Graduate School of Teaching

Beoordelingsformulier II - Masterscriptie Educatie en Communicatie Geesteswetenschappen

Eerste beoordelaar - Motivering cijfer

De begeleider van de masterscriptie is tevens de eerste beoordelaar. De eerste beoordelaar is verantwoordelijk voor de communicatie tussen de beoordelaars, de volledige invulling en archivering van de beoordelingsformulieren, het invoeren van het eindcijfer in Osiris en het informeren van de student over het eindcijfer en de onderbouwing daarvan.

Het beoordelingsproces van de masterscriptie kent vier stappen:

(1) Eerste en tweede beoordelaar beoordelen de scriptie onafhankelijk van elkaar; elk vult een beoordelingsformulier in, met daarop een **voorlopig cijfer**.

(2) Op initiatief van de eerste beoordelaar bepalen eerste en tweede beoordelaar gezamenlijk het **definitieve cijfer**, en wel binnen 10 werkdagen na het inleveren van de scriptie bij de eerste beoordelaar**.** Daarbij kan onder bepaalde omstandigheden een derde beoordelaar worden ingeschakeld (zie formulier derde beoordelaar). Als een derde beoordelaar wordt ingeschakeld, wordt het definitieve cijfer vastgesteld binnen 20 werkdagen na het inleveren van de scriptie bij de eerste beoordelaar. De student moet door de eerste beoordelaar geïnformeerd worden over het inschakelen van een derde beoordelaar. Als de eerste of tweede beoordelaar op basis van consultatie met andere beoordelaars zijn of haar voorlopig cijfer herziet, past hij/zij het beoordelingsformulier aan op die punten waarop hij/zij van inzicht veranderd is en geeft het gewijzigde beoordelingsformulier aan de eerste beoordelaar. De eerste beoordelaar verwijdert het 'Voorlopig cijfer' uit de beoordelingsformulieren van eerste en tweede beoordelaar en vervangt dat door het 'Definitief cijfer'.

(3) De eerste beoordelaar informeert de student over het eindcijfer en de onderbouwing daarvan. Informatie over de onderbouwing kan op twee manieren plaatsvinden:
    a. via een eindgesprek tussen eerste beoordelaar en de student en/of via een e-mail, waarin de onderbouwing van het cijfer aan de orde komt.
    b. doordat de eerste beoordelaar de definitieve versie van de beoordelingsformulieren aan de student laat toekomen; in dat geval is het essentieel dat stap (2) is afgerond: de student mag niet worden geconfronteerd met de mogelijk verschillende oordelen tijdens stap (1), aangezien die inmiddels via onderlinge consultatie tijdens stap (2) zijn overbrugd.

(4) De eerste beoordelaar voert het definitieve cijfer in in Osiris en archiveert de beoordelingsformulieren van eerste, tweede en (eventueel) derde beoordelaar.

BEOORDELINGSFORMULIER II, 1ᴱ BEOORDELAAR

MASTERSCRIPTIE EDUCATIE EN COMMUNICATIE GW

BASISGEGEVENS STUDENT	
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Titel masterscriptie Recommendations for Starting Professionals	
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OORDEEL	

Voorlopig cijfer (vóór consultatie van 2ᵉ en (eventueel) 3ᵉ beoordelaar):
NB: verwijderen wanneer definitief cijfer ingevuld is!

Datum: ......

Definitief cijfer (na consultatie van 2ᵉ en (eventueel) 3ᵉ beoordelaar):

Datum: ......

FORMELE RANDVOORWAARDEN**

RANDVOORWAARDEN		Commentaar
Correct taalgebruik (zinsbouw, spelling, interpunctie)	☐ voldaan ☐ niet voldaan	
Inhoudsopgave en samenvatting (zelfstandig leesbaar 150-250 woorden)	☐ voldaan ☐ niet voldaan	
Annotatie en literatuurlijst volgens de formele regels van het vakgebied	☐ voldaan ☐ niet voldaan	

** Indien aan één van deze formele randvoorwaarden niet voldaan is, kan de begeleider/eerste beoordelaar besluiten de scriptie niet inhoudelijk te beoordelen. De student krijgt een reparatiemogelijkheid. De grensbepaling voldaan/niet voldaan aan de randvoorwaarden ligt bij de opleiding (bijv. aantal taalfouten dat getolereerd wordt).

<div align="center">

INHOUDELIJKE BEOORDELING

</div>

De beoordelaar geeft per categorie een globaal oordeel dat voorzien wordt van een commentaar waarin duidelijk wordt gemaakt wat de sterke en zwakke punten zijn. Geef bij een onvoldoende nauwkeurig aan wat door de student verbeterd moet worden om een voldoende te behalen.

De onderdelen 1 t/m 5 moeten minimaal met een voldoende worden beoordeeld om tot een voldoende eindcijfer te kunnen komen.

1. PROBLEEMSTELLING	☐ voldoende ☐ goed

Is de probleemstelling helder geformuleerd? Zijn de deelvragen logisch afgeleid van de hoofdvraag? Is het onderzoek afgebakend en is deze afbakening onderbouwd? Is de relevantie voor de educatieve praktijk toegelicht?

Commentaar:

NB: bij het Onderzoeksplan is reeds beoordeeld of de Probleemstelling voldoende is. Daardoor kan bij de uiteindelijke scriptie de Probleemstelling alleen nog als Voldoende of Goed beoordeeld worden.

2. THEORETISCH KADER /POSITIONERING	☐ onvoldoende ☐ voldoende ☐ goed

Wordt de wetenschappelijke, educatieve en/of maatschappelijke relevantie van het onderzoek duidelijk gemaakt? Is de gebruikte literatuur relevant, representatief en van voldoende wetenschappelijke kwaliteit? Wordt de literatuur adequaat en kritisch besproken? Sluiten de gekozen theorieën en/of analytische concepten aan bij de onderzoeksvraag? Zijn de centrale concepten/termen duidelijk gedefinieerd?

Commentaar:

| 3. METHODE | □ onvoldoende □ voldoende □ goed |

Is de keuze voor de onderzoeksmethode/onderzoeksdesign voldoende verantwoord? Zijn de gebruikte onderzoeksmethoden/instrumenten adequaat om de gegevens te verzamelen en analyseren en de onderzoeksvragen te beantwoorden?

Commentaar:

| 4. ANALYSE / RESULTATEN | □ onvoldoende □ voldoende □ goed |

Zijn de gebruikte onderzoeksmethoden/technieken op de juiste manier ingezet? Wordt de wijze van gegevensverwerking zorgvuldig beschreven en verantwoord? Is er een goede balans tussen beschrijving en analyse? Worden de resultaten adequaat gerapporteerd?

Commentaar:

| 5. CONCLUSIE | □ onvoldoende □ voldoende □ goed |

Wordt in de conclusie een antwoord gegeven op de probleemstelling/hoofdvraag? Is er voldoende terugkoppeling tussen de eigen onderzoekresultaten en de literatuur/theorie/hypothesen? Overstijgt de conclusie het niveau van een samenvatting? Wordt er kritisch gereflecteerd op de eigen aanpak? Worden er suggesties gedaan voor verder onderzoek? Worden er relaties gelegd met en/of aanbevelingen gedaan voor de educatieve praktijk?

Commentaar:

| 6. STRUCTUUR EN STIJL VAN HET BETOOG | □ onvoldoende □ voldoende □ goed |

Wordt de informatie in een logische volgorde gepresenteerd (bijvoorbeeld: inleiding/theoretisch kader, vraagstelling, methode, resultaten, discussie)? Is er een duidelijke hoofdstuk- en alinea-indeling? Is de argumentatie ook binnen de paragrafen helder en coherent? Zijn paragrafen en alinea's coherent en inhoudelijk goed afgebakend?
Is het verslag leesbaar en begrijpelijk voor vakgenoten en geïnteresseerde docenten? Wordt de terminologie uit het vakgebied precies en specifiek gehanteerd?

Commentaar:

7. ZELFSTANDIGHEID (in te vullen door de begeleider)   □ onvoldoende   □ voldoende   □ goed
Werd de feedback zorgvuldig verwerkt? Werden afspraken en deadlines gerespecteerd? Heeft de student veel hulp nodig gehad tijdens het traject? Zo ja, op welke punten (bijv. formulering van de onderzoeksvragen, inkadering in de literatuur, opbouw van het betoog, taal.) Commentaar:
8. OVERIG
Hier kunt u commentaar geven op aspecten als de innovatieve kwaliteit van het onderzoek, de maatschappelijke relevantie van de scriptie etc.
SAMENVATTEND OORDEEL
CIJFERVOORSTEL: *NB: verwijderen wanneer definitief cijfer ingevuld is!*

EFL Teachers:

Recommendations for Starting Professionals

By Matthijs "Matt" Oldenhof

Supervisor: Roselinde Supheert

2nd reader: Josi ter Beek

For the master's program:

Engelse taal en cultuur: educatie en communicatie

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Non scholae sed vitae discimus

"We learn not for school, but for life"

-Imre Kelemen (1818), from Seneca

Word Count: 9565

ABSTRACT

In Dutch secondary school EFL teaching, there is currently a shortage of qualified teachers. An alarming statistic is that one out of three starting teachers quits the profession within the first five years, exacerbating the issue. Although the shortage is expected to be resolved in 2023 due to falling student numbers, this thesis posits that the current dropout rate is cause for research. Government sources report a number of policies to remedy the teacher shortage. Romeijn (2016) hypothesizes a number of difficulties L2 teachers may encounter and which may influence the ±33% dropout rate. This master's thesis examines Romeijn's hypotheses as well as the effectiveness of government policy through six interviews with starting university educated Dutch EFL teachers from city areas, combined with a literature review. It found that while some issues mentioned by Romeijn are relevant to the starting teacher, others are not. Critical examination of government policy yielded that while some solutions may prove fruitful, especially in light of newly appointed funding, others may prove ineffective or even counterproductive if implemented in the field of EFL teaching in the Netherlands. The findings of the above research form the basis for an advice package for starting professionals to improve the sustainability of the profession, and hopefully decrease the dropout rate.

Key Words: EFL, Dutch, secondary schooling, dropout rate, burnout, advice, starting teachers, government policy, macro/meso/micro-policies

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Introduction

The current state of secondary school foreign language teaching in the Netherlands needs urgent evaluation. The Dutch government reports a shortage of L2 teachers[1], which is expected to increase further in
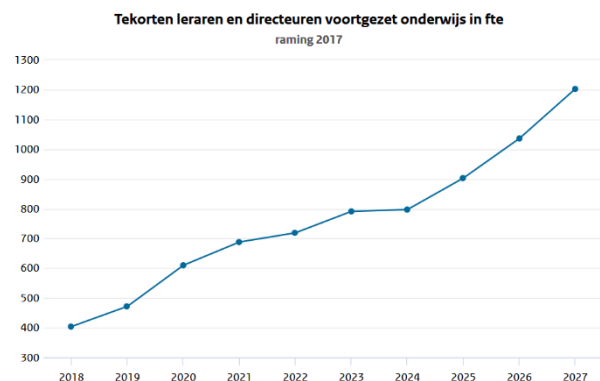

Figure 1: 2017 projection of education staff shortage Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2019)

the near future (figure 1). Research shows that the current shortage is most relevant in the urban areas of the Netherlands, but less so outside of the Randstad and other densely populated areas (Bouma, 2018). Widespread curriculum reform offers additional challenges with regards to secondary school English teaching specifically (curriculum.nu). The effectiveness of existing grading methods are being called into question (Kwakernaak, 2013), and there exists a high risk of burnout (Baan, 2018; Romeijn, 2016), although there are signs of improvement in this regard (Sikkes, 2017). Teachers unions are raising the issue of high pressure and inadequate pay (Hagen, 2018), the profession reportedly enjoys a lower status than ever (Dirks, 2017), and there may be a ubiquitous problem with working unpaid overtime (Romeijn, 2016). All this makes for a complicated situation. The teacher shortage notably applies to STEM fields[2] and languages. These subjects are known as "tekortvakken", or subjects where the teacher shortage is relevant. English is one of the secondary school subjects where a teacher shortage is currently apparent (OiC, 2017). The advent of falling student numbers is projected to solve the shortage. The

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[1] It is currently expected that the field will be saturated by 2023 (MOCW, 2018) due to an expected decrease in student populations in the coming ten years.
[2] Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

cause of the current shortage still warrants examination, as its existence suggests issues with the sustainability of the profession,

In 2015, 62% of starting teachers[3], English and otherwise, contemplated quitting within their first five years at work, and one out of every three starting teachers (working as a teacher for less than five years) quit the profession in those first five years at work (Lange, 2018). This indicates that there may be an issue with sustainability[4] of the profession of teachers in general. Due to the factors mentioned above that concern EFL teaching specifically, this field can be considered sufficiently unique as to warrant a separate approach in research. The causes of the dropout rate among teachers in general and Dutch EFL teachers in particular is the main concern of this thesis.

This MA project was inspired by a 2016 article by Aafke Romeijn, in which she makes claims with regards to the causes of the shortage of language teachers in Dutch secondary education. Interesting though it was, it did not include sources to back up the claims. An email was sent to the author, but a staff member on Romeijn's management team indicated that she was too busy to comment further. Therefore, her claims cannot be taken at face value. Romeijn hypothesizes the dropout rate is influenced by starting teachers, whose on-the-job experience is often different from what they expected or hoped for. This MA thesis aims to further investigate the problems experienced by starting teachers, and ultimately create a compendium of advice for teachers to reduce risk of dropping out. The average Dutch employee stays with a job for 10.5 years on average (Financieel Management,

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[3] By which is meant a teacher currently working less than five years as a teacher. This number of years is based on a 2005 study by Brekelmans, Wubbels, & van Tartwijk, where they found that generally teachers' development with regards to influencing students levelled out after five years of teaching experience.

[4] By which here is meant the degree to which professionals stay engaged in the profession after the onset of their careers.

2017), which makes the teacher dropout rate especially noteworthy. It appears that for many, the profession is not sustainable, which is problematic in relation to the projected shortage.

This research sets out to provide advice for starting teachers with regards to improving the sustainability of the position of starting EFL[5] teachers specifically. Of course, some advice may be further applicable to all teachers in general, offering pointers as to what can be done at the meso[6] (management)- and micro (individual)-level to prevent starting teachers from experiencing burn out or having to drop out. The present paper looks at the different factors contributing to the shortage, evaluating which of these apply to starting EFL teachers, and theorizing how adverse conditions can be ameliorated.

In brief, the main research question is:

What can a starting English teacher do to make the job more sustainable?

To answer the main question, the following sub questions need to be answered:

1: Based on expert opinions, what factors rooted in the profession contribute to the current dropout rate for English teachers?

2: What macro solutions to the projected teacher shortage have already been proposed, and in how far do they relate to starting English teachers?

3: What are the opinions and experiences of starting teachers with regards to making the job sustainable?

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[5] English as a Foreign Language, or English taught in a context where it is not the dominant language
[6] Micro/Meso/Macro-level refers to the different levels at which education policy is realized. Macro refers to the governmental level, so national curriculum and pedagogic guidelines, meso to school-wide, so for instance religious identity and education style, and micro to the single classroom, i.e. the individual teacher.

Answering question 1 gives a proper idea of the problem, without which solutions would be a non-sequitur. Answering question two ensures that the thesis does not answer questions that have already been answered, and assesses whether governmental measures can help starting teachers, which could lead to further research. Question three will be answered by means of a series of interviews with starting teachers. The interview questions test whether starting EFL teachers experience the difficulties reported by Romeijn (2016) or the issues the macro solutions aim to resolve. Data gathered from these interviews, combined with expert opinion, provide the basis for the conclusion to this paper, which takes the form of advice.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter considers research relevant to the topic of the Dutch EFL teacher dropout rate. It includes research results from the field of EFL education, general education studies, census data, opinion pieces, and official government policy. This chapter will examine what current teaching method looks like, in order to give context for difficulties starting teachers may encounter. The additional duties of the profession aside from the teaching itself are also discussed. After this, this chapter looks at potential causes for the current shortage among English teachers. Finally, it critically examines proposed macro solutions, and evaluates whether they would be effective if or when implemented.

Teaching Method

The practice of EFL teaching in the Netherlands tends to be diverse, with a reasonably high degree of individual teacher input. To understand difficulties starting teachers might deal with, it is important to understand what the profession entails. Currently, the increasingly prominent EFL (English as a foreign language[7]) teaching philosophy in the Netherlands is some form of the "communicative method" (Fasoglio et al., 2015), which emphasizes communication as the main goal of language (Brandl, 2007). Communicative approaches supplemented with appropriate explicit instruction, or what is also called a "focus on forms method" have been found to be more effective (Loewen, 2011) than methods focusing solely on input or explicit grammar instruction. Schools may differ in their interpretation and execution of the

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[7] In contrast with ESL and ESOL, the term EFL is typically used to refer to English as studied in a country where it is not the dominant language. In the United Kingdom EFL is also used more widely to refer to English as studied in a country where it is the dominant language, although the terms ESL or ESOL are now often used when the students are immigrants, as opposed to visitors, to that country (OED, 2019).

communicative method, such as in the amount of target language usage, explicitness of instruction, etc. There is no government prescription for the content of EFL lessons (Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling[8], 2019).

The author's own experiences with standardized textbook methods suggest that these allow teachers to work from a standard method and deviate at will. Widely used series like *Stepping Stones, New Headway,* and *Of Course* offer a mix of English language input (with mixed authenticity) and explicit instruction. Generally, standard material supplied by the textbook is useful, but it appears that most English teachers supplement that material with their own to satisfy the needs of the particular class and lesson (Bouckaert, 2018), which means that generally English teachers do not blindly follow the textbook.

Profession

The job of language teacher entails more than solely providing education for the purpose of language acquisition. This section examines qualities that are relevant for teachers in general as well as EFL teachers specifically.

Generally, any teacher can also be expected to assist students in developing their personality (Praamsma & Wansink, 2017), in order to prepare them for society. This entails the development of students' socialization and autonomy, in addition to their competences. and requires teachers to navigate between the needs of students, parents, management, team and, not unimportantly, their own. The University of Utrecht Graduate School of Teaching demarcates 11 aspects of modern secondary school teaching, or qualities any teacher must possess to some degree (UU, 2018). These include facilitating expert knowledge transfer, interpersonal skills, pedagogical skills, team-oriented attitude, reflective capability,

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[8] Dutch curriculum development organisation

and classroom management.

Additionally, the second language teacher in particular needs to be able to teach not only the language with its morphology, syntax, and lexicon, but also comprehensive reading and listening, conversation skills, public speaking, critical thinking, and writing for a variety of purposes (Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling, 2019). Moreover, roughly one in three schools require cultural knowledge to be transferred as well, such as literature, poetry, drama, film, music, and other forms of popular and high culture (Oberon & Sardes, 2017). All in all, this makes EFL teaching in the current Dutch climate a complicated affair, with many factors and interested parties dictating what the profession entails.

Potential Causes of Drop-out Rate among Starting Teachers

The difficulty and complexity of the profession of EFL teacher need not be an issue; many jobs may be equally or more difficult. Yet, a high dropout rate of around 32% has been observed among starting secondary school teachers (Lange, 2018). This section examines potential causes and contributing factors of this dropout rate. The findings helped inform the interview questions (see appendix 2) and advice package, found in the conclusion.

Part of the motivation for this thesis is a 2016 newspaper article by Aafke Romeijn, which hypothesizes causes for language teacher dropout. Although no sources are given, the causes appear plausible, and are examined below and later on in this paper, through analysis and interviews. One of the potential causes mentioned in the article by Romeijn is deficient preparation by vocational education schools and universities. Aspiring teachers currently need to either follow a Higher Vocational education trajectory, which takes an average of four years, with a job experience program throughout, or do a masters of either one or two years. In both

master's programs, a year is spent on internships, supported by courses focused on

didactics. In the two-year program, the other year is spent on additional courses

considering subjects related to teaching. An alternative option for BA students of an

English program is a half-year minor program, with a half-year internship in vmbo-tl

or the first three years of havo/vwo,[9] which results in the same supposed proficiency

as the 4-year vocational track. This means that university-educated teachers can

have as little as half a year of experience before being qualified to teach classes

associated with a second-degree qualification. The university minor system may

reasonably be expected to leave teachers with an overwhelming reality to deal with.

Starting teachers educated in this manner may not having had received proper

amount of preparation for the profession: it cannot be logically assumed that a

university student learns eight times as fast as a higher vocational education student.

Moreover, some aspects of teaching may not be taught or not sufficiently. This

complaint appears at least plausible and will be tested through the interview section.

Another complaint raised by Romeijn concerns a supposed lacking support

structure offered to teachers by secondary schools. Support systems appear to vary

from school to school. Some may have multiple structures of supporting starting

teachers, but others may just provide a 20% lower amount of teaching hours for first-

year teachers, decreased to 10% for second-year teachers (VO-Raad, 2018).

Through VOION[10], an organization which concerns itself with monitoring, maintaining

and improving labor conditions in secondary education, a three-year support

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[9] The Dutch secondary education system divides students between different difficulty levels: PO, vmbo-bb, vmbo-kb, vmbo-gl, vmbo-tl, havo and vwo, arranged according to increasing difficulty in theoretic knowledge necessary. The minutiae of this system are unimportant for this thesis. However, Dutch teacher degrees know two different categories as well: 1st degree and 2nd degree, where the former qualifies one to teach all secondary school levels, and the latter only havo/vwo years one through three, and all vmbo.

[10] (Voortgezet Onderwijs in Ontwikkeling), an organisation concerned with providing professional and educational support for secondary education in the Netherlands.

program has been set up on a number of Amsterdam schools. VOION provides a wide array of recommendations at the school level for improving teacher support: personalizing support, clarifying relevant school policy, emphasizing urgency of interventions, reflection on teacher goals in connection with school identity, taking into account outsiders' insights about your organization, and using a variety of coaching programs and tools (Hobma et al. 2017). The recommendations from this report will be echoed and/or modified in the advice package, based on the outcomes of the interviews and literary review. The interviews conducted for this thesis will measure in how far starting teachers are aware of the availability of these programs, and how versions of these programs are implemented outside of Amsterdam.

Something that should also be taken into consideration is the workload experienced by Dutch secondary school teachers. A Dutch secondary school teacher has 10% more teaching hours than the OESO-guideline prescribes (Algemene Onderwijsbond, 2017). This means that a Dutch teacher spends more time teaching (and consequently less on preparation or relaxation) than is advised. Furthermore, a recent study shows that Dutch secondary school teachers on average work an additional 12.5% of their workload in unpaid overtime (Algemene Onderwijsbond, 2017). The interviews of this thesis will investigate whether the amount of teaching hours is at all problematic for starting teachers, and whether they have to work unpaid overtime in order to provide lessons to their students that meet their personal requirements as well as those of their employer. Romeijn mentions that due to vague job descriptions, tasks may be allocated to teachers freely, with no possible grounds for objection. This may impact how much time teachers are able to spend on facilitating education, which reasonably is their core task.

Secondary education class sizes may be large, usually up to 30 students per

class maximum, with an average of 27 in the first 3 years of VWO (Van Bergen et al., 2016). Group sizes are dependent on the number of admissions and fluctuate with students changing tracks and retaking years. Moreover, to benefit student socialization, students with special needs are often placed in regular classes, instead of going to a specially designated school, but teachers do not necessarily receive training to deal with those special needs. Dealing with externalizing behaviors[11] from a student population is negatively associated with teacher self-efficacy (Zee, 2016, p. 114). Overall, large class sizes with diffuse populations inhibit a teacher's ability to provide a clear line of education. These large populations are more economical for school management, as this situation requires fewer teachers per student. However, a number of researches conducted in several countries have shown that smaller class sizes correlate positively with learner development (Visser, 2017). Care was taken during the interviews to stimulate lines of conversation pertaining to classroom management troubles in relation to class sizes and troublesome students.

Another potential cause of teachers dropping out has to do with the material they are required to teach. Government policy is that there is no fixed curriculum; schools are free to determine what they offer their students (Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling, 2016),[12] as long as they are prepared for the standardized final exam. In the case of English, this is a comprehensive reading test, which means the attention allocated to writing, speaking, listening, and cultural practices is left to schools to determine. The material being taught may contrast with the level that starting teachers are used to, coming out of university. This may lead to an

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[11] "The construct of externalizing behavior problems refers to a grouping of behavior problems that are manifested in children's outward behavior and reflect the child negatively acting on the *external* environment. In the research literature, these externalizing disorders consist of disruptive, hyperactive, and aggressive behaviors (Liu, 2004)."

[12] The causes underlying this policy are fascinating. For those historically inclined, research the "scholenstrijd" and the right to teach according to personal beliefs in the Netherlands.

intellectually unfulfilling curriculum, which is pointed out as an issue by Romeijn (2016). The ubiquity of this potential issue will be tested through the interviews of this research.

Some issues mentioned by Romeijn (2016) could be solved through government funding, she hypothesizes. This would allow for smaller class sizes, up-to-date teaching equipment, which makes the work easier, longer internship programs, and increased availability of support systems. It would also enable a smaller number of teaching hours per FTE, which would free up time to spend on preparation and other tasks besides teaching. Current government budget allocation plans include €100 million a year extra for education, which may be used for funding for such programs (NOS[13], 2019)(MvAZ[14], 2019). However, in the past government funding granted to alleviate some of the above issues was potentially mismanaged, due to the lump sum construction, which was put into place to ensure autonomy of educational institutions, meaning that all funding is conglomerated into a single payment, handed out to school managements, after which government supervision stops (Meijer, 2018). Spending of these funds was not regulated, which resulted in a perceived lack of spending on teaching personnel. Regarding this new fund allocation, a better tracking system should be in place, to avoid mismanagement. The aim of this thesis is not to develop macro solutions, but problems such as these could be further elaborated upon in later research.

Romeijn (2016) touches on one of the main issues, workload, in her article: "teachers do not just experience pressure at work, but pressure to perform is a real problem", meaning teachers experience a higher than acceptable amount of pressure. This ties in with the VOION study on unpaid overtime mentioned above. A

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[13] Dutch Broadcasting Association
[14] Ministry of General Affairs

postgraduate (MA) thesis by Baan (2018) investigated the significance of burnout symptoms and stress management in starting teachers. According to her analysis, burnout is the most significant cause for dropout. Burnout is caused by an overload of stress over a long period of time. Smulders et al. (2013) shows that teaching, in primary as well as secondary education, has the highest risk of burnout of all Dutch professions. Baan (2018) shows that emotionally taxing work, high pressure to succeed, long working hours, creatively unfulfilling work and a lacking support structure are all determinants of burnout that many teachers are likely to experience: "the experienced reality shock [of starting teachers] was significantly positively related to emotional load, exhaustion (component of burnout) and distance[15] (component of burnout), and significantly negatively related to social support, enthusiasm, competences[16] (component of burnout) and self-efficacy. (p. 2)" This information was obtained through an online questionnaire, with respondents (N=141) originating from a variety of subjects. It appears that avoiding burnout should be at the top of everyone's list when it comes to keeping starting teachers in the profession. Unpaid overtime and high pressure to succeed are what Romeijn touches upon; teachers have to work too hard for too long. These claims will be further analyzed in this chapter.

In brief, the profession of Dutch EFL teacher is often stressful, with many different elements contributing to the difficulties a significant number of starting teachers appear to experience, ultimately resulting in a teacher shortage. Below, this thesis will examine potential macro- and meso-solutions to the shortage, suggested by the government. They will be analyzed on feasibility. Furthermore, they will feed into the interview questions of this thesis.

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[15] Emotional distance; a lack of emotional involvement (Baan, 2018)
[16] Relevant skills of the teacher, the lack of (perception of) which is a contributing factor in burnout

Solutions

This section examines whether government-proposed solutions to counteract the current teacher shortage may reasonably contribute to solving the dropout rate among starting English teachers (Lange, 2018). The Dutch government has identified a number of potential solutions, which need to be critically examined. They are outlined below, with explanations given where possible.

Some government plans to counteract the teacher shortage are outlined in a report titled "Kamerbrief over extra acties tegen lerarentekort[17]" (MOCW[18], 2019). The letter places responsibility at the meso-level, stating that decisions at the macro-level cannot be enough to solve the issue. The letter further posits a number of solutions, which are discussed below for the purpose of developing the interview guide. Findings will inform the advice package; issues already correctly addressed with macro solutions need not be included. Of course, some of these solutions may be effective for other teacher groups than starting teachers. These macro solutions should not be disregarded outright based on the analysis below, therefore, but should be re-evaluated or addressed in the advice package produced by this research.

First, the issue of money must be addressed. Since the advent of the student loan system, the feared drop in university applicants has not occurred (CBS[19], 2018). Government policy thus far has been to improve the influx of EFL teachers though the availability of extra scholarships or extensions on other scholarship programs, counteracting potential negative effects of the more austere general scholarship policy. Effectively, students enrolled in the university or the higher vocational track

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[17] "Government letter concerning supplementary actions to counteract the teacher shortage"
[18] Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
[19] Center for Big Data Statistics

for English teacher (and other "tekortvakken") pay 50% less tuition, compared to other regularly subsidized education tracks (Rijksoverheid, 2017). This aims to make the tracks more attractive. Some measures to increase efficiency for practical education[20] tracks have been published, but it is unclear whether these are applicable to secondary education as well.

Government policy is to improve the possibilities for *zij-instromers*[21]*,* or lateral-entry teachers, to enter the profession. Frank Corvers notes that the influence of lateral-entry teacher on education is not necessarily positive, due to a mismatch between applicants and available job openings (Huygen, 2019).

Moreover, government policy supports the idea to have starting teachers work more hours, as many start the profession with part-time employment (MOCW, 2019). In other words, the teacher shortage may be resolved by simply having already working teachers work more hours. This is a quick fix, but it ignores the issue of unpaid overtime, which will be addressed later in this thesis.

Romeijn points out that many teachers experience a lacking support structure (2016). The MOCW letter mentioned above states that according to the ministry, it is the responsibility of schools to create a sustainable professional environment. There are currently no concrete plans in place to provide improved support, either on a macro level or at a meso level. As previously mentioned, support systems vary from school to school, and there are organizations such as VOION which endeavor to improve matters.

There exists a "silent reserve force" of qualified professionals who do not work in education (MOCW, 2017). These include those that dropped out when starting

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[20] Praktijkonderwijs, or craft education

[21] An individual without a full teaching degree, but knowledge from the relevant field. For example, a businessperson teaching economics, or an athlete teaching sports. The circumstances under which "zij-instromers" can work are under revision at the time of writing.

their careers. A current government ambition is to draw those people into the profession. This goal is not further elaborated on, and maybe those who have left would not be easily enthused to return. Without effecting meaningful change in other areas, and without a concrete plan regarding how to effectively implement this measure, there appears to be little reason to expect it to work.

On the subject of monetary compensation, a teacher's salary is not particularly high, with a starting salary of €2662 a month before taxes for 1 FTE (VO-Raad, 2018). The salary considered to be standard for a Dutch employee is €2769 a month before tax per FTE (Centraal Planbureau, 2018). Opportunities for advancement are not very abundant. This makes for a profession which is not unattractive but fails to draw people in because of the money or career to be made. Government plans include improving career perspectives and monetary rewards. This sounds promising but does not in itself mean anything, as no concrete plans to achieve this have been published at the time of writing. Furthermore, there are not many logical follow-up jobs after teaching, outside of management positions. How career opportunities can be created remains vague. The lack of concrete plans make improvement of career opportunities difficult to realize, although there is an opportunity in restructuring promotion ladders, with regards to the LB-scale/LC-scale/LD-scale construct[22] (VO-Raad, 2018).

The Dutch government further proposes to promote innovation with regards to the organization and management of secondary education facilities. According to the government webpage "Lerarentekort voortgezet onderwijs" (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2019), the government sees ways to teach more students with fewer or less

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[22] The payment structure for secondary school teachers works as follows: based on experience and school-defined job descriptions, teachers are allocated a wage bracket (or "scale"), in which they progress one step each first of August: LB, LC or LD. There are 17 steps in each bracket, with each progressive step representing a higher wage. Although there is overlap between the brackets, in general teachers in LC earn more than teachers in LB, and so on.

qualified teachers. As it stands, it is unclear what these good practices will be and how they will be implemented.

Some of these macro solutions appear promising. Considering that extra yearly funding has been allocated, the solutions requiring money have entered the realm of the possible. The concept of starting teachers working more hours and placing less qualified people in teaching positions is worrying, however, when seen into context with Romeijn (2016): if unpaid overtime is an issue already, stimulating teachers to work more hours appears hardly productive or, indeed, ethical. This measure may have an adverse effect, but that remains speculation.

Method

Data for this research will be acquired through a combination of literature review and semi-structured interviews, with the design of the latter being based on Dörnyei (2011). The aim is to develop an informed compendium of advice for teachers. This research concerns a combination of qualitative and some quantitative data from earlier research, and a modest set of yes/no questions for the respondents, and therefore qualifies as a mixed methods research (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 19). In order to answer subquestion 1: "based on expert opinions, what are the contributing factors rooted in the profession to the current dropout rate for English teachers?", an overview of expert opinions has been offered in the previous chapter. Subquestion 2: "what macro solutions to the projected teacher shortage have already been proposed, and in how far do they relate to starting English teachers?" has likewise been addressed in the Theoretical Framework. The interviews serve to answer subquestion 3: "what are the opinions and experiences of starting teachers with regards to making the job sustainable?". Below is outlined the method by which the interviews were designed and conducted.

Interviews

The conclusions of this research are partly based on six semi-structured interviews, details of which are outlined below.

Participants

The respondents for the interviews were starting EFL English teachers (i.e. no more than 5 years of teaching experience) in Dutch secondary education. This number of respondents is in accordance with Dörnyei, as a "well-designed qualitative study usually requires a relatively small number of respondents […] (2011, p. 127)" and will provide enough data on which to base a conclusion. Respondents were

found through the author's personal network. They were found through requests being posted on relevant media outlets (Facebook pages) and personal contacts of the researcher. Table 1 lists the respondents, including information on their relative age, region of employment, where they were educated, and what their current professional situation is. They were all university trained after having followed a master's program.

Table 1: respondent overview

Respondent number	Age	Region of employment	University where the teacher was trained in a master's program	Current professional situation	Appointment
1	mid 20's	Leiden	Leiden	Working as an English teacher at a traditional school[23]	ca. 0.8 FTE
2	early 50's	Utrecht	Utrecht	Has a background in business. Currently working as an English teacher at a traditional school.	0.2 FTE
3	early 30's	N.A.	Utrecht	Dropped out after second internship, currently working outside of education.	N.A.
4	mid 20's	Apeldoorn	Leiden	English teacher at a traditional school. Also	0.7 FTE

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[23] Meaning teacher-led, classroom-based directive teaching

				engaged in research for Leiden University.	
5	mid 20's	Utrecht	Utrecht	Currently holds an English teaching position at a domain-based[24] school. Previously worked in primary education. Also engaged in research.	0.4 FTE
6	early 30's	Utrecht	Utrecht	Working as an English teacher at a traditional school.	0.73 FTE

Materials

A list of guiding questions was used. The interviews were recorded on a smartphone. The respondents signed a consent form prior to the interview (Appendix A). The interview guide, including the guiding questions, can be found in Appendix B. According to Dörnyei, "the main function of the interview guide […] is to help the interview in a number of areas: (a) by ensuring that the domain is properly covered and nothing important is left out by accident; (b) by suggesting appropriate question wordings; (c) by offering a list of useful probe questions to be used if needed; (d) by offering a template for the opening statement; and (e) by listing some comments to bear in mind" (137). These guidelines have been adhered to in the guide. Care has been taken to make the first questions easy to answer, so respondents would be more open and comfortable talking. The appendix further includes categorization of

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[24] A style of education where multiple groups of students work in a larger room, supported by multiple teachers. Students typically enjoy more freedom with regards to time management.

the interview questions according to Patton's categorization (2015): "a) experiences and behaviours, (b) opinions and values, (c) feelings, (d) knowledge, (e) sensory information (i.e. what someone has seen, heard, tasted, smelled, etc., and even what the interviewer would have seen or heard if he/she had been in a particular place), and (f) background or demographic information. These six categories concern different aspects of the participant's overall view and experience of the phenomenon. Therefore, a complete overview of their experience may be gained by including guide questions that tap into each dimension in our interview (in Dörnyei 2011, p. 137-138)".

Questions were asked only when respondents did not offer up the relevant information themselves. This varied strongly from respondent to respondent. The interview included questions about their experience as starting teachers, support structures, and preparation by their universities. Other questions related to their attitude towards quitting their profession, whether issues with stress management were apparent, and what they thought of the reward system and conditions of their job. These were discussed thematically, and as they came up. For instance, if a respondent mentioned their salary in relation to their stress management, that would form a segue to the next question.

The questions were loosely categorized as opening, content, and final questions. Opening questions were designed to gather some data and general attitude towards teaching. The content questions answer the research questions. The final questions give the interviewee the opportunity to add any information they feel is relevant and to ask questions.

Procedure

The interviews were conducted in Dutch to facilitate clear communication, as

well as to prevent confusion surrounding the translation of Dutch-context-specific words. Before the interview, the purpose and method were briefly explained, to motivate the respondent to answer in detail. In this specific case, respondents had a fairly direct stake in the outcomes of the research, as they will provide useful information for them personally. Two of the interviews were conducted through a Skype call, two sitting in a café, and two at the respondent's school of employment, a classroom and the teacher's lounge respectively. Interviews lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. All interviews were conducted in the latter half of May 2019 and first half of June 2019.

The interviewees were encouraged to elaborate and explore thoughts and subjects. The motivation for this style of interviewing is to not limit the breadth and depth of the responses (Dörnyei, 2011). During the interview, care was taken to put the respondents at ease, so they could respond freely. Care was also taken to find a balance in letting the interviewee speak freely and keeping them to the point. The interviewer acted as neutrally as possible, to avoid steering the interviewee in a direction, although it has been argued that this is not strictly necessary (Dörnyei, 2011).

The data gathered from the interviews were processed by transcribing noteworthy passages, which can be found in Appendix C. Thus, the research only reports relevant information, but is still able to give in-depth information. Finally, the data are synthesized to form a compendium of advice for starting teachers.

Results and Discussion

The interviews yielded a number of findings, which are presented and interpreted below. The results are categorized according to the underlying topics, i.e. "sustainability" for results relating to the respondents' impressions of the sustainability of the profession of English teacher, etcetera. Where relevant, the respondent's number is included (see table 1). The product of this research, the advice package, is presented in the conclusion. The results presented here serve to answer subquestion 3.

Results

Sustainability

All but one respondent saw themselves working as an English teacher in five years. Two of the respondents indicated that, while they planned to remain in education, they would also be working in other fields at the same time, i.e. research, as a PhD student, independent researcher, or university-affiliated researcher. Respondent 3, who did not see themselves continuing in education, cited unintended circumstances during the internship as a reason, which will be further elaborated on below. Respondent 1, in their[25] second year on the job, replied that they considered quitting as a teacher after the first year, due to experienced difficulties in classroom management. Two respondents indicated that they wished to remain English teachers in secondary schools. However, they were not secure in their position, as they had only been offered temporary contracts with no concrete outlook on a permanent one at the time of the interview. In brief, most interviewees were positive about the sustainability of their job descriptions, but there were uncertainties around

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[25] Here respondents are referred to by the gender-neutral personal pronouns "them/their" to depersonalise the findings where possible.

employment contracts. There is also reason to explore the notion that a structured and well-executed internship, which is a mandatory part of the teacher's Master, is important in relation with sustainability.

Stress and Overwork

On the whole, respondents did not report experiencing symptoms associated with burnout or high stress levels when prompted (based on Baan, 2018), outside of the exceptional case of respondent 3. Overwork appears to be a relevant factor, however. An interesting notion came up in the interview with respondent 2. They did not necessarily experience high pressure to perform, but they did experience stress with regards to their role in the well-being of their students, lacking some sense of self-efficacy in the pedagogical aspect of the work. In two other cases, respondents were worried about their performance in classroom management. They further reported experiencing anxiety related to this outside of working hours.

One of the most notable findings of this interview series is the fact that all respondents worked unpaid overtime. Respondent 5 worked double, and respondent 2 working triple[26] the amount of time they were being paid for. Most respondents reported not working in the evenings and avoiding having to work on the weekend, although this sometimes occurred regardless. Rather, due to all respondents filling part-time positions, they worked extra weekdays, either from home or at school. This situation was rationalized in different ways: "the first few years are for learning" (respondent 2), "you know it is a part of the job" (respondent 5), or "After I am done teaching on Friday you just think: weekend! But you need to be prepared for Monday, so I need to work on the weekends." (respondent 1). Respondent 5 remarked that "you just can't work full-time as a starting teacher" as the overtime

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[26] Of a relatively small 0.4 FTE and 0.2 FTE respectively.

would simply be too much. Such dedication to the craft may be seen as commendable, but ultimately it is a factor that makes the job less sustainable, as not everyone is willing or suited to put in those extra hours.

All respondents indicated that most of their time was spent teaching, preparing lessons, and grading. Most indicated spending little time on other tasks. Respondent 2, due to a position of less than 0.2fte, was not compensated at all for work outside of lessons, which is in line with this school's policy. Respondent 4 indicated a great deal of time was spent on meetings, which infringed on the time allocated for teaching. Respondent 1 indicated that they generally worked 20% unpaid overtime, due to non-teaching tasks such as grading and meetings. However, that percentage went up in some periods, such as test weeks.

Reward System and Promotion Structure

Generally, respondents found the monetary reward for teaching acceptable. Respondent 1 remarked that while it is adequate for the workload de jure, the de facto workload is out of balance with the monetary reward. Respondent 2, who had a previous career in business, found the starting salary very low. They noted, however, that age may be a factor in the attitude towards a lower salary. For instance, a lowish starting income may be more acceptable to a 25-year old than to a 50-year-old, due to a difference in lifestyles associated with those age brackets. This sentiment was echoed by respondent 6, who indicated that without a frame of reference, the pay appears plenty. Two other respondents mentioned that, given the nature of the work, amount of work, and responsibility teachers bear, an increased salary would not be amiss. Promotion structures were sometimes clear to the respondents, and sometimes were not. Respondent 4 mentioned that there were not many opportunities or ways to advance their position. In some cases, respondents knew

how they could take on new tasks within the organisation, but they did not know how to increase their compensation. Respondent 5 mentioned that they had received detailed instruction from their university regarding job advancement and negotiating starting pay. They expressed that this had helped them secure a more advantageous position, two periodical steps ahead of his peers, amounting to an estimated €130 per month extra for 1 FTE in the first year of his career (VO-Raad, 2018). This could be useful for others as well and will be included in the advice package.

Innovation

Curriculum.nu was a relatively well-known concept, but not universally accepted as a welcome innovation. Some more research-oriented respondents were following the project rather closely, while only respondent 1 had never heard of it. Respondent 3 was conducting research into curriculum.nu themselves. A sense of skepticism was apparent; respondent 3 wondered whether it was the right time to implement curriculum innovation, and whether the proposed changes would be implemented, given that the field has been innovated a number of times already with varying degrees of success. Issues like classroom sizes and lack of specialized training to deal with special needs students should be addressed first, they felt. A general skepticism towards the program was apparent in those respondents that had heard of it, except in the cases of respondent 6, who felt a curriculum reform would be welcome, due to the "stuffy" nature of the classic style of education, and respondent 4, who reported that they and their direct colleagues aimed to take an active part in the development of curriculum.nu. Respondent 5 remarked that since there are so many sources claiming to know what good education looks like, it is unclear why curriculum.nu should be the definitive view on the matter.

Preparation by University

Generally, starting teachers felt well-prepared by their internships. The case of respondent 3 shows a scenario where the internship and support were mismanaged. In this case, the intern was immediately placed in front of the class due to an existing shortage at the school. The intern's designated coach was unavailable due to a burnout, and no other coach was assigned. Moreover, the respondent had to deal with a challenging mix of students, some with emotional trauma, some with authority issues. This made teaching very difficult, especially due to the lack of specialized training. Another issue was lack of communication from colleagues and failing material, such as insufficient or broken chairs, tables, and computers. This respondent ended up finishing their education "by the skin of their teeth," after which they experienced a burn out, with a number of burnout-related symptoms. Respondent 1 did remark that "If I'm honest, you learn a lot more in a year on the job than in the university trajectory," showing that there is room for improvement in teacher training by universities.

A supposed lack of academic satisfaction for EFL teachers did not resonate with the response group. Some were mainly interested in the didactic aspect, others were fascinated with language, and respondent 5 indicated that no matter what material is taught, be it literary or linguistic, it will always be academically unfulfilling to someone with a university degree: "Because it [literary discussion] never really goes in-depth enough. Look, it is interesting to look at how to bring across material and motivate students, that's the interesting part." Respondent 1 indicated that while literary projects were somewhat more fulfilling to teach, frustration did not stem from the material, but rather from strict adherence to a timetable and prescribed teaching method. No respondents said they were disappointed with the material they were

expected to teach, as they knew what to expect beforehand. While respondent 1 reported a preference for teaching literature, this did not jeopardize the sustainability of their teaching career. No teachers reported being obligated to adhere strictly to a set curriculum, which potentially put them into the role of material developer. This potentially interesting aspect of the profession may offset the nature of continual L2 teaching, presupposed to be dull by Romeijn.

Support Structure

The support offered by management differs strongly from school to school. In one school, as reported by respondent 1, starting teachers had weekly meetings with a coach for their first three years on the job. In most other cases, the first year of working included 4-6 meetings with a coach and other starting teachers. In the case of respondent 1, there was an interesting unclarity. Apparently, a support program was supposed to offer assistance and guidance for the first three years, but was only offered in the first, for reasons yet unclear. This reveals that ambitious plans can go awry if a proper infrastructure for executing these programs is not in place. Most respondents indicated the importance of supportive fellow English teachers, who can give targeted advice with regards to subject-specific issues, technical questions (such as about IT-systems, behavior correction protocols, etc.). Respondent 3 was not offered any advice, by university or school, and experienced that as a strong contributing factor of the negative experience which ultimately ended in their dropping out.

Discussion

In this section, the reported results will be discussed in relation to the research already done on the topic. The questions asked during the interviews where partly motivated by the 2016 Romeijn article, which lists grievances that

influence the dropout rate among L2 teachers. Based on the findings reported above, there is indication that some of these issues may not be relevant, while others may be considered to have been confirmed.

The fact that overtime is so prevalent was troubling, but also to be expected. A 2017 Algemene Onderwijsbond study reports that the average teacher works 12.5% of the time extra in the shape of unpaid overtime. The respondents are starting English teachers, as opposed to teachers in general, and often reported working much more overtime. It is unclear what the significant factor is in this higher number for the respondent group, although it appears reasonable to assume lack of experience. This overtime, combined with the already comparatively high workload of Dutch secondary school teachers (Algemene Onderwijsbond, 2017), makes for an even more intense start to a career than the theory suggested. Given the results of the interviews, combined with existing data, it appears to be inadvisable to go through with government plans to stimulate part-time teachers to work more hours to combat the current teacher shortage (MOCW, 2019). The 2017 research (MOCW), which supports activating the "silent reserve" appears to be a solution that may not jeopardize the sustainability of the profession of L2 teacher.

While there are other professions that require extraordinary time expenditure, notoriously law and medical professions, L2 teachers do not enjoy the monetary benefits of those lines of work. This was not perceived to be an issue by the respondents, however. This suggests that government proposals to improve financial conditions for teachers and those studying to be teachers will not necessarily impact starting L2 teachers, but the sample size does not allow for a definitive claim to that effect.

The notion that there are pressing issues that should be addressed before the

implementation of curriculum reform are supported by the research presented by

Zee (2016) and the findings reported by Visser (2017): offering training to

accommodate the needs of special needs students, and diminishing of generally

large class sizes (Van Bergen et al., 2016) could reasonably be expected to

positively influence teacher self-efficacy, which in turn would affect burnout among

starting teachers in a beneficial way (Baan, 2018). Given the experiences of

respondent 3, it may be fair to state that either stricter regulation of or additional

funding for the support of interns and starting teachers could prevent early burnout.

A staleness of curriculum was not reported to be an issue for teachers, running

somewhat contrary to Romeijn's position. This may be due to the role of the teacher

as a material developer, such as outlined in Bouckaert (2018): it is reasonable to

expect that an added layer of complexity affected how academically interesting the

job was be perceived to be. In brief, the findings suggest that subject matter is not a

relevant factor in teacher dropout.

Not all respondents were aware of the promotion structure within their

professional environment. Improving this could be beneficial for the retention of

teachers by schools. Only one respondent had been made aware of such structures

and was able to secure a better starting position because of it. Teachers should be

made aware of opportunities and policy, in order to perform better (Hobma, 2017)

and to remove feelings of uncertainty, which may hurt self-efficacy as well as loyalty

to the employer. It appears that promotion procedure is not always clear to starting

teachers. This can be a point of improvement for both universities and employers.

The results partly confirmed the grievances noted by Romeijn (2016) and

partly refuted them. Thus, this chapter has answered subquestion 3: what are the

opinions and experiences of starting teachers with regards to making the job

sustainable?". This leads to the conclusion of this thesis, in which the advice

package is presented, thereby answering the main question.

Conclusion

The advice package below was constructed based on the findings of the literature review and the interview series. It was sent to the respondents to be commented upon after it was finalized, and their comments were taken into account in the final product. The advice package sent to the respondents via the internet can be found in Appendix D. Three respondents replied, after a five-day window. They had a positive opinion regarding the advice package. Two respondents offered feedback with regards to structure and grammar, which was appreciated. Only respondent 3 offered an amendment: to urge management to not blindly implement curriculum reform if there are more urgent issues. This has been adapted into the advice package. Another comment concerned the matter of teacher autonomy having a social aspect: more senior fellow teachers may impose their methods of teaching, which hurts the autonomy of starting teachers, which may lead to a loss of interest in the profession. Their authority is reinforced by their level of experience. This thesis has not taken this into account, as its focus is not on inter-teacher communication. The advice package was further reworked at a later stage to only include advice aimed at starting teachers, due to a streamlining of the research questions.

The main question of this thesis reads:

"What can starting English teachers do to make the job more sustainable?"

Based on the research above, the answer to that question reads as follows.

Advice Package

- It is advisable to keep track of any significant overtime. This way, a starting teacher can alert management in the case of too high a workload. This gives

grounds for reorganization of tasks, and the option to decline extra assigned tasks.

- It is advisable to attend or promote coaching sessions mainly focused on improving classroom management. This may improve the sense of self-efficacy of all teachers. Classroom management is one of the most difficult and stressful aspects starting teachers cope with, according to this research. This is especially true if the teacher's student groups include students in such situations as having a refugee background, suffering from PTSD, or exhibiting externalizing behaviors (Zee, 2016; respondent 3).

- It is advisable for starting teachers to inquire about advancement structures with potential employers, as this may be beneficial to the starting teacher. This could be seen in the case of respondent 5. Familiarization with the advancement structure of the workplace may be conducive to seeing a clear career path and may result in greater work satisfaction.

- It is advisable to attempt to secure a degree of autonomy with regards to the material that is to be taught. Generally, a perceived lack thereof is considered a deterrent with regards to staying with an organization or the profession as a whole.

- It is inadvisable to start a teaching career with a full-time job. Instead, opting for 0.8fte or less could reduce the risk of burnout, as this offsets the expected 12.5% overtime (AOB, 2017).

- Asking help from direct colleagues and management can assist in coping with difficult workplace situations. A sense of self-efficacy is important to maintain good mental health and to prevent burnout (Baan, 2018). Starting teachers almost inevitably run into issues that their education did not fully prepare them

for. Several respondents who participated in this thesis mentioned their difficulties with classroom management in their first year.

- The material that is to be taught may be limited to EFL teaching without literary themes. It is advisable to take an interest in didactics, as opposed to just literary themes. If this proves unfeasible, it may be advisable to consider applying for TTO[27] or a CKV[28] position.

- A critical mindset with regards to the teaching method teachers have to work with can result in more satisfying lessons. Depending on the level of autonomy enjoyed by the starting teacher, adaptation of the book to the particular needs of the situation is advisable, as well as developing auxiliary exercises to meet the needs of specific student groups. Mixed method approaches have been shown to be more effective (Loewen, 2011) than simple grammar translation, and material designed for the specific group may have a stronger motivating effect on the students, ultimately adding to the sense of satisfaction and self-efficacy for the teacher.

- If a fixed curriculum is in place, it is advisable to try to secure a larger degree of autonomy, as this may affect a teacher's general attitude towards the profession.

- The support structure for starting teachers is not necessarily limited to a coach provided by the school. Most respondents reported their direct colleagues being extremely helpful, as they were able to provide information and coaching on matters that specifically had to do with EFL, besides procedure and general classroom management.

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[27] "tweetalig onderwijs", or education where English is as prominent a language as Dutch for subjects besides the languages. These, respondent 6 reported, work with more creatively fulfilling material than
[28] Cultural arts education, which some schools offer as a subject.

Limitations and Recommendations

This research was limited in multiple ways. As is natural for qualitative research conducted by a single researcher, the response group was necessarily small. Furthermore, the research outcomes are interpretive (Dörnyei, 2007, p.38). As a result, it was possible to formulate advice based on a combination of personal experiences and expert opinion. While this advice may prove useful to starting EFL teachers, it cannot be regarded as the basis for any absolute claims.

The thesis did not adjust for socioeconomic background or gender, as the issues reported by Romeijn (2016) and the MOCW (2019) did not do so either. This may or may not be a relevant factor, and subsequent research may want to take this into consideration. Moreover, the present research took into consideration university-trained fully certified teachers. Conditions may be different for teachers who were trained to the BA minor track or higher vocational track.

Respondent 3 remarked that there is a social aspect when it comes to teacher autonomy, as more senior teachers may have an exaggerated influence. Follow-up research may want to consider or even focus on this, although this research found no grounds in the theory to justify this.

More extensive research, potentially conducted by a team rather than an individual, could include more respondents, and ultimately provide a representative overview of the field. Moreover, this thesis considers both education as a whole and EFL teachers specifically. It could have been even more focused on either English teachers or attempt to say more about secondary school teaching in general. For the purposes of job sustainability, most sources dealt with secondary teachers in general. The matter of the supposedly unfulfilling nature of language teaching materials did pertain to L2 teachers in particular, which was concluded not to be a

relevant issue in this thesis.

Due to the complicated interplay of teacher, management, student, and government, there are angles this thesis has not included. The role of parents and the responsibility the teacher has towards them, the wishes of the government versus the reality of having to operate a successful school, the financial costs for schools required to maintain an elaborate support system for starting teachers with, for example, dedicated coaches or regular intervision, whether starting teachers have need of supporting personnel outside of their direct colleagues, and many others remain interesting questions to pour over.

A critical study into government policy with the aim to advise macro decisions with regards to how to treat and support the teacher population is needed, especially in the light of the newly allocated funds to education.

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Appendix A:

Consent Form

Onderzoek 'Startende Docent Engels'

Ervaringen van beginnende docenten in relatie tot de voorgestelde oplossingen van het lerarentekort.

Contactgegevens onderzoeker: Matthijs Oldenhof

m.oldenhof@hotmail.com

Informatiebrief:

Doel van het onderzoek:
Het doel van dit onderzoek is om een advies uit te kunnen brengen voor meso- en microniveau om de sustainability van het vak van docent Engels te verbeteren.

Type onderzoek:
Dit onderzoek is een afstudeeronderzoek voor de masteropleiding Engelse taal en cultuur: Educatie en communicatie aan de Graduate School of Teaching van de Universiteit van Utrecht. De data uit dit onderzoek zullen verwerkt worden in een masterscriptie. Het onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door 1 onderzoeker. Er zijn geen derde partijen betrokken bij dit onderzoek.

Onderzoeksmethode:
In dit onderzoek worden meningen van docenten en management verzameld door middel van interviews. Het betreft semigestructureerde interviews waarin de onderzoeker een mix van open, maar gerichte, vragen, en gesloten vragen stelt. De onderzoeker zou graag geluidsopnames maken van de interviews om de verkregen informatie op een later tijdstip in het onderzoek te analyseren.

Participatie & Tijdsduur:
Deelname aan dit onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig. Mocht u voor, tijdens, of na het onderzoek willen afzien van deelname aan het onderzoek of u willen terugtrekken uit het onderzoek kunt u dit bekend maken bij de onderzoeker, persoonlijk of via bovenstaand e-mailadres. Deelname aan dit onderzoek zal ongeveer 60 minuten in beslag nemen.

Dataverwerking:
Alle verkregen data uit de interviews zullen volledig anoniem verwerkt worden. Binnen het onderzoek zal er naar participanten verwezen worden als 'docent A', 'docent B' enzovoorts. Eventuele quotaties zullen aan de hand van bovengenoemde labels worden omschreven. Behalve plaats van opleiding en plaats van werkzaamheid zullen geen persoonlijke gegevens genoteerd of gebruikt worden. De geluidsopnames zullen digitaal bewaard worden tot het onderzoek is afgerond, waarna zij gelijk worden vernietigd. De uiteindelijke resultaten van het onderzoek

worden als scriptie (openbaar) gearchiveerd in het online scriptiearchief van de Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht.

Toestemmingsverklaring:

☐ Ik verklaar dat ik bovenstaande informatie heb gelezen en begrepen.

☐ Ik verklaar dat ik vrijwillig meedoe aan het onderzoek 'Talentontwikkeling Engels' en ik geef de onderzoeker toestemming om de verzamelde data in dit interview anoniem te verwerken in het onderzoek.

☐ Ik geef toestemming voor een geluidsopname van het interview, die na archivering van het onderzoek 'Talentontwikkeling Engels' vernietigd zal worden.

Datum:

Handtekening onderzoeker:

Handtekening deelnemer:

Appendix B:

Interview Guide

The questions below are designed to gain knowledge of the experiences of starting teachers with regards to the sustainability of the profession of EFL teacher in Dutch secondary education. The questions are based on the findings of Romeijn (2016), supplemented with opening- and closing questions motivated by Dörnyei (2015). Moreover, the interviews aim to find out whether the respondent has experienced or is experiencing burn-out symptoms and addresses the government solutions mentioned in the literary framework. Ultimately, it tests whether teachers experience the issues outlined by Romeijn, and checks whether the solutions provided by the government regarding the projected teacher shortage are addressing issues that are felt by starting teachers.

Opening questions:

Hoe bevalt het lesgeven tot nu toe? (c)

Hoe lang werk je in het onderwijs? (f)

Welke klassen geef je les? (f)

Content questions

Waar zie je jezelf over 5 jaar, in professioneel opzicht?

Ondervind je klachten door werkdruk, zoals piekeren of moeite met in slaap komen? (a/c)

Heb je wel eens overwogen te stoppen met werken in het onderwijs? Waarom (niet)? (c)

Wat is de kerntaak die je uitvoert? Heb je veel taken daaromheen? Hoeveel tijd per week besteed je ongeveer aan je kerntaak? Is dat genoeg tijd? (a/b)

Krijg je je werk altijd op tijd af? Werk je wel eens over? Kan je na je werkdag goed tot rust komen? (e)

Ben je het eens met de hoogte van je salaris? (b)

Heb je het gevoel dat je voldoende doorgroeimogelijkheden hebt? (c)

Waarom ben je het onderwijs ingegaan? (b)

Wat vind je van de stof waar je over lesgeeft? (b)

Waren de eerste maanden van je baan wat je verwachtte toen je begon met werken? (a)

Wat waren je indrukken van je stage? Ging alles goed, heb je het gevoel dat het zinvol was voor je ontwikkeling? (a/b)

Hoe en door wie word je in je baan ondersteund? Is dat voldoende? (b/c)

Ben je bewust van de ontwikkelingen bij curriculum.nu? Zo ja, hoe voel je je hierover? (d, c)

Final questions:

Heb ik iets niet gevraagd waarvan jij denkt dat ik het wel had moeten vragen?

Zijn er nog andere indrukken die je graag zou willen delen?

Heb jij vragen voor mij?

Notes:

- Tick off questions that have been answered, keep the tally!
- Let the interviewee do the talking, just make sure they go in-depth!
- Probe questions: kan je daar verder op ingaan? Hoe voel je je daarbij?; etc.
- Opening statement:
  - Hey, welkom en bedankt dat je een interview wil doen. Eerst moet dit formulier ondertekend worden dat je het ermee eens bent dat je dit interview doet. Vind je het goed als ik het opneem met mijn telefoon? Zo ja, en als je gemakkelijk zit, laten we beginnen.

Appendix C:

Partial Transcripts

Nota Bene: the interviews were conducted in Dutch. They have been translated as directly as possible, which sometimes makes for fragmented or grammatically incorrect sentences. In order to only include relevant information, ellipses ([…]) were placed where necessary. Information presented in brackets was added during transcription to clarify matters, such as in the case of demonstrative pronouns.

Respondent 1:

Q: "do you think you will still be working here in five years' time?"
A: I think so, but if you had asked me last year… right now, I am very content, because the school and the colleagues are great.
[…]
Q: So last year, you were thinking maybe not..?
A: it was, of course, my first year as a teacher, and I was like: what is happening? I still get that sometimes, with certain groups. A couple of groups… I had no idea how to deal with them, you know, so it was like: here, go teach, you have done [the relevant trajectory], you have got your diploma- I got a job, and THEN you start learning for real, at least I thought: it starts here.
Q: so you did not feel like you were fully prepared by your university?
A: no, not really. If I'm honest, you learn a lot more in a year on the job than in the university trajectory.
Q: but you did do internships, right?
A: yeah, those were fine, but it's different from… if you [have a job]…

Classroom management takes so much energy, that is the main [stress factor]

Q: do you agree with the compensation?
A: if you look at what we have to do, it could definitely be more. […] For now, I am content, but if I look at my colleagues, who are mentors and work full-time, I think: this deserves more pay.

Especially with test weeks, there are big peak moments (workload wise) when you have to do everything at once. It is not like when you have a normal 9-5 job; I always have to work on the weekends. […] especially as a starting teacher, you need to have everything prepared and there is a considerable amount of paperwork.

After I am done teaching on Friday you just think: weekend! But you need to be prepared for Monday, so I need to work on the weekends.

There is a 2-3-year (support) trajectory, and I am not sure whether that was supposed to be implemented last year [when I started], but this year I haven't been supported [by that project]. I do have a coach, but I have not spoken to them yet [note: interview conducted in April].

[on payment advancement structure]: No idea how that works exactly.

Now I teach more literature, which is super fun, because that is what I learned during my master's. […] [teaching grammar and skills] is fine, but sometimes the method is, well, not fantastic. […] it gets a little boring. But if I get to work with English, I am having a good time regardless.

Respondent 2:

Q: do you see yourself in education in five years? Not necessarily at this school, but…
A: yes, that is the idea. I have dropped everything else for a year, so I don't plan on quitting after a couple of years and going back (to a job in business), otherwise I would have stayed. […] Not sure if it will be here [at this school], I only have a 1-year contract. […] I will be 50 this year, and then it is not quite so easy to go back and do something else. So good thing for me that I like it!

There is a lot of support here [at this school]. For interns, and for teachers. Also because it would be a waste if the school invests in new people, getting them settled in, if they are just going to quit later on.

Q: do you experience a lot of stress in this job?
A: compared to my old job, it does happen, but it is a different kind of stress. At my old job there were a lot of deadlines, a lot of projects, which was stressful to me, and here you deal with people. So, if I don't perform well, what does that mean for the students? Stress may not be the right term, but rather "concern" that I experience. And all the peripheral stuff. Is everything written down alright, recorded in Magister [computer system for tracking grades and attendance]? I am very organised, everything is written down, and still I wonder whether it is enough. But it is ok to doubt; I am a starting teacher, and I give myself that space. I discuss that with my colleagues […], and when I am worried, I just open my laptop and take care of it. I am not saying that is the best way of handling things, on a Sunday afternoon, but it works for me.
Q: I wouldn't be able to get my partner to agree to that, weekends are kept free.
A: I understand, but […] it is better to do extra work than to worry about it.

Literature is a subject in itself [at this school], with all languages included. I don't teach literature at all. […] For me, right now, it is good to do the same things [e.g. language skills] a couple of times the same way, to pick it up properly. […] The method [book] leaves something to be desired, too complicated. […] Education itself is very interesting, a lot of fun. And English is a lot of fun. I really like teaching literature, but not teaching does not take away from my enjoyment of teaching.

That one day that I work [note: respondent works 0.2 fte] is for teaching only. All the rest is volunteer work. You need to work at least two days to get time allocated for that.

I think on average I am working for school three days a week, in hours.
Q: so, 24 hours? But you get payed for eight?
A: yes.

Q: So you work a lot of overtime?
A: yes, but I don't see it that way. Because it is my first year working, I still have to learn a lot, so I take a lot of time to do everything. […] I see it as an extended internship. This year I do what I have to do, and next year, we will see.

Q: do you agree with the compensation you receive?
A: yes, because I started in a higher bracket. I had to show my old income receipts.
Q: impolite question, but may I ask if you get paid in scale C?
A: No, B. All the way at the top. But the money I made at my former job I could never make here, not even in the D-scale. I liked it a lot, the fact that I started so high up in the scale.
Q: and you are ok with that, that you cannot make what you used to make?
A: yes, you can find the CAO online. I knew what I was getting into. I made that choice, and I am at a point in my life where that is alright.
Q: and when you consider the content, stresses, and circumstances of this job, do you think the job and its rewards match?
A: because I get paid more […] I think… well, it's education. I can have tons of opinions, and with the strikes… workload, yes, low pay, yes… but if you are in C- or D-scale, it is pretty good. It isn't what you make in the business world, but that is a completely different dynamic. There's bonuses, et cetera. It depends on where you are at. If you are just getting started, as a starting teacher, and you are given scale B, periodic step two, I think that is very low.

Respondent 3:

I had a lot of bad luck. [my internship] triggered a stress response that I could not shake. Around me, all the other teachers were dropping off, which put a certain pressure on me as an intern. I was there, and I thought that dynamic was… very forbidding.

[The "schoolopleider", or employee in charge of tutoring other teachers] was still working on her PGO [certain course in the educational master's]. I noticed that she was not used to coach interns, which was very confusing. It didn't sit right with me, the university [representative] though it looked alright, she is spoken for, we do not have a backup internship for her. Ultimately, in November, I threw in the towel.

I did not know what kind of students I had in front of me. I did not have access to Magister, I did not have access to the lesson schedule, I did have a classroom key… there was just a lot of stuff I could not do, it was completely unclear who was responsible for these things, but I was put in front of the classroom, AND I had a 6-month old kid at home. All that gave me […] heart palpitations, fearfulness, I was planning my classes ahead very minutely, so I had something to fall back on, but I was a very tense teacher. For years I have been standing in front of large groups of people, vmbo, for groups of students, with tonnes of confidence. So I did not recognize myself anymore.

Each class [that I taught] had two students with externalizing behaviours. […] Some refugee students without a permanent status, heavily traumatized, all those details I was not privy to, because I was just an intern.

I asked the head of the English department if there was anyone who could help me (prepare graduating students for their final exams), and she responded: "I do not think so, it will certainly not be me". […] I felt like a burden. "This is insane!"

Q: what do you think of the material that you were to teach the students?
A: I wanted more autonomy, to be able to sometimes diverge from things. At a previous school, there was no planner, so I could do whatever I wanted. But at my last school, everything was more or less set in stone. There were also teachers who had worked on the design [of the planner], which was not without mistakes, so erm… that could not really be touched. That was tough.

I asked my father [who has worked in education his whole life]: "why do teachers bear this?". Why is there so much sh*t coming at you, from the organisation, from students, from these huge group sizes […]

The English department is teetering because so many people are overworked. Then, as a start[ing teacher] you think: "oh dear", you might be afraid before you have a reason to.

Q: what do you think about curriculum.nu, in regard to teaching?
A: […] I think it is a very good thing, in that they are looking at the curriculum and how to shape it, but thing is that teachers are exposed to educational innovations very frequently, and curriculum changes, which makes me think… at the core [of education], not everything is in order. Stabilise those things first. Group sizes, those

kinds of things.

Respondent 4:

Q: do your tasks outside of preparing and executing lessons take a lot of time?
A: Yes, rather. Our school is modernising, we have a lot of meetings, often on Tuesdays. Those take a lot of time.

Q: do you have enough time each week to adequately perform your core tasks?
A: erm, not really. I work four days, and if I would have to do everything in those four days I would not make it. I often work on Fridays, which are free for me, and sometimes on Sunday.
Q: are you able to relax after work, then?
A: yes, I don't do a lot in the evenings, and I try to keep doing fun activities on the weekends.

Q: what do you think of the salary?
A: it is pretty low, as a fully qualified teacher you start in LB, bottom rung, and at my school there are no real opportunities to grow quickly.
Q: do you feel like you have adequate room and opportunity to grow, salary and career-wise?
A: at this school, maybe not, partly because the first-degree teachers […] are going to keep doing that […] and it is currently policy not to dole out many permanent contracts, so I don't know what the situation will look like in two years.

Q: are you aware of curriculum.nu?
A: yes, I am part of the L2 focus group, and as a school we want to contribute. It depends on what comes out of [the project], but if it gets accepted it will be up to us to stimulate the different language departments [in our school] to implement it well.

Respondent 5:

Q: do you see yourself working in education in five years?
A: yes, but maybe in a different capacity, university… in any case, education. In combination with development or research. Not necessarily as a teacher. I will never teach 100%.

Q: you have a 0.4FTE appointment, do you stay within that time with work-related tasks?
A: no, absolutely not. […] I always spend four days on work [note: this workload corresponds with 0.8FTE]. […] three and a half days are spent on teaching, preparation, and grading, and half a day on meetings and suchlike things.

When you work in education, you have to accept that you do more work than you are getting paid for. I have accepted it, with certain limitations. It is something that I am willing to sacrifice, that extra day or half day, whichever. I don't mind it much; I knew about it, I took it into account, and that's it. Moreover, a teacher's salary… it is a pretty well-paying job, still. I am in LB 3, but if you have LC or LD, it is pretty good.

Q: is it clear to you, then, how to get to LC or LD?
A: yes, absolutely. I have looked at the internal procedures surrounding LC and LD, […] and I have discussed it a lot with [University mentor], as in how to handle such matters, in class we were prepared for negotiations with employers.

Q: do you find the material that you teach fulfilling?
A: no.
Q: no, just straight up?
A: indeed.
Q: alright, so what do you teach currently?
A: I teach students how to use English, which is really the basics, for [CEFR levels] A1 or A2 for the upper bracket [of students]. […] I don't really transfer knowledge, but mainly skills.
Q: so you don't teach literature or culture?
A: no.
Q: would you be interested in doing so?
A: yes, but not at secondary school level. Because it never really goes in-depth enough. Look, it is interesting to look at how to bring across material and motivate students, that's the interesting part. But I we are talking about what is interesting on a subject level I want more advanced discussions, like you have in university.
Q: do you think you will grow tired of teaching grammar and skills and such?
A: I don't know. You keep developing, keep looking at how to deliver [your material] better so they understand it better. That is also interesting.

I am lucky to have joined my school when they just started a pilot where we only test formatively, no grades. […] it is completely new to everyone. […] I am involved… I make my own plans, and it is a way of teaching that suits me well.

We [respondent and direct colleagues] work together a lot. Every week we discuss workers, students, with whom things are not going so well, we work together a lot, and support [from the school and colleagues] is certainly there.

Q: what are your thoughts on curriculum.nu?

A: it is very abstract. I think it's a good thing that we are doing it, that people are thinking about it and experimenting with it, but I am too busy, there is so much development at our school on a micro level, that I cannot involve myself with it right now. […] what bothers me, there are so many sources that claim to know what good education looks like, you can take it all into account, it is very conventient, but we are so busy with developing ourselves and researching what good education is, that it would come in handy, but we do not need a wholly new curriculum.

Respondent 6:

Due to technical difficulties, the interview could not be recorded. This was ascertained early in the interview, so more detailed notes were kept. In the interest of succinctness, these have been adapted where relevant in the results section, instead of presenting them here.

Appendix D:

Advice Package as Presented to Respondents

For management:

- It is advisable to not overload the starting teachers under your supervision with extra tasks, as this research found it is likely they work an amount of unpaid overtime already.

- Organising coaching sessions mainly focussed on improving classroom management may improve the sense of self-efficacy of your teachers. This is one of the most difficult and stressful aspects starting teachers cope with, according to this research. This is especially true if the relevant student groups include students in such situations as having a refugee background, suffering from PTSD, or exhibiting externalizing behaviours (Zee, 2016; respondent 3).

- Clarifying advancement structure may incentivize personnel to stay with your organisation. So too will offering permanent contracts.

- When formulating openings, consider the option of splitting large openings into two smaller ones, to attract starting teachers. They can be a breath of fresh air and a long-term investment in a team, if handled and supported well. This runs counter to government advice, as policy is to have all employees work as much as possible to counteract the teacher shortage (MOCW), but this paper posits that this may have an adverse effect.

- The starting teachers considered here preferred to work with some degree of autonomy, and a perceived lack thereof was considered a deterring factor with regards to staying with an organization or the profession as a whole.

- VOION offers a number of recommendations for the support of starting teachers (Hobma, 2017). In light of the interviews, it appears advisable to personalise support, or in other words, to tailor the support to the teacher. Some teachers require other forms of assistance than others. Moreover, it is advisable to clarify how the goals teachers should aspire to relate to the school's mission, to create context and urgency. Nota Bene: Other VOION recommendations may also prove useful but were not tested in this particular research.

For teachers:

- it is inadvisable to start a teaching career with a full-time job. Instead, opt for 0.8fte or less. It is not uncommon for starting teachers, and teachers as a whole, to work a considerable amount of unpaid overtime in order to facilitate their lessons (AOB, 2017).
- A sense of self-efficacy is important to maintain good mental health and to prevent burning out (Baan, 2018). Starting teachers almost inevitably run into some issues that the education track did not fully prepare for. Several respondents who participated in this thesis mentioned their difficulties with classroom management in their first year. Asking help from direct colleagues and management can help to cope with difficult workplace situations.
- Familiarization with the advancement structure of the workplace may be conducive to seeing a clear career path and may result in greater work satisfaction. This avoids investment in a job that one cannot grow in and gives you something to work towards.

- Some employers may be willing to increase compensation after negotiations. This may not be generally known, but one respondent for this project reported such an outcome.

- The to be taught material may be limited to EFL teaching without literary themes. It is advisable to take an interest in didactics, as opposed to just literary themes. If this proves infeasible, consider applying for TTO or a CKV position.

- A critical mindset with regards to the teaching method you work with can result in more satisfying lessons. Depending on your level of autonomy, adaptation of the book to your own needs is advisable, as well as developing auxiliary exercises to meet the needs of specific student groups. Mixed method approaches have been shown to be more effective (Loewen 2011) than simple grammar translation, and material designed for the specific group may have a stronger motivating effect on the students, ultimately adding to the sense of satisfaction and self-efficacy for the teacher.

- If a fixed curriculum is in place, it is advisable to try to secure a larger degree of autonomy, as this may affect a teacher's general attitude towards the profession.

- The support structure for starting teachers is not necessarily limited to a coach provided by the school. Most respondents reported their direct colleagues being extremely helpful, as they were able to provide information and coaching on matters that specifically had to do with EFL, besides procedure and general classroom management.