



South East Education Cooperative

**2017-2018
Beginning
Teacher Network
Executive
Summary Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of the results collected throughout the Beginning Teacher Network professional development series during the 2017-2018 school year.

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Executive Summary

The Beginning Teacher Network project is a one-year professional development training series for first-year educators seeking resources, networking, and support as they navigate through their first year of teaching. Participants in the Beginning Teacher Network received three full-day sessions of professional development throughout the first half of the 2017-2018 academic year. There were a total of two cohorts comprised of 47 first-year teachers with 27 participants in the elementary cohort, and 20 participants in the secondary cohort. Participants represented a total of 24 schools in 8 school districts in eastern North Dakota.

The goal behind the Beginning Teacher Network was to provide new teachers with opportunities to enhance their classroom practices. It was expected that through participation in this professional development series, the following outcomes would occur:

- Enhance teachers’ ability to manage student learning, student engagement, and parent relationships.
- Increase teachers’ knowledge surrounding effective assessment practices.
- Enhance teachers’ ability to use student work to guide instructional practices.

1. Enhance teachers’ ability to manage student learning, student engagement, and parent relationships.

During Session 1 of the program participants were introduced to content and strategies related to the following topics: “*Communicating with parents & parent/teacher conferences*”; “*Managing the classroom for learning*”; and “*Active learning/student engagement*”. At the end of the session participants were asked to retrospectively rate their level of knowledge regarding each of these topics both before and after the session on the BTN Individual Session Reflection Survey using a 4-point scale: (“Very knowledgeable”; “Mostly knowledgeable”; “Somewhat knowledgeable”; “Not knowledgeable at all”). Prior to the session, between 52-70% of participants indicated being at least “mostly knowledgeable” regarding each of the three topics highlighted (Figure 1). After the session at least 90% of participants indicated being at least “mostly knowledgeable” regarding each topic.

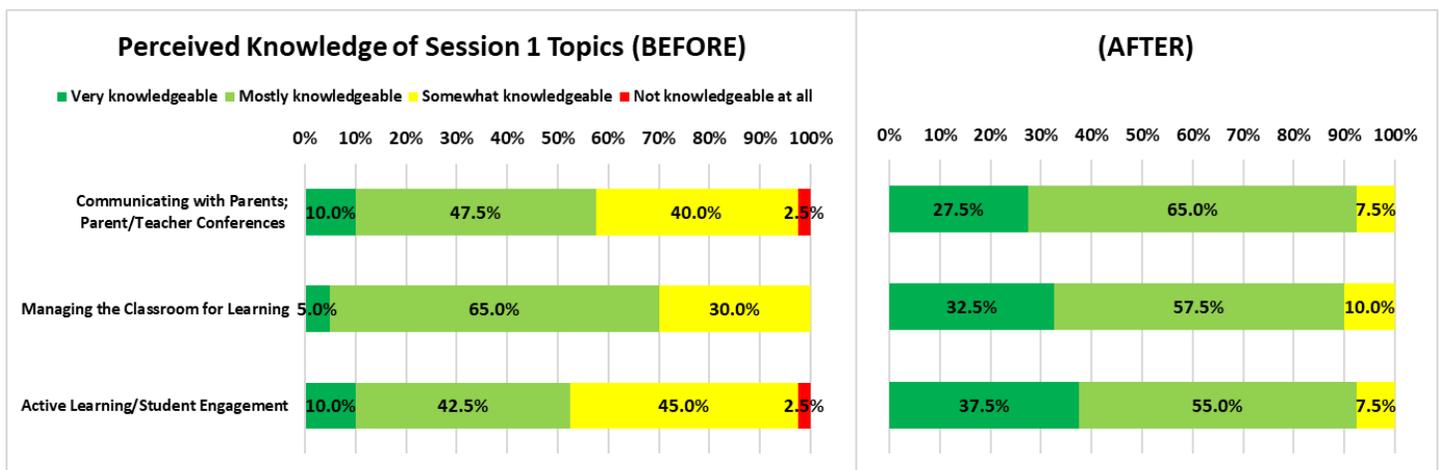


Figure 1. Participants’ Perceived Knowledge Regarding Session 1 Topics (Pre-Post). *n* = 40.

Additionally, at the end of the school year participants were asked to reflect on the impacts that this training has had on their practice and their students' learning on the BTN Implementation Survey. In regard to communicating with parents, 55% of participants responding to the end of year survey identified that their relationships with their students' parents improved. Related to student learning and engagement, 52.6% of participants noted that students are sharing more among themselves, 47.4% indicated that students are more active in group work, and over one-third indicated students are volunteering answers more often and are asking more questions (Figure 2).

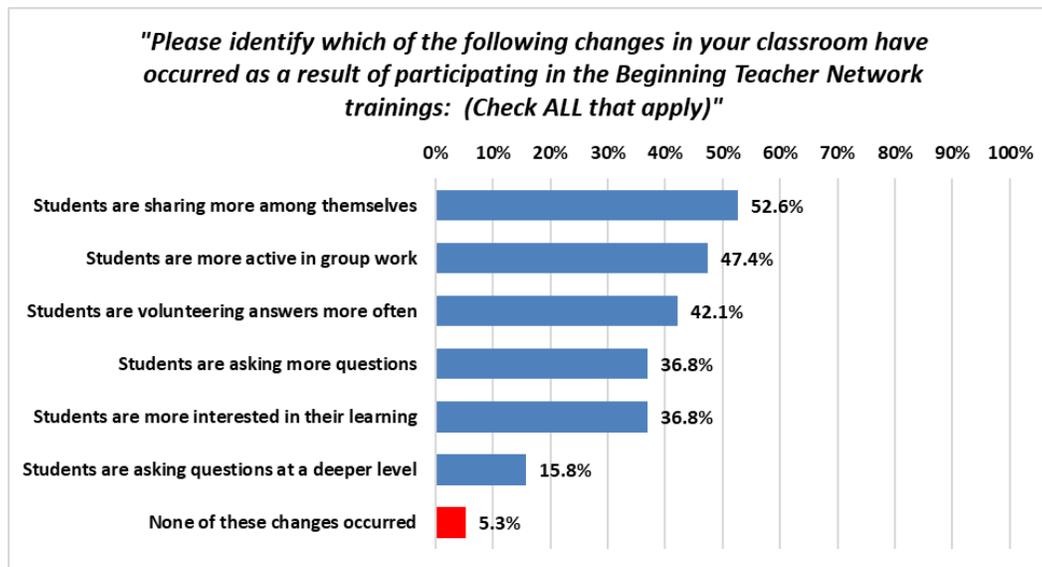


Figure 2. Participants' Perceived Impacts of Training on Student Learning. $n = 20$.

2. Increase teachers' knowledge surrounding effective assessment practices.

Another skill which new to the profession teachers often struggle with is assessing their students effectively. The Beginning Teacher Network attempted to support educators in this area by focusing on topics such as "clear learning targets", "purposes of assessment", and "assessment – sound design" as well as others during Session 2. After Session 2, participants were asked to rate their level of knowledge regarding each of these topics both prior to and after the training. Prior to the training slightly over half of participating teachers indicated being "very knowledgeable" or "mostly knowledgeable" regarding clear learning targets (55.8%), and sound assessment design (52.9%) (Figure 3). After the training these percentages increased to 94.1% of participants each, and 97.1% for understanding the purposes of assessment. Additionally, participants were asked to reflect on how their use of assessment changed throughout the year on the BTN Implementation Survey. 90% of respondents to the survey indicated that their use of assessment data to increase student learning improved, with 60% indicating it improving to at least a "moderate" degree. A majority of participants (85%) also noted improvements in using formative assessment data to guide instruction.

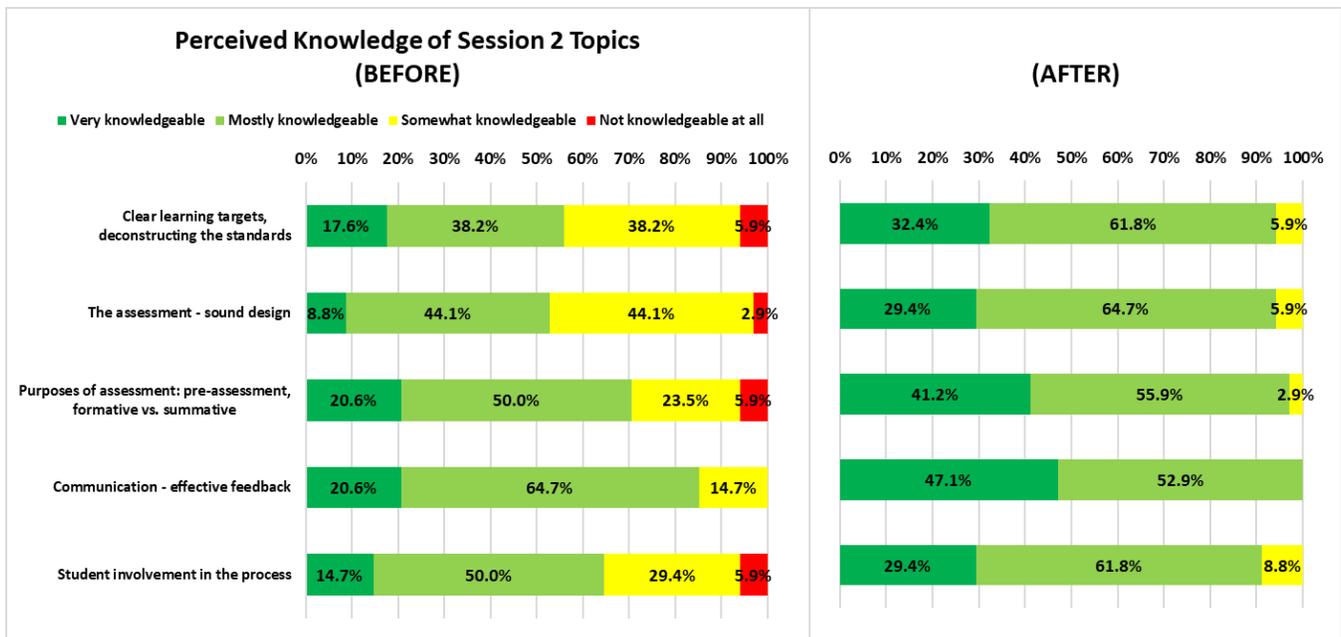


Figure 3. Participants’ Perceived Knowledge Regarding Session 2 Topics (Pre-Post). $n = 34$.

3. Enhance teachers’ ability to use student work to guide instructional practices.

The third outcome that the Beginning Teacher Network sought to achieve was increasing teachers’ ability to use student work to guide instructional practice. During the 3rd session of the program, participants were introduced to content related to “analyzing student work”, “tiered assignments to meet all learners’ needs”, and “managing the learning in a differentiated classroom.” After the session, participants were asked to retrospectively rate their knowledge regarding each of these topics prior to and after the training. Prior to the training, there was only one topic which greater than 50% of participants indicated being at least “mostly knowledgeable” – analyzing student work (Figure 4). By the end of the training at least 70% of participants indicated being at least “mostly knowledgeable” regarding each of the four topics addressed. In fact, 90% reported being at least “mostly knowledgeable” related to analyzing student work.

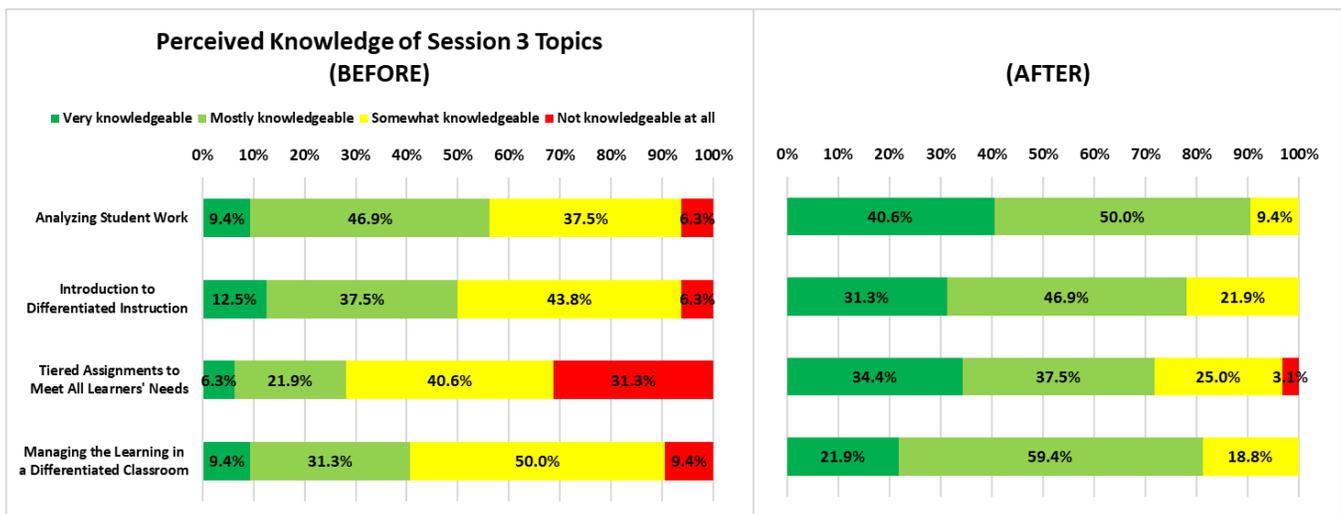


Figure 4. Participants’ Perceived Knowledge Regarding Session 3 Topics (Pre-Post). $n = 32$.

Participant Satisfaction/Perceived Impact of Program

Overall, participants were largely satisfied with the professional development they received from the Improving Academic Literacy project. Across the 6 sessions offered (3 for each cohort), 88.7% of participants indicated they would be able to apply what they learned to a least a moderate extent, and 86.8% believed what they learned would have either a “substantial” or “moderate” impact on their students. In regard to making changes to their instructional practice, 85% reported at least making one change. Changes most likely to be reported by teachers in the Beginning Teacher Network included reflecting on their practice more frequently (75.0%), and providing more opportunities for collaborative learning (65.0%). Additionally, one teacher noted that *“one of the biggest benefits to this training has been being able to connect with other first year teachers.”*

Conclusion

Overall, it appears that the Beginning Teacher Network was successful at reaching each of its three objectives. Additionally, a majority of educators indicated being satisfied with the content they received and have noticed impacts on their practice and their students.