

## **In-service Teacher Training Program in Thailand: Teachers' Beliefs, Needs, and Challenges**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Teacher training is one of the most important aspects of professional development for teachers in education. This paper identified 22 primary in-service teachers' beliefs, needs, and challenges they faced with regards to teacher training program in Thailand. The research methods used were a modified questionnaire and individual and focus group interviews. Findings revealed that the beliefs of the primary teachers were shaped by their previous attendance and experience on teacher's training programs in the country. Engaging workshops, simple but relevant teaching strategies were reported to be the needs of these teachers in a teacher training program. Teachers also reported the lack of teaching resources, problems on implementing new teaching strategies, and a big class size as the challenges they have encountered in their own classrooms. Findings may be useful for the Ministry of Education, education policy-makers, and teacher's training institutions in the ASEAN region context to design a much more effective training program for the local teachers to improve their teaching capacity. Implications are discussed in the study.

*Keywords:* Education policy, primary teachers, teacher's training program, teacher education, Thai primary teachers

### **INTRODUCTION**

Well-trained and highly qualified teachers are essential for quality education. Hence, professional development and continuous training of teachers are deemed significant in the teaching profession. Previous studies (Dudzik & Ngoc Nguyen, 2015;

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Hall, 2015; Jamil, Abd Razak, Raju, & Mohamed, 2011; Nguyen, 2015; Nguyen & Thuy, 2015; Steadman, 2008; Supriatna, 2015; Ulla, 2017; Widiati & Hayati, 2015) have explored various aspects of teacher training in different contexts and all believed that teachers' training is important for teachers. Supriatna (2015) and Ulla (2016) emphasized that teachers' training can have a positive impact on teachers' teaching strategies, which students can benefit. Realizing the importance of teacher training and its benefits toward better education, this has received greater attention by some researchers, education policy-makers, the Ministry of Education officials, and the governments in most countries in Southeast Asia and in Thailand in particular (Ulla, 2017).

Thailand has been updating and reforming its education system as a result of the low English proficiency level among Thai students as reported by the Educational Testing System in 2010. This poor English proficiency level among the students is linked to the poor teaching skills and teaching strategies among teachers (Kaewmala, 2012; Kongkerd, 2013; Simpson, 2011). Thus, the government, together with some public and private schools across the country, has been serious about addressing this problem. Schools have been continuously hiring and placing foreign teachers; native or non-native to teach English in most Thai schools across the country (Hickey, 2014). Likewise, teachers' training program is also being strengthened in order to equip teachers the necessary knowledge and skills in teaching.

A number of schools and organizations around Thailand have also been conducting and offering teachers' training programs to teachers in the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to update their teaching skills, methodologies, and strategies. However, only a few studies in Thailand have been conducted with regards to teachers' needs in the training program. Thus, this present study is conducted in order to explore the beliefs, needs, and challenges of local primary school teachers in Thailand with regards to teacher training. It is hoped that the result of this study would shed light on the issues concerning teacher training program not just in Thailand but in the whole ASEAN region. This study will have implications for the education institutions, Ministry of Education, and other education policy-makers in the ASEAN region. Understanding the local teachers' needs and by addressing and identifying the kind of training program appropriate for these teachers will create an impact for the betterment and development of the education system in the region.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Teacher Training in ASEAN Community**

In a country where teachers play the most important role in its development and progress, a teacher should be qualified, well educated, and well trained in order to deliver the lessons to the students effectively in the classroom. Continuous teacher training should also be held and conducted so that the teachers can attend to update their teaching

skills especially for those teachers who are in service for many years. Teacher training is believed to be helpful in updating the teaching strategies of the teachers (Ulla, 2018). In fact, some of the previous studies that concentrate on teacher's training programs (Jamil et al., 2015; Nguyen, 2015; Nguyen & Thuy, 2015; Steadman, 2008; Supriatna, 2015) have focused so much on the effects of teacher's training program, the role of teachers in the academic field, updating teacher's skills and competence, and teacher's development. Other studies like Dudzik and Ngoc Nguyen (2015); Hall (2015); Ulla (2017); Widiati and Hayati (2015); concentrated on building English competency and English language teacher education. All these researchers and practitioners in the field of teacher education agreed that teachers are the vital component in the quest for quality education in schools and in the country in general. If education system has to be reformed, teachers are the first people who will be trained since the learning of the students at school largely depends on their knowledge and the skills. Thus, sending the teachers to training, workshops, and conferences and letting them pursue professional development are just right as they make a significant contribution in the education system reform and in the learning of the students at schools.

In the ASEAN community, there has been a considerable number of teacher training programs going on in the past years. This has been fueled by the movement of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 where regional economic

integration among the country members of ASEAN is pursued. Thus, education is one of the areas being prepared for in this economic integration and teachers play the pivotal role in this education reform. For example, in Vietnam, several English teacher training universities were formed to address teachers' language proficiency, teaching capacity, action research, assessment, and use of technology in language teaching (Dudzik & Ngoc Nguyen, 2015). This network was formed in light of the English education reform in the country that was mandated by the government since teacher education institutions can no longer hold training programs for public school teachers in the country. Likewise, Brunei has acknowledged the importance of learning the English language for the improvement of the people in the ASEAN region. Thus, English language training was formed in order to train and help the people from other member-countries within the region to improve their English language skills (Haji-Othman & Sharbawi, 2015).

In Indonesia, Widiati and Hayati (2015) stated that the government implemented the English Language Teacher Professional Education (PPG) for the teachers in the country. The aim of the PPG is to improve the quality of teachers in the country. Although PPG is only developed for the pre-service teachers, the results are expected to affect the quality of teachers in the future.

The study of Tweed and Som (2015) in Cambodia also presented how teachers' training in the country works. Accordingly, English language teacher training centers

were set up by the government to prepare English teachers and other teachers to teach not just the English language but also other subjects in lower secondary schools. Teachers can also take English as their major for their classroom teaching as English is currently taught in primary and secondary Cambodian schools (Tweed & Som, 2015). Furthermore, teacher trainees can also take courses to enhance their classroom teaching skills and/or improve their English language proficiency (Tweed & Som, 2015). This is what happened to the in-service teachers in Myanmar. They received teacher training program that focuses on enhancing their teaching skills and strategies and at the same time, they also got to attend training sessions to improve their English language proficiency (Ulla, 2018). It was reported that most of the teachers in Myanmar held a positive perception with regards to teacher training and English language proficiency program in the country (Ulla, 2017).

### **Teacher Professional Development: In-service and Pre-service Training**

Students learning are always linked to the capacity of the teachers to teach the lessons in the classrooms. If a student performs poorly in his or her academics, teachers are always put to blame. In other words, teachers' teaching practices will either result in the improvement or failure in students' learning (Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, & Major, 2014; Mizell, 2010; Simon, 2013; Wenglinsky, 2001). Mizell (2010) mentioned that teaching quality was the most important factor in raising student achievement.

If the teacher is not qualified or has not gone to update his teaching skills in any professional development courses, training programs, and seminars, the quality of his or her teaching may be at stake that often leads to ineffective teaching and students' failure. Mizell (2010) also added that for teachers to be as effective as possible, they should continually expand their knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices. These practices in teaching can only be obtained through attending various professional development courses and training programs. Teachers are not only trained and updated as to the different teaching strategies, but they also share best practices in the classroom teaching (Ulla, Barrera, & Acompanado, 2017). For Simon (2013), teacher training is another important area for faculty development; without an adequate capability to train teachers for education, the pipeline for feeding qualified, well-prepared students into the country's university system will be relatively sparse. Sunday (2015) also disclosed that teachers were crucial inputs of an educational system. The real growth of the education in the country is directed to the teaching profession having qualified, well-trained, and experienced teachers.

Admittedly, for some in-service teachers, especially those who are teaching in the remote areas, access to various training programs and other professional developments is limited. Therefore, the knowledge and skills in teaching should always be emphasized before taking up the teaching work. In other words, pre-service

teacher training must be held for and attended by teachers to be prepared for the teaching profession. Pre-service training would be a good avenue for teachers to practice and acquire good and effective teaching skills. A number of studies (El Kadri & Roth, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Kabilan, 2013; Lingam, Lingam, & Raghuwaiya, 2014) pointed out that pre-service teacher training is indeed needed in the teacher education curriculum as it prepares teachers to become qualified for the teaching profession.

Lingam et al. (2014) suggested that teacher education institutions needed to undertake the school practicum component of the teacher preparation program more authentically to ensure trainee teachers found field-based experiences fruitful and rewarding in terms of their professional preparation. Practicum experience for incoming teachers provide them the hands-on experience in teaching and the chance to be supervised by the seasoned teachers. According to Johnson (2015), a pre-service teacher is expected to learn from his or her mentor teacher, as the mentor teacher serves as a role model, modeling teaching abilities for the pre-service teacher. Likewise, Kabilan (2103) mentioned that pre-service teachers showed signs of maturity – personally and professionally. Aside from the fact that they get exposure to the real teaching profession, they will get to understand the culture and context in which they are working. As a result, teachers emerged as professionally ready after the practicum experience.

El Kadri and Roth (2015) in their study stated that the teaching practicum

was often considered as a compulsory activity for enculturating new members into the teacher community by providing opportunities to experience teaching in action. However, the practicum is rarely conceptualized in terms of its transformative potential. Furthermore, they revealed in their study that the practicum does not have to be a mere induction experience but that it also may be the transformative locus for (a) the practicum participants (new teachers, school teachers, teacher educator and students) and (b) school and university/school relationships, and (c) of the practicum activity itself.

Studies of teachers' perceptions regarding teachers' training program were also conducted by Ha, Lee, Chan and Sum (2004), and Lingam (2012). The study of Ha et al. (2004) was conducted to determine whether the in-service training program was effective. With a total of 183 primary teachers in Hong Kong, the findings revealed that participants perceived the importance of the training. The findings also showed that the training was effective and practical for the teachers and for the curriculum. Lingam (2012) also made the same study to 33 beginning teachers at Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education. The researcher found that the beginning teachers had positive perceptions about the training program they received. The participants also mentioned some concerns that they considered being needing improvement. Among these concerns include "multi-class teaching, school practicum, school administration, the relevance of some of the

courses, duration of the training program and program upgrading, learning environment, staff responsibility, and research.”

The present study deals with Thai primary teachers’ beliefs, needs, and challenges with regards to teachers’ training program in the country. However, none of the studies above concentrated on what this study is focusing on; and none of them included Thailand and its teacher training program in their studies since they focused only in their own countries and localities. Thus, it is the purpose of this paper to bridge the gap between the cited studies and the lack of available literature pertaining to teachers’ training beliefs, needs, and challenges in Thailand. It is hoped that the result of this study would shed light for more teachers’ training programs in Thailand and in the ASEAN region in general, and to help teachers to become well prepared and well equipped with different teaching methodologies for their students to benefit.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the perceptions and beliefs of Thai primary teachers with regards to teachers’ training program in Thailand?
2. What are the primary teachers’ needs and expectations in the teachers’ training program?
3. What are the challenges and difficulties faced by these primary teachers in applying their learned teaching methodologies in their own classroom teaching?

### **METHODS**

This is a qualitative study where an in-depth interview was employed. Although the study made use of some numerical data (in the questionnaire) to tabulate the teachers’ perceptions with regards to teacher training, these data were only used as the basis for the descriptive analysis of the findings.

### **Participants**

A total of 22 (4 males and 18 females) primary school Thai teachers voluntarily participated in a 10-hour teacher’s training program conducted by a university in Thailand as part of its community outreach program. These primary school teachers, whose ages were in between 35 to 50 years, were teaching in two different primary schools in Thailand. With teaching experiences from 11 to 26 years, all of these teachers were teaching different subjects for Anuban (Kindergarten) and Prathom 1–6 (Elementary first to sixth grades). None of these teachers had a Master’s and or Ph.D. degree.

### **Research Tools**

A modified questionnaire that was adapted from the Uintah Basin Teaching American History (UB-TAH) Project was used in the study to identify and describe the perceptions, expectations, and beliefs of the primary Thai school teachers regarding the training programs in the country. It was modified to better fit in the Thai primary school teachers’ context. Furthermore, the questionnaire, which was written both in English and in Thai had two parts: part

one was on the demographic profile of the respondents, and part two was the items on teacher's perceptions, expectations, and beliefs regarding the training program. It made use of a Likert-type scale to code the responses of the participants in the questionnaire. Likewise, two semi-structured interviews were conducted. One group interview, which lasted for an hour, was held after the training program. The purpose of which was to delve deeper into the minds of the primary teachers whether their needs, expectations, and beliefs on teachers' training programs were met. Another individual interview with five teachers (since only five were available at the time of the visit) was done 2 months after the training program. The purpose was to know and identify whether the learned teaching strategies were applied in the classroom teaching, and whether there were challenges and/or problems met in applying those teaching strategies in the classroom.

### Research Procedure

The researcher visited the two primary schools in Thailand and had informed the schools' heads about the conduct of the teachers' training, its purpose, and objectives. It was explained to the schools heads that teachers' participation both in the training program and the research is voluntary. One consideration in choosing the participants for the teachers' training program is the proximity of their schools to the university from where the researcher was teaching. Teachers were also informed about the training program, the research and

its focus that was centered on delivering and sharing interactive activities, child-centered strategies, and real, authentic tasks that can be used in the classroom.

At the end of the training session, teachers were given the questionnaire to answer and group interview was conducted. The researcher invited a local teacher who can speak well in English to help in the interview. She translated some of the questions and answers in the interviews. Transcription and analysis of the data followed. After 2 months from the training, the researcher visited the two schools and interviewed the teachers who were free at the time of the visit. Questions relating to the use of the teaching strategies they learned from the session, and the difficulties they encountered in applying them in the classrooms were also asked. Final analysis of the findings was done after the visit.

## RESULTS

### Questionnaire Findings

For the purpose of presentation, the percentages obtained from *strongly agree* and *agree* were combined against *strongly disagree* and *disagree*, and *neutral*.

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of the items asked in the questionnaire with regards to primary school Thai teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and expectations in the teachers' training program.

From the results in Table 1, it can be said that most of the respondents strongly agreed in most of the items in the questionnaire. For example, all of the respondents said that the teachers' training program is helpful in their

Table 1

*The frequency and percentage distribution of primary school Thai teachers' beliefs, expectations and needs in the teachers' training program in Thailand*

Statements	Strongly Agree/Agree (n-22)	Neutral (n-22)	Strongly Disagree/Disagree (n-22)
The information provided in this training <b>will</b>			
1. Add to the content knowledge you had prior to this class.	86.37%	13.63%	0
2. 'Inspire' you to seek additional information about this topic or similar topics.	68.18%	31.82%	0
3. Be relevant to what you should be teaching to your students.	90.91%	9.09%	0
4. Be helpful in your classroom teaching.	100%	0	0
5. Have a positive impact on your teaching career.	100%	0	0
The teaching method that will be taught/emphasized in this training...			
6. Should be described well by the instructor.	100%	0	0
7. Should be demonstrated and/or modeled well by the instructor.	100%	0	0
8. Complements and/or supplements your existing teaching style.	100%	0	0
9. Can be used in your own classroom teaching.	100%	0	0
10. Should be relevant to the learning styles of the Thai students.	100%	0	0
After the training program, I am expected to be...			
11. Confident in my ability to develop lesson plans using the materials in the training program.	68.18%	22.73%	9.09%
12. Likely to integrate this knowledge into my classroom instruction.	54.54%	31.82%	13.64%
13. Confident to have adequate skill to use these teaching strategies in my class.	45.45%	22.73%	31.82%
14. Able to develop varied teaching and learning methods suitable to my students' needs.	77.27%	13.64%	9.09%
15. Able to create an effective learning environment for my students.	90.91%	9.09%	0
This training will improve my ability to...			
16 Engage students in active learning by using strategies that work.	86.36%	13.64%	0
17. Integrate local and national (including online/websites) resources/archives, programs, and initiatives into classroom instruction.	13.64%	9.09%	77.27%
18. Collaborate with other teachers to develop and implement the curriculum with student-centered activities.	90.91%	9.09%	0
19. Create an effective learning environment which supports the learning process	100%	0	0
20. Incorporate information technology in various learning situations.	22.73%	9.09%	68.18%



classroom teaching and can have a positive impact on their teaching career. While there were teachers who neither disagree nor agree that teachers' training can inspire them to seek additional information, there were still teachers who perceived that teacher training can add to the content knowledge they had regarding their classroom-teaching strategies and methodologies. Furthermore, all primary teachers also expected that the teaching methods that would be taught and emphasized in the training program should be described, demonstrated, and/or modeled well by the trainer, and should be relevant to the learning styles of their students. They also expected that the teaching methods would complement and/or supplement their existing teaching style, and can be used in their own classroom teaching.

It can also be noted from Table 1 that some of the respondents had disagreed on some of the expectations regarding the outcome of the teachers' training program. For example, 9% of the participants revealed that they were not confident in their ability to develop lesson plans using the materials in the training program and to develop varied teaching and learning methods suitable to their students' needs. Also, almost 14% said that they were not likely to integrate this knowledge into their classroom instruction, while another 31.82% mentioned that they were not confident to have adequate skills to use these teaching strategies in their classes. Despite this disagreement, still, a greater number of participants had agreed to the above-mentioned items.

Generally, the participants believed that the training program would improve their ability to create an effective learning environment that supports the learning process, collaborate with other teachers to develop and implement the curriculum with student-centered activities, and engage students in active learning by using strategies that work.

### **Interview Findings**

The sample excerpts from the teachers that were included in this section were translated into English.

Based on the interview conducted, the primary teachers thought that the training program was all lecture and discussion from the trainers. They never expected that it would be interactive and engaging. They revealed that most of the training programs they attended before were all series of lectures and no workshops and other engaging activities done. One teacher said,

“All the training programs that we attended before were all boring. Most of the time, the lecturers just talked and delivered the points without giving us activities to practice the strategies they introduced.”

They also believed that teacher training programs were only for English teachers and all the teaching strategies introduced in the program could not be applied to any subject areas. One senior female teacher stated,

*“Most of the teaching strategies and techniques that were introduced before were all made for English language teaching and for English*

*language teachers. The lecturers failed to make it applicable to other subjects.”*

### **Teachers’ Training Needs**

Based on the interview conducted, the respondents revealed the following training program needs that they want to have in the future training.

### **Engaging Workshops**

The primary school teachers revealed that teachers’ training that is activity based is what they want to attend in the future. According to them, the facilitator should engage them in workshops and activities so that they will have the real experience of what and how to conduct the teaching strategies in the real classroom context. They believed that they would easily learn and remember the teaching strategies if they would have the firsthand experience on how to do it in class. One of the teachers stated,

*“There should be workshops and activities in the training programs so that we would be able to apply what we learned in the session.”*

### **Simple but Relevant Teaching Strategies**

Another teacher training needs that were suggested by the primary school teachers during the interview is the simplicity of the teaching strategies that would be taught to them. They revealed that since they were teaching the elementary students, activities and other child-centered teaching strategies

should be relevant to them and to their students. Thus, they wanted simple teaching strategies. Likewise, they also stated that activities that are included in the training program should match the ability of their students so that they would learn effectively.

When asked about the common teaching strategies they used in their classrooms, they mentioned the use of songs and rhymes, games, and lectures as the basic strategies they employed in their respective classrooms.

### **Challenges**

In the school visit made after the training program, some of the teachers stated that they had tried using some teaching strategies they learned from the program. Others also revealed that they were still not using or have tried them.

Among the challenges that were mentioned during the interview were lack of teaching resources, the problem in the implementation of the new teaching strategies in the classroom, and a big number of students in the classroom. One of the male teachers revealed that lack of teaching resources posed as a big challenge for him in his classroom teaching. He revealed that information technology is scarcely available in his school, and that textbook is the only material and source in teaching. Sometimes, according to him, multimedia and other visual presentation equipment had to be shared with other teachers that whenever he needed it, he had to reserve it weeks before. He could not readily use them whenever he wanted to.

Another challenge that these primary teachers faced is the actual implementation of the child-centered strategies. In the individual interview, one female teacher stated that the problem in the child-centered strategies is that students are not used to them. She revealed that students felt hesitant to be put in groups, in pairs, and even in the class presentations. Students felt uncomfortable doing activities in class. Furthermore, she also revealed that conducting interactive activities with a large number of students would mean noise and disturbance to the other neighboring classes. For her, it is a challenge because she wanted her class to be interactive and enjoyable but at the same time, she did not want to receive complains from other teachers. Finally, she stated that she still would love to use the teaching strategies she got from the training program.

## DISCUSSION

This present study tried to explore the primary Thai teachers' beliefs, needs, and challenges toward teachers' training program in the country. Based on the findings, although the Thai primary teachers had a positive perception regarding teachers' training program, their perceptions, beliefs, and expectations were shaped by their previous experience, attendance, and participation in the teachers' training program. For example, in the interview conducted, it was revealed that training programs, and seminars on teaching strategies and methodologies that these primary teachers attended before were all series of lectures and discussion; and

no workshops were made. These findings somehow give a picture of how a teacher training looks like in the country. From this, it is clear that previous training programs did not emphasize the engagement of teachers in all the activities in the sessions. It could be said that these training programs were just all about lectures and no hands-on activities were conducted for the trainees. Pokhrel and Behera (2016) mentioned in their study that lectures and discussions in the training sessions are prevalent that is why trainees want to have engaging activities. They also mentioned that trainees who attended to this kind of training program wanted to try something new to go beyond the normal practice. Group work, games, and other activities are the sample strategies that a facilitator can try in the session in order to keep the trainees motivated to participate in the program. The same findings were shown in the study of Mai Trang Vu and Thanh Pham (2014) when they found that learning by doing made the teachers satisfied with the training they attended. They also stated further that the teacher trainees appreciated it all the more when the trainers made them understand how each teaching strategy works in the classroom.

Another important result of the study is the lack of teaching resources, and some student-centered teaching methodologies are not applicable for some classrooms because of the big number of students in each class. These challenges faced by most of the teachers who participated in the teacher's training program only imply that there are a number of factors that deter the effective

application of teaching strategies in the class. Having a large class is impossible for teachers to try and arrange the class for an activity. Bahanshal (2013); Saejew (2013), and Weixuan (2014) noted that the issue on large classes was common among public schools in Southeast Asia that often led to students' inability to understand the given task set by their teachers. Thus, learning would never likely to take place in this kind of environment.

Finally, it can also be noted from the findings of the present study that these primary teachers prefer to attend some teachers' training programs that focus on workshops, deliver simple but relevant teaching strategies, and does not only cater for a specific academic subject but across disciplines. This gives a clear picture that most of the teachers' training conducted in the country centered only on the English language improvement for both teachers and students since most of the teaching strategies that were introduced were for English language teaching. It should be considered that a many of these teachers are not English teachers. The introduction of the different teaching strategies and methodologies should be modeled not just for teaching English language but to other academic subjects as well. It should be noted that primary teachers in the country teach most of the academic subjects. Thus, teaching strategies that do not only concentrate on one subject are better preferred by these primary teachers.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

The researcher was aware of the many limitations of this present study. This should be considered in order to provide suggested directions for future research. First, the number of primary school Thai teachers who were involved in the study was only limited to 22 since only these 22 primary school teachers were invited to a 10-hour teacher training program. Thus, future studies should double the number of respondents in order to get more data and details from the teachers. Second, the training conducted was only good for one and a half days, which was short to cover and introduce the different teaching strategies that are necessary for teaching. A 3-day training should be made in the future so as to engage the primary teachers more with the different student-centered teaching strategies. Third, the methodologies used in the study were survey questionnaire, individual and focus group interviews only. Future studies may include classroom teaching observation in order to describe further the classroom teaching skills and the methods and strategies that these teachers use in the classroom. Finally, the present study dealt only with the primary school Thai teachers as subjects of the research. High school and middle school teachers should be included to provide different perceptions regarding Thailand's teachers' training programs.

## CONCLUSION

It is undebatable that indeed professional development of teachers through attending various conferences, training programs, and seminars can help teachers become more competent in the teaching profession. Mizell (2010) mentioned that effective and competent teachers would really have a positive impact and effect to their students. The knowledge and skills of the students will be improved and will eventually lead to their success when their teachers are actively and effectively attending various professional development sessions. These teachers should be updated in order to cope with the dynamic world of teaching. However, government and other institutions should also consider how the training should be delivered and what skills in teaching should be focused on. Thus, knowing the perceptions, beliefs, and needs of the teachers is essential to the success of all teachers' training program. This does not only identify the needs of the teachers, but it also opens for a great discussion on the challenges that these teachers face in the real classroom setting.

The present study that explored Thai teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and needs on teachers' training program in Thailand has implications for teacher education institutions, education officials, and education policy-makers who work and have been working for the improvement of teachers' professional and teaching skills

not just in Thailand but also in the ASEAN region. First, any educational organizations and the Ministry of Education should consider that professional development of teachers is a significant contributor toward the success of the students. Thus, teachers' training programs should be trainee-centered and activity-based rather than lecture-based. In this way, these teachers will have the first experience of how should a certain teaching strategy be employed in the classroom. Second, introducing some teaching strategies to the teachers especially when these strategies are new to them should be modeled properly by a facilitator. A facilitator or a trainer should see to it that the teaching strategies employed in the training should be easily understood by the teacher-trainees so as to use them properly in their own classrooms. Likewise, these strategies should not only be limited and applicable for a certain subject area but can be used as well to other academic subjects. Finally, a professional development like training programs, seminars, and conferences should be made available and accessible for all teachers especially to those who are teaching in the far-flung areas in the country. If the government is keen on improving the education status of the country, teachers' needs should be considered and training opportunities should not only be selective to those teachers teaching in the urban areas.

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