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Expectations, Satisfaction, and Long-term Impact: Evaluating the English Teacher Training Course at the Iran Language Institute

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Abstract

Teacher professional development plays a critical role in enhancing educational outcomes, with Teacher Training Courses (TTCs) serving as a primary avenue for improving teaching quality. This study evaluates the effectiveness of an English TTC conducted at the Iran Language Institute (ILI) by employing a concurrent mixed-methods approach. Data were gathered from TTC candidates, attendees, and ILI teachers to assess their expectations, immediate evaluation, and delayed evaluation of the TTC. Seven interviews with TTC candidates were conducted to capture expectations, while 69 questionnaires from attendees and 85 from ILI teachers provided immediate and delayed evaluations respectively. Both interviews and questionnaires were structured around the five standards of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), and the data were analyzed using content analysis and descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that candidates expected the TTC to focus on modern teaching techniques, syllabus design, classroom management, and supporting diverse learners. Besides, satisfaction levels were higher among female teachers and TTC attendees compared to male teachers and ILI teachers respectively. All in all, areas such as supporting diverse learners and professional development emerged with the lowest levels of satisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of tailoring TTCs to address specific needs, particularly in areas where satisfaction levels are suboptimal, to ensure the continued improvement of teaching quality and student outcomes.

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1. Introduction

Teacher training courses (TTCs) are widely acknowledged for their role in enhancing the pedagogical skills of educators (Ganji et al., 2018). Scholars contend that TTCs not only contribute to individual professional growth but also have broader societal implications across scientific, economic, and cultural spheres (Cruickshank et al., 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2006; TEDMEM, 2014). Participation in teacher preparation programs enables educators to refine their skills and keep pace with evolving educational practices (Saiti & Saitis, 2006). Moreover, the development of high-quality teacher education programs is essential to uphold educational standards (Akpınar, Çolak & Yiğit, 2012; Whitty, 2014).

In recent years, there has been increasing research interest in the effectiveness of teacher education programs in Iran (Aliakbari & Tabatabaei, 2019; Baleghizade, 2002; Ganji et al., 2018; Kazemi & Ashrafi, 2014; Shahmohammadi, 2012). Studies have highlighted disparities between candidate expectations and program outcomes, suggesting deficiencies in program design and execution (Aliakbari & Tabatabaei, 2019). Particularly, Iranian TTCs have been found to deviate from international standards, notably in planning, execution, and assessment (Ganji et al., 2018). Furthermore, concerns have been raised about the adequacy of teacher education programs in preparing educators to address the educational challenges in Iran (Shahmohammadi, 2012).

The Iran Language Institute (ILI), founded in 1926 as the Iran-America Institute, stands as a prominent language institution in Iran with a widespread presence nationwide (ili.ir, n.d.). Offering courses in various languages and serving a substantial learner base, the ILI prioritizes the recruitment of competent instructors and conducts rigorous biannual TTCs (Baleghizade, 2002). However, despite the significance of these training programs, there remains a paucity of research assessing their effectiveness.

Notwithstanding the structured approach of the ILI's TTCs, challenges persist among ILI teachers, as evidenced by classroom observations and feedback from learners (ilisurvey.ir; students.ili.ir). This study aims to evaluate the ILI's TTC from the perspectives of candidates, attendees, and employed teachers, with specific attention to gender and experience differences. Research inquiries will explore candidates' expectations, attendees' satisfaction, and teachers' perceptions of the TTC.

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2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Framework for Evaluation: Understanding the California Standards for Teaching Profession (CSTP) in Teacher Training Assessment

The theoretical framework utilized in this study revolves around the CSTP, developed by the California Center of Education, renowned for its pioneering contributions to the educational landscape in the United States. This framework emerged from the center's dedication to fostering a rigorous learning environment and facilitating opportunities for novice teachers' professional growth. Recognizing the importance of preparing beginning teachers through intensive learning activities, the CSTP aims to provide a comprehensive foundation for lifelong professional development.

According to experts at the California Center of Education, a standard TTC course should align with the CSTP framework to effectively train teachers. The CSTP framework is designed to offer a common perspective for teachers of diverse languages and cultures, enabling them to enhance their teaching practices. Its utility extends to various purposes, including establishing professional goals to improve teaching practices, fostering reflection on student achievement and teacher performance, and guiding teachers toward professional development objectives.

The CSTP comprises six standards that underpin both theoretical knowledge and practical performance in the teaching profession. These standards are intricately interconnected and collectively define the essence of the teaching profession. While each standard holds significance individually, they are most impactful when considered in conjunction with one another. In essence, these standards complement each other, contributing to the holistic nature of the teaching profession.

The six standards outlined by the CSTP are summarized in Table 1, followed by an in-depth exploration of each standard to elucidate its nuances and implications within the teaching context. Through the integration of these standards, the CSTP framework provides a comprehensive roadmap for effective teacher preparation and professional development.

Table 1: CSTP, (CSTP, 2009, pp. 5-16)

Number	Standards
1	Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

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2	Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning
3	Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning
4	Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students
5	Assessing Students for Learning
6	Developing as a Professional Educator

The CSTP standards have been integral to various educational initiatives since the 1990s, serving diverse purposes. Initiatives such as Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment have leveraged the CSTP framework to promote formative assessments, thereby facilitating the development of beginning teachers' practice (California Department of Education, 2012). Additionally, both the Teaching Performance Expectation and the Teaching Performance Assessment have utilized and are linked with the CSTP framework. Teaching performance expectations are a set of criteria, developed by Commission on Teacher Credentialing, which guide teacher education programs and provide a roadmap for what candidates need to know and be able to do to provide effective instruction. In fact, the teaching performance expectations were introduced so that all the teacher candidates obtaining initial credentials- Multiple Subject, Single Subject, and Education Specialist- acquire a set of common expectations (a common trunk) and then branch off into their specialty areas. California Teaching Performance Assessment is a performance-based assessment tool which is designed on the bases of teaching performance expectations. In California, all the teaching training programs need to administer a teaching performance assessment. The main aim is to assess the practical skills and knowledge of the pre-service teachers to make sure that they possess the essential teaching skills needed for teaching K-12 students. To be more exact, both TPA and TPE are aligned with the CSTP and are used in pre-service training courses. Teaching performance assessment is based on the pedagogical sequence of plan, teach and assess, reflect, and apply.

Over the past decade, the CSTP framework has undergone revisions to align with the evolving needs of today's educational landscape, particularly regarding teachers' roles within society (California Department of Education, 2012). Originally structured around six distinct yet interconnected standards

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on various domains of teaching practice, the CSTP framework has also been linked to teacher professional development.

In its current iteration, the CSTP framework encompasses five levels of teaching practice, reflecting a continuum of professional growth and development. These levels, namely emerging, exploring, applying, integrating, and innovating, provide a nuanced understanding of teachers' progression within each CSTP standard. Table 2 outlines these five levels across all six CSTP standards, as elucidated by the California Department of Education (2012, pp. 7-10). Through this comprehensive framework, the CSTP facilitates ongoing reflection and growth among educators, fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the teaching profession.

Table 2: Five Levels of CSTP according to California Department of Education (Code, 2012, pp. 7-10)

Standard 1:	**Engaging and supporting all students in learning**
Level 1: Emerging	Developing awareness of curriculum and teaching practices to support students' learning and promote students' engagement.
Level 2: Exploring	Demonstrating the curriculum by exploring new and additional teaching practices to develop students' understanding and engagement.
Level 3: Applying	Applying the curriculum using the various teaching practices to maximize students' understanding and engagement.
Level 4: Integrating	Integrating the vast domain knowledge of curriculum, instructional practices, and the variety of resources to improve students' understanding and engagement.
Level 5: Innovating	Designing and applying extensive curriculum with varied instructional strategies to support in-depth studies of the content and students' learning.

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Standard 2	**Creating and maintaining an effective environment for student learning**
Level 1: Emerging	Recognizing the important role of constructing an effective learning environment that leads to achievement.
Level 2: Exploring	Guiding the development of a successful learning environment that focuses on achievement.
Level 3: Applying	Applying a supportive environment in which all students can learn.
Level 4: Integrating	Building a rigorous learning environment that challenges all the students.
Level 5: Innovating	Facilitating the construction of a learning environment that is supportive, rigorous, and leads to achievement.
Standard 3	**Understanding and organizing subject matter for student learning**
Level 1: Emerging	Demonstrating knowledge of teaching as discrete skills as described in CSTP.
Level 2: Exploring	Developing knowledge of the concerned factors of effective instruction, learning goals, assessments, and content.
Level 3: Applying	Using CSTP for making a connection among effective instruction, learning goals, assessments, and content standards.
Level 4: Integrating	Organizing the knowledge of the inter-relationships between elements of effective instruction, learning goals, assessments, and content.
Level 5: Innovating	Applying knowledge of the CSTP to interrelate effective instruction, learning goals, and assessments across content areas.

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Standard 4	**Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students**
Level 1: Emerging	Planning lessons utilizing available resources.
Level 2: Exploring	Planning lessons using the vast knowledge of curriculum, related materials, and assessments.
Level 3: Applying	Adopting a variety of instructions and applying different adjustments in lessons.
Level 4: Integrating	Planning lessons using different strategies to differentiate instructions as informed by multiple assessments.
Level 5: Innovating	Planning instruction flexibility utilizing a repertoire of teaching practices as a result of ongoing assessment.
Standard 5	**Assessing students for learning**
Level 1: Emerging	Demonstrating a deep understanding of required assessment and uses of data to inform student progress.
Level 2: Exploring	Exploring the various types of assessments to learn about student learning needs.
Level 3: Applying	Using different kinds of assessments that provide data on student learning leads to planning, and reflecting regularly with colleagues to develop teaching practices and results in student achievement.
Level 4: Integrating	Developing, applying, and integrating assessments into instruction that provide ongoing data for planning comprehensive instructions that match to diverse needs of students.
Level 5: Innovating	Using a wide range of assessments during instruction to identify student learning needs and therefore adjust instruction to increase student achievement.

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Standard 6	**Developing as a professional educator**
Level 1: Emerging	Collaborating with colleagues to reflect and improve teaching practice, and support student success.
Level 2: Exploring	Collaborating with colleagues, personnel, families, and resources to present high-quality instruction and support student understanding.
Level 3: Applying	Holding regular feedback sessions to collaborate with colleagues to improve teaching practice and student success.
Level 4: Integrating	Gathering data from a wide range of resources to improve the skills of collaboration and reflection as a habit of practice which leads to teacher effectiveness and student learning.
Level 5: Innovating	Facilitating collaborative learning communities focused on providing high-quality instruction and maximizing learning.

In a study conducted by Darling-Hammond (2006), assessment strategies employed to evaluate teacher education program outcomes in the Stanford Teacher Education Programs were compared. Through interviews with candidates and systematic observation of programs based on Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA), Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), it was found that CSTP encapsulated the standards of these programs. Consequently, it was inferred that CSTP is a composite framework integrating INTASC, TPA, STEP, and standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, outlining the requisite knowledge and skills for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The data collection in this research involved interviews with program candidates, and most participant groups (employers, candidates, and teachers) rated the CSTP-based program highly.

In another study by Aliakbari and Tabatabaei (2019), the Teacher Education Program at Frahangian University was evaluated using the CSTP framework. Data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews from three participant groups in the context of Iranian Teacher Education

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Universities, similar to the setting of the current study. Unlike Darling-Hammond's (2006) research, Aliakbari and Tabatabaei's (2019) study was conducted in Iran. Thus, it can be inferred that the CSTP framework is applicable and valid within the Iranian context as well.

2.2. Exploring the Landscape: Insights from Previous Research on Teacher Training Programs

The evaluation of teacher training programs is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of these programs in preparing teachers for the classroom. Previous studies have explored various aspects of teacher training programs in different contexts, shedding light on their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

Bray and Howard's (1980) investigation into various types of teacher training for graduate teaching assistants illuminated significant shifts in teaching behavior and student ratings of instruction. However, the absence of student achievement measurements leaves a critical gap in understanding the true efficacy of these trained teaching assistants. Similarly, Erozan's (2005) study evaluating language improvement courses in a pre-service English teacher education program revealed noteworthy deficiencies, such as the need for increased exposure to authentic materials and more relevant teaching methodologies. This resonates with Şalli-Çopur's (2008) findings, which highlighted graduates' calls for enhanced practice opportunities and a reduction in unnecessary coursework.

In the realm of in-service training, Uçar Duzan (2006) reported overall satisfaction among teacher trainers but identified shortcomings in trainees' practical skill development. This echoes the concerns raised by Hashemian and Azadi (2010), who found no significant correlation between program components and teachers' actual teaching practices, pointing to potential flaws in the training's applicability to real-world classroom settings.

Moreover, Ganji et al. (2018) shed light on disparities between Iranian and international English TTCs, emphasizing deficiencies in implementation and evaluation within the Iranian context. This aligns with the concerns raised by Kazemi and Ashrafi (2014) regarding the ineffectiveness of prescribed teacher preparation programs, underscoring the urgent need for substantial revisions.

In contrast, Loyalka et al.'s (2019) large-scale evaluation of professional development programs in China revealed a systemic failure to impact teacher and student outcomes, suggesting fundamental flaws in program design and implementation. Similarly, Rajabi et al. (2012) highlighted the positive

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effects of an ESP in-service teacher training program, yet the study's focus on a specific domain underscores the need for comprehensive assessments across various teaching contexts to ascertain broader effectiveness.

Furthermore, Aliakbari and Tabatabaei's (2019) study on teacher education programs in Iran revealed notable gender discrepancies in expectations and evaluations, emphasizing the need for nuanced approaches tailored to diverse teacher demographics. Baleghizade's (2002) review of a TTC at the ILI highlighted critical weaknesses in program design and execution, underscoring the imperative for rigorous evaluation and improvement efforts.

Overall, these studies collectively underscore the imperative for rigorous evaluation and improvement of teacher training programs to bridge the gap between theory and practice effectively. From disparities in gender expectations to deficiencies in practical skill development, each study illuminates critical areas for intervention and enhancement within teacher education programs. The imperative for ongoing evaluation and improvement is clear, ensuring that these programs evolve to meet the dynamic demands of modern education effectively.

2.3. Bridging the Divide: Addressing the Gap in Evaluating TTCs in Private Language Institutes

The landscape of teacher training program evaluation research has witnessed a notable surge in recent years across various countries, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of enhancing the quality of teacher education. Studies such as Erozan (2005), Loyalka et al. (2019), Şalli-Çopur (2005), Şalli-Çopur (2008), Uçar Duzan (2006), and Uysal (2012) exemplify this trend by delving into the efficacy of diverse teacher training initiatives. While these investigations offer valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of teacher education programs, there remains a glaring gap in the literature about the evaluation of TTCs conducted within private language institutes (Baleghizade, 2002; Ganji et al., 2018). The existing studies either date back several years or are conducted in settings other than the ILI. Moreover, these assessments often fall short of evaluating TTCs against international benchmarks such as the CSTP.

In contrast, a plethora of research has scrutinized teacher preparation programs offered by the Iranian Ministry of Education (Aliakbari & Tabatabaei, 2019; Birjandi & Derakhshan, 2010; Hashemian & Azadi, 2010; Kazemi & Ashrafi, 2014; Khanjani et al., 2016; Rajabi et al., 2012; Sarlak & Vafaeimehr,

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2014). While these studies offer valuable insights into the teacher education landscape in Iran, they underscore the need for research focusing on TTCs within private institutes, such as the ILI. Aliakbari and Tabatabaei (2019), for instance, evaluated the Teacher Education Program (TEP) administered by the Ministry of Education, aligning it with CSTP standards. However, this research was conducted within a different Iranian context, emphasizing the necessity for tailored evaluations of TTCs like those conducted at the ILI.

Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by subjecting the TTCs held at the ILI to comprehensive evaluation based on internationally recognized standards, namely the CSTP. By adopting this approach, the study not only contributes to the advancement of teacher education research but also ensures that the findings are contextualized within the specific framework of private language institutes in Iran. In doing so, it responds to the call for more nuanced evaluations of teacher training programs, particularly within the private education sector, to enhance the quality of English language teaching and teacher preparation in the country. To be more exact, the study aims to shed light on the expectations, satisfaction levels, and long-term impact of the TTC program on both candidates and practicing teachers. To guide this investigation, three key research questions have been formulated:

1. What are the expectations of the candidates of the TTC held at the Iran Language Institute before the course starts?
2. To what extent are the attendees of the Teacher Training Course held at the Iran Language Institute satisfied with it at the end of the course?
3. To what extent are the teachers satisfied with the Teacher Training Course held at the Iran Language Institute one year after the TTC and implementing it in real classes?

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Design

According to Castro et al. (2010), concurrent mixed methods design is the simultaneous data collection and analysis, quantitative and qualitative, seeking integration and understanding. Moreover, as regards the first research question, since the candidates' expectations and wants are not clear to the researchers

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and they vary from context to context, there were no predetermined criteria and checklist used. In other words, the researchers aimed to collect their real opinions without imposing any ideas on them. Thus, they chose to collect qualitative data through interviews. However, for the second and third research questions, since the researchers aimed to collect data from more participants, and there are several models and questionnaires for evaluating TTCs, The researchers decided to use the survey questionnaire. Therefore, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods through questionnaires and interviews, respectively. Adopting a case study design, the research evaluated the TTC phenomenon at the ILI from the perspectives of three distinct participant groups. The cross-sectional design allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the TTC program in the ILI.

3.2. Participants

Three participant groups were involved in the study: TTC candidates at the onset of the course, ILI teachers employed for at least a year, and TTC attendees post-course completion, comprising both female and male participants. Convenient sampling was utilized to recruit participants from four ILI centers across various cities. Participants were required to be above 23 years old and possess a proficiency level ranging from upper-intermediate to advanced English, as the TTC caters to non-native English speakers. To be more exact, when the participants enter the course they are required to pass an ILI-made exam which consists of different parts such as listening comprehension, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar. Therefore, the English proficiency level of the participants is defined accordingly. Moreover, the participants' level of proficiency is not a concern of this study.

A total of 154 participants from diverse regions of Iran responded to the questionnaire, with a gender distribution indicating a higher proportion of female participants (70.78%) compared to male participants (29.22%). Among the respondents, 85 were ILI teachers who had completed the TTC one year ago and provided us with delayed evaluation, and 69 were the TTC attendees who had just finished the TTC and provided us with immediate evaluation, representing 55.19% and 44.8% of the total participants, respectively. Additionally, seven participants, comprising four females and three males, were interviewed to gain deeper insights into the TTC experience.

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3.3. Research Setting

The research was conducted within the framework of the ILI, the oldest language institute in Iran, with a history spanning over 90 years. Operating across 31 provinces with over 300 branches, the ILI serves a large population of language learners, primarily focusing on English instruction. The TTC program is a vital component of ILI's teacher recruitment and development strategy, conducted biannually to address staffing needs across its branches.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

The survey questionnaire, comprising 36 items derived from the CSTP, encompassed five key areas: *design curriculum and instruction, support diverse learners, use assessment to guide learning and teaching, create a productive classroom environment,* and *develop professionally*. The items were distributed unevenly across sections, aligning with the respective content areas. This adopted questionnaire was based on CSTP standards. However, it was given to three experts, including the supervisor and advisor of the thesis, for checking the wording, suitability for the Iranian context, and the TTC in ILI. Some of the items were removed since they were not among the aims of the TTC. Thus, it was adapted for the new context, translated into Persian, and linguistically validated. After a piloting phase with 15 participants to check for the reliability of the questionnaire (0.91 in this case), the researchers used Porsall to distribute the questionnaire among the participants.

A semi-structured interview protocol consisting of seven questions, corresponding to the six CSTP standards, was developed to gather qualitative data from participants. Questions covered topics such as *teaching strategies, classroom management, curriculum design, assessment practices, student engagement,* and *professional development*.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Quantitative data were collected through the administration of the questionnaire to participants, facilitated by convenience and snowball sampling methods. The questionnaire published on *Porsall* (https://porsall.com/) was distributed via messaging apps, ensuring widespread accessibility among potential respondents. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven

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participants, chosen through convenience sampling. The interviews were conducted virtually, with participants responding in Persian via voice messages across different social media platforms. Each interview session lasted approximately 15-20 minutes. Recordings of the interviews were transcribed to facilitate subsequent analysis. Finally, it must be mentioned that each of the interviewees agreed orally to be recorded before each interview. Regarding the questionnaires, before the questions started, the participants agreed to participate in the research.

3.6. Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically, with responses categorized into six themes corresponding to the CSTP standards. Since the researchers used deductive content analysis, and the main themes and categories were already established, it was not difficult or controversial to code the data. However, to make sure of the accuracy of the codes, the second researcher coded 15% of the data again. The intercoder dependability was 89%. As regards the member checking, the summary of the results and themes were checked with the interviewees. Quantitative data obtained from the Likert-type questionnaire were subjected to descriptive analysis using SPSS. Mean scores were compared between male and female participants as well as between TTC attendees and ILI teachers, utilizing simple frequencies across the five CSTP-based factors to evaluate differences in perceptions and experiences.

4. Findings

This study aimed to explore the expectations, satisfaction levels, and long-term impact of the TTC at the ILI. Through three key research questions, the study seeks to uncover the nuanced perspectives of candidates enrolled in the TTC, assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting their expectations, and evaluate its long-term influence on teachers' professional growth and classroom practices.

4.1. Research Question One: Candidates' Expectations of the TTC in ILI

Research Question One aimed to investigate the expectations of participants enrolled in the TTC at the ILI. This section provides an analysis of these expectations, listed below, which were derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with the candidates.

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4.1.1. Teaching Strategies and Techniques:

During the interviews, candidates consistently emphasized the significance of acquiring new teaching techniques and strategies. A_1 expressed, *"I expect that they instruct us in attractive new methods and techniques. These techniques should not be time-consuming."* This sentiment underscored the candidates' desire for practical and efficient methods to enhance their teaching skills.

4.1.2. Curriculum and Syllabus Design:

Expectations regarding curriculum and syllabus design revolved around the need for flexibility and creativity in lesson planning. B_2 remarked, *"I think lesson planning is very important and challenging because it takes so much time to prepare a lesson plan for just one session."* This highlighted the candidates' anticipation of guidance in streamlining lesson planning processes to optimize teaching efficiency.

4.1.3. Classroom Management:

Candidates expressed expectations for guidance on effective classroom management strategies tailored to different age groups. D_3 stated, *"I think the course should differentiate the kids', adults', and young adults' teachers."* This reflected the candidates' recognition of the importance of adapting management approaches to suit the diverse needs and behaviors of students across different age categories.

4.1.4. Students' Assessment and Evaluation:

Anticipations related to student assessment and evaluation centered on the desire for comprehensive instructions and diverse evaluation techniques. B_1 expressed, *"I need the course to teach me how to evaluate my students regularly."* This highlighted the candidates' expectation of guidance in implementing regular assessments to monitor student progress effectively.

4.1.5. Students' Engagement and Effective Learning Environment:

Expectations regarding student engagement and creating an effective learning environment focused on utilizing technology and varied teaching methods. C_2 noted, *"I think utilizing technology in classes would be interesting for the students."* This underscored the candidates' recognition of the importance of leveraging technology to enhance student engagement and promote interactive learning experiences.

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4.1.6. Teachers' Professional Development:

Candidates emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers. A_1 remarked, *"I have attended a TTC before, but it was not challenging enough for me."* This highlighted the candidates' expectation of rigorous and enriching training experiences to foster continuous growth and improvement as educators.

In summary, the findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed diverse expectations among candidates enrolled in the TTC at the ILI. These expectations encompassed various aspects of teaching, curriculum design, classroom management, assessment practices, student engagement, and professional development, underscoring the importance of tailored and comprehensive teacher training initiatives to meet the evolving demands of the education landscape.

4.2. Research Question Two: Attendees' Evaluation of the TTC in ILI

In addition to understanding the initial expectations of candidates enrolled in the TTC at ILI, this study also delves into their satisfaction levels upon completing the program. Research Question Two focused on assessing the satisfaction levels of TTC attendees regarding the effectiveness of the program and its alignment with their initial expectations. The following section presents an analysis of these satisfaction levels based on data obtained from questionnaires distributed to participants upon completion of the TTC. As mentioned before, the questionnaire was based on 5 factors of the CSTP, and each factor had some items. Based on the data analyzed, each of the following tables represents one of the factors with its items.

4.2.1. Factor 1: Design Curriculum and Instruction:

This factor involves nine items as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Attendees' Evaluation in Factor One

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 1. Teaching the concepts, knowledge, and skills of my field	3.50	3.00	3.38

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Item 5. Adapting the curriculum based on my experiences and students' interests and abilities	2.65	2.50	2.62
Item 6. Evaluating curriculum materials for their usefulness	2.83	2.56	2.76
Item 7. Creating an effective curriculum	2.62	2.75	2.65
Item 8. Using instructional strategies that promote active student learning	3.06	3.06	3.06
Item 9. Relating classroom learning to the real world	2.85	3.00	2.88
Item 14. Providing a rationale for teaching decisions to students, parents, and colleagues	3.12	2.94	3.07
Item 18. Developing students' questioning and discussion skills	3.00	3.00	3.00
Item 25. Using knowledge of learning, subject matter, curriculum, and student development to plan instruction respectively	2.92	3.19	2.99
Design Curriculum and Instruction (Total Mean)	3.04	2.94	3.01

Table 3 indicates overall satisfaction among both male and female attendees with the course, particularly in curriculum and instruction. Females generally reported higher satisfaction levels, except in specific areas such as items 7, 9, and 25 where males score higher. However, items 8 and 18 show equal satisfaction levels across genders, suggesting success in teaching strategies. Despite slightly higher satisfaction among females, both groups exhibited positive perceptions of the course with mean scores exceeding fifty percent.

4.2.2. Factor 2: Supporting Diverse Learners:

This factor comprises six items, which have been shown in Table 4.

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Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Attendees' Evaluation of Factor Two

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 2. Recognizing different styles of learning of different learners	3.21	2.81	3.12
Item 10. Understanding how students' social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development influences learning	2.98	2.81	2.94
Item 19. Engaging learners in group work as well as autonomous learning	3.37	3.06	3.29
Item 21. Using activities to engage learners with different learning styles	2.65	2.38	2.59
Item 24. Inspiring learners to see, question, and present ideas from diverse perspectives	2.75	2.63	2.72
Item 26. Understanding how factors in the learners' environment outside of the institute may influence their life and learning	2.71	2.81	2.74
Supporting diverse learners (Total Mean)	2.94	2.75	2.89

According to Table 4, female attendees tend to exhibit higher satisfaction scores compared to males, except for item 26. The highest satisfaction is reported in item 19, which addresses the course's effectiveness in engaging students in cooperative activities and independent learning. Conversely, the lowest satisfaction is noted in item 21, which pertains to the utilization of various worksheets and techniques to cater to diverse learning styles. Despite variations across items, the overall satisfaction level with the course is at least 51%.

4.2.3. Factor 3: Assessment and Evaluation:

This factor comprises four items, reported in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Attendees' Evaluation of Factor Three

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 11: Helping learners learn how to assess their learning	2.85	2.81	2.84

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Item 27: Collaborating with parents and families to better understand learners and support their learning	2.77	2.50	2.71
Item 28: Utilizing various ways of assessments (e.g., observation, portfolios, tests, performance tasks, anecdotal records)	3.12	2.88	3.06
Item 29: Giving effective feedback to learners to guide their learning	3.31	3.25	3.29
Assessment and Evaluation (Total Mean)	3.00	2.85	2.97

As per Table 5, both genders' viewpoints show minimal disparity in mean scores, with females tending to rate slightly higher, consistent with earlier findings suggesting more positive perspectives among them. Item 29, concerning effective feedback to students, receives the highest mean score, indicating success in this aspect of the course. Conversely, item 27, focusing on collaborating with parents for students' success, garners the lowest mean score, highlighting an area for potential improvement within the course.

4.2.4. Factor 4: Learning Environment:

Table 6 represents attendees' evaluation in the area of learning environment, which includes six items.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Attendees' Evaluation of Factor Four

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 3: Establishing challenging but appropriate benchmarks	3.12	2.75	3.03
Item 4: Helping all learners achieve high academic standards	3.31	2.69	3.16
Item 12: Teaching in ways that support new English language learners	3.02	2.88	2.99
Item 13: Maintaining an orderly and disciplined learning environment	3.56	3.00	3.43
Item 15: Helping students become self-motivated and autonomous	2.85	2.81	2.84

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Item 20: Using effective verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to facilitate student learning and behavior	3.12	2.94	3.07
Learning Environment (Total Mean)	3.16	2.84	3.08

Table 6 shows higher mean scores among female participants compared to males, indicating greater satisfaction. The discrepancy in scores between genders appears more pronounced in this factor. Item 13 receives the highest mean score, indicating adequate attention to establishing a purposeful learning environment. However, item 4 exhibits the largest difference in mean scores between genders. Overall, over 61% of attendees expressed satisfaction with the course's instructional process and content.

4.2.5. Factor 5: Develop Professionally:

This factor comprises four items, which are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Attendees' Evaluation of Factor Five

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 16: Use technology in the classroom	3.38	2.88	3.26
Item 17: Resolve interpersonal conflict	2.65	2.44	2.60
Item 22: Assume leadership responsibilities in one's institute	2.77	2.44	2.69
Item 23: Plan and solve my teaching problems with colleagues	2.73	2.63	2.71
Develop Professionally (Total Mean)	2.88	2.59	2.81

Table 7 shows higher mean scores among female attendees compared to males, consistent with previous findings. Item 16, regarding technology use in the classroom, receives the highest mean scores from both genders. Conversely, item 17, focused on resolving interpersonal conflicts among colleagues, receives the lowest mean scores. Male attendees expressed dissatisfaction with items 17 and 22, related to assuming leadership responsibilities, with mean scores below 50%. Overall, the factor's total mean score is the lowest, indicating areas for course development.

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4.3. Research Question Three: Teacher Satisfaction One Year after Completing the TTC in ILI

For the third research question, data were collected from ILI teachers via the questionnaire. This question sought to gather insights from teachers who had implemented the instructions from the TTC in their teaching practices. Their experiences offer valuable perspectives on the effectiveness of the TTC, having encountered real teaching challenges.

4.3.1. Factor 1: Design Curriculum and Instruction:

Table 8 presents the first factor containing 9 items.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for ILI Teachers' Evaluation of Factor One

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 1. Teaching the concepts, knowledge, and skills of my field	3.42	3.21	3.35
Item 5. Adapting the curriculum based on my experiences and students' interests and abilities	1.98	1.79	1.92
Item 6. Evaluating curriculum materials for their usefulness	2.44	2.21	2.36
Item 7. Creating an effective curriculum	2.44	1.89	2.25
Item 8. Using instructional strategies that promote active student learning	2.71	2.32	2.58
Item 9. Relating classroom learning to the real world	2.64	2.25	2.51
Item 14. Providing a rationale for teaching decisions to students, parents, and colleagues	2.69	2.54	2.64
Item 18. Developing students' questioning and discussion skills	2.36	2.14	2.29
Item 25. Using knowledge of learning, subject matter, curriculum, and student development to plan instruction respectively	2.80	2.50	2.70
Design Curriculum and Instruction (Total Mean)	2.76	2.47	2.66

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As per Table 8, it is evident that female experienced teachers have higher mean scores compared to their male counterparts, suggesting more positive attitudes toward the course among females. Upon closer inspection, however, several items have mean scores below 2.50, including items 5, 6, 7, and 18, which pertain to syllabus design, curriculum evaluation, lesson planning, and developing students' questioning and discussion skills, respectively. Among these, item 5 has the lowest mean score, indicating areas for improvement. Conversely, items 1, 8, 9, 14, and 25 have mean scores above 50%, indicating satisfaction. These items focus on teaching concepts effectively, promoting active student learning, relating learning to the real world, providing rationale for teaching decisions, and using knowledge to plan instruction. Notably, item 1, concerning teaching concepts effectively, receives the highest mean score, suggesting success in this area.

4.3.2. Factor 2: Supporting Diverse Learners:

This factor comprises 6 items presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for ILI Teachers' Evaluation of Factor Two

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 2. Recognizing different styles of learning of different learners	2.76	2.50	2.67
Item 10. Understanding how students' social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development influences learning	2.25	2.11	2.20
Item 19. Engaging learners in group work as well as autonomous learning	2.89	2.75	2.84
Item 21. Using activities to engage learners with different learning styles	2.55	2.32	2.47
Item 24. Inspiring learners to see, question, and present ideas from diverse perspectives	2.31	2.00	2.20
Item 26. Understanding how factors in the learners' environment outside of the institute may influence their life and learning	2.09	2.07	2.08
Supporting diverse learners (Total Mean)	2.47	2.29	2.41

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A glance at Table 9 reveals, once again, higher mean scores among female teachers compared to male teachers. However, unlike the previous table, there is not a significant disparity between male and female scores. This suggests that ILI teachers, regardless of gender, share similar attitudes toward the effectiveness of TTC in supporting diverse learners. Upon closer examination of Table 9, it is evident that item 19, which focuses on engaging students in cooperative work and independent learning, receives the highest mean score. In contrast, item 26, which pertains to understanding how factors in students' environment outside of school may influence their life and learning, garners the lowest mean score. Overall, the total mean score for this standard is below 50%, indicating that the course was not particularly successful in this area.

4.3.3. Factor 3: Assessment and Evaluation:

Factor 3 consists of 4 items shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics for ILI Teachers' Evaluation of Factor Three

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 11: Helping learners learn how to assess their learning	2.13	2.14	2.13
Item 27: Collaborating with parents and families to better understand learners and support their learning	2.29	2.11	2.23
Item 28: Utilizing various ways of assessments (e.g., observation, portfolios, tests, performance tasks, anecdotal records)	2.65	2.39	2.57
Item 29: Giving effective feedback to learners to guide their learning	3.11	2.61	2.94
Assessment and Evaluation (Total Mean)	2.54	2.31	2.46

Comparing male and female mean scores in Table 10, it is evident that three items show higher scores among females, while one item displays slightly higher scores among males. These three items pertain to working with parents and families, utilizing a variety of assessments, and providing productive feedback to students. Conversely, one item shows slightly higher satisfaction among male teachers. Additionally, item 29 receives the highest score, indicating success, while item 11 scores the lowest,

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suggesting room for improvement, particularly in self-assessment. Despite variations, female teachers generally appear more satisfied with the course compared to males, consistent with previous factors.

4.3.4. Factor 4: Learning Environment:

This factor consists of six items, provided in Table 11.

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for ILI Teachers' Evaluation of Factor Four

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 3: Establishing challenging but appropriate benchmarks	2.80	2.75	2.78
Item 4: Helping all learners achieve high academic standards	3.00	2.71	2.90
Item 12: Teaching in ways that support new English language learners	2.35	2.32	2.34
Item 13: Maintaining an orderly and disciplined learning environment	3.13	3.11	3.12
Item 15: Helping students become self-motivated and autonomous	2.36	2.14	2.29
Item 20: Using effective verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to facilitate student learning and behavior	2.73	2.43	2.63
Learning Environment (Total Mean)	2.72	2.57	2.67

Similar to previous observations, female teachers once again lead in scores in Table 11. However, upon closer examination, the difference in scores between male and female teachers is not as pronounced as in previous tables. It is noteworthy that item 13, focusing on maintaining discipline and a purposeful learning environment, receives the highest score, while item 15 scores the lowest. Overall, four out of six items in the table have mean scores above 2.50 out of five, indicating moderate to high satisfaction. However, two items, 12 and 15, scored lower, suggesting areas for improvement. These findings suggest that while the TTC was generally effective in several areas, there is room for enhancement in specific aspects of the course.

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4.3.5. Factor 5: Develop Professionally:

As the last factor in the questionnaire, the "*Professional Development"* factor involves four items, provided in Table 12.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for ILI Teachers' Evaluation of Factor Five

Item	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Item 16: Use technology in the classroom	1.96	2.46	2.13
Item 17: Resolve interpersonal conflict	1.95	2.07	1.99
Item 22: Assume leadership responsibilities in one's institute	2.44	2.32	2.40
Item 23: Plan and solve my teaching problems with colleagues	2.40	2.04	2.28
Develop Professionally (Total Mean)	2.18	2.22	2.19

Table 12 reveals a lower overall mean score, indicating less satisfaction with professional development. Male teachers exhibit higher satisfaction in technology integration and conflict resolution (items 16 and 17), while females express greater contentment in assuming leadership and collaborative problem-solving (items 22 and 23). Item 22 receives the highest score, while item 17 garners the lowest. Notably, male teachers show slightly higher overall satisfaction (2.22) compared to females (2.18).

4.4. Comparisons between Groups Based on Gender and Time

4.4.1. Attendees versus Teachers:

Table 13 displays the mean scores of two groups: attendees of the TTC and experienced ILI teachers. It aims to discern whether participants are more satisfied with the course immediately after completion (attendees) or after implementing TTC instructions and facing real teaching challenges (teachers).

As can be seen from Table 13, the total mean score of attendees surpasses that of teachers. Attendees express higher satisfaction with the TTC across all individual items as well as overall. Factors 1 and 4, focusing on "curriculum and design" and "learning environment" respectively, garner the highest

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satisfaction scores among attendees. Overall, it is evident that the attendees exhibited greater satisfaction with the TTC compared to teachers.

Table 13: Mean Scores for Comparing Evaluation of the Attendees and Experienced Teachers

Group	**Attendees**	**Teachers**
Factor One	3.01	2.66
Factor Two	2.89	2.41
Factor Three	2.97	2.46
Factor Four	3.08	2.67
Factor Five	2.81	2.19
Total Score	14.76	12.39

4.4.2. Male versus Female Teachers:

The last set of results is about the comparisons made between male and female teachers in each of the five factors and in general, which are provided in Table 14.

Table 14: Mean Scores for Comparing Male and Female Teachers

Group	**Females**	**Males**
Factor One	2.90	2.70
Factor Two	2.85	2.52
Factor Three	2.77	2.58
Factor Four	2.94	2.70
Factor Five	2.51	2.40
Total Score	13.97	12.90

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Table 14 illustrates that female teachers exhibited higher satisfaction with the TTC across all five factors as well as overall. These mean scores encompass both attendees and teachers, providing an overview of the overall satisfaction level with the course based on gender. In summary, female teachers expressed greater satisfaction with the TTC course (13.97) compared to their male counterparts (12.90).

5. Discussion

The findings gleaned from interviews underscore a clear demand among candidates for acquiring new teaching techniques and strategies. Aligning with prior research by Aslanargun and Atmaca (2017), which highlighted the ongoing professional development needs of educators, our study reveals a similar sentiment among teachers. Despite an active engagement in various professional development activities, teachers still express the need for further enhancement, echoing the call for exposure to diverse teaching environments as emphasized by Aslanargun and Atmaca. Likewise, Eret's (2013) examination of pre-service teacher education in Turkey aligns with our findings, emphasizing the necessity for candidates to develop communication skills and practical teaching techniques. For one things, the trainees have not acquired practical teaching techniques and skills for real classes in the graduate or postgraduate studies which are mostly theoretical. Besides that, because of the changing nature of the language and learners' needs, even the most experienced teachers need to stay up to date with the recent developments in the field of TEFL. Still another reason is that having good communication skills is necessary for teachers to build positive relationship and rapport with the students, leading to a more relaxed atmosphere.

Moreover, the interview data underscores candidates' keen interest in integrating technology into their future teaching practices. Aydin et al. (2021) corroborate this, suggesting a widespread demand among educators for specialized skills, further emphasizing the need for tailored professional development initiatives. Similarly, findings from Zarabi et al. (2023) shed light on the inadequacy of technology integration within Iranian TTCs, highlighting a growing societal thirst for educational technology. It is no surprise that the teachers need to be trained about technology since they are teaching a generation who are called Gen Zers. If they do not have enough training about technology, they can not mange their classes. In addition, when the teachers use technology in their classes, they can bring about enhanced engagement, higher motivation, and deeper learning, hence creating an interactive and immersive lesson that caters to different learning styles.

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In evaluating the TTC based on the CSTP framework, our study reveals a notable satisfaction with the learning environment aspect, echoing the importance candidates place on classroom dynamics and its impact on student achievement. This resonates with Pelton's (2014) findings, which highlight the influence of classroom environments on student-teacher confidence levels. Conversely, Paker's (2011) exploration of student-teacher anxiety underscores the significance of factors such as evaluation and classroom management, providing further context to our findings. The students' demotivation, old teaching materials, and inappropriate materials can be compensated by an interesting, engaging, and active learning environment. When the atmosphere is inviting and relaxed, the students will do their best to participate in the discussions and be active.

However, despite overall satisfaction with the course, a discrepancy emerges between attendees and ILI teachers. This contrasts with the findings of Aliakbari and Tabatabaei (2019), who noted a collective acknowledgment of program effectiveness among Iranian teachers. This distinction can be attributed to differences in program duration and settings between studies as well as the fact that teachers have responded to the questionnaire after implementing the techniques in real classes which are always different from the expectations. Furthermore, attendees identify shortcomings in the TTC, particularly in curriculum development, student support, and fostering student autonomy, aligning with prior research by Eret (2013) regarding communication skills with parents.

Additionally, attendees expressed dissatisfaction with the course's failure to cultivate self-directedness and develop professional skills such as problem-solving and leadership responsibility. Loyalka et al. (2019) underscore the limited impact of professional development courses on teacher achievement, contrasting with Lyonga's (2022) findings, which highlight the positive outcomes of self-designed projects in teacher training colleges. The reason is most probably due to the short duration of the TTC in ILI which a course, not a 4-year long program studied in Lyonga's study in 2022.

Lastly, gender disparities in satisfaction levels are evident, with females expressing greater satisfaction than males, consistent with findings by Aliakbari and Tabatabaei (2019). This aligns with Gibson et al.'s (2010) explanation of lower career expectations among women compared to men, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive approaches in professional development initiatives.

The discussion highlights a strong demand among teacher candidates for acquiring new teaching techniques and strategies, aligning with prior research emphasizing ongoing professional development needs (Aslanargun & Atmaca, 2017; Zarabi et al. (2023). The necessity for candidates to develop

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communication skills and practical teaching techniques is underscored, echoing previous studies (Eret, 2013). Moreover, there is a keen interest in integrating technology into teaching practices, reflecting a widespread demand among educators for specialized skills (Aydin et al. 2021). While overall satisfaction with the course is noted, discrepancies emerge, particularly in curriculum development and student support, aligning with previous research findings (Eret, 2013). Attendees express dissatisfaction with the course's failure to cultivate self-directedness and develop professional skills, contrasting with studies highlighting positive outcomes of self-designed projects in teacher training (Lyonga's, 2022). Gender disparities in satisfaction levels are evident, with females expressing greater satisfaction, consistent with previous research (Aliakbari & Tabatabaei, 2019).

6. Conclusion

Given the importance of evaluating TTCs, the study findings are expected to inform ILI teachers, trainers, policymakers, and learners, shedding light on strengths and weaknesses and guiding future course development. Additionally, the study endeavors to contribute to the existing knowledge base and provide direction for future research endeavors in this field. In conclusion, our study sheds light on the perceptions and needs of participants enrolled in the TTC at the ILI. Through semi-structured interviews and questionnaire data analysis, we uncovered valuable insights into the expectations, satisfaction levels, and areas of improvement regarding the TTC. The findings reveal a strong demand among candidates for acquiring new teaching techniques, integrating technology into classrooms, and enhancing professional skills. While the TTC excels in certain aspects, such as fostering a conducive learning environment, it falls short in areas like curriculum development, student support, and fostering teacher autonomy.

The findings of this study have several implications for teacher education and professional development initiatives. Firstly, they underscore the importance of designing comprehensive teacher training programs that address diverse needs, including technology integration, curriculum design, and student support strategies. Additionally, the study highlights the significance of providing opportunities for teachers to observe diverse teaching environments and engage in practical, hands-on learning experiences. Moreover, the gender disparities in satisfaction levels emphasize the need for gender-sensitive approaches in professional development initiatives. Tailored interventions aimed at addressing

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the specific needs and expectations of male and female educators can lead to more equitable outcomes and enhanced satisfaction levels among all participants.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, the sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data through interviews and questionnaires introduces the potential for social desirability bias and subjective interpretation of responses. Furthermore, the study's focus on participants from a single institution, ILI, may limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Future research could benefit from a more diverse sample and multi-site study design to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Building on the findings of this study, future research could explore the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at addressing the identified needs and expectations of teacher candidates. Longitudinal studies tracking the impact of professional development initiatives on teacher practice and student outcomes could provide valuable insights into the long-term effectiveness of teacher training programs. Additionally, comparative studies examining teacher education programs across different institutions and contexts could further elucidate the factors influencing program effectiveness and participant satisfaction. Moreover, qualitative inquiries exploring the experiences of teachers who have completed the TTC and implemented its strategies in real classrooms could provide deeper insights into the challenges and successes of teacher professional development efforts.

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