

Running Head: UNDERGRADUATE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Perceptions of Undergraduate Education Students from Within an Elementary Teacher
Education Programme

by

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Abstract

Most researchers use quantitative surveys when examining student perceptions of their teacher education programmes. Questions focus on student satisfaction and feelings of confidence; however, thoroughness can be a problem. A number of studies, while providing an overview of student perceptions, often lack a programme description leaving the context unclear. This makes it challenging to use these results to inform programme development. Without a thorough understanding of the programme, it is near impossible to develop a thoughtful interpretation of their responses, thereby inhibiting their effectiveness for programme revision. To avoid this confusion, a comprehensive survey ($n = 208$) was conducted of all cohorts enrolled in the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme, utilizing the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Through a parallel analysis of documents, faculty ($n = 3$) and staff ($n = 2$) interviews, and a detailed spiralling student survey, a comprehensive picture of programme effectiveness emerged. This enabled a thorough comparison between the programme in practice and the student perceptions of that programme, resulting in targeted and informed recommendations for programme revision.

Supervisor: Dr. Laurie Rae Baxter (Department of Curriculum and Instruction)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In response to the BC College of Teachers' 1997 alterations to teacher education programme requirements¹, the University of Victoria's recently (2000/2001 implementation year) redesigned elementary teacher education programme reflects three dominant trends in research literature: (a) increased field experience, (b) increased collaboration between the university and the field, and (c) incorporation of prior beliefs through a reflective practitioner model. Given the programme's incorporation of these three dominant trends, combined with the need for a regular, five year internal review of the programme (as mandated by the BC College of Teachers and required by University policy), the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme provides a unique and timely context for a survey of the perceptions that education students have of their elementary teacher education programme.

Situated in Victoria, BC, Canada, the University of Victoria is one of many post-secondary institutions that provide elementary teacher education programmes in Canada. Most Canadian teacher education programmes "consist of four or five years of combined teacher education and university training... There is no uniform route to certification [and] the length of the university programme varies from province to province" (Phillips, 2002, p.36). In a comprehensive review of teacher education programmes in Canada, Phillips (2002) reported that all programmes contained the same three aspects: (a) content courses that provide teacher candidates with generalist knowledge at a post-secondary level; (b)

¹ Established under the Teaching Profession Act of 1987, the BC College of Teachers is a professional, self-regulating body responsible both for licensing teachers in BC and for providing statutory authority over Teacher Education programmes (Bowman & Ellis, 1994). The 1997 policy changes required Teacher Education programmes to contain a minimum of: 75 post-secondary units, of which 30 units were academic (non-education) electives with 15 of these units at a senior level, minimum 12 week field experience, and include studies in human development/learning, educational foundations, curriculum and instruction, diagnosing and teaching to individual student needs, and evaluation and testing (BC College of Teachers, 2005).

pedagogy courses that provide teacher candidates with knowledge and skills in teaching methodology, educational philosophies and foundations, and child developmental psychology; and, (c) practical field experiences totalling a minimum of eight or more weeks.

As a graduate (1994) of the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme, teacher, and current graduate student interested in the preparation of elementary teachers, the programme changes made by the University intrigued me. Equally interesting was the Faculty's decision to reinvent their programme rather than simply make minor alterations. With their reinvention, Faculty aimed to better meet the needs of their students and incorporate the most up-to-date research findings. What effects have these programme changes had on students in the programme? How are today's teacher candidates responding to the new programme? Do they feel confident to teach? Are they satisfied?

Personal Interest

My experiences as a student in the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme prior to the redesign were positive. I felt prepared to enter the field of teaching and confident in the knowledge and skills provided by the University. However, I did have three concerns: (a) the repetitious nature of some of the courses; (b) a final professional year void of any field experience; and (c) the feeling that, as a student, I had no way to initiate programme improvements. Upon entering the field of teaching, I found my degree from the University of Victoria well received; school administrators were positive regarding the preparation provided by the University. Returning for my Graduate Studies, the *new* elementary programme surprised me. It looked very different

from the programme I completed nine years prior. I wondered if the teacher candidates had the same or different concerns than I had. The redesign meant to reduce redundancy and link the field experience through every year of the programme. Did the redesign ameliorate my earlier concerns? Did students feel more prepared? Were there opportunities for the Faculty of Education to hear student concerns? This is where my inquiry into the elementary teacher education programme at the University of Victoria began.

During the late 1990's, amidst policy changes from the BC College of Teachers, required of all teacher education programmes, and increasing competition from newly emerging programmes throughout the province, the Faculty envisioned a new and very different programme. However, did their vision include the voices of their students? Now that the programme has been in place for five years, is the University listening to the voices of those currently experiencing the programme? I view learning as an active process with student engagement fundamental to that process. As a teacher, to attain and maintain student engagement, I must be keenly aware of, and actively searching for, my students' voices. As a scholar of elementary teacher education, I continue this search for teacher candidate voices; however, as a previous graduate, I also feel a responsibility in ensuring that these voices enter into the narrative of programme effectiveness. In doing so, I recognize that their voices are not the only voices in the conversation and their voices are strongly influenced by the context in which they reside.

Purpose of the Study

Given the revision of the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme, the purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions that students have

regarding their elementary teacher education programme. By overviewing the context provided by the programme, gathering student perceptions of their programme, and placing the findings from this study within the current teacher education programme research literature, the intention of this research is to provide thoughtful and directed feedback for continued programme development.

To assist those who design and deliver teacher education programmes in using the research in this study, I clearly detail the context of the elementary teacher education programme provided by the University of Victoria. Only by providing rich details on the context of the programme can programme developers at other institutions reliably generalize the student perceptions revealed by this study. To understand the context created by the renovated elementary teacher education programme, I completed an analysis of relevant documents pertaining to the development, implementation, and current administration of the programme. To both verify my document analyses and to provide perspectives based on different experiences (designer, implementer, instructor, and administrators) with the programme, I completed faculty and staff interviews. With a more complete picture of the programme, I created a student survey using questions which linked the programme design with student perceptions of their programme.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To support my investigation into the student perceptions of their elementary teacher education programme at the University of Victoria, I reviewed the relevant literature pertaining to both *how* researchers survey student perceptions and *what* were the main findings concerning teacher education programmes. I overview both of these in this literature review.

How are Student Perceptions Surveyed?

Most researchers utilize quantitative surveys when they examine student perceptions of their teacher education programmes. Questions tend to focus on student satisfaction and feelings of confidence. I found three different types of student surveys relating to teacher education programmes: exit surveys, perception surveys, and graduate surveys. Exit surveys, completed by students as they finish their programme, were the most commonly reported. According to Thomas and Loadman (1999) and Loadman et al. (1999), universities with mandated accreditation procedures requiring an internal review process primarily use exit surveys to fulfill their accreditation requirements. Loadman et al. criticized these studies for being “institutionally bound because different instruments are used for each program[me] evaluation” (p. 77). While the use of different instruments may reduce one’s ability to generalize results across different programmes, I feel a greater problem lies in the lack of context provided by these studies. A number of them, while providing an overview of student perceptions do not provide any programme descriptions (e.g. McCullough & Mintz, 1992; Rodney & Mandzuk, 1994; Williams & Osman, 2001). This makes it extremely difficult for those who develop and revise teacher education programmes to utilize study results to inform their own programmes; without an

understanding of the context created by the programme, researchers are unable to use study results to inform programme revisions at other institutions. An additional drawback often associated with exit surveys involves low response rates (e.g. Hardy, 1999; Williams & Osman, 2001).

In comparison to exit surveys, research utilizing perception surveys, completed by students still enrolled in their programme, is more infrequent. In the few that I found, researchers used perception surveys to both determine the *effectiveness* of recent programme changes and to reveal differences in the perceptions of students at different points in their programme (Doyle, 1997; Housego, 1992). However, their measurements of effectiveness differed. Doyle (1997), looking at the effect of programme changes on student beliefs about teaching and learning, related effectiveness to a change in student beliefs (i.e. students moving from a belief that learning was a passive process to a view that learning was an active process). In contrast, Housego (1992) defined effectiveness by the students' perceptions of readiness to teach (i.e. the more ready they felt to teach, the more effective the programme). In neither case was effectiveness related to student satisfaction as is usually found in exit surveys.

Researchers using graduate surveys, completed by programme graduates who have been working in the teaching field, often look at satisfaction and confidence ratings across a variety of teacher education programmes. These surveys, while unable to give details about individual programmes, are able to identify trends and commonalities amongst education students. A large number of students are surveyed (Bowman & Ellis, 1994; Collier & Hebert, 2004; Loadman et al., 1999; Thomas & Loadman, 2001), internal

validity is tested (Loadman et al., 1999; Thomas & Loadman, 2001), and researchers then make suggestions regarding trends in teacher education.

A literature review of research regarding teacher education programmes reveals three main trends: (a) increasing the quantity of field experience; (b) increasing the level of collaboration between the university and the field; and (c) incorporating students' prior beliefs into the programme.

Quantity of Field Experience

The most dominant trend in teacher education is to increase the amount of time spent in the field. Sometimes referred to as a practicum, field experiences provide students with an opportunity to observe and teach in elementary classrooms under the guidance of a mentor teacher. A supervisor assigned by the university provides additional supervision. Traditionally, the university supervisor consults with both the mentor teacher and the student and completes periodic visits to observe the student teaching in the field. Most students' feedback centers on their perceived need to increase their field experience (Bowman & Ellis, 1994; Doyle, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998; Williams & Osman, 2001; Wilson & Loewenberg, 1996). In addition, the majority of programme revisions that have occurred over the past decade include a significant increase in field experience (Burn et al., 2003; Collier & Hebert, 2004; Hardy, 1999; Hart, 2002; Hayes, 2002; Hope, 1999; Housego, 1992; Linek et al., 2003; Moore Kent, 2005; Wideen et al., 1998). Currently, in Canada, the amount of elementary field experience ranges from 13 weeks² as reported by the University of Lethbridge (University of Lethbridge, 2005) to 21 weeks as reported by Queen's University (Queen's University, 2005). Most Canadian elementary teacher

² One week is equivalent to 5 school days.

education programmes have between 14 and 17 weeks in total. In contrast, England requires up to 32 weeks depending on the programme (Phillips, 2002).

Traditionally, teacher education programmes used a block placement for the field experience component (Bowman & Ellis, 1994; Wideen et al., 1998). Often, students would first complete their required university courses and then embark on an extended field experience or block placement. During that time, students would completely integrate into the life of the elementary school, only connected to the university through periodic field supervision. This division in time mirrors the division usually made between theory and practice: university is where you learn the theories of teaching; the field is where you *do* the teaching. This disconnect seemed to result in students feeling as though their university coursework was impractical, generating concerns that the expectations of the university were no longer in line with the expectations of what they considered to be the *real world* of teaching (Bowman & Ellis, 1994; Collier & Hebert, 2004). Students also revealed a concern over missing the start of the school year, noted as particularly important for students to observe because of the establishment of classroom routines (Bowman & Ellis, 1994).

One way of addressing the problem is the use of continuous placement whereby, over a semester, education students spend part of the week in the elementary school (usually two days a week) and the other part of the week in the university. This enables students to observe the schools over the entire year, including the integral school year beginning. In the majority of programmes, a block placement at the end of the year (usually April and May) usually follows the continuous field experience (Phillips, 2002). The purpose of the continuous field experience is to both increase the amount of field

experience as well as lessen the perceived gap between university course work and the field. However, while the field experience time did increase, students' perceived gap was not always filled. For example, Hardy's (1999) review of 62 student exit surveys revealed that, while the programme had involved continuous and block placements, as well as an increased focus on the role of the mentor teacher, students still perceived a lack of connection between pedagogy and what they considered the *survival* skills necessary for the immediate classroom experience. In his review, Hardy called into question the value of an extended field experience, feeling that the increased focus on *surviving* the immediate, daily tasks involved in the field experience resulted in a decrease in the students' understanding of the teaching philosophy and pedagogy that would be required over the life of the teacher.

Collaboration Between the University and the Field

In their meta-analysis of teacher education research over the past 20 years, Wideen et al. (1998) identified a problem with the assumption that a continuous placement would result in increased collaboration between universities and schools. In their review, Wideen et al. observed that, regardless of the type and length of field experience placement, most programmes demonstrated a lack of university presence *in* the field. While students were spending more time in schools, university instructors were not connecting with the field. Having a teacher education programme structured to increase student time in the field, while leaving it up to individual course instructors to make the connections between coursework and the field, was not resulting in collaboration. According to Linek et al. (2003) this is not a surprise given the pressure faculty members are under to research and publish; no recognition or support is given to faculty that choose to spend their time in,

and focused on, the field of teaching. In order for collaboration to exist between the university and the field, the programme structure needs to establish and support this collaboration. Two research examples stand out to illustrate the value of structured collaborative opportunities.

Doyle (1997) and Linek et al. (2003) are two rare studies documenting students who did *not* feel that the collaboration between the university and the field was a problem. In both studies, faculty were involved in the field as part of the programme structure. Doyle (1997) described a programme, involving continuous placement, whereby the faculty teaching the university courses made routine visits to the schools. Faculty used these visits to develop coordinated field experiences; faculty, mentor teachers, and students planned specific assignments for innovative teaching methods and structured experimentation to ensure each student maximized their field experience.

Linek et al. (2003) detailed a programme whereby faculty regularly observed student field experiences, as well as attended regularly scheduled team meetings with students and mentor teachers. In addition, faculty worked with the mentor teachers to identify, design, and deliver professional development workshops for teachers in the field. In this way, the university and school system used the opportunity of having an education student to link theory and practice on a school-wide basis. Also unique to the Linek et al. study was their evaluation methods. Rather than gathering perceptions of only education students, Linek et al. utilized standardized academic tests³ to monitor achievement levels of the children in the schools. They measured a baseline prior to implementing the revised teacher education programme and then monitored achievement levels over the next five years. In all schools, achievement levels increased.

³ Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

While these results are very exciting and provide strong support for the value of university-school collaborations, a note of caution is required. Not all students report satisfaction with the structured collaboration provided by their programme. While the teacher education programme researched by Hardy (1999) included scheduled faculty in-field visits, students still reported a lack of collaboration between the university and the field. In this study, researchers detailed the use of student cohorts and structured visits to support the field experience and, while students did agree with the philosophy of the programme, they felt there were inconsistencies between the expectations of the field and the expectations of faculty.

Wideen et al. (1998) discussed this difference in expectations. Based on the results of their literature review, they concluded that faculty often differ in the expectations they have for the field experience when compared with mentor teachers and education students. Faculty had a tendency to view the field experience as an opportunity to experiment, try new methods, take risks, and test theories. In contrast, mentor teachers and education students viewed the field experience as an opportunity to practice standardized methods, to *survive* their time in the field. I believe that both expectations are valuable. It is important that education students gain experience and successfully survive their field experience; however, it is also important to use their field experience as an opportunity to bring theory into practice. I suggest that the negotiation of these expectations is an integral part of structured university-school collaborations.

Often, studies that use exit surveys to report a lack of university-field collaboration do not provide a thorough overview of the context provided by the programme. Most programmes recognize the importance of collaboration and attempt to

redesign their programmes to increase it. While the studies reporting these attempts outline how the University *planned* to increase their levels of collaboration, few provide an overview of the challenges experienced during implementation. While they may report that collaboration is still a problem, they provide very few reasons as to why they were unsuccessful. Was there a flaw in their programme design? Were there obstacles to implementation that resulted in an alteration of their design? Do faculty have the same perception of the problem as students? Do these different perspectives generate alternatives to current programme designs that may increase the levels of collaboration?

Prior Beliefs

A large number of teacher education studies look at students' prior beliefs (Doyle, 1997; Hardy, 1999; Hart, 2002; Hoban, 2003; Johnston, 1990; Kukari, 2004; Trotman & Kerr, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). These studies focus on the beliefs students have about teaching and learning prior to entering their teacher education programme, how stable these beliefs are, and/or how a teacher education programme may affect these beliefs. The majority of studies used qualitative methods such as reviewing student journals (Doyle, 1997; Hart, 2002; Trotman & Kerr, 2001) or conducting student interviews (Johnston, 1990; Kukari, 2004) over the span of the programme. Whether the study may have focused on a specific prior belief, such as religious beliefs (e.g. Kukari, 2004) or a broad prior belief, such as what a student believes about teaching (e.g. Doyle, 1997; Johnston, 1990), results were consistent across all studies. Prior beliefs, found to be quite stable and persistent over time, greatly influenced the amount and type of information that students took from their education programme. However, certain programme aspects may have a greater impact on prior beliefs than others.

In her review of 310 journals over a period of two years, Doyle (1997) found that education students' views of learning as passive and teacher as giver of information gradually changed over the course of the programme. Towards the end of the programme, a significant number of students viewed learning as a process of change and growth. She attributed this change to an improved field experience. The field experience had been extended, using both continuous and block placements, with instructors who were teaching the university courses visiting the schools and directly coordinating specific experiences for students in the field. It is important to view Doyle's attribution that student beliefs changed because of changes in the field experience with caution. It is unknown if students' beliefs would have changed overtime regardless of alterations to the field experience as no control group or baseline existed.

The majority of qualitative inquiries into teacher education look at very specific characteristics of the education students. Focus may be on how they view learning (Doyle, 1997), what concerns they have about teaching (Burn et al., 2003), or their feelings of teacher efficacy (Housego, 1992); however, little information is provided regarding the type of programme they are in, nor their perceptions of that programme. This makes applicability tenuous and reliability a concern. As a result, it is difficult to utilize their findings to inform the design of teacher education programmes.

Based on this literature review, there are two factors lacking in research looking at teacher education programmes. First, there is a lack of studies looking at the perception of students currently enrolled in their programme. Second, studies looking at student perceptions of their programme often lack information regarding the programme itself, making it difficult to use these results to improve existing teacher education programmes.

Given the changes made by the University of Victoria to their elementary programme, designed to incorporate the current trends of increased field experience, university-field collaboration, and prior beliefs, a unique opportunity arises to analyze the perceptions of currently enrolled students. In doing so, I completed a detailed overview of the context provided by the programme to assist researchers in utilizing my findings to inform the development and revision of other elementary teacher education programmes.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Identified gaps in the literature indicate a need for a detailed understanding of the context created by a teacher education programme. To describe the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme, I used two different forms of data collection. A document analysis provided concrete representations of how a Faculty redesigned and implemented a new elementary teacher education programme. To verify documentation, I completed five interviews that included perspectives from faculty and staff involved with the development, implementation, and administration of the programme.

After investigating the programme itself, I created a spiral survey that would link student perceptions of the programme to actual design features within the programme itself. I made every effort to ensure that I repeated certain questions in different formats, building upon one another in a spiralling fashion. In this way, I attempted to incorporate a series of internal validity checks. To gather student perceptions of their elementary teacher education programme, I included questions pertaining to students' feelings of satisfaction and confidence, as well as teaching philosophy and programme expectations. I used both qualitative and quantitative questions using a variety of rating scales and open-ended responses.

Document Retrieval

To explore the context created by the new (2000/2001) teacher education programme at the University of Victoria, I needed to gather information from a variety of sources. I required a complete document analysis of the development of the new programme, along with documents describing the programme as it currently exists. As

with any programme, modifications to the vision or design often occur during implementation due to factors like finances, timetabling, and faculty availability. Therefore, my inquiry would require an understanding of the original vision, implementation, and facilitation of the current programme. To that aim, I recovered the following documents:

1. Calendar descriptions for both the 1998/1999 school year (old programme) and the 2004/2005 school year;
2. Documents provided to the BC College of Teachers in 1999 outlining the proposed new elementary teacher education programme; and,
3. Copies of the 2004/2005 School Experiences Handbooks, given to all students in the elementary teacher education programme.

Participants

I worked with two different types of participants: I interviewed faculty and staff and surveyed education students. I will look at each in turn. I interviewed three faculty and two staff members at the University of Victoria; all five were women. I purposively chose my interviewees based on their involvement with the elementary teacher education programme. Of the faculty, two were Directors of the elementary programme during the design and implementation of the current teacher education programme. The third faculty member is a current instructor of the elementary teacher education programme and was not involved in the design or development of the programme. Both staff members work as administrators in the current elementary teacher education programme in the key areas of advising and field experience. I contacted all interviewees first by email and then by

phone. At that time, I provided an outline of the study, which included a letter of consent (see Appendix A), and the interview question guide (see Appendix B). All five interviewees consented to the interview.

Two hundred eight education students completed the student perception survey (see Appendix C). I surveyed students from every elementary programme cohort (60 regular year three, 66 regular year four, 33 regular year five, 17 internship year five, and 32 post degree professional programme)⁴. After identifying classes corresponding to all cohorts, I contacted instructors via email. I outlined my study, identified that participation was voluntary, and requested class time to administer the survey. In all but two classes instructors consented to the survey; however, they asked students if they were willing to participate. In all classes but one, students agreed to participate. The one class that did not consent to the survey felt behind in their workload and were unwilling to take the time to complete the survey (there were seven students in that class). After agreeing upon a time, I visited each class, distributing the surveys to students. I outlined that participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential as well as the manner in which I was using the data. Students then completed the survey during class, returning surveys to me upon completion. For the two instructors that did not consent to giving time in class for the completion of the survey, I provided copies, which included the letter of informed consent. Instructors distributed, collected, and returned the surveys to me. The return rates for these two classes were lower than for the classes I visited personally. With 208, of the

⁴ Year 3 students had not yet begun their first field experience. Year 4 students, having one three week field experience completed the year prior, had not yet begun their second field experience. Year 5 and internship students had already completed their final field experiences. PDPP students had completed one field experience, with a second one to go.

approximately 300 students enrolled in the elementary teacher education programme for the 2004/2005 school year, completing the survey, my completion rate was 67%.

Context of the Elementary Teacher Education Programme

Prior to the implementation of the current elementary teacher education programme in 2000/2001, the University of Victoria had students enter the Faculty of Education in their second year. Total field experience was 16 weeks: 2 weeks, non-university supervised observation in second year; 2 weeks, university supervised in third year; and, two 6 week, university supervised experiences in fourth year. At this point, students received their Standard Certificate (non-degree). Most students chose to stay for a final, fifth year. This fifth year, deemed the Professional Year (degree), enabled students to complete a nine unit concentration (in one of 18 different subject areas) as well as additional education courses. No field experience existed in the fifth year.

In 1990, an internal programme review⁵ revealed that students felt the elementary programme was often repetitious and lacked a connection between the university and the field (F3)⁶. Additional concerns by faculty included worry over not being able to provide courses to support all 18 concentrations and a feeling that the fifth year left students disconnected from the field (F2; F3). In 1996, after recommendations from the Dean's Task Force that an organizing body exist across all programme areas, the University created the Elementary Council, headed by a Director (new position) of elementary teacher education. Meetings of the Elementary Council included faculty, staff, and sessionals across all elementary concentrations. This Council became the main collaborative venue for redesigning the elementary teacher education programme (F2).

⁵ This internal review, completed by R. Tinney, surveyed students in the elementary teacher education programme.

⁶ Citation to interview with Faculty member #3.

In 1997, when the BC College of Teachers announced the criteria (see Introduction footnote) required for successful degree completion, the University of Victoria's elementary programme was deficient in one area: students lacked 15 units of senior academic electives. As mandated by the BC College of Teachers, students graduating in the 2000/2001 school year, to receive their Teaching Certificate, were required to meet this criteria. This required that all students entering the University of Victoria's elementary programme as of the 1998/1999 school year would need the additional 15 units. At this point, Faculty voted to redesign/rethink their elementary programme rather than just "tinker" (F2, p. 3) with the current programme. Recognizing that they required time to redesign the programme, Faculty created a Revised Regular Programme (also known as the Transitional Programme) for students entering the programme in the 1998/1999 and 1999/2000 school years. This Revised Regular Programme included the 15 units of senior academic electives, removed the possibility of a concentration, and still provided the opportunity to finish with a Standard or a Professional Certificate. With the Revised Regular Programme in place, Faculty set about, over the next two years, designing the current elementary teacher education programme.

Amidst "endless meetings" (F2, p.4) of Faculty and sessionals, a majority Faculty vote accepted the programme redesign (F2) and the Director made a presentation to the BC College of Teachers in April of 1999. The BC College of Teachers accepted the programme in the Fall of 1999 (F3). After extensive calendar changes, registration of the redesigned programme started for September 2000/2001.

There are three different elementary programmes to choose from: regular, internship, and post-degree professional programme (PDPP). Faculty designed the

programme around the fundamental principle of continuity (F2): continuity from year to year, continuity from university to field, and continuity from course to course. Rather than entering the programme in Year 2, regular and internship students enter the programme in Year 3. To complete the programme, only a Professional Certificate is available at the completion of Year 5 (internship students complete the same Years 3 and 4; however, their Year 5 is different, with an extended 22 week field experience). The regular field experience builds progressively from three weeks, to five weeks, to eight weeks over each year. Included in Years 4 and 5, students also visit their sponsor school every Wednesday. In total, students complete 21 weeks of field experience. The PDPP, designed for students already holding a degree in a teachable subject, complete a 16-month programme that includes a 1-2 week field experience followed later by a 5 week and an 8 week final field experience. In addition, throughout their coursework, students also visit their sponsor schools every Wednesday, providing them with 17 -18 weeks of field experience in total.

Students also attend weekly seminar classes in Years 4 and 5 to support the link between the field and the university. While the original vision of the programme intended to have the course instructors (primarily Faculty) also teach the seminars and provide field experience supervision, administratively, this has not yet been achieved (F3). As a result, course instructors (Faculty and sessionals⁷), seminar leaders, and field experience supervisors are rarely, if ever, administered by the same individuals (S1)⁸. While the original programme design included a Professional Experiences Liaison Committee to

⁷ In the first few years of the programme, Faculty taught large classes. However, the large classes resulted in workloads and marking too heavy for instructors. As a result, the programme lowered the class sizes, increased the number of classes, and had to bring in sessionals (non-continuing contract, non-Faculty) to teach the additional courses (F1).

⁸ Interview with Staff #1.

assist in communication between the university instructors and the field, this committee never took shape.

Students take methodology courses in all subject areas (including art, music, and drama) throughout all years of their programme (PDPP students must choose between art, music, and drama). In addition, they complete courses in Foundations (educational history and philosophy) and Prosocial Behaviour (child psychology). Rather than having concentrations for students in specific subject areas, Faculty designed three strands for completion in the final year of the programme: community, culture, and environment; learning support; and creative literacies. Each strand provides cross-curricular development in diversity, individual student learning needs, and literacy (numerical, verbal, musical, dramatic, etc.) respectively. All students take an introduction course for each strand in Year 4 and must choose one strand from which to complete 6 units of work in Year 5 (PDPP students only receive the strand introduction courses). To cut down on repetition, Faculty designed a .5 unit course on basic teaching pedagogy and the provincial curriculum for the beginning of Year 3 and an additional .5 unit course on evaluation for students in Year 5. Both courses provide a cross-curricular view of teaching and evaluation. To provide course instructors with the opportunity to discuss course content and assignments, the Elementary Council⁹, which is also responsible for dealing with all programme administration, meets regularly.

Materials

The instrument used to survey education students' perceptions of their teacher education programme went through numerous drafts, receiving feedback from fellow researchers, the Associate Dean of teacher education, and the Education Students'

⁹ The Elementary Council expects Faculty to attend whereas they invite sessionals to attend.

Association at the University of Victoria. I designed this survey to be thorough, providing both insights into students' perceptions of the programme as well as the students themselves. I gave much care and attention to ensure that the survey mirrored the teacher education programme design to provide useful information for upcoming programme revisions. The following section outlines the development of the student perception survey.

First draft.

The first draft of the survey focused on the perceptions students had of what it means to be a teacher, including their expectations of the teaching environment. What did they expect teaching to be like? There were two primary concerns when putting together the survey. First, how can I obtain authentic expectations as opposed to *trained* responses? A common curriculum exposes students to specific terms, ideas, and language. How could I provide a vehicle for getting past what was being instilled, to what expectations already existed? To accomplish this, I asked questions that required students to describe a variety of teaching environments and a variety of teacher roles. My second concern was one of survey bias; I was wary of questions that presupposed a specific definition of *teacher* or specific type of *teaching environment*. As a result, questions remained open-ended and avoided adjectives or adverbs. For example, "If you were responsible for creating your own teacher education programme, what would it look like?"

I piloted the first draft in December 2004. We distributed the first draft to twenty 5th year regular students prior to their final practicum; these students had only experienced the teacher education programme implemented in 2000/2001 and detailed in this thesis. I

attached a self-addressed, stamped envelope to each survey for anonymous mail return. Students returned nine surveys.

Responses from the first draft provided many personality descriptors of teachers. The majority focused on the teacher as a caring individual and the teacher as a guide. The two key factors for a teacher education programme were relevance and practicality; details were not included on how a programme was to achieve either. Students identified that there was too much writing; the survey was too long and cumbersome. In addition, the questions did not allow them to comment or give suggestions specific to the programme at the University of Victoria. As a result, there were no connections made between their perceptions of teaching and their teacher education programme.

Upon review of the pilot survey, my supervisor identified four key concerns. (a) There needed to be some way of determining a level of internal validity; survey questions needed to spiral. I needed to link each question to one or two other questions in the survey so that I could compare responses for consistency and congruence. (b) There needed to be questions specific to the University of Victoria programme. This comment echoed student responses. (c) There needed to be a variety of question types used in the survey to maintain participant interest. Concern focused on the disinterest and disengagement that occurs when a single-type of question is used. Again, this echoed student responses. (d) The survey needed to be more comprehensive; participants needed to have specific questions about different aspects of their teacher education programme.

Second draft.

Based on results from the pilot survey and supervisor feedback, I completely revised the survey. I referred to *Psychological testing and assessment: An introduction to*

test and measurement (Cohen & Swerdik, 2002) for a variety of question types and information on developing a spiral survey. I used four different question types: (a) written paragraph response, (b) multiple choice, (c) constructed response, and (d) rating scale responses. To break it down further, I used a variety of rating scale responses: 4, 5, and 10-point Likert, categorical, comparative, and Guttman scales. To ensure that the survey was comprehensive in its overview of programme features, I referred to *Becoming a Teacher* (Parkay, Hardcastle Sandford, & Gougeon, 1996). This identified different teacher education programme aspects and common expectations regarding teaching, the role of the teacher, and the teaching environment. I decided on five key areas of investigation: (a) characteristics of teachers, (b) role of philosophy in teaching, (c) purpose of teacher education, (d) design of teacher education programmes, and (e) impact of the teacher education programme on student perception.

The key focus for my supervisor's review of the second draft was one of congruence; was the language of my survey questions comparable to the language used to describe the teacher education programme at the University of Victoria? This was important to ensure that I could relate my survey responses to the structure and content of the programme. Utilizing the information gleaned from faculty interviews, student handbooks for practicum preparation, and the presentation package for the BC College of Teachers¹⁰, I identified the following recurrent programme themes: (a) professional excellence, rigor, and pedagogical comprehensiveness; (b) intermeshing of course and

¹⁰ In April of 1999, the University of Victoria created a presentation and accompanying package for the BC College of Teachers. The Director of the elementary teacher education programme delivered this presentation to the College of Teachers Council. The accompanying package detailed the programme design, key features, example schedules, common questions/concerns, and faculty overviews. In the Fall of 1999, based on this presentation and package, the BC College of Teachers approved the University of Victoria's elementary degrees for the new programme.

school experience; (c) constructivism; and (d) collaboration, between university and schools, between faculty departments, between supervisors and faculty. When describing the important teacher attributes valued by the programme, the aforementioned resources used the following descriptors: (a) interdisciplinary; (b) autonomous; (c) problem-solvers that reflect the current complexities and challenges of society; (d) inquisitive; and, (e) reflective. I then reviewed my survey questions to ensure that these attributes and programme design features were included.

The Associate Dean of Teacher Education identified that a more direct comparison between what students wanted or expected from the programme and whether they felt the programme had succeeded was required. To accomplish this, it was felt that a more direct question regarding programme satisfaction was required. Through discussions with the Associate Dean and my supervisor, we identified that information on programme satisfaction would be more useful if programme features were separated out and students were asked to explain their satisfaction results. An important discussion topic for my committee was the need to ask students to explain their ratings; this was integral to our ability to understand both their interpretation of the question as well as their ratings.

Four additional, salient, points made by the Associate Dean included the following: (a) it was felt that the ranking activities limited students' ability to respond. We felt that they would not be able to articulate their position clearly and we decided that rating scales would still provide the desired information. I removed all ranking questions. (b) The use of a 4-point scale would limit students' ability to reflect a neutral position. I changed all 4-point scales to 5-point scales. (c) The Associate Dean viewed a percentage question, which required students to assign a time percentage to different programme

components, as too difficult and confusing. After much discussion, we decided on a pie graph as an alternative format. (d) Finally, it was felt that referring to students as student teachers was not respectful of their experiences. Instead, the survey now refers to participants as teacher candidates.

After I incorporated the feedback from both my supervisor and the Associate Dean, the Education Students' Association's (EdSA) executive council reviewed the survey to provide feedback related to clarity and understanding. Unanimously, the EdSA council found the pie graph too confusing and difficult to complete. After committee deliberation, I removed the pie graph and replaced it with a written response question asking students to detail what they felt the roles and responsibilities of the university, school system, and themselves are in the development of a teacher.

Final draft.

With the final draft of the survey complete, I provided the Associate Dean of teacher education with a copy. The Associate Dean identified that an internal review was currently underway for the elementary teacher education programme at the University of Victoria. As part of that internal review, a method of gathering feedback from students was required. The Associate Dean felt that the results from my survey would provide the information he required. As a result, the Faculty of Education paid for the printing costs of the survey and I adjusted the introduction to reflect the fact that results would also inform the internal review of the programme.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (1998), research is laden with values. While, as a researcher, I attempt to allow the data to *speak for itself*, my perspective will ultimately

affect the questions I ask and the analysis I complete. While I did use document analyses and interviews to create a survey based on the design of the elementary programme, my biases ultimately affected both how I worded the questions and the questions I chose to ask. This provides a view of the programme that is both mine and the students I surveyed. While I triangulated my research instrument (through the use of both student and Faculty checks) to minimize limitations based on my biases, it is possible that I overlooked some programme aspects while magnifying others. As a result, I feel it is important that I provide a look at the lens from which I gathered and analyzed my data.

As a previous student of the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme, my experiences predispose me to look for specific problems. As a student of the programme, my concerns focused on repetition and a feeling of disconnect in my final year. The lack of voice I felt in my programme also causes me to, perhaps, over zealously represent the voices of students currently in the programme; I may be less critical of their opinions in my desire to ensure their voices be heard. I also have a love of philosophy. I believe growth, especially as a teacher, begins where theory and practice meet; I feel the two are inextricably linked, even if rarely realized as such. This gives me both a bias and sensitivity to issues regarding theory.

Knowing this, I aim to sensitize the reader to my review; however, I also took steps in my analysis to try to balance my acknowledged perspective. First, as already mentioned, I based the survey questions on the design of the programme. For example, question 5 asks students to rate how they feel their programme accomplished a series of purposes; each purpose related to stated programme goals. Second, I tried to spiral each survey question, allowing students multiple and various opportunities to respond to one

question. This provides me with an opportunity to compare responses. Is there congruence between different questions? By being able to note if the same themes repeat themselves across questions I feel my interpretation is more reliable; this affords an opportunity to *check* that I am mirroring their voices in my interpretation of their responses rather than my own. For example, questions 22 to 24 ask students to rate their satisfaction with the programme, identify what programme aspects may have had an affect on their satisfaction, and then explain their satisfaction responses using an open-ended response. Third, I used both quantitative and qualitative questions in the survey. This allows a comparison between their numerical responses and their written responses. Is there congruence? I used the data analysis programme SPSS to analyze the quantitative responses.

Finally, for the written responses, after noting common themes and prevalence rates for each set of question responses, I completed a series of four checks. (a) Do the themes revealed for each question inform each other? Is there an interrelationship? (b) Are there consistent themes across different questions? (c) Are there responses contradictory to my most prevalent themes? If so, what are they? (d) Are my themes congruent with the literature? Do they make sense? If not, why? I included responses to these checks in the Results section of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

In total, there were 25 questions in the student survey. Of the 208 completed surveys, five different cohorts of students provided responses: regular Year 3, regular Year 4, regular Year 5, Internship (alternative Year 5), and PDPP. Survey responses are also included in this chapter along with cohort analyses. Please see Appendix C for a copy of the administered survey and Appendix D for suggested survey revisions based on student feedback and analysis reflections.

Of the 208 who completed surveys, Year 3 and Year 4 students were the most well represented (see Table

1). Completion rates for regular and internship students are well represented. Fifty

Table 1: What programme type are you in?

Programme Type	Total Completed	Total Population	Percentage Completed
Regular Year 3	60	78	77%
Regular Year 4	66	75	89%
Regular Year 5	33	44	75%
Internship	17	30	56%
PDPP	32	91	36%

percent of PDPP students were out on field experience and unavailable for survey completion and, of those completing, numbers represent a third of all PDPP students.

To provide a series of internal validity checks, I asked questions in a variety of ways thereby also working to maintain student interest. To provide coherence in my data analysis, I organized my results via the purposes of this study. The first stage of analysis was to compile all student responses pertaining to student satisfaction with their programme followed by questions related to their level of confidence regarding entry to the field of teaching. To reveal how my data informs the current research, I then analyzed those responses that relate to salient themes from the research literature: extended field

experiences, collaboration, and student prior beliefs. The discussion in Chapter 5 then expands further on each of these five areas.

Programme Satisfaction

Questions 5, 22, 23, and 24 specifically dealt with feelings of satisfaction.

Question 5 asked students to comment on how well they felt their programme met a series of identified purposes, question 22 asked students to rate their level of programme satisfaction, question 23 asked students to reveal what programme aspects most affected their level of programme satisfaction, and question 24 asked students for a written elaboration of their satisfaction ratings.

Question 5.

Students rated their programme’s ability to help them reflect on and refine their personal philosophies of education the most positively (see Table 2). Following closely behind, students felt

the programme also
often helped them
acquire teaching
strategies and
management
techniques. Students
felt that their
programme only

Table 2: Does the Programme Accomplish these Purposes?

Purpose	M	SD
Help students reflect on and refine their personal philosophies of education.	2.11	.96
Help students acquire teaching strategies and management techniques.	2.33	.95
Develop students’ knowledge base of research and theory to help guide their actions.	2.56	.86
Enable students to replicate the current effective practices of the field.	2.56	.87
Enable students to critically evaluate current school practices and initiate further growth.	2.83	.97

Note: 1 = meets purpose completely and 5 = does not meet purpose at all.

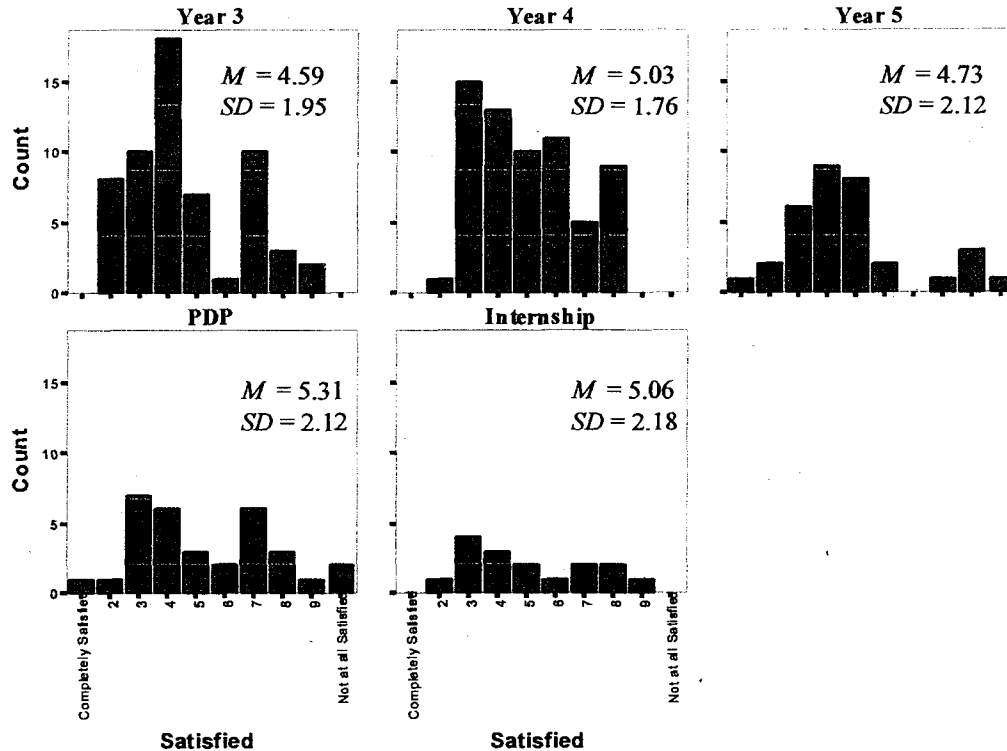
sometimes developed their knowledge base of research and theory to help guide their actions and enabled them to replicate the current effective practices of the field. Finally,

students rated the programme’s ability to enable them to critically evaluate current school practices and initiate further growth as the least met of all five purposes. Based on an ANOVA, these differences were not significant. Students mirrored concerns relating to their programme’s ability to connect them with the current practices in the field in the other three satisfaction questions.

Question 22.

When asked on a scale from one to ten (with one being completely satisfied and ten being not satisfied at all), students were neutral ($M = 4.90, SD = 2.01$). While an ANOVA revealed no significant differences between cohort means ($F(4, 199) = 3.38, p = .51$), interpretation requires caution given the lack of normal distribution (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Distribution of Satisfaction Scores by Cohort Groups



With the exception of Year 4, students tended towards opposite ends of the satisfaction scale; they tended to be either moderately satisfied or not satisfied at all. The least satisfied were the PDPP students and, comparably, the most satisfied were Year 3 students, with Year 5, Year 4, and internship students in-between.

Question 23.

Overall, students reported that their development as a teacher had the greatest impact on their feelings of satisfaction compared with any other programme aspect (see Table 3). Using a series of paired-sample t-tests, this difference was significant in

Table 3: What Programme Aspects have had the Greatest Impact on your Satisfaction?

	Overall		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		PDPP		Internship	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personal Development	2.20	.92	1.98	.80	2.17	.91	2.47	1.12	2.47	.80	2.06	.85
Programme Pacing	2.98	1.21	2.95	1.28	3.09	1.13	2.88	1.34	2.91	1.23	3.13	1.03
Programme Length	3.00	1.14	3.03	1.09	3.03	1.21	2.97	1.21	3.00	1.08	2.88	1.15
Degree of Challenge	2.62	.98	2.38	1.04	2.54	.95	3.00	.84	2.72	1.03	2.88	.81
Confidence with IRPs	2.61	1.08	2.58	1.09	2.67	1.06	2.62	1.12	2.74	1.13	2.08	.90

Note: A rating of 1 = greatest impact; a rating of 5 = least impact.

comparison to all other programme aspects ($p = .00$ for all comparisons). The degree of challenge students experienced in the programme and their feelings of competency with the IRPs had the next most significant impact on their feelings of satisfaction. While there was no significant difference between these two programme aspects ($p = .91$), they were both significantly different ($p = .00$) than the reported impacts of programme pacing or length.

When asked to share if there were any IRPs¹¹ students felt they were not competent to teach, 44% of students responded. Overall, students felt that they lacked teaching competence with respect to fine arts (in many cases, specifically music), language arts, math, and French. The distribution of these concerns varied across cohort groups. The greatest concerns for Year 3 students were language arts (26%) and music (15%). It is important to note that, at this point, Year 3 students had already completed a methods course in language arts and in music. The greatest concerns for Year 4 students were math (30%), music (30%), and French (26%). At this point, students had completed one three-week field experience in their previous year. They had also completed a second language arts methods course and one math methods course. The greatest concerns for Year 5 students were assessment (28%), language arts (22%), and French (17%). At this point, Year 5 students had already completed their final field experience (having been in schools for an accumulated period of 21 weeks).

It is also important to draw attention to the wording of the question. The first part of the question dealt with the IRPs, with the second part asking students to share those competencies (referring back to the IRPs) they did not feel competent to teach. Assessment was prevalent even though it is *not* an IRP (across all cohorts, 10% of students reported concerns with assessment). As a result, while some students may have had concerns regarding their abilities to assess student work, they may not have listed this as it is not an IRP. Assessment was also the most prevalent concern for internship students (33%). The greatest concern for PDPP students was fine arts (43%). Students felt that this concern resulted from them being limited to only one fine arts course (had to choose between art, music, *or* drama).

¹¹ IRP refers to Integrated Resource Package (BC curriculum documents).

Question 24.

Written comments regarding student satisfaction ranged from areas of general concern or satisfaction to specific areas felt in need of improvement. There was a great deal of diversity across cohort groups. Overall, 42% of students shared that they were generally satisfied with the programme. The most cited reason for programme satisfaction referred to the value of the field experience. In the majority of comments, students disclosed that, “the teacher education programme at UVic is primarily a good programme; however, there are several aspects that have to be rethought/redesigned” (86¹²). The most consistent concern (32%) across all cohorts focused on students’ perceived lack of connection between university courses and the practical skills students felt they needed to be effective teachers. Comments such as, “I found the courses to be many times not relevant to real life teaching” (30) illustrate the disconnect students felt with the field. I will elaborate more on this in the section on collaboration. Twenty-two percent of students shared how unbearable they felt their workload was resulting in extremely negative consequences for student health and well-being.

There is also a great deal of stress created by the workload. Students should not be leaving class in tears because they are burnt out (164). I am not satisfied with taking 6 courses. It has been an unhealthy experience for me. I have lost 25 pounds and I am always tired (165). The course load is very intense, to the point where retention and enjoyment of learning suffers (108). There is way too much work; it makes us tired and resentful (155).

Concerns regarding coursework not linked to the field and feeling overworked were the only two comments consistent across all cohort groups.

Year 3 concerns. The most prevalent concern for Year 3 students related to the requirement of 7.5 units of non-education, academic electives (59%) which breaks into

¹² Numbers identify which student survey the quote is from.

two parts. First, students expressed concerns over the work overload resulting from these units. Second, students were upset as they perceived this coursework as not valuable for their development as a teacher. These electives resulted in students having to take a minimum of six courses per term as music and physical education methods were both two term courses. In addition, in their second term, students also had to plan and prepare for their three week practicum in May. Students felt these electives were the primary reason for feeling overworked and stressed.

Having to do the five electives is the craziest idea for this programme. I would have done 2.5 years of prerequisites and joined next year if I knew it would be like this. People's relationships are falling apart and we don't have time for anything else. I'm so discouraged. (10)

Besides the stress caused by academic electives, students also repeatedly felt that the work required by these academic electives inhibited the time they had available for their education courses.

Electives—my nemesis. All I want is to be a teacher, all I want to learn and do at UVic is the education classes, so why the electives? I don't care about art history in the 17th century or ancient Greeks, right now I only care about having the knowledge I learn in the education classes sink in. The electives take up so much time and are so much work that, honestly, the education classes are put on the backburner. Because of the full course load, high expectations, and stress of this programme, I am now seeing a counsellor and taking medication for anxiety and depression. I did two years of electives, why more? I believe in lifelong learning, but let me become a teacher first and then I'll go back to Ancient Greece. (175)

Students suggested that 3rd year electives either be cut completely or “best completed before entry into the programme” (163). Comments from students also indicated that they did not understand why the Faculty of Education would *choose* to include 7.5 units of academic electives in the education programme. Even though all students received

Handbooks¹³ identifying that the BC College of Teachers required the completion of academic electives, students felt the programme was demanding this additional work. This made them frustrated and resentful of the programme.

Twenty-one percent of Year 3 students perceived a need for more practical experience. Students commented that they were “not satisfied with the lack of actual teaching preparation. I feel that we haven’t had enough practice teaching alone in front of a class” (195). Students involved in the SITE¹⁴ programme revealed that they “would like to see more microteaching sessions” (194). Students felt this could be made possible by “the removal of electives so that students can focus more on their education classes” (194). The third most prevalent concern specific to Year 3 students pertained to grading practices for the programme (14%). Students felt that “the grading system is ineffective and that it should be a pass/fail programme to shift the focus from grades to developing ourselves as teachers” (9). Comments revealed that students felt the focus placed on marks, aggravated by what they perceived as a focus on “how many As the faculty is giving out,” (167) was making it difficult for them to “work effectively as a team, communicate, and try new things” (167).

¹³ Each year students received Handbooks in connection with their field experience. It contains course descriptions, timetables, field experience observation questions, and overviews of the required Codes of Conduct.

¹⁴ The SITE project is a research study currently underway at the University of Victoria. Based on a model of situated learning, field experiences are systematically integrated into the core teachings of university courses. As part of this project, one section of a Year 3 language arts methods course, two sections of a Year 3 physical education methods course, and two seminar classes participated. In these SITE courses, students participated in lessons in the field. The physical education courses had university instructors teach school children as education students gradually took over teaching two of their own classes. The language arts methods course had classroom teachers model before education students had the opportunity to teach classes on their own. Finally, seminar classes enabled students to visit the field as part of their coursework. To support this project, the university instructors met bi-weekly as well as with the field staff and principals (three times a year). These SITE courses, referred to as “microteaching” by students, is separate from the three-week field experience completed by all students in Year 3.

Year 4 concerns. The most prevalent concerns for Year 4 students, as already mentioned, were university courses not being practical enough (40%) and feeling overworked (32%). Of those comments concerned with the lack of practicality in courses, 17% of students stated that the seminar/plenary sessions were particularly not useful in preparing them for their field experiences. In addition, Year 4 students expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with *changes* made to the programme this year (19%). Four specific changes had students concerned. The most commented on change was the cancellation of the internship option for the following year. "At this moment I am unsatisfied because the internship programme for next year has been cancelled. This was so poorly handled that it leaves a sour taste in my mouth in regards to the entire programme" (74). Administration cancelled this programme option due to a lack of applicants, indicating a seemingly different understanding by the students and those of the programme or programme decision-makers highlighting concerns regarding a lack of communication. Students also expressed resentment over changes to the French requirements for the programme. Students felt that "the programme should not be changed part way through. Changes should begin when new students enter...for French, part way through, how can we get the requirements" (129)? The feeling that implemented changes should not affect those already enrolled in the programme also applied to perceived changes in grading standards. "I feel that this year particularly we have been directly affected by the politics going on in the department regarding grading strategies (after the meeting our grades have gone down)" (95). This included dissatisfaction with the "changes to marks needed to graduate with distinction" (129). Students felt strongly that it was unfair that changes made after their acceptance into the programme affected

them. In addition, they often commented negatively, many times resentful of how administration and/or faculty informed them of these changes.

Rounding out the top concerns of Year 4 students, 14% felt that they spent too much time on fine arts methods courses and not enough time on core subjects such as language arts and math. “Why do we get half a year in math and science and a whole year in drama and art? It seems unbalanced to me” (138)¹⁵. In addition, 12% of students shared concerns regarding the effectiveness of some of their university instructors.

I have been very dissatisfied with the level and quality of the instructors in the programme. This semester alone I have had two profs who have given us no marks back when there are only two weeks of class left. It is ridiculous that we are being taught by teachers who are so incompetent to teach themselves. (125)

While comments such as these need to be balanced with comments such as, “I have thought that all of the teachers were wonderful, helpful, and full of information” (148), the negative comments regarding university instructors outweighed the positive comments by more than two to one.

Year 5 concerns. Fifty-five percent of Year 5 students shared that they were “satisfied with the level of development I have received as a teacher; however...” (49). The most cited reason for satisfaction was the extended field experiences. “I really enjoyed the fact that we had 3 practicums because I became more and more confident and was able to teach a variety of grade levels” (45). The *however* concerns focused on three areas: (a) need to decrease fine arts and increase coverage in core subject areas and assessment, (b) ineffective university instructors, and (c) ineffectiveness of Wednesday visits and plenaries/seminars. Comments such as, “why a year in drama and only 4 weeks

¹⁵ It is important to note that art, drama, music, and PE were two semester courses equal to two units each. Math and science, while only for one semester, were worth one and a half units each.

in evaluation? Are you kidding,” (106), “music, art, drama courses should not be year long. Need much more experience teaching kids to read,” (48) and “I felt that the arts classes (drama, art, music) could have been half year and the other methodology courses could have been longer like science, language arts,” (50) emphasize that students felt they needed more coverage of language arts, math, science, and assessment.

I feel the programme could better prepare us if the courses were more balanced. I.e. language arts and assessment are huge topics in schools but we only spend 1 or 2, three month courses on literacy and 4 weeks on assessment. (109)

It is possible that a lack of time (by the end of Year 5, all students completed a minimum of 3 units in language arts and 2.5 units in mathematics as opposed to 2 units in the fine arts) on these subject areas is not the problem, but instead the activities and assignments instructors are choosing for each class; students may feel less prepared because they did not feel the coursework was practical. Repeatedly (45%), students relayed concerns regarding their ability to teach language arts, mathematics, and science. Even though students only spent 1.5 units on social studies, students did not mention it as an area of concern. This may be because students do not perceive this subject to be as important as the other three or because students perceive the time they spent learning social studies methodology was more practical and applicable. The same possibilities exist concerning the fine arts courses. This question, regarding the effect of extended time versus value of the time spent, requires further investigation.

Forty-two percent of students expressed concern regarding the ineffective instruction they received from *some* university instructors. Students expressed that “the teaching quality of the professors was inconsistent...some excellent, some not” (45). As one student shared,

I am completely unsatisfied with the programme because of incompetent professors. We are not prepared, we've wasted hours listening to people tell us that we will never work in Victoria so maybe UVic should decrease enrolment numbers. (54)

It is important that we balance comments like the one above with comments such as,

I believe that the classes I learned the most in were the philosophy of education (lists professor), prosocial development (lists professor), community-culture-environment (lists professor), and First Nations education. My personal growth and the importance and responsibility of teachers were most affected and developed in these courses. (46)

The most cited suggestions for university instructors focused on increasing communication between instructors (regarding content overlap and equal learning opportunities) and the implementation of a system of faculty peer assessment (see section on collaboration).

The third most prevalent concern for Year 5 students focused on their perceived ineffectiveness of the Wednesday visits and their seminar classes (24%). Students shared that “Wednesday visits are not that effective” (47). As well, although designed to connect their courses to the field and focus on the practicalities of teaching, students viewed seminars as a “ridiculous waste of money” (52) and as “not functional” (56). Students found it “hard to see the value of plenaries/seminars in 3rd and 4th years” (47). Some students also felt that they did not receive the support they wanted from their seminar leaders, suggesting that they “have one seminar leader from Year 3 on” (53).

Internship concerns. Internship students did not provide many comments regarding their satisfaction with the programme. The most prevalent comments, as already mentioned, were satisfaction with the programme (58%) and a concern with course relevancy (42%). The primary reason for student satisfaction was the time dedicated to their field experience. “I am very satisfied with having the chance to do the internship

programme. I would not feel as confident to teach if I was not in the elementary school as long as I was" (19). One student shared that he/she was "very satisfied. Could be more satisfied but UVic does a good job and I know I will be well received because of my degree" (27).

PDPP concerns. As with Year 5 students, 43% of PDPP students felt that, while "it is a great programme, [it has] some major problems" (42). The greatest concern for PDPP students focused on irrelevant assignments (57%).

I dislike strongly completing "busy work" (i.e. journals) that take away the limited time I have to plan for practicum and develop quality work. Work for the sake of doing it (after proving mastery in a previous degree) seems like a waste of time. Time I'd rather devote to teaching and honing my skills. (69)

As one student shared, "I personally feel that some of our assignments are impractical. I have spent five years writing essays during my BA. Give me assignments that I can use in the classroom" (36). Students specifically requested, "fewer research papers...more assignments we can actually use" (98).

Some assignments in some courses are not relevant. I.e. Can we memorize facts (proven already as undergrads) or write a research paper (proven already as undergrads); not valuable at all. (102)

As one student explained, "because we are in the PDPP we need to receive the maximum of practical experience in a short amount of time. We are not getting this. I don't need theory, I need practicality" (103).

The second most prevalent concern of PDPP students was the perceived ineffectiveness of some instructors (40%); however, as with other cohort groups, this ineffectiveness was not consistent. For example, there were comments such as "I think they are not modelling for us the behaviours we are expected to teach" (36) and,

I feel the best way to learn is from an excellent teacher and so far in the programme I have had 3 or 4 out of 16 classes. One would expect a teacher education programme to have all excellent teachers, (38)

We must balance these comments against examples such as, “I have encountered two very caring instructors who have made all the difference to my morale. Professor (name) is a particularly well-informed, cross-curricular, inspiring person” (67). The three key points stressed by PDPP students regarding university instructors are that: (a) instructors can make all the difference, (b) instructors need to “practice what [they] preach,” (15) and (c) some instructors need to be “re-evaluated” (41).

The third most prevalent concern of PDPP students was their inability to take all three fine arts methodology courses. Contrary to other cohort groups, PDPP students, who were only able to take one of the fine arts courses, felt it was important to take all three. “We need more training in all 3 fine arts—drama, art, and music” (40). Combining the sentiments of PDPP students with all cohort groups, it is important that students have courses in all three fine arts areas; however, this time needs to be a reflection of the balance of subject areas taught in elementary.

Feelings of Confidence to Enter the Field of Teaching

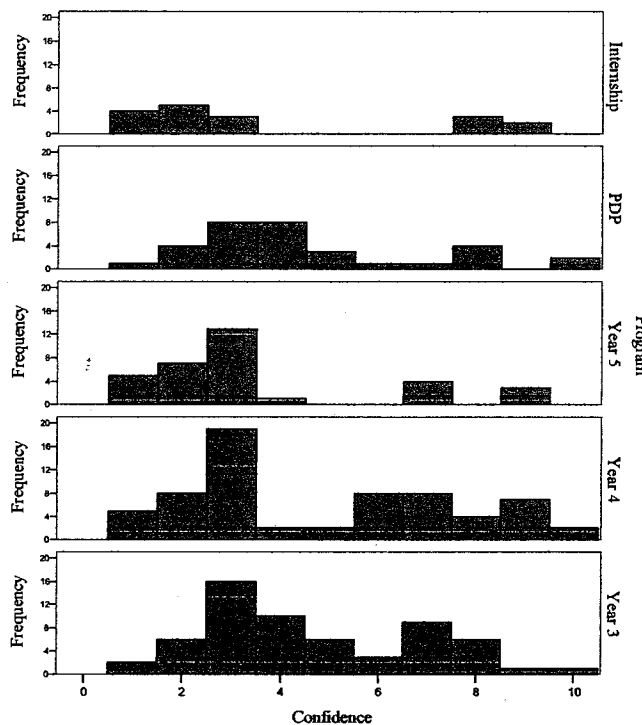
Three survey questions dealt specifically with student feelings of confidence. Question 7 asked students to rate their feelings of confidence (on a scale from one to ten), question 8 asked students to share which experiences had the greatest impact on their feelings of confidence, and question 9 asked students to explain their ratings using an open-ended, written response. For students in the

Table 4: How Confident are you?

Cohort	Confidence	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Year 3	4.67	2.21
Year 4	4.85	2.70
Year 5	3.55	2.44
PDPP	4.53	2.38
Internship	3.82	3.13

elementary teacher education programme, their average level of confidence was a 4.45 rating, just above a neutral or middle score (see Table 4). While Year 5 and internship students, both of whom completed the largest amount of field experience, rated themselves more confident than the other cohorts, an ANOVA revealed no significant

Figure 2: How Confident are you?



Note: 1 = completely confident, 10 = not confident at all.

difference in mean confidence ratings ($F(4, 202) = 1.86, p = .12$). However, a review of responses (see Figure 2) demonstrates that students felt either very confident or not confident at all. This bimodal pattern was very definite for all programme cohorts; however, the bimodal pattern for Year 3 was not as extreme.

When I asked students to rate the impact that four different factors had on their feelings of confidence, I also provided a space for them to identify any other, unlisted factor. Table 5 provides an

Table 5: What Factors had the Greatest Impact on Confidence Level?

Factors	Overall		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		PDPP		Internship	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Experiences	3.15	1.2	2.88	1.2	3.44	1.16	3.28	1.20	2.88	1.13	3.29	1.26
Practicum	1.37	.74	1.31	.60	1.35	.79	1.45	.87	1.47	.80	1.29	.59
Coursework	2.79	.93	2.58	.93	2.73	.80	2.94	1.01	3.03	1.06	3.00	.94
Feedback	2.07	.99	2.17	1.04	2.26	.98	1.73	.98	2.06	.98	1.71	.69

Note: 1 = greatest impact on confidence, 5 = least amount of impact on confidence.

overview of both an overall listing of mean ratings, as well as a breakdown by cohort group. On average, students felt their field experience had the greatest impact on their level of confidence. The next most important factor was feedback; however, there were significant differences regarding feedback from mentor teachers and university supervisors across cohort groups ($F(4, 202) = 2.37, p = .05$). A Bonferroni Post Hoc¹⁶ revealed that Year 5 students rated feedback significantly more important to their feelings of confidence than Year 3 or Year 4 students. In addition, internship students also rated feedback significantly more important than Year 4 students. In both cases, those students with more field experience placed more value on feedback. I found no other significant differences across cohorts.

Coursework completed at the university had a moderate impact on the confidence levels of students. Students rated their experiences in elementary and high school, as a student themselves, as having the least impact on their confidence levels. While not significant ($p = .06$), Year 3 and PDPP students, those with the least amount of field experience to date, rated their previous experiences as more important than all other cohort groups. For those students who chose to specify an additional factor (38% of respondents), the importance of previous work experiences with children (e.g. day camps, swim instructors, etc.) was the most prevalent (41%). As another important note, 34% of Year Three students listed their experiences with the SITE project as having a great impact on their feelings of confidence.

The majority of written responses pertaining to student confidence levels focused on those factors that students felt *increased* their confidence. Seventy-four percent of

¹⁶ I used the Bonferroni Post Hoc test to identify where the significant differences existed because the Bonferroni adjustment would not inflate any Type I errors.

students felt that their field experiences had the greatest impact on their confidence. Many comments emphasized the value of working in a “real” situation with children; the field experience provided the ultimate test of their teaching abilities.

The work in my practicum has been by far the most important for my confidence because it allows me to see myself as a teacher and gain comfort being in front of students. It gives me a chance to deal with the everyday situations of teaching that can't be covered at university. (39)

Overall, 32% of the written comments provided information regarding the impact of university courses on student feelings of confidence. Of these comments, 69% were negative and 31% were positive. The negative comments focused on the effects of an excessive workload and irrelevant assignments as reflected in the follow student comments.

I am frustrated that my confidence is not high after this program. If any, it has decreased because I am aware of how much work it is but I have no instruction on how to go about it (171).

The majority of classes do not help with confidence because writing a paper on basal readers does not show me I can be successful with children (139).

I have not felt challenged in my course work at all. The answer is not more busy work—I want to explore issues deeper and challenge my own mind (147).

Comments regarding frustration with “busy work” were prevalent. “Some courses had the greatest negative impact because of low grades for busy work, discouraging and under qualified teachers and a certain amount of redundancy that bores me and makes me ask what I am doing this for” (105). In contrast, the majority of negative comments from PDPP students illustrated a disappointment with university instructors.

PDPP has left me discouraged, stressed, angry, resentful because I am here to learn how to be a good teacher and I have found almost none of

that. The majority of professors here know about as much of teaching as I do. (33)

The majority of positive comments regarding university coursework came from the Year 3 students professing the value of their experience with the SITE project (82% of positive Year 3 comments referred to the SITE project).

Teaching experiences in PE had a huge impact on my confidence. We got into schools as early as November and were allowed to teach a class. The fact that I could do it that early on made me feel that I could do it and I would only get better. It made me more confident for my practicum because I've done it before. (201)

Positive comments from other cohort groups regarding university courses revealed that some students recognized that they “needed the coursework in order to be successful on [their] practicum” (130).

Extended Field Experience

Regarding field experiences, students commented on what they felt the purpose of a field experience was (question 6), how important it was to their feelings of confidence (question 9), and that, while it was an integral part of programme satisfaction, they had concerns regarding continual placement (question 24). Students had very specific ideas regarding the role of the elementary schools or field experience portion of their programme. Ninety percent of students felt the field experience represented the opportunity for them to gain practical experience in the *real* world. “This is where the real classroom learning occurs. Teachers are kind enough to mentor us and to expose us to a real classroom, real children, and real situations” (11). Students continually referred to the importance of exposure to the “workings of a school; a first-hand sneak peek into real life situations” (87). Some students felt this “practical experience, this hands on learning, [gave] an opportunity to make sure that you are really meant to be a teacher” (18).

Referred to as “the most authentic learning experiences” (64), students felt the field experience provided the “only way to encounter the true challenge of classroom management and dealing with actual children’s personalities” (44).

Also mentioned as an important role of the field experience, 28% of students felt the elementary schools provided an opportunity to experiment with the theories and strategies learned in the university. Students reported that it was “a chance to see our studies put into actions and a chance to actually practice what we have been taught” (6). Students felt it was important that the field experience provide “an environment where we as student teachers are encouraged to experiment and develop our teaching strategies and philosophies” (95). Students continually used the phrase, “put into practice” (54) when discussing elementary schools.

An additional role mentioned by 28% of students regarding the field experience was the importance of mentorship. Students repeatedly described the field as needing to be “understanding, flexible, and helpful” (169). It was important that the schools “welcome [them] into the classroom” (183) and treat them as “equals” (188). More specifically, the field experience needed to “support and guide student teachers in a positive setting. To encourage student teachers to develop positive social relationships within a professional role” (142). Repeatedly, students emphasized that the field experience needed to provide positive experiences that supported and helped student teachers to “grow” (74).

As already mentioned, 74% of students felt that their field experiences had the greatest impact on their feelings of confidence.

I believe that field experiences are the most crucial to feelings of comfort and competence in the classroom. It is far too easy to slip into the student

role in our classes at university and I believe more time in the classroom is necessary before we do our practicums to increase confidence. (9)

Students commented that, “every time I am working with children my confidence as a teacher grows no matter how good or bad the experience was because I know it further prepares me for the future” (95). Many students shared that the field experience influenced their confidence levels the most because they “learned what [their] strengths and weaknesses were” (123). The majority of comments focused on the value of working and responding to children and reaffirming their desire to be a teacher. Furthermore, internship students strongly believed that their extended (5.5 months) field experience was vital to their feelings of confidence (93% of internship students); for them, confidence levels correlated with the amount of time they spent in the field: “the more time I have in classrooms (elementary) the more confident I feel” (19).

The most cited reason for students’ satisfaction with their programme was their field experience. Students felt positively about the length of time spent in the schools (especially internship students) and that there were three separate experiences providing opportunities to visit a variety of grade levels. In contrast, Year 4 and Year 5 students were not satisfied with their continual placement experiences. Students felt there was “too much stress with course assignments that required info from visits...hard to teach disconnected lessons on Wednesdays” (47). Several students made the suggestion that, instead, they “go for a week in December so that [they] can see what a full week looks like” (53). When students referred to their Wednesday visits, they seemed to view them as separate from their field experience. Regardless that it was time in the field, students did not associate them with their field experience. They viewed the visits as additional work that lacked value.

This contrasts with the positive remarks from Year 3 students regarding the SITE project visits to the field. Even though the SITE project amounted to less time in the field and was also viewed as preparation for field experiences, students viewed this time spent in the field as valuable. It increased their levels of confidence and helped them feel prepared for their practicum. Students in the SITE project felt “very satisfied with the amount of in-school experience” (163). When comparing Year 3 student responses to question 24 (explain your satisfaction), all comments reporting programme satisfaction were from students enrolled in the SITE project (verified against responses from question 9 referencing SITE). In contrast, Year 3 students who did *not* participate in the SITE project felt “there was not enough time spent out in the schools. [They felt that] to make the classés we have relevant to us it would be very helpful to be able to see theories in action” (13). Many of these students shared that they did not feel adequately prepared for their practicum and expressed lowered levels of confidence. What became apparent when comparing students’ positive comments regarding the SITE visits to the field and the Wednesday visits of Year 4 and 5 is the nature of the how these experiences were structured and the degree of collaboration these structures provided between the university and the field.

Collaboration

While research literature on teacher education programmes focuses on the level of collaboration between the field and the university, University of Victoria students commented on both the level of collaboration *between* the field and the university and *amongst* the instructors at the university. Students perceived a disconnection between the field and the university. This feeling of disconnect was manifest in three concerns: (a) a

lack of similarity between course work and field experiences, (b) a lack of practicality in course assignments, and (c) perceived lack of application of seminar/plenary courses. Comments such as, “there doesn’t seem to be enough similarity between what we do at UVic and what it is really like to teach...this is frustrating” (89) illustrate this feeling of separation. More specific comments such as, “I would also like to see more time at university to prepare for practicum and Wednesday visits—so often its left on the backburner because I have assignments or reflections due for university,” (39) provide an example of how students perceived that university courses did not support their field experiences.

Often, students referred to course assignments as “jump[ing] through hoops” (153). Related to this concern were comments complaining about the “little tasks which do not foster real learning...many of us write in journals/list serves what we feel is expected and feel the assignments with real value do not receive the attention they deserve” (164). In many cases, students felt that assignments that would be of little use to them were inhibiting their ability to apply themselves to other assignments they viewed as being more relevant.

The big assignments such as unit plans etc are excellent and are most helpful in preparing us for teaching. More effort and attention could be focused on these crucial assignments if the small, insignificant assignments were eliminated. These are the busy work assignments that achieve nothing but to add further pressure to us. (163)

Frustration with theory and course work that students did not feel were practical was evident in the following comments.

Way too much memorizing, theory, and irrelevant assignments. Time consuming tests and assignments which say nothing about teaching ability nor development of it. The role should be to assign highly relevant assignments (unit plans only which will be used) and guide the development of those plans. (102)

There needs to be more practical teaching methods discussed. In some courses the prof went above and beyond—great. But we need the basics first...Language arts course did not make me ready. We need practical applications at 80% and theory at 20% (56).

I feel that more strategies for teaching each subject (math, LA, science, etc.) should be taught. Many were taught, but more specific examples would be helpful, particularly in math. More time on classroom management and assessment/evaluation would also be helpful. (112)

The only information provided regarding what made an assignment or theory practical was their ability to *use* it in the field. What constituted *use* was unclear.

As already elaborated in the satisfaction section, Year 4 and 5 students felt their seminar/plenary courses did not support their field experiences (17% and 24%). Students reported that they were “not functional” (56) with 17% of Year 4 students sharing that the seminar classes, specifically, did *not* prepare them for their field experiences.

While not related to the field experience, students also shared concerns regarding the perceived lack of communication amongst university instructors. As already reported, 42% of Year 5 students expressed concern with the lack of consistency they perceived amongst instructors. As detailed by the following student, the course instructor is integral to student satisfaction with the programme.

Profs...holy smokes does a prof make a difference. More than the outline, what a prof's philosophy on teaching is makes a difference. Let us choose our classes based on who teaches it and see who needs to go...and who needs more classes to teach. Having different profs for different strands, many students feel continually jipped. “Oh, they got (lists professor) for PE and I got (lists professor). They get to see children learn about...and we did an essay.” No fair! If you have to have these tenure profs then at least make them teach all the 4th years so some of us don't get the benefit! (106)

The two most cited suggestions for university instructors were that, “communication is needed among profs to ensure equal learning and overlapping of topics” (53) and that the “Faculty of Education might try faculty peer assessment” (60). Both call for an increase in collaboration amongst university instructors.

Prior Beliefs

The prior beliefs of teacher education students are a well researched area. Studies continually report on the constancy of student beliefs about learning, teaching, and the role of the teacher and learner; most beliefs that students enter a programme with, remain. As this survey did not gather the beliefs of students prior to entering their programme, it cannot speak to whether participation in this particular teacher education programme influenced or changed student beliefs. However, it does provide a glimpse of student beliefs at different points in their programme. This survey posed numerous questions aimed at revealing student beliefs about teachers, their role as students, and the role of teacher education programmes.

Beliefs about teachers.

The top five attributes of teachers, identified by students in response to question 2, were patience, loving children, being an effective classroom manager, loving to teach, and being a lifelong learner (see Table 2). Notable differences include internships also valuing the ability to think on their feet and being organized. This may be indicative of the skills found important during an extended field experience of 5.5 months. While Year 3 students valued the importance of creativity, no other cohort rated it as highly. Another notable mention was the value placed on managing multiple tasks at once, rated highly by both Year 4 and PDPP students.

Table 6: Most Important Attributes of an Excellent Teacher

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Internship	PDPP	Overall
Patient 50%	Patient 68%	Effective classroom manager 64%	Loves children 77%	Patient 63%	Patient 60%
Loves children 50%	Loves children 62%	Patient 55%	Patient 65%	Effective classroom manager 50%	Loves children 54%
Loves to teach 45%	Lifelong learner 42%	Loves to teach 46%	Able to think on feet 53%	Loves children 44%	Effective classroom manager 42%
Creative 43%	Manage multiple tasks at once 35%	Loves children 46%	Organized 47%	Loves to teach 41%	Loves to teach 39%
Effective classroom manager 37%	Effective classroom manager 32%	Lifelong learner 42%	Effective classroom manager 41%	Manage multiple tasks at once 38%	Lifelong learner 37%

Of note, when asked in question 25, students felt that patience, caring for students, and being a lifelong learner (three of the most important teacher attributes) were personal characteristics of a teacher not taught by a teacher education programme (see Table 7).

Table 7: Can these Teacher Characteristics be Taught?

Teacher Characteristic	Taught	Attribute
Patient and encouraging	12%	81%
Reflective practitioner	82%	13%
Knowledgeable and informed	87%	8%
Creates a climate that promotes equality	68%	25%
Cares for students	5%	90%
Able to improvise on the spur of the moment	34%	57%
Maintains clear standards of mutually respectful behaviour	52%	40%
Uses individualized and attention-getting strategies	89%	5%
Shows enthusiasm	17%	76%
Divides lessons into small, easily digestible pieces	94%	2%
Empathetic	8%	88%
Ethical	30%	62%
Lifelong learner	24%	67%
Mentor	34%	56%

Along with being a patient and caring manager of classrooms, students also felt that teachers were professionals. Ninety-seven percent of students in the elementary teacher programme either strongly agreed (74%) or agreed (23%) that a teacher is a professional ($M = 1.30$, $SD = .58$). When defining professional, 53% of students shared that, they felt a teacher was a professional because they went through years of extensive and specialized training, usually at a post-secondary institution.

It also requires 5 years of university. A professional is a person with knowledge about a specific area that is extensive. Anyone can be a teacher in terms of helping someone else learn, but an elementary school teacher is a professional because of their specific knowledge about the content and methodology of teaching in elementary schools (111).

Thirty-four percent of students also felt that professionals held a position of importance in, or value to, the community. Most often, students felt teachers were professionals because they were responsible for the education of children. “We are directly responsible for caring for, teaching, and influencing young people in hopes that they ultimately become functional members of society” (1). Often, students related the education of children to the development of “active citizens” (207).

Other notable descriptors for why a teacher was a professional included the recognition that a governing body regulates teachers with standards and codes of conduct (15%) that teachers must act in a respectful and responsive manner (15%) and that teachers must be very committed to their job (11%).

Teaching is definitely not just a job. It is a past time, a career, a professional career. A teacher is always thinking about her students, even out of class, and this means that her students become a major part of her life. (207)

No differences appeared between cohorts. Given these responses, students believe teachers to be patient, caring professionals dedicated to teaching and managing their classrooms.

The aforementioned beliefs, reported in questions 2, 3, 4, and 25, are congruent with student responses to questions 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, and 19 that asked students how much they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding teachers (see Table 8). Students

Table 8: How much do you agree with the following statements regarding teaching?

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Beliefs about Teachers		
To be lifelong learners, teachers remain intellectually engaged and critically alert.	1.51	.64
Effective teachers have mastered planning, management, and evaluation.	1.85	.77
Reflecting on your teaching philosophy contributes to a teacher's ability to effectively teach.	2.15	.81
Teachers need to be autonomous to make independent decisions for their students.	3.58	1.06
Once certified, the effort teachers expend in continuously learning drops.	3.75	1.00
Once established, a set of lesson plans should be used year after year.	3.83	.82
Beliefs about Curriculum		
Teachers experiment and adapt the curriculum to meet individual student needs.	1.57	.59
Curriculum should be primarily based on individual students' needs and interests.	2.46	.89
Curriculum should be primarily based on provincial standards.	2.74	.90
Role of the Student		
The purpose of schools is to encourage the personal development of each student.	1.50	.57
The purpose of schools is to ensure practical preparation for life and work.	1.99	.80
Schools should actively involve students in social change to reform society.	2.21	.76

Note: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree

most strongly agreed that, to be lifelong learners, teachers needed to remain intellectually engaged and critically alert. They then agreed that effective teachers have mastered specific skills in planning, management, and evaluation. Finally, they agreed that reflecting on your teaching philosophy contributes to a teacher's ability to teach effectively. Inferring from these ratings, most students feel that teachers need to be

critically engaged, reflective practitioners. Based on a series of paired-sample t-tests, these differences in means are significant ($p \leq .05$) indicating the immense value placed on critical thinking.

In contrast, students disagreed with the statements that teachers need to be autonomous so that they can make independent decisions regarding their students, that their effort to continue learning after certification drops, and that teachers should use the same lesson plans year after year. While the latter two are congruent with the value students place in critical and reflective teaching, their disagreement with autonomy is puzzling. This incongruence may be due to an alternative interpretation of the question. While students may feel that teachers should be able to act autonomously for their students, they may feel that, in *actuality*, teachers are restricted in their ability to make decisions independently. It is also possible that students associated *independent decisions* with isolation, preferring instead, a collaborative approach. Finally, it is also possible that students did not understand the question; a few students wrote notes in the margin stating that they did not understand what *autonomous* meant. As a result, interpretation of students' responses to this statement requires caution. After completing numerous paired-sample t-tests, there were significant differences found between all reported means with the exception of statements regarding autonomy and the decrease of learning after university completion, as well as between the reusing of lesson plans and, again, the decrease of learning. ($p \leq .05$).

When asked to rate statements pertaining to curriculum design, students most strongly agreed that teachers should experiment and adapt the curriculum to meet individual student needs (again, see Table 8). This correlates with students' most highly

rated purpose for schools: to encourage the personal development of individual students. Again, the focus is on teaching to the individual. However, this is contrasted with the lower rated statement that curriculum should be primarily based on individual students' needs and interests. Even lower rated is the statement that curriculum should be primarily based on provincial standards. Based on these responses, it is likely that students feel that, while student needs and provincial standards may be the base of the curriculum, teachers can change or adapt this curriculum to accommodate individual students. Based on a series of paired-sample t-tests, these differences in means were significant ($p \leq .05$).

Role of the student.

In question 6, across all cohorts, students emphasized the importance of deciding, independently, which teaching strategies and philosophies to adopt. The most consistent comment from students regarding their role in their own teacher education programme was their responsibility in deciding on their own teaching style and philosophy (45%).

My role is to initiate any learning necessary to develop the craft. By evaluating what I have learned in both the university and in the schools, it is my responsibility to make decisions about what aspects I want to draw from to develop into the teacher I hope to be. (9)

These students felt they were responsible for determining their own identity as a teacher. Repeatedly, these students described themselves as “advocates” (200) and “initiators,” (9) responsible for “applying” (187) the knowledge they acquired from the field and university.

[We] individualize ourselves as teachers. Bring to the table what we feel is important. To gather all that is available in the way of information, experience, and observation to create an individual perspective as a teacher. (198)

These students felt strongly that their role was to “reflect on my misconceptions. Engage critically in tasks. Practice and refine my teaching skills. Not regurgitate information and opinions of others” (69). These students described learning as an active process with the role of the learner central to the process itself. Given the value students placed on developing their own philosophy of teaching, it is important to note that, in question 5, the programme purpose students felt was most often met regarded helping students reflect on and refine their personal philosophies of education.

These comments, reflecting a strong sense of personal responsibility and involvement in their education, contrast with remarks describing students as “sponges” (196). In contrast to the active involvement and determination of the aforementioned comments, 17% of students felt their primary responsibility was to “absorb” (6) as much information from the university and field as possible. Reflected in these comments was a sense that learning was a passive act; one had only to “learn and soak in as much as I can and just enjoy being surrounded by a supportive and resourceful environment” (128). Looking across cohorts, the percentage of responses regarding either the active or passive role of the student was consistent; the number of years students were in the programme did not relate to their perceptions regarding the role of the learner.

Regardless of the role of the learner, 30% of students shared how important it was for the student to be committed to their teacher education programme. Students felt they needed to “invest and put your all into this program[me]. Make sure the innate feeling to want to be a teacher is really there” (7). Students often described this commitment as requiring their “full participation, care for quality of work, and a willingness to examine and experiment with new ideas” (174). Along with the importance of commitment, 14%

of students also shared how vital it was for education students to be open-minded. As exemplified in the following comment, students felt they needed to:

remain open and motivated to learn as much as possible the strategies, methods, current research, and practicality of teaching from instructors, school mentors, and peers, for the purpose of becoming the most effective, engaging teacher that one can be. (123)

Role of the teacher education programme.

When asked about the purposes of school (in general), students most strongly agreed that the purpose of schools is to encourage the personal development of each student (see Table 8). Students then agreed that schools should provide practical preparation for life and work. Students then agreed that schools should actively involve students in social change to reform society. Based on a series of paired-sample t-tests, these differences in means were significant ($p \leq .05$). While it is understandable, given the value students placed on their own development as a teacher, that they would strongly support the personal development of each student; however, given the importance they placed on having a teacher education programme prepare students for the *practicality* of teaching, it was surprising that their support of this statement was significantly less.

When asked about the role of the field experience and university, students felt their field experience was to expose them to the *realities* of teaching. Students were also very clear on the role of the university in preparing future teachers. Ninety percent of students across all programme cohorts shared that the university was to prepare students for the field. To do this, universities needed to provide the “background knowledge needed to be a good teacher” (11). This included “knowledge of current practices, and the research and theories of teaching” (163). Continually mentioned, universities were to

provide the “educational theories and practical strategies” (8) required to effectively teach in today’s elementary classrooms.

To provide the background knowledge, strategies, support, and present the newest, most innovative teaching methods available that leave the student teacher well prepared in their future careers. To provide a picture of what the world of teaching looks like. (123)

As further clarified by some students (15%), they felt this exposure should provide a “setting for the development of personal education philosophies [and] teaching styles in a variety of settings” (68). Comments sharing that a university was to “provide [the] theory to support the strategies we choose to accept and practice” (141) reflect that these students viewed themselves as having an active role in deciding what to take from their university experience and what to leave behind.

It is important to note that the university’s role in providing background information and theory had a caveat in most cases. Students wanted theory they could use and apply to the practical world of teaching. Comments such as, “this should be accomplished by providing students with applicable theory and assignments; not busy work as is so often done in this program[me]” (86), emphasize the link that must exist between theory and practice.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to survey students enrolled in an elementary teacher education programme regarding their satisfaction with the programme and their level of confidence concerning their entry into the field of teaching. While students provided some very clear directions for programme revisions that they felt would increase their feelings of satisfaction, other responses were incongruent and require a thorough inquiry into the development of the elementary teacher education programme at the University of Victoria. Reflecting on the rich and complex descriptions of this programme's development, gathered through faculty and staff interviews and archival documents, I am struck by the number of similarities that appear to exist between student responses and the Faculty's original vision of the programme.

Although the focus and data set analysis for this study are student survey responses looking at their current experiences across all programme cohorts, a combination of interviews and document analyses pertaining to the design and implementation of the programme were undertaken prior to the construction of the extensive questionnaire in order to better situate the general or more universal questions of student satisfaction and confidence. By accessing persons involved in the vision and planning documents available for interviewing, follow-up questions addressed by individuals involved in both the old and the revised programme, and a review of the original proposal prepared for the BC College of Teachers, I came to view the Faculty's vision of the programme as innovative and progressive, incorporating many current research findings and, at times strikingly refreshing in its combination of elements for planning and implementation of a collaborative and comprehensive program.

Faculty Vision

In 1997 when the University of Victoria's Faculty of Education decided to redesign rather than simply amend their programme, they began a two-year, collaboratively intensive project to envision a teacher education programme without boundaries. Their vision focused on three key concepts: continuity, collaboration, and integration. Faculty aimed for field experiences that were extensive, progressive, and continuous. For example the new program would see students as gradually increasing their block placements over their three year programme rather than having one year of field intensive practica. Weekly field visits would enable students to remain continuously linked with the schools, providing opportunities to both observe a variety of grade levels and connect their university coursework with the field. Faculty envisioned students organized into cohorts, providing continuous support from both peers and mentor leaders in weekly seminar classes.

Faculty pictured a teacher education programme where university instructors worked collaboratively with teachers in the field, supporting students as they put course theories into practice. Providing not only a rich and supportive atmosphere for students, with coursework linked directly to field experiences, this would also create opportunities for university instructors to both stay connected with current teaching practices and provide a platform for more field based research. Additionally, school teachers would benefit from their exposure to the current trends and connections with Faculty researchers. With the aspiration that university instructors would also lead seminar classes and provide field supervision, Faculty designed a Professional Preparation Liaison Committee (as

outlined in the proposal for the BC College of Teachers in 1999¹⁷) to provide structured opportunities for those instructors involved in the teacher education programme, seminar leaders, and field experience supervisors to work together to maximize connections between the university and the field. Extending this collaboration throughout the courses, Faculty pictured cohort instructors meeting and working together to streamline course content, assignments, and provide links between subjects. Recognizing the diversity represented in today's schools and the need for teachers who are able to work across curriculum areas, Faculty innovatively created three strands that focused on meeting individual student needs while developing an appreciation of how to integrate subject areas. With students being able to choose their own strand and strand instructors working together to provide cohesive experiences, Faculty worked to realize a vision of students prepared for the extensive demands placed on today's elementary school teachers.

Vision to Implementation

As with most vision statements and planning documents the implementation stage often offers challenges such as pressures from the institutions, economic considerations, timetables, scheduling, and faculty and staff concerns. These may result in eventual compromise and alternatives from the original vision. The University of Victoria's revised elementary teacher education programme is not an exception in this regard.

Following on this I will now engage in an overview and highlight those initiatives

¹⁷ "This committee will operate to coordinate the content of the mentor seminars, and to provide links between the coursework and school experience components of the program. The membership will include the instructor(s) of EDUC 410, The professional role; the Chair of the Elementary Council; the Coordinator of Elementary School Experiences, and the Chair of the new department (or designate), as well as representatives of the Supervisors of Student Teachers, the sponsor teachers, and the students (to be selected by EDSA, the education students association). The committee will meet periodically throughout the year, and will provide an ongoing vehicle for the meaningful integration of the school experiences into the program, as well as an opportunity for the discussion of ways of better preparing students, sponsors, and supervisors for the practica, and for the "debriefing" of school experiences" (*Facilitative Structures*).

considered in the document as important for inclusion and track a few through to the implementation stage in order to better set the further context connection this researcher has indicated between those who planned the revised programme and those undergoing study in the programme. Frustrated by seeing no way of avoiding 7.5 units of non-education courses after entry into the programme (F2; F3), Faculty chose to reduce unit values for methodology courses while increasing the number of units students needed to complete each year. Within a university atmosphere focused on research, publications, and teaching courses instead of time in the field, those Faculty who had given so much of their time in the 2 year planning stages found that, on the implementation and practical level, they lacked the support necessary to provide field supervision. Without the creation of a Professional Preparation Liaison Committee, it remained up to individual instructors to form strand and cohort committees (F3); however, a lack of time and, perhaps, direction, resulted in the dissolution of any attempts to structure collaborative opportunities (F1). Coupled with the need for smaller class sizes and the pressures of increased enrolment numbers (F1; S2), administration increased the number of sessionals teaching in the programme. This resulted in a larger number of instructors, most of whom had not been a part of the planning phase and, due to their sessional relationship in the programme, not required to attend council meetings or meet with instructors teaching other sections of the same course. Apparent in the students' comments, this may have resulted in what many students perceived as disconnections and sometimes inconsistency from course to course. Reflected against these difficulties, we can perhaps begin to understand better the source of student concerns and possible avenues for addressing these concerns. To maintain continuity with previous chapters, I organized my discussion

around student concerns pertinent to student satisfaction, student feelings of confidence, extended field experiences, collaboration, and prior beliefs.

Student Satisfaction and Confidence

Faculty's vision of extended field experiences, built progressively from year to year, was the primary source for student satisfaction and confidence. While the mean satisfaction rating was 4.9 out of 10 (with 10 being not satisfied at all), students responses tended towards either end of the scale; students were either moderately satisfied (2 or 3) or very unsatisfied (8 or 9). The most prevalent reason given for high levels of satisfaction (as well as confidence) focused on the amount of field experience students completed. They found their field experiences valuable, contributing significantly to increasing feelings of confidence, and imperative to their development as a teacher (rated as having the greatest impact on their feelings of satisfaction). The reasons for their dissatisfaction were also quite specific, while often varying across cohort groups.

Removing academic electives from Year 3.

The primary source of dissatisfaction for Year 3 students was the 7.5 units of senior academic electives required in their third year along with the other education courses they were taking. Resulting in a minimum of six courses (in total) per term, these electives had students feeling overworked and stressed. Students resented these electives, feeling that they were not useful to them as teachers and took away time and energy from their education classes. Year 3 students wanted to be able to focus on their education classes only. Students expressed resentment and confusion towards the University for *making* them take these *useless* electives. Students seemed unaware that it was the BC College of Teachers requiring the non-education, academic electives. As expressed by

interviewees (F2, F3), Faculty found it difficult to schedule in the required academic electives, expressing frustration with the insinuation that education courses were, themselves, not academic in nature.

Student concerns suggest a variety of actions on behalf of the Faculty of Education. Perhaps one remedy to this would be for the University to provide students with more accurate information regarding the senior academic elective requirements (having a note in the Field Experience Handbooks is not enough). In addition, the Faculty of Education needs to review the BC College of Teacher's Policies and their own programme structure to identify possible alternatives to 7.5 units in third year. Perhaps other courses could move up from the first two years (e.g. Math 160A and B; math for the elementary teacher) in exchange for at least some of the senior electives. In addition, given students' reactions, the University of Victoria should consider advocating, on behalf of students, for changes with the BC College of Teachers.

Another possibility, as suggested by one interviewee (S2), focuses on the amount of support provided to students as they choose their academic electives. As outlined by the BC College of Teachers, a great deal of choice is available for students regarding electives¹⁸; however, given the subject areas covered in elementary classrooms, certain academic electives may be more useful to future elementary teachers than others. As suggested by the interviewee (S2), as students often end up choosing those electives that happen to fill a timetable slot, more support and guidance may assist them in making choices more relevant to their career as an elementary educator.

¹⁸ "Choose from Anthropology, Art, Astronomy, Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Commerce, Computer Science, Earth and Ocean Sciences, Economics, English, German, Greek and Roman Studies, French, Geography, History, Italian, Japanese, Kinesiology, Linguistics, Mandarin, Mathematics, Microbiology, Music, Philosophy, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Russian, Sociology, Spanish, Theatre, Visual Arts, Women's Studies" (University of Victoria, 2004, p. 60).

Balance of Fine Arts throughout programme.

When the Faculty redesigned its elementary teacher education programme, they felt it was important that students take methods courses in all three fine arts areas: drama, music, and visual arts. As opposed to other methodology courses that were 1.5 units, three hours a week over one semester, the fine arts methodology courses were each 2.0 units, two hours a week over two semesters. Students focused not on the unit value of the courses, but on the length of the courses. In Years 4 and 5, students felt that *a whole year* of fine arts was unbalanced with *half a year* for core subject areas such as language arts or math. Coupled with the feeling that students felt unprepared to teach language arts, math, and/or science, students wanted the fine arts courses reduced with more time spent in those areas they perceived as *dominating* the curriculum they would have to teach.

This is in contrast to the PDPP students who, because of their condensed programme, were only able to take one of the fine arts courses (value of 2.0 units). These students felt inadequately prepared to teach in the other fine arts areas. They shared that they would rather have the exposure to smaller portions of all three fine arts areas than an in-depth exposure to only one area. With these thoughts in mind, the University may need to consider possible programme revisions regarding the distribution of fine arts methodologies. While there is a great deal of value in exposing students to all three areas, students view having these courses spread over an entire year (two semesters), regardless that they are two hours a week instead of three, as extreme. Perhaps the University needs to reduce these courses to 1.5 units over one semester or, keep them as 2.0 units, but completed in one semester. In addition, to meet the perceived needs of PDPP students, the

University might create a separate two or three semester course (or series of courses) that provides a grounding in all three fine arts methodologies for PDPP students.

Student requests that the balance of time spent on subject areas more equally match the time dedicated in elementary schools (E.g. The domination of time spent learning to read and write in the primary grades.) are understandable. This request appears to contrast Faculty's dedication to covering all fine arts; however, I do not see this as such. From the old to the new programme, Faculty increased the number of course units dedicated to such core subjects as language arts and mathematics. They also sought to remain dedicated to developing elementary teachers conversant in all subject areas. The problem may lie in a lack of time and too much to cover.

Need for more assessment.

Students in all cohort groups expressed feeling a lack of competence regarding their ability to assess student achievement. In the 2004/2005 school year, only Year 5 students completed a .5 unit course on evaluation/assessment at the end of their school year (after their final field experience). While the intention was for instructors to cover assessment to some degree within each methodology course (F1, F2, F3), students in all years of the programme felt that assessment needed more coverage and needed coverage earlier in the programme. Heeding these concerns, the university needs to either (a) provide specific direction to course instructors to increase their coverage of assessment in each methodology course and/or (b) schedule a separate course on assessment at the beginning of the fourth year. The Faculty's vision of an integrated programme whereby courses complemented and supported one another, ensuring that all instructors effectively cover areas such as assessment, needed to exist within a collaborative framework.

Without opportunities to communicate and exchange course content and materials, the degree of coverage for skills such as assessment remain unknown. According to students, this coverage is not adequate to meet their perceived needs as future educators.

Extended Field Experience

While current trends in teacher education emphasize the value of continual placement field experiences for both preparing students and linking university coursework to the field, Year 4 and Year 5 students both expressed dissatisfaction with the weekly Wednesday visits to schools. Students felt that the Wednesday visits were “ineffective;” this gave a discontinuous experience that was difficult to plan for, resulting in more “busy work.” Students felt a one-week field experience in December would be of greater value. Even if completed in both Year 4 and Year 5, these 10 days of field experience would be replacing 28 days (based on planned Wednesday visits for 2004/2005 school year). Incongruent with this suggestion is students’ perceived need for more time in the schools.

This indicates that simply increasing the time spent in schools may not be enough; the quality of that time is also important. Students expressed that they felt “dropped” into the schools one day a week, little connection to their university courses, and that seminars were unrelated to their visits. While students viewed their university courses as disconnected from their field experiences, they still viewed the block placements as very important, vital to their confidence, and integral to their feelings of satisfaction. The question that comes to mind when contemplating students’ comments is why a continual placement, even if also disconnected to the university, was not of equivalent value? I would suggest here that we may locate an answer by looking to the level of integration students have with the field. During a block placement, while students may feel

disconnected from the university, they fully integrate into the school system. They become a part of school life, directed and supported by their mentor teacher (and, sometimes, a university supervisor), and moved through a progression of observation, practice teaching, and feedback. By visiting a school for one day a week, many students seem unable to integrate fully into the school. This then may reduce their ability to become and feel a part of the school routines, to progress through purposeful observation and practice teaching sessions. Given this possible lack of integration with the school community, the connection felt between university courses and the Wednesday visits becomes imperative; students may need to feel connected to something, whether the university or the field, to benefit from their continual placement. In this sense, students in the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme may feel as though there are three separate and distinct parts to their programme: their university courses, their block field experiences, and their Wednesday visits. Without having their visits on Wednesday connected to their courses or integrated into the field, students may perceive them as unsatisfying. How to improve this situation becomes of paramount importance.

Improving this situation may receive insight from the overwhelming support shared by Year 3 students regarding the SITE project visits done in combination with language arts and physical education methodology classes. As part of their language arts or physical education methodology classes, students and their instructor visited schools, observed classes (taught by school teachers and university instructor) specific to their course subject. Students then took turns teaching, observing their peers teach, and receiving feedback from their university instructor, the school teacher, and their peers. Students appeared to recognize this time in the schools as part of their university course.

They felt supported and experienced a direct connection between the university and the “realities” of teaching. Perhaps adopting a modified SITE approach to the Wednesday visits would increase the value students find in both their seminar classes and continual placement field experience.

One possibility would be for the seminars to relate more directly to the Wednesday visits. Every month, seminars would explore different subject areas (or, in Year 4, specific aspects of teaching such as assessment, classroom management, development of IEPs, etc.). On the Wednesday visits, seminar leaders would go *with* students to schools (one school per class section) to observe, develop their own microteaching lessons, teach, and receive feedback. This would turn the seminars and Wednesday visits into an integrated course directly linking the university with the field, increasing the practicality that students are requesting, and maximizing their field experience time. This would match Faculty’s original vision of collaboration between the university and the field, with the seminar classes providing much needed opportunities for students to link theory with the practical.

Placing these findings into the context of current research literature on extended field experiences, while support for extended field experiences is unquestioned, simply extending using a continual placement model is not. These students’ perceptions reveal that the amount of time for a continual placement model may not be as important as how the university connects itself to that time.

Collaboration

Congruent with previous research in teacher education, the level of collaboration between the field experience and the university appears to be a priority for students. Students expressed concerns that (a) their university course assignments were not linking to or adequately preparing them for their field experience assignments, (b) their university course content was not consistent (or, as cited in many cases, *unrealistic*) with what they were experiencing in the field, and (c) their seminar classes were not helpful or relevant to their field experiences. These three concerns are indicators that the collaboration between university and field is not occurring to the degree needed by students. While the vision of the redesigned programme focused on an increased collaboration (and continuity) between the field and the university, students are not seeing this vision as a realization. A look at the differences between the programme's vision and the current administration of the programme provides two possible ways to meet these perceived needs.

In order to increase the collaboration and continuity between the university and the field, Faculty originally envisioned both the development of a Professional Preparation Liaison Committee and university instructors that would teach seminar classes and supervise field experiences. Neither of these visionary ideas came to fruition. Rather than creating a Professional Preparation Liaison Committee for the coordination of university courses, seminars, and field experiences, continuity between these three programme areas resides with the Elementary Council (F3, S1). Unfortunately, meeting once a month, *hopefully* including all Faculty (and *inviting* all sessionals), and covering all content areas, discrepancies, and administration of the elementary programme, it may be that the Elementary Council is already overtaxed and unable to provide the focused

discussions needed for effective collaboration. In four of the five interviews, Faculty and staff shared that, at different times, members of the Elementary Council formed separate, smaller, and specific committees (e.g. fourth year course instructors' committee, strand committee) at different points in time; however, they were short-lived. Their lack of continuity may be due to the Elementary Council leaving responsibility for maintaining these committees with the individual instructors who often change over time. As a result, the elementary programme appears to lack a structured opportunity for collaboration between courses, seminars, and field experiences.

A very large and diversified network of Faculty, sessionals, and seminar leaders may further exacerbate the lack of a structured opportunity for collaboration. As shared in one Faculty interview (F1), when the elementary programme began in 2000/2001, class sizes were larger, number of course sections smaller, and, as a result, taught primarily by Faculty. However, the larger class sizes resulted in instructors overwhelmed with marking and feeling disconnected from students. Consequently, administration reduced class sizes, increased the number of course sections, and hired many sessionals to teach the additional courses. Sessionals who, for the most part, were not involved in the development of the elementary programme, are not required to attend Elementary Council meetings, and may only teach courses periodically provide an additional challenge to continuity. Without a structured opportunity for collaboration, providing continuity between Faculty, sessionals, and the field may be quite difficult. This may have also contributed to student concerns involving discontinuity between different sections of the same course, overlapping of content from one course to another, and assignment loads that are both too large and/or perceived as incongruent with the course unit value.

In addition, while Faculty envisioned a collaborative programme whereby the university instructors were also the seminar leaders and field experience supervisors, administratively, this has proven extremely challenging. For the 2004/2005 elementary programme school year, only three course instructors were also field experience supervisors. In two of the interviews (F2, S1), interviewees felt that the lack of instructor involvement in the field was due to a lack of support from the university.

You're not released from other teaching obligations you have when you do that. The timelines to do it are extraordinary and...I was forever sort of racing between...I was given schools that were close by precisely because I was teaching, but the other thing is the reward system. You hear it all the time; you're rewarded as a prof. on your publications. It's not the time you've spent in schools and the time (it's incredibly time intensive). There's got to be ways to do it and we're looking at it...[You need] a really strong commitment to the research of teacher education and that's the bridge, but unless you can sort of see that you can research your time in the schools...you're going to be penalized. (F2, p. 31)

Having university instructors in the field supervising benefits the field, the instructors, and the students. With university instructors having a presence in the field, this provides an opportunity to expose teachers, currently in the field, to the new research ideas and trends of the university and opens the possibility for collaboration on inquiry into the day-to-day workings of schools through action research, placing the site of practice and theory on equal footing. It provides an opportunity for the university to, perhaps, directly influence the current teaching practices of today's elementary school teachers and most certainly to have the teaching force inform theory. For the university instructor, spending time in the field provides a *reality-check* on what is currently happening (working and not working) in today's schools. In a programme where students perceive a disconnection or lack of *realistic expectations* with university instructors, time in the field may be invaluable. In addition, actually observing students teach in the field will also provide

instructors with specific indicators of where students need more assistance. Instructors can modify or alter assignments to meet the specific needs of students, giving assignments the much requested *relevancy* students perceived them as needing. Finally, having university instructors supervising students in the field provides students with the opportunity to receive feedback on their actual teaching behaviours, perceived by surveyed students as being the most valuable type of feedback.

A look at the student perceptions of their elementary programme reveals an apparent lack of collaboration between the university and the field. Two strategies that may improve this collaboration is the development of structured opportunities for university instructors (Faculty, sessionals, and seminar leaders) and field supervisors, similar to the originally envisioned Professional Preparation Liaison Committee. In addition, to provide discussions regarding course loads and course content, this committee may best separate into cohort committees with one for each of Year 3, Year 4, and Year 5 instructors. In combination with these structured opportunities for collaboration, the greater involvement of university instructors as supervisors in the field would be extremely beneficial. However, to dedicate this time to the field, instructors need recognition and support from the university both regarding release time and recognition of the value their presence in the field generates.

Prior Beliefs

While their beliefs about teachers, teaching, and the role of schools in today's community prior to entering their teacher education programme are unknown, their beliefs while in the programme, regardless of year or cohort, are consistent. Students see teachers as caring, patient, classroom managers, respected by society as professionals.

They see the student has having an active role in learning, which is contrary to previous research in this area. They feel it is the responsibility of the teacher education programme to help them develop and refine their own personal teaching philosophies while preparing them with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to teach in the elementary schools of today. Given the emphasis students place on defining their own teaching philosophy, the value they place on knowing teaching theory, and the recognition that their teacher education programme should meet these needs, student requests for less theory and more practice is puzzling.

Having students complain about too much theory, irrelevant assignments, and more practical is not new; these concerns are quite prevalent in teacher education research. However, rarely have these requests occurred along with such contrary expectations or beliefs. How is it that these students rate a teaching philosophy as more important than preparing for the practical and then call for less theory more practice? The ability to answer this question is beyond the scope of this study; however, survey responses do provide a variety of interesting questions worth further investigation. When students call for more *theory* and less *practice*, what do they think theory is? When they talk about a *teaching philosophy*, what do they think that is? What do they perceive the relationship between theory and practice to be? How do they think that relates to the actions of a teacher? How do they see a teaching philosophy *informing* their practice?

As suggested by a faculty interviewee (F1), while instructors may work to link the theory to the practical, do they do it *explicitly* enough? Are instructors providing theory and providing practical teaching suggestions and leaving it to students to make the connections? If so, are students making those connections? Are students able to make

those connections? If not, what do they need? When students complain about useless assignments and course content irrelevant to the classes they will be teaching, what makes them useless? Is it because they will not be able to take the assignment, as is, and implement it in the field? What about assignments which cause them to challenge their assumptions about teaching, which push them to reflect on the type of teacher they want to be; are those assignments useless? Do students perceive these assignments as useless because they are not *usable*? The strategies that instructors use to link theory and practice need exploration. How do students respond to different strategies? Do students find some strategies easier to follow than others? We need to ask many questions of these students to understand thoroughly what *less theory, more practice* really means.

Limitations and Implications of the Study

While, compared with other student surveys a 67% completion rate is above average, only 36% of PDPP students completed the survey. In a programme where almost one third of its students are PDPP students, caution when generalizing is important. In addition, as the survey responses are specific to students in a single programme in Western Canada, generalization beyond the immediate campus must be tentative. However, in an attempt to make this generalization more reliable, I purposely included a great deal of information pertaining to the structure and delivery of the programme. Using this detailed outline of the elementary teacher education programme at the University of Victoria, other programmes may be more able to apply these findings reliably to their programme development and/or revision.

When interpreting results and using them to inform programme revision, it is important to realize that they represent only the voices of students currently enrolled in

the programme. I did *not* survey Faculty, instructors, administrators, field supervisors, or mentor teachers. While important, student voices should not be the only voices informing programme revision. An elementary teacher education programme that hopes to prepare students to enter the diverse and demanding field of teaching requires a collaborative effort. Knowledge of the field, Faculty research, and student perceptions need to work in a system of reciprocity, each informing the other. The field offers both a comprehensive view of current teacher roles and responsibilities as well as an opportunity for students to test their skills and hone their strategies. Faculty and the research conducted through Universities provide insight into current trends in education as well as provide direction for future improvement, expansion, and reflection. Student perceptions, as gathered in this study, provide both a place to start and move forward. As clearly described by students in this study, they see themselves as responsible for their development as an educator. It is their responsibility to decide which knowledge, skills, and attitudes to take from their teacher education programme. Their willingness to participate, to both actively and critically involve themselves with their courses and field experiences, is imperative. In their own words, without their willingness to be “open-minded,” the opportunities and insights afforded by even the most innovative teacher education programme are lost. A resistant student population nullifies even the most careful of programme preparations. As a result, it is important for programme administrators and Faculty to gather, reflect on, and take heed of student perceptions of their programme. Keeping in mind, while important, they are not the only voice that we need to listen to.

This study outlines many programme revisions, specific to the University of Victoria’s elementary teacher education programme, that may increase student

satisfaction. I provided numerous suggestions, based both on student concerns and the design of the programme, to look at alternatives for managing Year 3 academic electives, fine arts methodology courses, and seminar classes. In addition, using the insights gleaned from the Faculty's vision of the programme, I made specific suggestions to increase the level of collaboration that exists both amongst courses as well as between university courses and the field. The degree to which other teacher education programmes can use these suggestions to inform their programme is dependent on the similarities that may exist between programmes.

Situating this study in the current teacher education research literature, I found support for the use of extended field experiences and the importance of (and, perhaps, difficulty in attaining) collaboration between the field and the university. Pushing the discussion surrounding the use of continual placement field experiences, this study *challenges* the notion that just increasing the amount of time in the field is sufficient for student satisfaction or confidence development. Instead, results suggest that how the field experience is connected to the university and/or integrated with the field is just as important, if not more important. Additional research looking at other teacher education programmes using a continual placement model and the support provided by the university is called for.

Creating even more questions, this study also highlighted the need to investigate more thoroughly students' understanding of what theory is and how it informs practice. Contrary to most student exit surveys which simply call for less theory and more practice, this study highlighted a contradiction between the value students' placed on theory in relation to their development as an educator and their suggestions of reducing it.

Researchers need to ask comprehensive questions of students regarding their understanding of theory and its relationship to practice. What students define as useful and relevant needs exploring. In addition, this survey illustrates the importance of asking students mutually-informing questions in a variety of ways; the spiral survey design revealed inconsistencies not previously reported by student surveys.

Finally, and perhaps as a testament to the Faculty and students in the University of Victoria's elementary teacher education programme, apparent in interviews, documents, and student survey responses was a passion and dedication to excellent practice *consistent* across both groups. Contrary to the persistent assumption in much research literature that a disconnection exists between the vision of Faculty and the perceptions of students, this study provided a rich example of Faculty and student voices in unison. An awareness of this *common ground* between Faculty and students can go a long way in helping both groups to work collaboratively towards innovative teacher education programmes that meet the expectations and needs of both Faculty and students; it provides a place to start. I suggest that the *myth* that Faculty and students have opposing interests regarding what makes a teacher education programme valuable needs re-evaluating. It is possible that survey results, disjoint from an understanding of the context of a teacher education programme, have perpetuated this myth. It is important for future researchers to realize that interpreting surveys out of context may provide an incomplete, even misleading, basis for programme revision.

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Appendix A

Faculty and Staff Letter of Consent
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria
PO Box 1700 STN CSC
Victoria BC V8W 2Y2

Dear _____ :

**RE: CONSENT FORM—STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER
EDUCATION**

My name is Sheryl MacMath and I am a M.A. student in the Curriculum and Instruction department of the University of Victoria. My Master's thesis is titled, *Perceptions of undergraduate education students from within a Teacher Education programme*. The new teacher education programme, implemented at the University of Victoria in 2000, provides an excellent opportunity to research my inquiry. As part of my research, I would like to interview you about the development and implementation of the new programme.

The purpose of the study is to identify the perceptions that students have about their teacher education programme. I am hoping that my research will provide valuable insight into the development and implementation of teacher education programmes. To effectively do this, an accurate picture of the context provided by that programme needs to be detailed. To accomplish this, I am completing a document analysis of records regarding the development and implementation of the new programme at the University of Victoria. To provide a more comprehensive picture of the programme, as well as ensure an accurate analysis of the documents, I am interviewing faculty and staff involved with the development and implementation of the programme. I am hoping that you are willing to volunteer for an interview.

Interviews will be completed on an individual basis with myself. Each interview should take approximately 1 hour to complete. The interview will be taped and later transcribed. Data acquired from the interviews will be analyzed and relevant themes will be identified. These will be provided to you, along with a copy of the transcription, for your review, approval, and additional comments. This data will not be used for any purposes other than this study. Paper data originals will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and all computer data files will be kept on a password protected computer at my place of residence. Paper data originals will be stored for a period of one year after which point they will be shredded. Computer data files will be kept for a period of two years after which point they will be erased.

As public documents currently exist identifying your involvement with the teacher education programme, the confidentiality of your responses may be limited. While your name will not appear in my final thesis, it may be possible to identify your involvement. Given that the purpose of the interview is to establish a context for the students' perceptions regarding the teacher education programme, I do not expect this to be a problem. However, to ensure that you are comfortable with your involvement, you will

have the opportunity to review the thesis before it is presented. Any concerns with confidentiality will be dealt with prior to its release.

Having you volunteer for this study would be of great assistance to me; however, there is no obligation for your participation. If you choose to not be a part of this study, there will be no penalties for that decision. If you do choose to participate, I will be grateful. However, if at some point during the study you wish to withdraw, there is no penalty for that decision. As soon as you identify that you do not wish to participate, I will erase all data corresponding to you and your involvement.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact either myself, by phone (250 598 2768) or email (macmath@shaw.ca) or my graduate supervisor, Dr. Laurie Baxter (250 721 7777, lbaxter@uvic.ca). In addition, you may verify ethical approval of this study or raise any concerns you might have by contacting the Associate Vice-President Research at (250) 472 4545 or ovprhe@uvic.ca.

By signing the lines below, you are identifying that you are volunteering to be a part of this study. If you do not wish to volunteer, please return the form unsigned. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Printed name of Interviewee
Interviewee

Signature of

Date of Signature

Sincerely,

Sheryl MacMath

Appendix B

Faculty Interview Questions

1. Please identify yourself, your position at the University of Victoria, and your involvement/work with the teacher education programme.
2. Prior to the new programme, what programme existed at the University?
3. Why was the design of a new teacher education programme implemented? What were the goals and objectives of the new programme?
4. What is the theoretical framework of the new programme? How did it hope to meet the objectives of the programme? Who/What organizations were involved in determining the theoretical framework?
5. How was the programme created? Who contributed? What steps existed in the development of the programme? What steps were taken for the implementation? What steps were difficult? Which were easy? Why?
6. How were faculty informed or instructed in the new programme, if at all? What was their response?
7. How has the programme been implemented at the University by instructors?
8. What type of ongoing assessment of the new programme is taking place? What have been the results thus far?
9. Have there been any student responses to the programme? If so, what are they?
10. Do you feel that the programme is meeting its objectives? Why or why not?
11. Do you feel that the programme will generate more effective teachers than the previous programme? Why or why not?

Staff Interview Questions (i)

1. Looking at the Education Advising Office, Director of Elementary Education Programme, Associate Dean's Office, General Education Office, and the School Experience Office:
 - 1.1. What do you see as the function of each office?
 - 1.1.1. How do the roles and responsibilities differ?
 - 1.1.2. What is the overlap?
 - 1.1.3. How do faculty and sessionals access or interact with each office?
 - 1.2. What opportunities do the offices have to communicate with each other?

1. What is the function of the Professional Experiences Liaison Committee?
 - 1.1. How often do you meet?
 - 1.2. How does it connect to other committees such as the Elementary Council and the Student Advisory Committee?
 - 1.3. How is information transferred to the other departments?
 - 1.4. What differences have the committee made to the running of the programme?

2. What is the function of the Student Advisory Committee?
 - 2.1. How often do you meet?
 - 2.2. How is information transferred to the other departments?
 - 2.3. What differences have the committee made to the running of the programme?

3. With regards to the Handbooks given to students each year:
 - 3.1. Is there an example template for the course descriptions?
 - 3.2. Who writes the course descriptions?
 - 3.3. Do instructors receive a copy of the handbooks? If so, how do instructors use the handbooks?
 - 3.4. When do students receive the handbooks and from where?
 - 3.5. I noticed that EdSA provides information for the Handbooks? Why is mention not made of the Student Advisory Committee, Elementary Council, or Professional Experiences Liaison Committee?

4. Comparing the administration of the school experience from prior to 1998 to this year:
 - 4.1. Is it easier or harder to administrate? Why?
 - 4.2. How does student level of competency compare, in your opinion?

5. What opportunities for collaboration exist between staff and faculty? Between faculty? Between supervisors, mentors, and faculty? Between students and all offices? What connections do you have to faculty who are teaching courses? To seminar leaders? To mentor leaders? Do any opportunities to compare assignment loads or student timetabling exist for faculty and course instructors?

6. According to the programme design sent to the BC College of Teachers, numerous courses were designed to be collaboratively taught by faculty and seminar leaders. What are some examples of when that has occurred and what was the effect of that collaboration?

Staff Interview Questions (ii)

2. In comparison to the 1998/99 school year and the 2004/005 school year:
 - 2.1. How many people are currently enrolled in the programme?
 - 2.2. What was the average grade of those accepted into the programme?
 - 2.3. How many interviews did the Faculty hold prior to admission?
 - 2.4. What did the transition programme (98/99, 99/00) look like and how long was it in effect?
3. Looking at the Education Advising Office, Director of Elementary Education Programme, Associate Dean's Office, General Education Office, and the School Experience Office:
 - 3.1. What do you see as the function of each office?
 - 3.1.1. How do the roles and responsibilities differ?
 - 3.1.2. What is the overlap?
 - 3.1.3. How do faculty and sessionals access or interact with the advising office?
 - 3.2. What opportunities do the offices have to communicate with each other?
4. How often are each of the courses scheduled to run?
5. How are the different cohorts scheduled into classes? How are students placed in each strand?
6. How often does the Faculty meet the 5% quota for First Nations admission?
7. Does the advising centre play a role in the Elementary Council and, if so, what is that role?



Perceptions of a Teacher Education Programme

Dear Teacher Candidate:

You are asked to participate in a study looking at the perceptions of undergraduate education students in relation to their Teacher Education programme. Sheryl MacMath, a M.A. student attending the University of Victoria, is conducting this study in conjunction with the Associate Dean's Office in the Faculty of Education. The information gathered from this study will assist in the evolution of the Teacher Education programme at the University of Victoria and satisfy the requirements for a Masters thesis. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. You may complete any or all of the questions. By returning this survey, you give consent for your responses to be used. Thank you for your time and for sharing your opinions and insights.

Sincerely,

Sheryl MacMath

1. What programme type are you in?

Regular (if regular, what year? 3 4 5)

PDPP (1.5yrs)

Internship

2. Circle what you consider the 5 most important attributes of an excellent teacher.

Reflective practitioner	Can manage multiple needs at once	Active problem solver	Appreciates aesthetics
Desire to serve	Self-knowledgeable	Appreciates diversity	Empathetic
Creative	Effective planner	Ethical	Patient and encouraging
Effective classroom manager	Knowledgeable and informed	Sees self as agent for social change	Able to think on their feet
Empowered	Teampayer	Energetic	Committed
Mentor	Organized	Flexible	Loves children
Time efficient	Loves teaching	Lifelong learner	Effective motivator

3. How much do you agree with the statement that a teacher is a professional?

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Why do you feel a teacher is or is not a professional? Please define professional.

5. Identify the degree to which the University of Victoria's Teacher Education programme accomplishes each purpose (1 = meets purpose completely, 5 = does not meet purpose at all)

Type of Purpose	My Programme				
	Meets		Does not		
	1	2	3	4	5
The purpose of Teacher Education is to enable students to critically evaluate current school practices and initiate future growth.					
The purpose of Teacher Education is to help students acquire teaching strategies and management techniques.	1	2	3	4	5
The purpose of Teacher Education is to develop each student's knowledge base of research and theory to guide their actions.	1	2	3	4	5
The purpose of Teacher Education is to enable students to replicate the current effective practices in the field.	1	2	3	4	5
The purpose of Teacher Education is to help students reflect on and refine their personal philosophies of education.	1	2	3	4	5

6. There are three main partners responsible for the development of elementary teacher candidates: elementary schools (field), university, and you, the candidate. Explain what you feel the roles of each are.

Elementary Schools (Field)

University

Candidate (You)

7. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing completely confident and 10 representing not at all confident, circle the number identifying how confident you feel you are to work in the teaching profession? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Based on your response to question 7, circle the impact of the following experiences on your level of confidence with 1 being the greatest impact to 5 being the least amount of impact.

	Impact				
	Greatest				Least
Your experiences as a student in elementary and high school.	1	2	3	4	5
The practicum(s) you will/have completed in your Teacher Education programme.	1	2	3	4	5
The courses (excluding practicum) in your Teacher Education programme.	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback you have received from others regarding your ability to teach and/or work with children.	1	2	3	4	5
Other? Please specify: _____	1	2	3	4	5

9. Please explain your response to #8. Which specific experiences had the greatest impact (positive or negative) on your confidence and why?

For each of the following statements, identify how much you agree or disagree.

10. Once a teacher has an established set of lesson plans, they should be used year after year.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. Curriculum should be primarily based on provincial standards.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. Teachers need to work autonomously so that they can make independent decisions regarding their students.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. Effective teachers have mastered specific skills in planning, management, and evaluation.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. Schools should actively involve students in social change to reform society.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
15. Once certified to teach, the effort teachers expend in continuously learning drops.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
16. Curriculum should be primarily based on individual students' needs and interests.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
17. To be lifelong learners, teachers must remain intellectually engaged and critically alert.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
18. The purpose of schools is to ensure practical preparation for life and work.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
19. Reflecting on your teaching philosophy contributes to a teacher's ability to effectively teach.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
20. Teachers should experiment and adapt the curriculum to meet individual student needs.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
21. The purpose of schools is to encourage the personal development of each student.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
22. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing completely satisfied and 10 representing not satisfied at all, circle the number identifying how satisfied you are with your Teacher Education programme at the University of Victoria. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
23. Based on your response to question 22, circle the amount of impact the following aspects of your Teacher Education programme have had on your level of satisfaction, with 1 being the greatest impact to 5 being the least amount of impact.

	Impact				
	Greatest				Least
Your development as a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
Pacing of the Teacher Education programme.	1	2	3	4	5
Length of the Teacher Education programme.	1	2	3	4	5
The degree of challenge you have experienced in the programme.	1	2	3	4	5
Your feeling of competency at teaching the content of the IRPs. Are there areas you do not feel competent to teach? If so, please identify:	1	2	3	4	5

24. Please explain your satisfaction with your Teacher Education programme further.

25. For the following, check off whether you think these characteristics can be taught as part of a Teacher Education programme or if they are personal attributes that a person either has or has not **(one or other)**.

	Taught	Attribute
Patient and encouraging		
Reflective practitioner		
Knowledgeable and informed		
Creates a climate that promotes equality		
Cares for students		
Able to improvise on the spur of the moment		
Maintains clear standards of mutually respectful behavior		
Uses individualized and attention-getting strategies		
Shows enthusiasm		
Divides lessons into small, easily digestible pieces		
Empathetic		
Ethical		
Lifelong learner		
Mentor		

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return it to the survey presenter.

Appendix D

Survey Revision Recommendations

- Q5 Identify the degree to which the University of Victoria's teacher education programme accomplishes each purpose (1 = meets purpose completely, 5 = does not meet purpose at all).**

An area for students to provide written explanations of their numerical responses would have been insightful. In addition, when completing this question, numerous students needed to clarify the rating scale. Students remarked that success (in this case, meeting the purpose completely) usually referred to the larger number (e.g. receiving a rating of 5 out of 5).

- Q6 Explain what you feel the roles are for elementary schools (field), university, and you, the candidate.**

In reviewing student comments and reflecting back on questions asked by students as they completed this survey, some students were unclear as to whether they were to describe the roles of the field, university, and student as they felt they *should* be or as they felt they *were* in their programme. Some students used the space provided to do both. These comments were very enlightening and provided specific recommendations regarding the programme. It would have been useful to have provided more space for writing and asked students to complete both tasks: what do you feel the roles *should* be and what do you feel they currently *are* in your programme? In addition, some students, when handing in their survey, shared that they wished there had been more opportunity to provide comments on specific aspects of the programme (e.g. field experience, mentor teachers, and course work). Having this question as two parts may have met this need.

- Q7 On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing completely confident and 10 representing not at all confident, circle the number identifying how confident you feel you are to work in the teaching profession.**

As with question 5, students reported confusion regarding the rating scale. Again, students felt the scale should have had a score of 10 out of 10 representing completely confident. Some students felt so strongly about this, they made announcements as reminders to the rest of the class while I administered the survey.

- Q8** Based on your response to question 7, circle the impact of the following experiences on your level of confidence with 1 being the greatest impact to 5 being the least amount of impact.

Regarding the formatting of question 8, some students expressed confusion; they found it confusing to rate the amount of impact a factor had on their confidence level. When first reading the question, some students thought they were to identify those factors that *contributed* to their confidence levels. In other words, what factors positively supported or resulted in an increase in confidence. When rereading the question, some students felt it difficult to respond as question #8 asked for impact, regardless of positive or negative. Some written comments along the margins provided insight into whether the factor (e.g. coursework) positively or negatively affected the confidence levels. Again, students shared that the rating scale would have made more sense to have the greatest number (5) matched to greatest impact. In retrospect, given some of the confusion involved in answering the question, as well as students' demonstrated need to share whether a factor had a positive or negative impact, the question would provide more reliable information if it asked students to rate the type (positive or negative) of impact a factor has had on their confidence levels and then rate how important the factor was. In addition, given its prevalence, in the future I would add an additional factor regarding previous work experience with children.

- Q9** Please explain your response to question 8. Which specific experiences had the greatest impact (positive or negative) on your confidence and why?

Confusion between sharing which factors had the greatest impact on confidence and sharing which factors had the greatest *positive* impact continued into question 9. The majority of responses focused on those factors that students felt *increased* their confidence.

- Q22** On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing completely satisfied and 10 representing not satisfied at all, circle the number identifying how satisfied you are with your teacher education programme at UVic.

As with question 7, students felt the scale would have made more sense if a rating of 10 out of 10 correlated with greatest satisfaction.

- Q23** Based on your response to question 22, circle the amount of impact the following aspects of your teacher education programme have had on your level of satisfaction, with 1 being the greatest impact to 5 being the least amount of impact.

Again, students experienced difficulty understanding how to rate the impact of different programme aspects. Confusion resulted as students tried to rate the degree of impact an aspect had on their satisfaction with the programme as opposed to indicating how much a programme aspect had either positively or negatively affected their satisfaction with the programme. Consequently, caution concerning the generalization of results is important. It was very informative to look at the trends and variances of competency concerns across cohort groups. This provides very specific direction for programme revision. In the future, I suggest that this question expand, asking students to share the degree to which they feel competent to teach in the different subject areas and/or teaching skills (e.g. Do students feel more competent in classroom management, assessment, reporting, giving directions, leading groups, etc?).

- Q24** Please explain your satisfaction with your teacher education programme further.

More than any other question in the survey, this question resulted in the greatest level of proliferation from students. Numerous surveys had writing in the space provided, along the margins of the page, and continued on to the front of the survey. In the future, surveys should provide more space for student responses to this question.

- Q25** For the following, check off whether you think these characteristics can be taught as part of a teacher education programme or if they are personal attributes that can a person either has or has not.

Several students checked off both taught and attribute for a given characteristic. As a result, in the future, I would modify this question to include a third column, allowing students to choose *both*. Providing this option for all students may affect question results.