

Preferred Professional Competences and Characteristics of Kindergarten NNESTs in Taiwan

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This study identified the preferred professional competences and characteristics of kindergarten non-native English-speaking EFL/ESL teachers (NNESTs) in Taiwan. A total of 394 kindergarten faculty and 67 teacher educators in Taiwan participated in this study. The results indicated that professional competences such as good English oral skills are preferred. EFL teaching and fundamental early childhood education courses are both required to complete a kindergarten NNEST training program. However, teacher educators tend to include more theoretical courses, while kindergarten faculty tends to prefer more practical ones. In addition, kindergarten faculty finds teachers with degrees in EFL teaching or early childhood education less desirable than teachers with teaching experience who value professional development. This paper offers a brief but broad overview of the qualifications of Kindergarten NNESTs in Taiwan, contributes to an understanding of the locally based practices of EFL teaching, and provides suggestions on related areas for further study.

Key words: kindergarten EFL, professional competences, characteristics, NNESTs, Taiwan

INTRODUCTION

The quality of the non-native English-speaking EFL/ESL teachers (NNESTs) workforce is of major concern in many countries where English is taught as a foreign language, such as China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. In Taiwan, the government mandated that English be taught in elementary schools in 2001 (Chern, 2002), which has led to a trend of teaching English to kindergarten children. However, the dearth of qualified NNESTs has long been a major problem at the kindergarten level, exacerbated by the fact that more than 30% of public kindergartens and 97% of private ones have implemented English curriculums since the year 2001 (Chang et al., 2001).

One of the concerns expressed by kindergarten faculty in Taiwan is that many of their NNESTs do not have the requisite qualifications. The main reason is that they do not receive proper training in school and thus ignore the importance of developing teaching skills. However, little research has been done in the area of NNESTs' preferred qualifications in teaching English to kindergarten students. The establishment of qualifications for kindergarten NNESTs will contribute to substantial improvements in the quality of the kindergarten EFL workforce in Taiwan and other countries where EFL is taught.

In this paper, I first explore the professional competences every kindergarten NNEST should possess. To discuss such professional competences, I discuss the courses to be included in an appropriate training program, which should comprise language proficiency, knowledge of EFL teaching, and knowledge of early childhood education. Next, I investigate the concept of preferred teacher characteristics using a broad definition of characteristics as general requirements (e.g., English ability, computer competence, teaching license, administration ability, educational background, practicum experience, etc.), values, and attitudes. Finally, I discuss the differences in beliefs between kindergarten faculty and teacher educators pertaining to the professional competences and characteristics of kindergarten NNESTs.

Since a teacher's professional competences depend highly on the content of the teacher education they receive, this study hopes to determine what needs to be offered in training programs by educational institutes, as well as to determine the general qualifications of NNESTs. The findings of this study may assist educational institutes in providing proper teacher education programs and kindergartens in determining useful quality criteria for selecting NNESTs. Please note that the focus of this study is limited only to NNESTs, as determining standards for native English-speaking EFL/ESL teachers might involve more complex factors. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the professional competencies that every kindergarten NNEST should possess?
2. What are the professional characteristics that every kindergarten NNEST should possess?
3. In terms of the professional competences and characteristics of kindergarten NNESTs, to what extent do the beliefs of kindergarten faculty differ from those of teacher educators?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kindergarten EFL Education in Taiwan

In the last few decades, many research results and theories, particularly the critical period hypothesis, have supported the teaching of EFL early in life. It is commonly accepted that the optimal age for language learning is approximately from 2 years old to the beginning of adolescence (about 13 years old) because the human brain structure has more plasticity at a young age (Lenneberg, 1967; Mayo & Lecumberri, 2003; Penfield & Roberts, 1959; Seliger, 1978; Singleton, 1995). This concept led to the common belief in Taiwan that English must be learned in kindergarten if it is to be successfully

acquired. As a child grows, it is very likely that language learning will be hindered by the increase of affective factors (Schütz, 2002). In 1984, McLaughlin also reported that children's particular brain structure allows an advantage in learning a second or third language, and that affective factors are an important influence on their learning. Later, Krashen (1982) proposed the affective filter hypothesis, which is now generally accepted as the main factor that influences language learning. In addition, many other studies have reported high acceptance of foreign cultures in children learning a foreign language. Children often have higher sensitivity to speech sounds and have stronger memorization abilities (Chang et al., 2001; Curtain & Pesola, 1994; Shin, 2001).

As a result, an educational policy of beginning EFL education at the kindergarten level in the capital city of Taiwan, Taipei City, was implemented in 2000. This policy was widely supported by kindergarten teachers and professionals in the field (Chang et al., 2001). The government of Taiwan then followed suit, implementing a national policy to improve the general level of English in Taiwan by establishing an EFL curriculum at the elementary level in 2001. An indirect effect of this policy was to urge parents to start their children's English learning even earlier than elementary school, which led to the spread of kindergarten EFL programs. According to research statistics from Tsao, in 1993, 70% of the children in the Taipei metropolitan area were attending or had attended EFL classes in children's language schools. In 2001, more than 1/3 of public kindergartens and 97.2% of private kindergartens nationwide were offering EFL classes for more than 4 years (Chang et al., 2002). Kindergarten EFL is a clearly inevitable phenomenon in Taiwan.

However, the initial implementation of a new educational curriculum often comes with its own problems and difficulties. In this case, more than half of the kindergarten administrators reported a shortage of qualified EFL teachers. In Taiwan, the main sources of kindergarten EFL teachers are (1) Native English speaking teachers (NESTs) from overseas; (2) Taiwanese NNESTs who hold BA degrees and above from English speaking countries; and (3)

Taiwanese NNESTs who are graduates of a Department of English (Foreign) Language and Literature, Department of Applied Foreign (English) Languages, or Department of Early Childhood Education. The potential candidates for the position of NNESTs seem to be eligible for teaching, but they are very often found to lack essential qualifications. It is very difficult to locate a NNEST with good English ability, teaching knowledge, and teachers' characteristics. However, the new education policy dictates that every teacher of English subjects must be deemed to be highly qualified (Chang et al., 2001). Research findings have also confirmed that teachers play influential roles in developing the intellectual and social skills necessary for children to achieve success in education, and educational institutes, particularly those involved in cultivating teachers, are increasingly held responsible for providing quality training programs for pre-teachers and in-service teachers (Gilroy, 2005). This has placed pressure on educational institutes and the teachers of kindergarten EFL to become more competence-based, so as better to meet the changing demands of the workforce. The design of teacher education programs has to correspond with the actual needs of the teaching world to ensure the success of the program, as is clear from the strong relationship that exists between instruction, learning, and teacher quality, which together have a great influence on student achievement.

Related Research on the Quality Criteria of Kindergarten NNESTs

The Scottish Office Education Department (1992) defined teachers' qualifications as professional competences in knowledge, understanding, teaching attitudes, and practical skills. Whitty (1996) identified two sets of qualities that characterize a successful teacher: professional competences and characteristics. Professional competences consist of knowledge of children and their learning, subject knowledge, knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of the education system, and knowledge of the teacher's role. Professional characteristics consist of knowledge of understanding and skills.

Knowledge of understanding includes professional values, professional development, personal development, communication and relationships, and synthesis and application. Skills include subject application, the ability to deliver knowledge, classroom methodology, class and curriculum management, assessment and record keeping, motivation of learning, answering inquiries, and undertaking a wider role (Shin, 2001; Whitty, 1996). Even though researchers have provided clear ideas on teachers' professional competences (e.g., Morais, et. al, 2004; Pantic & Wubbels, 2010; Pantic & Wubbels, 2010; Peyton, 1997; Whitty, 1996; Wilson & Berne, 1999) and NNESTs' issues have been explored (e.g., A' rva, & Medgyes, 2000; Clark & Paran, 2007; Hayes, 2008; Reves & Medgyes, 2002; Shibata, 2010; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009), information regarding the required knowledge, skills, and characteristics of kindergarten NNESTs is lacking. Very little is known about the professional quality of these teachers, since it takes knowledge in two professional fields, EFL teaching and early childhood education, and a high level of English language proficiency to become a qualified NNEST. According to Chang et al. (2001), kindergarten administrators prefer teachers who possess all of the criteria mentioned above. These types of teachers are especially preferred because a proper kindergarten English curriculum has to be integrated with other subjects in children's lives, and therefore presents a new challenge for graduates from kindergarten education departments, most of whom have never been trained in teaching English, and for graduates from English-related departments, most of whom do not know how to teach kindergarteners.

For NNESTs, professional competences such as language proficiency, fundamental EFL teaching knowledge, kindergarten educational theory, language acquisition, language and culture, and language assessment are commonly required (Richards, 1987; Shin, 2001; Wright, 1990). Kindergarten NNESTs especially need to understand that their students learn differently from older children and adults, and they will need to exercise more care in their classroom learning. And yet, other necessary knowledge is oral analysis, grammar teaching, curriculum and lesson plan design, and

teaching methods. In 1997, Peyton concluded that a good foreign language teacher needs to have:

1. A high level of language proficiency in the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. The ability to use the language for both social and professional purposes in real-life contexts.
3. The ability to understand both oral and written media in the target foreign language and the ability to interact with native speakers of the foreign language.
4. A strong background in the liberal arts and the content areas.
5. A good understanding of the social, political, historical, and economic realities of the regions where the target foreign language is spoken.
6. Pedagogical knowledge, including human growth and development, learning theory and second language acquisition theory, and strategies for developing proficiency and cultural understanding in teaching the foreign language.
7. Knowledge of various technologies and the ability to integrate them into classroom instruction.

Other than professional competence, it is crucial to develop the personal characteristics of teachers (Combs et al., 1974; Korthagen, 2004; Tickle, 1999). Teachers need to be confident and understand their students. They also need to learn from their teaching experiences in order to develop effective teaching in order to deliver knowledge properly to their students (Huizen et al., 2005). After teaching for a certain period of time, teachers will have enough teaching experience to react to their daily teaching circumstances, and therefore form their own teaching styles. Yet, kindergarten NNESTs need to be careful to develop the abilities to deliver knowledge, manage a class and curriculum, assess learning outcomes, motivate learning, and answer inquiries (Shin, 2001). Teachers have to love their jobs, must not disguise their true personalities, and must coordinate with their teaching to bring about the best learning outcomes (Harmer, 2003). However, in Taiwan, the official policy on the criteria for Kindergarten NNESTs remains

undefined. It was this lack of definition that motivated this study.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The representative sample comprised 394 kindergarten faculty and 67 teacher educators in Taiwan. The kindergarten faculty comprised administrators, kindergarten teachers, and kindergarten NNESTs; the teacher educators were professors from colleges or universities who specialized in the related fields of EFL kindergarten education and early childhood education. The subjects in the sample were chosen for the reason that they were the educators currently working in the field and thus would provide the most valid data for this study.

Of the 394 kindergarten faculty, 21.1% were administrators, 63.7% were kindergarten teachers, and 15.2% were kindergarten NNESTs. The majority of the kindergarten faculty participants were females (94.4%) aged 21-40 (70.9%) with BA degrees or higher (77.4%). The number of participants was distributed fairly evenly across urban (40.8%) and suburban (51.5%) areas, and across public (41.8%) and private schools (58.2%).

The majority of the teacher educator respondents were male (70.1%) and aged 41-50 (41.8%). Most held doctoral degrees (82.1%), and some had been teaching in a field related to kindergarten EFL for more than 20 years (28.4). Table 1 summarizes the data on the respondents for the background variables among them.

TABLE 1
Distribution of Participants by Background Variables

Demographic Category	KF (n=394)	TE (n=67)
Gender		
Female	94.4	29.9
Male	5.6	70.1
Age (year)		
Less than 20	1.3	0
21-30	34.2	4.5
31-40	36.7	20.9
41-50	21.7	41.8
51-60	5.1	28.4
61 and above	1.0	4.5
Educational Background		
High school	5.1	0
3 or 5 year college	17.2	0
BA or equivalent	68.7	0
Master	8.2	13.4
Doctorate	.5	82.1
Others	.3	4.5
Years of Teaching Experience		
1-5	31.1	13.4
6-10	24.7	25.4
11-15	22.7	14.9
16-20	9.1	17.9
21 and above	12.2	28.4
School District		
Urban area	40.8	
Suburban area	51.5	
Remote area	7.8	
School Type		
Public	41.8	
Private	58.2	

KF=Kindergarten Faculty; TE=Teacher Educators

Instrumentation

Administrators, the teachers themselves, and teacher educators often have clear views on what abilities teachers should possess. In this study,

information on the preferred professional competences and characteristics of kindergarten NNESTs was gathered from their administrators, colleagues, the teachers themselves, and teacher educators by means of two sets of questionnaires. The form of the written questionnaire was chosen because the opinions of a relatively large group of kindergarten faculty and teacher educators were desired. Questionnaires were developed by the researcher, guided by an extensive review of the literature in different educational areas, to obtain the information needed for the study. The kindergarten faculty questionnaire contained questions on both demographic information and teacher qualifications. The teacher educators' questionnaire contained the same questions except for the demographic items. A pilot test of the questionnaires yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .78, and the questionnaires were subsequently revised for use as a measurement of teacher quality criteria from the participants' perspectives.

In the final version, the NNEST competences and characteristics consisted of 81 items adopting a five-point scale: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly disagree (SD), and multiple responses. The respondents were able to give their opinions on the necessity of each competence by indicating on the questionnaire how necessary they believed each qualification to be for a kindergarten NNEST. The quantitative questions provided concrete data regarding academic competences of kindergarten NNESTs in Taiwan. The assumptions cover areas stated in the related literature as important qualities, which comprise the two main categories described in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Categories of Questionnaire Assumptions

Teacher's professional competency	
Language proficiency training	Fluency of listening, speaking, writing, and reading in English language.
EFL teacher training	English language linguistics, kindergarten EFL teaching method, grammar teaching, oral analysis, language assessment, classroom activity design, phonics theory and application, story-telling techniques, curriculum and lesson plan design, children's literature, bilingual education, culture and language, etc.
Kindergarten education knowledge	Kindergarten education theory, kindergarten child development, kindergarten child psychology, classroom management, kindergarten child behavior, kindergarten education curriculum, etc.
Teacher's preferred characteristics	
General requirements	English ability, computer competence, teaching license, administration ability, educational background, practicum experience, etc.
Values for kindergarten EFL education	Beliefs in education, such as to help students reach their full potential and gain knowledge and skills; belief that every student who enters the classroom can succeed; a student-centered approach, and students should be accountable for their learning and behavior; etc.
Attitudes for kindergarten EFL education	Motivation/enthusiasm for teaching, creative teaching, teaching responsibility, teaching experience sharing and exchange, fairness in class, good communication skills, etc.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedure

The questionnaire was administered over a period of approximately 10 weeks through mail. The participants were told that their responses would be used for research purposes only and that they did not need to reveal their identities. After the data were collected from the participants, each questionnaire was examined individually, and incomplete questionnaires were discarded. Then the data from the remaining, valid questionnaires were coded for statistical analysis, using SPSS 17.0. Descriptive statistics and multiple response analysis were first used to process the data gathered from

the questionnaires. Then one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the differences in kindergarten faculty' and teacher educators' beliefs toward kindergarten NNESTs' preferred competences and characteristics. The statistical significance was set at 0.5 to assess whether the researcher's level of confidence observed in the samples also existed in the population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Professional Competences of Kindergarten NNESTs

To determine which professional competences of kindergarten NNESTs participants considered important, and whether they deemed some criteria more important than others, this section reports the data analysis results in terms of four categories: language proficiency training, EFL teacher training, kindergarten education knowledge, and professional characteristics of kindergarten NNESTs (see Appendix I for complete results of the statistical analysis).

Language Proficiency Training

Participants' beliefs regarding the language proficiency training courses to include in the teacher's training program were analyzed using multiple response analysis. The respondents' positive beliefs were evident, with scores of English oral/conversation training (92.0%), English pronunciation training (91.4%), English listening comprehension (88.5%), and English reading comprehension (60.5%). This indicates that the participants believed listening and speaking skills are more likely to be acquired by kindergarten students. NNESTs will need to be able to teach these two skills at the kindergarten level.

EFL Teacher Training

Participants were asked to respond to 28 items on their beliefs about EFL teacher training necessary to meet the criteria for kindergarten NNESTs. Practical courses related to teaching conversation (76.1%), songs and nursery rhymes (73.2%), teaching materials (72.8%), classroom activities (67.7%), storytelling (67.0%), listening comprehension (61.3%), and lesson planning (57.3%) were believed to be more important; on the other hand, theory courses such as western literature (11.7%), language acquisition (29.9%), language assessment (31.2%), teaching methodology (30.5%), and language and culture (33.6%) were considered less necessary for kindergarten EFL teachers. In addition, grammar teaching (19.2%) and writing teaching (27.2%) were rated least important.

Knowledge of Kindergarten Education

Participants' responses on 27 courses on early childhood education are reported here. The multiple response analysis results indicated that theory courses related to child development and language learning, such as children's language acquisition and development (72.2%), music and rhythmic movement (70.4%), and child development and care (70.2%), were considered to be necessary for kindergarten NNESTs, while policy courses such as childcare and education administration (13.3%) and child and family policy (22.2%) were considered least important.

Professional Characteristics of Kindergarten NNESTs

This section presents the results of descriptive data analysis of kindergarten faculty' and teacher educators' beliefs about kindergarten NNESTs' preferred characteristics in terms of three categories: general requirements, values, and attitudes. (See Appendix II for complete results of statistical analysis.)

General Requirements

Participants were asked to identify their beliefs about general requirements for kindergarten NNESTs. The top three beliefs of general requirements for kindergarten NNESTs were as follows: sufficient English ability ($M=4.47$), EFL teaching knowledge ($M=4.61$), and early childhood education knowledge ($M=4.37$). In addition, according to the respondents, the question of whether a kindergarten NNEST should have a degree in EFL teaching or in early childhood education was less important. Computer skills and administrative abilities were the requirements that participants least expected of a kindergarten NNEST.

Values for Kindergarten EFL

The participants responded in this category with higher means over previous ones, with means of 4.21 to 4.47. The top three beliefs of values for kindergarten EFL were that the curriculum should be adjusted to reflect student's needs and interests ($M=4.47$), the class should be challenging and inspiring ($M=4.46$), and all students are capable of learning ($M=4.42$).

Attitudes for Kindergarten EFL

The participants gave items in this category the highest ratings, from 4.22 to 4.66. The top three attitudes were that teachers should be responsible ($M=4.66$), that they should continually reassess actions and programs in response to a constantly changing environment ($M=4.53$), and that they had an ongoing responsibility to increase their knowledge of both content and pedagogy ($M=4.52$). The least important attitude in the category was that teachers needed to positively participate in school affairs ($M=4.22$).

Belief Differences between Kindergarten Faculty and Teacher Educators

Professional Competences

The differences in beliefs on the professional competences of kindergarten NNESTs between kindergarten faculty and teacher educators were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). As shown in Table 4, the difference was not significant, $F(1, 458) = 3.50, p = .06$, on participants' ratings of language proficiency training courses for a kindergarten NNEST. However, the difference was significant, $F(1, 452) = 17.98, p = .00$, on participants' responses regarding EFL teacher training courses. The teacher educator participants believed some theoretical courses, as listed in Table 3, needed to be included in the training program, while the kindergarten faculty participants did not.

TABLE 3
ANOVA Results of Participants' Differences in Beliefs on Kindergarten EFL Teaching Courses

		N	Mean	SD	Sig.
Second/foreign language acquisition	KF	394	.23	.422	.000
	TE	67	.66	.478	
Computer assisted language learning	KF	393	.37	.483	.005
	TE	67	.55	.501	
Theoretical foundations of ESL/EFL	KF	394	.30	.459	.000
	TE	67	.60	.494	
Classroom management	KF	394	.48	.500	.026
	TE	67	.63	.487	
Child EFL/ESL development	KF	394	.48	.500	.001
	TE	67	.70	.461	
An introduction to children's English	KF	393	.52	.500	.001
	TE	67	.73	.447	
EFL/ESL teaching methodology	KF	394	.24	.428	.000

	TE	67	.64	.483	
Children's English literature	KF	394	.41	.492	.002
	TE	67	.61	.491	

KF = Kindergarten Faculty; TE = Teacher Educators

In addition, as shown in Table 4, there was a significant difference, $F(1, 454) = 3.91, p = .05$, in participants' responses on kindergarten education courses to be included in the training program. Teacher educator and kindergarten faculty participants had significantly different beliefs on the necessity of courses such as childhood education theory, learning difficulties and reinforcement education, observation and participation, parental education, childcare and education administration, early childhood educational psychology, and curriculum development.

TABLE 4
ANOVA Results of Participants' Belief Differences on Kindergarten Education Courses

		N	Mean	SD	Sig.
Theoretical foundations of childhood education	KF	392	.59	.493	.000
	TE	67	.12	.327	
Learning difficulties and reinforcement education	KF	392	.39	.488	.000
	TE	67	.16	.373	
Observation and participation	KF	392	.73	.446	.031
	TE	67	.60	.494	
Parental Education	KF	392	.49	.501	.046
	TE	67	.36	.483	
Childcare and education administration	KF	390	.27	.443	.000
	TE	67	.61	.491	
Early childhood educational psychology	KF	392	.59	.492	.000
	TE	67	.24	.430	
Curriculum development	KF	391	.60	.491	.000
	TE	67	.34	.478	

KF = Kindergarten Faculty; TE = Teacher Educators

Professional Characteristics

In the category of professional characteristics, no significant differences were found among kindergarten faculty and teacher educators regarding their beliefs on kindergarten NNESTs' general requirements, $F(1, 439) = 2.52, p = .11$, values for kindergarten EFL, $F(1, 453) = 3.99, p = .05$, and attitudes for kindergarten EFL, $F(1, 454) = .02, p = .96$.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study of the desirable criteria for kindergarten NNESTs, I examined professional competences and characteristics that should be required. The results in the professional competence section indicate strongly that EFL teacher training courses and fundamental early childhood education courses both appear to be essential parts of a kindergarten NNEST training program. However, English oral skill training courses are the priority, due to the fact that the main curriculum goal of Taiwanese kindergarten EFL is the development of speaking and listening skills. A list of required courses for a kindergarten NNEST training program is established as shown in Table 5 in three areas: English language proficiency, EFL teacher training, and early childhood education knowledge.

TABLE 5
Required Courses for Kindergarten NNESTs

Area	Required courses
English language proficiency	English pronunciation English oral/conversation skills English listening comprehension English reading comprehension
Early childhood education knowledge	Observation and participation in early childhood education Music and rhythmic movement for young children Children's development and care Theoretical foundations of childhood education

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	<p>Design of leisure activities for young children Early childhood teaching methodology Principles of teaching and learning Behavior modification Curriculum development in early childhood education Early childhood educational psychology Children's language development Design of learning environments for young children</p>
EFL teacher training	<p>Phonic theory and application Conversation teaching skills Selection and using of teaching materials Songs and nursery rhyme teaching skills Classroom activity and game Story telling skills and storybook selection Making and using teaching tools Listening teaching skills Lesson planning Child EFL teaching methodology Phonics teaching Introduction of culture and holidays Second/foreign language acquisition Child EFL development psychology Classroom management and language use Introduction of culture and holidays Second/foreign language acquisition Child EFL development psychology Classroom management and language use</p>

In the section on teachers' preferred characteristics, the results showed that teachers who have high English proficiency, with both EFL teaching experience and understanding of children, are highly preferred, but degrees in EFL-related fields or early childhood education are not particularly valued. The most important characteristic is the ability to adjust the curriculum to reflect students' needs and interests. The teaching must challenge and inspire students to learn, and a teacher must believe that all students are capable of learning. Furthermore, professional development is required for any teacher who seeks continuous self-improvement. Teachers must also be willing to

share knowledge and teaching experience with others and increase their own knowledge in response to a changing environment.

In addition, in terms of professional competences, the beliefs of kindergarten faculty and those of teacher educators on EFL teaching and early childhood education courses differ significantly. Teacher educators believe that more theoretical courses are needed, while kindergarten faculty believe more practical courses, such as observation and participation, early childhood education, and parental education, are needed in the training program. Traditionally, teacher training programs are dominated by theoretical courses, which may not appear to be useful in the reality of teaching. Houston (2002), as a University Department Chair, argued that teacher training courses should teach the techniques that can be used immediately in actual teaching. Therefore, it is recommended that further studies focus on the issue of the discrepancy in the standards of NNEST training courses.

The main contribution of this research is to identify preferred professional competences (contents in the NNESTs' training program) and characteristics (general requirements, administration ability, educational background, practicum experience, values and attitudes) that affect the teachers' professional practices and the quality of student learning. The study results provide information for prospective teachers to critically re-evaluate their professional role and their qualifications as kindergarten EFL teachers, for kindergarten administrators to select NNESTs, and for teacher educators to improve their teacher training programs. These initial results open the way for further research that aims to assess the impact of teachers' training programs on the professional competences that teachers consider necessary to develop and the characteristics that are necessary to develop in order for teachers to teach effectively. The conditions for improving the efficiency of teachers' training programs for NNESTs can also be explored.

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APPENDIX A

Multiple Response Analysis Results Regarding Participants' Beliefs toward Kindergarten NNESTs' Professional Competences

Courses	Responses	
	N	Percent
<i>Language proficiency training</i>		
English oral/conversation training	415	92.0%
English pronunciation training	412	91.4%
English listening comprehension	399	88.5%
English reading comprehension	273	60.5%
English writing training	171	37.9%
English grammar	167	37.0%
<i>EFL Teacher Training Courses</i>		
Speaking teaching techniques	344	76.1%
Songs and nursery rhyme teaching techniques	331	73.2%
Selection and use of teaching materials	329	72.8%
Classroom activities and games	306	67.7%
Story-telling skills and storybook selection	303	67.0%
Listening teaching techniques	277	61.3%
Lesson plan design	259	57.3%
An introduction to children's English	253	56.0%
Introduction to western culture and holidays	252	55.8%
Phonics teaching	251	55.5%
Vocabulary teaching techniques	239	52.9%
Child EFL/ESL development	236	52.2%
Classroom management	231	51.1%
Classroom observation and practicum	224	49.6%

Making of teaching aids	219	48.5%
Children's English literature	201	44.5%
Reading teaching techniques	200	44.2%
Teaching demonstration	183	40.5%
Computer assisted language learning	182	40.3%
Bilingual education	159	35.2%
Theoretical foundations of ESL/EFL	158	35.0%
Language and culture	152	33.6%
EFL/ESL teaching methodology	138	30.5%
Language assessment	141	31.2%
Second/foreign language acquisition	135	29.9%
Writing teaching techniques	123	27.2%
Grammar teaching techniques	87	19.2%
Western literature	53	11.7%
<i>Kindergarten Education Knowledge</i>		
Children's language acquisition and development	325	72.2%
Music and rhythmic movement for young children	317	70.4%
Child development and care	316	70.2%
Theoretical foundations of childhood education	303	67.3%
Design of classroom activities for young children	288	64.0%
Early childhood teaching methods & materials	280	62.2%
Children's literature	266	59.1%
Curriculum development in early childhood education	256	56.9%
Early childhood educational psychology	248	55.1%
Learning environments for young children	241	53.6%
Observation and Participation in Early Childhood Education	239	53.1%
Parental education	216	48.0%
Interpersonal Communication	202	44.9%
Ethics for early childhood professionals	201	44.7%
Multicultural education	173	38.4%
Preschool special education	166	36.9%
Learning difficulties and reinforcement education	163	36.2%
Nutrition and diet in early childhood	162	36.0%

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Craft education for young children	155	34.4%
Montessori education	153	34.0%
Early childhood behavior modification	146	32.4%
Childcare and education administration	145	32.2%
Early childhood industry operation & management	143	31.8%
Kindergarten education history	124	27.6%
Child and family policy	100	22.2%
Educational philosophy	97	21.6%
Childcare and education administration	60	13.3%

APPENDIX B

Distribution of Mean Scores on Participants' Beliefs toward Kindergarten NNESTs' Preferred characteristics

Statement	Percent %					Mean	SD
	SD	D	U	A	SA		
<i>General Requirements</i>							
English ability	.4	.2	.7	49.6	49.1	4.47	.573
EFL teaching knowledge	.4	.2	.7	44.1	54.3	4.61	1.928
Early childhood Ed knowledge	.4	.4	.7	49.9	44.4	4.37	.640
Teaching certificate	.9	3.9	14.0	51.1	30.0	4.05	.822
Language proficiency certificate	.7	1.7	8.3	51.1	38.3	4.25	.731
Early childhood EFL trend	.9	.7	7.2	55.1	36.2	4.25	.690
Administrative ability	.9	5.3	24.9	49.2	19.7	3.82	.838
Computer technique	.2	3.7	14.9	61.2	20.0	3.97	.720
EFL major	.4	5.5	11.2	49.6	33.3	4.10	.834
Early childhood Ed major	.7	6.3	19.2	49.9	24.0	3.90	.857
Teaching/practicum experience	.4	1.1	3.7	52.6	42.2	4.35	.648
Professional development	.4	.4	4.8	49.9	44.4	4.37	.640
<i>Values for kindergarten EFL</i>							
All students are capable of learning.	.7	.7	3.0	47.6	48.0	4.42	.651
Success of teaching depends on student improvement.	.4	3.1	8.3	44.8	43.4	4.28	.777
Education is the promoter of personal and social development.	.4	.7	3.1	49.0	46.8	4.41	.629

Teachers are the cornerstone of education.	.7	2.8	9.6	48.9	38.0	4.21	.779
Teachers hold certain authority.	.4	.2	2.2	55.0	42.1	4.38	.588
Curriculum should be adjusted to reflect student's needs and interests	.4	.0	.7	50.2	48.7	4.47	.561
Teaching must be challenging and inspiring.	.4	.0	2.2	47.8	49.6	4.46	.588
Students acquire and accomplish basic standards of knowledge.	.4	.2	4.4	52.1	42.9	4.37	.622
<i>Attitudes for Kindergarten EFL</i>							
Teaching with responsibility	.4	.0	.0	31.9	67.7	4.66	.526
Teaching with enthusiasm	.4	.0	5.0	41.3	53.3	4.47	.635
Creative teaching	.4	.2	2.8	45.6	50.8	4.46	.610
Experience sharing	.4	.0	.2	50.0	47.6	4.44	.582
Respect for parents	.7	.7	5.2	58.0	35.4	4.27	.649
Setting proper classroom rules	.2	.2	4.6	52.8	42.2	4.36	.603
Teaching students to be a lifelong contributing and active citizens	.4	.0	4.4	53.8	41.4	4.36	.609
Teaching based upon a belief in fairness	.4	.2	.9	49.1	49.4	4.47	.577
Proper use of teacher authority	.4	.2	.7	49.1	49.6	4.47	.573
Continuous self-improvement	.4	.0	.7	45.0	53.9	4.52	.562
Positive participation in school affairs	.2	1.1	8.5	57.2	33.0	4.22	.658
Consistent acceptance of all students	.4	.2	5.9	54.6	38.9	4.31	.632
Good interaction with parents	.4	.4	1.2	50.0	48.0	4.45	.590
Good communication with school colleagues	.2	.2	1.6	47.6	50.4	4.48	.566
Ability to respond to a constantly changing environment	.3	.1	.6	44.2	54.8	4.53	.589

SD = strongly disagree (1); D = disagree (2); N = neutral (3); A = agree (4); SA = strongly agree (5).

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