Tale of a Two-Year Initial Teacher Education Program Expansion: Examining the Development, Implementation, and Outcomes of One Ontario Program

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WHAT WILL WE LEARN?

The Ontario government's legislated changes in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) took effect in 2015, whereby the "enhanced" (Ontario College of Teachers, 2014) ITE program moves from a two to a four-semester program, and includes a longer practicum and additional accreditation requirements within core content areas. This mixed-methods study explores the evolution of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology's ITE program and will answer the question: **How does one faculty of education in Ontario (re)develop and implement an ITE program as required under Ontario legislative changes and Ontario College of Teachers' accreditation requirements to provide a strong(er) foundation in the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for teaching in the 21st century?** To answer this complex question, this research takes a multiphase case study approach whereby data from faculty, students, and documentation review will provide for a thick and rich description of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 1998). This poster shares one aspect of the study, specifically data from students in the ITE program. Students in the ITE program provided consent for the use of course materials, field experience results and for their participation in focus groups so that the researchers could examine their skills, knowledge, and attitudes using the learning to teach framework (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007) as a framework for analyzing student success. This study will eventually also track the students once they graduate and enter their next career or academic phase. This research will identify successes and challenges to not only enhance student learning but to inform program development. Specifically, this poster shares how this one phase of the research will:

- Determine teacher candidates' learning in the new ITE program
- Identify aspects of the enhanced ITE program that augment beginning teachers' growth and development for teaching in the 21st century, from various internal stakeholders' perspectives
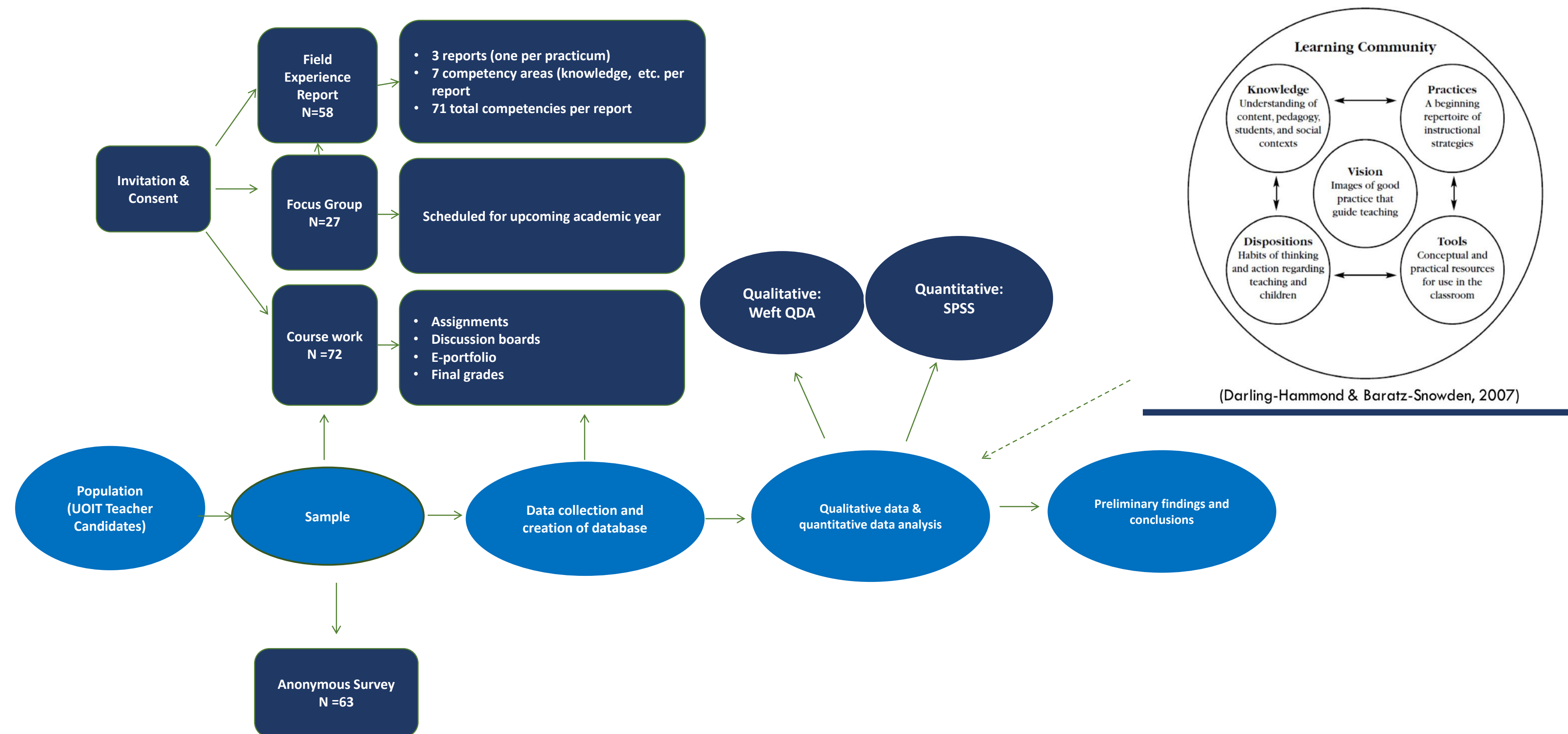- Examine teacher candidates' growth and experiences throughout the program through an anonymous questionnaire comprised of Likert scale items and open-ended questions
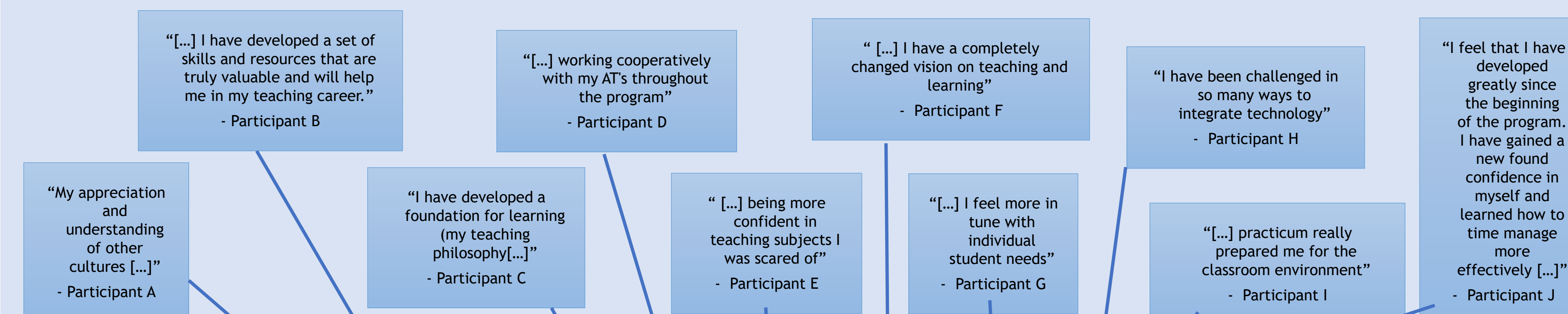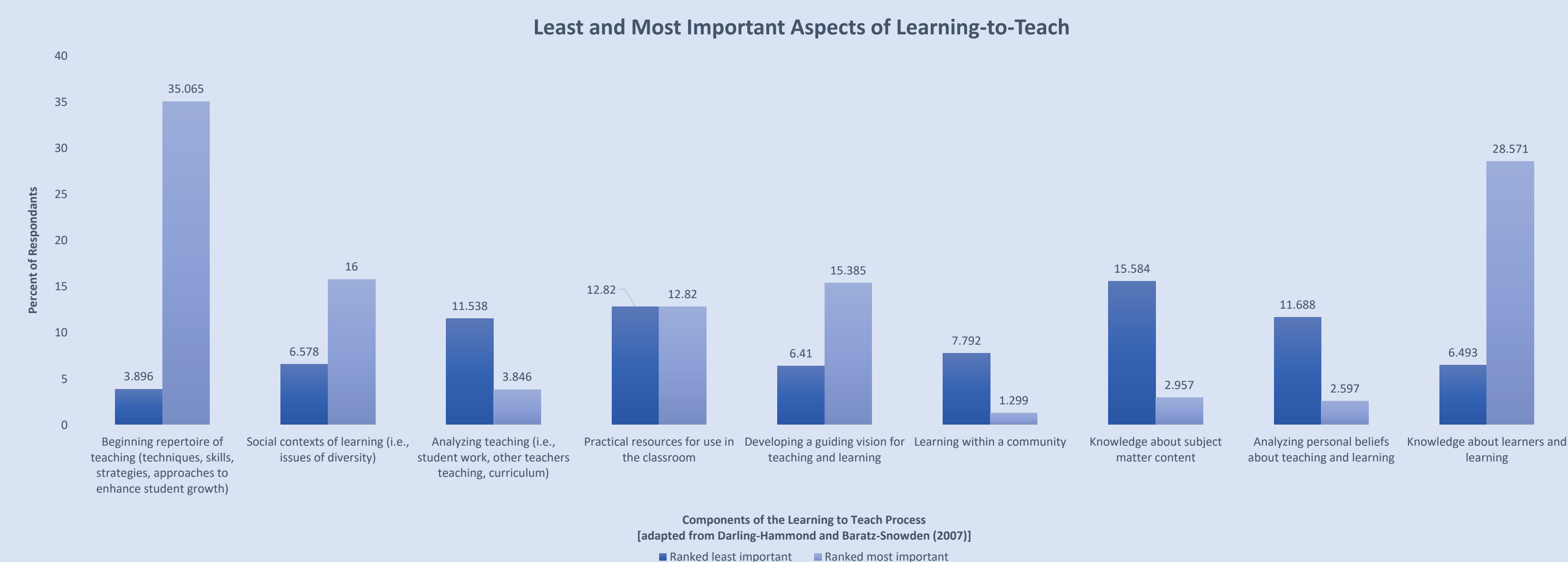
BACKGROUND

Using the research question as a guide, this research takes a case study approach, drawing upon the work of Stake (1995), Yin (2003), and Merriam (1998) as a guide. A case study allows for a thick and rich description of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 1998) in a manner that maintains and portrays "holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2003, p.2). A case study is a "specific, a complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 1995, p. 2) such as a person, a group of people, or an "innovative program" (Stake, 1995, p. 2), whereby the "distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" (Yin, 2003, p. 2). There is a strong need for in-depth case studies on exemplary ITE programs in Canada, as well as the need for long-term studies to examine how ITE programs influence their graduates' teaching and learning (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008).

This research is based on the notion that the central goal of ITE programs is to provide teacher candidates (TCs) with a solid foundation of education, skills and learning upon which to build further teaching practice to enhance K – 12 student learning experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Feimen-Nemser, 2001). Thus this research aims to examine and understand the challenges and benefits of the program and will bring forward recommendations to improve the ITE to ensure that the K - 12 student learning experiences are stronger.

METHODS

(Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007)

FINDINGS

Least and Most Important Aspects of Learning-to-Teach

Components of the Learning to Teach Process
[adapted from Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007)]
■ Ranked least important ■ Ranked most important

"[…] I have developed a set of skills and resources that are truly valuable and will help me in my teaching career." - Participant B

"My appreciation and understanding of other cultures […]" - Participant A

"I have developed a foundation for learning (my teaching philosophy[…]" - Participant C

"[…] working cooperatively with my ATs throughout the program" - Participant D

"[…] being more confident in teaching subjects I was scared of" - Participant E

" […] I have a completely changed vision on teaching and learning" - Participant F

"[…] I feel more in tune with individual student needs" - Participant G

"I have been challenged in so many ways to integrate technology" - Participant H

"[…] practicum really prepared me for the classroom environment" - Participant I

"I feel that I have developed greatly since the beginning of the program. I have gained a new found confidence in myself and learned how to time manage more effectively […]" - Participant J

	social contexts of learning (e.g., issues of diversity)	beginning repertoire	practical resources	guiding vision of teaching and learning	learning within community	subject matter	analyzing personal beliefs	knowledge about learners/learning	technology	Practicum	overall growth	analyzing teaching	teacher centred	student centred
social contexts of learning (e.g., issues of diversity)	10	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	2	3	0	8	5
beginning repertoire	6	25	0	1	2	1	1	1	7	3	13	0	24	10
practical resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
guiding vision of teaching and learning	0	1	0	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	5	0
learning within community	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	1
subject matter	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
analyzing personal beliefs	0	1	0	2	0	0	9	0	0	0	3	0	8	2
knowledge about learners/learning	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	0	3	3
technology	3	7	0	0	1	0	0	1	13	2	7	0	13	6
practicum	2	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	8	5	0	9	2
overall growth	3	13	0	1	0	0	3	3	7	5	46	0	40	11
analyzing teaching	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
teacher centred	8	24	0	5	2	1	8	3	13	9	40	0	63	7
student centred	5	10	0	0	1	0	2	3	6	2	11	0	7	20

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