

## EXPLORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS OPINIONS ABOUT LEARNING SUSTAINABLE COMPETENCIES DURING TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

<sup>1</sup>Ambreen Siddique, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Muhammad Anwer

### Abstract

The teacher is represented by the nation's principles and goals and is obliged to its ethical and intellectual responsibilities for the training of learners to actively and creatively participate according to societal order. A teacher must reveal competence to attain the standards settled by state plans and programs (policy). These objectives can be attained via active, excellent teacher, teacher who is well prepared through professional training that has a direct impact on the quality of lifecycle. Teachers are the pivot in the whole educational structure. Continuous learning of teachers based on the development of a healthy structure of professional development and effective approaches for professional development that facilitates a range of competencies. It is not sufficient to improve teacher competencies; it is necessary to construct and sustain the useful, cooperative and collaborative environment, and permit them to do work cooperatively in a condition that facilitates learning for teacher and learner. Effective teacher education must promote teacher learning and competences. Moreover, it is also necessary to ensure who is sustained and can effectively support learning. The basic objective of the study was to know the pre-teacher's opinion about learning sustainable competencies during teacher education program. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the particular research and semi-structure interview was conducted to collect the required data. The result of the study reveal that was highlighted by participants that during the period of professional qualification/teacher training program we learnt from each other and got beneficial techniques to utilize in our professional life as a teacher. Majority of the participants agreed on the fact that they have developed skills professionally; they have developed reflective thinking skills, improved observational skills, lesson planning skills and learnt different assessment techniques etc. which are necessary to work as an effective teacher. Practice teaching was highlighted as most important part of their professional degree program because they explored what is evidence in research, what they have learnt and what is promoted in practice. This practice introduced new activities and techniques which are essential to implement theory to practice. Sense of cooperation and support has been developed in prospective teachers moreover, moral values has been polished and they have developed values i.e. respect for others and opinions etc.

**Keywords:** Pre-Service Teachers, Sustainable Competencies, Teaching Practices

### Introduction

Education plays a vital role in all societies and it contemplates as the most important tool for bringing political, cultural, financial, social, and environmental change. Various agents are utilizing for shaping the whole structure of society and education but the teacher is the most important agent in modification and structuring a civilized society (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, & Espinoza, 2017). Education has an excessive significance in developing a stable society, and teachers are the basic source to attain it. The preparation of teachers for a teaching career is considered as the most important job around the world, it may support the nation to rise and improve in multiple areas. Therefore, it is an important need for education that teachers must attain sufficient professional and educational training to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and competencies and have the capability to bestow their selves to a teaching career. A central reality is that, if given to teacher training program and procedure of professional development should have to be presented, monitor, and assessed frequently by a professional expert in a particular field.

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar, University of Education, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan [ambreensiddique@rocketmail.com](mailto:ambreensiddique@rocketmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Associate professor, University of Education, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan [dranwer@ue.edu.pk](mailto:dranwer@ue.edu.pk)

The learning process is an ongoing procedure if knowledge is not fixed. So it is necessary to improve the teaching and it should shift from old and theoretical structure; it should be evidence based and research focused (Boudersa, 2016). It is not possible to enhance the quality of work if we don't produce a good number of effective teachers who are effectively trained and dedicated to continual of the profession. According to James (1977), mention that in the teaching process you purely work with your pupils into a state of concentration that all other object exiled from their mind: than expose it very memorably that he remembered this lesson till his death, and lastly fill him with devouring interest that what will be the next step/action in the subject.

Whereas, Current educationist focus on the significance of core teaching competencies that must be learned by the prospective teachers. If prospective teachers learn these skills, they can acquire on their own other general competencies that can help them in making the most proficient. Education has its own entity and works as a discipline that over and above links with teaching strategies and educational learning as well as an educational environment which is different than the semiformal and no formal source of education and socialization (Britannica, 2012). Education deals with the truth, the culture of generations, and the realities of life that created by human and its contexts (Potschin, 2009). It works as a device to attain the objective of sustainability (UNESCO, 2004-2014). Effective individuals and effective employees always produce by effective organization and through quality of education (J.Beaulieu, 2005).

Promotion of learning is most significant element of teacher education and their training program. It is the sign of good teacher who can integrate his professional and particular knowledge in teaching spaces. An experienced and competent teacher tries to apply all the rules and standards they have learned from their training duration to follow the criteria for performing task and ways guided by professional criteria (Jumani, 2007). Education report on the professional development of teachers has revealed that public demand for education has augmented in the present age (OECD, 2010). Educational institutes have been focused for learner's demands in a new era to compete or perform the task in the future reasonably and effectively. In this perspective, organizations are needed to sustain their learner with wide-ranging competencies to facilitate them to endure in the world of work. This condition emphasizes quality students. In this sense, the professional competency of teachers becomes more significant because teachers are the most effective role model for the learner at all levels of education (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Quality of teachers and teaching depends on prospective teacher education programs which have been enthusiastic to gain competencies among teachers. Therefore, to attain essential teacher competencies during teacher training programs has great meaning to prepare prospective teachers for teaching profession.

An effective and competent teacher is treated as the determination or backbone of the effective educational system and leaning is assumed as a changing process, the struggle for developing and improving teacher, their competencies ( knowledge & skills) in an educational perspective, are necessary to develop and motivate (McMillan, 2014) because their knowledge, abilities, competencies have great and direct impact on learner achievement whom they are going to teach (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). There is no effective teacher education than the quality of teacher education (Lubanga, 2011). Teacher education renewal (Gatlin, 2009) need to care about the enhancement of teachers tasks based on developing a strong relationship between pupils and curricula, in the course of the provision of knowledge (Stronge, Ward, & Gran, 2011), and provision of effective learning environment that endure teacher competence development. This method modifies the everyday jobs of teachers: helper and initiator, learning instructor, concerned with expertise (Sturgis & Patrick, 2010). Teachers required specific content knowledge as well as pedagogic knowledge to implement the education for sustainable development. Mutually both practices of teacher's knowledge are fundamental for effective teaching and learning at schools and therefore a measure of professional competency (Bertschy, Künzli, & Lehmann, 2013). For the teaching profession, the teacher must promote his/her professional skills through teacher training according to learning standards. The effective CPD programs and teacher education has great impact on teaching-learning development. It also motivates a leaning environment.

Comprehensive and latest knowledge's, skills about assessment and teaching, fair and arranged goals of education, affection and devotion, motivation, obligation and optimistic behavior for the profession of teaching are integral, the basic consideration is that all teacher education organizations should acknowledge it and its significance. Effective teaching always exists in the quality of teachers which base on their knowledge skills and dispositions to demonstrate in a particular manner e.g. collaboration with peer and modification of instruction to support learner achievement. Whereas, quality teaching stated as durable teaching that facilitates an extensive range of learners to learn. These instructions help the program, the learning objective, and demands of the learner in certain conditions (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

Pre-service teacher education program and institutes need to prepare the pre-service teachers at all educational levels with important knowledge and capabilities to build up a conclusive professional attitude in these future teachers (BOUDERSA, 2016). Additionally, the professional knowledge of teacher has a good impact on the professional engagement and teaching practices (Manasia, Ianos, & Chiciooreanu, 2020).

The basic purpose of this study was to Exploring Pre-Service Teachers Opinions about Learning Sustainable Competencies during Teacher Education Program. In this study the sustainable competencies are those competencies that retain by the prospective teacher over a long time and in term of knowledge and skills (with practices perspectives that what they learned and practice). Which also indicate the effectiveness of teacher education programs and its implementation? Effective practices are acknowledged as being accurate and are to perform a task frequently to become skillful (Webster, 2020).

### Research Objectives

The objective of the study was:

Which competencies have teachers learned and practice during teacher education program?

### Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach with phenomenology design was used. In which importance is given to the words of participants in light of their experiences about a phenomenon. Purposive sampling technique was used through which 14 participants were selected. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyses the qualitative data and 10 themes were inferred through this process. The interview protocol was designed to conduct interview with prospective teachers, who have completed 4 years of their professional education. All the participants were enthusiastic except few about the questions and presented their views and answered the questions with confidence. The interview was recorded with the consent of participant or to record their suggestions. Interview was started with some introductory questions and then shifted to real business to probe the responses of participants in relation to research.

When asked about the competencies they have developed during 4 years of professional education, majority of the participants explicitly shared their learning, developed competencies and experiences which are following:

1. Introduction to new teaching methodologies
2. Confidence building through presentation skills
3. Better communication skills
4. Planning skills as teacher/manager
5. Knowledge sharing forum-University/classroom
6. Motivation to apply new knowledge and skills
7. Contribution to professional practices
8. Lesson Planning-a tool for a teacher
9. Assessment techniques
10. Implementation of learnt knowledge and skills to real classroom
11. Promotion of cooperative learning
12. Addition to moral values

### Findings

From the above presented report which was written on theme extracted from interviews of prospective teachers, the following has been highlighted as findings:

1. Majority of the participants reported that they have learnt new teaching methodologies and skills which are mandatory to work as a professional teacher to excel in this field.
2. It was highlighted by majority of the participant that they have developed confidence and improved communication skills to deliver the content with full confidence.
3. Majority of the participants have shared that they have developed planning skills to plan lessons, design activities, and implement assessment techniques to make teaching learning process more effective.
4. It has been mentioned by the participants that motivation is important aspect for teaching and learning they are enough motivated to shift it to students to create positive learning environment.
5. Participants reported that they have developed professional skills of reflective thinking and observing critically.
6. Majority of the participants highlighted that they have understood what is advocated in theory, what they have learnt and what will be the practice.
7. Participants also shared that university was a knowledge sharing platform which not only equip them with knowledge and skills but also to provided opportunity (practice teaching) to implement it in real classroom and come up with solutions to tackle the problems in real classrooms.
8. Participants reported that they are introduced with new technology from which they can get benefit for research purpose and in professional life as well.
9. Majority of the participants highlighted that they have developed sense of cooperation and respect for others as addition to our moral values.
10. It was shared by majority of the participants that for a teacher, it is necessary to understand students' individual differences.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

The study was aimed to explore the sustainable competencies of pre-service teachers' programs in Punjab. To augment the quantitative data with qualitative 14 interviews (male/female) were conducted from prospective teachers of teacher training programs. The participants explicitly shared their views and competencies they have developed during their 4 years professional degree program and how it will be beneficial in implementing the learnt skills/knowledge in professional life. As, they are prospective teachers and introduction to new and innovative teaching method is essential for them, they learnt to take on new teaching methodologies and ways to make teaching learning process more effective while teaching any of school subject. Teachers are role model for students and shift the skills/knowledge to students they have, so it was evident from prospective teachers that they have developed confidence and enhanced communication skills which will robustly relate to students whom they will interact in their professional career of teaching. English language is language to communicate at international level and participants have improved communication skills not in terms to deliver/present the content/topic effectively but also inculcate them in students when they have to compete at international level. It is fact that a teacher is a planner first who plan and manage class because planning enhance the efficiency of a teacher to design objectives more effectively to implement activities to achieve learning outcomes and participants have developed competency in lesson planning and hoping to get benefit from it in future to prove their selves active and effective. Every individual is different from other and each has some distinct characters, it was highlighted by participants that during the period of professional qualification/teacher training program we learnt from each other and got beneficial techniques to utilize in our professional life as a teacher. Motivation is an important aspect which stimulates the one to do work with more interest and passion. It has been reported by participants that teachers have motivate them enough to shift the same to our students. Majority of the participants agreed on the fact that they have developed skills professionally; they have developed reflective thinking skills, improved observational skills, lesson planning skills and learnt different assessment techniques etc. which are necessary to work as an effective teacher. Practice teaching was highlighted as most important part of their professional degree program because they explored what is evidence in research, what they have learnt and what is promoted in practice. This practice introduced new activities and techniques which are essential to implement theory to practice. Sense of cooperation and support has been developed in prospective teachers moreover, moral values has been polished and they have developed values i.e. respect for others and opinions etc. In terms of quality of education, it highlights that pre-service teachers are working toward sustainability. The current study emphasis on the significance of core teaching skills that must be taught to prospective teacher. Core competencies address the group of objectives (Ranjan & Rahman, 2003). If teachers learn these skills, they will be able to earn and perform other skills that facilitate them in making an

effective teacher (Bawa & Nagpal, 2010). It highlights that pre-service teachers are working toward sustainable development at the local level. It was evident from prospective teachers that they have developed confidence and enhanced communication skills which will robustly relate to students with whom they will interact in their professional career of teaching. These are the basic components of an effective and quality teacher education program and professional development. So, the pre-service teacher education program can focus on these variables and plan their orientations according to the perceived lack of prospective teachers.

This result creates a sense when looking at the courses' offered during semesters, which has been planned step by step improvement. Competencies of pre-service teachers are not only based on professional skills, pedagogical or technological but other factors i.e. citizenship, assessment, social and moral skills are also important. It is more essential to consider that teachers must be trained and master in pedagogical and technological and content skills before entering the actual field.

## Reference

- Boudersa, N. (2016). *The Importance of Teachers' Training Programs and Professional Development in the Algerian Educational Context: Toward Informed and Effective Teaching Practices*. Algeria: ministere de l'enseignement superieur et de la recherche.
- Britannica, E. (2012). Retrieved July 17, 2020, from www.Google.com: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/education>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., Gardner, M., & Espinoza, D. (2017). *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Learning Policy Institute.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2014). Strengthening Clinical Preparation: The Holy Grail of Teacher Education. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 547-561.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st Century teachers education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 300-314.
- Bertschy, F., Künzli, C., & Lehmann, M. (2013). Teachers' Competencies for the Implementation of Educational Offers in the Field of Education for Sustainable Development. *sustainability*, 5068-5080.
- Gatlin, D. (2009). A Pluralistic Approach to the Revitalization of Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 469-477.
- Lubanga, F. X. (2011). *Competence Profile for the Primary School Teacher in Uganda*. Uganda: Ministry of Education and Sports.
- J.Beaulieu, L. (2005). *The Role of Education Promoting the Economic and Social Vitality of Rural America*. United State : Southern Rural Development Centre.
- Jumani, N. B. (2007). *Study on the Competencies of the Teachers Trained through Distance Education in Pakistan*. Islamabad: Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Manasia, L., Ianos, M. G., & Chicioreanu, T. D. (2020). Pre-Service Teacher Preparedness for Fostering Education for Sustainable Development: An Empirical Analysis of Central Dimensions of Teaching Readiness. *Sustainability*, 24.
- McMillan, J. H. (2014). *Classroom Assessment: Principles and Practice for Effective Standards-Based Instruction, 6th Edition*. USA: Pearson Education.
- M.S.Bawa, & Nagpal, B. M. (2010). *Developing Teaching Competencies*. Daryaganj, New Delhi: Vinod Vasishtha for Viva Books Private Limited.



---

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Retrieved November 7, 2018, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sustainable>.

OECD. (2010). *Teacher Professional Development: Europe in international comparison*. Office for Official Publications of the European Union.

Potschin, M. (2009). *sustainability science and Landscape Ecology*. United Kingdom: Elsevier.

or teaching profession.

Ranjan, N., & Rahman, N. (2003). *Role of Teacher in Enhancing Learning Achievement of Child & Emphasis on Teacher Skill Development, Knowledge Building and ICT*. India: OneWorld South Asia.

Sturgis, C., & Patrick, S. (2010). When Success Is the Only Option: Designing Competency-Based Pathways for Next Generation Learning. *Nellie Mae Foundation Education*, 42.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Gran, L. W. (2011). What Makes Good Teachers Good? A Cross-Case Analysis of the Connection Between Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 339–35

Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., & Fung, I. (2007). *Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration*. New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

UNESCO. (2004-2014). *Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit*. France: United Nation for Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.