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TEACHERS BELIEFS ABOUT EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Abstract:

During the most recent educational reform in Estonia, a new National Curriculum was introduced in 2010 providing new guidelines for education generally and foreign languages specifically. To investigate the understanding that an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher has about professional teaching and whether it matches the principles of the curriculum, a research was conducted amongst EFL teachers at the lower secondary school level. There were two research questions: What perceptions do EFL teachers have regarding effective teaching and learning? What methods and techniques of teaching EFL are most effective according to EFL teachers' beliefs?

The study revealed that generally EFL teachers' beliefs about professional teaching are in concordance with the principles of the new curriculum, however are aspects that should be addressed by teacher education. Estonian EFL teachers support constructivist learning principles, but only to a certain extent: grammar focus and teacher-centredness are two major issues of concern that should be considered while designing both pre-service and in-service education programmes. Although Estonian EFL teachers generally support communicative principles of language teaching, there may be a further need to raise the profile of pedagogical-psychological courses in teacher preparation to give teachers more confidence in dealing with puberty-age students.

Keywords:

educational reform, effective teaching, teachers' beliefs,