

## **PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' NEEDS: A PANACEA FOR COMPETENT SCHOOLING PREPARATION IN NIGERIA**

**Muhammad Alhaji Ibrahim**

Department of Science Education, Sule Lamido University Kafin Hausa, Jigawa State, Nigeria  
[ma.ibrahim@slu.edu.ng](mailto:ma.ibrahim@slu.edu.ng)

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### **ABSTRACT**

Teacher Education training has played a central role in the training of individuals, who are responsible for impacting knowledge, behavior, attitude, and skills, in order to ensure better productivity and efficiency in the society. The main objectives of this study are to identify preservice teachers' needs and what component of teaching knowledge they require? How could we satisfied their needs? And how do we ensure their needs are adequately provided for effective classroom instruction? The finding of this study has shown that the inability of many teacher education training in satisfying preservice teachers needs has made it difficult for them to possess the require subject matter knowledge and skills for effective classroom instruction. The study has identify two preservice teachers' needs (i.e. learning needs and teaching needs). The need are further categorized into cognitive needs, emotional needs and physical needs. Therefore, it is pertinent for the training to bridge the gap between the current practice in the training and the desired practice in order to groom competent school teachers and achieve the set objective of the training. It is recommended that the training should examine relevant strategies adopted in the training, and adjusted to current realities of needs of the preservice teachers to ensure that the training is appropriately managed to achieve the set objectives of the training

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the continue process of learning from the first day where a child was born to the declaring years. It's the process of preparing an individual or group of individuals intellectually on how to become useful members of their society, by imparting knowledge, skills, and reasoning ability of making right decision. The process through which the knowledge is imparted is called training, and it involved acquiring knowledge, skills, discipline and development through teaching, observation and learning. In a general terms, education is all about personal, social harmony and security, economic, and political freedom. The mechanism for achieving these is teacher education training. Teacher Education training has played a central role in the training of individuals, who are responsible for impacting knowledge, behavior, attitude, and skills, in order to ensure better productivity and efficiency in the society. Therefore, teacher education training is refers to the special training in education which prepare and equip pre-service and in-service teachers (prospective school teachers) with the knowledge, behavior, attitude, approach, methodologies and skills they require to provide effective classroom instruction.

Moreover, the pre-service/In-service teachers are expected to possess all the required teaching knowledge and skills at their final year of graduation before been able to shoulder the teaching responsibility immediately after graduation. In many countries qualified school teachers are in short supply, and even in the countries with adequate numbers of qualified teachers, the prospective schools are not adequately equipped with their teaching needs which will enable them to discharge their teaching responsibility effectively. How could we satisfied the needs of preservice teachers and how do we ensure their needs are adequately provided for effective classroom instruction? In most countries particularly Nigeria, we see challenges to ensure the pre-service teachers are prepare and adequately equipped with teaching and learning needs for effective classroom instruction. Implementing Basic and Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS) for university program is also difficult to ensure the preservice teachers' needs are adequately satisfied in order to shoulder the teaching responsibility immediately after graduation. This practice has made it difficult for many new school teachers to provide effective classroom instruction, due to disconnection between the teacher education training curriculum contents and school curricular for which they have been trained to teach<sup>1</sup>.

Equally, a substantive body of researches of teacher education training have shown that many new recruited school teachers find themselves in a

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Alhaji Ibrahim, Wun Thiam Yew, and Nordin Bn Razak, "Mathematics Teacher Education Training for Quality School Teachers: An Assessment of Mathematics Teaching Needs of Preservice Teachers," *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24, no. 04 (2020): 1475–7192.

situation in which: the knowledge and skills they acquired in teacher training are different from what they teach in school; given sole responsibility of teaching, and contradictory perception of teaching with teaching practice<sup>23</sup>. For this stressful situation experienced by some school teachers has made it difficult for them to provide effective classroom instruction, and many stakeholders begins to doubt about the process they acquired the certificate they possesses without going deeply into the root of the problem. Thus, for preservice teachers to teach effectively and guide their students, their teaching and learning needs must be satisfied and create a strong connection between the training and the work for which they have been train do immediately they graduate. This is because human are motivated to perform their task effectively when their basic needs are satisfied<sup>4</sup>. He noted that a person needed to completely satisfy one level, before he begins to pursue another level<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, preservice teachers' needs should be satisfy before being able to shoulder the responsibility of providing effective classroom instruction. The training is committed to equipping prospective school teachers with the needed skills, knowledge, attitude, behavior and teaching approaches to help them deliver teaching responsibilities effectively. Summary of the required needs that teacher training program should equip preservice teachers with and their explanation is given below.

### **Preservice Teachers' Learning Needs**

Pre-service teachers learning needs is the gap between the preservice teachers' level of knowledge of the subject matter and skills, and the level of knowledge and skills required to qualify as competent classroom teachers. The needs are essential to all pre-service teachers to be able to survive in the program, participate in the training activities, and acquire all the required subject matter knowledge and skills for effective classroom instruction. The needs can be categorized into three (3) as follows:

1. Cognitive Needs
2. Emotional Needs

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<sup>2</sup> Beijaard, Douwe, Nico Verloop and Jan D. Vermunt. "Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: an exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16 (2000): 749-764.

<sup>3</sup> Geert Kelchtermans and Katrijn Ballet, "Micropolitical Literacy: Reconstructing a Neglected Dimension in Teacher Development," *International Journal of Educational Research* 37, no. 8 (January 1, 2002): 755–67, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0883-0355\(03\)00069-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0883-0355(03)00069-7).

<sup>4</sup> Shannon L. Navy, "Theory of Human Motivation—Abraham Maslow". *Springer Texts in Education*, January 1, 2020, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-43620-9\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-43620-9_2).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

### 3. Physical Needs

#### **Cognitive learning needs**

This learning needs is concerned with the preservice teachers' ability to process new information in the brain. The needs is essential in adaptation and survival in the training. It enable the preservice teachers to acquire new knowledge, skills and manipulate the information. According to<sup>6</sup> is a brain function that deals with how an individual learn, remember, solve problem and pay attention, rather than with actual work. This needs general relied upon the preservice teachers learning ability and lecturers understanding of each preservice teacher' learning ability. Lecturer's ability to understand their students learning needs is very essential here, because it will guide them to plan, design and implement their lesson based on students' needs. Some students required physical objects (adequate utilization of instructional material) during the lesson to be able to learn, remember and solve problem, while others can learn, remember and solve any problem without utilization of instructional materials during the lectures. Therefore, lecturers' understanding of preservice teachers' learning needs is very essential in teacher preparation, it will help them to equip their students with adequate subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills based on individual preservice teacher learning needs.

Its known fact in some countries that the admission process of teacher education training particularly at university level, many unqualified students who did not get the cutoff point in their choosing program or students with lower cutoff point of university admission were offered admission to study education, sometimes students who applied for other lucrative programs and did not get the admission are offered admission to study education courses<sup>78</sup>. This practice has lowered the standard and quality of teacher training, and sometimes poorly qualified candidates are admitted in the program. Thus, providing preservice teachers needs is necessary in order to bridge the gap between the preservice teachers' level of knowledge of the subject matter and skills, and the level of knowledge and skills required to qualify as competent classroom teachers. It will

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<sup>6</sup> Kiely, K.M. (2014). Cognitive Function. In: Michalos, A.C. (eds) Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research. Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5\\_426](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_426)

<sup>7</sup> Babalola A, "Why we support the post- Jamb test" The Guardian Newspaper, (November 21, 2005), p. 15

<sup>8</sup> Eluemunor, E. T, "Post UME test: Education Minister Versus Representatives" Sunday Independent Newspaper, (November 13, 2005) pp. 13-16

also help lectures in the program to carry all their students along and provide them with all the necessary information they needs to excel in the training.

### **Emotional Learning Needs**

This learning needs is concerned with the feeling and condition of pre-service teachers, how they are happy in the training, feel satisfy with lecturers of the program, feel fulfilled and at peace during and after the training. This component is essential to the achievement of teacher training objectives. Some of the objectives of teacher training is to develop proper attitudes towards teaching and development of self-confidence among prospective school teachers. Emotional learning needs is entirely focus on the feeling of pre-service teachers toward the training, (i.e. are they feeling safe? appreciated, satisfied, feel part of the teaching community and accomplished). This learning needs must be fulfilled in order the pre-service teachers to acquire the required teaching competency and skills. This is because the condition must be satisfied, before the preservice teachers feel they are part of the training, feel safe and happy to actively engage, acquire the required subject matter knowledge and skills, and reflected in the behavior of their students at school and home. Equally, fulfilment of the needs during the training, will help the pre-service teachers to developed self-confidence, adjust to social environment, physical condition and become independent learners.

Consequently, the best way to train competent and effective classroom teachers is to push them beyond the capability of the training, through independent learning, development of self-confidence and attitude toward teaching. It is a well-known fact to psychologist that emotions are connected to and influence cognitive skills of an individual such as memory, attention, problem solving, decision making and critical thinking. Paying more attention to pre-service teachers' emotional learning needs is like eliminating all roadblocks which will prevents the training in grooming competent and effective school teachers. If the pre-service teachers developed the feeling of belonging and positive attitude toward the training there is tendency to activate their cognitive skills to optimal level and acquired the required teaching competency. However, when emotional learning needs are not satisfied there is tendency the preservice teachers to suffer in the training. Ideally, the needs of identifying the feeling and emotional condition of pre-service teachers during the training should be at the forefront of teacher training, whose responsibility is to ensure the pre-service teachers they develop adequate mastery of the subject matter knowledge and understand the psychology of their students so that they can be able to handle the difficulties they

experienced. Despite the important of emotional learning needs in attaining higher level of academic achievement, identification of pre-service teachers feeling, and attitude toward some lecturers of teacher education training suffers from several major drawbacks; such as student/teacher relationship and supportive lecturers.

However, a major problem with this kind of relationship is that it could prevent the preservice teachers to actively engage in the training and subsequently affects their productivity in the training. Recent evidence suggest that lack of supportive lecturers in teacher education training is one of the major difficulties encountered by preservice teachers during the training<sup>9</sup>. Data from several sources have identified an increase of student/teacher relationship and lecturers support are associated with academic achievement and social development<sup>1011</sup>. Therefore, teacher education training should pay more attention to preservice teachers' emotional learning to enable them to actively engage in the training and acquire the required subject matter knowledge and skills for effective classroom instruction.

### Physical Learning Needs

This learning needs is concerned with the preservice teachers' physical competence, knowledge and skills of utilizing different teaching materials and approaches. The needs are essential in the preparation of preservice teachers, because it will enable them to acquire the appropriately and differentiated teaching skills for meeting the individual learner' needs. It's important here that each lecturer of the training to know the physical competence of their students so that they can meet the diverse of physical needs of their students. Although there are various concern and views about how individual students learn, but one thing that

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<sup>9</sup> Ibrahim, Muhammad Alhaji, Wun Thiam Yew, and Nordin Bn Razak, "Mathematics Teacher Education Training for Quality School Teachers: An Assessment of Mathematics Teaching Needs of Preservice Teachers'." *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24, no. 04 (2020a): 1475–7192.

<sup>10</sup> Rimm-Kaufman, S., & Sandilos, L., "Improving Students' Relationships with Teachers to Provide Essential Supports for Learning", (2011). Accessed from [www.apa.org/education/k12/relationships.aspx#](http://www.apa.org/education/k12/relationships.aspx#)

<sup>11</sup> Ibrahim, Muhammad Alhaji, Wun Thiam Yew, and Nordin Bn Razak, "Effectiveness of Mathematics Teacher Education Training in Nigeria: An Assessment of Pre-service Mathematics Teachers' Learning Needs". *International Journal of Pedagogical Development and Lifelong Learning*, 1(1), e020xx (2020b): <https://doi.org/10.30935/ijpdll/xxxx>

is clear to all educators and educational practitioners is that all learners are different, but there are physical factors that can influence preservice teachers' productivity when incorporated in the training. Some of these factors are as follows:

First, In house-hands on training (Micro teaching). This refers to the internal preparation of preservice teachers for the actual teaching practice. The training involves the use of internal resources and expertise of the trainers of the program for effective preparation of preservice teachers before going out for teaching practice. The training should be carryout under the supervision of trainers of the program, and all the required teaching skills and knowledge should be taught and assess during the exercise. This will help the prospective school teachers to practice teaching internally, improve their efficiency and productivity before going out for teaching practice. It has been demonstrated that an adequate internal preparation of preservice teachers before going out for teaching practice help them to develop self-confidence, easily coped with the teaching difficulties experienced by new teaching practice students<sup>12</sup>. Different teacher training institutions have their own way of preparing prospective school teachers to address the core teaching skills that each preservice teacher should possess before going out for the teaching practice. But in house hands on training (Micro teaching) has the advantage over others in customizing the preservice teachers skills based on the needs of the society, and adapt to the teaching culture.

Second, Learning Style: This refers to the way or method through which the preservice teachers acquire and process new information. It is a well-known facts to psychologist and education practitioners that every student has a certain learning styles that work for him better than others. The difference in the preference of learning style among the preservice teachers does not indicate their cognitive ability but only differences of how they assimilate new information and process it internally. Some preservice teachers prepare lecture using audio-video aids while others prepare normal lectures without use of teaching aids. Understanding preservice teachers learning style can help lecturers of the training to figure out what styles work best for them and how to train them in a smarter way. This will help the training in optimizing session of the training and focus

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<sup>12</sup>Ibrahim, Muhammad Alhaji, Wun Thiam Yew, and Nordin Bn Razak, "Effectiveness of Mathematics Teacher Education Training in Nigeria: An Assessment of Pre-service Mathematics Teachers' Learning Needs". *International Journal of Pedagogical Development and Lifelong Learning*, 1(1), e020xx (2020b): <https://doi.org/10.30935/ijpdll/xxxx>

more on the practical aspect, achieve better result and groom competent school teachers.

Third, Adequate and relevant course contents: This refers to the reading material needed for the preparation of competent school teachers. The choice of the topics, structure and organization of the topic should be guided by the stated objectives of the training. This will help the training to provide the preservice teachers with the overview of the training and groom them based on the set objectives of the training. It will also help the preservice teachers to master their chosen area and how it fits into future job. The debate about the curriculum contents of some teacher education program has gained fresh prominence with many arguing that the level of mastery of the subject matter knowledge demonstrated by some school teachers has raise issue of concern to many stakeholders to the extent that many begins to doubt about the process the obtained the certificate they possesses<sup>13,14,15</sup>. The existing account fail to resolve the contradiction between the teacher education training curriculum contents and school curriculum for which the preservice teachers have been trained to teach. Researchers have not treated inadequacy of the subject matter knowledge demonstrated by recently graduated school teachers in much details because one cannot teach what he does not know. A relationship exists between an individual's ability to teach school subject matter with competency and ability of teacher education training to groom prospective school teachers with adequate subject matter knowledge<sup>16</sup>. Equally, in a study conducted by<sup>17</sup> on the relation between

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<sup>13</sup> Aluede, O., & Idogho, P. O., "Refocusing Teacher Education for Nigeria's National Development: Issues and Policies for Implementation", *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, (2014), 42(3).

<sup>14</sup> Aluede, O., & Idogho, P. O., "Refocusing Teacher Education for Nigeria's National Development: Issues and Policies for Implementation". *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, (2014), 42(3).

<sup>15</sup> Yamtim, V., & Wongwanich, S., "A Study of Classroom Assessment Literacy of Primary School Teachers". *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (2014), 116, 2998-3004.

<sup>16</sup> Ibrahim M. A., "Evaluation of Mathematics Teacher Education Program in a University in Kano, Nigeria". (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). (2020), University Sains Malaysia, Penang Malaysia.

<sup>17</sup> Ibrahim, Muhammad Alhaji, Wun Thiam Yew, and Nordin Bn Razak, "Mathematics Teacher Education Training for Quality School Teachers: An



teacher education training curriculum content and school curricular contents for which the preservice teachers have been train to teach have indicated a discrepancy between their training curriculum contents and school curricular. Consequently, the training should satisfied the need of the preservice teachers to possess adequate mastery of school curriculum to develop reliable cross curriculum relationship among the topics they are going to teach after graduation

Fourth, Information and Communication Technology: This refers to the application of diverse set of technological tools and resources in the teaching and learning to transmit, store, create, share and exchange information. Being able to conduct teaching in the absent of physical classes without disruption of the academic calendar have increasingly become necessary among school teachers. The lesson we learned during the novel Covid-19 virus has taught to urgently embrace technology in the process of teaching and learning so that we can have smooth academic activities in our various schools and institutions. Many schools and tertiary institution around the world have abandoned their academic activities due to the lack of infrastructures and knowledge of ICT. Therefore teacher education training should include information and communication technology as part of the core curriculum contents of teacher training to enable them acquired the knowledge of applying technology in the process of teaching and learning. This will not only enhance the quality of their training, but also improve the efficiency of prospective school teachers in guiding the learning of their students. This is because the technology applied in the teaching will make the process more fun and enjoyable to the students, improves their engagement and knowledge retention. Integration of technology in teaching will provides teachers with the opportunity to introduce innovative technologies that will stimulate and enhance students learning, and establish collaborative learning among students. Therefore, it is pertinent for teacher education training to provide the preservice teachers with knowledge and skills of applying technology in the classroom teaching, so that their teaching effectiveness can be improved in the current trend of education, where most of the curriculum content cannot be taught effectively without the application of technology.

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Assessment of Mathematics Teaching Needs of Preservice Teachers?." *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24, no. 04 (2020a): 1475–7192.

### Teaching Needs of the Preservice Teachers

This refers to the required teaching skills and competencies that are expected the training to prepare and groom the preservice teachers with for effective classroom instruction. The needs are the gap between the current practice in the training and the desired practice. The needs are essential in the preparation of competent classroom teachers, and it will enable them to simplify complex, and make abstract concepts accessible to students and influence their learning. The needs can be categorized as follows:

- a. Adequate Teaching Practice: This refers to the period that a prospective school teachers spends in practicing teaching at a school as part of their training. The exercise is usually conducted as a temporary under the supervision of trainers of the program and head of department where the prospective school teachers were posted. The exercise allows the prospective school teachers to practice teaching in school and effective utilization of instructional materials and strategies that will permit them to meet the teaching demand and improve their effectiveness. Despite the important of teaching practice in the preparation of competent school teachers, some teacher training institution tend to neglect their duty by allocation short period of time for the exercise, poor management of the exercise, and poor identification of appropriate teaching practice schools<sup>1819</sup>. This practice combine with the preservice teachers' attitude toward teaching practice may result in preparation of incompetent school teachers with little concern over learners' need. Central to the entire objectives of teaching practice is to expose student-teachers to real life classroom experiences under the supervision of professional teachers, to provide the forum for student-teacher to translate educational theories and principles into practice, to enable student-teachers discover their own strengths and weaknesses in classroom teaching and provide opportunities to enable them address their weaknesses and enrich their strengths, to familiarize student-teachers with real school environment as their future work place, to provide student-teachers with an opportunity for further acquisition of professional skills, competencies, personal

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Odundo, P. A., Lilian, G. K., & Boniface, N., "Preparation and Management of Teaching Practice Process at University of Nairobi, Kenya: Appropriateness of Methods and Resources". *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 17(8), (2018), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.26803/IJLTER.17.8.7>

characteristics and experience for full-time teaching after graduation, to help student-teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession, and to serve as a means of assessing the quality of training being provided by teacher training institutions<sup>202122</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary for teacher education training to allocate more time for the exercise to enable the preservice teachers to developed their teaching skills, paired with competent and concerned supervisor during the exercise, authorized the host institution to monitor, guide and influence professional growth and development of the preservice teachers, and ensure all the necessary teaching practice strategies and protocol are follow and managed appropriately so that the desired objectives of the exercise are achieve.

- b. Use of technology: This refers to the application of diverse set of technological tools and resources in the teaching and learning to transmit, store, create, share and exchange information. The use of technology in teacher preparation will provide the training with opportunity to groom the preservice teachers with skills needed to use ICT effectively in teaching and learning. So, far, however, there has been little commitment from teacher training institution in shifting the paradigm to technological based teacher preparation, based on the current reality that no meaningful teaching and learning process can take place without use of utilization of technology. Information and communication technology is fast becoming a key component of teaching and learning. A key aspect of technology in teaching is that it support variety of teaching strategy, improve access to resources, pursue a variety of resource format, enhance and extend learning environment, enabling more efficient administration, and support continuous professional development of teachers. Equally, the use of technology improve students engagement and motivation, accommodate different learning style, enable choice of learning space, improve access to learning, support variety of learning strategies and support the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. It is therefore, pertinent for the training to prepare and groom the preservice

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<sup>20</sup> National Universities Commission, “Benchmark for minimum academic standard”. (2007). Retrieved from <http://www.nuc.edu.ng>

<sup>21</sup> National Commission for Colleges of Education, “Benchmark for minimum academic standard”. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.ncce.edu.ng>

<sup>22</sup> Aglazor, Genevieve. “The Role of Teaching Practice in Teacher Education Programmes: Designing Framework for Best Practice.” *Global Journal of Educational Research* 16, no. 2 (2017): 101. doi:10.4314/GJEDR.V16I2.4

teachers' based on the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, advocate for effective utilization of communication technology in teacher preparation, and ensure all the necessary knowledge and skill of using communication technology in teaching and learning were provided in the training.

- c. **Learning issues and Special needs:** This refers to the learning condition that required adequate preparation and support from the teachers to enable the students with special needs to actively engage in the classroom instruction and strive in the presence of their peers. The condition can cause an individual with special needs or learning issues to experience difficulty in the classroom, if the lesson was not prepared and presented based on the individual needs and learning context. Therefore, teacher training should prepare and groom preservice teachers with knowledge and skills of preparing lesson based on students with learning issues and special needs, so that they can meet the unique learning needs of their students. This will give the preservice teachers opportunity to develop their teaching competency and help their students to reach full academic potentiality. This is because, for students with special needs, inclusion in the classroom instruction means everything to them, because they were given the opportunity to strive in the presence of their peers.
- d. **Leadership Training:** This refers to undergoing a special management training that is designed to help preservice teachers to learn new and developed their leadership skills and techniques to run team, motivation methods, guide and influence students with different and complex behavior. The training was very essential to preservice teachers since they are the prospective school teachers and are expected to assume teaching role immediately they graduated from the training. The training is ideal for anyone in a supervisory role and wanted to keep on top of their game. Thus, leadership training is necessary for the preservice teachers, and the training should groom them with the skills of quality leadership for them to keep on top of the expectation of the training. The expectation of the training is that, the preservice teachers shall be able to guide and influence their students to reach their full academic potentiality, bring out the best of each individual student, and help them to achieve success in their study.

**CONCLUSION:**

It can be concluded that the way in which the preservice teachers learning needs and teaching needs play a vital role in the preparation of competent school teachers can never be over emphasized in teacher education training. This conclusion is substantiated by the evidence presented in the literature reviewed that the needs are the gap between the preservice teachers' level of knowledge of the subject matter and skills, and the level of knowledge and skills required to qualify as competent classroom teachers, and the gap between the current practice in the training and the desired practice. Therefore, it is pertinent for the training to bridge the gap between the current practice in the training and the desired practice in order to groom competent school teachers and achieve the desire objective of the training. It is recommended that teacher training institution should examine relevant strategies adopted in the training, and adjusted to current realities of needs of the preservice teachers to ensure that the training is appropriately managed to achieve the set objectives of the training. Moreover, the preservice teachers should create suitable, dependable and sustainable procedures for updating and improving their learning and teaching skills in order to keep on top of the game and possesses the required teaching skills.

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