

TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS AND AIMS OF PRE-
SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Master's thesis

Elli Kinnunen

University of Jyväskylä

Department of languages

Spring 2012

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA

KIELTEN LAITOS

Elli Kinnunen

“Teacher self-efficacy beliefs and aims of pre-service English teachers”

Pro gradu-tutkielma

Englannin kieli kevät 2012

88 sivua

Kun tulevat englanninopettajat siirtyvät opinnoistaan työelämään, heitä tulee kohtamaan haastava työelämä, jossa heidän taitonsa ja osaamisensa opettajina tullaan punnitsemaan. Opettajankoulutuksessa luodut mielikuvat itsestä opettajana ja osaamisestaan opettajana ovat vahvoja suunnannäyttäjiä siinä, kuinka taitavia opettajia näistä tulevista englanninopettajista lopulta kehittyy ja kuinka hyvin he tulevat jaksamaan työssään. Lisäksi näihin käsityksiin omasta osaamisestaan ja sen kehittymiseen liittyvät opiskelijoiden omat tavoitteet omaan opettamiseensa. Näihin käsityksiin omasta osaamisestaan ja tavoitteisiin liittyvä tieto opetettavasta aineesta, tieto oppilaista ja tieto siitä, kuinka tieto välitetään oppilaille.

Tämä tutkimus perustuu Banduran (1977) teoriaan niin sanotusta minäpystyvyydestä (*self-efficacy beliefs*). Tämän teorian mukaan oletukset minäpystyvyydestä eli odotukset siitä, kuin hyvin tietyistä haasteista tulee selviytymään, ohjaavat voimakkaasti ihmisen päätöksentekoa, vaivannäköä tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi sekä lopulta sitä, kuinka menestyksenkäs ihminen on yrityksessään. Lisäksi Gibbs (1999) on tutkinut opettajien minäpystyvyyssodotuksia ja on osoittanut, että hyvät minäpystyvyyssodotukset opettajilla saa heidät jaksamaan paremmin työssään, olevan pidetympiä opettajia sekä kehittyvän työssään tehokkaammin.

Tämä tutkimus on kyselytutkimuksena tehty selvitys tulevien englanninopettajien käsityksistä omasta osaamisestaan opettajina sekä heidän tavoitteistaan opettamiseensa liittyen. Tutkimus osoittaa, että tulevien englanninopettajien minäpystyvyyssodotukset yleisimpiä opettajuuden osa-alueita kohtaan ovat vaihtelevia, mutta pääosin positiivisia. Eniten epävarmuutta koettiin kieliopin ja luokanhallintataitojen osalta. Tavoitteita osallistujilla oli useimmiten oppilaiden motivoinnin, tiettyjen kieliosaamisen opettamisen sekä oman ammatillisen kehittymisen saralla.

Key words: Self-efficacy beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, aims, teacher knowledge

Table of contents

1 Introduction.....	3
2 Self-efficacy beliefs.....	4
2.1 Teacher self-efficacy beliefs.....	6
2.2 Sources of efficacy information.....	8
2.3 Types of teacher self-efficacies.....	10
2.4 Measurement of self-efficacy.....	11
3 Finnish education system and National Core Curriculum.....	12
3.1 Finnish education system.....	12
3.2 Finnish National Core Curriculum.....	13
4 Teacher knowledge and aims.....	15
4.1 Subject matter knowledge.....	17
4.2 Pedagogical knowledge.....	18
4.3 Knowledge of students.....	19
4.4 Curricular knowledge.....	21
4.5 Knowledge of context.....	22
4.6 Interaction skills.....	23
4.7 Pedagogical content knowledge.....	24
4.8 Aims in teaching.....	25
5 The study.....	27
5.1 Questionnaire.....	27
5.1.1 Questionnaire type and setting.....	27
5.1.2 Participants.....	28
5.2 Results.....	29
5.3 Likert-scale questions	43
6 Discussion.....	72
7 Conclusion.....	77
Bibliography.....	80
Appendix.....	84

1 Introduction

Teaching is probably one of the most difficult jobs in the world. It requires innovation, sensitivity to other people, authority, profound knowledge of the subject that is taught and of the people that it are being taught. Teacher training aims to give future teachers the tools and readiness for the work cut out for them. However, when a pre-service teacher steps up in front of a class of students, how competent do they actually feel?

The main idea about self-efficacy beliefs is that the better you think you are at something, the more likely you will be good at it. Self-efficacy beliefs is a complex issue that consist of different sources of efficacy information (how do you know how good you are?), the reciprocal forces of the environment, cognitive factors and affective factors, which all contribute to the impression of “how competent I am”.

Self-efficacy beliefs is a concept that has been pioneered by Bandura (1977), who defined self-efficacy beliefs as an outcome of the triadic reciprocal causation process: how the environment, human behavior and personal internal factors create expectations of how well a person can deal with different situations. These expectations greatly affect the choices a person makes, the effort he or she puts into them and ultimately, how successful he or she in achieving the goal.

In the case of teachers, self efficacy is an important matter to discuss. The implications of good teacher self-efficacy beliefs are evident: as Gibbs (1999) points out, teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are less likely to drop out of teaching and to have better teaching results.

In addition to teacher self-efficacy beliefs, the aims of pre-service teachers have an effect on how they develop as teachers. Different individuals have

different personal goals in teaching regarding both language skills and development as a teacher. What the pre-service teachers find relevant and important in their teaching directs how they put effort into developing themselves, which consequently affects the development of self-efficacy beliefs. In English language teaching, these aims coincide with what is necessary to learn about the language to be a proficient user of English as well as what the National Curriculum outlines as necessary goals for English teaching in schools.

The main research questions of the study to be reported:

- How self-efficacious do pre-service English teachers feel about teaching different language skills?
- How self-efficacious do pre-service English teachers feel about other areas of pedagogical knowledge?
- What are the most important aims for pre-service English teachers have set for themselves

This study will give an overview on teacher self-efficacy, areas of teacher knowledge and aims. The study conducted consists of a questionnaire in which the self-efficacy beliefs and aims in teaching of Finnish pre-service English teachers were studied.

2 Self-efficacy beliefs

Self-efficacy is a term that roughly corresponds to peoples' sense of their own potential: How capable they believe to be in achieving different goals. In other words, how successful they believe to be in the future in different areas of life. Self-efficacy beliefs are developed throughout the life, they are affected by numerous different factors and they have a great influence in many areas of life.

One of the first pioneers of self-efficacy was Bandura (1977). He based his theory on the assumption that humans operate as agents in a process called triadic reciprocal causation. The model suggests that human behavior and agency is an outcome of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, human behavior and internal personal factors such as biological processes, cognitive and affective factors. This triadic force system regulates what people think about themselves, how they perceive their potentials and shortcomings and ultimately, the courses of action people decide to take based on their assessment of themselves and the situation. On the basis of this view, Bandura (1977) concluded that what people believe to be their capabilities to cope in different situations has a great effect on what the actual outcome in the situation will be. For example, if a teacher is very confident in being able to motivate students to learn grammar, the teacher is more likely able to succeed due to the courses of action he or she decides to take and the attitude in which he or she approaches the task. Self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices people make, the effort that is put into attaining goals, persistence when faced with drawbacks and also their emotions (Pajares 1997). Overall, the influence of self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1986) is the most crucial factor in predicting human agency – human behaviour is better predicted from self-efficacy beliefs than the actual level of proficiency. People with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be more optimistic, outgoing and entrepreneurial - on the other hand, low self-efficacy can lead to depression, helplessness and anxiety (Schwarzer 1998).

Self-efficacy beliefs affect all aspects of social life: relationships, careers, development of personality and attitudes towards life. In the present study, however, the concept of self-efficacy is observed from the point of view of self-efficacy beliefs in teachers.

2.1 Teacher self-efficacy beliefs

Teacher self-efficacy is a teacher's belief in how well he or she can manage the teaching situation, understanding of his or her potentials and knowledge of the subject. That means that teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be more confident as teachers, perceive themselves as good teachers and ultimately be more effective in teaching. In addition, good self-efficacy beliefs often result in a positive expectation about one's future career. In contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to feel less successful in their jobs, be less confident, and give up in the face of challenging situations and have negative expectations about their careers. It is not therefore surprising that teachers with low self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to quit their jobs than teachers who have higher self-efficacy beliefs (Gibbs 2002: 7).

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are not a question of whether one has a solely negative or positive outlook on the teaching career, but which parts of pedagogical competence teachers experience being good or poor at (Juukkola 2008: 8). All teachers have their strengths and weaknesses. For example, someone can be very proficient in teaching grammar; someone else may get along with students and find it easy to keep discipline; someone has a way in motivating students to learn. All in all, it is important to be aware which strengths and weaknesses teachers experience possessing and how it affects their image of themselves as teachers. Naturally, the more weaknesses one experiences having the lower the overall self-efficacy belief is. In contrast, if one feels that he or she possesses more strengths than weaknesses, the overall self-efficacy belief is higher.

Persistence in teaching careers is a real problem in many countries. According to Almiola (2008: 20), 20% of graduate teachers in Finland leave their jobs in the first two years of teaching. Gibbs (1999) found that around 60% of teachers felt ill-prepared for their jobs. Teacher self-efficacy, states

Gibbs (2002: 7), is one of the factors that have an effect on how well beginning teachers survive the first years of their career, which makes it an important issue to consider in teacher training and research.

Self-efficacy beliefs influence teachers' careers in several ways:

Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs tend to be more satisfied with their jobs.

Teachers who have high self-efficacy beliefs are usually happier with their careers and have lower rates of work related stress (Gibbs 1999). They tend to stay longer periods of time in their jobs and show more commitment. In addition, self-efficacious teachers are less often absent from their jobs (Chapman 1994: 17)

Self-efficacious teachers are more persistent.

When facing problematic situations, teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are often persistent and optimistic about positive outcomes. In addition, teachers who tend to visualize optimistic outcomes are more likely to find efficient solutions for difficult situations (Gibbs 2002: 6). Moreover, teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are less likely to refer problematic students for special education (Soodak et al. 1988).

Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are more innovative.

Teachers who have high efficacy beliefs have more courage to be innovative in designing lessons and putting curricula into practice. Efficacious teachers also seek new methods of teaching and instruction and are more likely to use materials innovatively and experimentally (Henson 2011: 5).

Students of self-efficacious teachers are more successful.

Teachers' sense of efficacy also has a great deal of influence on their students. Teacher efficaciousness can be directly related to students' own sense of

efficacy, states Henson (2001: 5). In addition, efficacious teachers tend to have more motivated students. A study conducted by Caprara et al. (2006) also shows that students of self-efficacious teachers tend to have greater academic success.

2.2 Sources of efficacy information

Bandura (1977) outlines four main sources of self-efficacy information: Performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological states.

Performance accomplishments are usually the most potent source of self-efficacy information, as stated by Bandura (1977). Actual mastery experiences raise personal self-efficacy most effectively. Regarding teachers, mastery experiences might include such things as being able to control a classroom in a difficult situation (“I am good at class management”) or being able to get an unmotivated student interested in the subject (“I am good at motivating even the most reluctant students). Failure experiences, on the other hand, can have various effects on self-efficacy (Jacobs 1984: 6). According to Jacobs, repeated failures that do not occur due to a lack of persistence or difficult situational factors may lower self-efficacy beliefs. On the contrary, failure experiences after several successes may have little or no effect whatsoever on self-efficacy beliefs. In fact, failure experiences may in some situations even enhance self-efficacy, if a difficulty is after some failures overcome. Consequently it would contribute to a self-efficacy belief that even major difficulties can be overcome and enhance persistence in similar situations in the future.

Vicarious experiences are another possible source of self-efficacy information. Vicarious experiences, as outlined by Bandura (1977), are experiences gained from observing successful peers in a similar situation. The efficaciousness of vicarious experiences depend on how close the peer or

person in a similar situation is experienced to be to oneself, and how similar the situation. For example, a pre-service teacher may have heightened sense of self-efficacy after observing a fellow student coping well in teacher training studies. In contrast, observing a peer failing at their attempts may lower self-efficacy beliefs. Vicarious experiences can vary greatly between individuals as people differ in their perceptions and how they relate to their peers.

Verbal persuasion is another source of self-efficacy information according to Bandura (1977). Verbal persuasion means that people can be influenced by the power of suggestion to raise their personal self-efficacy belief. Verbal persuasion can help people to put forward their best effort in difficult situations, which results in better success rates and ultimately a higher self-efficacy belief. An example of this can be a pre-service teacher who receives encouragement from his or her peers or good feedback on his or her performance in teacher training sessions. According to Jacobs (1984: 7), verbal persuasion can be the most efficient source of self-efficacy information when learning new behaviours are concerned. The effect of verbal persuasion depends greatly on situations and the personal relationship between the receiver and contributor of persuasion. For example, the praises of a teacher might have more influence on personal views of efficacy than the praises of a parent, since the teacher would normally have more concrete knowledge of how well the person has succeeded, whereas parents often give encouragement even without knowing if their child has actually done well or not.

Physiological states are the last source of self-efficacy information outlined by Bandura (1977). Physiological states refer to the emotional arousal caused by the situation. The physiologically strong state of arousal, anxiety or fear contributes to a prediction of failure. In contrast, a calm, assertive state of mind contributes to a positive outcome expectancy. A usual example of this is can be a pre-service teacher who is preparing for his or her first teaching

session. Most pre-service teachers would feel some level of anxiety, but if the state of arousal is very strong, it would add up to the feeling of insecurity and low self-efficacy belief.

There have been some diverse findings on which source of self-efficacy information is most important. According to Jacobs (1984: 7), performance accomplishments are not always the most potent source, but verbal persuasion can have the greatest effect when learning new behaviours is involved. The sources of efficacy information also vary between individuals. For example, in situations where peers are not available, or for people who prefer to avoid peer contact, vicarious experiences play very little role in constructing self-efficacy beliefs. Often performance accomplishments and verbal persuasion are regarded the two most important sources of self-efficacy beliefs (Jacobs 1984: 8). The point of emphasis in the present study is on performance accomplishments.

2.3 Types of teacher self-efficacies

Gibbs (2002: 4) outlines four different types of self-efficacies of teachers: behavioural, cognitive, emotional and cultural. These four types represent different self-efficacies of teachers.

Behavioural self-efficacy as a teacher is the belief in his or her capability to deal with specific teaching situations. For instance, the teacher's proficiency to teach grammar or to exercise classroom management.

Emotional self-efficacy as a teacher is the teachers' belief that they are able to control their emotions in classroom situations. An example of this is that the teacher does not let his or her personal emotions towards a student interfere with assessment, or being able to refrain from emotional outburst in front of students.

Cognitive self-efficacy as a teacher means a teachers' belief in his or her ability to control their thought processes in specific teaching situations. For instance, teachers' belief that they can go on with the lesson plan without getting carried away or sidetracked involves cognitive self-efficacy.

Cultural self-efficacy as a teacher means the teacher's belief that he or she can behave in the classroom in culturally acceptable ways. This includes, for instance, dress code and avoiding taboo subjects. This type of self-efficacy is of most importance for teachers who go to teach in a different country or culture.

These types of self-efficacies are not independent or mutually exclusive, but they exist in constant interaction, as outlined by Gibbs (2002: 4). The point of emphasis in the present study is, however, mostly on behavioural self-efficacy of teachers.

2.4 Measurement of self-efficacy

Measuring self-efficacy and its influences is a problematic process. One of the central issues is the fact that self-efficacy beliefs are personal mental states of mind and cognitive constructions, and thereby hard to measure. In the 70s and early 80s, refers Gibbs (2002: 5), most research had an Occam's razor approach - that is, making it as simple as possible. Two items would be presented to the participants of the study, and the decision between these two would show if the participant would feel self-efficacious about the measured topic or not. For example, a study of teacher self-efficacy would hold two items for choosing:

- *Item 1: "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment."*

Item 2: "If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students"

(Gibbs 2002: 5)

Today, measurement of self-efficacy concentrates more on researching and surveying a person's positive resistance resources. These resources include for instance goal-setting, resistance in the face of drawbacks and recovery from challenging situations. One of the leading measurement methods that concentrates on these factors is Schwarzer's General Self-efficacy Scale (n.d). It is mostly used in assessing how well people are capable of dealing with daily tasks and events after stressful afflictions.

3 Finnish education system and National Curriculum

As assessing pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are observed from the point of view of how well they perform in teaching according to the standards and policies set by the Finnish National Core Curriculum, a brief overview of its outlines follows.

3.1 Finnish education system

The Finnish education system is a system that is based on the principles of quality, efficiency, equity and internationalization (Finnish National Board of Education 2012). Basic education starting from pre-primary school and most post-graduate education in Finland is free of charge. The basic right to education that enables free education for all Finnish residents is recorded in the Constitution of Finland. The Finnish National Board of Education also defines the Finnish National Core Curriculum. Its purpose is to standardize the learning goals, content and knowledge requirements for each level in all schools. How these goals and requirements are met are left for schools to outline in their own private curricula and ultimately by the teachers.

3.2 Finnish National Core Curriculum

The present chapter gives a brief overview of what the goals and requirements set by the Finnish National Core Curriculum (2012) for the English language. The goals vary between grades and the level of proficiency in which the topics should be learned are also set.

Goals for language learning and central content aims

Primary school, grades 1-6

The first goals in language learning are that include students become aware of the language and all its meanings. In the lower grades, these goals include mainly encouraging students to be communicative and to provide tools for later language studies. The aims of language knowledge develop with each grade so that in lower grades the topics dealt with are more everyday life topics and the vocabulary is quite simple. Also, in listening and reading comprehension, the aim is that students understand main points with provided help. At the end of grade 6 students are expected to be able to tell basic information about themselves and their immediate surrounding (family, school, etc.) and to write a short note containing similar information. Also, students are expected to know basic information about the target language and cultures. As for learning methods, students are expected to learn to do group work, use text books and other sources of information and to gain relevant knowledge. Additionally, basic grammar for communicative purposes is outlined as a learning aim.

The aims of language proficiency in the 6th grade are outlined in Table 1

Table 1: Language proficiency in the English language in the 6th grade:

Listening comprehension: the beginning stage of basic language skills

Speaking: functional rudimentary language skills

Reading comprehension: the beginning stage of basic language skills

Writing: functional rudimentary language skills

Grades 7-9

The aims concerning language teaching is that students' language skills improve to be able to handle a range of more demanding language use situations such as in hobbies, public services and activities. The role of written language skills is emphasized. Students' ability to act according to cultural norms of the target culture improves and they gain more learning strategies to aid language learning. In addition, students should acknowledge some central differences of different varieties of English.

Students should learn to understand central ideas and fundamental details from wider written or spoken texts including clearly structured general knowledge. Students should also be able to carry out a small project work and to use a variety of sources for gaining language knowledge. Also, the importance of self-evaluation is emphasized. More advanced grammar is taught, but the emphasis is on communication strategy skills.

The aims concerning language proficiency in the 6th grade are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Language proficiency in the 9th grade

Listening comprehension: functional language skills

Talking: developing basic language skills

Reading comprehension: functional language skills

Writing: developing basic language skills

4 Teacher knowledge and aims

Teachers have a rather special type of knowledge in the subject they teach. As the saying goes, if you really wish to learn something, you should learn how to teach it. Teacher knowledge is not only about knowing the subject in great detail and width, but also how it is stored in the memory. Teacher knowledge, in order to be efficient in classroom situations, needs to be easily and efficiently accessible. That is, teachers need to have knowledge of their subject which is processed and organized in a manner which makes it easy to access and display to students. The most important part of teacher knowledge, however, is the understanding of how to present and convey the subject knowledge to students in its many different forms. Teachers must know how the information needs to be structured, justified and externalized in lectures, tasks and exercises, in order to convey the information. In addition, the teacher must be aware of the students, how to motivate them, encourage them, to convey information to them and to help them internalize the knowledge.

Historically, the connection between teacher knowledge and student success has been studied by examining relationships between teachers' grade point averages, courses they have taken, standardized tests that have evaluated their subject knowledge and student learning (Gess-Newsome 1999: 52). Although these studies showed only weak correlations between teachers' knowledge and student success, the idea of teachers' knowledge influencing teaching results has persisted. The focus of the studies has more recently turned to examining the effect of teachers' beliefs and conceptions of subject matter on student learning as well as how the subject matter is taught (Shavelson & Stern 1981). This change of paradigm in teacher knowledge studies called for more elaborate examinations about the different kinds of knowledge bases held by teachers and how they function and interrelate in the teachers' work (Gess-Newsome 199: 52). Among others, Shulman (1986)

identified seven different areas of teacher knowledge bases required to understand the complex structure and content of teacher knowledge. Shulman (1986) views teacher knowledge bases as consisting of six different areas (see Table 3):

Table 3: Shulman's areas of teacher knowledge

Subject matter knowledge
pedagogical knowledge
curricular knowledge
knowledge of students
knowledge of context
pedagogical content knowledge

In addition to these six knowledge bases outlined by Shulman (1986), another area of knowledge can be added: interactional skills. This addition has been made by Yrjönsuuri & Yrjönsuuri (1995) who had a slightly different approach to teachers' knowledge bases. In the present study, the area of interactional skills is added to the definitions listed by Shulman, as it is relevant to the topic. These seven areas of teacher knowledge are closely interconnected and partly overlapping.

Another area connected to teacher knowledge is the aims that teachers have for their teaching. That is, some teachers believe, for instance that teaching grammar is the most important thing in teaching and therefore it is an important aim for them to teach grammar. Similarly, there can be all kinds of personal tendencies that direct which areas of teacher knowledge are emphasized in teaching. Naturally, the aims of teachers are directed and influenced by the curricula and other external factors, but an outlook on the personal aims of teachers is provided in section 4.8.

4.1 Subject matter knowledge

Subject matter knowledge is one of the major knowledge bases necessary for teachers. Subject matter knowledge naturally varies between subjects, and the nature of the subject defines what kind of knowledge is required.

Language teachers, for instance, need specific knowledge of linguistics, culture and history of the language. Subject matter knowledge is basically the kind of information the teachers need to convey to their students during the school year. The knowledge that teachers have of their subject matter, however, is usually much deeper and wider than what the curriculum assigns for knowledge aims for students. For instance, English teachers are assumed to have grammar knowledge that reaches more deeply into the structures of language than what is necessary even for students in high school to know. Deeper and more elaborate knowledge than what is necessary in classroom teaching helps the teacher to motivate and structure the knowledge needed for classroom purposes. Teachers also need to have knowledge about how the subject is organized, how it relates to other subjects and what its influences are to the surrounding society. Subject matter knowledge is usually gained through studies of the subject, but personal experiences and background also contribute. Therefore subject matter knowledge and areas of expertise vary greatly between teachers.

Subject matter knowledge of teachers has been studied traditionally by measuring the amount of courses that teachers have taken as well as by using standardized tests, as Even (1993: 95) points out. Teachers' knowledge of their subject, however, is not reliably examined through the amount of courses taken or even tests about the target subject. For this reason, studies examining teachers' knowledge of subject matter often focus on more qualitative measures such as their understanding of concepts and principles within the subject (Even 1993).

In addition to differences in personal experiences and knowledge that vary between individuals, beliefs about the subject matter also contribute to subject knowledge (Gess-Newsome 1999: 54-57). Beliefs of subject matter knowledge in language teaching context can imply several things, beliefs of what is important in language learning, beliefs about different cultures and their influences on language use and beliefs about how languages can be learned. These kinds of beliefs impact the points of emphasis teachers have in their own language learning and teaching. As an example, a teacher who believes that language is most efficiently learned by culture-integrated language learning would be more likely to use authentic materials and stress the cultural knowledge aims outlined in the curriculum and to have a wider subject matter knowledge in that area. Thus beliefs influence how knowledge is evaluated, structured and used (Gess-Newsome 1999: 55). A study conducted by Gudmundsdottir (1990) also reported that teachers' orientation to the subject affected their choice of content, pedagogical strategies, use of materials and perceptions of students.

4.2 Pedagogical knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge is basically knowledge about teaching. Teachers, as experts in the area, possess knowledge about how information can be conveyed to their students and how to encourage students to use that information. In essence, pedagogical knowledge is the ability to present information in a manner that is understandable and applicable to the student. Pedagogical knowledge includes the decisions that teachers make in their teaching - which examples to use, which tasks to decide on and how to structure the lesson for the best possible learning outcomes. Pedagogical knowledge is a mixture of teaching strategies, approaches to teaching and technical knowledge of teaching conventions (Shulman 1986). Pedagogical knowledge also includes assumptions about how students would react to the presented activities and what the learning outcomes will be like.

Pedagogical knowledge also varies greatly between teachers and the grades or the institute where they teach. For example, the difference between elementary school teachers' pedagogical knowledge and university professors' knowledge are essentially very different in type and points of emphasis. For instance, elementary school teachers might have a more extensive knowledge of how to teach through games and to motivate students to learn in different ways. In contrast, university teachers might have an emphasis on how to structure complex information efficiently and how to present knowledge to a great number of students at the same time in big lectures. Pedagogical knowledge is gained through teacher training and through personal experience in teaching in different contexts.

Pedagogical knowledge is very closely related to knowledge of students. Naturally, teachers require knowledge of students in order to choose pedagogically functional teaching strategies. In some representations of teacher knowledge, knowledge of students and pedagogical knowledge is assimilated.

4.3 Knowledge of students

An essential part of teachers' knowledge is to know what students need in order to learn efficiently. Gaining knowledge of how students act and learn requires social sensitivity and knowledge of different types of learners (Shulman 1986). Knowledge of students can be divided into four sections: how do students learn specific subject matter structures, what are the problems that students face in learning, how do students function socially in classroom situations and how different types of learners in different developmental stages function.

Every student has his or her own individual learning style. Learning styles are preferences of the manner in which information is memorized and processed. That is, some tasks and types of examples are easier for other

students to understand than others, because of the cues that are used differ. One of the most traditional ways of categorizing learning styles is Fleming's "VAK" model (Felder 1988). The model includes three basic categories:

1. **Visual learners:** Learners who have a preference in seeing. Efficient ways of learning include watching pictures, films and graphs.
2. **Auditory learners:** Learners who learn most efficiently by listening. Effective ways of learning are, for example, lectures and discussions. In language learning, auditory learners may for instance learn grammar structure by "playing by the ear" rather than by grammar rule formulas.
3. **Kinesthetic learners:** Learners who learn most efficiently by hands-on tasks, moving and touching.

A proficient teacher has knowledge of how his or her students learn most efficiently. As learning styles differ greatly from one student to another, teachers need to be versatile in their teaching methods to enable equal opportunities for his or her students to learn the subject.

The knowledge of how students learn the subject matter is one of the most essential things that teachers deal with in their work. Learning and teaching strategies have been studied and developed frequently, which makes more information available for teachers about how students actually learn. For instance, language learning and teaching has changed greatly along with language attitudes. The emphasis of language teaching has switched from grammar and translation oriented learning to more communicatively active learning styles. One of the factors affecting this change is the fact that the learning strategies including memorization of grammar rules, drilling and translating sentences from one language to another was not an effective ground for language learning for communicative purposes. To summarize, teacher knowledge about how students learn means considering the best

possible solutions for tasks, exercises and lesson structures to meet the learning aims of the students.

Social sensitivity is also required in gaining knowledge of how students work in their social context. For instance, a shy student would not benefit from an exercise that involves presenting their work to other students in front of a classroom. Another example of knowing how the students function socially is one of the basic considerations: how to set the seating order in the classroom. Additionally, taking into account the age and developmental stages of students is important in designing teaching materials and carrying out tasks.

4.4 Curricular knowledge

Curricular knowledge is the area of teacher knowledge that is concerned with the aims and contents of teaching. The curricula are the general guidelines for teachers that define what kinds of knowledge bases the students of each class level should possess about the subject. There are different kinds of curricula; national curriculum that set the standards of teaching aims for the whole country and institutionally bound curricula which regulate the teaching in the particular school or institute.

In addition to knowing the goal and objectives set in the curricula, teachers need to be aware of what the students have learned in the previous years and what they will be learning in the following years (Gess-Newsome 1999: 103). Curricular knowledge is the guideline according to which more specific subject areas and issues are handled in the classroom. One essential aim of teaching is convert these objects outlined into the curriculum in the form of tasks, exercises and lectures.

4.5 Knowledge of context

Knowledge of context is a part of teacher knowledge that touches on the surrounding culture and norms that affect the subject. In language teaching, the question of context is particularly important. Language, as a social construct, is always bound to culture in many different ways. Culture and language develop in an interrelated manner – language represents and modifies language, whereas language is modified by its cultural surroundings. In this manner, culture is at the very core of language teaching. It influences how we use language and set the standards against which we compare it for evaluation (Kramersch 1993: 8). In addition to providing students information about the target culture of the language, knowledge of context also requires understanding of the differences and conflicts between cultures. In its simplest level, this means acknowledging, for instance, the fact that some words in English do not have equivalents in Finnish (Kramersch 1993: 9). Other examples of the relevance of contextual factors include, for instance, knowledge of cultural histories and norms. We need cultural knowledge to understand, for example, why it is not advisable to talk about bombs in hushed voices at an airport or to crack jokes at a funeral. As language and culture are bound to each other, it is natural that language learning and teaching should consider the topic of cultural differences which may cause misunderstandings between people. Differences in ethnicity, age, gender, generation, social class, education and personal history are all contextual factors that may complicate or even inhibit communication (Kramersch 1993)

Kramersch (1993) discusses the dichotomy between grammar and communication in language teaching. This dichotomy and its implementations in teaching affect how contextual factors are developed in students. On the one hand, in order to accomplish successful communication, students need to have knowledge of the grammatical systems that regulate language use. On the other hand, only knowing the grammar is not sufficient

in order to be able to use the language. Kramersch (1993: 5) argues that if teachers concentrate too heavily on communicative competence instead of grammar in a “whatever goes” attitude towards language production, it results in communication problems in different contextual environments.

4.6 Interaction skills

As mentioned earlier, interaction skills is an addition to the knowledge bases outlined by Shulman (1986) that was made by Yrjönsuuri & Yrjönsuuri (1995). Interactional skills are an important part of teachers’ professional expertise. This area of knowledge is interconnected with Shulman’s knowledge of students – knowledge area, but there are differences between the two concepts. Whereas a teacher can have a very detailed knowledge of how individual students work and what their strengths and weaknesses are, it does not necessarily mean that the teacher is capable of interacting with the student in a way that would efficiently utilize this knowledge. Interaction skills are therefore a tool that is developed through experience as well as training.

There are different types of interactions in the classroom that require interaction skills from the teacher. As an example, a lesson may contain the following scenes: getting restless students to focus on the lesson’s topic, creating groups for group work, answering questions that arise about the subject, solving conflicts between students and giving positive and negative feedback about the students’ behaviour and achievement. According to Yrjönsuuri & Yrjönsuuri (1995)

One essential part of teacher-student interaction is the teachers’ capability to approach all of his or her students individually. That is, teachers create an understanding of how students will react in different situations, what types of learners the classroom contains and what kinds of tasks would suit them.

In addition to being a necessity in the classroom environment, interaction skills are the teachers' tool for assessing students and reflecting their own work. By observing, talking and asking questions to the students, teachers gain valuable information about them. In interaction with the students, teachers also get both explicit and implicit feedback about their own teaching behavior (Yrjönsuuri & Yrjönsuuri 1995).

Another important implication of interaction skills and an essential part of teachers' work is co-operation with the students' families. A functional relationship with the students' parents, especially in lower grades, is an important source of information both for the teacher and the parents.

4.7 Pedagogical content knowledge

In the previous sections, the terms pedagogical knowledge and subject matter knowledge have been defined. Pedagogical content knowledge, in its simplest meaning, is the combination of these two concepts (Gess-Newsome 1999).

Gess-Newsome (1999) points out that pedagogical content knowledge is always more than the sum of its parts. It is the very specific kind of expertise that teachers have that helps them to teach their subject efficiently.

Pedagogical content knowledge includes, for instance, the knowledge of English teachers of how to structure an efficient grammar lesson, what kinds of tasks to use in order to teach irregular verbs or how to persuade students to do their homework. Shulman defines pedagogical content knowledge as:

That special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding...It represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (Shulman 1987: 8).

Teaching a subject is a task that requires complex cognitive activity in which the teacher applies knowledge from many different knowledge bases. As pedagogical content knowledge requires practical application of a vast number of knowledge bases, it is mostly acquired through experience in teaching. Van Driel (1997: 5) points out that beginning teachers have very little if any pedagogical content knowledge, since it is mostly attained through classroom practice.

Pedagogical content knowledge is developed through the transformation of subject matter knowledge. This transformation happens, as teachers critically reflect their knowledge of the subject, adapt their information to different types of teaching situation and structure the information as teachable entities. This process involves creating and memorizing the most efficient tasks, examples, analogies, tasks and activities in helping students to understand the topics (Cochran et al 1991: 6).

4.8 Aims in teaching

Aims in teaching are a concept that is affected by several factors. Firstly, the National Curriculum set the outlines of what should be learned and how. Secondly, schools may have their own curricula which have more specific outlines of the aims in teaching. In addition, students' requirements and their goals in learning should be taken into account. However, one of the least studied factor affecting the aims in teaching are the teachers' personal aims.

As pre-service teachers enter teacher training, they carry with them impressions about what a good teacher is like, and how they as students experienced different types of teachers. According to Kagan (1992: 142), these beliefs remain quite intact throughout the teacher training and ultimately affect what kinds of teachers they become. These beliefs and impressions strongly affect the aims in teaching that are set by pre-service teachers. These aims may include teaching specific language areas ("I believe it is important

to learn grammar, so teaching grammar is an important aim in my teaching”). In addition to teaching different areas of the subject matter, aims in teaching also include the teachers’ aims in improving as teachers.

Lavonen et al. (Opetuksen tavoitteet ja työtavat n.d) views the aims of teaching as a core element in the teaching process. As mentioned earlier, teaching aims are influenced by the curricula as well as the needs of students, but one of the major factors that affect the ultimate teaching aims are the personal aims of the teacher. Even though the curricula set boundaries on what to teach and how, it is always in the hands of the teacher to decide on the emphasis and means in which the subject is approached, which makes teachers’ own aims an important factor. The following figure is adapted from Lavonen et al, depicting the role of aims in teaching (see Figure 1)

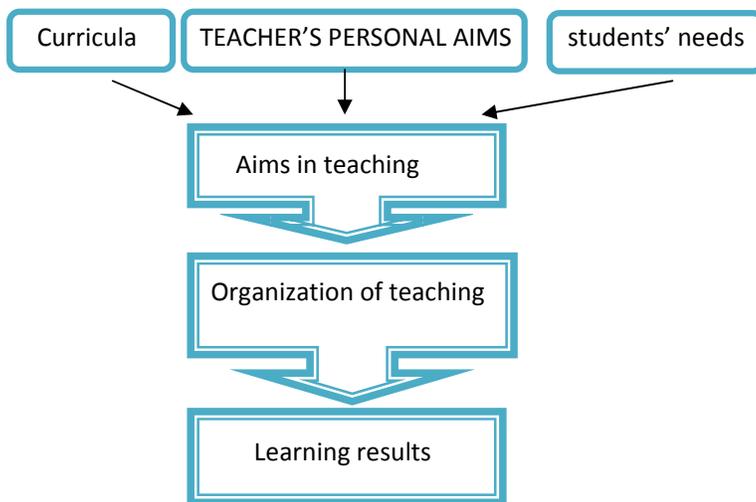


Figure 1: Aims in teaching (adapted from Lavonen et al.)

Krokkfors (Tavoitteena ajat televa opettaja n.d) views the development of pre-service teachers as a process of self-reflection. In this model, the emphasis of pre-service teachers’ development is on the reflection about their own personal premises, causes and consequences. This also includes taking into consideration the aims that pre-service teachers set for themselves.

According to Korkfors, the process of self-reflection is important regarding personal growth as a teacher, and therefore personal aims also play an important role in the pre-service teachers' professional growth.

Teachers' personal aims are also connected with their teacher self-efficacy beliefs. As an example, if a teacher does not view teaching about different cultures an important aim for oneself, he or she is unlikely to place much emphasis on how well he or she is able to teach the subject. According to Bandura's theory of triadic reciprocal causation (1977), affective factors impact the development of self-efficacy beliefs. Due to this, those matters that are experienced as more important goals in teaching affect their teacher self-efficacy beliefs more.

5 The study

This chapter deals with the present study, which consist of a questionnaire with open questions and questions using the Likert-scale. The aim of the study is to find out about pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and aims in teaching.

5.1 Questionnaire

5.1.1 Questionnaire type and setting

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part handles self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service English teachers. This part consists of 21 Likert-scale questions and two open questions. The second part of the questionnaire aimed to find out about what the pre-service English teachers thought to be most important in their teaching. This part consists of ten Likert-scale questions and one open question.

The questionnaire was originally an internet questionnaire (see Appendix 1), and most of the participants were contacted via email. There was some

difficulty, however, in getting the necessary amount of answers to the questionnaire, due to which I distributed the questionnaire at the University of Jyväskylä as a paper version. The paper version was comparable to the internet questionnaire. The paper version was handed out to the students at the University of Jyväskylä for convenience reasons: as a pre-service English teacher myself, I had the access to my fellow students and consequently was able to insure better answering percentage than in the email version of the questionnaire.

The participants were informed of the nature of the questionnaire. Also, the participants were told that the questionnaires would be handled anonymously and that they had the right to contact me about the results of the study if they wished to.

The questionnaire was first distributed in the spring 2011 to Jyväskylä and Tampere. As there were not enough participants at the first try, the questionnaire was distributed again the subsequent fall. At the second distribution the internet questionnaire was sent again to Jyväskylä and Tampere. In addition, it was distributed to Universities in Helsinki, Oulu, Turku and Joensuu.

5.1.2 Participants

The target group of the study is students of English in Finnish universities who have completed at least the basic pedagogical studies. The participants are from Jyväskylä, Tampere, Helsinki, Oulu, Turku and Joensuu. There is some variation within the participants in the amount of time they had spent studying English or doing pedagogical studies at the universities. Some of the participants had had no experience in teaching outside the teacher training courses of pedagogical studies whereas some had had many years of experience in teaching - mostly as substitutes.

The participants were aged between 21 years and 49. The average age of the participants was 25,5. The participants consisted of women (80%) and men (20%). The participants had studied English at the University from two years to “too many” (due to such answers there is no average time studied by the participants). However, most of the participants had been studying English at the university for 2-5 years.

5.2 Results

What the participants experienced to be easy in teaching English

Speaking English in the classroom

Many of the participants experienced that it was easy to speak English in the classroom. Especially in high schools, the participants often aimed at using only English in the classroom - or at least as much as possible. Having good oral skills in the target language helped the participants in being relaxed and natural during lessons; that is, it gave them confidence. In addition it made communication with students easier and more natural.

Hyvä oma suullinen kielitaitoni auttaa luokassa puhumista ja luontevaa käyttäytymistä [...]

My skills in oral communication help in speaking in the classroom and acting naturally [...]

Communicating and connecting with students

Being an approachable teacher and being able to communicate efficiently with students was another point that came up in the answers as an easy thing for the participants to achieve. Forming a good relationship with the students made it easier to assess the students' performance and also to design suitable teaching materials. Most of the participants had no experience in teaching for longer periods of time, which means that teaching

in short term was not a difficulty for the participants in making a good connection with students.

[Koin helpoksi] oppilaiden kanssa kommunikoinnin, hyvän suhteen luomisen oppilaisiin lyhyessäkin ajassa, eri oppilaiden taitotasojen arvioinnin.

[I experienced it easy] to communicate with students, to create a good relationship with the students even in a short period of time and to assess the level of proficiency of the students.

Another factor about communicating with the students was that some participants found it easy to take into consideration different types of learners and their needs in language learning in their teaching. This was taken into consideration both in designing teaching materials and interacting in the classroom, for instance in giving instructions.

Planning and carrying out lessons

Many participants regarded planning lessons - choosing materials, creating a written outline for the lesson, creating own exercises - as being easy. Some of the participants specified that it was easy to find the necessary materials to carry out the lesson plan. Following the lesson plan outline during teaching was also easy for some participants. In addition, some participants experiences that it was easy to make changes to the lesson plan if it was necessary and making so called "plan B"s during the lesson. Also choosing appropriate tasks to fit the learning aims was mentioned as an easy task.

Tuntisuunnitelman tekeminen on jokseenkin helppoa. Myös sopivien tehtävien valitsemisen olen kokenut helpoksi.

Making a lesson plan has been somewhat easy. I have also experienced that choosing appropriate tasks has been easy.

Another specific area that in some cases was found easy was to use technology in the classroom to help teaching. For instance, using the smart board and making clear presentations for students was considered easy and helpful.

Motivating students

Encouraging and motivating students was another frequent answer by the participants about what is easy in teaching. The means of achieving this goal was defined in some of the answers: for example, students were motivated to learn by developing appropriate tasks or inventing games. One factor that also came up was that the participants thought it was easy to rationalize to the students why learning English is important.

[Helppoa on] myös yleensä oppilaiden motivoinnin koska englanti nähdään yleensä melko tärkeänä.

[It is easy] Also motivating students because the English language is usually regarded as quite important.

As seen above, the status of the English language also played a role in why the participants thought it was easy to motivate students to learn English. Motivation for learning can be created by a variety of sources – as above mentioned, a motivation related with how useful the students regard the subject as being and how motivating the materials are even if the subject in itself would not be of interest to the students. All in all the participants were able to motivate students in both internal and external motivation.

Textbook chapters and tasks

One specific task in language teaching was brought up as an easy accomplishment: going through textbook chapters and ready-made tasks in the book. Some participants also mentioned that going through the texts as a listening comprehension task was easy for them.

Uuden tekstin läpikäyminen erilaisten aihekysymysten ja uusien lauseiden selvittämisen avulla on minulle helppoa.

Going through a new text using different kinds of content question and sorting out new sentences is easy for me.

Going through chapters usually include reading and listening comprehension, vocabulary learning, sorting out semantics and related tasks and exercises. Most text and grammar books used in schools present ready-made material for going through chapters, so teachers do not necessarily need to devise own materials for the lessons concerning textbook chapters.

Creating a good atmosphere and keeping discipline in the classroom

Many of the participants pointed out that it was easy for them to create and maintain a good, positive atmosphere in the classroom. Some also experienced that keeping discipline and order in the classroom was easy. There was also mention about the participants keeping their own attitude positive; many beginner teachers experience anxiety and stress during lessons, but in some cases the participants thought it was surprisingly easy to ignore the anxiety and be relaxed in front of the class. This consequently helped to keep up a good atmosphere in the classroom.

Another factor contributing to a good classroom atmosphere was that many participants found it easy to help and manage students. They thought that giving advice and connecting with students came quite naturally. One particular thing mentioned was that it was easy to talk with the students (in the target language or otherwise). Creating a good relationship and connection with students were helpful assets in creating positive language lessons.

Specific language areas

Many of the participants mentioned a specific language area that he or she thought was easy to teach. These language areas varied between participants. Interestingly, most of the answers that contained a mention of a specific language area, included only one area of language. That is, many of the participants mentioned either oral communication, cultural skills or grammar, but only one specific thing. This creates an impression that there is one area of expertise that is especially easy for the participants.

As mentioned above, the language skill areas mentioned to be easy to teach were oral communication (namely speaking exercises) cultural topics and grammar.

Olen onnistunut omasta mielestäni hyvin kannustamaan oppilaita puhumaan englanniksi ja olen nähnyt paljon vaivaa laatiessani heille sopivia puheharjoituksia jos kirjoissa ei ole ollut sopivia.

I think I have succeeded in encouraging students to speak English and I have seen a lot of trouble in compiling appropriate speaking exercises if there haven't been suitable ones in the text books.

Englannin kielen tunteminen hyvin auttaa sen opetuksessa. Tarkoitan sillä eri kulttuurien, varianttien ja englanninkielisen maailman tuntemista.

Knowing the English language well helps in teaching it. By that I mean knowing different cultures, language variants and the English speaking world.

As seen in the examples above, the specific language areas that the participants found easy were also the easiest topics to create original materials for and also to motivate students to learn. In addition, general teaching of the specific area was experienced as easier than some other topic.

Assessing and correcting tasks

Assessment was one of the rare things that came up in some of the participants' answers. Some participants found that it was easy to correct written tasks and to assess the students' performance in lessons. In addition to formal assessment, some also found it easy to make assessments of the proficiency level of the students in order to find suitable material for their purposes.

The participants did not specify any methods of assessment or type of exercise or test that was particularly easy to assess.

What the participants experienced to be difficult in teaching English

Diverse teaching techniques

Using diverse teaching techniques in teaching was considered as a difficult task, as the following answers shows:

[Koin vaikeiksi käyttää] monipuoliset ja luovat opetustekniikat ja tavat

[I found it difficult to use] diverse and creative teaching techniques and strategies

Most of the participants were inexperienced pre-service teachers who had only recently begun their teaching careers. Therefore it is not surprising that the knowledge of different teaching techniques had not yet been accomplished and using them variably was not an easy task to do.

Keeping discipline in the classroom

One of the things found difficult by the participants was controlling the classroom situation and keeping discipline. Keeping discipline was challenging to the pre-service teachers particularly in very heterogenous groups. The participants, as novice teachers, found themselves preoccupied

by dealing with the classroom situation in general - if some discomposure erupted in the classroom, some of the participants were quite unprepared to deal with the situation. That is, they lacked strategies of group control. Also, the participants felt challenged by individual students that were described as "troublesome cases".

Motivating students

This aspect of classroom interaction was, as previously mentioned, considered easy by some of the participants. However, many of the participants also found motivating students very challenging.

On vaikeaa saada oppilaita, jotka eivät ole kiinnostuneita englannista, osallistumaan. Siksi on myös vaikea tietää, oppivatko he varmasti

It is difficult to get the students that are not interested in English to participate. Therefore it is also difficult to know if they are really learning.

There were also different areas of language in which motivating students was more challenging than in others. For instance, the participants had trouble in motivating students to use the language in different situations or to do written exercises. In addition, some participants noticed that their own attitude easily reflected in students: it was difficult to motivate students to do the kinds of tasks that the pre-service teachers did not personally think were interesting.

Another point that came up in the answers was that it was difficult to motivate students to learn more in case they already knew the language up to some extent. In this case it was difficult to give reasons and motivate why improving language skills is necessary even though the language proficiency level was already quite high and the student was content with his or her language skills.

Grammar & culture

Different aspects of the language were brought up in the answers as being difficult to teach. Grammar, however, was by far the most frequent answer by the participants.

Kieliopin opettaminen oppilaan kannalta mielekkäästi ja käytännönläheisesti, meinaa mennä aina luennoimiseksi ja liikaa teorian kautta.

Teaching grammar in a meaningful way for the student and also practically, teaching grammar tends to be lecturing and concentrates too heavily on theory.

What the participants found difficult about teaching grammar was mostly motivating students to learn grammar rules but also to present rules in a comprehensible way. The lack of motivation for grammar in some cases also affected the students' proficiency in other language skill areas. For instance, the importance of producing grammatically correct language interfered with the success of oral communication exercises.

The participants also experienced that it was difficult to answer students' questions about grammar. The reason for this in some cases was that the participants had not previously considered the grammar rules in depth and detail. Some felt that it was surprisingly difficult to trust his or her own knowledge and language skills especially regarding grammar. In some cases the participants thought that their own lack of motivation in teaching grammar explicitly affected the teaching success of grammar lessons.

In addition to grammar, another topic that was found challenging by the pre-service teachers was going through cultural topics. The participants did not specify, whether the problems arose from lack of motivation and/or lack of knowledge or some other factor.

Different kinds of learners

In some cases the participants felt that they were quite unprepared to teach classes with much heterogeneity. Many found it difficult to design tasks and exercises that suited all students regardless of their level of proficiency. In addition, taking into consideration the different kinds of learners was challenging to some.

One of the challenges faced by the pre-service teachers was that it was hard to distribute time, effort and attention equally between all students in the classroom. In a classroom where there was a great variety between students (energetic and outgoing as well as quiet and reclusive students), some participants would easily concentrate only on the outgoing students that were more challenging to manage and the quiet students would be left without an equal amount of attention. Some participants also thought that the short period of time spent in teacher training sessions in one classroom made it challenging to get to know students well enough to know their language learning needs and characteristics.

En omasta mielestäni myöskään osaa ottaa huomioon tasapuolisesti kaikkia oppilaita ja heikoimmat ja hiljaisimmat eivät tunneillani aina saa kaipaamaansa huomiota.

I don't think I can take into consideration all the students equally, and the weakest and the most quiet students do not always get the attention they need in my lessons.

Motivating students was a challenge that was often connected in the answers with low proficiency level learners. That is, motivating weaker students to learn was found particularly difficult by some of the participants.

Trusting one's own knowledge

One of the factors that came up in the answers was that it was surprisingly difficult to trust his or her own knowledge of the language. That would imply that the pre-service teachers have in some cases rather low self-efficacy

beliefs regarding their language skills. Particularly knowledge of grammar was considered hard to rely on. This is also reflected in the difficulties many participants had with teaching grammar.

Going through texts

In many answers, the participants brought up different areas of language knowledge or task type that was difficult for them to teach. Going through textbook texts, however, was mentioned in many of the answers. The participants did not often motivate this answer whereas to what was particularly difficult in teaching texts to students, but some pointed out that this problem was also connected with motivation:

Tekstien läpikäyminen tuntuu joskus tylsältä ja tuntuu, etten keksi siihen mielenkiintoisia ja vaihtelevia tapoja.

Going through texts feels boring sometimes and I can't think of interesting and varying ways of doing it.

Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of teaching. Many pre-service teachers, however, found this challenging. Both explicit assessing and on-going assessing of language skills were found challenging. Especially assessing oral skills was found difficult.

Oppilaiden suullisen kielitaidon arvioinnista ei ole juuri käytännön kokemusta, ja koen vaikeana kuunnella esim. yhden oppilasparin suullista työskentelyä, kun luokassa on 20 muuta, jotka puhuvat samalla.

I don't have much practical experience in assessing students' oral communication skills and I find it difficult to listen to, for example, the communication of one pair of students when there are 20 others talking at the same time.

One factor affecting the pre-service teachers' experiences is the amount of assessing that they had made so far. Some teachers with longer teaching experience had come across a lot more assessing than those who only had experience in teacher training, which might not include much assessing, or only a limited amount and kind of assessment tasks.

In addition to assessing, it was considered difficult to give feedback students. In this way assessment relates to communicating with students.

Making lesson plans and carrying them out

In the previous section the point of making lesson plans and carrying out the practical part of lessons was found quite easy by some of the participants. However, this was also experienced as difficult. Some of the participants thought that estimating how time-consuming some tasks or exercises would be was challenging, and also following the lesson plan accordingly. Some also found it a drawback that they kept using too much time pondering over lesson plans and had trouble finding the right kinds of materials. In addition to having difficulty in following the lesson plan accordingly, some found it difficult to digress from the plan when it was necessary during the lesson.

Another problem arising from carrying out the lesson in practice was that some pre-service teachers had difficulty in giving clear instructions to students.

Classroom English

Teaching in the classroom is another factor that divides the participants' feelings. That is, some found it easy to speak English in the classroom, but some found it difficult. General skills in English and confidence in front of the classroom affect how easy or difficult using classroom English felt.

Eniten ongelmia minulla on [...] puheeni sujumisessa, koska en ole kovin hyvää puhumaan

I mostly have problems with the fluency of my talking, because I'm not very good at speaking.

Having problems in communicating with the target language affects many areas of teaching - not least of all self-efficacy beliefs.

The most important aims of future English teachers

Motivating and encouraging students

The most frequent answer that came up in the participants' answers was that the most important aim in language teaching was to motivate students and to encourage them to use the language as much as possible. The participants wanted to motivate students in their language studies, but also to create a motivating learning environment.

One part of motivation that the pre-service teachers found important was that the students would be encouraged to speak English as much as possible. This answer also illustrates how also affecting the students' conceptions and aims is important regarding motivation:

[Tärkein tavoite on] saada oppilaat ymmärtämään että kieltä opitaan jokapäiväistä käyttöä varten eikä luokkahuonetta, kokeita ja arvosanoja varten. Saada oppilaat käyttämään kieltä rohkeasti niin tunnilla kuin tuntien ulkopuolellakin.

[The most essential aim is] to get the students to understand that language is learned for everyday use and not for the classroom, exams and grades. To get the students to use the language courageously both in the classroom and outside classes.

One of the major aims of raising students' motivation was to support learning as an ongoing, lifelong process. That is, the participants aim for students to find intrinsic motivation to language learning. Motivating and encouraging was a very comprehensive aim of pre-service teachers – it was linked to all aspects of language learning.

*Nahda oppilaat ja kunnioittaa heidat motivoida ja inspiroida englannin kayttoon.
[sic]*

To see the students, to respect and to motivate them and inspire to use English.

In addition, one language learning aspect was brought up in relation to motivation: the participants were especially keen on advancing students' motivation in oral communication. The participants wished to encourage students to use English confidently and to diminish the perceived error-centered view of language learning. That is, to focus more on active and functional communication rather than to concentrate on possible mistakes. All in all, one of the major aims was to help students become language users that are confident in their language skills, are enthusiastic about learning the language also independently and to justify language learning with authentic language use aims.

Different areas of language skills

Some areas of language skills were experienced as superior in terms of importance. The areas that were mentioned in the answers varied from one participant to another. The language skill areas that came up included oral communication, culture, metalearning, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening and reading comprehension and grammar. In these answers, like in many others, the emphasis was on communicative competence which came up most often. This variety of language skills that the participants prioritized show that the pre-service teachers have different views on language learning and also have different aims in their work.

Students as individuals

Seeing students as individuals and being able to provide different kinds of learners the opportunity to learn most efficiently. Taking into account individual differences and learning styles by using a variety of task types and presenting different language learning strategies that are available for

the students. Another point of emphasis was the efficiency of time management in order to be able to meet students individually to find out about their language learning needs and dispositions. All in all, designing tasks to fit students' need, aims, level of proficiency and areas of interest was seen as important goals in language teaching.

In order to find out what the students need individually, it is necessary for teachers to find out what students' learning aims are. This idea also came up in the participants' answers: some of the participants told that one of their major aims was to help students realize what their own individual learning goals were or should be. The next example illustrates this point:

[Tavoitteeni on] Se, että kukin oppija oppii itse asettamaan itselleen realistiset, omiin tarpeisiin sopivat tavoitteet, joita kohti opettaja voi auttaa pyrkimään.

[My goal is] that each learner learns to set him or herself realistic goals that are suitable for their own needs, towards which the teacher helps them to endeavor.

Developing as a teacher

One of the important points that came up in the participants' answers was that they wished to become better teachers. Some wished to gain experience in how to motivate students to learn English. In addition, some thought it would be necessary to learn more group management skills in order to improve as a teacher. Although the specific areas in which the teachers thought they should improve themselves in differed, there was a common motivation in becoming a professional teacher. Having an aim in becoming a good teacher is an essential part in developing positive expectations about one's career and thus it has an effect on self-efficacy beliefs.

5.3 Likert-scale questions

This section outlines the results from the questionnaire that were gathered by questions with response alternatives on a Likert-scale: the participants chose the best alternative from the claims "I disagree", "I quite disagree", "I don't know", "I quite agree" and "I agree". The questions concern pre-service teachers' efficacy beliefs in teaching specific language skills, their self-efficacy beliefs as teachers and what they find most important in their teaching.

The total number of answers to all of the questions is 51, from which the percentages were calculated.

Pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in teaching language skills

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to find out how efficient the pre-service teachers felt in teaching different areas of language skills: oral communication, written communication, listening and reading comprehension and studying cultures.

Question 1 aimed to find out the participants' views on their efficiency in teaching oral communication. Teaching oral communication consists of encouraging students to speak in English in different tasks and exercises, helping students to make presentations and teaching pronunciation and other tasks requiring students to use spoken English. Figure 1 (see below) shows how the participants experienced their efficacy in teaching oral communication.

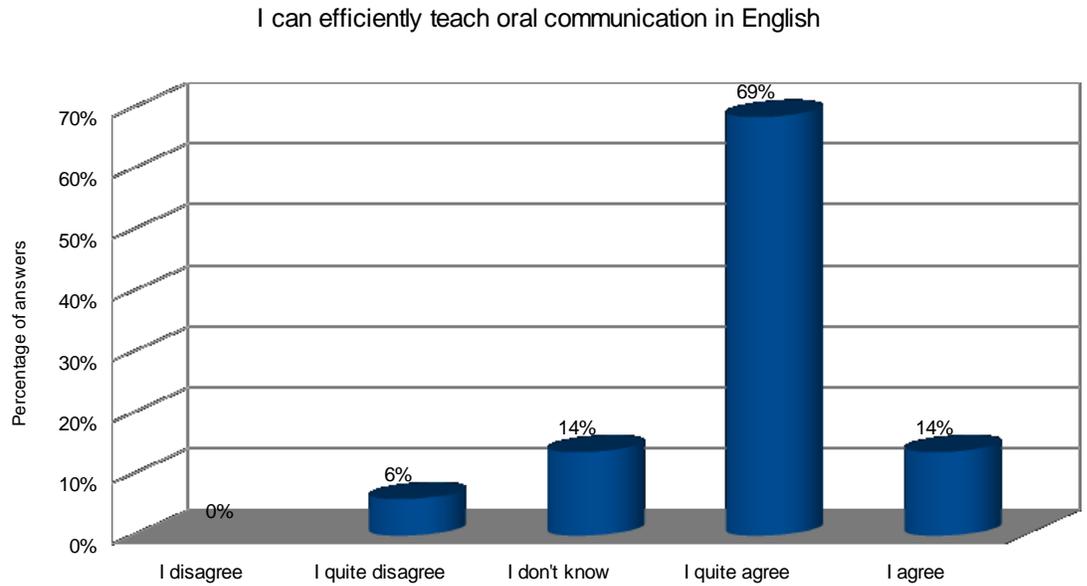


Figure 2: Efficacy in teaching oral communication in English

The majority of the participants experienced that they were quite efficient in teaching oral communication (69%). In contrast, some felt quite inefficient in teaching oral communication (6%). Some participants indicated that they were unsure of their efficiency (14%).

Question 2 aimed to research the participants' efficiency in teaching written communication. Teaching written communication consists of instructing and assisting students in writing essays and other written tasks. Most participants considered themselves to be quite efficient in teaching written communication (see Figure 3).

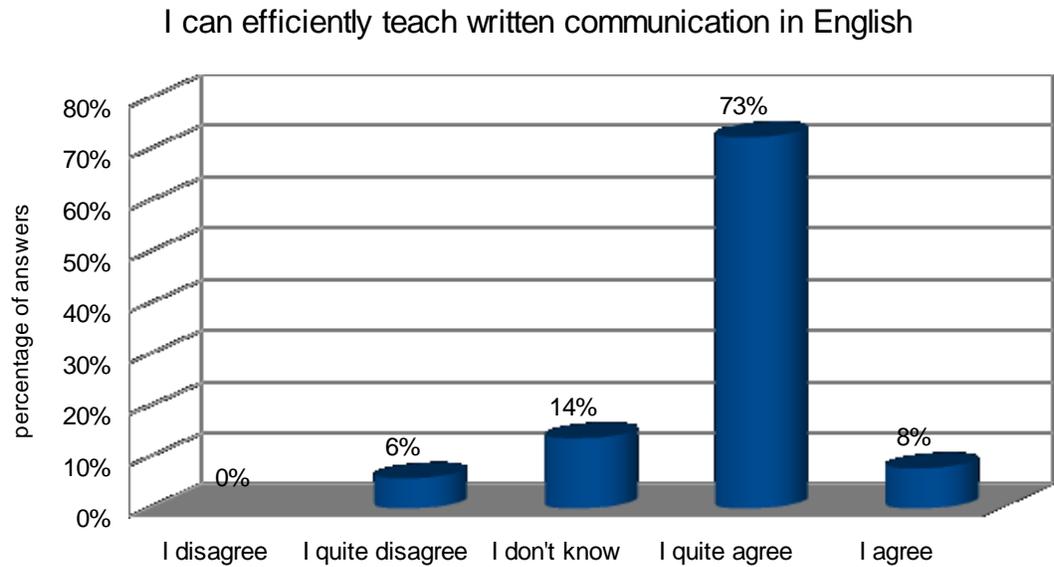


Figure 3: Efficacy in teaching written communication in English

The great majority of the participants felt quite efficient in teaching written communication (73%). In addition, some felt certain of their efficiency (8%). However, 6% slightly disagreed about being efficient and some were unsure (14%).

Question 3 was concerned with the efficiency in teaching grammar. The answers to this question were more diverse: not quite as many participants were positive in their view of their efficacy regarding teaching grammar (see Figure 4).

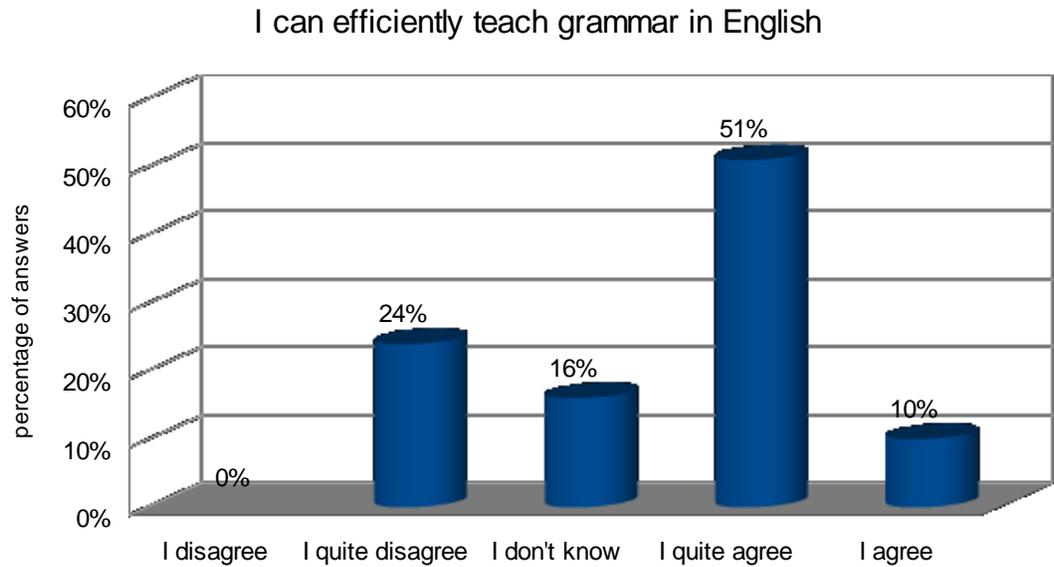


Figure 4: Efficacy in teaching grammar in English

The majority, like in previous areas of teaching, felt quite confident in their efficiency in teaching grammar (51%) and some agreed to be efficient in this area (10%). However, almost a quarter of the participants felt quite inefficient in teaching grammar (24%). In addition, some were unsure whether they were efficient in teaching grammar or not (16 %).

Question 4 concentrates on the participants' efficiency in teaching English listening comprehension. In contrast to the other language skills, the efficiency in teaching listening comprehension was an issue about which many were unsure of (see Figure 5).

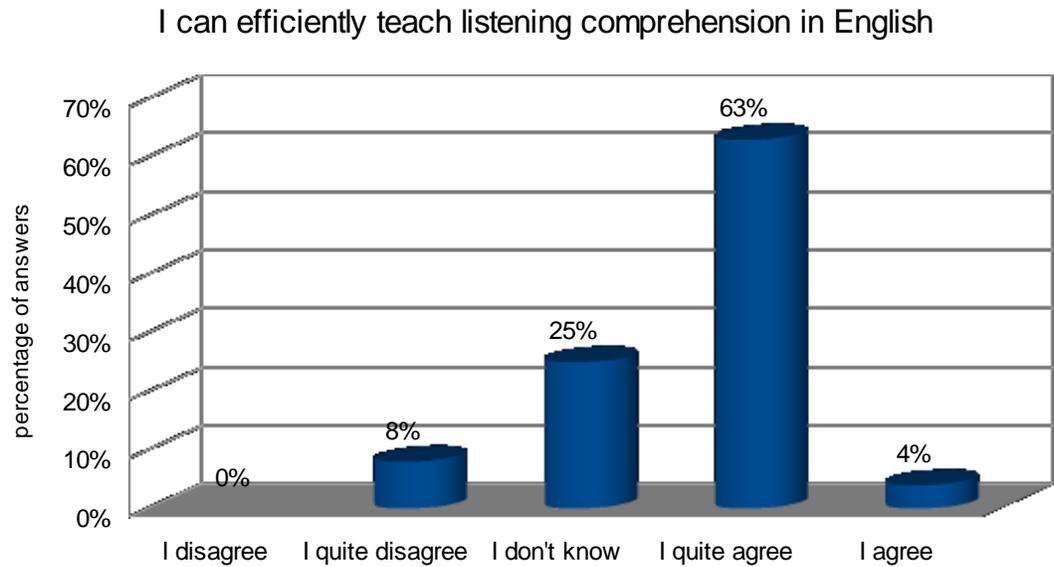


Figure 5: Efficacy in teaching listening comprehension in English

The majority of the participants felt quite efficient in teaching listening comprehension (63%). A couple of the participants agreed that they were efficient (4 %). In contrast, a few quite disagreed that they were (8%). However, as figure 4 shows, a quarter of the participants were unsure of their efficiency (25 %).

Question 5 is concerned with teaching reading comprehension. The efficiency in teaching reading comprehension was mostly quite positive in the participants' view (see figure 6).

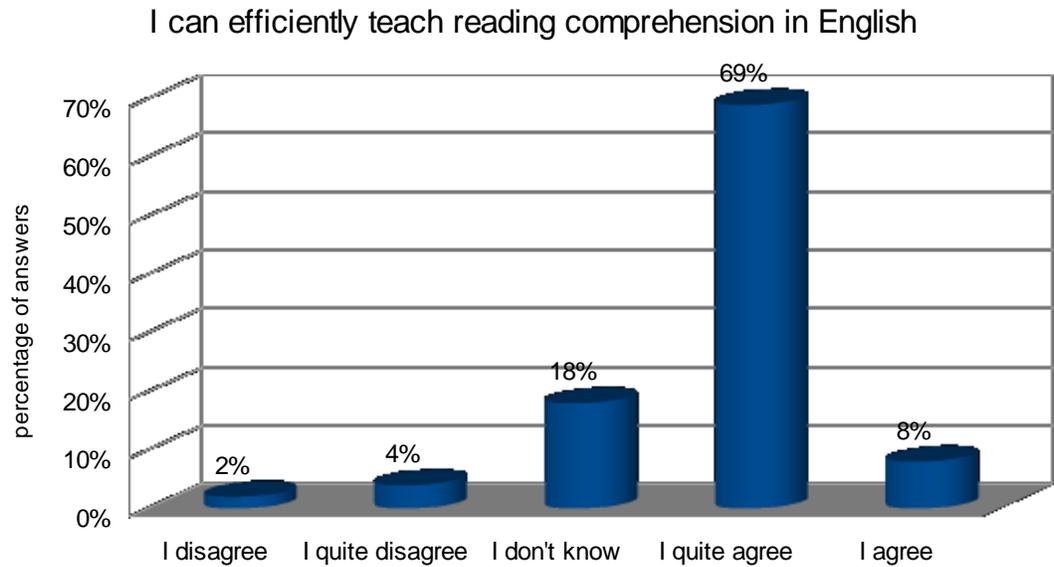


Figure 6: Efficacy in teaching reading comprehension in English

Almost 70% of the participants answered that they were quite efficient in teaching reading comprehension and some of the participants thought that they were efficient (8%). Some of the participants also answered that they were not very efficient (4 %) or not efficient at all (2%) in teaching reading comprehension. In addition, 18% were unsure of their efficacy in teaching reading comprehension.

Another important area of language skills is the knowledge of different English-speaking cultures. The participants were asked about their opinion in whether or not they were efficient in introducing new cultures to the students as well as teaching essential information about them (see Figure 7).

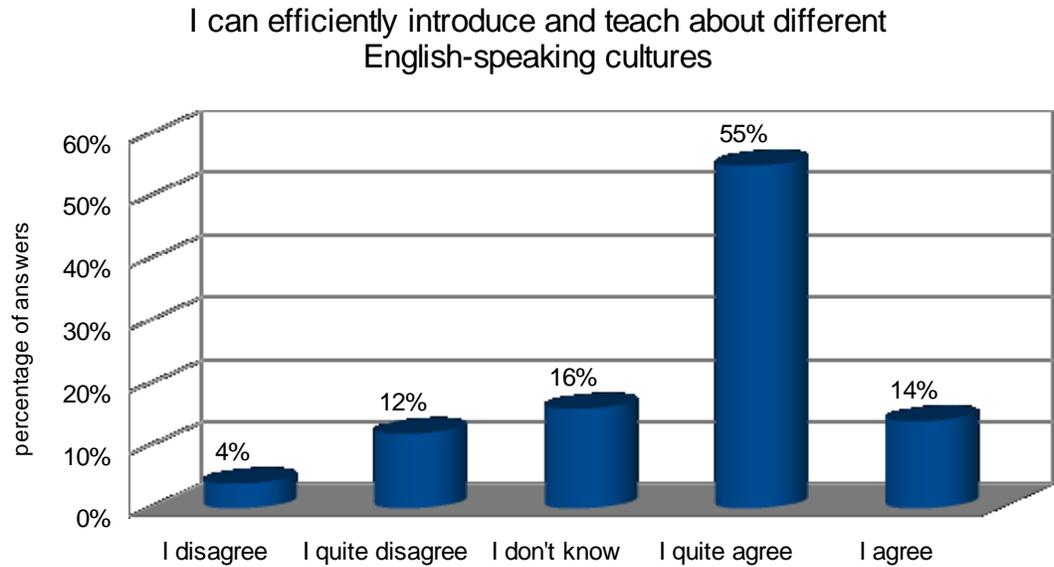


Figure 7: Efficacy in introducing and teaching about English-speaking cultures

Similarly to other language skills, most participants were quite efficient in teaching about different English-speaking cultures (55%). Another 14% regarded themselves efficient in this task. In contrast, 12% of the participants quite disagreed that they would be efficient in teaching cultural knowledge, in addition to which 4% disagreed that they would be efficient in this task. In addition, 16% of the participants were unsure whether they had a positive or a negative view of their efficacy in teaching cultural knowledge in English.

Self-efficacy beliefs in other pedagogical issues

The following questions are concerned with different areas of teaching that are not specifically related to teaching language skills but which indicate self-efficacy beliefs in other fundamental. This includes, for instance, classroom management skills, making lesson plans, evaluating, giving feedback and motivating students. Like in the previous questions, the number of the

participants was 51 and the percentages calculated from the answers are based on this number.

Question 7 is concerned with classroom management skills, more precisely controlling the classroom situation so that the classroom remains peaceful. The answers of the participants were quite discordant regarding their skills in controlling the classroom situations (see Figure 8).

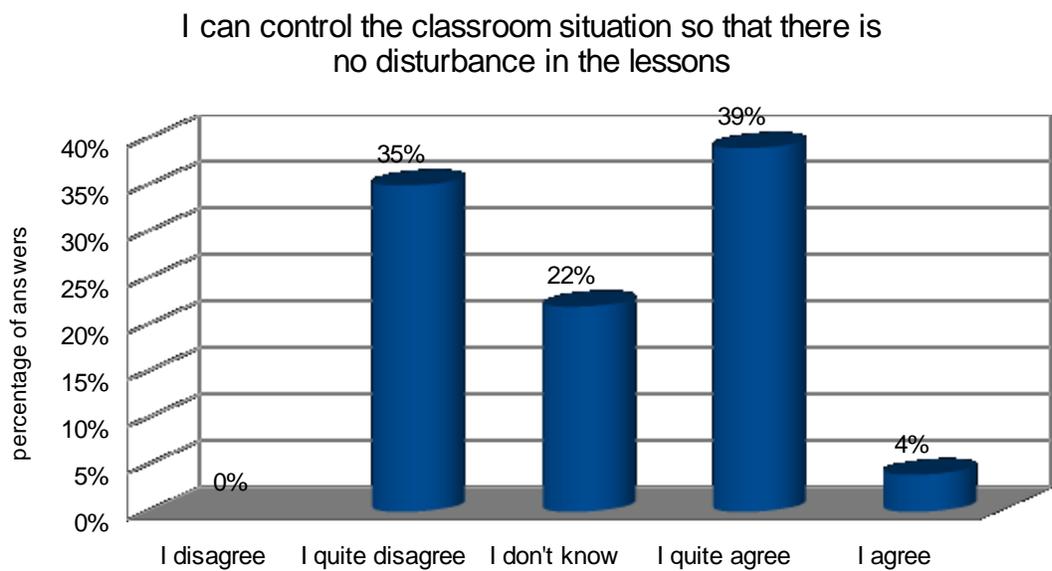


Figure 8: Efficacy in controlling the classroom

The majority of the participants quite agreed that they could control the classroom situation (39%) and 4 % agreed that they could. However, almost as many participants felt that they could not prevent disturbances during lessons (35%). In addition, more than one out of five was unsure of their classroom management skills (22%).

Question 8 continues on the topic of classroom management skills. This question aims to outline whether or not the participants felt efficient in

solving problematic situations in the classroom, for example, sorting out dissonances between students (see Figure 9).

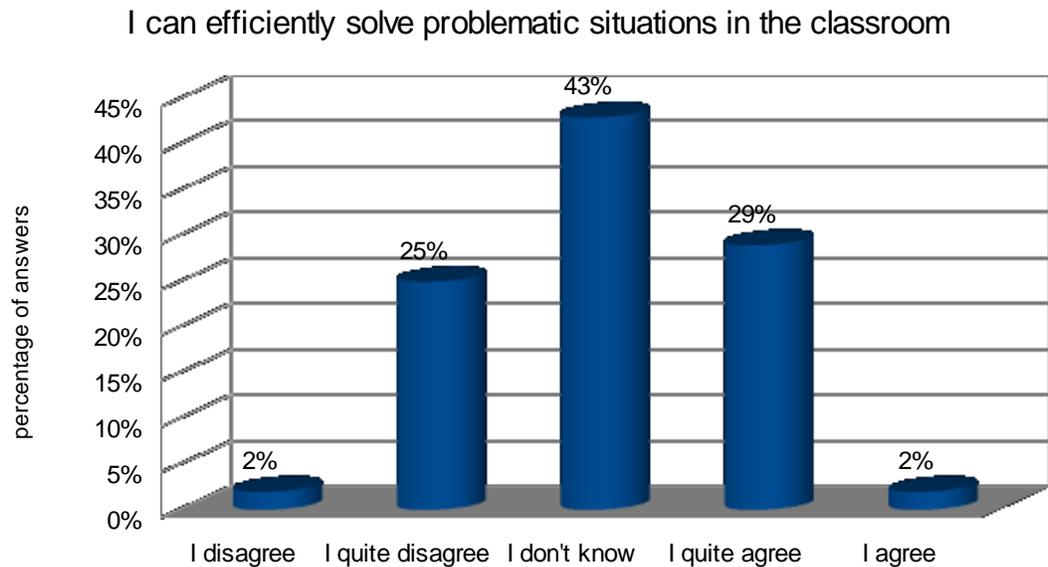


Figure 9: Efficacy in solving problematic situations in the classroom

A total of 29 % of the participants agreed that they were quite efficient in solving the situations, and furthermore some thought they were efficient in this area of classroom management (2 %). Nevertheless, a quarter of the participants thought that they were not very efficient in solving problematic situations (25 %) and some thought that they were not efficient at all (2 %). The majority of the participants, however, were unsure whether or not they were capable of solving problematic situations in the classroom.

Question 9 is concerned with a rather different part of teacher self-efficacy beliefs. The question of how likeable the teacher thinks the students found him or her is an indication of how self-efficacious the teachers felt about her professional identity. That is, how well he or she has succeeded in being a likeable teacher (see Figure 10).

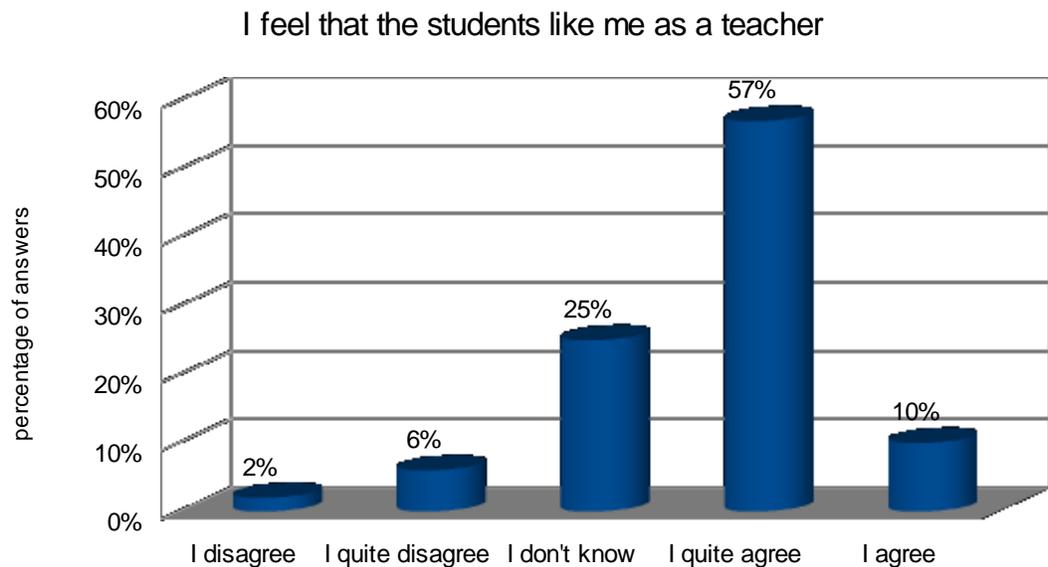


Figure 10: Feelings of being liked as a teacher

Again, the majority of the participants quite agreed that they felt that students liked him or her as a teacher (57%). In addition, 10 % felt that they were liked as teachers. However, there were also a number of participants who felt that they were not very much liked by students (6 %) or did not feel liked by students at all (2 %). Also a quarter of the participants were unsure whether they felt liked by students or not (25 %).

Question 10 deals with making lesson plans. Planning lessons requires choosing the best alternatives from the available methods is teaching the subject at hand. It also requires knowledge of the students and time management. Most participants found this task quite easy, but not without discordant answers (see Figure 11).

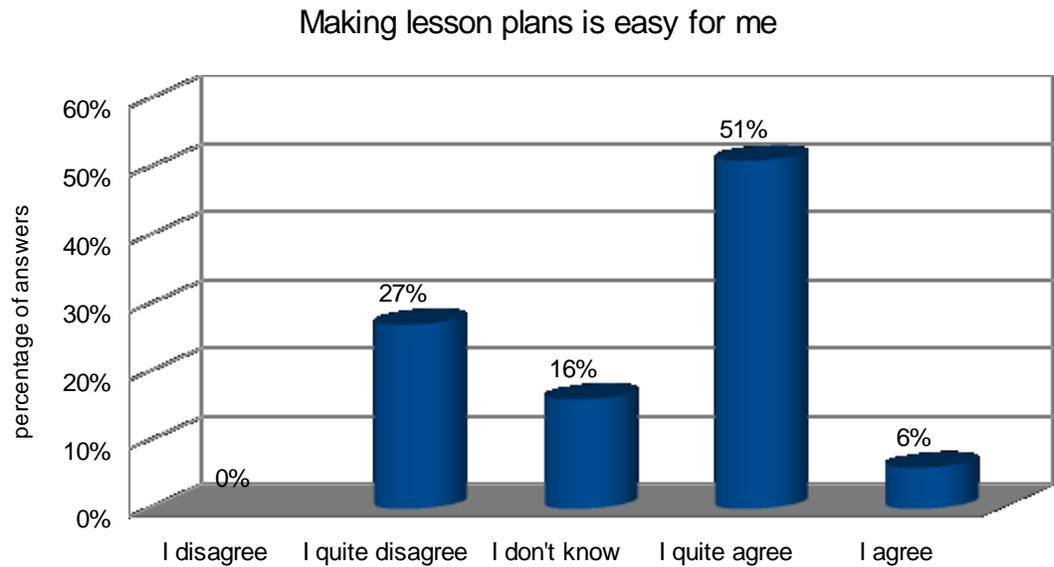


Figure 11: Ease of making lesson plans

Over a half of the participants felt that planning lessons was quite an easy task (51%), and 6 % felt that it was easy. In contrast, 27 % of the participants did not find planning lessons very easy, and 16 % were not sure whether they found it easy or not.

Evaluation is one of the key responsibilities of teachers. Being able to use different types of evaluation methods is important in mapping the language skills of students. This involves not only written exams and vocabulary tests, but also evaluation of oral skills and cultural knowledge. Unlike the previous questions, this matter brings about more negative than positive results from the participants (see Figure 12)

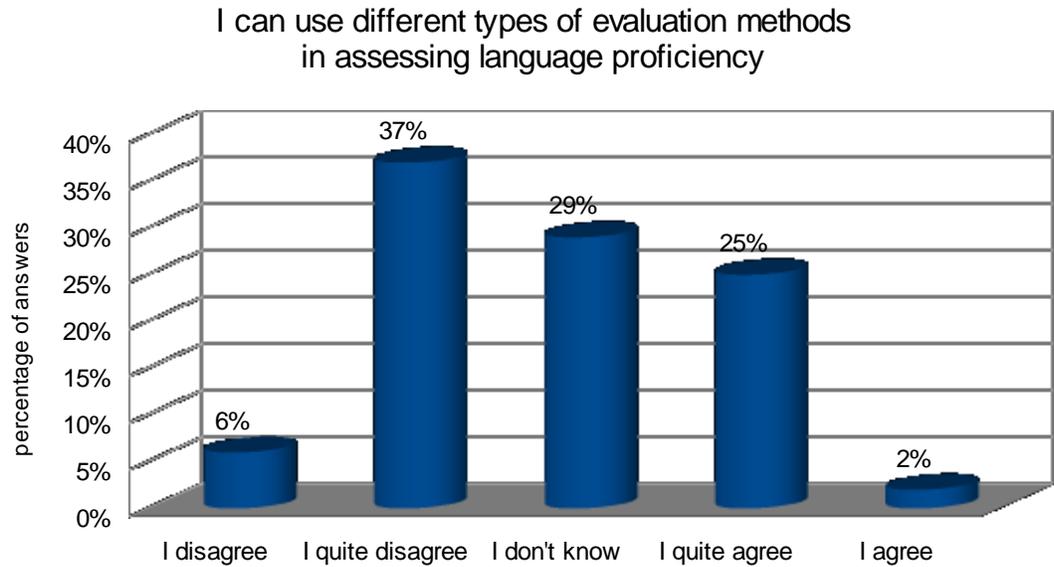


Figure 12: Using different types of evaluation methods in assessing language proficiency

Only a quarter of the participants thought that they could use different types of evaluation methods quite well in assessing their students' language proficiency (25 %), in addition to which 2% agreed that they could use these methods. However, a total of 37 % thought that they could not use a variety of evaluation methods in assessment very well and 6 % had a negative stance regarding this question. The number of people that were unsure whether or not they could use evaluation methods was also very high, as 29% felt this way.

Versatility is another important quality in a good teacher. Therefore the participants were asked about how easily they could come up with alternatives in a situation where the initial teaching method proved insufficient in helping students to understand the subject (see Figure 13)

When students have difficulties understanding what I'm teaching, I can easily come up with alternative teaching methods and examples to clarify

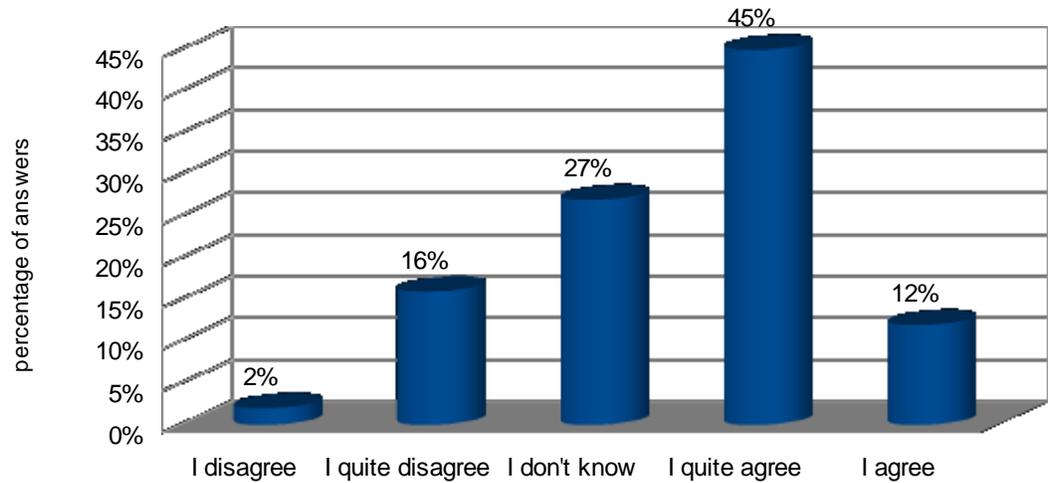


Figure 13: How easy is it to come up with alternative teaching methods and examples when needed

The majority of the participants thought that they could quite well come up with alternatives in order to clarify the subject (45%), in addition to which 12 % felt that they were capable of this type of versatility (12%). Nonetheless, 16% of the participants did not find this task quite as easy, and 2 % did not find this an easy task. Also, 27 % did not know whether they thought that this was easy or not.

In order to be able to make functional plans for English studies, teachers must (using the National Core Curriculum as a guideline) make realistic aims for his or her teaching. Almost half of the participants thought that this was not a problem for them (see Figure 14)

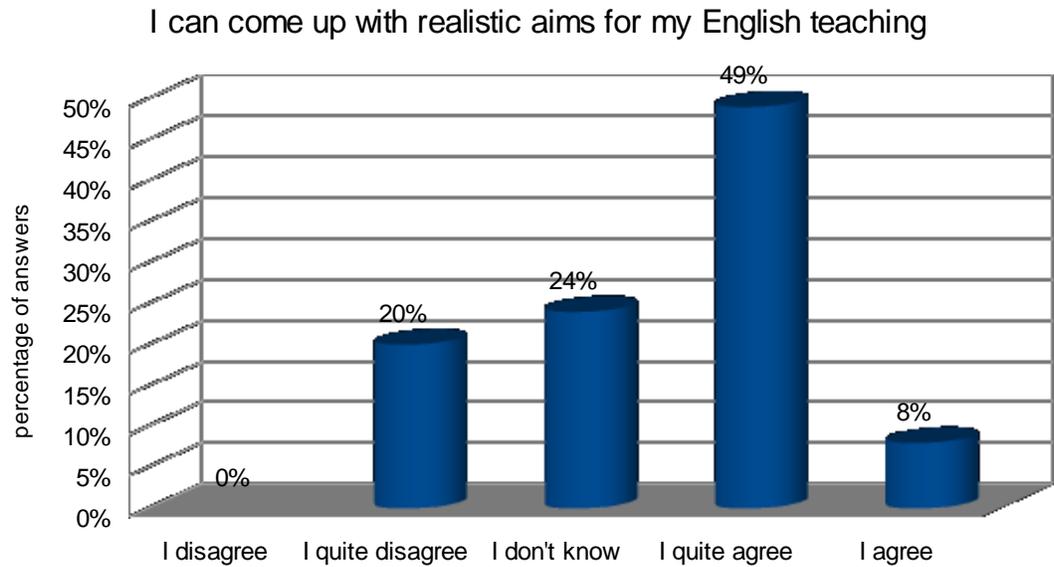


Figure 14: Making realistic aims for teaching English

Almost half of the participants thought that they were quite well able to come up with realistic aims in their English teaching (49%), in addition to which 8% thought that they were well able to do this task. However, 20% of the participants quite disagreed that they would be able to innovate teaching aims. Many of the participants were also unsure of their capability of setting aims (24 %).

In English studies, one of the major sources of input for spoken English is the teacher. It is therefore important that the teacher feels at ease to speak English in front of students and to interact in English. When the participants were asked whether or not speaking English while teaching was easy for them, most people agreed strongly or at least quite positively that it was (see Figure 15).

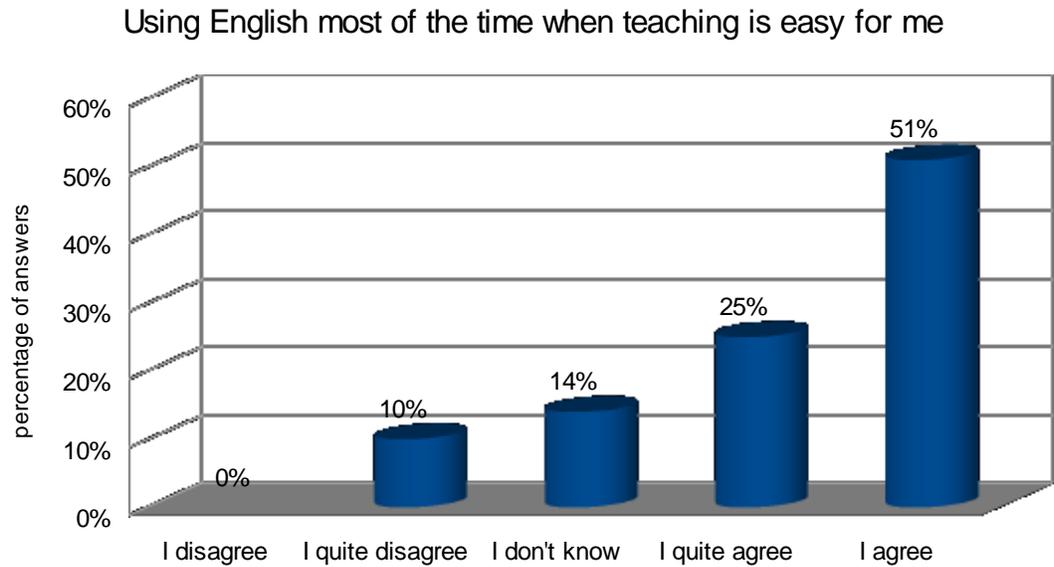


Figure 15: Using English when teaching

Over half of the participants agreed that it was easy for them to use English when they were teaching (51%) and 25 % thought that it was quite easy. Therefore only 10% quite disagreed that using English as a medium of instruction was easy for them, and 14% were unsure.

Evaluation, as discussed earlier, is an important part of teaching. In order to evaluate, however, teachers must be able to notice the mistakes that students make. Although, in order to be a language teacher, a person must be very proficient in the language he or she teaches, there is great variety in how well different teachers are able to notice students' mistakes in both spoken and written language. First, the participants were asked whether or not it was easy for them to notice mistakes in spoken English (see Figure 16).

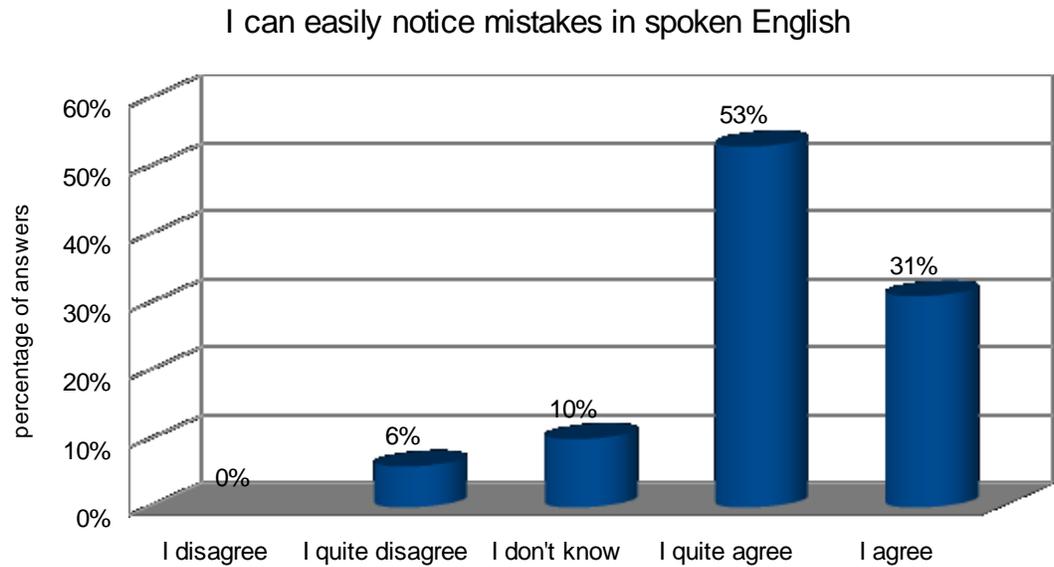


Figure 16: Noticing mistakes in spoken English

Most participants felt that it was easy to notice mistakes in spoken English, as 53 % felt that it was quite easy and 31% felt that it was easy. On the contrary, only 6 % of the participants thought that it was not very easy to notice mistakes in students' speech. In addition, 10% were not sure whether it was easy or not.

In addition to noticing mistakes in spoken English, it is also important that teachers are able to notice mistakes in written English. The participants were asked whether or not this task was easy for them (see Figure 17).

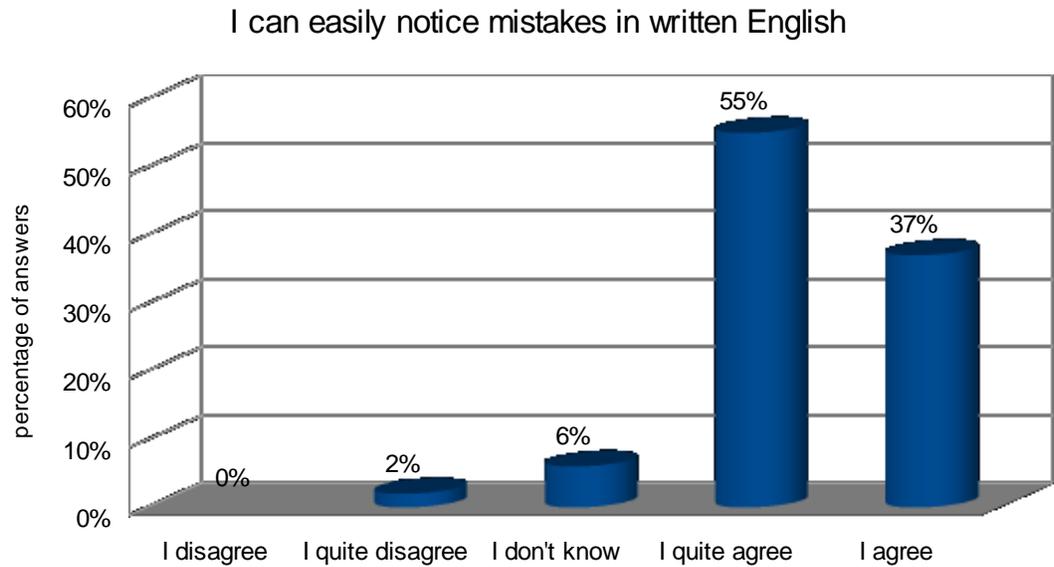


Figure 17: Noticing mistakes in written English

More than half of the participants felt that it was quite easy for them to notice mistakes in written language (55%), in addition to which 37 % thought that it was easy. In contrast, only 2% of the participants thought that it was not a very easy task, and 6% did not know whether it was easy or not.

Noticing mistakes is one part of the evaluation process, but correcting them is another important part of it. That is, a teacher should be able to correct mistakes in a constructive way that helps students to correct themselves and avoid repeating the same mistakes. In order to do this, teachers require many different ways in which to correct students' mistakes. The participants had diverse views on whether or not they could use many different ways of correcting mistakes (see Figure 18).

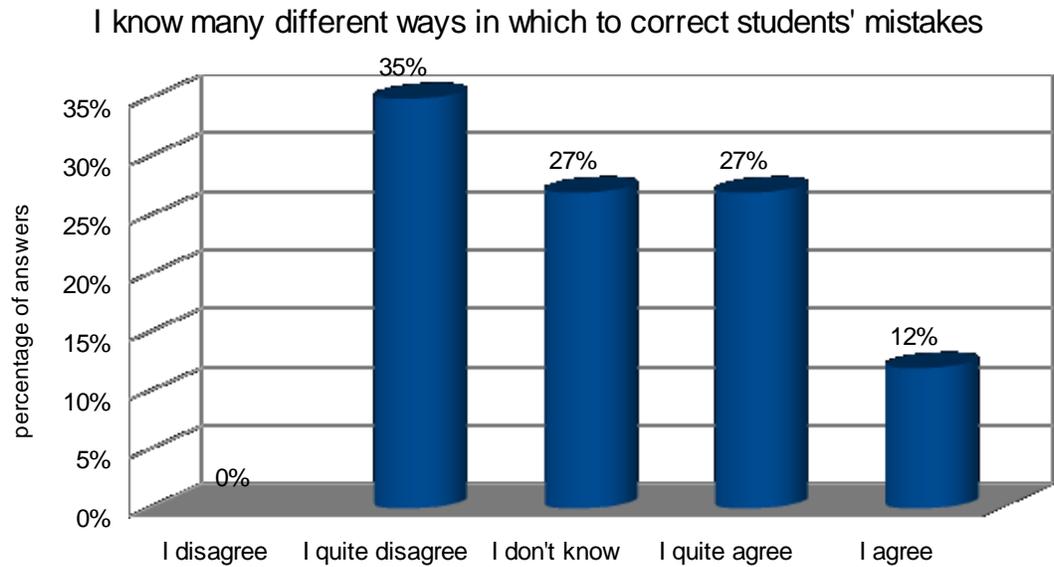


Figure 18: Knowing many different ways to correct students' mistakes

A part of the participants quite agreed that they knew many different ways in which to correct students' mistakes (27%). In addition, 12% agreed that they knew many ways to correcting mistakes. However, most of the participants quite disagreed that they knew different ways of correcting students' mistakes (35%), and 27 % were unsure of their knowledge of this matter.

Another important factor in correcting mistakes is that it should not lower students' motivation. Therefore, when correcting mistakes in spoken or written language, teachers should be able to correct the mistakes in a way which does not lower students' motivation. The participants' answers showed that there was some uncertainty whether or not they were able to correct the mistakes without lowering motivation or not (see Figure 19).

I can correct a student's mistake without lowering his or her motivation

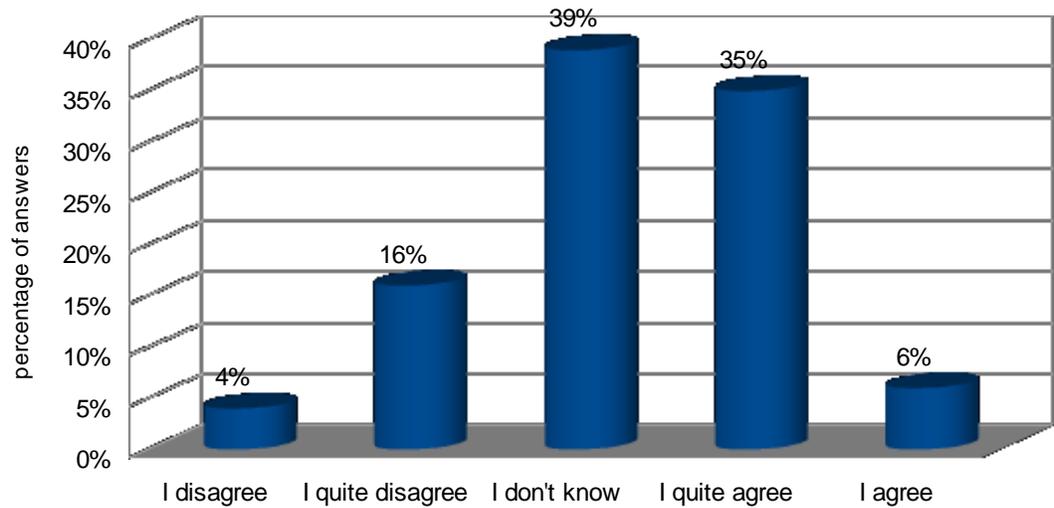


Figure 19: Correcting students' mistakes without lowering his or her motivation

Many of the participants thought that they were quite well able to correct mistakes without lowering students' motivation (35%), and an additional 6% thought that they indeed were able to correct mistakes in this way. However, 16% thought that they were not quite capable of correcting mistakes without negatively affecting the students' motivation, or not at all able to correct mistakes without the same effect (4%). Most of the participants, however, were unsure whether or not they could correct mistakes without lowering motivation (39%).

Motivation is another factor connected to being a good teacher. Motivating students requires social skills, knowledge of students and innovativeness in designing teaching material from the teacher. Naturally, some students are easier to motivate than others. The participants were asked how capable they were in motivating students to learn (see Figure 20).

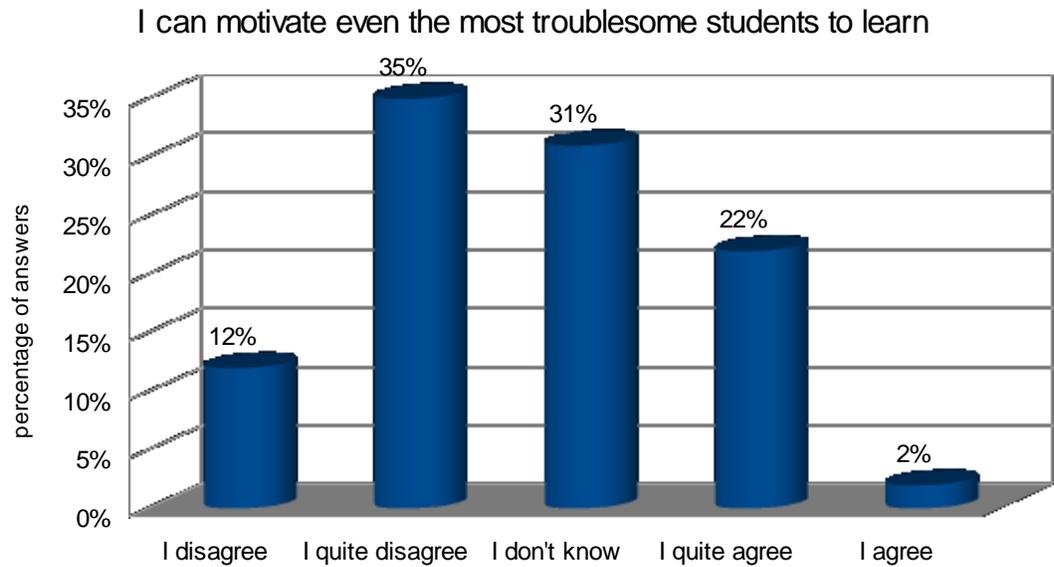


Figure 20: Motivating troublesome students to learn

Some of the participants answered that they were quite well capable of motivating even the most troublesome students to learn (22%). In addition, 2% thought that they were well capable of motivating students. However, the majority of the participants did not find themselves very capable in motivating troublesome students (35%) and furthermore some did not find themselves at all capable of positively influencing students' motivation. 31% of the participants did not know if they were capable in motivating students or not.

Knowledge of students and the ability to create and modify teaching materials to suit the purposes of teaching are two parts that are essential that help in reaching good results in teaching. That is, teachers should be able to assess what the students need to learn and what kinds of materials can be used in teaching to achieve this goal. The participants were asked how successful they thought to be in modifying materials to meet the students' needs (see Figure 21)

I can modify my teaching materials to suit the individual needs of my students

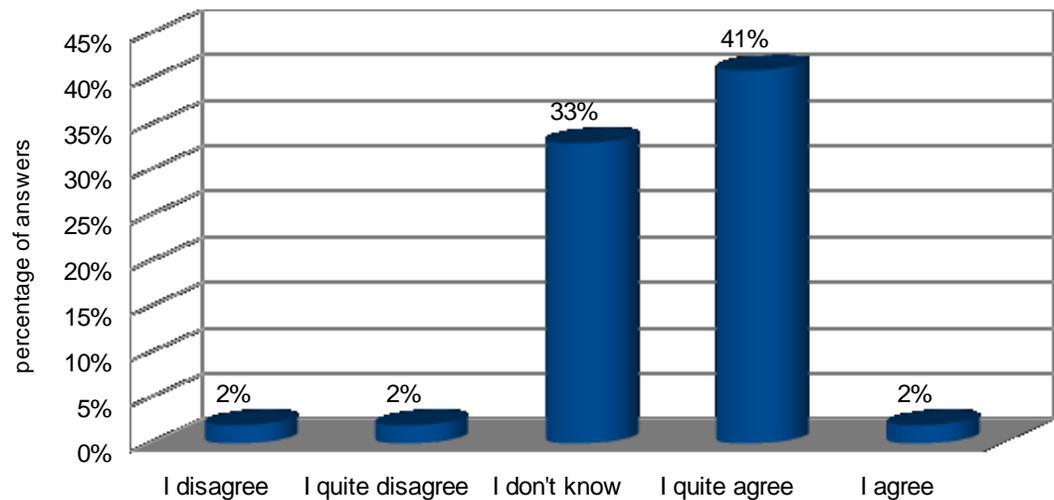


Figure 21: Modifying teaching materials to suit the individual needs of students

Most of the participants thought that they were quite well able to modify their teaching materials to suit the teaching purposes (41%). Furthermore, 2% thought that they were well able to do this task. Only 2% of the participants thought that they were not quite able to modify teaching materials to be suitable for individual students. Similarly, 2% thought that they were not at all able to modify materials as necessary. Some of the participants were unsure whether or not they could modify materials to suit their teaching purposes or not (33%).

Pre-service teachers' aims in English teaching

This part of the questionnaire concentrates on what the pre-service teachers thought was important in their language teaching and furthermore what their aims are in English teaching. This section outline both what the participants regarded as important aims for themselves as teachers as well as what the important aims in their teaching are.

To begin with, the participants were asked how important aim it was for them to be able to use flawless English while teaching. Most participants felt that this was an important goal for them (see Figure 22)

It is an important aim in my teaching that I use flawless English as a teacher

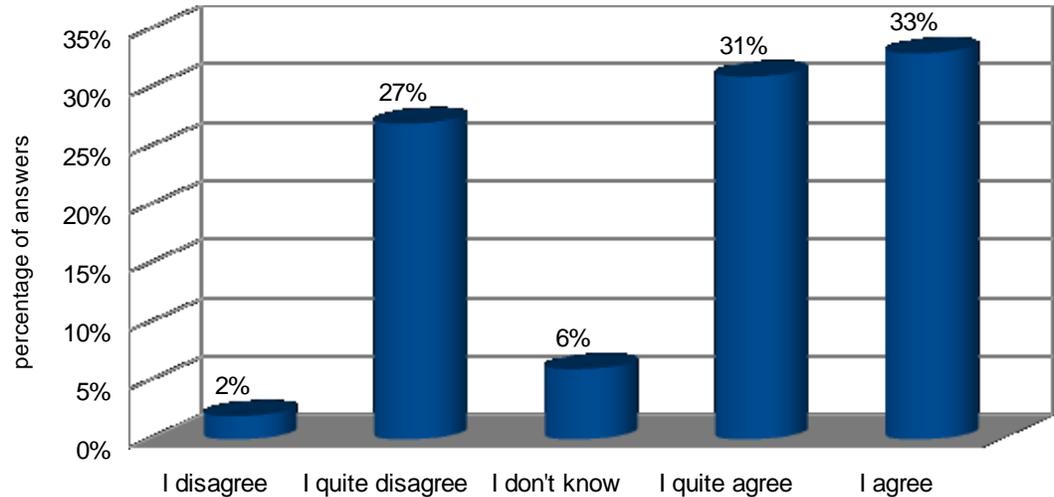


Figure 22: The aim of using flawless English as a teacher

Many of the participants quite agreed that using flawless English as a teacher was an important goal for them (31%). Furthermore, 33% of the participants fully agreed that this was an important goal for them. However, there is some disparity in the results as 27% felt that using flawless English as a teacher was not a very important goal. Moreover, 2% of the participants did not find this an important goal at all. Lastly, 6% of the participants were unsure whether or not they think it is an important goal.

In addition to teachers' own language skills, it varies between teachers what kinds of aims they hold for their students' oral skills. Some teachers esteem native-like pronunciation and grammatical correctness whereas some place more emphasis in successful communication without much regard to native-like language use.

The next question inquires how important it is for the participants that their students learn to speak like native speakers (see Figure 23).

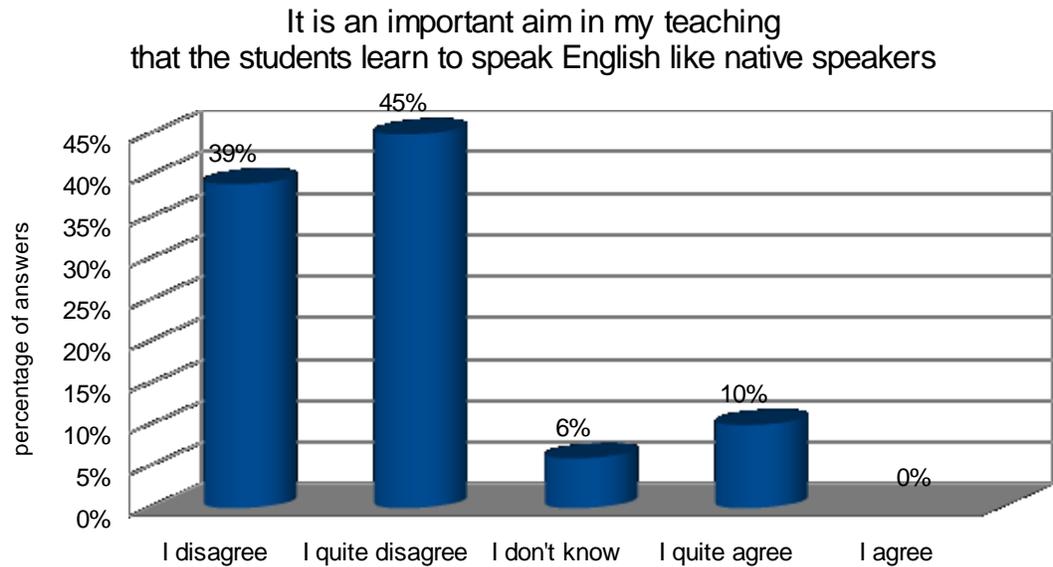


Figure 23: The aim that students learn to speak English like native speakers.

Only 10% of the participants thought that teaching the students to speak like native speakers was a quite important goal for them. The majority, however, thought that it was not a very important aim for them (45%). Additionally, 39% of the participants disagreed that this would be an important aim for them. A few participants did not know if this was an important goal for them (6%).

Continuing with the topic of oral communication, the participants were next asked how important they thought that proper pronunciation was, or if they thought that being comprehensible was all that counts. Most participants felt that it was sufficient that students learn to speak comprehensibly (see Figure 24)

It doesn't matter even if the students can't pronounce properly as long as their speech is comprehensible

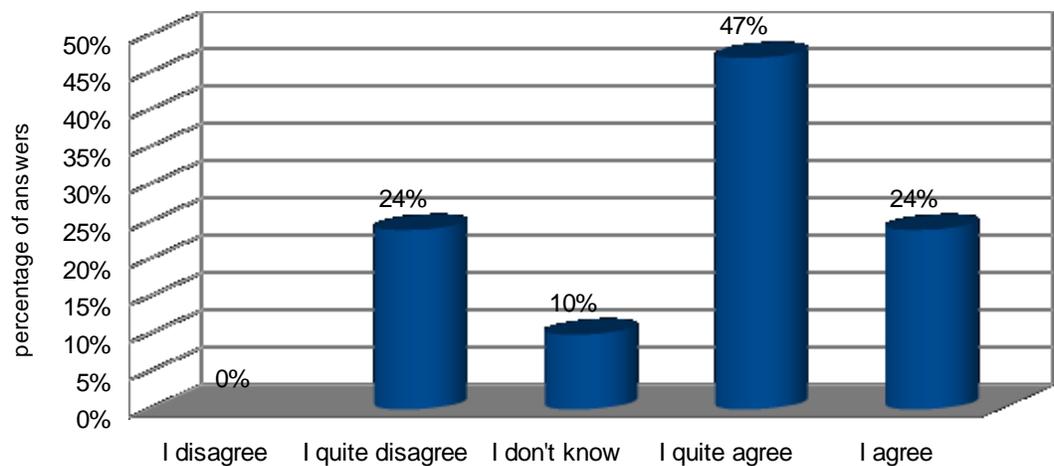


Figure 24: The opinion on if it matters that students can not pronounce properly as long as their speech is comprehensible

Most of the participants thought that it did not matter very much if students couldn't pronounce properly as long as their speech is comprehensible (47%). In addition, 24% of the participants agreed that pronunciation did not matter as long as the speech was understandable. However, 24% did think that it does matter a little, and 10% did not know whether it mattered to them or not.

Moving on from speaking to reading, different teachers have different aims regarding how much and what their students read. The participants were asked whether or not reading different types of texts had a great role in their teaching (see Figure 25).

Reading different types of texts in English has a great role in my teaching

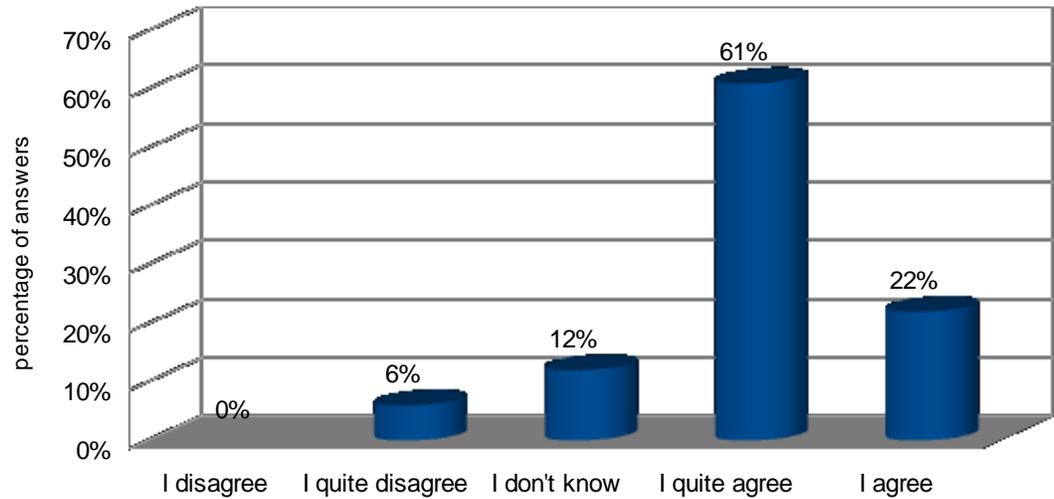


Figure 25: The role of reading different types texts in English in teaching.

The majority of the participants quite agreed that reading different types of texts had a great role in their English teaching (61%). Also, 22% of the participants agreed that it had a great role. In contrast, only 6% of the participants felt that reading different types of texts did not have a very big role in their teaching, and 12% were unsure if it had a great role in their teaching or not.

Continuing with the topic of reading comprehension, the participants were asked if they thought it was more important that students understand the main message of texts rather than all of the words used in the text (see Figure 26)

In reading comprehension, it is more important to understand the main message of the text than all the words used

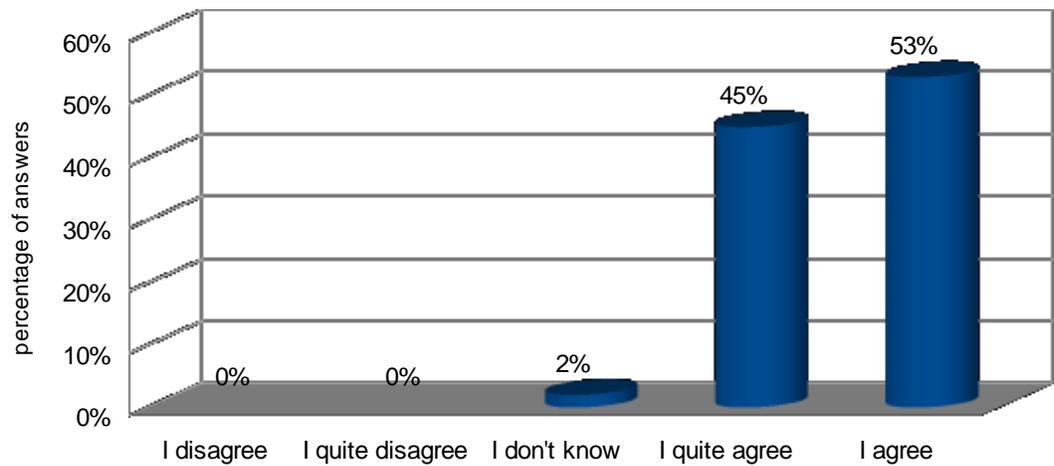


Figure 26: The opinion on whether it is more important to understand the main message of the text than all the words used.

The results show that almost all participants agreed or quite agreed that understanding the main message of a text was more important than all the words used, as 45% quite agreed and 52% agreed that this was what they thought. Only 2% of the participants were unsure of their opinion and none disagreed or slightly disagreed.

Moving on to listening comprehension, the next question aims to outline the participants' opinions on what is the most important thing in listening comprehension: to understand the mains ideas or all the details in spoken input (see Figure 27)

In listening comprehension tasks, it is more important that the students understand the main ideas than all the details

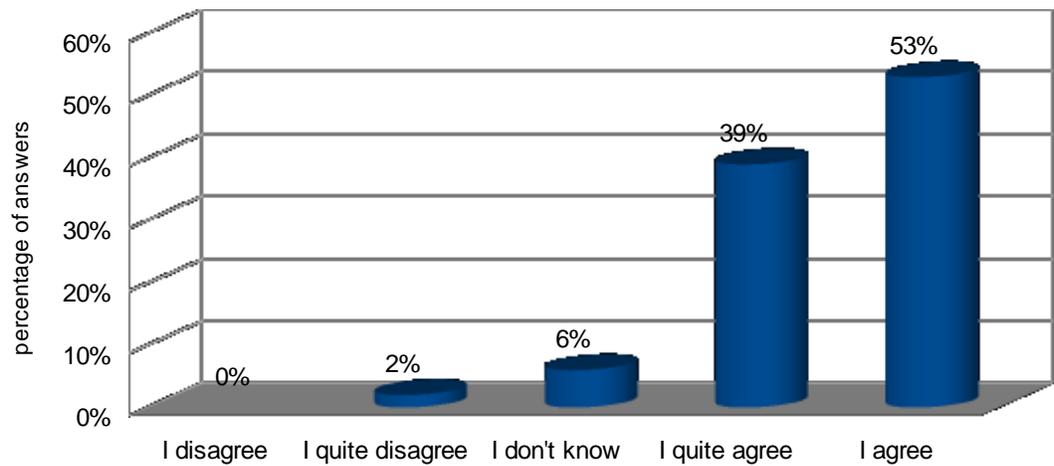


Figure 27: The opinion on if it was more important in listening comprehension tasks that the students understand the main ideas than all the details

Many of the participants quite agreed that it is more important to understand to understand the main ideas than all the details (39%) and an additional 53% agreed that it was more important. In contrast, only 2% did not quite agree that understanding main ideas would be more important than understanding details, whereas 6% did not know which they thought was more important.

The next opinion of importance is related to writing. Again, the participants were asked for their opinion about their priorities in writing tasks: do they think that grammatical accuracy is more important than the message that the text conveys? (See Figure 28)

In writing, grammatical accuracy is more important than the message it conveys

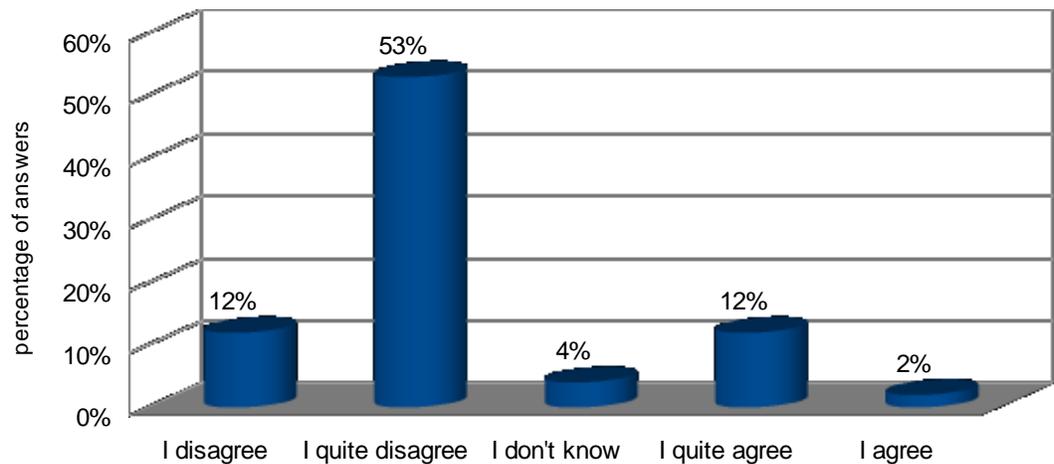


Figure 28: The opinion on whether in writing, grammatical accuracy is more important than the message is conveys.

Only 12% of the participants quite agreed that grammatical accuracy was more important than the message conveyed by the text. In addition, 2% of the participants agreed that accurate grammar was more important.

However, the majority thought that the message conveyed by the text was more important than accurate grammar, as 53% quite disagreed and 12% disagreed with the statement. Lastly, 4% did not know whether grammatical accuracy was more important than the message or not.

Moving on to another area of language skills and the pre-service teachers' opinion of it, the next question is related to teaching about different cultures. The participants were asked whether or not teaching about different cultures was important to them (see Figure 29).

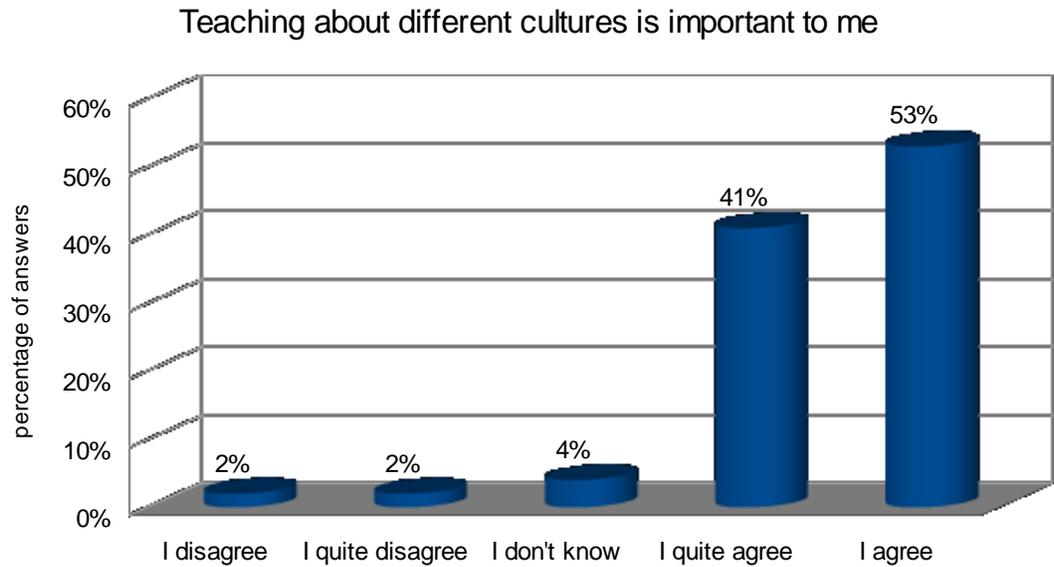


Figure 29: Teaching about different cultures

Many of the participants thought that teaching about different cultures was quite important to them (41%) whereas the majority thought that indeed it was important for them (53%). In contrast, only 2% of the participants thought that this was not very important for them, and another 2% thought that it was not important at all. In addition, 4% of the participants were unsure whether or not it was important for them.

The last question about the aims of pre-service teachers' aims was about teaching the students to correct their own mistakes. Most of the participants thought that this was a quite important aim for them (see Figure 30)

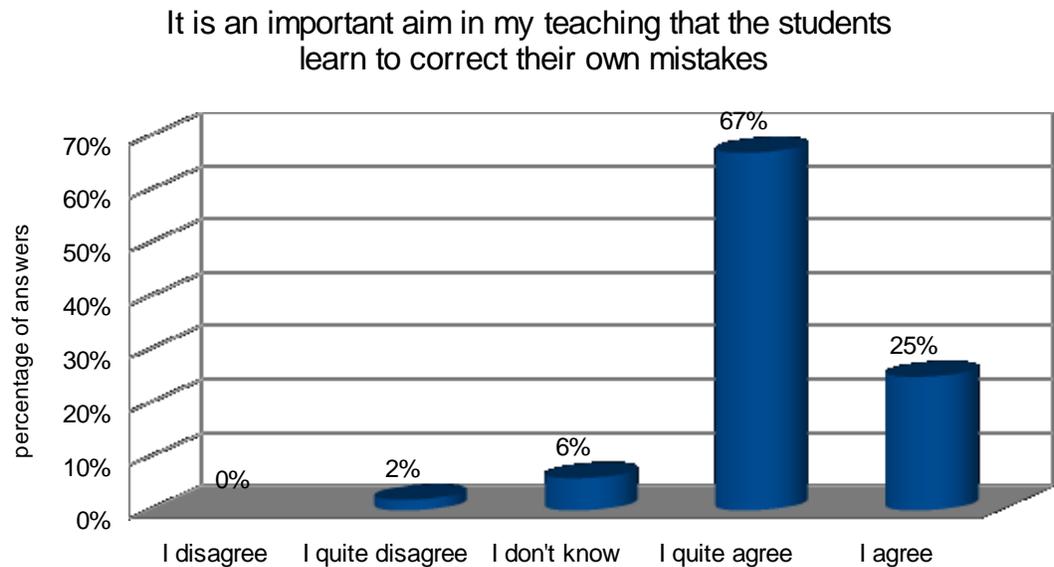


Figure 30: The aim of teaching the students to correct their own mistakes

The majority of the participants thought that it was a quite important aim in their teaching that students learned to correct their own mistakes (67%). Additionally 25% of the participants thought that it was an important aim for them. In contrast, only 2% of the participants did not think this was a very important aim for them, and 6% were unsure whether it was important for them or not.

6 Discussion

In this section, the results of the study are discussed. In the open question part of the questionnaire, the pre-service teachers were asked to share their ideas about what was easy and what was difficult for them. In addition, the open questions aimed to outline the participants' most important goals as teachers. The other part of the questionnaire that used Likert-scale type of questions, outlines the efficiencies and capabilities of pre-service teachers as well as their aims. In this section, the variations and tendencies are discussed.

What the pre-service teachers thought was easy and difficult

In the following section, the main findings or the open questions regarding what was found easy and difficult in teaching are outlined (see table 4).

Table 4: What is easy and difficult in teaching for pre-service teachers?

EASY:	DIFFICULT:
Speaking English in classroom situations	Speaking English in classroom situations
Communicating and connecting with students	Teaching different kinds of learners and using diverse teaching techniques
Planning and carrying out lesson plans	Planning and carrying out lesson plans
Motivating students	Motivating students
Going through textbook chapters and tasks	Going through texts
Creating a good atmosphere and keeping discipline	Keeping discipline in the classroom
Teaching oral communication, cultural topics and grammar	Teaching grammar and culture
Assessing and correcting tasks	Assessment

As can be seen from the table, there is a lot of inconsistency in what the participants found easy or difficult. This is quite natural, as different individuals have different strengths and weaknesses. This listing of what is easy and difficult also sheds light on how teacher knowledge develops in pre-service teachers. From Shulman's (1986) list of teacher knowledge areas, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge, knowledge of student and pedagogical content knowledge are represented in the answers.

What is found easy or difficult by the participants is important regarding the development of self-efficacy beliefs. According to Bandura's (1977) theory of sources of self-efficacy beliefs, performance accomplishments are one of the

most important sources of self-efficacy information. In this case, if a pre-service teacher finds teaching something particularly easy, he or she is more likely to feel more optimistic about teaching the same thing in the future. In contrast, if something has been demanding, the assumption will likely be that the same thing will be demanding in the future as well.

As open questions are used, this also gives us an impression of what kinds of issues the participants find relevant in their teaching. For instance, none of the participants mentioned “time management” in either of the categories, which is undoubtedly an essential part in a post-graduate teacher’s job. These choices of areas in teaching are an indication of what in their current situation is important to the participants in teaching: according to the answers, the participants are mostly concerned with subject matter knowledge and knowledge of students.

Aims of pre-service English teachers

The aims of pre-service teachers were found out by both open questions (see table 5) and questions that made use of the Likert-scale. In this section, the tendencies of the results and their implications are discussed.

Table 5: Most important aims of pre-service teachers

Motivating and encouraging students

Teaching communicative competence

Teaching different areas of language skills: communication, culture, metalearning, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, grammar.

Taking into consideration students as individuals

Developing as a teacher

There is a variety of aims that the pre-service teachers find most important for them. Considering the Finnish National Core Curriculum (2012) the teachers’ individual aims correspond quite well to the aims of the curricula,

as teaching communicative competences is a priority. Also, the pre-service teachers listed teaching language skills such as culture, vocabulary, listening and reading skill and grammar as aims, which are also skills that the National Curriculum outlines as aims for learning. Although teaching language skills was a major topic that came up in the answers, there was also consideration of how to achieve the position in which teaching these skills is possible: namely, motivating and encouraging students as well as taking them into account as individuals.

The part of the questionnaire that consisted of Likert-scale type of questions dealt with more specific aims. The results from these questions show that there is variation in what the pre-service teachers think are important aims in their teaching. Nevertheless, there are some tendencies that appear: many the participants quite agreed that reading different types of texts had an important role in their teaching, and that both in listening and reading comprehension it was more important that the main idea was understood than all the details. In contrast, some participants disagreed that it would be sufficient to be able to talk comprehensibly if the pronunciation was otherwise inaccurate. Slightly inconsistently, however, the participants were quite united in thinking that it was not an important aim for them to teach students to speak like native speakers.

In correlation to the Finnish National Core Curriculum, the communicative aim of language learning and teaching can be inferred from the results: in most cases, the pre-service teachers prioritized communicative competence over linguistic competence (“It does not matter if pronunciation is incorrect as long as the speech is comprehensible”). Also a more international view can be noted in the results, as learning about different cultures was often prioritized and the status of native-like pronunciation was not very strongly represented in the participants’ values.

In addition to teaching different areas of language skills, the pre-service teachers had aims that dealt with personal development as teachers. This is

an important aim regarding the development of self-efficacy beliefs. According to Bandura's (1977) theory on self-efficacy beliefs, one of the factors in the triadic reciprocal causation process is the internal personal factor that consists of how the person perceives his or her potentials in relation to whichever task is being considered. For this reason aims are important: setting aims for oneself creates an expectancy of how well he or she is able to reach the aims, which then correlates to the development of self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, when a person aims to develop as a teacher, it requires the process of thinking about what are good and desirable qualities as a teacher that the person does not yet have - and if there are qualities that a good teacher should not have that should be learned away from. This is also a part of the triadic reciprocal causation process (Bandura 1977): environmental influences (an external definition of what a good teacher is like) that are in interaction with personal factors (what am I like as a teacher and what I think being a good teacher should be like). All of these factors are reflected to the actual self-efficacy belief that is developed through personal views and how they relate to the environment, which makes personal aims an important affecting factor.

Pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs

A part of the questionnaire dealt with different areas of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. The questions used to outline self-efficacy were typed as "I can efficiently teach..." or "I am able to..." which indicate the participants' views of their own potential and therefore display self-efficacy beliefs.

The results from the questionnaire show that for most part, the pre-service teachers felt quite efficient in subject matter knowledge such as teaching oral communication, written communication, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, cultural knowledge and grammar. All in all, there was little variation between how efficient the participants thought they were in each area of teaching. However, the results about the efficiency of teaching grammar show a little more disparity. Indeed, almost a quarter of the

participants did not think they were very efficient at teaching grammar. This tendency can also be seen in the open questions: many of the participants had mentioned grammar when asked what was difficult for them in teaching. In addition, there was a considerable amount of results that indicate pre-service teachers' uncertainty in their efficiency in teaching listening comprehension.

Concerning other pedagogical areas the pre-service teachers also showed a lot of positive tendencies. For instance, most of the participants felt positive about their ability to use English while teaching, coming up with alternative methods in teaching if necessary, and making realistic aims for their English teaching. However, there was also distinction between the participants' views. Whereas some participants thought that they were well able to manage problematic classroom situations, almost as many thought that they had problems in achieving good class management skills. In addition, many (although not the majority) participants had some trouble with their evaluation skills. Relating to evaluation, the pre-service teachers also had some trouble in giving feedback and motivating students.

It can be inferred from the results that teacher training might lack in teaching the pre-service teachers to evaluate by using different methods of assessment. The results also clearly indicate that the pre-service teachers are, naturally, quite inexperienced as teachers: there was a great amount of uncertainty regarding many areas of teachers' pedagogical and language teaching skills.

7 Conclusion

One of the major implications of this study is that although there is variation between individual pre-service teachers, the overall impression is that most pre-service teachers issued in the study had quite high self-efficacy beliefs regarding major areas of teacher knowledge. Most difficulty in teaching language skills was in teaching listening comprehension as well as grammar

and cultural topics. The pre-service teachers mostly had rather high self-efficacy beliefs regarding teaching different areas of language skills, and the self-efficacy beliefs were also mainly positive regarding other areas of pedagogical knowledge. Nevertheless, there was some uncertainty in how well the pre-service teachers think they can control classroom situations, motivate students and take them into account in their teaching.

The aims of the pre-service English teachers consisted majorly on enhancing students' communicative competences, motivating them in their English language use and connecting with the students. In addition, there were personal aims such as developing as a teacher and being able to teach specific areas of language skills more efficiently. These aims correlate in most parts with the aims set by the Finnish National Core Curriculum.

A point of view that arises from the results is the question: does the teacher training program give sufficient tools for pre-service teachers? As is apparent in the lists of Table 1, there is a lot of discrepancy between different participants. Naturally, there are many factors that have an effect on whether something is easy or difficult to a pre-service teacher, of which only one is teacher training. However, as there are many essential matters in teaching that part of the participants have found difficult for them, it raises the question of whether or not teacher training provides enough support to pre-service teachers for their development as teachers? Of course, most of the participants had not yet finished their teacher training, which can make a major difference in what the pre-service teachers find difficult or easy. Nonetheless, a suggestion for further studies is "do pre-service teachers feel that teacher training provides enough support for their professional development?".

The process of conducting this study was not unproblematic: first of all, finding participants for the questionnaire was difficult, which postponed the schedule of the study. This also resulted in another problem: the scarcity of participants. There were only 51 participants in the questionnaire, which

does not offer a very reliable source of statistical information. Nevertheless, the questionnaire illustrates the individual participants' views on teaching and even though the statistics could be more reliable, it indicates general tendencies that can be used as a basis for future studies.

In conclusion, this study shows that individual pre-service teachers feel self-efficient about one thing or the other: there is great diversity between what the individuals feel self-efficient about. However, the pre-service teachers mostly had high self-efficacy beliefs regarding their efficacy in teaching different language skills and regarding other areas of pedagogical competence. The importance of outlining how self-efficient pre-service teachers feel about different areas in teaching have significance in whether or not they will have problems in their future careers. In addition, outlining pre-service teachers' aims in teaching gives us understanding of which things the pre-service teachers are willing to work for to develop. The reciprocal relationship of aims and self-efficacy beliefs are key to understanding how pre-service teachers develop as teachers and give indication of how successful they will be in their chosen career.

Bibliography

Ajzen, I. 1988. *Attitudes, personality and behaviour*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Almiala, M. 2008. *Mieli paloi muualle - opettajan työuran muutos ja ammatillisen identiteetin rakentuminen*. Joensuu: Joensuun yliopiston tieteellisiä julkaisuja.

Andrews. 2007. *Teacher language awareness*. Hong Kong: Cambridge University Press.

Baker, C. 1992. *Attitudes and language*. Bristol: Multilingual matters ltd.

Bandura, A. 1982. *Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency*. Stanford: Stanford University.

Bandura, A 1986. *Social foundations of thought and action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Bandura, A 1977. *Social learning theory*. New York: General Learning Press.

Caprara, V., Barbaranelli, C., Steca, B. and Malone, P. 2006. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as

determinants of job satisfaction and students' academic achievement: a study at the school level. *Journal of school Psychology*. [online] 44 (6), 473-490.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022440506000847>

Chapman, D. 1994. *Reducing teacher absenteeism and attrition: causes, consequences and responses*.

Paris: Unesco.

Cochran, K., King, R. and DeRuiter, J. 1991. *Pedagogical content knowledge. A tentative model for*

teacher preparation. Chicago: University of Northern Colorado.

Even, R. 1993. *Subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge: Prospective*

secondary teachers and the function concept. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* [online] 24 (2), 94-116.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/749215>.

Felder, R. 1988. *Learning and teaching styles in engineering education*. North Carolina State

University.

Fillmore, L. and Snow, C. 2000. *What teachers need to know about language*. Berkeley: University of

California.

Gess-Newsome, J. and Lederman, N. 1999. *Examining Pedagogical Content Knowledge*. Kluwer

Academic Publishers.

Gibbs, C. 1999. *Believing, thinking and feeling: Putting the teacher back into effectiveness*.

Auckland: School of Education and Social Sciences Auckland

University of Technology.

Gibbs, C. 2002. *Effective teaching: exercising self-efficacy and thought control of action*.

Exeter: University of Exeter.

Gudmundsdottir, S. 1990. Values in pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of teacher education*.

[online] 41 (3): 44. <http://jte.sagepub.com/content/41/3/44>.short

Henson, R. 2001. *Teacher self-efficacy: Substantive implications and measurement dilemmas*.

North Texas University.

Jacobs, H.1984. *Self-efficacy theory and control theory - toward a comprehensive understanding of persistence*. Alabama: The University of Alabama.

JeongAh, L. 2009. *Teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching English, perceived English language proficiency,*

and attitudes towards the English language: A case of Korean public elementary school

teachers. Ohio state University.

Jukkola, S-M. 2008. *Nuoren opettajan itsetunto ja sen kehittyminen opintojen aikana*.

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences.

- Kagan, D. 1992. Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. *Review of Educational research* [online] 62 (2) 129-169.
<http://rer.sagepub.com/content/62/2/129.short>
- Kramsch, C. 1993. *Context and culture in language teaching*. England: Oxford University Press.
- Pajares, Frank. 1977. Current directions in self-efficacy research. *Advances in motivation and achievement* [online] 10 1-49.
<http://des.emory.edu/mfp/effchapter.html>
- Schwarzer, R. 1998. *General perceived self-efficacy in 14 cultures*. University of Berlin.
- Shavelson, . and Stern, P. 1981. Research on teachers' pedagogical thoughts, judgments, decisions, and behavior. *Review of educational research* [online] 51 (4) 455-498.
<http://rer.sagepub.com/content/51/4/455.short>
- Shulman, L.1986. Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational researcher* [online] 15(2) 4-14. <http://edr.sagepub.com/content/15/2/4.extract>
- Soodak, L. and Lehman, L. 1998 Teacher, student, and school attributes as predictors of teachers' responses to inclusion. *Spec Educ Winter*[online] 31 (4) 480-497
[<http://sed.sagepub.com/content/31/4/480.short>]
- Van Driel, J., Verloop, N. and de Vos, W. 1997. Developing science teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* (online) 35(6), 673-695.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/%28SICI%2910982736%28199808%293:6%3C673::AID-TEA5%3E3.0.CO;2-J/pdf>
- Yrjönsuuri, R. and Yrjönsuuri, Y. 1995. *Opettajain osaaminen*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.

Online sources

Finnish National Board of Education. <http://www.oph.fi/english/education> .(16 April

2012).

General Self-efficacy scale. <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/health/engscal.htm>.(16 April

2012).

Tavoitteena ajatteleva opettaja.

<http://sokl.joensuu.fi/verkkojulkaisut/ohjaus/Krokfors.htm>.

(16 April 2012)

Opetuksen tavoitteet ja työtavat

<http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/malu/kirjasto/tyotavat/main.htm>.

(16 April 2012)

Olen Elli Kinnunen Jyväskylän yliopistosta ja tarvitsen apuasi pro gradu -tutkielmani tekemisessä. Aiheenani on tulevien englanninopettajien kokemukset osaamisestaan opettajina ja mitkä asiat ovat heidän mielestään tärkeitä englannin kielen opettamisessa. Haluaisin nyt kartoittaa, minkälaisia kokemuksia ja ajatuksia sinulla on aiheesta ja toivoisin että vastaisit oheiseen kyselyyn – vastaamalla autat kohtalotoveria valmistumaan ja samalla voit osallistua viiden Finnkinon elokuvaipun arvontaan. Kysely on suomeksi ja siihen vastaamiseen kestää 5-10 minuuttia. Kiitos!



Kyselyn tuloksia käsiteltäessä osallistujien anonymiteetistä pidetään huolta. Osallistujan nimiä ei mainita tutkimuksessa eikä niitä liitetä tuloksiin. Sähköpostiosoitteen kirjoittavat ne, jotka haluavat osallistua elokuvaippujen arvontaan tai tietoa tutkimuksen tuloksista, muutoin osallistujiin ei oteta yhteyttä sähköpostitse. Tutkimuksen tuloksia voi halutessaan kysyä osoitteesta elli.k.a.kinnunen@jyu.fi, jolloin tutkimuksen valmistuttua tuloksista raportoidaan sähköpostitse.

Kiitos osallistumisestasi!

Elli Kinnunen

OSA 1

Tulevien englanninopettajien kokemuksia osaamisestaan opettajina	Täysin eri mieltä	jokseenkin mieltä
1. Osaan opettaa oppilaille tehokkaasti englannin kielen puhumista		
2. Osaan opettaa oppilaille tehokkaasti englannin kielen kirjoittamista		
3. Osaan opettaa oppilaille tehokkaasti englannin kielen kielioppia		
4. Osaan opettaa oppilaille tehokkaasti englannin kielen kuullun ymmärtämistä		
5. Osaan opettaa oppilaille tehokkaasti englannin kielen luetun ymmärtämistä		
6. Pystyn hallitsemaan luokkatilannetta niin, ettei tunneilla esiinny häiritsevää käytöstä		
7. Pystyn selvittämään tunneilla esiintyviä ongelmatilanteita tehokkaasti		
8. Tunnen, että oppilaat pitävät minusta opettajana		
9. Tuntisuunnitelman tekeminen on minulle helppoa		
10. Osaan käyttää erilaisia arviointitapoja englannin kielen osaamisen arviointiin		
11. Kykenen tehokkaasti opettamaan ja esittelemään oppilaille englanninkielisiä kulttuureja		
12. Kun tunnilla tulee vastaan tilanne, jossa oppilaat eivät ymmärrä opettamaani asiaa, pystyn helposti keksimään uusia tapoja ja esimerkkejä selventääkseni asiaa		
13. Pystyn asettamaan realistisia tavoitteita englannin kielen opetukselleni		
14. Englannin kielen tuntien pitäminen pääosin englannin kielellä on helppoa		
15. Pystyn opetuksessani ottamaan hyvin huomioon englannin kielen eri varianttien erot		
16. Virheiden huomaaminen englanninkielisessä puheessa on minulle helppoa		
17. Virheiden huomaaminen englanninkielisessä kirjoituksessa on minulle helppoa		
18. Tiedän monia keinoja oppilaiden tekemien virheiden korjaamiseksi		
19. Osaan korjata oppilaiden virheet niin, ettei se laske oppilaan motivaatiota		
20. Osaan motivoida hankalimmatkin oppilaat yrittämään tunneilla		
21. Osaan muokata opetusmateriaalia oppilaitteni tarpeiden mukaiseksi		

22. Kerro lyhyesti, mitkä asiat olet kokenut helpoiksi englannin kielen opetuksessasi

23. Kerro lyhyesti, mitkä asiat ovat tuottaneet sinulle eniten ongelmia englannin kielen opetuksessasi

OSA 2		
Tärkeäksi koettua englannin kielen opetuksessa	Täysin eri mieltä	jokseenkin mieltä
1. Pidän opetuksessani tärkeänä että käytän virheetöntä englanninkielistä puhetta		
2. Pidän opetuksessani tärkeänä että oppilaat pystyvät puhumaan syntyperäisen englanninkielisen ihmisen tavoin		
3. Koen foneettisten aakkosten osaamisen olevan tärkeässä asemassa opetuksessani		
4. Eritylisten tekstien lukeminen on tärkeässä osassa englanninopetuksessani		
5. Kuullun ymmärtämisessä tärkeämpää on että oppilaat ymmärtävät kokonaisuuksia kuin että he ymmärtävät kaikki yksityiskohdat		
6. Englannin kielen ääntämisen virheettömyydellä ei ole merkitystä niin kauan kun puhe on ymmärrettävää		
7. Tekstin kirjoittamisessa kieliopillinen tarkkuus on tärkeämpää kuin sen sisältö		
8. Englanninkielisten tekstien ymmärtämisessä on tärkeämpää saada kokonaiskuva kuin ymmärtää teksti sana sanalta		
9. Pidän opetuksessani tärkeänä, että oppilaat oppivat itse korjaamaan omat virheensä		
10. Pidän opetuksessani tärkeänä englanninkielisten kulttuurien käsittelemistä		

11. Tärkeimpiä tavoitteitani omassa englannin kielen opettamisessani ovat:

Osallistujatiedot

Nimi: _____

Sähköpostiosoite (elokuvalippujen arvontaan osallistuvat):

Ikä: _____

Sukupuoli: _____

Miten monta vuotta olet opiskellut englanninkieltä yliopistossa?

Olen suorittanut aineenopettajien...

A) Perusharjoittelun

B) Aineopintojen harjoittelun

Oletko tehnyt opetusharjoittelun ulkopuolella opetustyötä? Jos kyllä, miten pitkään?

KIITOS OSALLISTUMISESTASI!