

## Reflection Paper

The process behind this master's thesis has been challenging but also very rewarding in many respects, as it has given me new valuable insights of what constitutes good teacher education. The most challenging part of this study was accessing voluntary respondents in such numbers enabling analysis of the results, representable for a larger population of novice EFL teachers in Sweden. Nevertheless, I was able to get 81 survey respondents after reaching out to principals at municipalities throughout Sweden, as well as contacting newly qualified English teachers via e-mail. If I were to conduct such a study again, I would consider limiting the interview questions and perhaps make them more refined, instead of having several subsequent questions. Hence, this may have facilitated the analysis of the data with a more explicit data base.

The topic for my investigation stems from a desire to investigate novice teachers' perspectives on their teacher training, and what sources they perceive as being useful for their teaching practise. As there will be a great demand for newly qualified teachers in the near future in Sweden, these types of studies have substantial value to understand what contents in teacher education are appreciated by novice EFL teachers. Consequently, results together with research in the field, could constitute valuable information for policy makers of teacher education programmes in the future.

The most noteworthy result of this study was the recurrent theme of the perceived missing link between theory and practice with the respondents. Even though this has been repeatedly confirmed by previous research, it was still striking to observe the respondents' desire for more practicum and more opportunities for mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion in their teacher training. In conjunction, this coincides with Bandura's theory of mastery experiences being the most valuable parameter to develop a strong teacher self-efficacy or TSE. In turn, as outlined in previous research and as per Bandura's cognitive theory, teachers who possess strong TSE are more likely to have high motivation and endurance, and as such, they are more likely to motivate their own students. If all stakeholders in teacher education were able to instil these competencies within their student teachers, education in Sweden would have much to gain, both from a teacher and a student perspective. Consequently, there would be a much greater chance to retain student teachers in the programmes as well as in-service teachers, and thus, facilitating management of challenges ahead, such as teacher deficiency. Therefore, it is hoped that results from

studies, based on self-report data from newly qualified EFL teachers, may have implications for policy makers of teacher education in Sweden, and in the subject of English.

# *MASTER'S THESIS*

Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs – Equipping Pre-Service EFL Teachers  
for the Future

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## **Abstract**

On the backdrop of shortage in teacher numbers in the years to come in Sweden, a major challenge for stakeholders in teacher education will be in the areas of recruitment and retention of pre-service and in-service teachers outlined by the Ministry of Education and Research in Sweden. Hence, one crucial task for teacher educators is to foster capable and resilient teachers who possess strong self-efficacy beliefs. The purpose of this study is to investigate newly qualified EFL teachers' perception of preparedness to teach English after graduating from teacher training. It is based on Bandura's (2000) socio-cognitive theory of self-efficacy, which focuses on the parameters of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used with a survey and follow-up interviews to uncover as much information as possible within the scope of this paper. Self-report data from newly qualified EFL teachers in Sweden in the years 7-9 and upper-secondary schooling will be used for this investigation. The results indicate implications for improvements to be done in teacher education programmes for teachers of English, with evidence implicating what sources in teacher education have the prerequisites to foster strong teacher self-efficacy (TSE).

# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>   | 1  |
| 1.1 General background   | 1  |
| 1.2 Previous research  | 4  |
| <b>2. Theoretical framework</b>  | 5  |
| 2.1 Bandura's socio-cognitive theory – the exercise of control                     | 5  |
| 2.2 Mastery experiences – the most influential variable                            | 6  |
| 2.3 Vicarious learning experiences – modelling teaching and mentoring              | 7  |
| 2.4 Verbal persuasion – the importance of constructive feedback                    | 8  |
| 2.5 Teacher identity formation and self-efficacy                                   | 9  |
| 2.6 Teacher burnout and low self-efficacy  | 10 |
| 2.7 The EFL perspective and the Swedish educational context – curriculum coherence | 11 |
| 2.8 The EFL perspective and challenges in a Swedish educational context            | 11 |
| 2.9 Teacher education in Sweden – an overview                                      | 12 |
| <b>3. Method</b>   | 14 |
| 3.1 Methods used in previous studies as inspiration                                | 14 |
| 3.2 Method of study  | 15 |
| 3.3 Materials and procedure  | 17 |
| 3.4 Respondents  | 18 |
| 3.5 Reliability and validity   | 19 |
| 3.6 Limitation of study  | 20 |
| <b>4. Results</b>  | 21 |
| 4.1 Results of survey and interviews   | 21 |
| 4.1.1 <i>Characteristics of respondents</i>  | 21 |
| 4.1.2 <i>Colour-coding system for analysis</i>                                     | 22 |
| 4.1.3 <i>Results of survey</i>   | 22 |
| 4.1.4 <i>Results of interviews</i>   | 30 |
| <b>5. Discussion</b>   | 39 |
| 5.1 Survey   | 39 |
| 5.1.1 <i>Survey discussed in the light of previous research</i>                    | 39 |
| 5.1.2 <i>Survey discussed in the light of the theoretical framework</i>            | 42 |
| 5.2 Interviews   | 43 |
| 5.2.1 <i>Interviews discussed in the light of previous research</i>                | 43 |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 5.2.2 Interviews discussed in the light of the theoretical framework.....       | 46        |
| <b>6. Summary and conclusion .....</b>  | <b>47</b> |
| <b>7. Further research .....</b>  | <b>50</b> |
| References.....   | 52        |
| Appendices:   |           |
| Appendix A Sense of Effectiveness for Specific Teaching Tasks and Contexts..... | 58        |
| Appendix B Questionnaire invitation .....                                       | 59        |
| Appendix C Teacher questionnaire with responses .....                           | 60        |
| Appendix D Interview invitation and interview guide .....                       | 74        |
| Appendix E Qualitative results from interviews.....                             | 77        |
| List of figures:  |           |
| Figure 1 Perceived sufficient practicum in teacher training.....                | 25        |
| Figure 2 Perceived most useful programme content.....                           | 27        |
| Figure 3 Perceived least useful programme content.....                          | 29        |
| Figure 4 Perceived characteristics of high TSE.....                             | 37        |
| Figure 5 Suggested improvements of teacher training programmes.....             | 38        |

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 General background**

As the Swedish educational system is facing a major challenge in the years to come with a shortage in qualified teachers, designing teacher training programmes which build strong self-efficacy beliefs with novice teachers will be crucial. It is expected that there will be a deficiency of some 36.000 teachers of compulsory and upper-secondary schooling by the year 2033 (Ministry of Education and Research, p. 81). Moreover, retaining the student teachers in the teacher programmes is another important factor, with the fostering of solid self-efficacy qualities, thus enabling them to stay and grow in their future teaching profession. Teachers' self-efficacy (TSE) beliefs are crucial factors in mastering the complexity of the teaching profession, addressing one's capabilities to achieve desired levels of performance in a given situation.

Drawing on Bandura's socio-cognitive theory entails "beliefs in one's own capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). As these skills are most malleable early in teacher training (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Chacón, 2005, Mouradkhani, 2019; Demirel, 2017), consequently, the structuring of teacher training programs with relevant and useful content is of utmost importance to build strong self-efficacy beliefs in novice teachers.

Moreover, numerous studies within the field of teacher education have disclosed the schism between theory and practice, i.e. the connection between subject content and practicum (Carmel, 2019; Yu, 2020; Mouradkhani, 2019; Zhu, 2020; Farrell, 2012; Demirel, 2017; Golzar, 2020; Canrinus et al., 2017; Swee Choo Goh et al., 2017; Jakhelin et. al. ; Almunger & Wahlström, 2017; Juuti et al., 2018; Åstrand, 2012; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Staal-Jenset, 2018; Eisen-Schmidt et al., 2008.; Putman, 2012; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Christophersen 2015). In a Swedish educational context, the study by Almunger & Wahlström (2017) is of special interest. It investigated to what extent teacher education programs in Sweden are research-based, with the opportunity to connect theory and practice. The study included analysis of educational plans from 17 universities and colleges, as well as student and teacher surveys conducted at 16 universities.

As a scientific approach to teaching and learning constitutes the core of teacher education and teacher professionalism, training should be inclusive of recent research and have instructors who are researchers, enabling student teachers to be inspired by recent research to “function well in their profession” (Alvunger & Wahlström, 2017, p.338). Even though both student teachers and instructors perceived course content as being research-based, i.e. inclusive of recent scientific articles, merely 35% of the student teachers totally agreed to feel prepared to put theory into practice. Moreover, results proved limited opportunities for student teachers to engage in critical discussions (Alvunger & Wahlström, 2017, p. 343). To further enhance this link between research based theory and practice, the researchers suggested research-based skills to permeate the entire teacher training with student teachers as classroom researchers, sharing expertise and as such learning from each other, and by so, building strong professional identities.

Similarly, the study by Åstrand et al. (2012) investigated newly graduated teachers’ perceptions of their teacher preparation in a national questionnaire including 10.000 student teachers, two years into their teaching career. This survey was the result of considerable criticism towards the teacher training programmes in Sweden at the time. The results showed that the programmes were insufficient in preparing the student teachers to apply a scientific approach in their teaching with nearly half of the respondents being critical of the program in this aspect.

Moreover, as a scientific approach constitutes the core of teacher professionalism, a call for action in this respect was made. On the same note, Canrinus et al. (2017) investigated coherence in teacher education programmes in the countries of Norway, Finland and the US to see whether student teachers perceived courses as being aligned with a shared vision across their education, as well as coherence between course content and practicum. The findings revealed that there was too little focus on practice and that there was a need of making closer connections between course content and practice. Hence, student teachers should get opportunities to implement what they have learned at the training institutions whilst on their field placements to a greater extent (Canrinus et al. 2017, p. 315). It was concluded that this responsibility rests with both the teacher training institutions and the practice schools, with a need for closer cooperation between the two stakeholders.

Thus, teacher training institutions in Sweden have endured this criticism of insufficient links between theory and practice for some time, and to further increase the quality of teacher education, the Ministry of Education is conducting a consultation with concerned parties



during the spring of 2021 to gain legal effect on August 1, 2021. This initiative is part of an agreement amongst political parties, the so-called January Agreement (Government Offices of Sweden, 2019) which stated the need for a reformation of the teacher education programme. The proposition includes more teaching hours as well as the strengthening of connections between theory and practice, with an increased focus on methodology (Ministry of Education and Research, 2021).

To strengthen this connection, the practicum design is to be clarified with the teacher training institutes' obligation to organize mentorship training. These mentors should be skilled and experienced, with teacher educators at the training institutions acting as supervisors to monitor student teachers' progressive development. Furthermore, practice schools have been part of a pilot project with a concentration of student teachers and educated mentors aiming for increased quality. This is also to be retained where all of the teacher training institutions are to use practice schools for this part of the training.

Against the backdrop of this former criticism, this is an important incentive from the ruling government in Sweden. However, the extent of the practicum periods will not increase in exchange for course content in the teacher programmes, which contradicts previous research which calls for more field experience for pre-service teachers to experience real classroom contexts (Canrinus et al. 2017; Demirel, 2017; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Staal-Jenset, 2018) On the contrary, it is not stated how content courses are to intertwine efficiently with the practicum, facilitating the visibility of the "missing link" in teacher education construction (Zhu et al., 2020, p. 12) and thus counteract a "reality shock" once out in the field (Eisen-Schmidt et al.; Yu, 2020; Farrell, 2012).

From an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and an international perspective there is yet little known about the impact of teacher education on teaching competencies and how to best prepare novice teachers in their teacher training (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Chacón, 2005, Mouradkhani, 2019), with even less research conducted in a Swedish educational context. Thus, it is evident that based on this information, further inquiries need to be made into teacher training programmes' preparation of novice teachers in Sweden for the complex role of teaching in the EFL classroom. Moreover, the transition stage between being a pre-service and in-service teacher is of interest to investigate, to define what *sources* of the teacher training programmes best support novice teachers' development of content knowledge, didactics and pedagogy, and as such, build strong teacher self-efficacy (TSE).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate what constitutes good teacher education equipping pre-service EFL teachers with the necessary tools needed to master the complex profession of teaching in a Swedish educational context of years 7-9 and upper-secondary school and asks the following questions:

- How do teacher training programmes best prepare EFL pre-service teachers for their future profession?
- What *sources* in the teacher training programmes influence novice EFL teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully manage the complexity of teaching?

## 1.2 Previous research

A substantial number of studies have been performed within the field of teacher education concerning improvement perspectives, with the majority conducted in an international context and to some extent with an EFL perspective (Carmel, 2019; Yu2020; Zhu, 2020; Farrell, 2012; Demirel, 2017; Golzar, 2020; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Moradkhani, 2019; Molani et al., 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Chacón, 2005; Kostic-Babanovic, 2020; O'Neill & Stephenson 2012). These studies also conclude the need for further investigation, and especially in the field of EFL, to detect what sources in the teacher training programmes seem to enhance strong self-efficacy beliefs in the novice teacher.

Much of the findings relate to incoherent programmes lacking connections between the theoretical courses at the institutes versus the practical elements as previously described, with pre-service teachers being “packed with the theory of teaching”, thus lacking field experience, and with dissatisfaction with how links between theory and practice have been bridged (Demirel, 2017, p. 229). Other studies reveal the importance of teachers, both university instructors and mentors at practicum, as important role models in the development of self-efficacy (Carmel, 2019; Yu, 2020; Mourdkhani, 2019; Farrell, 2012; Bjerkholt, E & Hedegaard, 2008; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Björk & Stengård, 2019), and the feedback received from these teachers as scaffolding. Following is a description of the theoretical framework used as a model in many of these studies.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Bandura's socio-cognitive theory – the exercise of control

As the complex profession of teaching entails the mastering of many skills in order to manage the daily classroom practice, previous research has endeavoured to visualize what sources best prepare novice teachers for this challenge. Many studies have drawn on Bandura's socio-cognitive theory of self-efficacy, which is the driving force of peoples' actions, i.e. "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

From an educational perspective, this belief of teacher self-efficacy or TSE (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007) affects teachers' motivation, perseverance in overcoming difficult challenges, and positive and negative thought processes, for example, all part of human agency. By making pre-service and novice teachers aware of how to exercise control over their own self-efficacy beliefs in their teacher training, they have a much greater chance of managing this complex profession, "they must believe in themselves" (Juuti, et al., 2018, p. 424).

The parameters which constitute self-efficacy beliefs, according to Bandura's theory, are: (a) Mastery experiences, (b) Vicarious learning experiences (modelling), (c) Verbal persuasion, and (d) Physiological arousal (Bandura, 1997 p. 79-104; Chacón, 2005, p. 258-259). In a teaching context, *mastery experiences* refer to teachers' own teaching experiences, and they are the most influential factors, as they provide authentic learning experiences of successful teaching, which in turn build strong self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997, p. 80).

Moreover, self-efficacy has the chance to grow where teachers get to experience challenging situations, and where these challenges can be met by effort, and in this context, for example, by experimenting with different teaching strategies (Juuti, 2018). The second parameter, *vicarious learning experiences* or *modelling* is connected to peoples' appraisal of their own efficacy in relation to the success of others' (Bandura, 2000, p. 86). In a teaching context, it translates to the observation of other teachers, both with instructors at the training institutions and the mentors at the practicum. As such, it will allow pre-service and novice teachers to learn from these experiences, in order to improve their own teaching. The third parameter, *verbal persuasion*, deals with the feedback received from teachers and mentors,

constituting positive empowerment with student teachers to overcome challenging situations (Bandura, 2000, p. 101).

Furthermore, this feedback is most effective if it is concrete, realistic, and affirmative for the trainee to gain capabilities to believe in their ability to teach (Bandura, 2000, p. 101), which in turn has the prerequisites to affect pupils' engagement positively. The fourth parameter, *physiological arousal*, deals with affective states, i.e., emotional factors such as stress, where preventive measures based on the three previous parameters may reduce the risk of teacher burnout with the increasing development of success in teacher performance (Bandura, 2000, p. 106).

## **2.2 Mastery experiences – the most influential variable**

Previous research has made visible the importance of mastery experiences in moulding pre-service and novice teachers to become successful, with mentoring programmes (Lindgren, 2005; Bjerkholt-Hedegaard, 2008; Putman, 2012; Kostic-Babanovic, 2020; O'Neill & Stephenson 2012; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Christophersen, Elstad, Turmo & Solhaug, 2015, Fransson) focusing on practicum and the connection of theory and practice in teacher training (Putman, 2012; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Christophersen et al. 2015, O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012, Carmel, 2019; Yu, 2020; Zhu, 2020; Farrell, 2012; Demirel, 2017; Golzar, 2020; Swee Choo Goh & Canrinus, 2020; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017) and the collective teacher efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2001) as well as coherent teacher training programmes with relevant content for instance, linguistic and communicative skills (Chacón, 2005; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Kostic-Babanovic, 2020; Yu, 2020; Demirel, 2017;).

With mastery experiences having the highest impact on self-efficacy, it is of importance that the subject practicum of the teacher training programmes of 7-9 and upper-secondary schooling clearly connects to the content of the modules in English. Criticism points to content being “too theoretical and abstract to implement” and “disconnected or delivered too far in advance of practicum (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012, p. 543), with newly qualified teachers lacking the skills of applying their content knowledge and skills in teaching, connecting theory and practice (Kostic-Babanovic, 2020). In addition, as the practicum was considered the most valuable experience by respondents in Faez & Valeo

(2012) and Putman (2012), content knowledge acquired from the teacher training should be easily attainable, facilitating successful teaching practices for the teacher students.

In a Swedish context, mastery experiences via mentoring programmes in the novice teacher's first year of teaching were considered critical to provide scaffolding to master classroom management and teaching approaches, with modelling (vicarious learning experiences), implemented early in the programmes (Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008 p. 65). On the same note, Lindgren (2007) addressed the need for bridges between the pre-service and in-service stages via models for support such as mentoring programs. Thus, balancing the act of attracting teacher students and retaining them in the programmes is a difficult task for teacher educators, but building these strong efficacy skills early in learning could facilitate the prospects of these challenges.

### **2.3 Vicarious learning experiences – modelling teaching and mentoring**

With mastery experiences rated the highest of the influential variables, vicarious experiences constitute the framework for successful teaching by observing teachers with strong efficacy beliefs teach. In a study by Bjerkholt & Hedegaard (2008), the importance of induction programmes during the first year as a novice teacher is discussed, to best enable the novice teacher a successful transition. A comparative study of five Scandinavian countries, including Sweden, over a period of three years, investigated the features of induction programmes for novice teachers to shed light on successful scaffolding practices. These programmes for newly qualified teachers were first regulated in 1995 in Sweden, with the right to be supported by a mentor during the first year of teaching.

Conversely, with the decentralization of the educational system in Sweden, and where the funding of schools lies in the hands of the municipalities themselves, these regulations never reached a national agreement. Even though the School law in Sweden (§22a) states this induction year to be enforced in direct connection to the employment agreement, reality tells a different story, with some novice teachers not receiving any support at all, according to a debate article on one of the teacher union's website (Roth & Fallén in Lärarnas Riksförbund, 2019).

Similarly, this is one of the conclusions of the study by Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, that these programmes, if they do exist, are of varying qualities, hence calling for an equated

system. In conjunction and from an EFL perspective, Farrell (2012) addresses the same issue in a special edition of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), with novice English language teachers experiencing the lack of support and being “left to survive on their own” p. (436), and in isolation (Swee Choo Goh & Canrinus, 2020). The same phenomenon re-surfaces with novice teachers rarely receiving any support from their employer, and if induction programs exist, they vary in character, and they may not be mandatory.

Moreover, Farrell (2012) suggests having teacher training institutions embrace continued support with newly graduated student teachers, to help them navigate the first challenging year of teaching. To counteract this “reality shock” which novice teachers often experience due to the aforementioned issues, Farrell suggests the inclusion of a course called “Teaching in the first years” (Farrell, p. 440), with “anticipatory reflection (reflection for action)” (Farrell, p. 440). This course would focus on student teachers’ own beliefs about teaching and learning, teacher identity development, critical incidents in regards to classroom management, and case studies, for example.

## **2.4 Verbal persuasion – the importance of constructive feedback**

The role of scaffolding feedback is another important factor in building strong teacher self-efficacy with the pre-service and novice teacher. Feedback from both instructors at the teacher training programmes and mentors at practicums is vital in forming a professional teacher identity. A study by Phuong & Vasques, 2011 (in Golzar 2020), analysed feedback sessions between mentors and interns in a TESOL context in the US, recording and analysing six feedback sessions. These recordings were then further analysed via discourse analysis to see language features used in these sessions to support the interns’ self-efficacy. Being a practicum mentor entails certain aspects in delivering supportive empowerment in a complex interplay with power relations at play between the mentor and the student teacher. The results showed mentors being generally considerate of delivering criticism and instead provided a supporting atmosphere, with “specific, practical and applicable suggestions” for further development (Golzar, 2020, p. 468), much appreciated by the interns.

Moreover, a study by Juuti et al. (2018) investigated teacher education in Finland and its contributing factors to pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy. The survey was distributed to

153 pre-service teachers, where the construction was based on Bandura's social cognitive theory. An important finding was that student teachers' conception on how to deal with challenging situations and failure could be overcome with supportive techniques from their instructors, such as making them realize that failure is part of the process of developing teacher professionalism. With the practice of modifying teaching strategies when needed, student teachers can overcome these barriers and view their failure in a different light, developing stronger teacher efficacy beliefs.

## **2.5 Teacher identity formation and self-efficacy**

Another variable investigated by researchers in relation to TSE (teacher self-efficacy) is teacher identity formation. Golzar (2020) studied teacher identity formation in a review of 37 empirical studies through classroom practices and found that teacher identity is dynamic and complex. The transformation from being a student teacher to becoming a professional in-service teacher is a multifaceted journey of moulding and shaping. Kaya & Dikilitas, (2019 as cited in Golzar 2020) identified teacher identity formation through three stages; *pre-existing*, *developing*, and *liberating*. These stages resemble Bandura's theory of self-efficacy gained through vicarious learning experiences, that of learning from instructors and mentors at practicum in a behaviouristic manner to then implement teaching strategies with mastery experiences in a cognitivist manner to finally reach the liberating stage, all in line with socio-constructivist theory. This theory is based on Vygotskij's (1978) theory of learning as being co-constructed in social settings, which also constitutes the foundation for teaching and learning in a Swedish educational context. As such, this final stage resonates with the professional teacher with strong self-efficacy beliefs, gained through the linking of theory and practice and through verbal persuasion.

Another study by Noguera & McClumsky (2019), set in a Spanish-Australian context, investigated teacher identity formation and the importance of allowing reflective practices throughout teacher training to build awareness of the transition from pre-service to in-service teachers. Reflective practices as an important factor for identity development has also been investigated by Zhu (2020), where student teachers reflected on their experiences via metaphors to visualize their progress. To conclude, strong TSE is affiliated with teacher identity, with the three parameters of mastery experiences, vicarious learning experiences and verbal persuasion providing the foundation for teacher professionalism.

## 2.6 Teacher burnout and low self-efficacy

In conjunction, reflective practices in teacher education may also counteract *teacher burnout*, a phenomenon which may implicate serious threats to teacher sustainability and teacher retention. A Canadian study by Farrell (2012 ) concluded that offering opportunities for reflective practices during teacher training could serve as scaffolding teacher self-efficacy, enabling student teachers to share experiences from practicums for example (Farrell, 2012, p. 437). Furthermore, Lindqvist et al. (2020) investigated student teachers' perception of burnout and possible proactive strategies with 67 student teachers from six Swedish universities participating in the study. The three elements constituting the concept of "burnout" or attrition were described in the study as *emotional exhaustion*, *depersonalization*, and *reduced personal accomplishment*, with emotional exhaustion being the most important factor.

All of these factors relate back to low self-efficacy as the novice teachers may experience their first year as a "reality shock" (Farrell, p. 439), whilst trying to find strategies in dealing with the complexity of teaching. Therefore, preventative measures applied in teacher education is of utmost importance in order to retain newly qualified teachers in the teaching profession, on the backdrop of the estimated extensive lack of teachers in Sweden in the future. Moreover, *depersonalization* was referred to negative feelings and attitudes towards colleagues and students, with *reduced personal accomplishment* referring to negative feelings towards the profession itself and the belief in one's own capability to succeed. Thus, low self-efficacy has been found to be connected to teacher burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, as cited in Lindqvist et al., 2020), where preventive measures should be taken already in teacher training (Lindqvist et al., 2020, p. 1).

By raising the issue of teacher burnout and proactive strategies, especially in conjunction with practicum where tools are needed to cope with challenging situations, burnout could be prevented from developing (Lindqvist et al. 2020, p. 11). To further strengthen this claim, the study gave an example of newly qualified teachers experiencing burnout after three months in their profession, which is too short of a time frame to be developing these symptoms, and as such, it must have emerged previously in their teacher training (Lindqvist et al. 2020, p. 3).



## **2.7 The EFL perspective and the Swedish educational context – curriculum coherence**

To narrow the scope from the birds-eye view of teacher self-efficacy in the pre-service and novice teacher, implications for teacher training programmes from an EFL perspective, and subsequently in a Swedish context, will constitute the following paragraph. Research based on teacher training programmes in Canada (TESOL) scored low for the ability to teach ESL literacy and to teach English in a foreign language context, with mixed responses from respondents of not getting enough grammar instruction to not appreciating it at all (Faez & Valeo, p. 463-464). The implications for teacher education emphasized the importance of connecting theory and practice, and how knowledge is outlined in teacher education in order to foster solid self-efficacy.

Similarly, respondents in a Venezuelan educational context failed to teach grammar in meaningful and communicative contexts, as they lacked enough English speaking proficiency and confidence, pointing towards the need for solid preparation of language proficiency skills in the teacher training programmes (Chacón, 2005). These results have implications for the development of teacher training programmes, i.e. how subject specific content in English affects pre-service teachers and how that knowledge is bridged from the transition of pre-service to novice teachers in a Swedish educational context. As such, teacher education coherence is important to facilitate a logical structure of the combination of course and field work (Staal-Jenset, 2018).

## **2.8 The EFL perspective and challenges in a Swedish educational context**

Moreover, a challenge which faces EFL teachers in Sweden is the autonomy in teaching, i.e. leaving novice EFL teachers with limited experience of teaching material to use for planning and teaching. The syllabus for English of years 7-9 states that: “Through teaching, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop all-round communicative skills.” (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 34), which is also reflected in the syllabus for upper-secondary education in the subject of English: “Students should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills.” (Skolverket 2011b, p. 1). Hence, there is no clear directives of how these skills should be taught, i.e., what teaching material should be used, for example. Thus, it places much of this responsibility on the teacher training institutes and the English subject and practicum to

share ideas of appropriate teaching materials, to facilitate the construction of a sound canonical repertoire.

This teacher autonomy also exists with Norwegian EFL teachers (Christophersen et al., 2016), hence, the same challenge also faces novice EFL teachers in Norway. Similarly, adapting teaching to student needs may infer another challenge, with many classrooms consisting of up to 30 students or even more. As stipulated in the Curriculum Guidelines for Compulsory Schooling teachers should: “take into account each individual’s needs, circumstances, experiences and thinking” (Skolverket 2011 a, p. 12).

With Swedish classrooms reflecting a heterogenic society, students are often multilingual, which is positive. However, challenges arise when students have limited knowledge of English due to their former education and conditions of developing adequate proficiency. According to Skolverket’s statistics (cited in Friskolornas Riksförbund, 2020) the percentage of immigrated students have increased from 9,8% in the academic year of 2011/2012 to 15% in 2019/2020. The greatest increase has been with newly arrived students, who have spent less than four years in Sweden, with an increase from 2,7% in the academic year of 2011/2012 to 4,6% in 2019/2020. Hence, EFL teachers are faced with students at diverse levels, with requirements of adapting instruction to meet every student’s needs, inferring great challenges for these teachers.

## **2.9 Teacher education in Sweden – an overview**

Teacher education in Sweden has been steered by the influence of governmental policies based on the fluctuating views of governing political parties historically, consequently leading to continuous change in curriculum design. The school law from 1985 was substituted with a new law in 2010 with regulations of teacher education to be resting on scientific basis and proven experience (Skolverket, 2020). Furthermore, the reform in 2001 was initiated by the ruling Democratic Party who identified a need to adapt teacher education to the emerging shift in social construction due to globalism, multiculturalism and information technology. This reform entailed a focus on problem-solving and co-operative skills including a student-centered view, with less focus on subject knowledge, but an increase emphasis on field placements (Furuhagen, 2019, p. 794).

As the Liberal Party gained power in 2006, a new reform was introduced in 2011, with the construction of a new school curriculum, Lgr 11 and Gy11 (Skolverket, 2011) being the latest reformation of teacher education in Sweden. Separate teacher training programmes based on levels of teaching was introduced with class teachers in years 1-3 and 4-6, and subject teachers in secondary schooling, years 7-9 and upper-secondary schooling. A greater emphasis was placed on subject knowledge and didactics with a continued scientific approach, i.e., teaching should be based on a scientific basis and proven experience (Skolverket, 2020).

The subject teacher education consists of 60 credits of educational science core, with courses like the history of Swedish education, human rights, curriculum theory and didactic. Further, conflict management, assessment and grading, the perspective of the teacher role, and the school's democratic mission in the perspective of values for example. Practicum consists of 30 credits, which of 15 are subject specific (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2021). The subject teacher education differs based on level of certification. Thus qualification requires 60 credits of English studies for years 7-9 (13-16 years) and 90 credits for upper-secondary schooling (16-19 years).

The next change in policy is with the current January agreement of January, 2019 (Government Offices of Sweden, 2019), which is an agreement between the Democratic Party and the middle parties to reform teacher education in an effort to further enhance quality. A consultation has been sent from the Ministry of Education to stakeholders, with the aim to gain more insight into the proposed changes, which will be in effect as from August 1, 2021.

Policy makers face the challenge of increasing recruitment of teachers by implementing more paths into the teaching profession, with reduced lengths in programmes such as Complementary pedagogical education (KPU, kompletterande pedagogisk utbildning), Further training of teachers (VAL, Vidareutbildning av lärare), and Foreign teachers' further training (ULV, utländska lärares vidareutbildning) whilst retaining quality.

In conjunction, the government has given the Swedish council for higher education the commission to investigate the requirement of the grade C (of a scale A-F), with the teaching subjects as a special eligibility requirement for entry to the subject teacher training programmes (Universitets- och högskolerådet, 2021), to attract applicants with higher qualifications. Moreover, the practical part of the training should be strengthened with practice schools, experienced and educated mentors, as well as placing an increased

responsibility on institutions and their support during this part of the training (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2021). In contradiction to previous research (Canrinus, 2017; Demirel, 2017; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Staal-Jenset, 2018), there is no intention to increase the length of practicum with this reform.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Methods used in previous studies as inspiration**

Following is an outline of the methods used by the researchers in previous studies in the field of education research. Hence, they served as inspiration for this study in a Swedish educational context. Three of the articles constituted comparative studies aiming at detecting what sources of self-efficacy differentiated the pre-service and in-service teacher (Putman, 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Kostic-Babanovic, 2020). They all used a mix of qualitative (open-ended questions) and quantitative (closed-ended questions and, Likert-type scales 1-9, ranging from “nothing” to “a great deal”) methods based on the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale or TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) with three subscales of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement.

All of the researchers, except Lindgren (2007) and Bjerkholt & Hedegaard (2008), based their inquiries on the TSES constituting a 24-item scale adapted to fit the purpose of the individual studies, with the three subscales mentioned above. From a Swedish educational context, this study draws heavily on research by Faez & Valeo (2012), as their study addresses specific target content concerning English language teachers.

The online questionnaire constituted three areas: demographic information, reflections of preparedness to teach, and general attitudes and beliefs about “the overall usefulness of their teacher education” (Faez & Valeo, p. 454-455). A 20 item scale based on Faez & Valeo (2012, p. 462) was used connected to the content of the teacher training programmes (see Appendix A) to analyse novice teachers’ preparedness as English language teachers.

### 3.2 Method of study

The study included both quantitative and qualitative methods to reach high reliability and thus to answer the research questions (McKay, 2010, p. 41) in the form of a questionnaire (Appendix C) and follow-up interviews (Appendix D). The questionnaire (Appendix C) consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data. The former consisting of numerical data of close-ended questions such as the ranking of perceived self-efficacy for the aforementioned parameters with a Likert scale, 1-4. An even number option is more favorable to avoid the middle section of an indecisive response (McKay, 2010, p. 38).

The survey and the interviews were aimed to address both research questions, with the first attending to how teacher training programmes best prepare pre-service teachers, and with the second research question investigating what sources in the teacher training programmes influence novice teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully manage the complexity of teaching (Appendix C and Appendix E).

The qualitative data consisted of open-ended questions, aimed at detecting common topics or themes of self-efficacy beliefs connected to the English content of teacher training programmes. Six semi-structured interviews constituted the quantitative method, based on a standardized open-ended guide with exact wordings and order of the questions for each informant (McKay, 2006, p. 52).

As previously outlined, many enquiries into the sources which best build strong efficacy beliefs in the student teachers have drawn upon Bandura's social cognitive theory. Similarly, this study used the same theoretical framework for investigation. It was focused on how subject teacher training programmes in Sweden, with an EFL perspective, best prepare their student teachers for the complex teaching profession, based on the theory of self-efficacy and the first three parameters; mastery experiences, vicarious learning experiences, and verbal persuasion.

Firstly, the importance of mastery experiences and connecting theory and practice, especially by implementing acquired subject matter in the practicum of the teacher training, was surveyed with a focus on the criticism of subject didactics being too theoretical and abstract for implementation (Faez & Valeo, 2012; Chacón, 2005; Putman, 2012; Lindgren, 2007; Bjerkholt-Hedegaard, 2008; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012, Carmel, 2019; Yu, 2020; Zhu, 2020; Farrell, 2012; Demirel, 2017; Golzar, 2020; Swee Choo Goh, & Canrinus, 2020 ;

Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Christophersen et al., 2016; Kostic-Babanovic, 2020).

Secondly, an enquiry into what sources acquired in the teacher training programmes best prepared novice teachers for their profession was made with inspiration drawn from previous research in teacher education (Carmel, 2019; Yu, 2020; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Demirel, 2017; Canrinus, 2017; Swe Choo Goh & Canrinus, 2020; Jahkelin et al. 2019; Almunger & Wahlström, 2017; Juuti 2018; Åstrand, 2012; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Björk & Stengård, 2019; Christophersen & Elstad, 2016; Chacón, 2005). Subsequently, as the third category, novice teachers' language proficiency was investigated, i.e. how well teacher training programmes have prepared these teachers to teach English language proficiency confidently (Faez & Valeo, 2012; Chacón, 2005).

Skaalvik & Skaalvik's (2007) augmented TSES, the Norwegian Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (NTSES), as well as the work of Christophersen et al. (2016), served as inspiration as Swedish and Norwegian educational tradition and policies rest on equal views of the autonomous teacher. Moreover, Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy designed the TSES self-efficacy scale, proposing a 24-item scale constituting three dimensions: 1. Instructional strategies, 2. Classroom management and 3. Student engagement, augmented to suit the aim of Skaalvik's (2007) study, for example. Hence, to answer the research questions, the research instrument was based on these five parameters:

Perceived self-efficacy for instructional strategies and pedagogy teaching

Perceived self-efficacy for subject-didactics teaching

Perceived self-efficacy for mastery experiences (e.g. practicum experiences)

Perceived self-efficacy for classroom management

Perceived self-efficacy for student engagement

All of these parameters served as the basis for the construction of the survey and interview questions to gather as much information possible from respondents of sources most appreciated in teacher education.

### 3.3 Materials and procedure

A mixed method approach was applied, constituting both quantitative and qualitative methods, with a survey and follow-up interviews in order to answer the research questions best possible (McKay, 2006, p. 13). An information letter was constructed (Appendix B) with information about the purpose of the study with principles of ethics of the research process (Swedish Research Council) of anonymity as well as adhering to the regulations of data protection, GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). The letter also invited the participants to engage in a voluntary follow-up interview online via the video conferencing tool Zoom. The questionnaire was piloted before distribution to avoid ambiguity (McKay, 2006, p. 41).

The survey was designed based on a Google forms format, which compiles the data in figures and tables, facilitating the analysis procedure. The questionnaire was introduced with a brief introduction with details of the purpose of the study. The survey consisted of 21 questions, two of which were open-ended, allowing the participants the opportunity to reflect on the content of their English courses and the overall program design (Appendix C).

The first five questions attended to participant characteristics, followed by 11 close-ended questions in a Likert-scale format (McKay, 2006, p. 38). The design of the Likert-scale incorporated a 4-item scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The justification for using an even option design is to have participants avoiding a middle and neutral alternative, thus avoiding taking a stand in that question (McKay, 2006, p. 38). There were three multiple-choice questions, questions 7, 8 and 14. In question 7 the respondents could choose one or several alternatives related to content in the teacher training programme and decide which were perceived as being most useful. Question 8 asked for which of the four communication skills they felt best prepared to teach, either reading, writing, speaking and listening they felt most prepared to teach.

The last of the multiple-choice questions (Q. 14) inquired about the most valuable aspects of the practicum in the subject of English. The final two questions, 20 and 21, were open-ended, inviting respondents to assess the most and least useful content of their teacher education. These questions were included to give valuable information about their overall perception and the usefulness of skills acquired during their training. The results from these two questions were to be compared with the replies from the interviews and with the theoretical framework.

The survey data was analysed to detect specific themes or categories where respondents showed dissatisfaction or satisfaction, especially with questions 20 and 21, with either the content of the English courses, practicum or curriculum design of their teacher education. These categories were colour-coded and organized according to prominentness in a ranking system, to identify the most and least appreciated aspects of the programs (McKay, 2006, p. 159). This colour-coding system is described further in chapter 5.

The categories which emerged were; *practicum, didactics courses, literature courses, teachers, language structure and grammar courses, grading and evaluation, special education, theory and practice, irrelevant courses, outline of programme, grading and assessment, and classroom management*. To help visualize the results of these last two questions, two graphs were constructed (Figure 2 and Figure 3). These categories then formed the design of the interview questions, based on Bandura's socio-cognitive theory of self-efficacy and Skaalvik's (2007) research instrument of the five categories previously described.

A standardized open-ended interview model constituted 17 questions (Appendix D), with the same question order and content used with each interviewee (McKay, 2006, p. 52). The interviewees were given a choice of language preferred, where three chose English and three, Swedish. The responses in Swedish were later translated into English. The interviews were conducted via Zoom where the interviewees had been prepared with the questions in advance, facilitating time for reflection prior to participation (Appendix D).

The interviews were recorded and notes were taken to ensure internal validity (McKay, 2006, p. 13), facilitating authentic use of quotes. Their replies were confirmed at the end of each interview to ensure that no misunderstandings had occurred. The same procedure was used with the colour-coding of prominent categories in the analysis to be able to draw conclusions from the accumulated data.

### **3.4 Respondents**

The respondents for the survey were selected by random sampling (McKay, 2010, p. 37). Skolverket's statistics tool was used (Skolverket, n.d.) to retrieve data of English language teachers in years 7-9, and upper-secondary school constituting the criteria of these novice teachers, or *strata* (McKay, 2010, p. 37). Once the municipalities had been identified



and categorized in alphabetical order, every 20<sup>th</sup> school was chosen, with a second dispatch encompassing every 30<sup>th</sup> school. The heads of schools had to make a selection of newly qualified teachers, i.e. those in their first year of teaching, as this information is not available in Skolverket's statistics online.

Since a larger sample of respondents was desired, Skolverket was contacted directly via e-mail to share an extract of statistics of newly qualified English language teachers who had been certified in the years 2018-2020. This extract contained e-mail addresses of newly qualified teachers, where another random sampling was made, all in an effort to reach results representative for the nation of Sweden, also defined as generalizability (McKay, 2010, p. 14). The newly qualified teachers were invited to participate in the survey via e-mail based on the extract from Skolverket's statistics (Skolverket, n.d.).

These novice teachers, both from Skolverket's statistics and actual schools, were invited to take part in an anonymous online Google forms questionnaire, where they responded to their perceived preparedness to teach English in a Swedish EFL classroom. The survey was open for participation between March 29 and April 11, 2021. A total of 81 respondents completed the questionnaire, which also invited respondents to participate in voluntary interviews. Six out of the 81 respondents, four female and two male, volunteered for interviews between April 22 and April 30, 2021. A more detailed categorization of respondents is displayed in chapter 4.

### **3.5 Reliability and validity**

The aspects of reliability and validity are important for sound research (McKay, 2010, p. 11). Reliability refers to the study being conducted in a reliable way and is categorized as internal or external, with the former relating to the extent of someone analysing the data of the survey would reach the same conclusion, and with the latter referring to another researcher conducting a similar study to reach the same conclusion (McKay, 2010, pp. 12-13). To ensure internal and external reliability, the questionnaire was piloted and the informants were included based on Skolverket's information, which is a trustworthy source of information. Similarly, the validity is categorized as internal or external and refers to the focus of the study, that the aim and research questions permeate the whole study. Internal validity relates

to the controlling of variables in the design of the study, whereas external validity, refers to the fact that it can be generalized to a larger population.

To ensure sound internal validity, the study used a mixed-method approach for both a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews. The interviews were recorded and notes were taken with a careful analysis of the data, based on colour-coding of specific themes (McKay, 2010, P. 159). An explanation of the colour-coding system used for analysis can be found in chapter 5. To ensure external validity, all municipalities in Sweden were included in the study by the random sampling based on Skolverket's statistics (Skolverket, n.b.) representing the wider population of newly qualified teachers in Sweden. As such, the study has high external validity in regards to generalizability (McKay, p. 12). Moreover, a complete description of respondents is presented in chapter 5.

### **3.6 Limitation of study**

The data collection for this study was based on Skolverket's statistics (Skolverket, n.b.), which is a valid source of information. As with qualitative research, such as interviews, the researcher strives to attain internal validity by "carefully recording and analysing all of the data gathered and presenting it in a fair and unbiased manner" (McKay, 2010, p. 13). As the theoretical framework and previous studies in the field have indicated certain flaws with teacher education, the researcher needs to approach the study in an objective manner, without having this information interfere with the present research. As the interviewees were given the opportunity to choose language, either Swedish or English, three of the participants chose Swedish. Hence, these three interviews were translated into English by the researcher.

This method has its weaknesses as it is quite likely that another researcher may have opted for other equivalent expressions between the two languages. 81 survey responses provide a limited source of information for a study, and ideally, a larger sample would have been preferred. However, it was rather difficult to access newly qualified teachers via heads of schools. This was facilitated with the third dispatch which was with a direct e-mail contact with newly qualified teachers, accessed through Skolverket's registrar and register extract of newly qualified teachers. Moreover, the collection of data was conducted in the limited time frame of two weeks. All of the above factors need to be taken into consideration when analysing the results.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Results of survey and interviews

This chapter presents the results of the online questionnaire and the interviews which were conducted to answer the two research questions: First, how do teacher training programmes best prepare EFL pre-service teachers, and second, what *sources* influence teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully manage the complexity of teaching? The first sub-chapter describes the characteristics of the respondents of the survey and the interviews, followed by a description of the colour-coding system used for the analysis of the two open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the replies given in the interviews.

#### 4.1.1 *Characteristics of respondents*

Out of the 81 responses of the questionnaire, the categorization by gender displayed 64,2% female and 35,8% male. These numbers are representative for the general teaching body in Sweden, which consists of 75% of female teachers in compulsory schooling, and 52% in upper-secondary education (Skolverket, PM, 2019). The age distribution in the category aged 25-30 proved to be the highest with 45,6%, which is slightly younger than the average age of the teaching body in Sweden in compulsory and upper-secondary schooling. The highest representation with 32% was with teachers aged 40-49. The majority of the participants, 63%, gained their certification in 2020.

There are several paths to attain teacher certification in Sweden, as described in chapter 2, and the results showed that most of the participants had attended teacher education at universities (46,9%), where 22,2% had attended training at University colleges or complementary pedagogical education (KPU). Two of the respondents had gained their certification via foreign teachers' further training.

The respondents for the voluntary interviews consisted of six participants, four of which were female. The age distribution was 25, 27, 28, 44, 46 and 52. Three had attended teacher education at Universities and one at a university college, while the remaining two had attended Complementary pedagogical education (KPU). They were all certified to teach years 7-9 in compulsory schooling as well as upper-secondary education.

#### ***4.1.2 Colour-coding system for analysis***

This investigation aims to portray novice teachers' preparedness to teach after completing teacher training, and as such, to make visible and discuss specific themes occurring in the replies. To facilitate analysis of these results of the open-ended survey questions and the interview questions, a colour-coding system was developed (Appendix C and Appendix E). After analysing the replies, certain themes appeared in open-ended questions 20 and 21 which were colour-coded: Practice/VFU (yellow), didactics courses (blue), language structure, linguistics, and grammar (green), teachers (dark pink) literature (light blue), special education (purple), grading and assessment (yellow print) (Appendix C).

The analysis of the interview replies followed the same procedure to facilitate analysis of the results, with the following colour-codes: Practice (yellow), connecting theory and practice (blue), practical exercises and didactics (dark pink), assessment (green) and lesson planning (dark green) (Appendix E). This system enabled the construction of figures to make responses more visible. These themes were then placed in a descending ranking order for questions 20 and 21 (figure 1, 2 and figure 3) and for the interview responses (figure 4 and figure 5).

#### ***4.1.3 Results of survey***

The first five survey questions attended to the characteristics of the respondents, asking about gender, age, mode and year of certification (Appendix C). A detailed description of respondents can be found in section 5.1.1. Following is a description of the results of the survey questions 6-21, to visualizing specific key findings related to the research questions. The most salient replies displayed in the "disagree or strongly disagree" columns are presented with the inclusion of data based on the Google Forms figures, to support the interpretation of the results. These replies are especially interesting to analyse as they represent dissatisfaction with the teacher training programmes in some specific categories. These findings will be discussed in relation to the theoretical framework in chapter 5.

The first research question, number 6, denoted how teacher training programmes best prepare pre-service teachers, and what *sources* influence teachers' beliefs in his/her ability to successfully manage the complexity of teaching. In order to answer this question, respondents were asked how well they felt to use the English syllabus in teaching. Even though 82.7

percent felt well prepared or prepared, 17,2 % felt unprepared which is close to one fifth of the total 81 participants. If you look at these results in the context of the national teaching body, 17,2 percent is still quite a substantial figure showing unpreparedness to use the English syllabus in teaching.

In question 7, the participants were asked to rate how useful certain subject matter in their English courses were, with an option to include other information in the category “other” (Appendix D). The different categories were: *English didactics*, *Practicum (VFU)*, *Written communication*, *World English*, *Literature*, *Language structure* and *Linguistics*. The practicum received the highest rating with 76,5 %, followed by courses in English didactics, with a score of 56,8%. These two courses are interrelated as the practicum facilitates the implementation of didactic methods studied at the training institutions.

Moreover, language structure rated third with 42% followed by linguistics with 34,6% and literature with 33,3%. The two lowest rated courses were written communication and World English with 21 % and 12,3%, respectively. Five respondents used the “other” option with one person stating that none of the courses was useful, and another referring to the Complementary teacher training (KPU) to be non-inclusive when it comes to “focusing on how to teach English (except during VFU).” A third respondent mentioned courses in pedagogy.

Question 8 asked which of the four communication skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening the respondents felt most confident in when teaching these skills. 71,6% rated writing as the highest, while 21% had listening as the lowest. Speaking was rated as the second highest with 48,1 % and reading was rated third with 42%. The results indicate that the respondents felt most prepared to teach written skills and that they felt less prepared to teach listening skills.

In conjunction, question 9 referred to courses in English didactics and asked how well prepared they felt to use a variety of teaching methods. Close to a fourth of the respondents (24,7%) disagreed with this statement, and another 11,1% showed strong disagreement. This infers that 35,8% of the respondents did not perceive themselves as prepared to use a variety of teaching methods as novice teachers of English. In total, 22,2 % of the respondents felt inadequately prepared in this respect.

Further, Questions 10 and 11 were also related to English didactics. Question 10 asked to what extent the respondents felt prepared to design efficient lesson plans. Slightly above

one fourth (25, 9%) were strongly in agreement and further 50,6% in agreement to this statement. 21% disagreed and another 2,5% expressed strong disagreement. In total, 23,5% disagreed with this statement (Appendix C), constituting nearly close to a fourth of the respondents. As lesson planning is part of courses in didactics and a crucial part in everyday teaching, a result showing that nearly one fourth of the respondents are not feeling sufficiently prepared is noteworthy.

In conjunction, question 11 asked how well prepared they felt to select appropriate teaching material in the subject of English. The findings reveal that 22,2% approved strongly of this, meaning they felt well prepared, and 59,3% were in agreement, leaving 11,1% in disagreement. Thus, close to one out of five expresses some sort of disagreement with this statement (Appendix C). Summing up questions 10 and 11, the results show somewhat higher scores for being prepared to choose appropriate teaching materials than for designing efficient lesson plans.

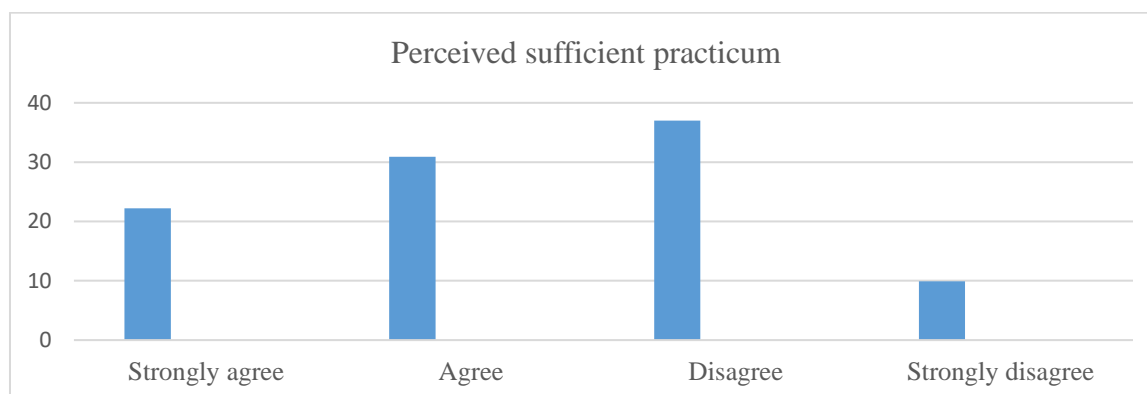
Question 12 referred to how well the participants perceived themselves as being able to implement English didactic theory in their practicum on a scale from 1-4. The practicum allows student teachers to practice what they have learned in their teacher training, and thus, experimenting with various teaching methods. 27,2% of the respondents agreed strongly with this statement, which can be interpreted as if they feel well prepared for the job. 53,1% were in agreement with this statement where another 17,3% disagreed and with another 2,5% disagreeing strongly. A total of 80,3% agreeing to this statement is a high percentage, however, leaving nearly one fifth of the respondents dissatisfied is worrying and will be further analysed in the discussion chapter.

To find out the respondents' perception of adequate practical elements in their education, question 13 asked if there was enough practice in the teacher training programme in the subject of English. Results show that just 53.1 percent strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, leaving nearly half of the participants dissatisfied in this respect. This result is noteworthy and will be further discussed in the discussion chapter.

Figure 1 displays the distribution of replies in percentages.

**Figure 1**

*Perceived sufficient practicum in teacher training*



Next, question 14 investigated the appreciation for the content of the practicum. There were several options. The option “I got to practice how to plan, execute and evaluate my teaching” was rated highest with 74.1 %. The statement “My confidence of managing the English classroom was strengthened”, received the second highest rating with 69,1 %. “I received valuable feedback from my mentor at the practice school”, was rated third with 59,3 %. “I was able to connect theory and practice”, was rated fourth with 34,6%.

The final two statements were rated lowest, where; “I was supported by my teacher training institute”, receiving 7,4%, and; “There was good cooperation between my practice school and my teacher training institute”, receiving 6,2%. Noteworthy is the low percentages for the support from the teacher training institute and the cooperation between the institute and the practice school (Appendix C). These findings will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

Questions 15 and 16 dealt with perspectives on classroom management with question 15 inquiring how well novice teachers felt prepared to manage the classroom efficiently. Responses in strong agreement constituted 18,5 % and in agreement 66,7%. 12,3% disagreed with this statement and another 2,5% were in strong disagreement. These results show that 85,2% felt prepared in this respect.

The preparedness to provide a good learning environment (Q. 16) scored 21% in strong agreement and 61,7% in agreement. 13,6% were in disagreement with another 3,7% being in strong disagreement. Thus, the results of both questions showed fairly similar results.

Question 17 inquired about preparedness to instil motivation with the students. The replies showed that 18,5% felt very well prepared and 56,8% felt prepared. 23,5% disagreed to this statement with another 1,2% in strong disagreement.

Out of these three questions, question 15 received the highest score in relation to preparedness of managing the classroom efficiently, with 85,2% of the respondents agreeing strongly or agreeing to this statement. This is followed by question 16 of preparing a good learning environment which scored 82,7% in the categories of strong agreement or agreement.

Finally, question 17 showed the lowest response in relation to preparedness of instilling motivation in students, totalling 75,5% in agreement, leaving nearly one fourth dissatisfied in this respect. As instilling motivation in students is connected to strong TSE, it is conspicuous that so many of the respondents felt unprepared in this respect. This will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

To investigate how confident respondents felt in their own language skills to teach English, question 18 revealed that 53,1 % marked that they strongly agreed with this statement and 40,7% in agreement, leaving 4,9% disagreeing with another 1,2% in strong disagreement. In total, 93,8% felt confident in their language skills to teach English.

The last of the closed questions (Q. 19) dealt with the questions of instructors at the teacher training programmes being valuable role models. Thus, if the instructors were able to instil confidence in their student teachers to believe in their own ability to teach English. 65.4% of the respondents agreed to this statement leaving 25,9 % in disagreement and 8,6% in strong disagreement. These findings indicate that 34,5% of the respondents were dissatisfied with perceiving instructors at the teacher training institutions as valuable role models.

In relation to the second research question of what sources in the teacher training programmes influence teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully manage their everyday teaching, these replies indicate that merely 65,5% of the respondents felt that their instructors were valuable role models. Thus, in relation to enhancing quality in teacher training programmes in Sweden, these findings will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

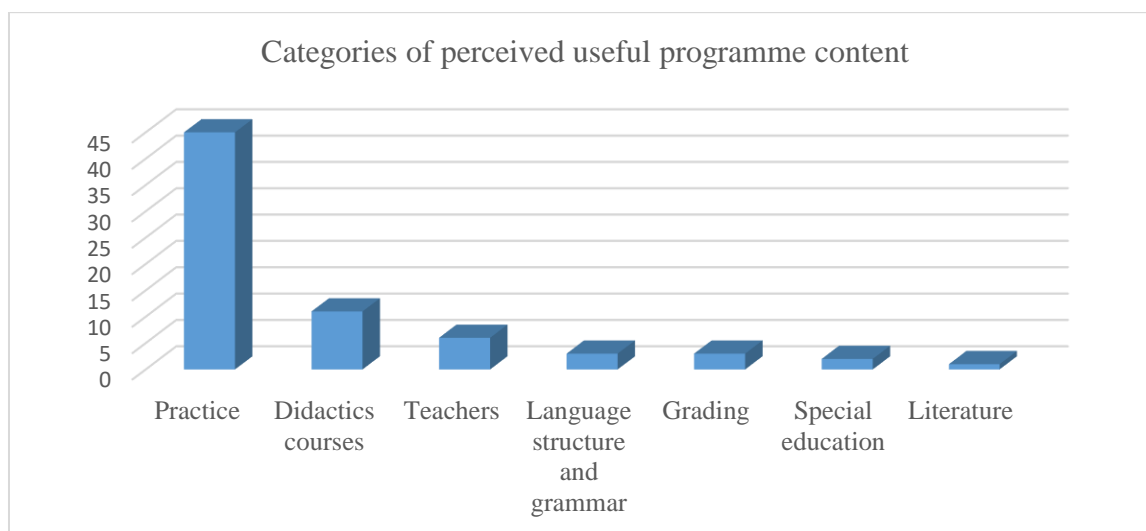


The last two questions were of an open-ended character covering a general perspective of what aspects of the teacher training in the subject of English was perceived as most useful (Q. 20) and which were least useful (Q. 21) pertaining to subject content, practicum and teachers. Other aspects such as duration and outline of the programme related to the education in a holistic perspective. A full list of replies can be seen in Appendix C.

Sixty respondents chose to answer question 20, pertaining perceived usefulness of their training, with 43 rating practicum (VFU) as the most useful course in their teacher training. This was followed by courses in didactics with 11 responses, and teachers with six responses, courses in language structure and grammar and grading and assessment both received three responses each. Courses in special education was appreciated by two respondents, and courses in literature by one. Figure 2 shows categories in the teacher programmes that respondents found most useful, i.e. most salient in the text replies in a descending ranking order.

**Figure 2**

*Perceived most useful programme content*



A few quotes have been selected to provide a clearer picture of the respondents' thoughts regarding their practice experiences. The text replies are direct quotes from the respondents. VFU is an abbreviation for Verksamhetsförlagd utbildning, equivalent to practicum in English.

-“VFU and reflective discussions to evaluate theory and practice.”

-“VFU is by far the most useful part of the teacher training program. It allows you to practice different methods of learning. Also, depending on your mentor at the practice school, you might get lots of valuable insights on how to teach English.”

-“VFU, since it was the only connection I had between my subject and the teaching experience.”

-“practice in real-world situations.”

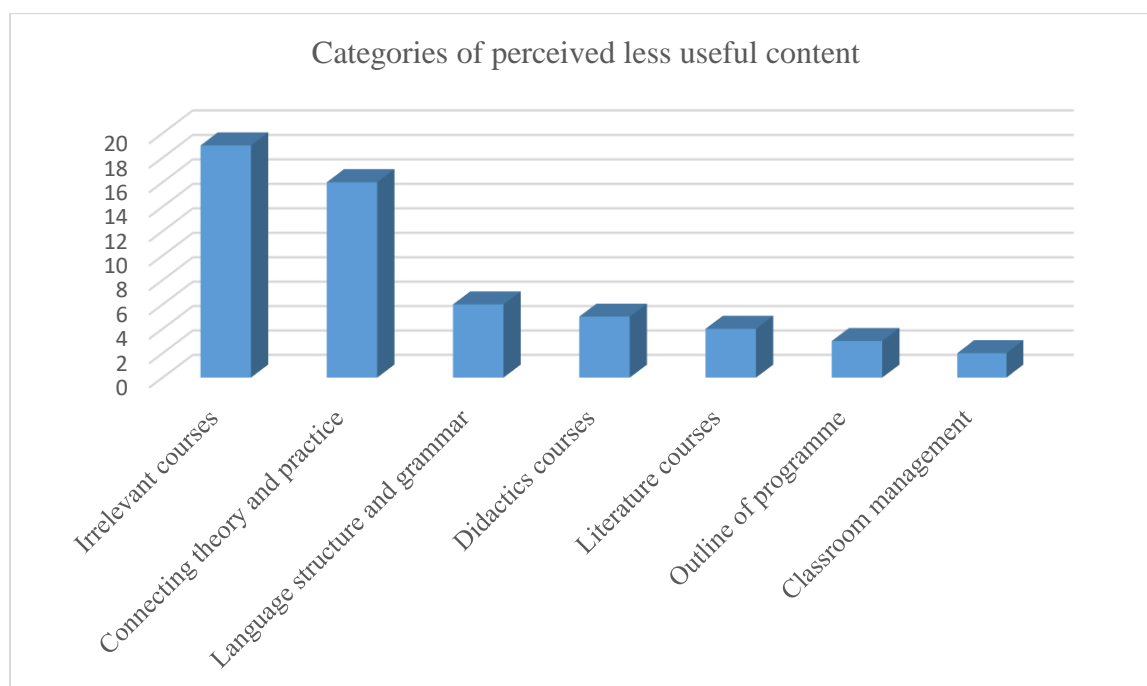
These four examples demonstrate the respondents’ appreciation for the possibility of implementing theories learnt at their teacher training “in real-world situations”.

Question 21 referred to ” What aspects of the teacher training programme do you find least useful as a teacher of English?”

76 of the 81 respondents replied to this question. Seven persons expressed that they either were unsure or that it was not applicable, and three respondents gave “none” as an answer. The latter three replies might indicate that they cannot point to any specific aspect being “least useful”, thus, the interpretation might be that these respondents found the programme useful. Noteworthy is the higher response rate for question 21 relating to dissatisfaction with content of the teacher training programmes compared to question 20, displaying useful content of the teacher education. Figure 3 displays the aspects perceived as least useful in a descending ranking order.

**Figure 3**

*Perceived least useful programme content*



Irrelevant courses constituted the largest number of replies with 19 in total. They were referred to as the history of education (7), theoretical content (3), social relationships (1), and American socio-politics (1). The remaining replies referred to some courses in general being irrelevant to their teacher training.

The category of dissatisfaction of preparedness to connect theory and practice constituted 16 replies. Examples of text replies shown below demonstrate some respondents' dissatisfaction with parts of the programme content concerning theory and practice:

-“There was too little practical methods and too much theorising.”

-“I think that the program need to adapt more to the actual environment you are going to work in as a teacher.”

-“We were given a lot of tools that were supposed to be useful, only to realize once we were on our VFU that these models and tools could only be applied theoretically, not in an actual classroom.”

- “Courses that I couldn't "use" in reality.”

These comments reflect on the replies of question 20, with respondents showing the highest appreciation for their practice, which enables opportunities for theory implementation. i.e., agreeing to the need for more practice and a tighter link between theory and practice.

#### **4.1.4 Results of interviews**

This chapter attends to the description of the results of the interviews. Six participants volunteered to participate, following an invitation in the information section of the questionnaire. There were 17 interview questions which related to perceived efficacy gained from the interviewees' teacher training (Appendix E). The first six questions pertained to interviewees' personal data such as gender, age, levels of certification, year of certification, and what part of Sweden they lived in. These data are described in chapter 4.1.1.

The rest of the questions were based on prominent characteristics which emerged from the survey results and were connected to the three parameters of self-efficacy beliefs; *mastery experiences* (q. 7 a, b, 8, 10 d, 11, 12) *vicarious experiences* (q. 9, 10 a, 13 b, 16), and *verbal persuasion* (q. 9 a, 10 b, 13, a). Two men and four female took part in the interviews, and they are characterized by individual numbers in this section (Teacher One, Teacher Two etc.)

Questions 7, a and b referred to mastery experiences and what content of the teacher education has strengthened the novice teacher. The questions asked were: What personal strengths as a novice teacher of English have developed during teacher training? What aspects of the teacher training programme have helped you develop these strengths? (7 a). How are these strengths expressed in your own teaching? (7 b).

The aspects which had helped developing strong self-efficacy beliefs were in the areas of linguistics, written proficiency, and how to teach written communication, social aspects, and practicum. Teacher self-efficacy (TSE) was gained through the practicum according to two of the respondents, written skills from teacher training courses with another two, and linguistic and grammatical competency also gained from teacher training courses with the remaining two teachers. In question 7b three of the six interviewees emphasized confidence gained from teacher training as the most valuable strength expressed in their teaching, with one (Teacher One) expressing linguistic strength as being most valuable with this quote:

-“Linguistically strong which creates security.”

This was emphasized further with teacher Two expressing that it is: -“Easier to teach written proficiency and assessment than oral proficiency.” This indicates that these teachers perceive themselves as being more confident in teaching written proficiency than oral proficiency.

The next question (8) inquired about whether they felt that the content of the teacher training programme in the subject of English had any deficiencies when it came to skills needed. Two of the respondents expressed a greater need for training in assessment and how to apply assessment in teaching. Teacher Two expressed that there was adequate content on assessment but where, “A lot of focus on assessment, but not how to apply it in teaching.”

Another two would have wished for more practice and didactics, with Teacher Five expressing “At the last period of practicum I had an English teacher who gave me many ideas on didactics, which would have been valuable at the first course.” Another two respondents would have liked to learn more about the syllabus and spelling comprehension. Teacher Two expressed that there was a lot of focus on assessment, but not how to apply it in teaching

Question 9 was related to vicarious experiences of modelling teaching and working with a mentor. The question asked: “Regarding the didactic courses and *practical elements* in these, such as watching peers teach, how you perceive the benefit of receiving *feedback* from peers during lesson planning/teaching/evaluation?” “How have you been able to implement these skills into your own teaching?” (9a). “How prepared do you feel to use a variation of *teaching methods* in your teaching of English?” (9b).

All of the respondents replied to question 9a that the time given to watching other peers’ teach and getting feedback was either insufficient, and/or in isolation, not adhering to a real classroom context. Teacher One expressed dissatisfaction with the limited time dedicated toward vicarious experiences with the quote, “Very few opportunities to watch peers teach. Only one less planning of 10 minutes, where two stars and a wish was used as feedback.”

This infers that there is a lack of vicarious experiences in the didactics courses regarding practical elements. One teacher even expressed that feedback at the beginner level of teacher training is “harmful”, and that feedback should be given by mentors at practicum or teachers at the training institutes given the fact that “Students at beginner level tell each other what to do” (Teacher Six).

In regards to feeling prepared to use a variety of teaching methods, (Q. 9b), three teachers felt unprepared, where one stated that she had learned more from being at the school than being at the training college (Teacher Two). Teacher Four stated that the level of

confidence was context-related, and that “we didn’t practise different teaching methods at the teacher training programme, only on the whiteboard.” Teacher Six had difficulties in seeing the connections between theories and reality.

Question 10 inquired about interviewees’ experiences of the practicum and whether they were able to practice what they had learnt in their teacher training. “Regarding your practice/field placement (VFU), do you feel that you were able to implement didactic theory to your practice teaching?”

Four of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction in this aspect, with criticism of too much focus on classroom management and insufficient length of practicum. Teacher Four expressed this clearly: “5-10 weeks of practicum is not enough, absolutely not enough. I feel not prepared for what is to come. We are vulnerable.” The subsequent questions of question 10, that is a, b, c and d all referred to the interviewees’ perception of their practicum experiences.

This question had four subsequent questions to investigate the interviewees’ overall experiences with their practicum. As the self-efficacy parameters of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion are all part of practicum, it was of importance to investigate the interviewees’ experiences, and whether they perceived themselves as being adequately equipped to master their role as novice teachers in these respects.

10 a. “How do you perceive the scaffolding by your mentor at the field placement (LLU)? Did you get to watch him/her teach?”

Nearly all interviewees expressed positive experiences with their mentor, with Teacher Two stating: “Fantastic, very supporting. Free reins provide comfort.” And Teacher Five said: “You need to grow into the role of as a teacher. First, I was the student teacher, and then at the last VFU period, I was her colleague.”

10 b. “How do you feel about the feedback that you received? How would you describe the benefit of this feedback?”

All of the teachers were pleased with their feedback, with comments such as it being useful, concrete and constructive, and where Teacher Two expressed: “My LLU made me believe that that I can be a good teacher. She has a lot of work experience and is an experienced LLU.”

c. “How do you perceive the cooperation between your field placement and your teacher training institute? How would you describe this cooperation?”

Five of the six respondents were dissatisfied with this cooperation, and meant that it was not well established. Teacher Six expressed that it is “a necessary evil”, It’s just something that needs to be done with. No one really embraces it with joy”. These salient findings implicate areas of improvements in teacher education in Sweden, and will be considered in more detail in the discussion chapter.

d. “Is there anything you would like to change in the practice period (VFU) in the subject of English?”

Four of the respondents expressed the need for more practicum and also a longer practicum, which would help facilitate the inclusion of the school or to “feel part of the school” (Teacher Three). Teacher Two expressed: “A longer practicum at the end of the training during the autumn term. To get a feel for how it is to work. Conduct a larger project.”

The next question, question 11, constituted two questions related to classroom management and the perceived preparedness of having techniques to motivate the students in the classroom. Further, the teachers were to express how well the teacher training had prepared novice teachers in this respect.

Three of the respondents showed general dissatisfaction, and one teacher expressed the lack of preparation from the teacher training institute. Teacher Six experienced the missing link between theory and practice as “an impossible design”. Failures are perceived as something that you have to deal with yourself, and that this may contribute to teacher attrition.”

Furthermore, the same teacher expressed: “That is why teachers change professions. They make amateur like mistakes which are perceived as failures. If one is not prepared that everything might fail, you blame yourself. You have to carry your own failures.” Thus, it can be interpreted that half of the interviewees felt inadequately prepared with managing their classrooms efficiently and instilling motivation in their students.

Regarding instilling student motivation, three of the respondents felt quite prepared. Teacher Four expressed the lack of course content adhering to special education: “The field placement was good. But courses at the university didn’t prepare me much at all. You need to adapt to every single group of students. This should be discussed more. Not much preparation, so many different needs. Broad aspects of theories are taught. I missed teachers to give small tips and tricks on how to improve a lesson. Think about this...”

Question 12 was included to answer the second research question about what sources had influenced the novice teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully manage the complexity of teaching. The question inquired about the transition period from being a pre-service teacher to an in-service teacher and the perceived challenges.

“What has been the most challenging aspect with the transition period from being a teacher student to a novice teacher of English?”

The respondents referred to the complexity of the teaching profession, planning for a full academic year, the heterogenic classroom, being on your own, working with rubrics and grading, and seeing the link between theory and practice. Teacher One expressed: “How do one get an overview over the whole academic year? How does one plan for a full year? The holistic and the overview is challenging.”

Teacher Two referred to the difficulties of the heterogenic classroom: “Students can be at such different levels. Some students are new inhabitants to Sweden and barely know the alphabet. They need different pedagogy. I don't feel prepared to teach English from scratch.”

Teacher Six expressed dissatisfaction of not being prepared for implementing theory in every day teaching: “The reality does not match the universities. The feeling of shortcomings and failure. I know the theories, but have a vague understanding of how to put them into practice.”

In question 13, the interviewees were asked about practical advice to be used in instructions at the teacher training institutions: “What advice would you give the teachers in the teacher training programme in the subject of English?”

Three of the respondents expressed the need for more practical examples, and one of these also wished for an extended practicum period. “More practical examples, lesson planning and how to use them” (Teacher Three). There must be enough practice according to Teacher One. The subsequent, question 13 a, inquired about how teacher training instructors had impacted on the interviewees as role models.

a. “How do you feel that these teachers have impacted on you as a novice teacher? “

Three of the respondents had positive experiences with their teachers, while the other three were less satisfied. Teacher Four expressed that: “I would have liked teachers to give actual advice.” Teacher Six suggested teacher educators to do practice at schools to “see the reality of today”.



Question 13 b attended to the feedback received from the instructors at the teacher training institutions and the benefit perceived from this feedback: “How do you feel about the feedback that you received from these teachers? How would you describe the benefit of this feedback?”

Four of the respondents were satisfied with this feedback and described it as valuable, clear and honest, concrete and constructive. Two of the respondents were less happy and would have wished for “more comments on the actual teaching (Teacher Four).

Question 14 referred to the content of their teacher training and included four subsequent questions to give as many details as possible: “What advice would you give to those who organize teacher training?”

Two of the respondents would have liked more knowledge about assessment, and more practice in this respect.

Teacher One expressed the complementary teacher education (KPU) as being “a bit fuzzy” with a wish for planning and assessment to be supported by more practical examples.

Question 14 a inquired about what the interviewees would like to see more of in teacher education in the subject of English.

Three of the respondents expressed the need for more practicum, with another two wishing for more subject knowledge when it comes to lesson planning and student assessment.

The subsequent question 14 b investigated what content in their teacher education being perceived as less appreciated. Three of the respondents referred to, in their view, less useful content, such as educational history, general pedagogy, advanced courses which are not applicable to school, and theory as perceived as not being connected to reality.

In question 14 c the interviewees were asked to reflect on the structure of their teacher training programme: “How do you feel about the structure of the teacher training programme? Has it been coherent, e.g. in the structuring of didactic courses and practice (VFU).”

Four of the responses showed dissatisfaction regarding objectives at the practicum being abstractly formulated, and saw a need for more practicum and courses on assessment.

To quote Teacher Five, “Somehow there should have been more practical work, maybe more VFU I think. More practical and courses on assessing.”

In conjunction, Teacher Six expressed the need for closer links between courses in English and the practicum, “Far in between the VFU periods. “Rather a recurring VFU of one week per month during the whole teacher training.”

In referring to the theoretical framework and previous studies of enabling self-efficacy beliefs to be fostered early in learning, question 14 d inquired about what course content would have been beneficial to introduce early in their training: “Would any aspects of the teacher training program be particularly important to include in the *early stages* of learning to foster strong beliefs in your own ability to teach English?”

Responses were such as, English proficiency, leadership, practicing assessment and “to think about students’ production early (Teacher Two), “real life experience at an actual school” (Teacher Three), more field placement “during the first and third semester” (teacher Four), and “courses in conflict management and special pedagogics” (Teacher Five).

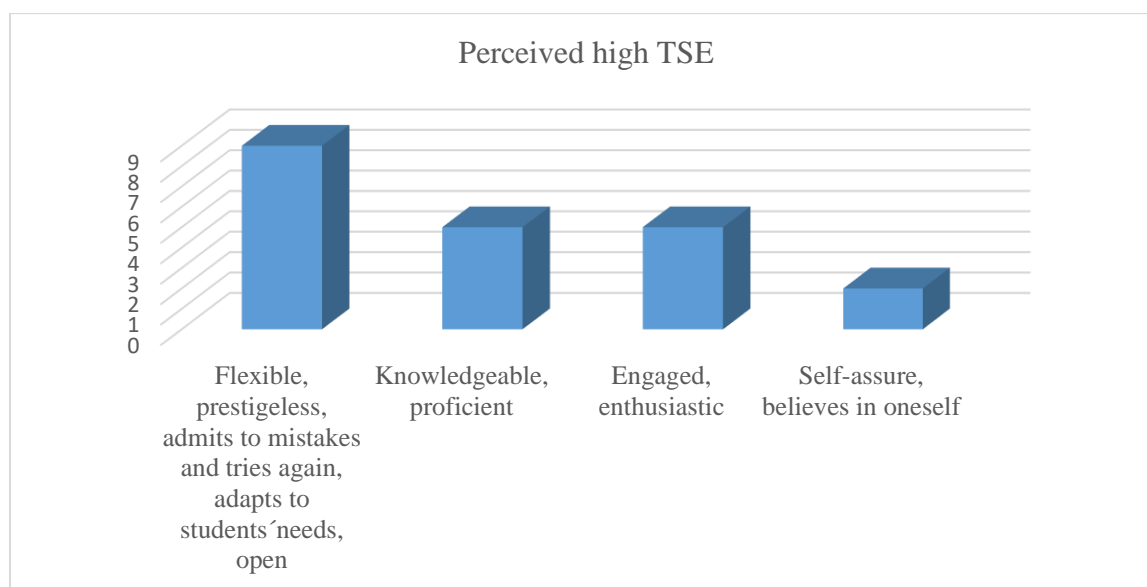
Question 15 related to how confident interviewees felt about their own language skills to teach English. All of the respondents expressed that they were confident enough in their own language skills to teach English, with five out of the six respondents stating that they either felt confident or very confident.

To investigate the interviewees’ perception of what characteristics constitute strong TSE with a teacher, the final question, No. 16, was included. Hence, the characteristics described by the interviewees help understanding what they perceive as being essential qualities as a novice teacher, which can be linked to the second research question of what skills they appreciate being developed in teacher training.

The question asked: “How would you describe the characteristics of a teacher who possesses a solid ability to teach English, i.e. with a belief in one’s own ability to organize and conduct teaching?” The responses are illustrated in figure 4, displaying those characteristics which were most salient and perceived as constituting high TSE.

**Figure 4**

*Perceived characteristics of high TSE*



Some of the other TSE categories were;” to be an avid reader”, and possessing “excellent social skills”. The most recurrent features of high TSE concerned flexibility, someone who unconditionally adapts to new situations and is one who is not afraid of admitting mistakes and try again. The second most salient features were showing language proficiency and being knowledgeable in English. The third most apparent feature was having engagement in teaching, where words like joy and enthusiasm occurred. The fourth category dealt with self-assurance and belief in oneself.

Teacher One expressed: “Someone who is knowledgeable and who can provide a calm environment. Self-assure, showing authority, being structured, clear, systematic, and engaged, expressing joy, and professional pride. One who thinks that the subject is fun but who also is interested in his/her students and then will be visible to the students and in their engagement.”

Teacher Two: “Someone who is not afraid of asking for help and to trying out new things and never to give up, but tries again. One makes some adjustments and it is new to everyone. A teacher who believes in him/herself and who is willing to admit when something goes wrong and tries again.”

The majority of the replies referred to resilience, low prestige, curiosity and engagement as important characteristics of a teacher who possesses strong TSE.

Question 17 gave the interviewees the opportunity to share any additional information in relation to the study. Three respondents replied to this question. One teacher expressed the need for more practicum - “more hands on the practical” and with a piece of advice to, “Visit as many other teachers and schools as you can.” (Teacher Five). The response from Teacher Six revealed dissatisfaction with the teacher training overall with the respect for higher education being lowered after “enduring” teacher training.

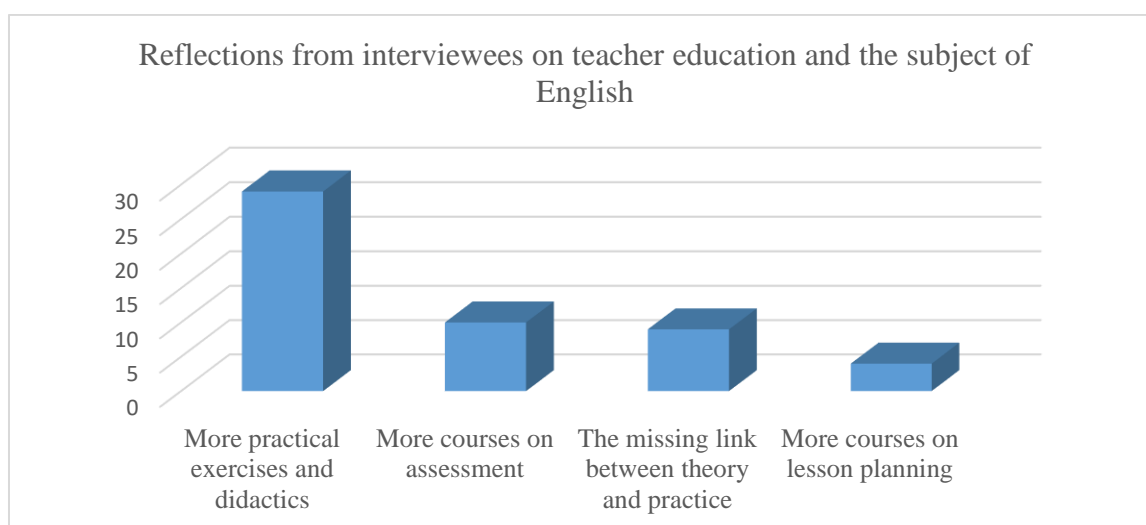
It has lowered my trust to the whole Swedish educational pedagogical system. This was higher before I had undergone this training myself, and it should be the other way around. The result should be that through teacher training the respect towards teachers is increased, but my respect for this profession has totally decayed of having to endure the teacher training programme. (Teacher Six).

Thus, the final sentence and the word “endure” reveals that this had not been a positive experience according to this teacher.

As the aim of the study related to novice teachers’ perception of their teacher training and preparedness to teach, an analysis was made to interpret the overall understanding of the interviewees’ perceived preparedness. Thus, the most salient features were detected using the colour-coding system. The categories which emerged were compiled into figure 5 to aid visualization of the suggested improvements of teacher education by the interviewees.

**Figure 5**

*Suggested improvements of teacher training programmes*



More practical experience and more courses in didactics were expressed in 29 of the replies, followed by a wish for more courses on assessment found in 10 of the replies. In 9 of the replies, the dissatisfaction of about not knowing how to link theory and practice in teacher education was expressed, followed by four replies wishing for more courses on lesson planning.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Survey**

The following chapter discusses the survey results in the light of previous research and with the subsequent subchapter viewing the results in the light of the theoretical framework of Bandura's socio-cognitive theory of self-efficacy beliefs and the parameters; mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion.

#### ***5.1.1 Survey discussed in the light of previous research***

The gist of researchers' and policymakers' perplexity of teacher education revolves around how to best prepare pre-service teachers for their future profession, and how to best bridge the gap between theory and practice. In accordance, the findings of this study clearly demonstrate a deficiency in programme coherence as well as the missing link between theory and practice. With the research questions constituting the foundation of the survey and the follow up interviews, the succeeding section will discuss the findings of the survey in connection to the theoretical framework and previous research aimed at improving teacher education in Sweden.

The research questions addressed how well the teacher training programmes in Sweden best prepare pre-service EFL teachers, and what *sources* influence novice teachers' beliefs in his/her ability to successfully manage the complexity of teaching. The survey questions were constructed to find out how TSE is strengthened throughout teacher training, with a focus on the English subject. What can be interpreted is that although novice teachers perceive their preparedness to teach to be quite high in regards to their own language skills (Q. 18), there are still an average of approximately 20% throughout all of the respondents' replies expressing dissatisfaction of feeling inadequately prepared in other areas (Appendix C).

The most salient sources were evident in question 7, referring to which subject content was found most useful acquired in teacher education, with the *practicum* receiving 76.5 % and *subject didactics* in second place with 56.8%. These prominent categories re-emerge in question 13, with as much as 46.9 % of the respondents disagreeing to the fact that there is enough practicum in teacher education.

Moreover, the text replies of questions 20 and 21 confirm this fact with the category of practice rated as the most valuable part of teacher education, followed by courses in didactics. The most noteworthy results are found with questions 9, 13 and 19. Question 9 inquired about how well prepared the respondents felt about applying various teaching methods in the subject of English, where 35.8% indicated a dissatisfaction. This is also confirmed by previous research inferring the “missing link in teacher education design” (Zhu, 2020, p. 12) to one of the most criticised elements in teacher education design (Carmel, 2019; Yu, 2020; Mouradkhani, 2019; Zhu, 2020; Farell, 2012; Demirel, 2017; Golzar, 2020; Canrinus, 2017; Swee Choo Goh & Canrinus, 2020; Jakhelin et al. 2019; Alvunger & Wahlström, 2017; Juuti et al. 2018; Åstrand, 2012; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Staal-Jenset, 2018; Eisen-Schmidt et al. 2008).

Evidently, there are gaps in what student teachers learn in their training compared to the realities of teaching (Carmel, 2019), also confirmed by findings from studies by Demirel (2017) investigating pre-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs in Turkey, “Currently the case is that most of the pre-service teachers are packed with the theory of teaching, and unfortunately they suffer from the lack of field experience, and are dissatisfied with the bridge between theory and practice “(Demirel, 2017, p. 229).

Moreover, the responses of questions 7 and 8 were contradictory as courses in written communication was perceived as the second least appreciated in question 7, but where respondents felt most confident in teaching written skills to students in question 8 (Appendix C). In addition, with courses in world English receiving the lowest percentage of 12,3%, one may question what underlying factors constitute these results. These findings will be further discussed in reference to the English syllabi of compulsory and upper-secondary schooling in chapter six.

Moreover, question 13 asked respondents to agree or disagree on the extent of practicum included in their teacher training with 46,9% in disagreement. This infers that nearly half of the respondents were in favour of more opportunities for practical elements in

their education. Thus, these are striking evidence which clearly demonstrate what novice teachers, approximately one year into their teaching, would like to have more of in their training to build strong TSE. This is also confirmed in research by Canrinus et al. (2019), concluding the need for more practice in teacher education and that there needs to be tighter links between practicum and course content.

Continuing on the subject of practicum, 80,3% of the respondents in question 12 agreed to the statement that they were able to implement theory into practicum, constituting quite a large proportion of the replies, however, still leaving nearly 20% of the respondents dissatisfied in this respect. In conjunction, the replies to question 14 further strengthen the theory of appreciation for practicum. Respondents showed satisfaction with planning, executing and evaluating teaching rated as the highest benefit from practicum followed by increased confidence in classroom management and appreciation for valuable feedback from mentors. In sum, the respondents perceived these skills as being valuable as novice teachers which can be interpreted as positive influences in the teachers' ability to successfully manage the complexity of teaching

As feedback from mentors at practicum was appreciated, support from teacher training institutes received a merely 7,4% with cooperation between the two stakeholders receiving an even lower percentage of 6,2%. These results connect to question 19 with 34,5% of the respondents disagreeing on perceiving instructors at teacher training institutions as valuable role models. This question was also asked in the interviews and will be further discussed in that section. Though the respondents felt quite fairly confident of managing their classrooms efficiently with 85,2% in agreement, only 75,3% agreed to being equipped with techniques to motivate their students in the classroom. Hence, with a fourth of this novice teaching body not being adequately prepared in this respect, it raises questions of deficiency in TSE.

The investigation into teacher education design in a Swedish context conducted by Åstrand (2012), based on a national questionnaire to student teachers, concluded that the research-based teacher education does not sufficiently prepare student teachers for their future profession. In the same study, it was noted that only half of the respondents were satisfied with their education in assessment and grading (Åstrand, 2012, p. 14). This is also reflected in the summary of salient themes (Figure 2) with courses in assessment being second most sought for course.

In conjunction, a study by Canrinus et al. (2019 ) in a Scandinavian context shows similar results with the lack of links between courses and field placements, and where programme coherence is important in order to try out teaching methods learned at teacher training institutes during practicum. It was concluded that coherence should be the responsibility of all stakeholders in teacher education design.

Thus, those responsible for teacher education curriculum design should therefore aim at enabling student teachers to bridge these gaps between course content and practicum in a better way. In conjunction, the study by Swee Choo Goh & Canrinus (2020) concluded the teacher training programmes in Malaysia to be fragmented and disconnected from actual classroom practices, with theories commonly taught in isolation. Hence, “Pre-service teachers need to see the purpose and connectedness of what they are learning” (Swee Choo Goh & Canrinus, 2020, p. 378). A study by Golzar (2020) suggests demo-lessons as part of subject content to enhance the understanding of teaching approaches, applying theory in a practical context.

### ***5.1.2 Survey discussed in the light of the theoretical framework***

This section relates the results of the survey to the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 3. With Bandura’s (Bandura, 2000) theoretical framework of teacher self-efficacy (TSE) beliefs constituting the foundation for this research, the survey was designed accordingly, inclusive of the three parameters of self-efficacy beliefs; *mastery experiences*, *vicarious experiences*, and *verbal persuasion*. These parameters are all included in practicum allowing student teachers to try out various methods in a real classroom context, thus developing their *mastery experiences*, followed by valuable feedback from mentors, the *verbal persuasion*. As the practicum consists of both teaching students and learning from mentors, watching mentors teach further adds to student teachers’ *vicarious experiences*.

The analysis of the responses showed great appreciation for practical elements in teacher education, with 76,5% rating practicum as the most beneficial for their teaching. Furthermore, these results correspond to the appreciation for all of the three parameters, i.e. the opportunities given for implementing theoretical content into teaching at practicum, known as mastery experiences. Moreover, observing instructors at teacher training institutions, peers and mentors at practicum teach (vicarious experiences), watching them



succeed and overcoming challenging situations by sustained effort, raise the student teacher's belief of resilience and capability (Bandura, 1994, p. 3).

Feedback from mentors at practicum was also highly appreciated in question 14, with 59,3% in appreciation of feedback from mentors at practicum. In conclusion, results clearly show the need for more practical elements in teacher education, enabling student teachers to practice what they have learnt at their teacher training institute, and hence, developing their mastery experiences even further. With this parameter being the most important for building strong self-efficacy beliefs, the respondents' opinions clearly mirror Bandura's theory in this respect.

## **5.2 Interviews**

### ***5.2.1 Interviews discussed in the light of previous research***

Based on prominent themes from the survey, the following is a discussion of replies and correlating themes which emerged in the interviews. All of the data accumulated was aimed at answering the research questions of appreciated course content and how well prepared the interviewees felt after graduating from teacher training (Appendix E). The replies from the interviews confirm the lack of practicum yet again, with 29 examples referring to a wish for an increase in practical training (Figure 5). The practicum factor was also evident in the interviews constituting the foremost most salient category in the replies overall.

These findings concur with previous research proving the need for more practicum in teacher education and closer links between theory and practice (Carmel, 2019; Yu, 2020; Mouradkhani, 2019; Zhu, 2020; Farrell, 2012; Demirel, 2017; Golzar, 2020; Canrinus, 2017; Swee Choo Goh & Canrinus, 2020; Jakhelin et al. 2019; Alvunger & Wahlström, 2017; Juuti et al. 2018 Åstrand, 2012; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Staal-Jenset, 2018; Eisen-Schmidt et al., 2008).

Moreover, the replies to question 9a inferred a lack of opportunities to watch peers' teach and that these opportunities, were conducted in isolation of a real life classroom context. The experiences from practicum were overall positive, but where the cooperation between the teacher training institute and practice school was perceived as less positive, which also relates back to the survey replies of question 14 (Appendix E). Clearly, there is room for

improvement in this respect, where all teacher education stakeholders should aim at developing teacher with strong TSE.

Another noteworthy finding that emerged from both the survey and the interviews was the inability to motivate students in the classroom, with three of six interviewees not feeling adequately prepared. This is also confirmed in the survey in which nearly a quarter of the respondents reported that they felt inadequately prepared to motivate their students. A correlation can be made to TSE and that it takes strong TSE to master the complexity of teaching. Teachers with high assurance in their ability to approach challenging tasks see them as surmountable rather than unobtainable (Bandura, 1994, p. 2). Thus, believing in one's own ability to overcome difficult situations, will build confidence and a sense of control, which in turn will build motivation and continued aspiration. If novice teachers have not acquired the skills necessary to build a solid teacher identity from their teacher education, they themselves are less likely to be motivated and thus also less likely to be able to motivate their students.

In conjunction, interesting results from question 16 emerged where interviewees were asked to share their views of what personal characteristics entail strong TSE. The interviewees' responses reflected on the following traits of being: self-assured, structured, authoritarian, engaged, joyful, expressing professional pride, being curious, resilient, flexible, open, enthusiastic, prestige less, proficient in English and expressing professional pride. Thus, if teacher education enables these characteristics to develop and flourish it would enable student teachers to build strong TSE, contributing to a positive spiral of reinforcement, reflected in teaching. This in turn may also enhance novice teachers' motivation which has the prerequisites to reflect positively on student engagement and motivation.

Similarly, Christophersen et al.'s (2015) inquiry into what sources in teacher education influence student teachers positively showed that strong efficacy beliefs also reflect on boosting students' motivation in the classroom. As motivating students is a challenging task, it is of utmost importance for teacher education programmes to instil solid TSE enabling novice teachers to "see themselves as efficient and capable of performing as professionals" (Christophersen et al., 2015, p. 243).

Furthermore, the course content mostly appreciated from teacher education (Q. 7 Appendix E), was distinguished as English language proficiency especially with courses in written communication. This was also reflected in the replies of the survey where respondents

felt most confident in teaching written communication. Two of the six interviewees also referred to practicum as the most important part of their teacher training. All interviewees felt that they had the necessary skills in English and confidence in their ability to teach the language, which indicates that the courses given in language proficiency and written communication seem to prepare novice teachers adequately.

Moreover, the interviewees addressed the complexity of teaching and responsibility as being challenging together with student differentiation and assessment and grading in their role as novice teachers. These replies refer to their teacher training being incapable of sufficiently equipping them with the necessary skills in these respects. The interviewees voiced the fear of being left on their own with all this responsibility, without adequate support from neither the teacher training institution nor the school of employment. Clearly, the mentoring programmes have been conspicuous by their absence here. For novice teachers to feel supported in all challenging aspects, mentoring programmes as part of their first year of teaching are crucial and must adhere to the regulations of the Swedish school law (§22a) to facilitate a smooth transition.

Previous research also indicates the necessity of fostering strong TSE and thus, solid teacher identity, and to counteract teacher burnout (Bjerkhold & Hedegaard, 2008; Swee Choo Goh & Canrinus, 2020). Farrell's (2012) idea of teacher training institutes continued support to newly qualified teachers is something teacher education in Sweden can develop. This arrangement would benefit both parties, with student teachers' realization that they would be supported in their early careers already at their training. This support in turn, would have the prerequisites to counteract student teacher attrition as well as teacher burnout.

Concerning teacher autonomy, both the responses from the survey and the interviews denoted too little focus in the teacher education programmes on lesson planning and the holistic perspective of planning for a full academic year with one of the respondents expressing: "How does one get an overview over the whole academic year? How does one plan for a full year? The holistic and the overview is challenging." (Teacher One). Thus, it can be concluded that scaffolding is in greater need by the novice teachers, who require more examples on planning and lesson content. Moreover, the challenges of a diversified classroom were also expressed in the interviews with teachers asking, for example, how one can teach English from scratch.

Perhaps these new realities of a Swedish diversified school need to be taken into consideration in programme design, to mirror classroom reality best possible. In summary, these finding also resonate with the first research question of how teacher training programmes best prepare EFL pre-service teachers for their future profession, as there are clearly not enough opportunities for student teachers to practice lesson planning and methods to scaffold each and every student's proficiency in English.

In conclusion, the replies given in the interviews correspond well with the survey results overall, where salient themes of practical elements, courses on grading and assessment, knowledge on how to connect theory and practice and courses on lesson planning were perceived as most appreciated in both cases. Noteworthy is the higher number of replies for question 21 in the survey concerning the perceived usefulness of the programme content compared to question 20 in the survey, where respondents had more to say about their dissatisfaction than appreciation for the programme content. Hence, the higher number of replies for question 21 correspond with the overall picture of the interviews denoting a more positive reflection on the practicum compared to other course content of teacher education.

### ***5.2.2 Interviews discussed in the light of the theoretical framework***

The anticipated reformation of teacher education currently under way in Sweden is aimed at strengthening teacher education, including the practicum. However, there are no plans of extending the scope of the practicum; instead, a continued 15 credit module dedicated to the English subject will be contained. As *mastery experiences* being the solid and foremost important factor for building strong TSE (Bandura, 2000), it is evident that practising what one has learnt at the training institute in a real life context is crucial.

Moreover, as self-efficacy beliefs seem to be most malleable early in learning (Bandura, 2000; Putman, 2012; Mouradkhani, 2019; O'Neill, 2012; Faez & Valeo, 2012), it would be advisable to include content adhering to the development of mastery experiences early in teacher training. This was also asked in question 14 d (Appendix E) where interviewees were asked which content would be most appreciated early in their training to build strong TSE. Five of the six replies denoted practicum as an essential course to include early in training in order to build strong TSE. Other courses mentioned were courses in leadership skills, assessment of student production and conflict management.

As such, building confidence early seems reasonable facilitating the practice of various teaching approaches, scaffold by teachers and mentors to gather knowledge about the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs early in training (Putman, 2012). Furthermore, *vicarious experiences*, which was rated as the second most important factor in developing strong TSE, is developed by instructors at training institutions and mentors at practicum, acting as role models for student teachers who might be inspired by these persons' teaching style (Mouradkhani, 2019; Bjerkeholt & Hedegaard 2008; Yu, 2020; Staal-Jenset, 2018; Noguera & McClumsky, 2017; Eisen-Schmidt et al. 2008; Christophersen et al. 2015).

In conjunction, the responses in question 13 a, revealed that only three of the six interviewees reflected positively on the impact of their instructors at teacher training. Thus, more practical advice was sought for as well as instructors having a greater understanding of real life classroom teaching.

Furthermore, question 9 revealed discontent with the lack of opportunities for watching peers teach and for allowing feedback sessions. Thus, it can be concluded from these interviews that more opportunities should be given for vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion in the didactics courses. To sum up, the amounting criticism of teacher training being too abstract and too disconnected from real life teaching is recognized worldwide among researchers and policymakers (Staal-Janset, 2018), and is clearly supported by the findings in this study as well, and as such linking theory and practice should be one of the top priorities in constructing coherence in teacher education.

## **6. Summary and conclusion**

With the backdrop of the recent consultation from the Ministry of Education and Research concerning the reformation of teacher education in Sweden, previous research and the theoretical framework, together with the findings of this study, which has displayed evidence of novice teachers' perceptions of their teacher training, have proved that changes have to be made in the teacher training of teachers of English.

The inquiry related to how teacher training programmes best prepare EFL pre-service teachers for their future profession and what *sources* in teacher education influence novice EFL teachers' beliefs to successfully manage the complexity of teaching. Thus, the sources reported as being most or least appreciated by respondents constitute implications for teacher

education and EFL in a Swedish context with replies disclosing requirements for better preparation in some respects.

Clearly, the findings mirror previous research in the respect of insufficient training in linking theory and practice. The consultation of reforming teacher education in Sweden by the Ministry of Education and Research, is partly aimed at developing this criticized area of teacher education by, to a larger extent, providing practice schools with well-educated mentors supporting the student teachers at practicum. The consultation states that the teacher training institutions should provide practice schools and training of mentors for this purpose. Moreover, it is also required that instructors at the institutions support and assist in developing these students during this part of their training (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 108). In addition, the link between theory and practice is to be strengthened with a clarification of the aim of practicum to enhance quality (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 110).

These are all well intended proposals to increase quality in teacher education. However, many questions still remain unanswered, for example, whether mentors at practicum will be given the adequate conditions to fulfil their responsibility, and why student teachers are not being given any increased length of practicum with this proposal. The consequences are that curriculum designers of the English subject need to take a greater responsibility in preparing student teachers with adequate practice to aid in strengthening the link between theory and practice, and hence, also to provide opportunities for mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion in course content.

Moreover, regarding appreciation of course content, some contradictory results emerged from the responses of survey questions 7 and 8 and with interview question number 7 (Appendix C and Appendix E). The appreciation of courses in written communication rated second lowest in survey question 7 contradicting the responses in question 8, with courses in writing being perceived as most useful. The responses in survey question 7 also contradicts the responses of interview question number 7 with interviewees' feeling well prepared to teach written communication (Appendix C and Appendix E). An explanation could be that novice teachers also accumulate these skills in their time outside teacher training, where they also read and write for pleasure. However, the modest appreciation of courses in written communication (survey question 7, Appendix C) raises questions of inadequate skills acquired and their usefulness in real life classroom teaching contexts.

In addition, with World English perceived as the least useful course (Appendix C, survey question 7) questions arise of the missing link between theory and practice, supposing that student teachers may not be able to fully implement the acquired skills from this course in their teaching practice. On the contrary, this course has the prerequisites to broaden the perspectives of English used across the globe. It coincides with the aim of the syllabus for English in compulsory education which clearly expresses that: “Teaching of English should aim at helping the pupils to develop knowledge of the English language and of the areas and contexts where English is used” (Skolverket, 2011 a, p. 4) and with the syllabus for upper-secondary education stating that the teaching of English should aim at: “helping students to develop knowledge of language and the surrounding world so that they have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in different situations and for different purposes” (Skolverket 2011 b). With the present situation of heterogenic classrooms throughout Sweden, courses that raise awareness of English varieties and cultural diversity, should be perceived as positive and valuable in the teaching of English. Perhaps a closer link between the course content and its practical implementation could be made more visible to student teachers to strengthen TSE in this respect.

Taken into consideration that the parameters of TSE are malleable early in learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; O’Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Chacón, 2005, Mouradkhani, 2019; Demirel, 2017), the suggestion by Farrell of introducing a course on “Teaching in the first years” (Farrell, p. 440), with “anticipatory reflection (reflection for action)” (Farrell, 2012, p. 440), may well aid fostering strong TSE and counteract attrition and teacher burnout. In conjunction, by offering opportunities for reflection and proactive strategies as suggested in research by Lindqvist et al. (2020), teacher burnout may be prevented to a greater extent, and thus increase retention of teachers.

As the results of the study also clearly displayed dissatisfaction with the collaboration between stakeholders, it is the responsibility of all parties involved in teacher education to increase the quality of this cooperation. Some suggestions may be continued support from teacher training institutions to novice teachers and to facilitate mentoring programmes that are actually being manifested as regulated in the Swedish school law (Skollag 2010:800, §22a). As teacher education should rest on scientific grounds and proven experience (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 113), equipping student teachers with adequate skills to become classroom researchers would help facilitate conditions for an increased interest in

research and understanding of techniques for implementing theory in teaching (Alvunger & Wahlström, 2017, p. 343).

Moreover, this study has also made apparent the inconsistency of programme coherence. This was particularly evident in the interviews in question 14 c (Appendix E) with interviewees reflecting on the structure of their teacher training. Responses revealed requirements for more practicum and for closer links between didactics courses and practicum. One response also suggested a more continuous form of practicum of one week per month to facilitate the strengthening of this link (Teacher Six). These findings resonate with previous research in a Norwegian context (Christophersen et al. 2015) where student teachers who perceive their teacher education as fragmented or irrelevant may be less equipped to utilize content matter in their practicum, and ultimately, in their profession as novice teachers.

As discussed in chapter 2.8 new realities in classroom diversity also infer challenges for EFL teachers. Responses from the interviews (Q. 12, Appendix E) and survey (Q. 21, Appendix C) display insufficient training in adapting to students' needs and to teach English at beginner's level. This criticism needs to be taken seriously as it is part of teachers' daily work to scaffold each and every student and as such, student teachers should be equipped accordingly with adequate course content in their teacher training. Hence, the type of self-report data used in this study has the prerequisites to serve as bench marks for policymakers and designers of teacher education in the future.

## **7. Further research**

Finally, to meet the challenge of a deficiency of some 36.000 teachers in Sweden by the year 2033 (Ministry of Education and Research, p. 81), both attracting student teachers to teacher training, and retaining those already in the programme, will be crucial. Although the current consultation by the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research is aimed at implementing strategies for increased quality in teacher education, further studies are needed to investigate the construction of these teacher training programmes and what *sources* are most appreciated and useful for student teachers to foster strong TSE.

Moreover, as the construction of teacher training programmes having a major impact on student teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, it would be of interest to further investigate the coherence of these programmes. As the most noteworthy evidence of this survey clearly



resonate with much of previous research regarding the missing link between theory and practice, policy makers need to seriously consider how to strengthen this link further in teacher training. Thus, more opportunities for mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion to foster strong TSE should permeate teacher education design.

It is hoped that this study has raised some awareness of novice EFL teachers' perception and experiences from their teacher training and what constitutes good teacher education. The results of the study clearly display a need for further research with more in-depth inquiries into the themes of discontent, reported by the respondents. Hence, it should be the foremost important task for policymakers to design coherent teacher education programmes that foster student teachers who believe in themselves and in their ability to perform.

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## Appendix A

### Sense of Effectiveness for Specific Teaching Tasks and Contexts

**TABLE 3**  
**Sense of Effectiveness for Specific Teaching Tasks and Contexts**

|  | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|
| 1. Teach ESL literacy  | 6.1      | 3.0       |
| 2. Teach English for academic purposes                                   | 6.5      | 2.7       |
| 3. Teach English in a foreign language context                           | 6.6      | 2.7       |
| 4. Use professional resources and engage with organizations in the field | 6.7      | 2.0       |
| 5. Use technology to teach language                                      | 6.9      | 2.4       |
| 6. Use the LINC curriculum guidelines                                    | 6.9      | 2.5       |
| 7. Use the Canadian Language Benchmarks in teaching                      | 7.0      | 2.6       |
| 8. Develop tests for the classroom                                       | 7.0      | 2.2       |
| 9. Teach pronunciation   | 7.4      | 2.0       |
| 10. Teach international students in Canada                               | 7.4      | 2.4       |
| 11. Teach grammar  | 7.5      | 1.9       |
| 12. Teach listening skills   | 7.6      | 1.9       |
| 13. Use a variety of teaching methods                                    | 7.7      | 1.8       |
| 14. Teach writing skills   | 7.7      | 1.8       |
| 15. Develop appropriate material to use in the classroom                 | 7.9      | 1.8       |
| 16. Teach speaking skills  | 7.9      | 1.8       |
| 17. Teach reading skills   | 7.9      | 1.8       |
| 18. Design effective lesson plans  | 8.0      | 1.7       |
| 19. Select appropriate material to use in the classroom                  | 8.1      | 1.6       |
| 20. Manage classrooms effectively  | 8.2      | 1.7       |

Faez & Valeo (2012, p. 462)



## Appendix B Questionnaire invitation

Till rektor:

Hej,

Jag heter Susanne Greés och är student vid Östfold universitet i Norge och jag skriver förnärvarande en masteravhandling i ämnet ”Lärares självförmåga – att utrusta nyexaminerade engelsklärare för framtiden”. För att ta reda på vilket innehåll från lärarutbildningen som stärker dessa nyexaminerade lärare önskar jag att komma i kontakt med **nyexaminerade 7-9 lärare som undervisar i ämnet engelska** vid just din skola. Jag skulle vara tacksam om du kunde vidarebefordra nedanstående information till alla nyexaminerade engelsklärare så att de får möjlighet att delta i en studie via ett anonymt frågeformulär. Tack på förhand.

/Mvh Susanne Greés

### **Till nyexaminerade lärare i ämnet engelska åk 7-9:**

Skulle du vilja delta i en studie som undersöker hur du som nyexaminerad engelsklärare uppfattar innehållet i lärarprogrammen som förberedelse att undervisa i ämnet engelska i åk 7-9? Jag heter Susanne Greés och jag är student vid Östfold universitet där jag skriver min masteravhandling denna termin i detta ämne. Din skola har blivit slumpvis utvald för denna studie och **om du är nyexaminerad lärare i ämnet engelska, åk 7-9 så är du välkommen att delta i denna studie**. Din medverkan är frivillig och resultaten kommer att presenteras anonymt. Uppgifterna från studien kommer att behandlas i enlighet med regler gällande forskningsetik samt GDPR. I studien ingår även frivilliga intervjuer. När du besvarat enkäten så skicka ett meddelande till [teachersurveysusanne@gmail.com](mailto:teachersurveysusanne@gmail.com) så att jag kan delge resultat samt slutsatser från studien och om du skulle vara intresserad av att delta vid en intervju, skriv detta i samma mejl så kontaktar jag dig för mer information.

Här är länken till enkäten: <https://forms.gle/2tY9BjN7jnvhk2hk7>

Enkäten består av 21 frågor och tar ca 5-7 min att besvara, så vänligen svara så ärligt som möjligt. Genom ditt deltagande ger du samtycke till att insamling samt publicering av data sker anonymt. Enkäten är **öppen mellan 29:a mars och 11:e april**. Du är också välkommen att kontakta mig om du har några övriga frågor gällande studien. Din frivilliga delaktighet är av yttersta vikt för denna studie och är mycket uppskattad. Tack för din medverkan! /Mvh Susanne Greés

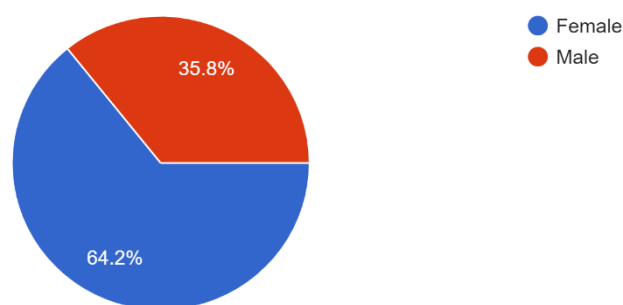
## Appendix C Teacher questionnaire with responses

Dear newly certified teacher,

I am a master student at Östfold University College. This term I am writing my Master's thesis on the topic of newly certified English language teachers' perceived preparedness to teach English in the year 7-9 and upper-secondary school after completing formal teacher training. Your participation is voluntary and the results will be presented anonymously and will be shared with those of you who participate in the study if you are interested. If so, please send me an e-mail on: [teachersurveysusanne@gmail.com](mailto:teachersurveysusanne@gmail.com). Your voluntary participation is of utmost importance and I invite you to fill out this questionnaire, so kindly answer as truthfully as possible. In addition, if you are able to participate in an interview, please contact me on the above e-mail for more information. Thank you!

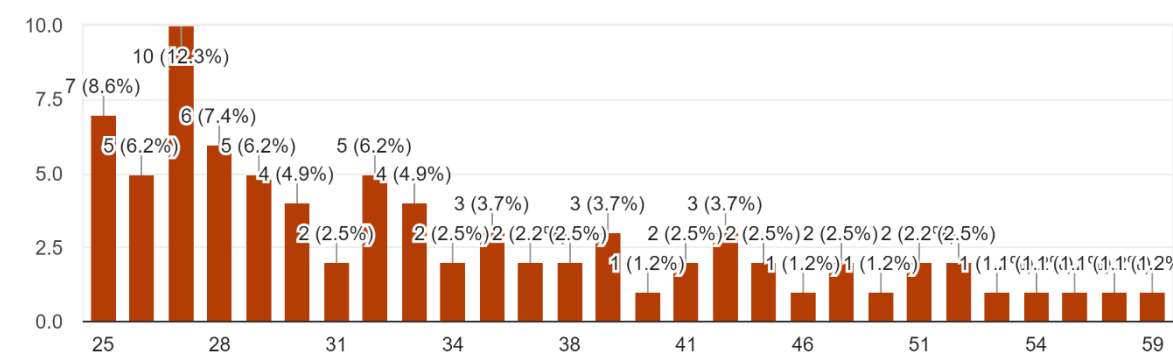
/Regards Susanne Greés

1. Gender  
81 responses



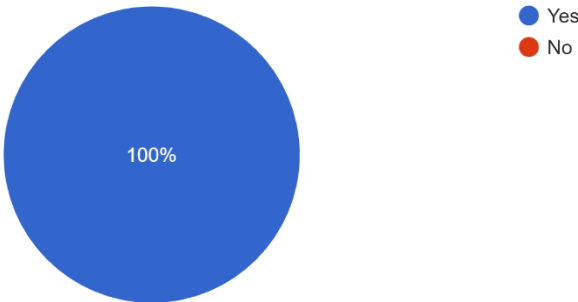
2. Age

81 responses



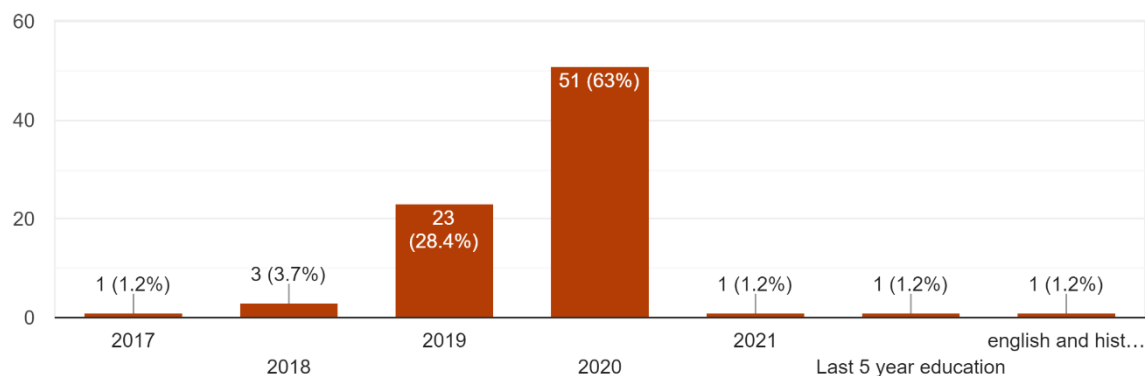
3. Are you certified to teach English in yr 7-9 and/or upper-secondary school (gymnasiet)?

81 responses



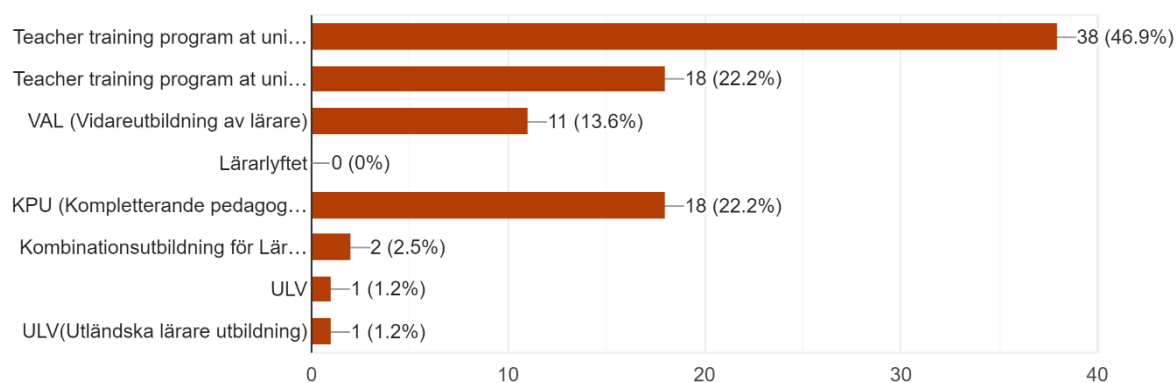
#### 4. In what year did you become certified to teach English?

81 responses



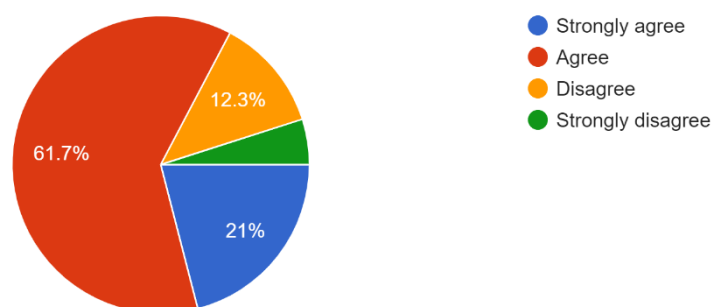
#### 5. How did you gain your certification?

81 responses



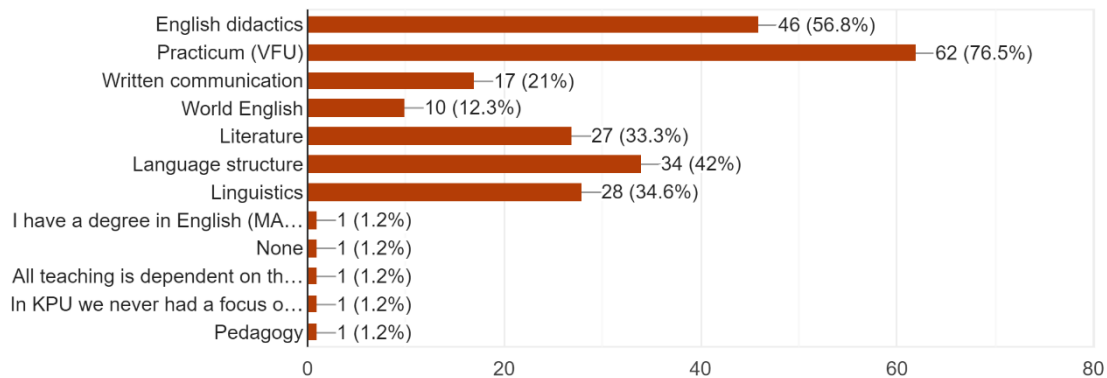
#### 6. After completing the teacher training program I feel prepared to use the English syllabus (kursplan) in teaching.

81 responses



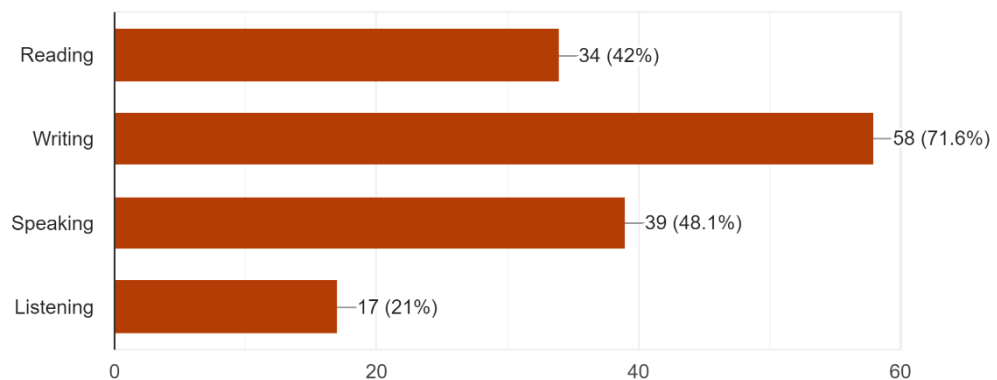
7. The course/s in the teacher training program in the subject of English that I find most useful is/are:

81 responses



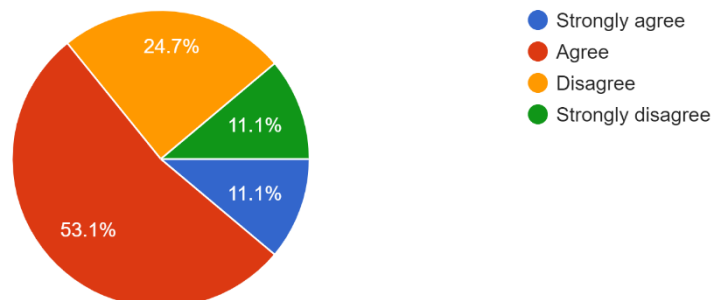
8. Out of the four communication skills I feel most confident in teaching the following

81 responses



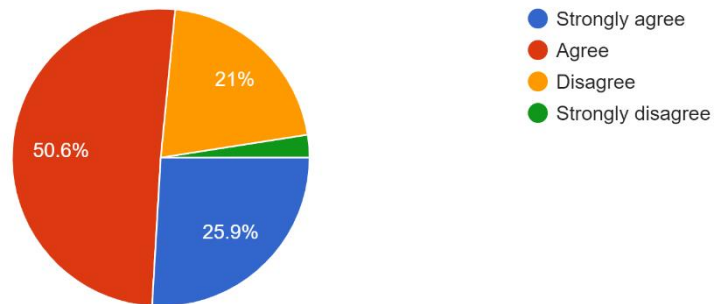
9. My teacher training program adequately prepared me to use a variety of teaching methods in the subject of English.

81 responses



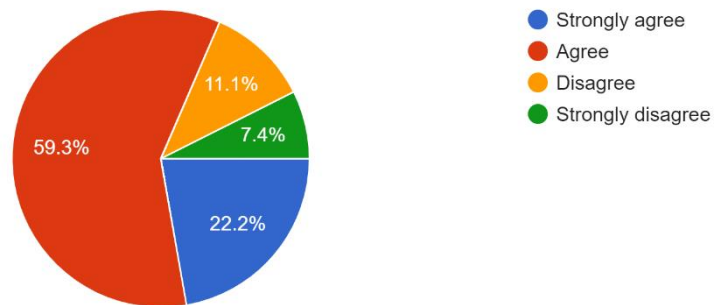
10. I feel prepared to design efficient lesson plans in the subject of English.

81 responses



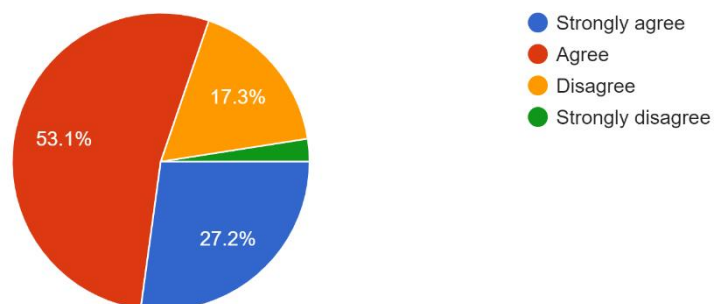
11. I feel prepared to select appropriate teaching material for my English classes.

81 responses

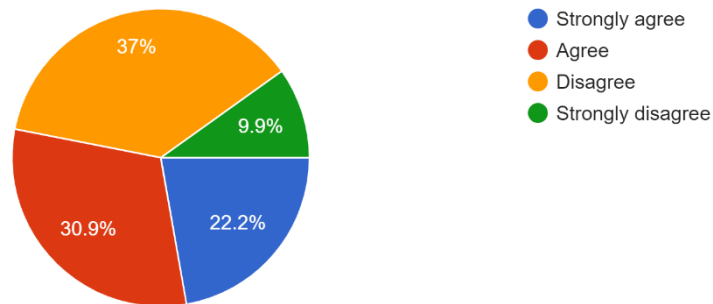


12. I feel that I was able to implement English-didactic theory in the practice period (VFU).

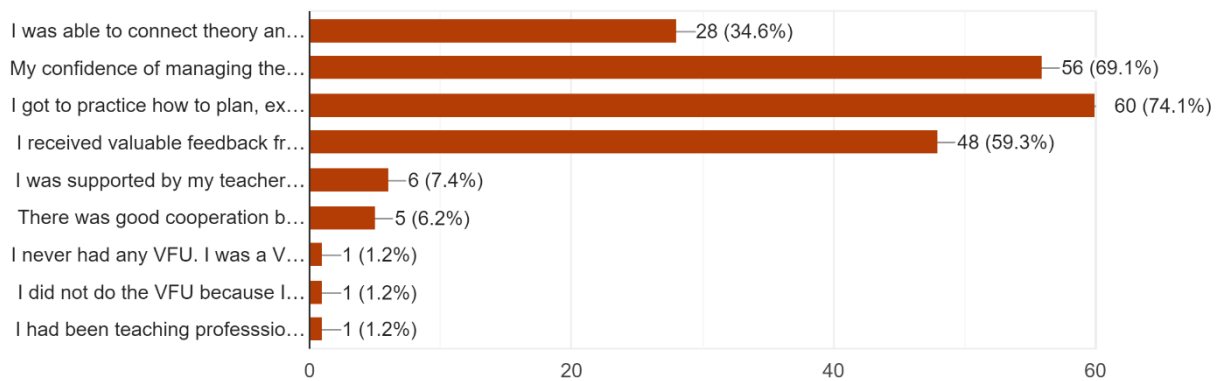
81 responses



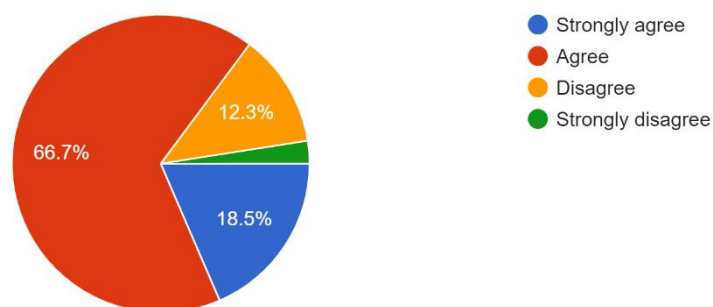
13. I feel that there was enough practice (VFU) in the subject of English in my teacher training.  
81 responses



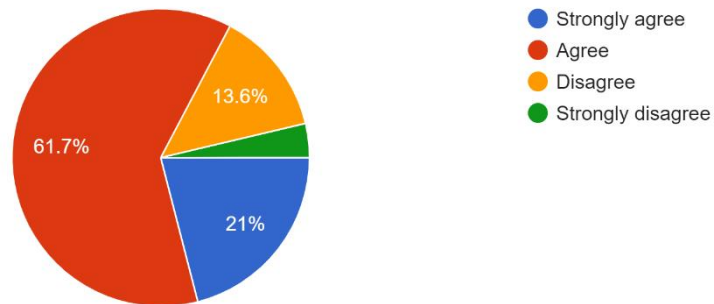
14. The most valuable aspect/s of the practice in the subject of English (VFU) was/were  
81 responses



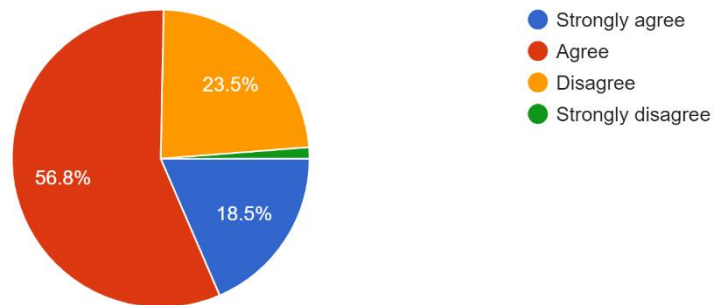
15. I feel prepared to manage my English classroom efficiently.  
81 responses



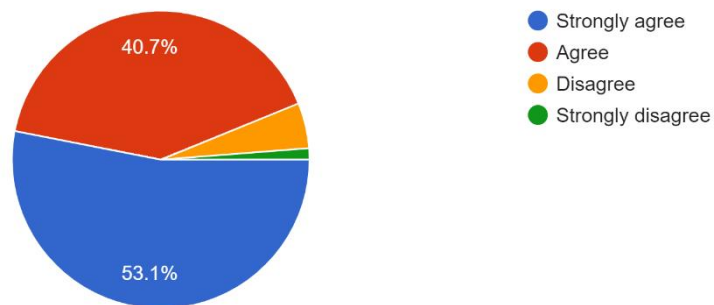
16. I feel prepared to provide a good learning environment in the English classroom  
81 responses



17. I feel prepared to use techniques to motivate my students in the English classroom.  
81 responses



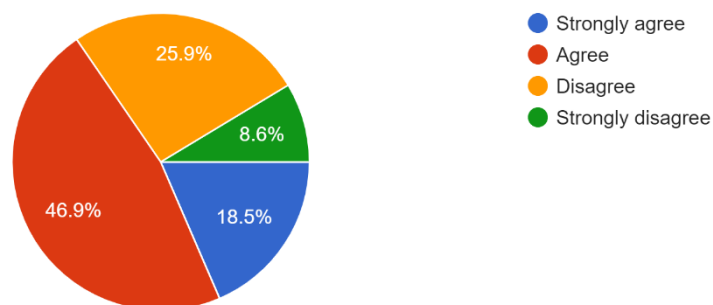
18. I feel confident in my own language skills to teach English  
81 responses





19. I feel that the teachers at my teacher training program are valuable role models in order to believe in my own ability to teach English.

81 responses



20. What aspects of the teacher training program (e.g. duration, outline, courses, teachers, practice (VFU) etc.) do you find most useful as a teacher of English? 60 replies

1. VFU
2. Courses
3. I loved the teachers and the practice the most during my time at university.
4. practice
5. Practice.
6. VFU, English didactics and my subject specific courses.
7. practice (VFU)
8. Hands down the VFU and the didactics courses.
9. Reading books from American researchers Sweden is behind the 8 ball.
10. didactics and practice
11. Everything that had to do with the practical part of the profession has proved to be very useful, but unfortunately most of what we learned isn't useful in the classroom. I've also gotten a lot of use out of the grammar course, and the course on how to structure a text, since those are things I have to teach my students.
12. Courses when we had to discussions about student assignments, evaluated them and graded them together.
13. The practice period even though my mentors/supervisors were horrible
14. The courses and VFU in combination
15. VFU, but highly dependent on the school and supervisor/mentor you are assigned to. Didactics, but we should have had more of that.
16. Most usefull was the VFU since it gave classroom experience.
17. VFU. Theory is useful and a good way to get a glimpse of what it is like teaching. However, I believe that theory was not enough to completely prepare me for teaching.
18. None, possibly how to protect your voice
19. Teachers
20. The practice, that's all!
21. vfu

22. I think the most valuable part for me was to meet friends whom I am in contact with now. We support each other.
23. Practice
24. teachers. Discussing curriculum.
25. VFU and reflective discussions to evaluate theory and practice.
26. The only useful part of KPU in my opinion was VFU
27. VFU is by far the most useful part of teacher training program. It allows you to practice different methods of learning. Also, depending on your mentor at the practice school, you might get lots of valuable insights on how to teach English. Besides VFU, the courses in the teacher training program are of high level and really strengthens your confidence in the language.
28. VFU. Subject courses were not that focused on english teaching. The education science classes were better in general when it comes to teaching a subject.
29. I don't know
30. The courses in style pedagogy.
31. VFU, didactics, specialpedagogik, also that the teachers were teaching in years 7-9 or upper secondary school whilst teaching in University, and were therefore close to the job.
32. All of them
33. Basically only the VFU. I studied English at Lund University for a while, and only took the KPU in Malmö. The VFU was without a doubt the only useful thing
34. VFU practice
35. VFU, since it was the only connection I had between my subject and the teaching experience.
36. Some of the courses were valuable and useful but most of them were a waste of time such as the youth literature course where we analyzed some book about the Nordic gods(?!). It would have been more useful to learn how to assess a book talk between students and grading it according to the syllabus. Also the didactics course was a joke. We did a presentation and talked about comic strips. The didactics course in SVA was way better where we actually learned to assess students and how to help them with authentic learning problems. The things which I learned there are applicable to the English class a
37. VFU and didactics
38. Courses, teachers and VFU
39. Trip abroad, vfu, practical courses
40. Almost 100% the practice, the other courses were not related to English teaching at all, maybe the course in grading and evaluation. During the final VFU-course we finally came across some English didactics, but very little and a little late, a greater focus on English didactics would have been very useful.
41. Yes
42. kursen i betyg och bedömning
43. VFU
44. Practice (i.e., practice with theories etc.) and VFU
45. As I said before, I was a VAL-student and I haven't studied English at University since the 90's

46. I studied VAL had no handledare for my practical experience, the broad range of courses was most important
47. VFU and peer discussions.
48. VFU, literature courses, English didactics, degree project
49. Courses and practice
50. VFU and some courses
51. VFU first and foremost. My mentor was an angel in how she taught me. Not just in English, but how to be a good teacher overall. More generically, the course in special pedagogics was also very good. Both these parts contained elements that were directly applicable in practice.
52. teachers and practice
53. I believe that I got the most out of the didactic courses and the courses in linguistics. The didactic courses speak for themselves but I think that the general knowledge about the language accompanied by the courses in language structure were also very giving. Having said that, I feel that the teacher training programme in Sweden relies heavily on the students figuring out the most parts for themselves, for example how to combine theory and practice. Which in hindsight, and as I'm writing it, does not seem all that bad, but this system requires suitable students and by not having some sort of test or interview to check the suitability of aspiring teachers, just furthers the problem with unsuitable teachers in schools. I know this was off-topic, but had to take the opportunity.
54. The courses where they actually connected the material used to how we ourselves can adapt the assignment and use in our future teaching.
55. Courses, VFU
56. VFU, contrastive course in English
57. The didactic courses and the VFU.
58. practice in real-world situations
59. VFU, Linguistics and language structure.
60. Practice

**Practice/VFU = 43**

**Didactics courses = 11**

**Language str., linguistics, grammar = 3**

**Teachers = 6**

**Literature = 1**

**Special Ed. = 2**

**Grading and evaluation = 3**

21. What aspects of the teacher training program do you find least useful as a teacher of English? 76 replies

1. The courses that was not part of the English programme..

2. "Specialpedagogiska metoder" were totally insufficient and did not match the needs in school. Dyslexia was just briefly mentioned ONCE.
3. Specific courses that did not teach us how to be teachers. Such as **school history**.
4. Some courses that went too deep into some small aspect of English. Ex. analysing where ONE specific English word came from, and its evolvement since its first appearance.
5. TUV is almost pointless why bother educating beauracrats educate TEACHERS for Pete's sake
6. **historical background of schools in Sweden**
7. **Didactics**. In general the theories brought forward in didactics seems rather old.
8. The amount of **literature courses** we had to take bordered on ridiculous. When am I supposed to teach my 7th graders about the literature of diaspora and how to analyze the same book using 6 different methods of literature analysis? Meanwhile we spent exactly half a day learning about digital tools and how they can be used in the classroom, and one hour (!) learning about different special needs that kids might have and how we can adapt to them. Since those are things I have to do during every lesson, I had to teach myself after graduating. (Yes, I'm bitter.) Also, why was the **history of the Swedish school system** so important that we had to pass an exam on it? I've never had any use for it, despite history being the second subject I teach. Oh, and those two graduation works? Interesting at the time, but completely useless now that I'm working. A lot of the content of the courses felt like it was only thrown in there to raise the status of the education, rather than to be of any benefit to us in our work.
9. Not sure
10. As of now, I feel that everything in my program gave me insights into English teachings. I might not have realised it then, but I can see the relevances of each course now.
11. courses like **History of education**
12. **History of linguistics**
13. Not enough methodology(metodik)
14. Everything else (see above)
15. Some less helpful courses to do with **litterature** and **special educstion**. I would have liked more of a special educatinon theory and training within every subject
16. **Courses in history of the school system** and in school development. The former should be shortened and the latter should be abolished from teacher training, as it can wait until we are in actual employment.
17. The couses, or parts of them, dedicated to research and research theory since are the least related to teaching.
18. **Outline** of some of the courses.
19. None.
20. **The grammar units**. Mostly because we were taught functional grammar, which of course is useful to know, but I don't feel prepared to teach the grammar that some students need to cram.
21. **Special needs course** was not practical in any way. I am still in no way prepared to differentiate for different levels and special needs groups

22. **That we never practiced planning an entire course.** We had plenty of exercise in planning individual lessons, but nothing in how to plan modules, making sure you include all the core content in the course and so on.

### 23. Basic courses

24. Nearly everything, the level of language in the teaching has no correlation whatsoever with what was taught at Uni. The theories of teaching and learning has no correlation whatsoever with my daily work and so forth.

25. VFU-period is too short by far

26. I think many courses were unnecessary.

### 27. Literature

28. The scientific part...

29. Pedagogical courses (in our school) were not easy to implement.

30. The theoretical part has not helped me in my profession

31. **The grammar course,** we were taught English grammar in Swedish

32. **English didactics.** It is ironic that the courses which are supposed to teach you about being a teacher are of so low quality. There is too much focus on old outdated theory which is barely applicable in today's schools. We are not given the right tools in the didactics course. I never got any tips on how to actually plan a school year, how to effectively grade students, or how to manage a classroom properly. It is only during VFU (provided you are placed in a positive school with a good mentor) where you get to learn everything on the fly.

33. Jag anser att jag inte fått lära mig hur jag ska lägga upp mitt arbete så att jag får en rimlig arbetsbelastning. Jag önskar att fokuset hade legat mer på **att lära studenter hur de blir bra lärare** med de förutsättningar som finns istället för djupa ämneskunskaper (vilket också behövs).

34. Not sure.

35. VFU because it's very different from when you are a teacher.

36. **The course we had about american sociopolitics.** Berating Trump and talking about how "insane" people were back then had nothing relevant to offer.

37. Some of the **history courses.**

38. The theoretical side of everything was pretty pointless sometimes

39. Most aspects. There was too little practical methods and too much theorising.

40. Everything else, especially **pedagogical theory**

41. Most of the courses at my KPU were **theoretical and not connected to the subject I am teaching;** I would have loved to have more connection between the english knowledge I have and how to teach/apply this knowledge in school.

42. I am really disappointed in the English course at LIU. The trip to Chester was really unnecessary and a waste of my money. We did a play and visited a British School. It was good that we experienced a British school system but I already have experience from that so it was a waste of money for me. Also the trip to Pau, France, was a waste of my money. They could have planned the trips and the content of them better.

43. I think that the program need to adapt more to the actual environment you are going to work in as a teacher. **The grammar courses** are way too advanced for someone who's going to teach year 7-9.

44. N/A

45. C and D level thesis
46. The initial course on **the background of education.**
47. Yes
48. UVK
49. kursen i ledarskap
50. **Literature**, English didactics and **language structure**
51. **Didactic courses**- mostly since they were way to focused on theory, leading to that I and other students I have discussed this concern with felt that we were given a lot of tools that were supposed to be useful, only to realize once we were on our VFU that these models and tools could only be applied theoretically, not in an actual classroom.
52. Nothing really, but I wish we had more of other things, such as **grading**, easily explain **grammar** to students, how to be a mentor, how **to manage a group of teenagers**.
53. The research part (C-uppsatser) (not that it is not useful but its not something that I will use when teaching)
54. **The course "sociala relationer"** as it focused entirely on young kids. I work in upper secondary
55. **Practice**
56. All important
57. The **assessment/grading "course"** was too short, understandably to create a false sense of "unimportance" but this part is severely lacking and all they throw is "sambedömning med kollegor" which isn't invalid, but a cop-out when more information and time should have been given to students within the KPU programme.
58. A lot of the assignments.
59. World English, too many exams during the first term.
60. **Outline**
61. **Some of the courses in educational science**
62. Courses that I couldn't "use" in reality/ VFU.
63. I believe more focus/time should be given to **didactics**.
64. The courses in UVK (apart from special pedagogics) felt very theoretical, wooly, and ambiguous. There were hardly any practical examples provided in how to for example be a good leader, how to manage conflicts, or how to grade and assess. I picked that up during my VFU. I was in two different years during my KPU, and both my classes constantly questioned the practical use of the vast majority of the material included in the education. More specifically for English: I did the subject as individual courses, but I read together with teacher students, so I guess I could give some insight on that. The **linguistics** during the first year was very good, as it heavily focused on grammar. Likewise, I think the **literature courses** provided good training in how to read, interpret, and analyse text, together with learning how to write academic essays. However, for someone who did 120hp in English, which is required for the primary subject as an upper-secondary school teacher, I feel like everything past the first year is **unapplicable** at the level of education that I teach. When am I going to teach them about cognates, corpus linguistics, or diglossia, for example?

65. The theoretical part was so ideal that can not be applied in teaching in reality. (the most of it)
66. I think all parts were useful, the teacher training programme for English teachers works quite well I believe, in comparison with other subjects and/or institutes. Where there is a disconnect or a non-existent link between knowledge in the subject and the teaching techniques or didactic courses.
67. Too much focus on **phonetics**, I understand that we need to learn about how the language is built - but this can be done in other ways.
68. none
69. None
70. **Fiction** (even if I love fiction).
71. I believe that there was a disconnect between learning english and learning to teach english at the teacher training program. I felt that the courses were good to learn and develop your language skills but not for learning how to adequately teach english as a second language.
72. duration- **the more practice the better**- it could have been longer
73. **Irrelevant courses** (for English teaching) of the teacher training program
74. **Didactics, Literary studies**, semesters of pedagogics (courses such as **the history of education**) **Need more VFU**. Teacher students need more courses in how to integrate the kursplan into our course and module plans. **More courses in how to assess** according to the bedömningsmatris from Skolverket
75. Unsure
76. **courses**, **outline**

**Practice/VFU = 5** 4, more practice, 1, very different from when you are a teacher, 1 practice

**Didactics courses = 6** 5, 1 – more didactics

**Language str., linguistics, grammar = 8** 6, 1 – need more, 1 – very good

**Teachers =**

**Literature = 4**

**Special Ed. = 3 (2 – need more)**

**Grading and evaluation = 3 (need more)**

**Outline = 3**

**Connecting theory and practice = 16**

**Classroom management = 2**

**Irrelevant courses = 19** **The history of education = 7**



## **Appendix D Interview invitation and interview guide**

Dear participant,

Thank you for your voluntary participation in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to learn more about your views of the teaching training program and the sources which have been beneficial, and which ones that have been less beneficial to you as a novice teacher of English. Also, I am interested to see how these sources are bridged from the teacher student to the novice teacher. As stated before, I am conducting this research in connection with my Master's thesis at Östfold University College. Hence, the topic of this study is newly certified English language teachers' perceived preparedness to teach English in the years 7-9 and upper-secondary school after completing formal teacher training. Your participation is voluntary and the results will be presented anonymously where all of your responses and experiences are of utmost importance for this study. I will be taking notes and recording the interviews in order to keep track of the information, but your contributions will be kept anonymous. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time should you wish to do so.

These are the questions that will be asked during the interview:

1. Gender?
2. Age?
3. What level/s are you certified teach, 7-9 and/or upper-secondary school?
4. In what year did you become certified to teach English?
5. How did you gain your certification?
6. What part of Sweden are you from, i.e, what municipality?
7. What are your strengths as a novice teacher of English which have developed during teacher training?
  - a. What aspects in the teacher training program have helped you develop these strengths?
  - b. How are these strengths expressed in your own teaching?
8. Do you feel that you lack any skills based on the content of the teacher training program in the subject of English? If so, what are they?
9. Regarding the didactic courses and practical elements in these, such as watching peers teach:



- a. How do you perceive the benefit of receiving feedback from peers during lesson planning/teaching/evaluation? How have you been able to implement these skills into your own teaching?
  - b. How prepared do you feel to use a variation of teaching methods in your teaching of English?
10. Regarding your practice/field placement (VFU), do you feel that you were able to implement didactic theory to your practice teaching?
- a. How do you perceive the scaffolding by your mentor at the field placement (LLU)? Did you get to watch him/her teach?
  - b. How do you feel about the feedback that you received? How would you describe the benefit of this feedback?
  - c. How do you perceive the cooperation between your field placement and your teacher training institute? How would you describe this cooperation?
  - d. Is there anything you would like to change in the practice period (VFU) in the subject of English?
11. How do you feel about your teacher training preparing you to manage your English classroom in an efficient way?
- a. How prepared do you feel to use techniques to motivate your students?
12. What has been the most challenging aspect with the transition period from being a teacher student to a novice teacher of English?
13. What advice would you give the teachers in the teacher training program in the subject of English?
- a. How do you feel that these teachers have impacted on you as a novice teacher?
  - b. How do you feel about the feedback that you received from these teachers? How would you describe the benefit of this feedback?
14. What advice would you give to those who organize teacher training?
- a. What would you like to see more of in teacher education and in the subject of English?
  - b. What would you like to see less of in teacher education and in the subject of English?
  - c. How do you feel about the structure of the teacher training program? Has it been coherent? E.g. the structuring of didactic courses and practice (VFU).

- d. Would any aspects of the teacher training program be particularly important to include in the early stages of learning to foster strong beliefs in your own ability to teach English?
- 15. How confident do you feel about your own language skills to teach English?
- 16. How would you describe the characteristics of a teacher who possesses a solid ability to teach English, i.e. with a belief in one's own ability to organize and conduct teaching?
- 17. Any other comments?

Thank you for your participation!

/Regards Susanne

## Appendix E Qualitative results from interviews

7a

1. KPU – Linguistically strong which creates security.
2. Easier to teach written proficiency and assessment than oral proficiency.
3. VFU and LLU. The practical is crucial.
4. Written courses and task-based learning and literature courses.
5. My VFU mentor, and varied teaching.
6. To some extent, grammatical security.

7b

1. KPU – Linguistically strong which creates **security**.
2. Easier to teach written proficiency and assessment than oral proficiency.  
VFU and LLU. The practical is crucial.
3. Dealing with people and to be able to communicate with students.
4. **Confidence** when teaching English.
5. Lesson planning. To make sure all aspects are covered.
6. **Confidence building** for my own knowledge level, but not connected to practice.

8

1. KPU – had wished to have learnt more about the syllabus.
2. A lot of focus on assessment, but not how to apply it in teaching, e.g. the ZPD in teaching.
3. Classroom management.
4. More practice and more courses on assessment.
5. Specific language learning training methods. “At the last period of VFU I had an English teacher who gave me many ideas on didactics, which would have been valuable at the first course.”
6. Spelling comprehension.

9a

1. Very few opportunities to watch peers teach. Only one less planning of 10 minutes, where two stars and a wish was used as feedback.
2. It would have been more useful to teach students.
3. Really important. We did some lesson planning, but we could have done more.
4. Yes, we did some role play. This was isolated and is a huge difference to a school environment with actual students. That would have been more beneficial.
5. It was a very short session on feedback, which mainly came from the course teacher. But valuable feedback from LLU and from the teacher from the university who came to visit gave valuable feedback.
6. Completely useless, harmful. Students at beginner level tell each other what to do. LLU or teachers at the universities should give this feedback.

9b

1. Not that well prepared via KPU. But an American teacher educated in the US was very engaged, a role model who was always well prepared and who taught various teaching methods.
2. I have learnt more from being at the school than from being at the teacher training college.
3. Fairly prepared.

4. I do feel quite confident in some ways and in some ways quite limited, depending on the context of teaching. We didn't practice different teaching methods at the teacher training program, only on the whiteboard. I would have wished for more focus on how to adapt to teaching needs.
5. Very.
6. Not at all. Totally unprepared. Difficult to see the connection between theories and reality.

10

1. It felt like I fell between the cracks since I didn't get any practice in teaching English at upper-secondary level.
2. More about classroom management.
3. Absolutely, scaffolding.
4. Hard with 10 weeks. 5-10 weeks of practicum is not enough, absolutely not enough. I felt not prepared for what is to come. We are vulnerable.
5. To a large extent, however, my VFU school was slightly chaotic, so many of the lessons were more a matter of managing the classroom and the group than actual teaching.
6. I tried to implement different theories in a practical context.

#### 10 a Four out of six replies positive

1. The LLUs have been **good** and I have been able to watch them teach.
2. **Fantastic**, very supporting. Free reins provides comfort.
3. My LLU was a **really good mentor**.
4. I did, a few times. Some better than others.
5. **Yes, all the time**. You need to grow into the role as a teacher. First I was the student teacher, then at the last VFU period I was her colleague.
6. Inadequate, but ok.

#### 10 b All six replies positive

1. The feedback I received has been **useful**.
2. My LLU made me **believe that I can be a good** teacher. She has a lot of work experience and is an experienced LLU.
3. **Important, you need that and it really helped**.
4. Pretty good. Some better than others. **The feedback was concrete and constructive**. Another mentor let me make mistakes, then discussed them, which gave me a better feeling.
5. **Very useful**. It made me reflect and consider the didactic choices you make in the classroom.
6. **Yes, very important** but dependent on the pedagogue's own competency level.

#### 10 c Five replies out of six negative

1. **Poor**. The cooperation was mixed, where the assignments which were supposed to be conducted during practice at KPU were controlling where I wrote 40 pages as evidence of my achievement as documentation. Difficult to do this with the lack of experience and it felt condensed.
2. **Not very good cooperation**.
3. It worked well.
4. **Quite scarce**. Communication was not really that well established.
5. **Not great**.
6. **Very troublesome for both parties**, a necessary evil. It's just something that needs to be done with. No one really gets to grips with it with joy.

10 d

1. To be able to conduct your practice at the right level and forward planning, which strengthens one's self-esteem.
2. A longer practicum at the end of the training during the autumn term. To get a feel for how it is to work. Conduct a larger project. There is no time for that in the VFU periods which are offered.
3. More practice. It would be good with an entire term or full year of practice. It makes you feel part of the school. As much experience as possible where you get to experience the "real world".
4. No, but extended.
5. More of it and to be in different schools. More time also to learn about grading.
6. A lot. The practice must mirror the actual work of a teacher. An hour to prepare a lesson at VFU then a reality of five minutes. The difference between practice and actual work is great.

11

1. Through the American teacher who was a good role model.
2. I studied courses in classroom management but not in the subject of English. That is a shame. It would have been better if those would have been part of the English subject.
3. Good tips.
4. The field placement was good. But courses at the university didn't prepare me much at all. You need to adapt to every single group of students. This could be discussed more. Not much preparation, so many different needs. Broad aspects of theories are taught. I missed teachers to give small tips and tricks on how to improve a lesson. Think about this...
5. To a certain extent.
6. Not at all. The theoretical framework has extremely little in connection to reality. A year has been lost through trying various methods and theories. It is so distant from the practical work. An impossible design. That is why teachers change professions. They make amateur like mistakes which are perceived as failures. If one is not prepared that everything might fail, you blame yourself. You have to carry your own failures.

11a

1. Relatively. It is a question of sensitivity to get to know the group. Positive.
  2. Not so prepared. I have learnt this afterwards. A longer VFU.
  3. Prepared where the experience is important.
  4. Not prepared. Would have loved more.
  5. Quite prepared.
  6. The theory and practice crash. The utopian image of pupils as lit candles.
12. Complexity, responsibility = 2, You are on your own = 2, students at different levels = 1  
Failure = 1
1. **The complexity.** It is a commitment full of **responsibility** and it goes from zero to 60. How do one get an overview over the whole academic year? How does one plan for a full year? The holistic and the overview is challenging.
  2. **Students can be at such different levels.** Some students are new inhabitants to Sweden and barely know the alphabet. They need different pedagogy. I don't feel prepared to teach English from scratch. The reality does not match the universities.
  3. At the practice the LLU supports you, then you are on your own. Working with rubrics is challenging.
  4. The increased **responsibility** in all aspects of the job.
  5. All of a sudden **you are on your own.** I am also not happy that the course structure is quite loose. I have the freedom to choose and plan the whole course myself, which I am not sure is

the greatest idea. Grading, we need more of that. Responsibility. It was a comfort to have a mentor. You grew with that.

6. The feeling of shortcomings and failure. I knew the theories, but have a vague understanding of how to put them into practice.

13

1. They are bound by the course content. To concretize as much as possible. Declamatory and abstract. There must be enough practice.
2. Very pleased with the teachers of English. Would have been beneficial to discuss newly arrived students.
3. More practical examples, lesson planning and how to use them.
4. Try to focus on broad theories.
5. Not really applicable as I had already studied courses in English.
6. Teacher trainers should do practice in schools at least two weeks per term in order to see the reality of today. They have been hiding in the university corridors. They should take a greater responsibility.

13 a Three out of six positive

1. The American teacher was a **role model** who gave me valuable feedback, which was clear, concrete, constructive and balanced.
2. **Very pleased** with the teachers of English.
3. **Great experience.** I learned a lot. Positive.
4. I would have liked teachers to give actual advice.
5. Not really.
6. Teacher trainers should do practice in schools at least two weeks per term in order to see the reality of today. They have been hiding in the university corridors. They should take a greater responsibility.

13 b Four out of six positive

1. The American teacher was a role model who gave me **valuable feedback**, which was clear, concrete, constructive and balanced.
2. **Clear and honest.** I have become very good at assisting students with the structuring of thoughts and texts.
3. **Good feedback.**
4. Alright, but it didn't connect so much on methods of teaching as for proficiency in English. More didactics. A lot of literature courses. I would have loved more comments on the actual teaching.
5. I had two visits from a teacher from Malmö University, which was part of my grading process. **Here I got very valuable feedback.** My mentor constantly gave me feedback but here were two different eyes who gave me different feedback. Very useful.
6. A larger VFU-project to practice various proficiencies which do not work, because the theories do not match the reality.

14

1. The KPU was a bit fuzzy. **To discuss assessment**, and to have an overview of the planning and to see the connection should have been made clearer with **practical examples**.
2. **More focus on the subjects that we are to teach**.
3. **Make sure teacher training with mentors so that they match, the LLU and the student**. Good with an experienced LLU, as students may need more support. They have different personalities. I know someone who had a negative experience from the practice and she has now dropped out of the program.
4. **More teacher training and more actual practice would have been beneficial**. **Practice more assessment**.
5. **Not applicable**.
6. **To have a connection to the level of English which I am to teach**. Instead of syntax and Milton in the literature B course, **we should read 15 youth novels, fiction which we can apply in teaching**.

14 a

1. The KPU was a bit fuzzy. **To discuss assessment**, and **to have an overview of the planning** and to see the connection should have been made clearer with **practical examples**.
2. More focus on the subjects that we are to teach.
3. **More lesson planning** in the subject of English.
4. **More teacher training and more actual practice** would have been beneficial. **Practice more assessment**.
5. **Not applicable**.
6. **Exchange one term of subject courses for practical elements**. Instead learn about computer skills and all the laws and how to interpret them. The social service law, how to communicate with parents and authorities etc.

14 b

1. **The KPU was very general** with **educational history** for example. (came up 7 times in text replies, q. 21)
2. Less of the general pedagogical courses and **more subject**. Nothing.
3. **Less of really advanced courses, which are not applicable to school**. **More on how to teach a student who doesn't speak a word of English**.
4. Not applicable.
5. **Less theory**. No connection.

14 c Two out of six replies positive

1. Different objectives for the practicum periods which were abstractly formulated.
2. **Yes, well planned**. The last VFU was in conjunction with the thesis work, where research could be conducted in the classroom.
3. Nothing.
4. **Alright**. First semester we had proficiency in English, which was good. The didactics courses in the second semester, then VFU in the third semester. **The assessment of VFU is important, implementing didactic theory, good later**.

5. E.g. the structuring of didactic courses and practice (VFU). My KPU, 90 hp, were divided into 2 ½ terms plus one summer term. We had three VFU-periods, not during the summer term, which worked well. **Somehow there should have been more practical work, maybe more VFU I think. More practical and courses on assessing.**
6. Far in between the VFU periods. **Rather a reoccurring VFU of one week per month during the whole teacher training, recurring.**

14 d English proficiency, Leadership, **VFU (5/6)**, assessing, conflict management

1. English proficiency. Leadership. What is a good teacher? To be confident in your teaching.
2. **VFU, start planning lessons directly. Practice assessing and to think about students' production early.**
3. **Real life experience at an actual school.**
4. **Proficiency, assessing student teachers' proficiency. Field placement. More during the first and third semester.**
5. **Maybe the course in conflict management and special pedagogics.** This would have helped me understand why some students behave the way they do. Our first semester we studied the background of teaching and pedagogic theory, in a way different to apply as one had no initial experience from a classroom. Having said that the KPU was initially targeted at people who have been working as teachers without the qualifications, however, in my group most students had no previous experience from teaching. **"Go out in a classroom a lot quicker". Background on educational history, better to have later. The structure has been changed now.**
6. **The practice.** Good through practice. Believe in one's own self-efficacy in the subject matter.

15

1. I feel confident. That I have studied English first and then supplemented with KPU, I see as an advantage.
2. Good.
3. Confident
4. Quite confident, now lower secondary school I need to keep up my English proficiency. I don't write a lot of texts. Basic English now, where I need to adapt and be clear, which doesn't improve my English
5. **Very confident, I speak English fluently and have lived and worked in English-speaking countries for many years. That is the least of my worries...**
6. Very.

16.

1. Someone who is knowledgeable and who can provide a calm environment. Self-assured, showing authority, being structured, clear, systematic, and engaged, expressing joy, and professional pride. One who thinks that the subject is fun but who also is interested in his/her students and then will be visible to the students and in their engagement.
2. Someone who is not afraid of asking for help and to try out new things and never to give up, but tries again. One makes some adjustments and it is new to everyone. A



teacher who believes in him/herself and who is willing to admit when something goes wrong and tries again.

3. Flexible, open, interested in learning, avid reader, excellent social skills and good at planning. Learn new things and try new things. Adaptable and flexible with digitalization and with Covid.
4. A lot of experience. Not automatically, no short cuts. Need to accumulate bad lessons. A lot of lessons are not perfect. A lot of material available to meet different kinds of needs. Proficient. More important in English. One who identifies what a student needs and adapt to those needs.
5. Someone who is structured and experienced, who does different exercises and class content with a thought, nothing is done at random, there is a reason and a purpose for everything. Also this teacher would constantly make didactic choices and change his teaching methods and materials if need be, to be constantly reflecting of the teaching, content, methods and results. **All lessons do not have to be fun, it can be quite solid and boring, to make it easy for you as a teacher.**
6. Enthusiastic, prestigeless, especially with newly qualified teachers. The natural pride which the individual experiences after qualification, and there after is able to break down at least two of the years of theoretic studies to adjust to the practical reality, demands prestigelessness. **If one thinks that the theories we learn in teacher training is what will characterize our daily work, then I believe one will soon be burnt out very soon.** An electrician knows his work through practice, but a newly qualified teacher does not master his/her profession.

17

4. A bit more preparation

5. **More hands on the practical.** “How do you do it?” Advise to new students: Make use of the time you have, try different things and make sure you practice the grading, how to think and reason, as much as you can. Visit as many other teachers and schools as you can. For example my VFU was at a vocational college with not so very motivated students who really struggled with English, most of the courses I taught were English for year 7-9 as they did not have a grade in that subject. It was super interesting to visit a high performing private school with over-achieving students. It also helped to give me an idea of what kind of teacher I want to be and what kind of students I prefer. I also visited a correctional institute (prison) and followed a teacher there for the day which gave me a great experience of what kind of different teaching jobs there are. I was also able to do ten days of my final VFU-period at a different school teaching Swedish for foreigners (sfi) as I studied extra courses in these subjects in order to get another subject aside from English. These days made me realise that adult education is more for me than teenagers.

6. The teacher training has many not suitable students who pass their education. They cheat a lot. In the literature courses some students didn't read the literary works but just the summaries and where group discussions were the mode of examination. Students at literature B can pass without reading one single book. No one at the university puts their foot down. There is a financial incentive to pass these students. That we let this reproducing itself is an enormous, enormous scandal. It is distasteful with the number of students who cheat their way

through teacher training and where no one puts an end to it. It is such a failure for the teacher training programmes and for the teaching body as such that we have so many practically incompetent certified people who are allowed to teach. I think it is appallingly bad. That there is not an adult person at the English faculty who puts his/her foot down. Our examination for syntax was an oral group discussion. It is to unbelievable poor. When the level is already so low that one in addition is allowed to cheat just because one cannot pass. The educators know this but they still pass these teachers who will teach the next group of students. This is such a reproductive downward spiral where no adult person in the room says enough is enough. It is such a low mark for the responsible teachers at the faculties first and foremost. Either they are not aware of this and then it is incompetence because it is their responsibility, or else they may be aware and pass these students and then it is criminal incompetence. My respect for higher education has never been hit so hard as with my own experience with the teacher training programme. It has lowered my trust to the whole Swedish educational pedagogical system. This was higher before I had undergone this training myself, and it should be the other way around. The result should be that through teacher training the respect towards teachers is increased, but my respect for this profession has totally decayed of having to endure the teacher training programme.

Themes from text replies:

Replies related to VFU and the importance of VFU

29

More practical exercises and didactics

26

Practical elements =  $55/102 = 54\%$

Connecting theory and practice

9

More on assessment

10

More lesson planning

4