

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
TAKINGITGLOBAL'S

Empowering

student voice
in Education



Professional Learning in 2015

Prepared by TakingITGlobal Research
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School Boards Involved

Sun West School Division	Rosetown, Saskatchewan
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Executive Summary

From March – June 2015, TakingITGlobal (TIG) facilitated the Empowering Student Voice in Education professional learning course, with the goal of supporting teachers to co-develop student voice projects in order to transform learning partnerships in the classroom. The course registration fees were covered as part of a grant from the Waterloo Global Science Initiative as a follow-up to the Learning 2030 Equinox Summit. Release time was covered by each of the five participating school boards, with an average of 15 hours of release time per educator. National endorsement partners included the Canadian Education Association, Canadian School Boards Association, and C21 Canada. This research study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning opportunity in order to enhance TIG’s current portfolio of student voice programming, as well as to help develop new professional learning opportunities.

The results of this study are based on the pre and post-course questionnaire administered to teachers participating in the course. The course consisted of an in-person orientation session, followed by four online learning sessions, each building towards a culminating student voice project showcased during a national virtual project showcase. The pre-course questionnaire was administered prior to the first session, and the post-course questionnaire was administered at the end of the fourth session.

When participants were surveyed on specific knowledge and skills related to Student Voice, only 38% responded that that they were proficient in, or routinely able to utilize student voice as a pathway for student success to meet curriculum goals. At the end of the course, this number increased by 39% (+102%) to 77%. 44% of participants reflected similarly on “knowing how to embed student voice in your classroom/school”, which grew 29% (+65%) to 73% following course completion.

When it came to specific teaching practice, there was a 95% increase, from 44% to 86%, in the area of designing student voice projects to meet curriculum goals and school policies.

With 100% of participants intending to transfer and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills to their daily classroom practice right away, (Figure 11), we are confident that this experience has contributed to a positive change in practice related to student voice in education.

Participants' Background

Course Timelines: March 11 to June 1, 2015

Population: primary and secondary school teachers, teaching and learning staff, school administrators, and school resource teachers

Sample Size: pre-course questionnaire – 50 teachers and post survey questionnaire – 29 teachers. In total, there were 79 participants who filled out both pre and post survey questionnaires

Pre Questionnaire: 4 questions with approximately 5 – 10 sub-questions

Post Questionnaire: 5 questions with approximately 5 – 10 sub-questions

Mode of data collection: online pre and post-course questionnaire

For both the pre and post-course questionnaires, participants were asked to fill out their background information such as role with the board, school name, years of teaching experience, and teaching qualifications.

Roles within School Board

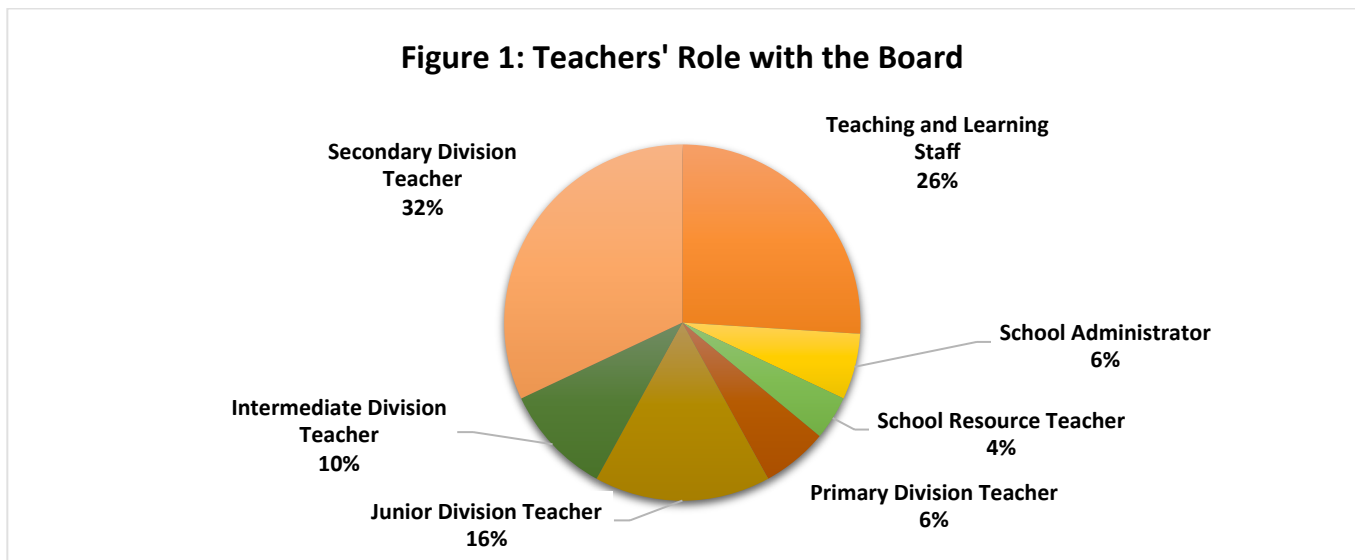
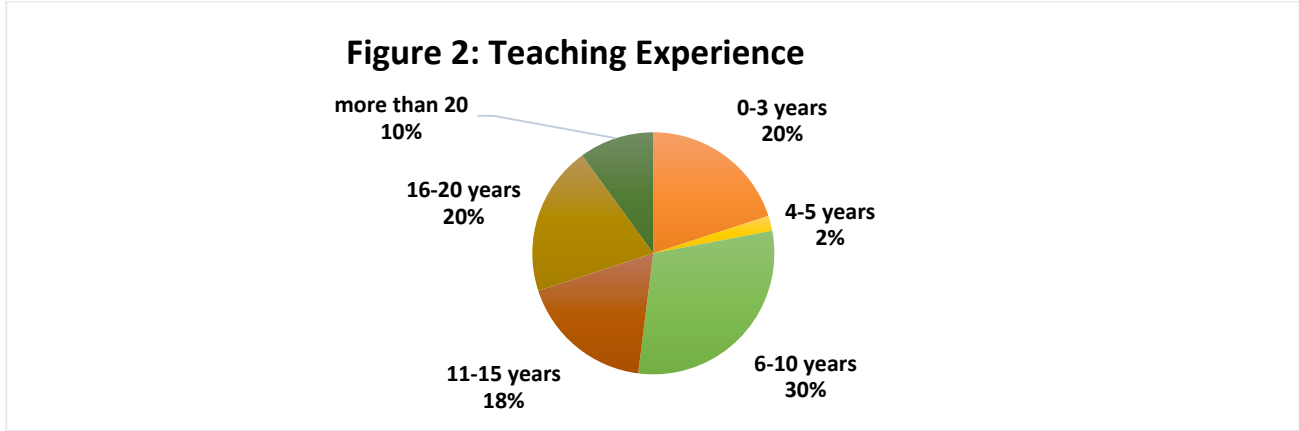


Figure 1 shows the breakdown of participant roles as part of their school boards: 26% are from the Boards' Teaching and Learning Department, 6% are School Administrators, 4% are School Resource Teachers, 6% are Primary Division Teachers, 16% are Junior Division Teachers, 10% are Intermediate Division Teachers, and 32% are Secondary Division Teachers.

Teaching Experience



In Figure 2, which provides an overview of the amount of teaching experience of participants, 20% are new teachers with a maximum teaching experience of 3 years, 2% have 4-5 years of teaching experience, 30% have 6-10 years of experience, 18% have 11-15 years of experience, 20% have 16-20 years of experience, and 20% have more than 20 years' teaching experience.

Teaching Qualifications

Table 1 below represents the teaching qualifications of participants and their specific teachable. Some teachers were qualified for more than one subject. More teachers (20%) were qualified for Junior than any other category.

Table 1: Teaching Qualifications of Teachers

Teaching Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	23	14%
Junior	32	20%
Intermediate	29	18%
Senior	28	18%
Special Education	14	9%
Principal Qualification Program (PQP)	2	1%
Literacy related subjects (Intermediate/Secondary)	11	7%
Mathematics (Intermediate/Senior)	4	3%
Science and Technology (Intermediate/Senior)	10	6%
Arts (Intermediate/Senior)	7	4%

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON THE BLENDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The results of 50 pre-course questionnaires from participants were compared with 29 post-course questionnaires. Based on the 50 and 29 returned pre and post-course questionnaires from participants, results are shown in the following sections.

NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Both the pre and post-course survey had 16 sub-questions asking all participants about their current level of knowledge/skills for teaching and learning. The sub-questions can be classified into three categories:

1. Generic Knowledge/Skills for Classroom Teaching: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Expert' or 'Competent' Response
2. Generic Knowledge/Skills for Inquiry-based Teaching and Learning: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Expert' or 'Competent' Response
3. Specific Knowledge/Skills related to Student Voice: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Expert' or 'Competent' Response

Figure 3: Generic Knowledge/Skills for Classroom Teaching: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Expert' or 'Competent' Response

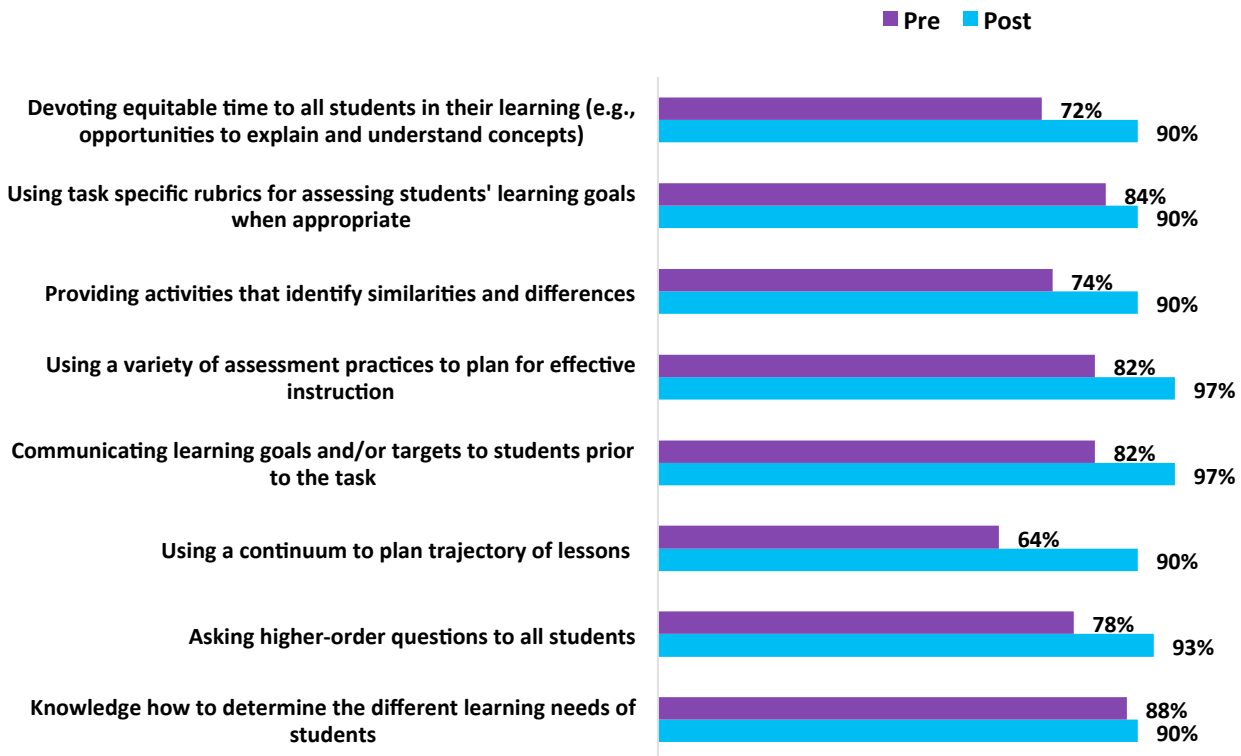


Figure 4: Generic Knowledge/Skills for Inquiry-based Teaching and Learning: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Expert' or 'Competent' Response

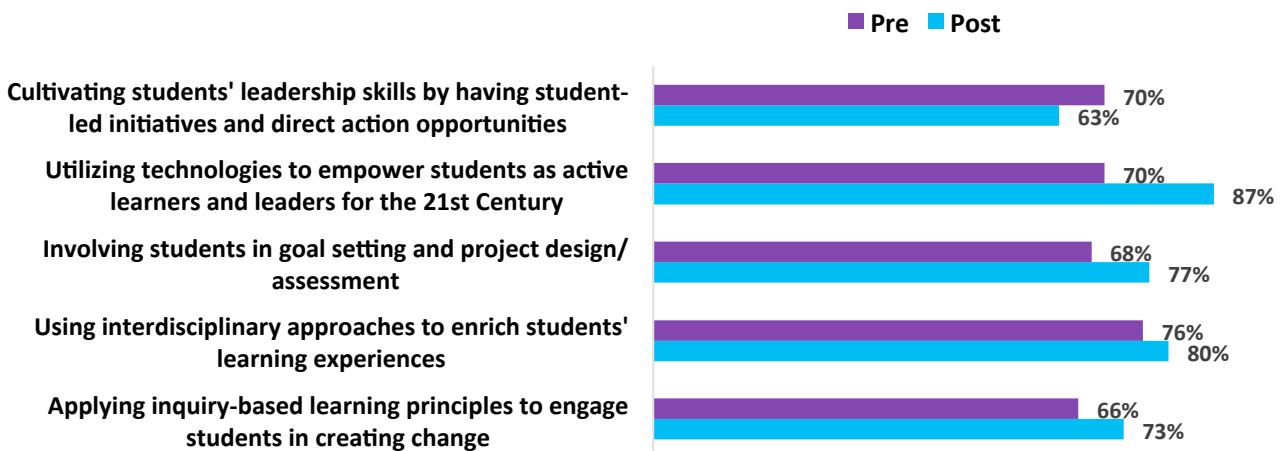
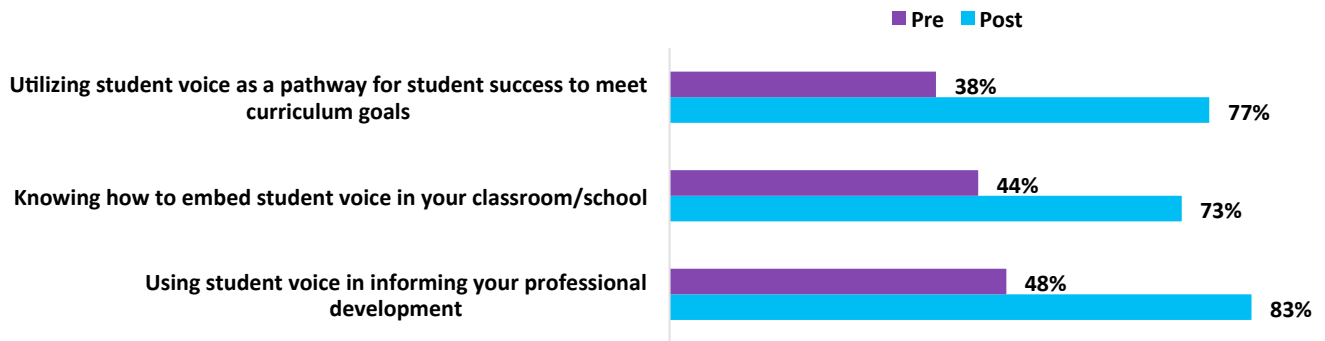


Figure 5: Specific Knowledge/Skills related to Student Voice: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Expert' or 'Competent' Response



The participants felt more confident in using the strategies taught during the course to co-design a student voice project after analyzing their own student survey results. The improved skill level in these areas allowed teachers to better incorporate student voice in their teaching.

Level of Teaching Practice

There were 14 sub-questions for both pre and post questionnaire asking participants their level of teaching practice. Further, these sub-questions can be classified into two categories:

1. Generic Practice for Classroom Teaching: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Proficient' or 'Routine' Responses
2. Specific Teaching Practice on the focus areas of inquiry – Student Voice: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Proficient' or 'Routine' Response

Figure 6: Generic Practice for Classroom Teaching: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Proficient' or 'Routine' Responses

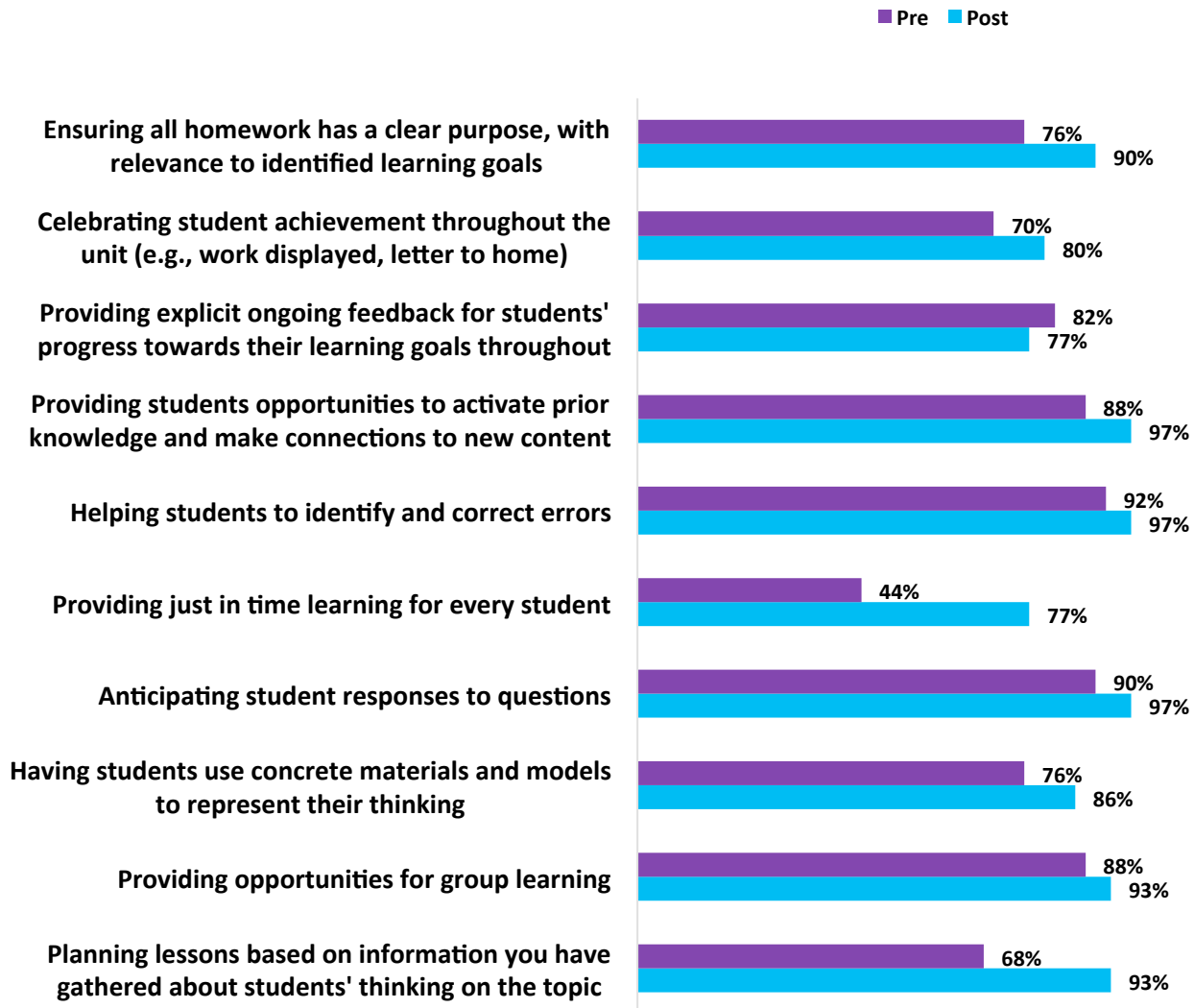
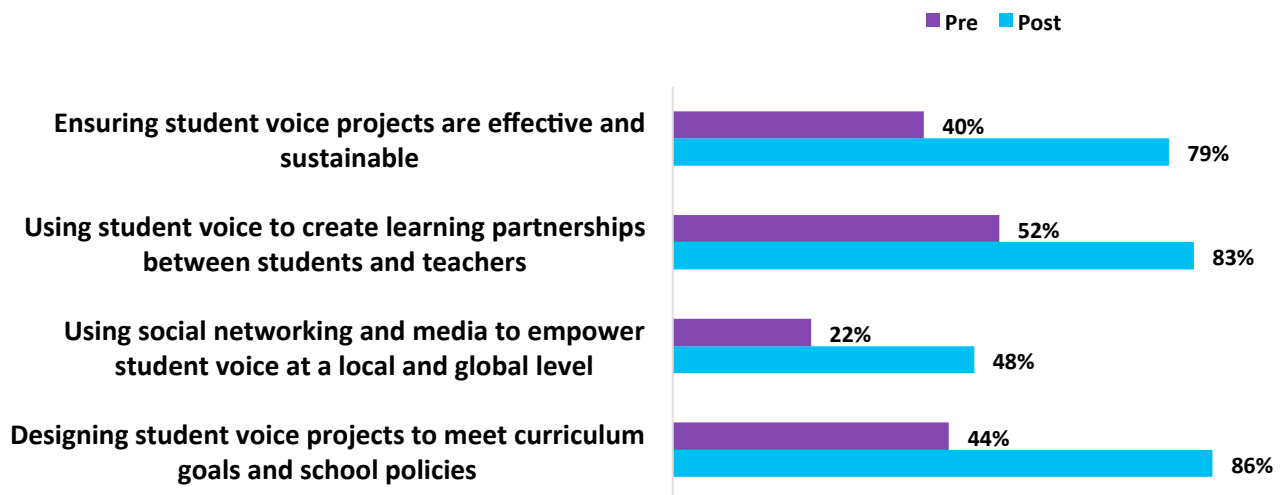


Figure 7: Specific Teaching Practice on the focus areas of inquiry-Student Voice: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire participants with 'Proficient' or 'Routine' Response



Attitudes and Beliefs

In both pre and post questionnaires, participants were asked two types of questions about their attitudes and beliefs about classroom teaching and student learning:

1. Attitudes/Beliefs about Generic Classroom Teaching and Student Learning: % of Pre and Post Questionnaire Participants with 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' Response
2. Attitudes/Beliefs about Inquiry-based Teaching and Learning: % of Pre and Post Questionnaire Participants with 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' Response

Figure 8: Attitudes/Beliefs about Generic Classroom Teaching and Student Learning: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' Response

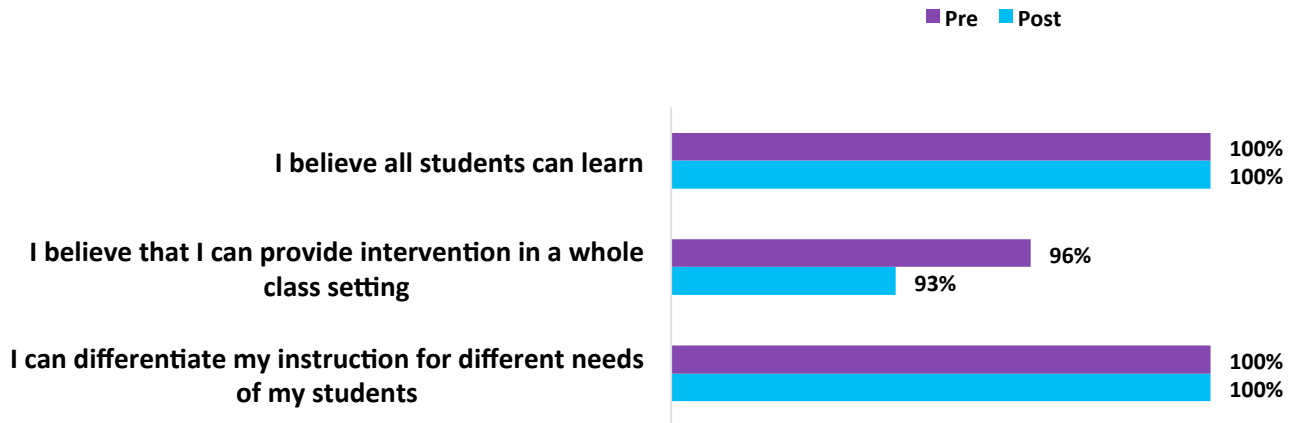
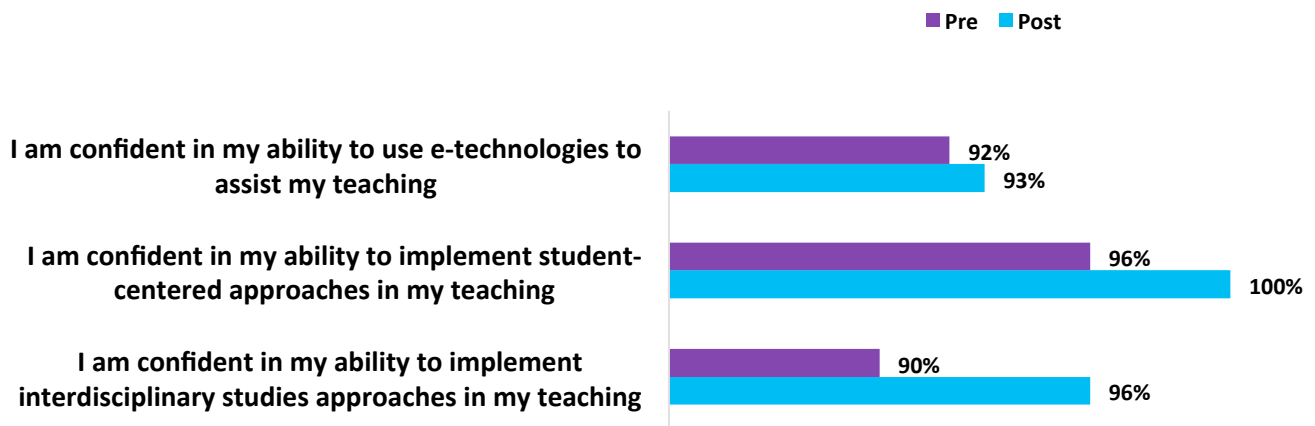


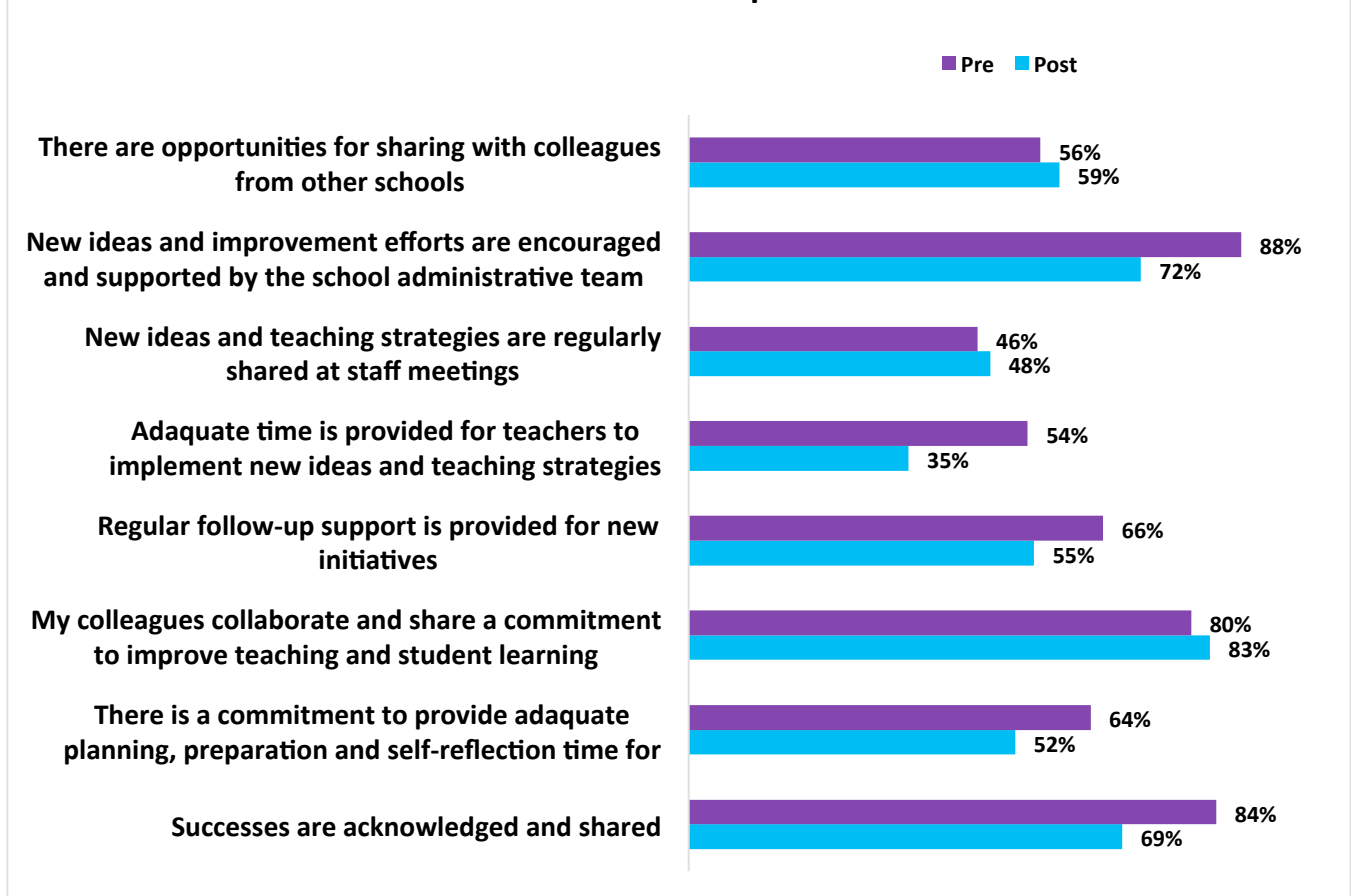
Figure 9: Attitudes/Beliefs about Inquiry-based Teaching and Learning: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire Participants with 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' Response



Organizational Supporting Structures

In the pre and post questionnaires, participants were asked the same set of questions about how much support they received from their school administrators and colleagues.

Figure 10: Organizational Supporting Structures: % of Pre and Post-Course Questionnaire of Participants with 'Great Extent' or 'Moderate' Response



Reflections on Professional Learning

In the post questionnaire, there were 10 sub-questions asked of participating teachers regarding their experience with the professional learning initiative.

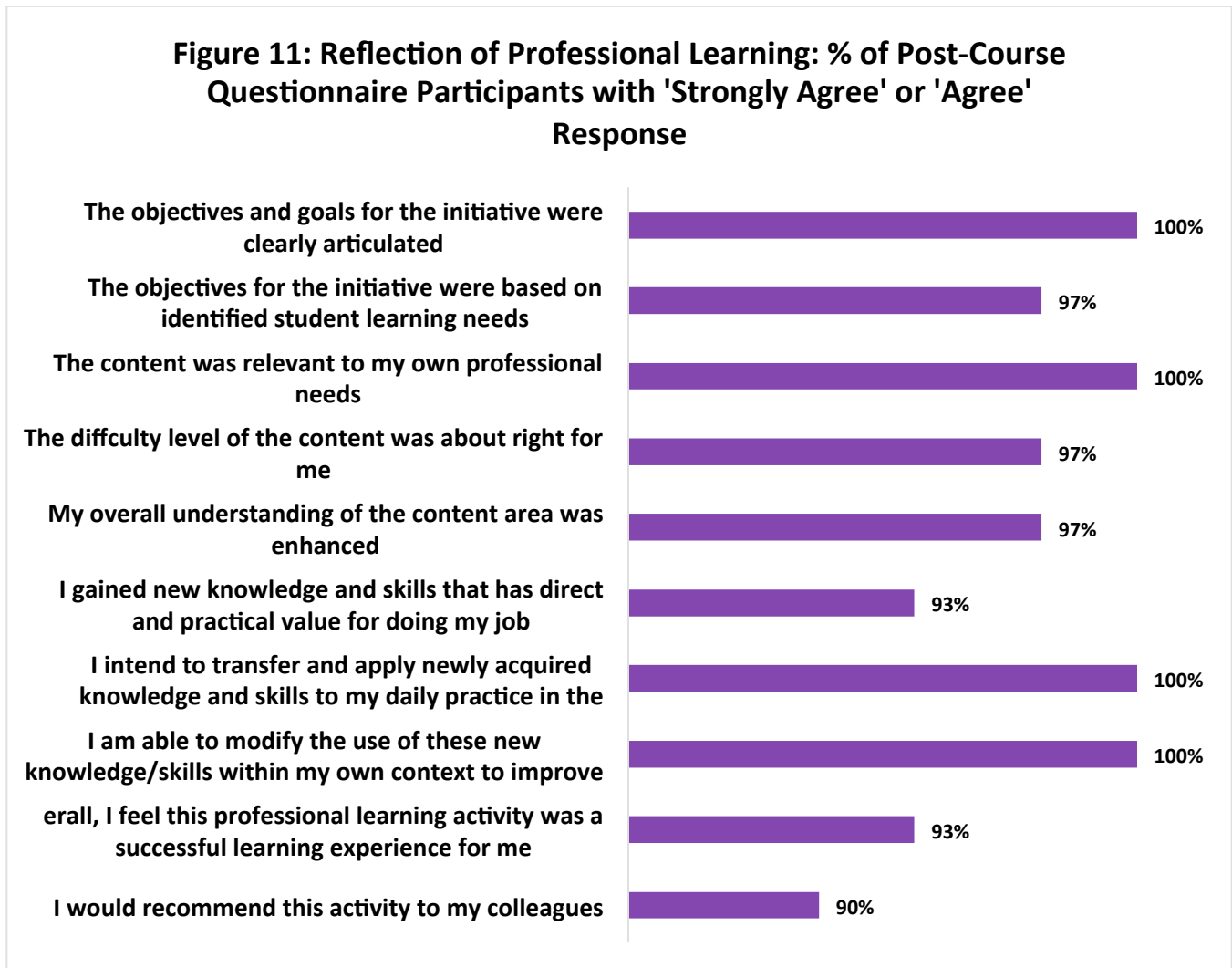


Figure 11 shows the post-course questionnaire participants who provided a 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' response. This highlights their overall learning experience as well as satisfaction level with the course. Overall, the participants felt that this course was a valuable experience.

Summary of Findings

The main objective of the pre and post questionnaires is to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning in the areas of teacher knowledge/skills, teaching practice, attitudes/beliefs, and organizational supporting structures.

In addition to the post survey questions with the given choices, participants were asked two open-ended questions as follow:

1. What specific elements or activities of this professional learning initiative do you think were the most useful for you?
2. What do you think was (or will be) the most significant/beneficial change in your teaching practices as a result of this professional learning initiative?

These questions allow for a more in-depth analysis of their personal experience as well as the benefits from this professional learning initiative. Also, these two questions allow the participants to share more information about their experience. Further, it allows us to see if there are any common techniques, benefits, as well as teaching practices which were learned or shared by the teachers during their professional learning.

The vast majority of teachers said they really enjoyed how they were encouraged to collaborate with their colleagues during the professional learning. They also added that “It was much easier to get ideas and see how other teachers do things at other schools.” Teachers mentioned that they really like the opportunity to connect and collaborate with TIG leaders and educators from various school divisions. This allowed them to more deeply understand the topics and share opinions with their colleagues.

In general, the majority of teachers attending the professional learning enjoyed being able to work together with their colleagues, discussion and brainstorming session with other teachers from other schools, and sharing ideas. They also appreciated the blend of both in-person and online training for this professional learning.

Many teachers enjoyed the engagement of the students (i.e., project design, evaluation, construction assignments, and assessments) in their classroom. Most of the suggestions/comments in pre and post questionnaire were positive:

- *“I really enjoyed how you modelled instructional activities as how we ideally want to introduce initiatives like this to our students.” – Course participant*
- *“Thank you very much for this leaning opportunity. Very powerful. Your enthusiasm and energy as TIG leaders was contagious and the opportunity to connect with others and also to work with a team of teachers I do not normally work with in my division was powerful. Thank you!” – Course participant*

Special thanks to the Research team at the Toronto District School Board for the initial development of this research methodology.