Examining the Effectiveness of Tefl Programmes: Perspectives of Students from Two Universities

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Examining the Effectiveness of TEFL Programmes:

Perspectives of Students from Two Universities

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the perspectives of 35 student teachers' at two different universities on the extent to which the MA in TEFL programmes are effective in preparing them to be knowledgeable and skillful teachers of English as a foreign language. The two programmes examined are the MA in TEFL programme at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Rijeka, Croatia and the MA in English Philology at the Institute of English Studies at the University of Wrocław, Poland. Using an on-line questionnaire data were collected on the student teachers' general experience with the enrolled TEFL programme; how prepared and satisfied they feel with the programme, the outcomes they have achieved and the programmes' strengths and weaknesses they have noticed. The findings show that even though both TEFL programmes comprise similar courses and student obligations, they are carried out very differently, with the main disparity being the organization of studies and the pre-service training. Student teachers' preparedness to teach was evaluated through seven EPOSTL categories (i.e. areas of teacher competences) and was identified as moderate in both student teacher groups. They share the feeling that the extensive theoretical knowledge is their most achieved outcome, while a more hands-on experience is still needed. All student teachers are also moderately satisfied with the TEFL programme, but their perceptions on its strengths and weaknesses suggest that there is room for improving the curriculum and implementing new strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the relevant teacher training programmes.

Key words: TEFL, student teachers, pre-service training, teaching practicum, programme evaluation

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List of Abbreviations

TEFL   Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TESOL   Teaching English as a Second Language

B.A.   Bachelor of Arts

M.A.   Master of Arts

EPOSTL   European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages

EPLTE   European Profile for Language Teacher Education

EL   English Language

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

UWR   University of Wrocław

FHSS   Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka

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1. INTRODUCTION

Questioning the effectiveness of an education system as well as its main stakeholders, i.e. the teachers, has always been one of the main goals of education and quality assurance systems, and a common topic of interest within the field. In recent years, new challenges have emerged, and the crucial role of education is making a difference in how well the future generations will be able to confront them (OECD, 2018). Some of the newer changes occurred in the last few decades with the rapid spread of English in the globalized world where both physical and electronic mobility of people is increasing, where world Englishes are becoming more diverse and non-native speakers greatly outnumber the native (Crystal, 2012). Its substantial impact has promoted the need (and desire) to learn English and has influenced every aspect of teaching English; from educational policies and the classroom experience, to the way future teachers are preparing for their profession. Accordingly, EFL teacher preparation programmes have received more attention and there is a growing awareness of their responsibility to educate teachers that are competent, confident, and equipped with all the necessary skills and competences (Harmer, 1998, Ur, 1991, Brosh, 2008, Caena 2011) and prepared for their profession. Teachers were, and still are considered to be "agents through which knowledge and skills are communicated and rules of conduct enforced" (Dewey, 1938, p. 6), and although their work is changing in line with the global matters, their main role never will. Regarding the current status of English, English teachers worldwide are even more so the ones who must keep up with educational trends and research to guide their teaching and make it more effective and applicable to their specific context. However, in the initial stages of their career, the teacher education programmes are the ones that should provide core competences and guidelines for teaching.

Even though there is no universal consensus on a specific framework that teacher education programmes should follow, many authors (such as Chong and Cheah, 2009, Darling-Hammond, 2006, Freeman and Johnson 1998 and Day 1991) have attempted to systematize the knowledge base that English teachers should have. Besides that, the importance of experiential learning should not be undermined, which is why an integrated approach to theory and practice should be adopted in any teacher education programme (Ur, 1991, Darling-Hammond, 2006), and in programmes for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) as well.

Nowadays there is a plethora of TEFL programmes available. Whether they are offered as a teacher preparation programme at universities, at specialized TEFL schools or on online academies; TEFL programmes are led by the same goal – to produce competent English teachers by achieving the proposed outcomes and standards. "One needs to know where one is going (the standard) in order to know how to get there (the curriculum)" (TESOL, 2014, p. 9). In other words, establishing certain quality standards is vital, for they serve as an objective measure for developing and evaluating the programme curriculums.

Evaluation of teacher education programmes and the issues regarding how it should be carried out has been investigated and carried out by many researchers (Coskun, 2010, Martinez, 2017, Wang, 2009 et al.). Along with their valuable findings, the works of these and the following authors demonstrate different perspectives from which one can evaluate a programme. That is to say, an evaluation can include a conceptual overview of the programme and the models of curriculum it adopts (Nunan, 2007, Lund and Tanehill, 2014, O'Neill, 2017, Kuhlman and Knežević, 2014) or it can take a more empirical approach and examine the perceptions of the programme's main participants – the students. Some scholars have attempted to develop strategies and models for evaluating teaching programmes and their effectiveness by questioning student teachers' preparedness or self-efficacy, as a primary objective of a teacher preparation programme (Sotoudenhama, 2016, Turner et al., 2004, Pendergast et al., 2011, Barnes, 2000, Bray-Clark, 2003). Others have developed their own frameworks for evaluation (Peacock, 2009, Housego, 1990) or utilized internationally recognized publications such as the EPOSTL for developing a research instrument for programme evaluation through student teachers' perceptions (Bergil and Sançoban. 2017).

Drawing on insights from the findings of these studies, and the data obtained in this piece of research, this thesis is an attempt to make a small scale contribution to the current academic knowledge on TEFL programmes and to promote the need for self-reflection – both individual and institutional. It aims to examine two TEFL programmes – one at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, Croatia (henceforth FHSS) and the other at the University of Wrocław in Poland (henceforth UWR), regarding their effectiveness in preparing prospective teachers for their profession. Both TEFL programmes share the same goal of preparing students to be good teachers and use similar strategies to achieve that outcome. However, the analysis of the same type of programme in two different contexts has shown some differences, both in the execution of the program, and in the student teachers'

attitudes towards it. This study will examine these differences and use them as an opportunity to share examples of good practice between the universities.

The thesis is divided in three main parts. The first part includes chapters one and two. The first chapter provides the theoretical background of the topic, i.e. the most important notions about teacher education and TEFL in particular; what it stands for, how it is developed, carried out and evaluated. It elaborates on the required knowledge base and competences that EFL teachers are expected to have, and the trends they are facing nowadays. Also, it provides specific information about the two observed TEFL programmes within their national context and several studies that dealt with the same topic. The second part that is presented through chapters three and four, offers the general information about the study and its methodological design. Finally, in the third part of the thesis the results are shown in chapter five and analyzed in chapter six. The concluding remarks, limitations and implications are presented in chapters seven, eight and nine.

2. ABOUT TEFL PROGRAMMES

2.1. What is TEFL?

Several acronyms and very similar terms are used to describe education programs for teachers of English as a foreign or second language. Therefore, it is important to distinguish the terms TESOL, TEFL, CELTA and DELTA. The two most common acronyms are TEFL (*Teaching English as a Foreign Language*) and TESOL (*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*) which essentially have the same meaning, and are often used interchangeably. While both terms are used to describe English teaching in countries where English is not a native language, TESOL is more commonly used in North America (and is also an International Association) and TEFL is more often used in the UK and the European context ("International TEFL and TESOL training", n.d.). Also, TESOL can be considered as an umbrella term for both TEFL and TESL, since "other languages" cover both second and foreign language ("EFL acronyms and terms, 2018, "What is TESOL", n.d.) However, given that the two analyzed programs are located in countries where English is taught as a foreign language the term TEFL will thus be used throughout the thesis.

What is characteristic of TEFL is that it can also be obtained through training and short-term programs and a specific higher education degree is not a prerequisite for enrollment. This makes it easier for those who want to change or upgrade their current career. In other words, English graduates of different majors can apply to a TEFL programme and obtain a certificate allowing them to work with EFL learners. ("TEFL Certification Requirements", n.d.) Another common term worth mentioning is CELTA - Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults, which is "a specific brand of TEFL certification that is awarded by the University of Cambridge's non-profit assessment organization, Cambridge English Assessment" (ibid.). In comparison to TEFL or TESOL which are not connected to any particular programme or stakeholder, CELTA (and other similar, widely known qualifications such as DELTA or Trinity respectively) is a "branded" certificate awarded by a certain prominent university (Lee, n.d.). Such "branded" programmes also have a structured external monitoring of courses by the experts from the university in order to ensure the programme's quality and international recognition ("About TEFL", n.d.). In comparison, other TEFL programmes rely mostly on self-evaluation, but they still have to abide by some generally accepted standards. Nevertheless, on completion of any of these programmes, candidates are eligible to teach English as a foreign language.

Over the years, the development of English language teaching (ELT) has naturally followed the educational changes and paradigm shifts that happened as a result of social and political changes worldwide. However, what paved the way for English teaching of today is the process of globalization. Globalization has placed English in a favorable position by popularizing it to the point of being the unofficial lingua franca (Crystal, 2003), leading to an increased interest in the language and ELT. Teaching English has become, over time, a desirable profession that also offers opportunities for teaching abroad. From 1960's to 2001, the number of non-native EL speakers has surpassed the number of native speakers in 3:1 ratio (ibid.) which is still growing. Consequentially, so has the number of non-native speaking teachers who represent 80% of all English teachers (Canagarajah, 2005, as cited in Selvi, 2011).

Although TEFL has always been focused on learning English per se, the adopted teaching methods and approaches to achieve that goal have differed greatly throughout time.

In the very beginning, TEFL teachers taught in the same way they learned the language; with the predominance of the "classical method" and the grammar translation method[1]. Since then, many TEFL trends have come and passed, followed by better, more research-grounded approaches and "methodological innovations". Larsen-Freeman (2000) in her work elaborates on a variety of contemporary teaching methods and principles in language teaching. Such are, for example: content-based instruction, project work, community learning and other methods used within the task-based or communicative approaches, along with some more unconventional methods like the silent way or total physical response (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). All of these newer methods focus on the process of learning and support the notion that 'using English in order to learn it' is more effective than simply 'learning to use English' (ibid.).

The most widely accepted and advocated outlook on ELT nowadays is the communicative approach which originated in the 70's as "remedial; an attempt to overcome inadequacies of structural syllabuses, materials, and methods" (Howatt, 1984, p. 287). The newly adopted emphasis on language use and real-life practicality has become a *leitmotiv* of English teachers, teacher educators and researchers as well. Continuing on that educational transposition, TEFL began to utilize and educate prospective teachers how to incorporate numerous new strategies, ways of learning, more authentic material and more thoughtfully tailored classroom experience.

However, the noticed lack of a formal way to gather together English teachers and their shared knowledge, led to the establishment of the TESOL International Association in 1966. Today TESOL is the largest, leading organization in the field of ELT that keeps contributing to the profession ("TESOL Annual Report", 2017). In their words, they envisaged the organization as an "international association of professionals advancing the quality of English language teaching through professional development, research, standards, and advocacy", whose vision is "to become the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching" ("Mission and values", n.d.). To reach the acclaim at an international level, the TESOL research team had to provide a particular set of guidelines that

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[1] Interestingly, the earlies example of a TEFL teacher whose name was found in the books is a frenchmen called Gabriel Meurier who made a living by teaching EFL in Antwerp, around the year 1550 (Howatt, 1984, p 8.)

could be used by every language teacher or institution which will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.4.

2.2. Types of TEFL programmes and certifications

Mention has been made that there are different ways of obtaining a TEFL certification; however, all programmes have to fulfill the following criteria: a) appropriate coverage of the 'main' knowledge base and b) accreditation by a competent institution. Only then is the programme considered to be valid and official certifications can be awarded. However, since there is no national or international accrediting body for TEFL programmes, that role is most commonly taken by the government, ministries of education, or a recognized and reputable non-profit body ("What is Accreditation for TEFL", n.d.). It is very important to be careful while choosing a TEFL program. One should realize that membership in an association does not entail a valid certification and that such offers are commonly a scam. Also, it is necessary to investigate the accrediting body's validity through their physical location, existing members and proclaimed standards. Teacher education, or in less general terms; teacher training or preparation programmes do not share universal standards, designs or curriculums, however, they all encompass and merge two main features: a) the theoretical part - carried through university lessons about subject matter and pedagogy, psychology and methodology, and b) a practical part or a pre-service training (also referred to as teaching practice) (Darling-Hammond, 2006), which is defined as "a course of study designed especially for the preparation of teachers that involves the supervised practical application of previously studied theory" (Merriam-Webster dictionary) and is carried out in-school and provides the student teachers a particular professional experience (Ur, 1996, p.3). These two key features of a teaching programme should be intertwined in order to effectively prepare the student teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). TEFL programmes are no different than any other teacher training programme, however, in its particular context, the general programme standards should include:

- "At least 100 hours of coursework
- At least 6-20 hours of pre-service training (live practice teaching and observation)
- An accredited curriculum from a recognized, independent organization within the field
- Instruction provided by a qualified instructor (who has an equivalent to a MA in TESOL or related field)" ("What is Accreditation for TEFL", n.d.).

As for the mode of instruction, TEFL programmes can either be taken on-line (e-learning) or on-site ("brick and mortar" learning). On-line TEFL courses' popularity has grown with the development and accessibility of new technologies. Naturally, they are more flexible, affordable and basically anyone can enroll in them without having to meet certain prerequisites. On the other hand, TEFL programmes offered on-line are often considered to be dangerous since they can easily fake their accreditation, and are usually criticized for the lack of actual, "hands-on" classroom experience and teaching practice (Stimac, 2018). However, even though the pre-service training is rarely offered by an on-line programme, the professional level certification cannot be issued without the practical part and thus has to be compensated in some other way.[2]

On-site TEFL programmes refer to the course programmes conducted face-to-face, which are usually offered by specialized language institutes or universities. Universities can offer TEFL programme at the undergraduate level (BA), but more frequently it is carried out at the graduate level (MA). In the latter cases, the focus is on pedagogical skills and enabling teachers to work in an EFL context regardless of their knowledge of the learners' first language (Bagwell, n.d). TEFL programmes are often offered by the Department of English at different universities which, upon completion of the programme, award the state certification to teach English in primary and secondary schools (ibid.). On the other hand, some universities offer the possibility to graduate with a major in other English specializations (such as linguistics, literature and/or translation) with a concentration in TEFL ("TEFL Certification Requirements", n.d.). Whichever way the on-site programme is carried out, it is inevitably more time consuming and not as flexible as taking on-line courses. Formal types of TEFL programmes tend to be supervised by professors, are practice-based, and usually require a bachelors' degree certification for admission. The courses they offer combine general theories in pedagogy and skill-specific seminars that are put into practice on teacher practicums and pre-service training (ibid.). Although the university programmes are very similar in curriculums and courses they offer, the students' obligations, the amount of teaching opportunities and the overall execution of the programme can differ greatly between different education systems and even universities within the same system.

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[2] However, there are exceptions to the rule, such as the on-line TEFL programme from CIEE (The Council on International Educational Exchange*)* which addressed this shortcoming through incorporating obligatory pre-service training hours spent in the classrooms at home or abroad. These types of 'hybrid programs' are becoming more popular and acclaimed.

2.3. Requirements and expected competences of EFL teachers

The question of what makes a 'good EFL teacher' and their characteristics has been addressed numerous times and continually adapted as new trends in education emerged (Brosh, 2008, Harmer, 1998, Caena, 2011, Freeman, 1998, Ur, 1996). Moreover, ELT differs from other fields due to the fact that language is the means and the subject of instruction, as well as the cultural, social and context factors that have to be taken into account. Thus, certain competences might be exclusively related to TEFL. Ur (1996) mentions that the teacher training programme should be viewed as a process that does not end with the graduation but provides a solid starting point for prospective teachers' professional (as well as personal) development. In other words, such programme aims to bring the prospective teachers to a position where they feel autonomous, competent and encouraged to continue learning and forming habits throughout their career (Ur, 1996). In her work, Ur (1996) promotes the notion of a teacher as a 'reflective practitioner' which is the fundamental prerequisite for developing all teaching competences. This viewpoint is also present in the works of Harmer (1998) who listed the desirable qualities of a good, competent English teacher. Some of the key qualities he mentions include: having a good relationship with learners, effective class management as an "ability to control and inspire a class", providing interesting lessons, using simple instructions in language that is comprehensible to the students' level while and maximizing the student talking time (Harmer, 1998, p.3). To simplify, "Good teachers care more about their students' learning than they do about their own teaching" (Harmer, 1998, p.3), which also implies the importance of adopting a student-centered approach. Furthermore, Broch (1996), emphasizes that good EFL teachers must primarily be in great command of the target language, must have the ability to explain and incite the students' motivation, they have to treat all students equally and be available for them.

Additionally, his work, like many others', underscored that the EFL teachers' professional and interpersonal competences overrule the advantages of being a native-speaking teacher (Medgyes, 1992, Salvi, 2011). The language competence, that is dominant among the native speaking English teachers (Medgyes, 1992), is merely one variable in a plethora of teaching skills, which is why the quality of English teachers should be evaluated comprehensively. Although native speaking teachers might have the higher ground in the context of language use, the non-native teachers undeniably have the advantage in the context of language learning (Widdowson, 2009). "TESOL has recently made public its opposition to

discrimination against the non-native teacher, as a matter of sociopolitical principle" (Widdowson, 2009, p. 389). This shows that the quality of English teachers which was often measured in terms of their native-like proficiency is gradually being reconsidered and abandoned. Nevertheless, the researchers that debated the differences between native and non-native EFL teachers' effectiveness agree that each group of teachers has specific advantages and shortcomings, and that the best solution for any institution is to have a balance of both groups (Medgyes, 1992, Garcia-Merino, 1998). Native or non-native, good English teachers have a lot in common; they are qualified, have high levels of communicative ability, are fair and enthusiastic about teaching and they share the same knowledge base.

2.3.1. Knowledge base of language teachers

Even though characteristics of a 'good teacher' are often vague and susceptible to subjective interpretation, numerous authors such as Day (1991), Freeman (1998), Richards (1998) and many others, have tried to conceptualize the knowledge base that all English language teachers should possess. Essentially, they have built on each other's work and kept adding new categories or simply just recapitulating the proposed knowledge bases of language teachers and classified them as they saw fit. Faez (2011) drew upon different authors to show the differences in conceptualizations of the knowledge base of language teachers (See Table 1). Although all the authors listed in the table have their own perception of what is important, they generally agree that the teachers' shared knowledge base must include: a) subject matter/content knowledge or knowledge about the language, b) pedagogic knowledge (theories of teaching, teaching skills and practices etc.) and c) contextualization knowledge (whether it concerns the national curriculum that teachers work by, culture or social context they teach in). These three 'umbrella' terms are then elaborated in detail to form a curriculum of any language teacher education programme.

Table 1 - Summary of Knowledge Base Frameworks (Faez, 2011, p. 35)

	Shulman (1987)	Lafayette (1993)	Day (1993)	Richards (1998)	Freeman & Johnson (1998)	NCATE Standards (2008)	Salvatori & MacFarlane (2009)
K n o w l e d g	Subject matter knowledge	Language proficiency	Content knowledge	Theories of teaching	The teacher-learner	Language, linguistics, comparisons	Pedagogical skills
	Pedagogical content knowledge	Civilization and culture	Pedagogic knowledge	Teaching skills	The social context	Cultures, literatures, cross-disciplinary contexts	Cultural competency
	Curricular knowledge	Language analysis	Pedagogic content	Communication skills and language	The pedagogical	Language acquisition theories and instructional	Language proficiency

bases							
e		(knowledge about language)	knowledge	proficiency	process	practices	
b			Support knowledge	Subject matter knowledge		Integration of standards into curriculum and instruction	
a				Subject matter knowledge		Assessment of language and cultures	
s				Pedagogical reasoning and decision making		Professionalism	
e				Contextual knowledge			
s							

However, it should be noted that all the afore mentioned key elements of the TEFL teachers' knowledge base are not sufficient for preparing a future teacher for classroom situations in which they will find themselves. Namely, many teacher preparation programmes are still adopting the rationalist model in their teaching, where students are expected to learn the theory and be able to apply it in practice (Day, 1991). In contrast, many authors (Day 1991, Ur 1991, Freeman and Johnson, 1998) agree that learning to teach is a long and complex process, and that providing more theoretical and research knowledge does not make the prospective teachers better practitioners. Thus, the teacher should be a 'reflective practitioner' that is able to work in a cycle of self-assessment and improvement, while the teaching programme is the one that should encourage it through the reflective model of teacher learning (Ur, 1996). For this reason, initial teacher education programmes should give equal attention to the practical part of the programme and offer plenty of teaching opportunities, as they have been continually proven to be the most useful experience for student teachers (Faez, 2011).

2.3.2. Trends in TEFL

Along with focusing on expanding their knowledge base, EFL teachers should also foster their professional development and keep pace with the educational trends in the field. Borale (2013), Finch (2008) and Sun (2014) have proposed their views on the trends in the last decade, and although some of these trends might be general and others are more specific, in most cases they are overlapping (See Table 2). Since there is no unanimous agreement, these overlapping TEFL trends can be summarized as follows: a) an early start in learning and teaching English, b) greater focus on learner autonomy and active, collaborative learning process, c) adoption of the communicative approach and language usage in the multicultural context, d) less emphasis on Anglophone countries' culture and more attention towards world Englishes, e) developing meta-cognitive knowledge and critical thinking, f) outcome oriented, content-based curriculums, g) promoting self-reflection and accountability and h) integration

of new technologies in all educational aspects. A summary of current key trends is presented in Table 2, where according to Borale (2013), there are eight current trends in TEFL, while Finch (2008) and Sun (2014) mention nine of them (See Table 2).

Table 2 – Trends in TEFL

Author	Borale (2013)	Finch (2008)	Sun (2014)
Trends in TEFL	1. Change in the Goal of Teaching English 2. Early Start in Teaching English 3. Change in the Approach to Teaching Culture 4. Changing View of an English Teacher 5. Change in Teaching Content and Test Design 6. E-Learning 7. Strategic Teaching and Learning 8. Teachers as Life-Long Learners	1. Classroom – Based, Performance Assessment 2. Collaboration 3. Learning English through pop culture, comics, cartoons, movies, the Internet, etc. 4. Process, task-based/project-based syllabi 5. Recognition of affective and social filters 6. Cyclic, contextual learning (learning strategies, and self-reflexiveness) 7. Postcolonialism, De-colonialism (regional englishes and diversification) 8. Qualitative, subjective, action research (effect of beliefs in learning) 9. Student-centred learning	1. Changes in Perspectives on English Language Teaching and Learning 2. Changes in Goals of English Language Teaching and Learning 3. Changes in Teaching Approaches 4. Changes in Teaching Content, Curriculum Design, and Assessment 5. Expanding the Dimension of Communicative Competence 6. Changes in Views of an Effective English Educator 7. Early Start in Learning English 8. Rapid Development and Integration of Information Technology in ELT 9. Changing Roles and Increasing Responsibilities of Teachers

Other requirements for EFL teachers, such as lesson planning, preparing for class, fostering critical thinking and meta-cognitive skills among students, being active within the teaching community, engaging in professional development throughout their teaching career and much more, were not specially mentioned since they are all equally important and essentially the same for teachers of all school subjects. Finally, to ensure the quality of instruction in the long term, teacher education programmes should also take in account contemporary trends and research findings, and meet the demands by implementing and developing new knowledge. "Otherwise, teacher education could fully equip a first-year teacher with knowledge and skills to last a career" (Freeman, 2002, p.11). Nonetheless, teacher education is still more normative and "one-size-fits-all" based, and has to take much more context into account in order to be more effective in achieving the quality standards of today.

2.4. TEFL/TESOL standards

Although developed in the US context, TESOL and the Commission for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) have developed standards for ensuring the quality of teaching that can be contextualized worldwide. These standards, known as 'TESOL

Professional Teaching Standards' and the five domains they fall under (See Table 3), are commonly used to develop, accredit, monitor and evaluate TEFL programmes. To make these processes easier, the standards are explained through seven statements and a rubric that proposes three levels of performance indicators: "approaches, meets, and exceeds" (TESOL, 2001, p. 6). TESOL standards are primarily intended for the P-12 ESL teacher education programmes, meaning that obtaining such certificate allows the teacher to work in primary and secondary schools. Although the standards were initially developed within the US education system, they are universal and adaptable to fit other contexts as well.

Table 3 – Domains and standards for P-12 teacher education programme (TESOL, 2002, p. 5)

Domain	Standard
1. Language	a) Describing language b) Language acquisition and development
2. Culture	a) Nature and role of culture b) Cultural groups and identity
3. Planning, implementing and managing instruction	a) Planning for Standards-Based ESL and Content Instruction. b) Managing and Implementing Standards-Based ESL and Content Instruction c) Using Resources Effectively in ESL and Content Instruction
4. Assessment	a) Issues of Assessment for ESL b) Language Proficiency Assessment c) Classroom-Based Assessment for ESL
5. Professionalism	a) ESL Research and History b) Partnerships and Advocacy c) Professional Development and Collaboration

2.4.1. TEFL standards in the European context

In the European context, this "standard-based" instruction approach represents the basis for the Common European Framework of Reference – CEFR (Nunan, 2007), which was later used to develop two other important publications within the European context that are vital for language teacher educators and EFL teachers' - the European Profile for Language Teacher Education (EPLTE) and the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL). The EPOSTL is a self-reflection and assessment tool designed for English teachers, while the EPLTE is "a frame of reference for language teacher educators" and "a toolkit" to aid them in developing prospective English teachers' competences (Martínez, 2017, p. 63). Whether they help by giving practical advice to teacher education institutions, or to teachers themselves, all of these documents' aim to improve the overall English teachers' experience and are elaborated below in order to clarify their specific objectives and purpose.

a) *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) was issued by the Council of Europe in 2001. It provides the standards for EL proficiency by categorizing it into six levels in the form of 'Can do' sentences. In short, CEFR represents "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). Even though CEFR does not impose certain ways of teaching or assessment, it clearly comes from a communicative approach, advocating learner-centered, task-based instruction (Little, 2009). Whilst CEFR can serve as an educational framework and a valuable source of direct guidelines for language teaching programmes, it is primarily used to assess the language proficiency of the student.

b) *The European Profile for Language Teacher Education* (EPLTE) is the most influential resource for the makers of European educational policies and for language teacher educators, even though it is not an official document (Karatsiori, 2016). Kelly et al. (2004) have developed the Profile to provide a framework for initial EFL teacher education institutions in the form of a holistically developed list of guidelines (elements) written as 40 checkpoints that deal with four key sections of language teaching programmes, as shown in Figure 1.[3]

Figure 1 – Four key sections of EPLTE (Kelly et al., 2004, p.4)


Structure
This section contains items describing the different constituent parts of language teacher education and indicates how they could be organised.

Knowledge and Understanding
This section contains items relating to *what* trainee language teachers should know and understand about teaching and learning languages as a result of their initial and in-service teacher education.

Strategies and Skills
This section contains items relating to what trainee language teachers should *know how* to do in teaching and learning situations as teaching professionals as a result of their initial and in-service teacher education.

Values
This section contains items relating to the values that trainee language teachers should be taught to promote in and through their language teaching.

c) *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* (EPOSTL) was issued by European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) of the Council of Europe in 2007. It provides a comprehensive overview of English teachers' competences in the form of a checklist which can also be used as a "reflection tool" for student teachers undergoing their initial teacher preparation (EPOSTL, 2007). EPOSTL allows them to monitor their progress in teaching and have a clearer understanding of the competences they have or should improve. The document comprises six sections: a personal statement section, a self-

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[3] Detailed list of elements can be accessed at URL: http://www.lang.soton.ac.uk/profile/report/MAinReport.pdf

assessment section, a dossier, a glossary, an index of terms and the EPOSTL users' guide. However, the most important one is the self-assessment section with seven knowledge areas (See Figure 2) that contains 193 descriptors of language teaching "core competences which language teachers should strive to attain" (EPOSTL, 2007, p. 5). In order to make the best use of the EPOSTL, student teachers are encouraged to evaluate their competences in several stages of their education, as well as during their pre-service and in-service training.

Figure 2 – EPOSTL categories of descriptors for self-assessment (EPOSTL, 2007, p.6)
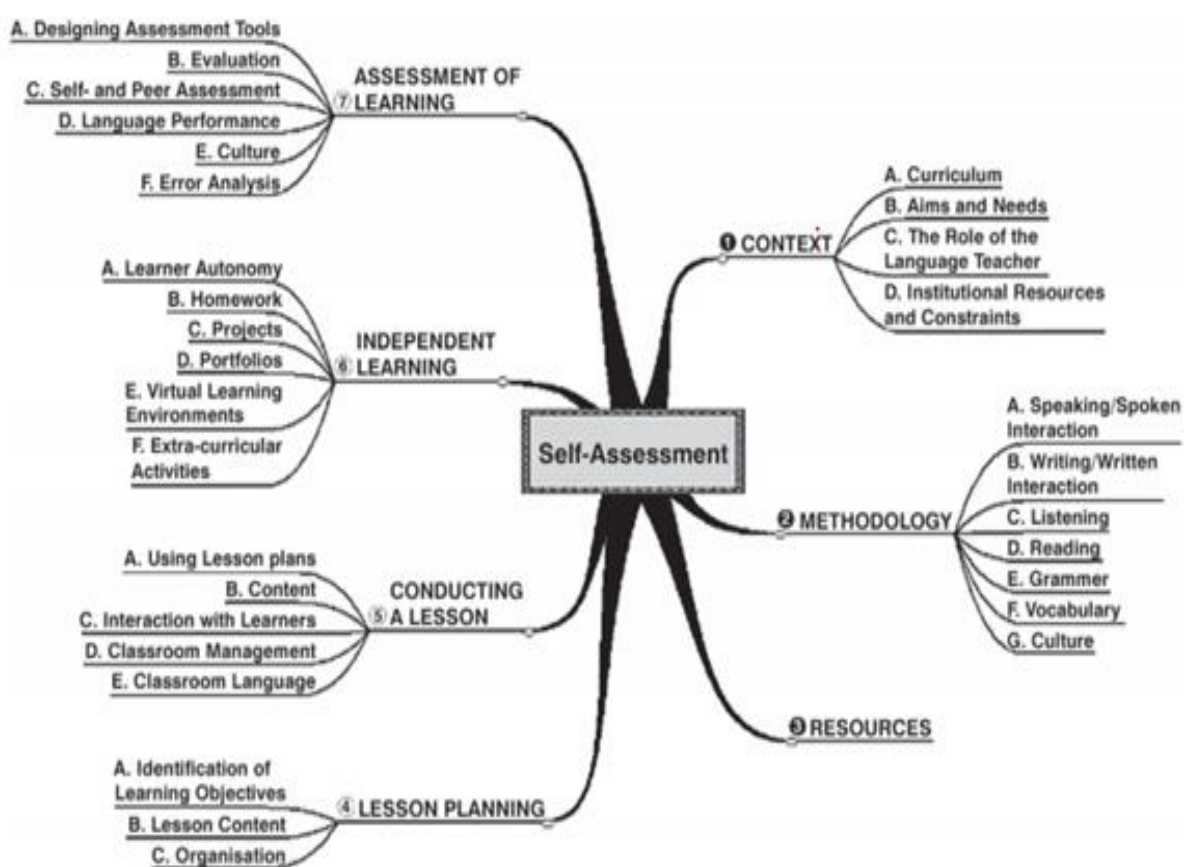
Given the importance of the three above-mentioned documents, they were used as the framework of analysis in this study and served as the basis for developing the research instrument and evaluating the two TEFL programmes.

2.4.2. Approaches to TEFL curriculum design

Another issue to be discussed is the type of approach that TEFL programmes can use while designing their curriculum. It is important to mention here that there is no official

standardization within the European context that is 'prescribed' for TEFL programme development or evaluation (Freeman, 1998). Ministries of Education from EU member states develop and monitor their respective programmes' curriculum individually, based on their performance and the fulfillment of their objectives. There are numerous types of curriculum models and designs, however, according to the TESOL guidelines (Kuhlman and Knežević, 2014) the teacher preparation programmes can be either based on certain standards (standard-based) or on a collection of courses (course-based).

a) Course-based programme refers to a group of courses that do not (or rarely) have a mutual goal or a structured conceptual framework implemented at the institutional level. In these types of programmes, "faculty teach within their specialty, but don't necessarily see the linkages across courses" (Kuhlman and Knežević, 2014, p. 14). In other words, the similarities that appear between courses are usually not addressed due to the lack of cohesion communication between the departments or even professors within a department. According to Kuhlman and Knežević (2014) the majority of teacher preparation programmes today is following this model.

b) In a standard-based programme every aspect of educational institution is oriented towards (and connected by) reaching a mutual goal, i.e. a conceptual framework with clearly established standards. The courses in such programmes are expected to be interconnected, to build on each other and provide mutual support in achieving the standards. To exemplify, Table 4, taken from the TESOL Guidelines (2014, p. 16), shows the differences between these two types of programmes. Standard based programmes, or more precisely, their curriculums[4], are still not commonly adopted in the European context, so the programmes that offer MA in TEFL are usually course-based. On the other hand, in Anglophone countries, interestingly, they are increasingly adopting the standard-based approach, which is advocated by many researchers (Lund & Tannehill, 2014).

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[4] Standards based curriculum is a "curriculum developed by looking at the standards (district, state, national); identifying the skills, knowledge and dispositions that students should demonstrate to meet these standards; and identifying activities that will allow students to reach the goals stated in the standards." (Lund & Tannehill 2014, p.7)

Table 4 – Differences between standard and course based programmes
(Kuhlman & Knežević, 2014)

Characteristics of a standards-based programme	Characteristics of a course-based programme
overall plan, macro level, "the big picture"	micro level, may not see or have connections
standards are developed across different courses, overlapping is expected	each course is autonomous
flexibility in how you accomplish goals, if not well planned, could be mandated by education officials	usually more autonomy in objectives and syllabi
integrative assessment	individual course assessment
multiple ways of assessing a concept	single assessment of many concepts, accountability at course level

Namely, course-based programmes are based on an informal agreement about content areas that should be covered through obligatory courses in every TEFL program. This may, however, vary depending on the national curriculums. Generally, "students in a TEFL certificate programme can expect to learn the basics of linguistics, second language acquisition, language pedagogy, materials development, and language methodology" ("TEFL Certification Requirements", n.d.). CELTA, for example, divides its' TEFL syllabus into five main topics: "1) Learners, teachers and the teaching and learning context, 2) Language analysis and awareness, 3) Four language skills, 4) Planning and resources for different teaching contexts and 5) Developing teaching skills and professionalism" ("CELTA Syllabus", 2018). Naturally, university master's programmes in TEFL will vary, but they will share more similarities than, for example, an online TEFL course, but they will probably include, to a greater or lesser extent the following core courses:

- Syntax for EFL/ESL
- Principles of linguistics
- Teaching English as a foreign/second language
- Culture issues in the EFL classroom
- Second language acquisition for EFL
- EFL curriculum and materials design
- Theories of foreign/second language learning
- Phonology/morphology for EFL/ESL ("TEFL Certification Requirements", n.d.)

In order to include general teacher education courses and round off all the aspects of teaching, many university TEFL programmes, such as the ones at the FHSS and UWR often collaborate with departments of educational sciences (pedagogy and/or psychology), which offer courses on the psychological development of learners, special education, didactics and memory processes, among others.

2.5. TEFL in Croatia and at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka

Learning and teaching EFL in Croatia in the past was greatly influenced by the social and political situation of the country and the prevalence of other, at that time, more influential languages. German, French, Russian and even Latin had more prestige in education (Vilke, 2007). English language and literature was introduced as a major at Zagreb University in 1898[5], and only in the second half of the 20th century, did English start to sporadically appear in schools (ibid.). Since then, following the global expansion of English, the number of EFL learners and teachers has steadily grown, as well as the research in the field. Consequently, in 2003, a foreign language (with English as one option) was introduced as a compulsory subject in the first grade of primary school. To address the subsequent need for English teachers, TEFL programmes also started to get more acclaim and were gradually introduced by many other Croatian universities as well. "The teaching option at the departments of English language and literature used to be only a safe choice and not a true wish for a future career, whereas now an increasing number of students show interest in the teaching profession" (Vilke, 2007, p.22). Nevertheless, students who choose to study English can also opt for a graduate programme in translation, literature or linguistics. Not only the students, but also the general public in Croatia seems to perceive English as the most 'profitable' and pragmatic mean for international communication. Other reasons for having an interest in the language is the dominant exposure to it through the media which often leads to unintentional learning, and thus, the general perception that English is a fairly easy language to learn. Moreover, the Eurostat statistics analysis from 2015 shows that more than 99.6% of pupils in Croatia are learning English (Eurostat, 2015). Teachers who are eligible to teach English in Croatia include MA graduates in TEFL, teacher education graduates with a specialization in English, and graduates of other English specializations with a certification of supplementary

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[5] Important pioneers worth mentioning include A. Lochmer as the first instructor at the department of English Language and Literature, and Rudolf Filipović as one of the first EL scholars and proponent of innovations and research within the field, s wel as the organizer of the YSCECP (Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian English Contrastive Project)

"pedagogical-psychological-didactic-methodological" teacher education programme (NN, 2003, art. 76).

Croatian universities today are guided by the Bologna principles and offer TEFL programmes at the graduate level to students that obtained a Bachelor degree (BA) in English language and literature. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, which is relevant for this study, launched their BA in English language and literature in 1996. Today it offers a double-major TEFL study programme at the graduate level, which lasts for four semesters. "The curriculum covers various areas of linguistics and literature, and the applied part of the study programme includes productive language skills and English language teaching methodology" ("About the Department", n.d.). As can be seen from Table 5, the TEFL programme consists of the teaching module courses (general teacher education courses offered in Croatian by the Departments of Pedagogy and Psychology) and English language teaching module courses (taught in English at the English Department). The programme's curriculum is course-based, and it seems to cover all the essential categories of an EFL teacher knowledge base. The majority of the courses are theoretical, while 30 hours are dedicated to the teaching practicum at the Faculty and 60 hours to the pre-service training in elementary and secondary schools. Also, no particular courses are offered on language skills development or English for teaching purposes. After graduation, novice teachers are eligible to work in primary and secondary schools, or in other language teaching institutions.

Table 5 – Courses in TEFL programme at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka (in 2017/2018.) *elective courses are written in Italic

MA courses delivered by:	1. semester	2. semester	3. semester	4. semester
Department of Pedagogy	Educational psychology	Didactics	Didactics 2	
	Developmental psychology	Educational Psychology 2	*Philosophy of education*	
	General pedagogy	Teaching students with special needs	*Using ICT in teaching*	
	Croatian language culture basics	*Scientific thinking*	*Neuroscience and education*	
		Encouraging creativity in teaching	*The psychology of gifted students*	
		Psychology of parenthood	*Teaching and learning a FL at early school age*	
		Education and sustainable development		

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Department of English Language and Literature	Second language acquisition	Introduction to English Language Learning and Teaching	Introduction to psycholinguistics	Teaching practice
	English as a global language	Second language acquisition of English	ELT Methodology	English as a foreign language assessment
		Academic Writing 1	ELT practicum	*Research Methods*
		Languages in contact	*Teaching literature*	*Media culture*
		The culture of reading	*First language acquisition*	

2.6. TEFL in Poland and at the University of Wrocław

The position of English and EFL education in Poland has been largely influenced by political circumstances. Due to the difficult social and political situation in Poland during the 20th century that greatly influenced the educational system, the teaching and learning of English was not a pressing matter. Even though Poland was a multilingual country, the Second World War and later the Communist regime had delayed the development of foreign language education. Qualified teachers were rare, interest for foreign language (apart from Russian) was low, and the teaching materials were often politically loaded (Zielonka, 2007). It was only after the famous Solidarity movement in 1980 that positive changes began to appear. "Russian has been abandoned and English has been introduced as the first foreign language […], hundreds of teacher training colleges have been opened […] a great number of universities have established faculties of English Philology […], Poland has been flooded with modern and interesting course-books, informed by the Communicative Method" (Zielonka, 2007, p. 148). Although modern books in English have become accessible, the content of Polish TV was, and still is, almost always dubbed. However, since there is little exposure to English and incidental learning, there is an increased interest in learning English. The underlying motivation of students might include the functionality of learning English and the job opportunities it opens.[6] As a result, the number of students learning English in Poland was as high as 95.3% in 2015 (Eurostat, 2015). Importantly, it is not only the learning of English, but also the teaching of English that has gained popularity. Today, TEFL programmes in Poland are carried out by all major universities that offer a degree in English philology or by private university programmes with specialized teacher education and training modules.

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[6] For example, Ireland and UK have an "open door" policy, which means that Polish workers enjoy equal rights for employment as the local natoinality workers (Hughes et al., 2007)

As for the expected level of English proficiency, Budzynska (2016) took a closer look at the requirements for teaching English in Poland, and noticed that although TEFL programs' target is achieving C1 level, for teaching English in Polish pre-schools and primary schools it the minimum requirement is B2 level of proficiency. Interestingly, in addition to TEFL graduates, several groups of teachers are eligible to work in these schools: teachers that have a BA degree in English and completed pedagogical training, or students that have a degree in the field of Educational Sciences and an additional English philology course or a complete a post-graduate course in English (Budzynska, 2016). Furthermore, just like in Croatia, Polish universities also follow the Bologna principles and their TEFL programmes are construed in a way that an MA degree makes a teacher eligible to work at any educational level and institution. However, the difference to the Croatian system is that a BA degree in TEFL also provides a teaching certificate[7] which is sufficient for teaching in pre- or primary schools.

A part of the University of Wrocław that is responsible for carrying out the TEFL programme is the Institute of English Studies (Instytut Filologii Angielskiej). The Department (later Institute) of English Studies started with its work in 1945, and today it consists of five departments: *Department of English and Comparative Linguistics, Department of Second Language Learning and Teaching, Department of English and Comparative Studies, Department of American Literature and Culture and Department of Translation* ("About us-*Instytut Filologii Angielskiej*", n.d.). As part of the undergraduate studies, students can attend two specializations: translation and/or philology. An additional offer is a teaching module (*modul nauczycielski*), which students can pursue in parallel with their specialization. In other words, unlike in Croatia where the TEFL is limited to the two-year MA programme, here it is organized as an additional module which stretches across both the BA and the MA. The teaching module can be chosen in the second semester of the BA and does not need to be continued on to the MA if the student wishes to teach only in pre- or primary schools. However, if one decides to apply for an MA, the requirements include: passing the diploma exam, writing a research project[8] and a meeting with the supervisors. As for the obligatory courses, they are quite similar to those in other TEFL programmes, with a slightly bigger

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[7] Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)

[8] "Research project" is a research outline that the student will further develop during the MA. It should include clearly stated research problem. Supervisors are then appointed depending on the topic, i.e. the field of research students have chosen (UWR official website)

emphasis on research work and writing the thesis. The courses of the teaching module for both graduate and undergraduate level are listed in Table 6. As can be seen, the pedagogic part of the programme is organized according to the policy that allows English teachers to work in pre- and primary schools after the BA. Thus, student teachers have a pre-service training in elementary school during the BA and also in secondary school during the MA. A total of 240 hours of pre-service training is divided in 180 hours during the BA and 60 more hours during the MA cycle.

Table 6 - Courses in TEFL programme at the Institute of English studies
(University of Wrocław) at the BA and MA level (ac. year 2015/16)

BA	2. semester	3. semester	4. semester	5. semester	6. semester
Conducted by: Pedagogy department (Centrum Edukacji Nauczycielskiej (CEN)	Psychology for teachers	Pedagogy for teachers	Psychological basics of primary school education	Psychological and pedagogical competences of teacher in primary school	
		Pedagogy - students with special educational needs	Pedagogical foundations of education of primary school education	Care and educational internship at school (carried out in primary schools after the 4th semester and credited in the 5th semester)	
		Safety at school workshop			
Conducted by: Institute of English studies		The basics of didactics	Didactics of English in primary school (II educational stage)	Didactics of English in primary school (II educational stage)	Didactics of English in primary school (I educational stage)
				Continuous practice (carried out in primary schools after the 4th semester and credited in the 5th semester)	Continual pedagogical practice (carried out in primary schools during the 6th semester)
				Mid-year internship (carried out in primary school	

MA	1. semester	2. semester	3. semester	
Pedagogy department (CEN)	Psychology for teachers in secondary schools	Pedagogy for teachers in secondary schools		
Institute of English studies	Didactics of English in secondary schools	Didactics of English in secondary schools	Didactics of English in secondary schools	
			Didactic practice – continuous (carried out in secondary schools after the 2nd semester and credited in the 3rd semester.)	

2.7. Examining TEFL programs

The ultimate goal of any initial teacher preparation programme is to do precisely what its name says - to efficiently prepare students for the profession they chose. The questions regarding what that might include, and how to evaluate such a programme have been addressed from the very beginning of teacher education. A plethora of researchers (Day, 1991, Freeman and Johnson, 1998, Faez, 2011) have offered their stance on language teachers' knowledge base, skills and competences, or attempted to standardize teaching programmes and programme curriculums. However, the complexity of the issue, along with the dynamic nature of education does not allow such rigid frameworks. The detachment of researchers and practitioners had only aggravated the situation in the past (Merhani, 2014), but it has also led to the newer, more comprehensive and observant approaches to fundamentals of teacher preparation that take into account both the context and the student teachers individual opinions and characteristics (Freeman, 2002). "Teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals who enter teacher education programmes with prior experiences, personal values, and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms" (Freeman and Johnson, 1998, p. 401). Given the complexity of learning and teaching process, and the substantial number of factors that should be considered in order to assess them, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of an initial teacher education program. Therefore, the viable approach is to examine it through the student teachers self-reported feeling of preparedness, i.e. their efficacy to teach English (Turner et al., 2004, Sotoudehnama, 2016).

Before looking programme evaluation relative to student teachers' perceived self-efficacy, it is first necessary to define the term. The concept of teacher self-efficacy (TSE)[9] has gained popularity among researchers in the last few decades, with teachers as the most commonly used research sample (Pendergast et al., 2011, Mojavezi and Tamiz, 2012, Sotoudehnama, 2016). TSE is a motivational construct that was proven to be in a positive correlation with students' achievement (Pendergast, 2011) and motivation (Mojavezi and Tamiz, 2012). In short, self-efficacy is considered to be a perception of one's own capability,

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[9] Both preparedness and self-efficacy appear frequently in the reviewed literature, but essentially there is no major difference noticed between the terms. The latter term was coined by Bandura who defines it as *"beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments"*. (Bandura 1986, as cited in Bergil & Sarıçoban 2017, p. 401)

and in this context it can be considered as a self-perceived capability to teach (Barnes, 2000, Bray-Clark, 2003). Moreover, self-efficacy and preparedness are two terms that are semantically very similar, if not the same. "Teacher self-efficacy is a key driver of teacher effectiveness and should be explicitly included as a central focus in the professional development of teachers" (Bray-Clark, 2003, p.13). In other words, the teacher education programmes should be more concentrated on raising student teachers' self-efficacy if the goal is preparing them to teach effectively.

Sotoudehnama (2016), however, argues that the concept of self–efficacy has not been researched that much among EFL student teachers. In his study, he examines the role of MA TEFL programmes in developing the prospective teachers' self-efficacy. The results of the study indicate little difference in comparing the perceived self-efficacy among novice and experienced student teachers. Interestingly, older student teachers demonstrate greater satisfaction with the theoretical courses in comparison to their younger colleagues. Teachers with more experience tend to better understand the value of theories in helping them in their work, while novice teachers cannot recognize the benefits of theories because they do not have enough practical teaching experience to be able to make connections (Sotoudehnama, 2016). What is more, considering that the pre-service training, as the only hands-on school experience, was proven to carry a main role in boosting student teachers' self-efficacy, it is evident that teacher training programmes should give more thought to connecting theories to practice, especially with novice student teachers.

Unsurprisingly, the transition from university programme to actual teaching profession and employment might be intimidating and stressful. It depends on the student teachers' expectations, perceived abilities and individual beliefs that can all be summarized as preparedness. Student teachers observed in the Turner et al. (2004) research claimed best prepared to create of enjoyable lessons and develop lesson plans. On the other hand they felt least prepared in the teacher-parent relationship. Although many individual factors may interfere, such valuable insights from student teachers can be used to detect programme's possible shortcomings, evaluate its effectiveness, and optimally, propose and implement certain strategies for improvement.

However, in view of the fact that there is no procedure for an overall evaluation of TEFL programmes, Peacock (2009) designed his own model[10] to address the strengths and weaknesses of an observed TEFL programme in Hong Kong. He systematized the results in terms of the programme's strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of the programme was its practicality in preparing the students to teach, the pedagogic knowledge it offers and good relations between students and staff, while the biggest weaknesses concerned the lack of practice, impractical methodology courses and insufficient lessons on class management. Most importantly, 35% of student teachers stated that they did not feel prepared to teach, and such an alarming rate showed that something needed to be changed. Coskun et al. (2010) followed the Peacock's model in their research of a TEFL programme in Turkey and obtained similar results which showed the scarcity of teaching practice opportunities as the main weakness of the programme and the theoretical background as its strongest characteristic.

Ashley (2016) used a so called 'PREP scale[11]' to examine the student teachers' preparedness to teach. Despite using a scale that is not designed specifically for TEFL student teachers, the results corroborate previous findings. Namely, 93% responses indicate that student teachers learned much more by being in the classroom than at the university. "There is a gap between college and classroom. The programme did not bring the majority of respondents to where they feel comfortable in teaching in their own classroom" (Ashley, 2016, p. 60). Another important question that needs to be considered here is: how many university teachers have any classroom experience beyond academia? Hence, could this aspect also have a negative effect on the overall insufficient attention devoted to developing practical skills and competences in TEFL programs? It is evident the imbalance, or general lack of teaching practice, is a common weakness of many TEFL programmes in different education systems.

However, recent research involving TEFL student teachers carried out by Bergil and Sarıçoban (2017) took a different approach and evaluated the programme by examining students' self-efficacy using the official EU document – the EPOSTL as a "benchmarking tool suited to compare and observe the contents of teacher education programmes nationwide,

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[10] Peacock's model includes 15 questions that begin with „Does the programme..." and in such manner cover al the key elements of TEFL program „based on existing principles and moodels of teacher education" (Peacock, 2009)
[11] "Student teachers' Feelings of Preparedness to Teach" or the PREP scale was developed by Housego (1990) to examine how confident they feel for completing a set of 50 tasks.

which will also bring unity in pre-service teacher education" (Bergil & Sarıçoban, 2017, p. 401). As previously mentioned, the EPOSTL is a comprehensive self-assessment tool intended for all current and prospective teachers to monitor their efficacy and development. These researchers showed that it can also be repurposed to fill the lack of standardized measurements for TEFL education programmes. They concluded that "EPOSTL is a reflective instrument which gives not only deep information about the prospective ELF teachers but also the programme and the courses they got during their teacher education in English Language Teaching Departments" (ibid., p.408). By utilizing the EPOSTL as a framework for their research and also as their primary research instrument, Bergil and Sarıçoban (2017) came closest to standardizing the TEFL programme evaluation from the student teachers' perspective within the European context.

3. THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1. Motivation for the study

There are several motivational factors for carrying out this piece of research. Primarily, by being a student of TEFL programmes at both universities myself, I have noticed differences in the way the programmes are organized and carried out, and thus wanted have a deeper understanding of what seems to be working well, and what might be improved. Namely, after fulfilling all the course requirements at the English Department and the Department of Pedagogy at the University of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, I applied for the Erasmus exchange programme and spent one semester at the Institute of English studies at University of Wrocław. Having taken courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels, I obtained insights from colleagues, professors, and my own experience as a student on the particularities of both programs. The differences in organization and learning outcomes of the TEFL programme were surprising, yet eye opening and intriguing.

The second motivating factor was the commonly addressed gap between the theory and practice in TEFL, and the generally perceived lack of hands-on teaching experience among TEFL students (at both universities), which can repress their feeling of preparedness to teach. This study has been envisaged as a contribution to the TEFL teaching programmes offered by the two universities from different countries by providing them first-hand students' perspectives on the programmes' efficacy in preparing them to teach English language. By

comparing the two TEFL programmes in Croatia and Poland, this study wishes to draw some implications on how a programme can be upgraded to prepare future EFL teachers more effectively.

3.2. Aim and purpose

The aim of this study is to examine the extent to which student teachers at the graduate level of TEFL programmes feel prepared to teach, and, to evaluate the programmes' effectiveness in teacher preparation. This study examines the perspectives of two TEFL student teachers' groups from different universities and countries on the programmes' effectiveness. The effectiveness has been assessed through their feeling of preparedness to teach and perception of self-efficacy, their opinions on the programmes' contribution to their preparedness, as well as through their satisfaction with specific parts of the program. The analysis of the student teachers' answers gathered by this study tries to shed a light on the TEFL programmes' contributions towards developing the required teaching competences among student teachers. Studies on TEFL programme evaluations, teacher training and feelings of preparedness have been conducted by many researchers (Kuhlman and Knežević 2014, Bergil and Sançoban 2017, Sotoudenhama 2016, Turner et al. 2004). However, what is particular to this study is that it examines and compares two specific programmes.

Additionally, another goal of this research is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes, and provide information for tailoring the future educational policies and decisions to benefit the student teachers. Finally, this study aims to contribute to raising awareness among the higher education institutions on the importance of collaboration and sharing experiences which might help them to face the challenges more effectively and mutually benefit from their insights.

3.3. Research questions

This study is guided by the RQ: What are student teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of TEFL programmes at two universities? In line with the aim and the main research questions, the study focuses on the following, specific research questions:

RQ1: How effectively have the respective EFL teacher education programmes prepared EFL student teachers for their future profession?

RQ2: What are the students' perceived learning outcomes of the two TEFL programs?

RQ3: What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the both TEFL programs for preparing them to teach?

RQ4: What is the student's overall degree of satisfaction with the TEFL programs in which they are enrolled?

3.4. Theoretical framework

The following evaluation of TEFL programmes' was guided by two underlying assumptions; that that the primary objective of the programme is to prepare student teachers to teach (Ur, 1996, Kelly et al., 2004, Bray-Clark, 2003), and that the achievement of the educational outcomes is one of the indicators of a programme's effectiveness (Mathieu et al., 1993, Coggshall et al., 2012). More specifically, TEFL programme implies a teacher training process that is specialized in preparing English teachers in all aspects of their professional development (Ur, 1996, TESOL, 2002, Kelly et al., 2004). Just like any other teacher preparation programme, TEFL aims to prepare the student teachers for their profession, which is why the notion of student teachers' preparedness to teach has been examined by several researchers (Turner et al., 2004, Ashley, 2016). Housego (1990) defined the feeling of preparedness to teach as a "self-assessments of teaching competence" (Housego, 1990, p. 40). He decided to use that particular term by drawing the inspiration from Ashton and Webb who adapted Bandura's notion of 'self-efficacy' to fit the teaching context and named it 'personal teaching efficacy' (Housego, 1990). Although all three terms are used interchangeably in the literature, personal teaching efficacy and preparedness to teach are semantically the same, while 'self-efficacy' is somewhat a broader term. Nevertheless, a number of researchers have examined student teachers' self-efficacy (Pendergast et al., 2011, Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012, Sotoudehnama, 2016) and some of them (Bergil and Sarıçoban, 2017) used it to evaluate a TEFL programme.

Evaluation of a teaching programme, refers to a systematic and objective way of analyzing the data on a phenomenon and interpreting it in order to enable grounded decision-making (Wang 2009). According to Wang (2009), it "aids in concrete understanding of a program's intended outcomes and personnel requirements, or it can promote an analysis of the programs' efficiency" (ibid., p. 130). O'Neill (2010) indicates that programme evaluation should be exhaustive in order to be usable and include evaluation of "curriculum organization/coherence, student support, learning resources, physical environment, learning resources, generic skills, staff attitudes, etc." (O'Neill, 2010, p. 3) As for the teacher

preparation programme evaluation on its effectiveness, there are three aspects of programme processes that denote it: "1) program selection, 2) program content (i.e., what is taught in the teacher preparation program), and 3) program structure" (Coggshall et al., 2012, p. 6) After establishing what to evaluate, the question that follows is – how to evaluate the effectiveness of a teacher preparation programme? One of the methods includes "surveys of the graduates of teacher preparation programmes" (Coggshall et al., 2012, p. 6) The data gathered through this method can be of great value to programme stakeholders, since it "reflects feelings of preparedness, self-efficacy, and program perceptions" (Coggshall et al., 2012, p. 15). However, it is important to mention that it does not indicate the actual preparedness or the programme quality, which is why a mixed method approach is advised (Coggshall et al., 2012).

3.5. Participants

The participants in the study comprise two sets of TEFL students, 16 from the University of Wrocław (Institute of English Studies), and 19 from the University of Rijeka (English language and literature department at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, FHSS). Convenience sampling was used as the sampling was drawn from students in the two TEFL programmes the researcher attended. Two interviews were also conducted with students at Wroclaw and the head of administration at the Department of Second Language Learning and Teaching.

4. THE RESEARCH METHOD

The primary data were gathered using an on-line survey which was distributed to the student teachers through their Facebook study groups as the most resource and time efficient, economic and viable option. The instrument was piloted with a group of students prior to administration. The secondary data was collected from the universities' official webpages, the available programme specifications, and semi-structured interviews that were conducted with two students and the head of English Language Teaching Department beforehand, in order to obtain deeper insights into the TEFL programmes' structure and strengthen the understanding of the research context.

The first group of respondents included the students of MA TEFL programme at the University of Wrocław with a total of 16 students, predominantly female (93.8%), between the ages 23 and 25. The second group involved the MA TEFL graduate students at the Faculty

of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, where a total of 19 students, 68.4% female and 31.6% male student teachers, between ages 22 and 27, have completed the questionnaire. All of the respondents were full-time graduate students. The generally proposed minimum of 30 respondents in the survey (Cohen et al., 2000) was satisfied, which is enough to meet the need of quantitative data analysis. However, the overall return rate was low, considering that only 35 of them completed the survey.

The questionnaire comprised 22 overarching questions divided in four main groups. The first group of questions inquired the participants' demographic data (age, gender) and their experience with the TEFL programme (which university, time of the first encounter with teaching related courses and the duration of pre-service training). Second group of closed, Likert-scale questions concerned the student teachers' general perception of their own preparedness and the contribution of particular university aspects towards it. Third group of questions, also in the form of a Likert-scale, addressed student teachers' perceptions on how well the TEFL programme had prepared them to teach. For this group of questions, the EPOSTL was used as an internationally recognized and multi-purpose framework (as was done in the previously elaborated Bergil and Sarıçoban study (2017)). Student teachers expressed what aspect of teaching they felt prepared to do by rating a total of 40 elements chosen from the EPOSTL descriptors. The first 20 elements are specifically related to teaching EFL, while the second half covers the elements of teaching in general. To classify the results more precisely, a 7 - category model based on EPOSTL domains and descriptors (Figure 2) was used, which includes:

1. **Context** (addressing students' needs, learning styles, individual differences and the curriculum) – 5 descriptors
2. **Methodology** (integrating the four skills and pertaining learning strategies, teaching grammar, vocabulary and English culture) – 16 descriptors
3. **Resources** (choosing and creating teaching materials, utilizing ICT) – 3 descriptors
4. **Lesson planning** (planning specific types of lessons, learning objectives and time-management) – 3 descriptors
5. **Conducting a lesson** (varying organizational forms, interaction, classroom management) – 8 descriptors
6. **Independent learning** (encouraging learners self-reflection, self-assessment) – 2 descriptors

7. **Assessment of learning** (developing and using assessment procedures, error correction) – 2 descriptors

The last group of questions included six open questions where student teachers elaborated on their achieved outcomes in the programme, listed the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the programme, as well as their suggestions for its improvement.

4.1. Data analysis

In order to provide more comprehensive and thorough observation, the exploratory data of this study is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Namely, integrating the two approaches has been seen as the most favorable option to complement their shortcomings. Also, a generally descriptive approach is taken due to the particular context that included a small sample size of respondents. "Description research is used to observe and describe a research subject or problem without manipulating the variables (…) it does not attempt to answer "why" and is not used to discover inferences, make predictions or causal relationships." ("Overview of Descriptive Research", n.d.). Furthermore, since there are no official standards or prescribed protocols of evaluating a TEFL programme within the European context that would perfectly fit the research and serve as a framework for analysis, the programmes' effectiveness was evaluated through student teachers' responses on six main topics that are addressed and discussed in the results:

a) student teachers' previous experience on the BA and MA level

b) the general contribution of the key TEFL components in preparing them to teach

c) the programmes' effectiveness in particular aspects evaluated through student teachers' preparedness

d) student teachers' satisfaction with the programme and its components

e) achieved outcomes of student teachers

f) strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for improving the programme

5. RESULTS

The survey gathered more responses from Croatian respondents (54,3%) in comparison to Polish (45,7%). The findings on demographical data showed that female student teachers' are predominant in both groups and that age group is fairly similar.

Furthermore, the first group of questions revealed the main difference between the TEFL programmes' structure, which was elicited by the questions on the student teachers' experience at the BA and MA level. While TEFL programme at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka (FHSS) starts at the MA level, at the University of Wrocław (UWR) it starts in the second semester of the BA level. All sixteen UWR student teachers claimed their first encounter with English language teaching courses was at the BA level.

The first group of questions revealed that UWR student teachers (57,1%) had more previous experiences (outside the TEFL programs) with teaching English in comparison to only 22,2% at FHSS. The types of experience fall in three categories aligned by frequency: a) tutoring/giving private lessons, b) teaching in pre-school or language school, c) volunteering.

At the BA level, FHSS student teachers had not yet been introduced to the TEFL program, whereas at UWR, student teachers start attending the courses on psychology, pedagogy, didactics and methodology in the second semester:

We choose the teaching module after the first semester, so in the second we already have some courses in psychology. Later, there is didactics, pedagogy, microteachings at the university and teaching practice in the second year. (10 UWR)

We started in the second semester and from then on we continued till the sixth. We had psychology, pedagogics didactics, some practical classes with microteachings, in-school practices (2-weeks, and 2x6 months once a week), we learnt about SEN students, etc. Most of the classes ended with a test or a presentation or a microteaching to give. (5 UWR)

[I had] Courses both connected to teaching English and to psychology, working with children in general, etc. (8 UWR)

Obligations and practical requirements on BA at UWR include: writing essays and seminars, conducting microteachings, designing lesson plans and activities, with observations and conducting lessons at their pre-service training. However, many UWR students do not recall (or they recall incorrectly) how many hours of pre-service training in total they have had. Most of them who stated the time span of the pre-service training said it lasted for three weeks (4), some said two to three weeks (3), others said 120 hours (2), 150 hours (2) and 190 (1). Considering that several years have passed, the difficulties in recollection are understandable.

Namely, according to the official program, they are obliged to have 180 hours of pre-service training in total at the BA level.

> *We had teaching practice firstly in the 2nd year of interviews with counselors and 3 weeks in the middle of the year where we were in groups and had to conduct a lesson 2 times. In the 3rd year we had around 12 lessons and had to present 4 lesson plans.* (6 UWR)

> *I would say that we had 150 hours spent in schools (observation, lesson planning and teaching included).* (14 UWR)

> *About our practice in school, it's 120 for English and 30 for psychology.* (2 UWR)

Furthermore, all respondents (16 from UWR and 19 from FHSS) confirmed having TEFL courses and teaching practice at the MA level. Both groups shared similar courses (such as methodology course, various pedagogy and psychology courses), and their obligations and requirements (microteachings and lesson planning, and working with mentors and conducting lessons during the pre-service training).

At UWR, the MA curriculum is similar to BA regarding student teacher's obligations, but more focused on the post-primary school learners, with predominantly psychology courses (8). The duration of teaching practice was at UWR was stated as "two weeks" (4) or 60 hours (3), while others did not address the hours.

> *We have had similar courses as in BA, but more focused on older learners Also the proseminar course which is dedicated to developing our Masters' project and thesis. The teacher training lasted for two weeks and it was organized in high schools.* (5 UWR)

> *Mostly teaching related courses like didactics and seminars for developing MA project. Requirements included micro-teaching, tests, also preparing lesson plans and teaching plans.* (10 UWR)

In addition, UWR students also seem to be more in favor of the BA part of the programme:

BA teaching program was really diverse and there were a lot of classes and so on, while on MA we were sort of slowly deteriorating. We had classes on didactics mostly. (3 UWR)

Courses at the MA level are more focused, but not as interesting. They include psychology and didactics respectively. (13 UWR)

At FHSS they provided more elaborate responses on their experiences at the MA level by listing the courses, the subject area they cover and the specific obligations they have;

[I had] various pedagogy-based courses on a general level (Educational psychology, General pedagogy, Developmental psychology, Teaching students with special needs...) These mainly required us to write up a lesson plan, or a monthly/yearly programme. There were also English-specific courses like ELT Methodology. In these we had to present a method of teaching EFL, and write up a plan for a small 'microteaching'' segment and test it with our colleagues. (5 FHSS)

[I had] methodology and classes from pedagogy, Practical requirements were lesson planning and microteachings at the university and working with a mentor in school, observing their classes, writing lesson plans and conducting our own classes. (13 FHSS)

Courses regarding teaching methodology of the EFL. We had an introductory course and a one which dealt with teaching the 4 skills, grammar, etc. Also, we had a Practicum course at the faculty. In the summer semester, we have pre-service practice in an elementary and a high school. Also, we're having a FL assessment course. (10 FHSS)

Also, two student teachers at FHSS indicate that the pre-service training is scheduled in the second year of MA during the last semester (for both elementary and secondary school), while the first year includes ELT methodology and some courses in psychology and pedagogy.

So far, in the first year, only the introductory course. Practice is scheduled next year. (16 FHSS)

Only one course (Introduction to teaching English as a foreign language), no practice. (1 FHSS)

Similar to UWR, FHSS student teachers failed to recollect the exact number of hours spent on their pre-service training. The answers varied; some said 30 hours in total (2), 6, 8, or 9 hours for teaching in particular (3), some said 21 or 26 per school (2), 42/50h in total (2), while others were not sure (4), did not have the pre-service training yet (3) or are not sure about the hours (3). However, the syllabus of the course "Teaching practice" (*Nastavna praksa*) states 60 hours in total.

The second group of questions revealed that the results regarding students' perception of their overall preparedness vary within both groups, however, the feeling of preparedness is higher among the UWR student teachers in comparison to FHSS (3.45 > 3.12). Moreover, 63,6% UWR student teachers stated that they agreed with the statement "I feel ready to teach EFL". Among FHSS student teachers, 42,20% agree, while 29.40% disagree with the same statement. Also, while one respondent strongly disagreed, other one strongly agreed with the statement (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – General feeling of preparedness to teach among FHSS and UWR student teachers
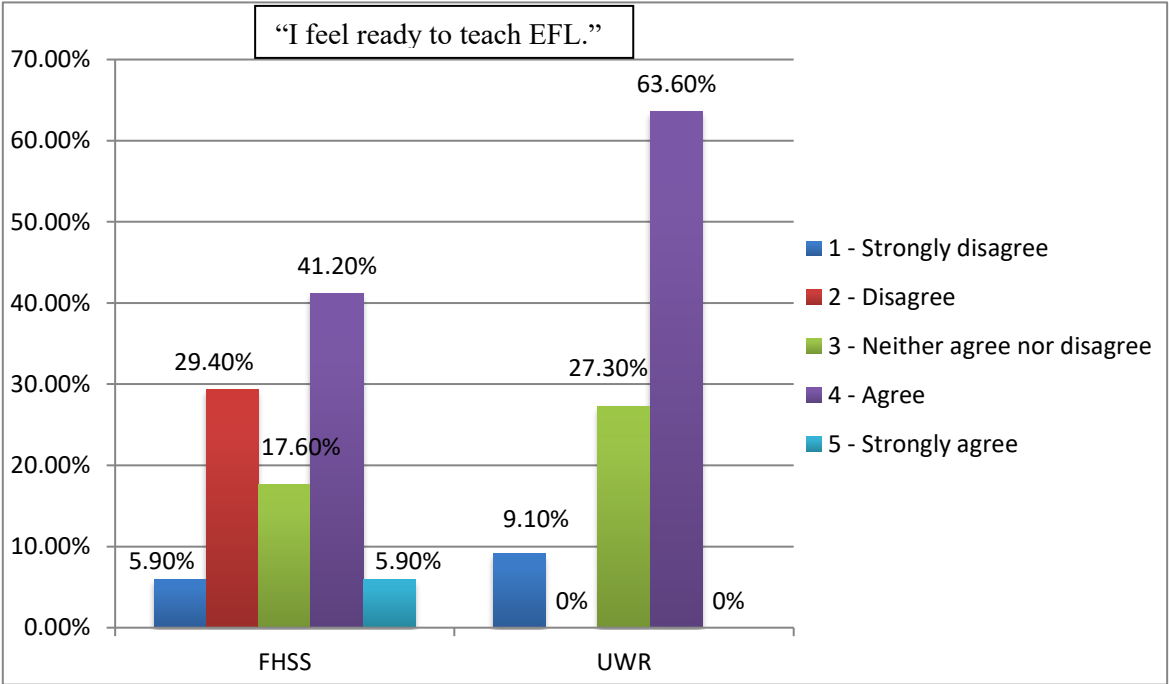
Source: made by the student

Furthermore, in comparing the contribution of university lessons with the pre-service training during the TEFL towards their preparedness to teach, both groups have put more emphasis on the latter, i.e. the provided 'hands-on' teaching experience with the highest rated

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element among both groups being the pre-service training, i.e. teaching practice (UWR- 4.00, FHSS- 3.59). Accordngly, at UWR, 45,50% agreed, and 35,40% strongly agreed with the statement "The practical training during the TEFL programme has prepared me to teach English as a foreign language in school" (4.00) (See Figure 4). The other statement; "The university lessons during the TEFL programme have prepared me to teach English as a foreign language in school" (3.00), elicited the same percentage of student teachers (36,40%) who have agreed or not agreed nor disagreed with it, while 18,2% disagreed or strongly disgreed (9,1%) (See Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Contribution of university lessons and pre-service training at UWR
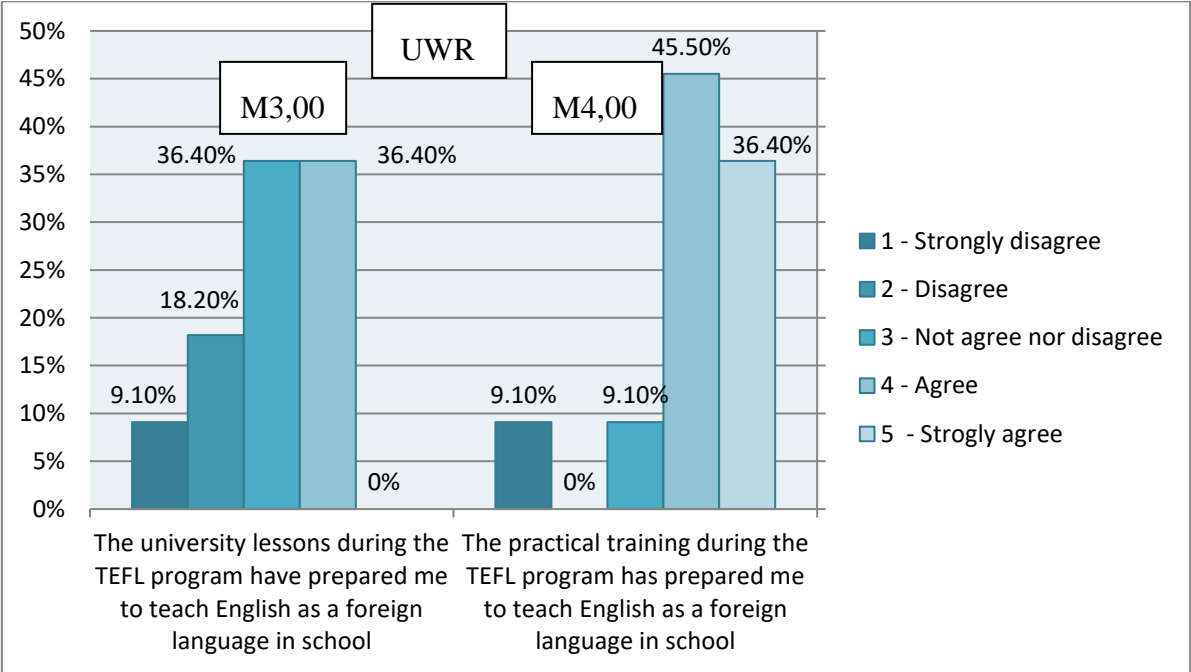
Source: made by the student

At FHSS, the university lessons moderately prepared (M 3.12) their student teachers for teaching with 41,20% who neither agreed nor disagreed with the sentence 'The university lessons during the TEFL programme have prepared me to teach English as a foreign language in school', 35,30% who agreed and 23,30% who disagreed with it (See Figure 5). On the other hand, the contribution of the pre-service training was rated higher (M 3.59), with 64,70% student teachers strongly agreeing and 29,40% agreeing with the statement 'The practical training during the TEFL programme has prepared me to teach English as a foreign language in school' (Figure 5).

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Figure 5 – Contribution of university lessons and pre-service training at FHSS
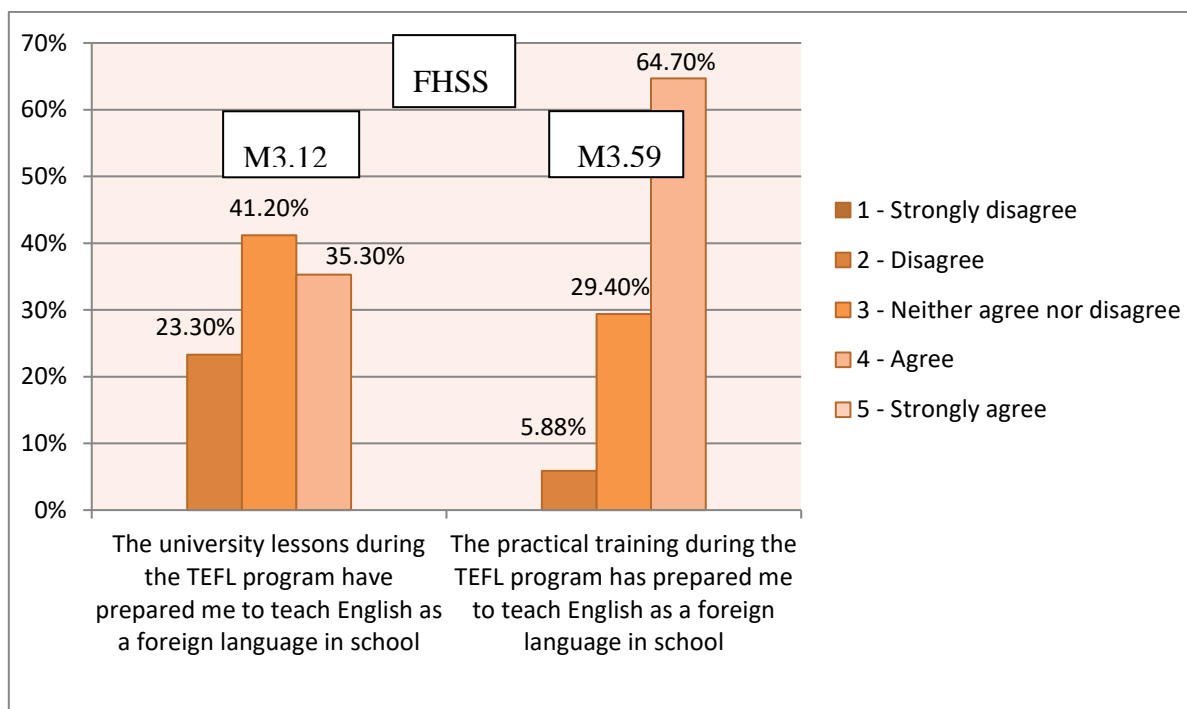
Source: made by the student

As for the contribution of particular TEFL components', the table of averages (Table 7) shows that both groups agree (FHSS-4.38, UWR-4.50) on the importance of 'conducting lessons or microteachings', where 60% at UWR and 56,25% at FHSS stated it y prepared them extremely well to teach. The second highest rated contribution for UWR student teachers is the 'non-university teaching experience' (4.60) which places the student teachers in an active teacher role (tutoring, working in a language school etc.). Here, 50% stated that this element prepared them very well, and 18,8% opted for extremely well. For FHSS student teachers, 'learning from mentors' had a significant contribution (3.88) with 50% answers stating its contribution as very well, 25% as moderate and 25% as extreme, while UWR group on the other hand does not perceive the contribution of their mentors as equally valuable (3.10). Both student groups also agreed on the lowest rated contributor to their preparedness, which are 'general linguistic courses' (FHSS- 2.56, UWR- 2.60).

Table 7 – Calculated averages of TEFL components' contribution

toward student teachers' preparedness

Particular component of the TEFL programme	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka (M)	University of Wrocław (M)
a) general linguistic courses	2.56	2.60
b) methodology courses	3.44	4.00
c) pedagogy/psychology courses	2.50	3.60
d) learning from mentors	3.88	3.10
e) classroom observations	3.63	4.20
f) conducting lessons or microteachings	4.38	4.50
g) non-university teaching experience	3.63	4.60
TOTAL AVERAGE:	**3.00**	**3.8**

*highest averages are colored yellow, while the lowest are blue

Source: made by the student

The analysis of the third group of questions regarded the specific teaching tasks and whether the student teachers are prepared enough to accomplish them. Student teachers estimated the extent to which the TEFL programme has prepared them do a certain task[12], starting from 1 – not at all, 2 – slightly, 3 – moderately, 4 – very, or 5 – extremely well.

The comparison of average means within the groups (Table 8) shows that student teachers at FHSS feel that the TEFL programme prepared them the most for 'structuring and planning a lesson plan' (4.15) with 69,3% claiming it prepared them very and 23,08% extremely well. The second highest rated element is 'independent design of activities and tasks' (3.92) with 38,46% very well prepared and 30,77% extremely well prepared student teachers. 'Critical self-assessment' (3.92) is also high on the list of student teachers preparedness, with the same response percentages as the previous element.

On the other hand, the lowest rated indicator in both groups was undeniably 'to teach learners how to interpret features of spoken language' (FHSS-2.38, UWR- 2.00). At FHSS, they feel the programme prepared them only slightly (53,85%) or moderately (30,8%) to teach how to interpret intonation, tone of voice etc. Also, a lower rated preparedness of FHSS students included 'promoting intercultural communication competence (ICC)' (2.62) with 46,15% who feel slightly and 15,4% who feel moderately or not at all prepared (15,4%).

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[12] The selected elements are chosen descriptors from the EPOSTL

Lastly, student teachers at FHSS fell slightly (46,15%) or moderately (30,8%) prepared to 'encourage learners to reflect on their own learning progress and outcomes' (2.77).

At UWR, they agree with the FHSS student teachers' group in feeling least prepared to 'teach learners how to interpret features of spoken language' (2.00), with 40% of them claiming that they do not fell prepared at all, and 30% who feel slightly prepared. The second lowest rated element at UWR is 'raising learners' awareness of language in different text types' (2.50) with the majority (60%) who are slightly prepared. The third lowest rated element is the commonly discussed 'effective classroom management' (2.70) with 20% of slightly prepared students and 20% of them who do not feel prepared at all to manage a classroom.

On a more positive note, student teachers at UWR feel that the programme prepared them extremely (60%) or very (40%) well in 'balancing activities that include a variety of skills and competences'(4.60). Also, many UWR student teachers feel extremely (50%), or very well (40%) prepared to 'use a variety of organizational forms' (4.40) as well as in maintaining a 'positive learning environment' (4.30) (same highest percentages as previous element).

Table 8 - Calculated averages of student teachers' preparedness through EPOSTL descriptors

Selected EPOSTL descriptors: "The TEFL programme has prepared me …"	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka (M)	University of Wrocław (M)
1. To teach English language from a communicative approach	3.54	3.90
2. To choose authentic materials from different resources	3.54	3.60
3. To design appropriate activities and tasks yourself	3.92	4.10
4. To integrate speaking skill in the class	3.46	3.70
5. To stimulate speaking (verbal interaction) in class	3.38	3.60
6. To help learners use various communication strategies	2.92	3.10
7. To integrate writing skill in the class	3.23	3.10
8. To raise learners' awareness of language in different text types	3.23	2.50
9. To teach how to structure a text with coherence and cohesion	3.15	2.80
10. To integrate listening skill in the class	3.38	3.30
11. To incorporate development of different listening strategies	3.54	2.90
12. To teach learners how to interpret features of spoken language	2.38	2.00
13. To integrate reading skill in the class	3.23	3.20
14. To teach how to handle difficult or unknown vocabulary in a text	3.31	3.20

|		
15. To incorporate development of different reading strategies	2.85	3.10
16. To explain grammar through meaningful contexts	3.23	4.10
17. To select a variety of activities that help learners to expand their vocabulary.	3.85	4.20
18. To incorporate the culture of English native speaking countries	3.31	3.30
19. To promote intercultural communication competence (ICC)	2.62	3.40
20. To promote the value of learning English language	3.46	3.00
21. To set learning aims according to the curriculum requirements	3.38	3.80
22. To write realistic objectives appropriate to the lesson and learners	3.54	3.60
23. To structure and write a good lesson plan	4.15	4.10
24. To balance activities that include a variety of skills and competences.	3.77	4.60
25. To use a variety of organizational forms	3.69	4.40
26. To be flexible with the lesson plan to adapt to the particular teaching situation	3.69	4.10
27. To maintain the attention of learners during a lesson.	3.08	2.80
28. To be responsive and interact with learners	3.46	3.70
29. To encourage learner participation whenever possible	3.46	3.60
30. To help learners to develop learning strategies	2.85	3.30
31. To manage a classroom effectively	3.00	2.70
32. To encourage learners to reflect on their own learning progress and outcomes	2.77	3.00
33. To select or develop assessment procedures appropriate to learning aims and objectives.	3.46	3.60
34. To deal with learners' errors in class – error correction	3.08	3.70
35. To establish a positive learning environment in class	3.62	4.30
36. To take into account students' individual differences	2.85	3.70
37. To adapt to learners of different age groups	3.08	3.90
38. To address different learning styles and intelligences	3.31	4.00
39. To utilize information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom	3.77	3.30
40. To critically assess your own teaching and adapt it accordingly.	3.92	3.80
TOTAL AVERAGE	**3.34**	**3.50**

*highest three averages are colored yellow, while the lowest three are blue

Source: made by the student

Altogether, the total average of all preparedness elements indicates that student teachers from UWR feel that the programme prepared them slightly better (M 3.50 > M 3.34). In order to compare the results between the groups, the averages of descriptors pertaining to the previously mentioned EPOSTL categories are shown below (Figure 6) and indicate that

results of both groups are quite similar. UWR student teachers feel slightly better prepared in the categories of Context (3.7>3.27), Resources (3.8>3.7), Lesson planning (4.1>3.8), Conducting a lesson (3.6>3.3) Independent learning (3.4>3.3) and Assessment of learning (3.7>2.7), while FHSS students are better prepared in the Methodology category (3.2>3).

Figure 6 – Averages of descriptors pertaining to 7 EPOSTL categories
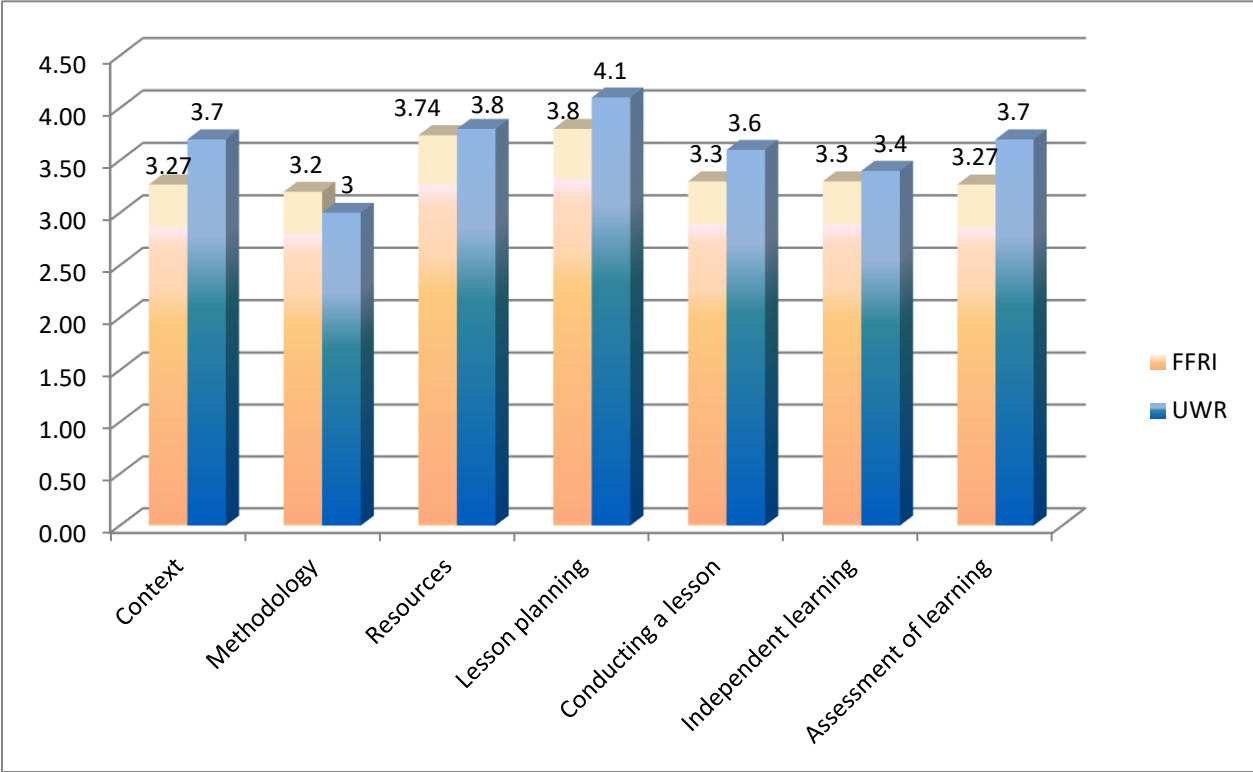
Source: made by the student

The fourth group of questions is related to the satisfaction with the programme and its particular aspects. The results show that student teachers at FHSS are pleased with the 'support of the teachers' they had throughout the programme (3.92), with 38,5% of them being extremely satisfied and 38,5% who are very satisfied (See Table 9). At UWR they are very satisfied (60%) or moderately satisfied (30%) with the 'skills gained' (3.50) in the programme. On the down side, both groups complained about the 'available variety of elective courses on teaching', with which 53,8% of FHSS (1.59) and 60% of UWR (1.40) student teachers are not satisfied at all with that aspect. The second lowest rated aspect among FHSS student teachers is the 'balance between theory and practice' (1.92), where most student teachers (70%) claim that they are only slightly satisfied with it. As for UWR, another

dissatisfactory aspect is the 'flexibility of the schedule' (1.70) with 60% student teachers stating that they are not satisfied at all.

Table 9 – Averages of student teachers' satisfaction with a particular aspect of TEFL

Programme aspect:	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka (M)	University of Wrocław ($\bar{x}$)
1. Balance between theory and practice	1.92	2.20
2. ECTS workload	2.23	1.80
3. Learning outcomes achieved	3.15	3.00
4. Skills gained	3.23	3.50
5. Support of the professors	3.92	3.30
6. General linguistic courses	3.38	3.00
7. Pedagogical and methodology courses	3.08	3.30
8. Available variety of elective courses on teaching	1.59	1.40
9. Provided teaching opportunities	2.38	3.00
10. Flexibility of the schedule	3.08	1.70
11. Getting feedback and guidelines	3.46	2.60
12. Overall time and obligations balance	2.38	2.30
TOTAL AVERAGE:	**2.81**	**2.59**

*highest three averages are colored yellow, while the lowest three are blue

Source: made by the student

As for whether the students would recommend the programme, the results also vary between the student groups. More diverse responses can be seen within the FHSS group, where the majority would possibly recommend the programme (58,30%), while 33, 3% would and 8,3% would not recommend it to other students (See Figure 7).

Figure 7 – FHSS student teachers' willingness to recommend the enrolled TEFL program
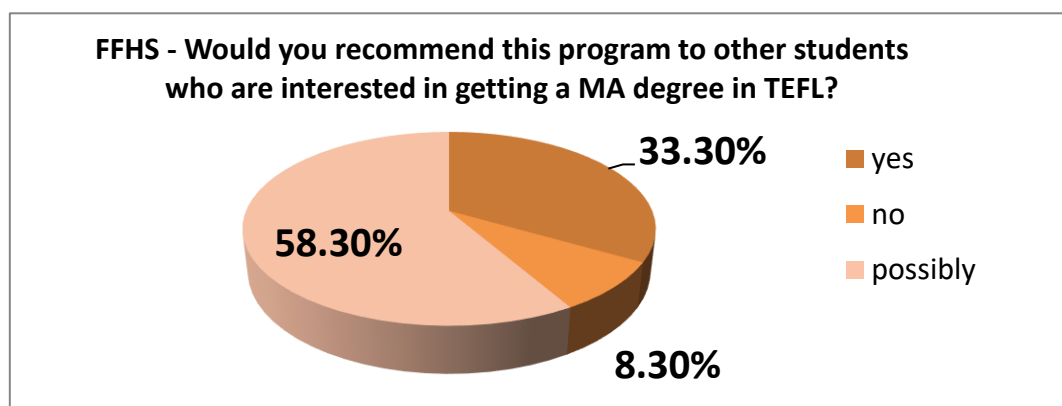
Source: made by the student

At UWR, 60% of student teachers would possibly recommend, while the rest (40%) would definitely recommend their TEFL programme (See Figure 8).

Figure 8 – UWR student teachers' willingness to recommend the enrolled TEFL programme
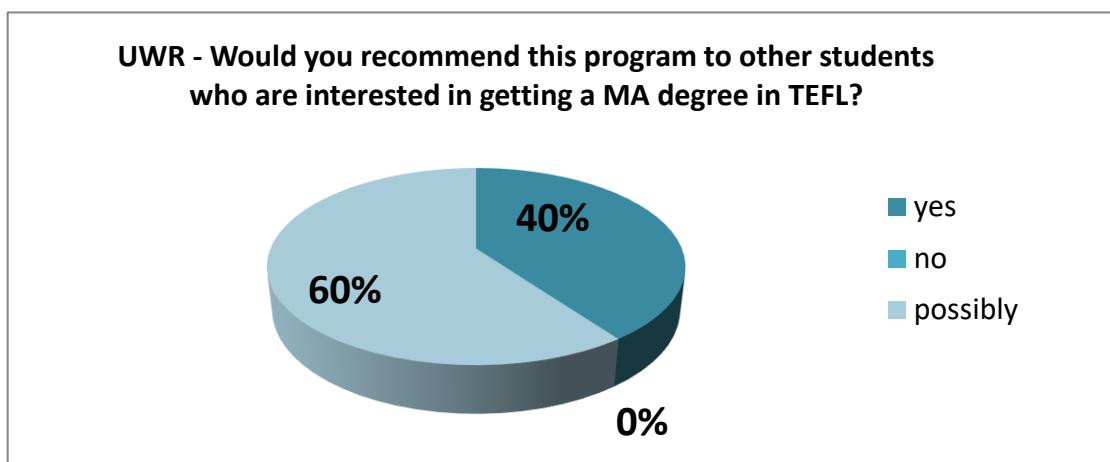
Source: made by the student

The fifth group of questions revealed that the most commonly listed learning outcomes at FHSS deal with theoretical background knowledge and ELT methodology knowledge (teaching the four skills, planning a lesson, inventing and choosing tasks etc.).

I think that most of the outcomes needed for teaching English have been achieved (planning a lesson, choosing appropriate tasks, implementing cultural aspect into teaching practice, teaching different skills, evaluating own work, etc.) (7 FHSS)

Managing a classroom effectively, integrating various skills within a lesson plan, constructing a lesson plan, adapting a lesson plan to particular class situation, creating my own activities in line with learning objectives, writing up leaning objectives... (14 FHSS)

Detailed theoretical background, first classroom experience- valuable, but we've only had a gist of what looks like in reality, great methodology insight. (2 FHSS)

At UWR, many student teachers have listed the ability to adapt to students' needs as an outcome they have achieved (7). Other commonly achieved outcomes included: using different teaching strategies and methods (5), incorporating various activities and games (3) and knowing how to teach the four skills (3).

I have general knowledge about the psychology of learners and also how to use various activities and games to promote learning. (3 UWR)

Incorporating different strategies and methods to fit the needs of the students, using a variety of activities for all four skills and also how to prepare for class and write a good lesson plan. (13 UWR)

Awareness about students and their needs, interesting activities and teaching methods. (1 UWR)

When asked about the outcomes they would like to improve, both groups emphasized classroom management and maintaining discipline (5 at FHSS and 7 at UWR). The FHSS group additionally wishes to work on: creating interesting materials and lessons (3), teaching learning strategies (3) and assessment procedures (3).

I still have to work on all of outcomes but the most I have to pay attention to my classroom management techniques as well as the ones which deal with different learning strategies. (16 FHSS)

Teaching communicative skills and strategies, constructing good assessment instruments, responding to particular students' needs, implementing authentic assessment... (10 FHSS)

Classroom management, task creation (3 FHSS)

Along with classroom management as the biggest issue (7), the UWR group also mentions planning enjoyable lessons and tasks (4) and self-reflection (3) as additional outcomes for improvement.

Self-assessment and learning techniques that deal with classroom management. (5 UWR)

Planning lessons and preparing teaching plans. Maintaining discipline, incorporating reading, listening and writing, and making it more interesting. (8 UWR)

How to incorporate all the knowledge in a big group of teenagers who are rarely eager to sit still and listen. All that is easy to say in theory but rather challenging in practice. (11 UWR)

In the last part of the questionnaire, the student teachers were asked to list particular strengths, weaknesses and their suggestions for improvement of the TEFL programme. At FHSS, they listed more perceived strengths of their programme, and were more specific in their responses. They claim that the programme's strength is providing a good theoretical background - especially in methodology classes (7) and the professor teaching it (4). Also, the perceived strengths are the pre-service training that enables them to teach in a school context (5), getting feedback (3) and flexibility of the schedule (2).

A good methodology course with theory backed up by the activities in the practicum, where students put that theory into practice. Well organized teacher training - compared to other courses. Coverage of many aspects of teaching - writing lesson plans, methods for certain skills, etc. (10 FHSS)

Very flexible in terms of obligations and deadlines, good feedback on your teaching practice; you get to meet different types of students and teachers during pre-service training; one gets good overall skills and knowledge to teach English in schools. (7 FHSS)

Great ELT Methodology teacher! Apart from that, there were a lot of courses overall but most of all the practicum part were we get to actually go to schools and try to teach. (2 FHSS)

As for the weaknesses of the programme, the student teachers at FHSS listed the insufficient practical training (7) and its late realization in the programme (4).

There are more theoretical courses than actual application of that knowledge. Maybe the outcomes would be better if pre-service training began in the 1st year of MA programme, and not just during the last semester of the MA programme (i.e. more actual praxis would benefit the future teachers). (10 FHSS)

Practicum and practical part in general comes in the last semester of our TEFL program and it should be implemented earlier, even in BA level, in some form. (15 FHSS)

Also, the other commonly mentioned challenge is the overwhelming amount of obligations (4), i.e. a large number of course obligations that they have at the same time they are completing their pre-service training at school.

> *Even though it's better than most courses at FHSS, 40ish hours is still not enough practice for someone who's going to be a teacher, especially when paired with a number of other obligations students have to do in their final semester.* (4 FHSS)

> *The final semester should be reserved specifically and only for pre-service training (and writing one's MA thesis) - no other courses. Ideally, the training should also take place for longer than one semester.* (7 FHSS)

At UWR, student teachers generally agree that the strength of the programme is its teaching pre-service training (4). They also commended the variety of professors (3) and the communicative approach to teaching they adopt (3) as the strongest characteristics of the programme.

> *Opportunities for hands on training.* (2 UWR)

> *A lot of educational issues covered during the BA and plenty of teaching practice.* (5 UWR)

> *The communicative way of teaching.* (11 UWR)

> *A lot of different teachers with different backgrounds and teaching styles, communicative approach of the professors.* (13 UWR)

On the other hand, they feel overburdened with the amount of obligations and "paperwork" (8). Student teachers also complained about the offering and content of elective courses (3) that underscore the previously mentioned issue.

> *An excessive amount of paperwork regardless of the other obligations.* (2 UWR)

> *Unnecessary obligations and classes.* (14 UWR)

Some (3) student teachers at UWR also mentioned the lack of teaching practice in the program, even though they are supposed to have three times more hours than the group at FHSS .

The number of electives is too high and the options are not at all versatile. More teaching practice instead of the electives could be a good solution." (5 UWR)

On MA NOT ENOUGH PRACTICE, doing stuff with no feedback. How do I know whether l succeeded or not. And sadly - the unavailability of the professors. Not all of them of course, but I would have learned so much more if they just wrote back to my emails or were present during office hours. (7 UWR)

Furthermore, there were many suggestions for TEFL programmes' improvement in both student teacher groups. Naturally, the stated recommendations mainly addressed the previously mentioned weaknesses of the programmes, but the student teachers also offered precise explanations on what and how the changes should be carried out. For example, FHSS student teachers proposed a greater concentration on the practical part of teaching as well as the earlier start of the pre-service training (9)

More classroom experience and practicum and less general pedagogy/ psychology courses. Also, English language workshops would be a valuable part of our MA program, not just BA program. English teaching methodology and preschool training should get more ECTS points and workload, while some courses should be restructured as they are too time-consuming and not really useful. (4 FHSS)

Consider implementing more practical courses throughout the MA programme, and not only in the last semester. More electives that deal with teaching (English) would also be a plus. (10 FHSS)

They also propose a shift in programme's organization by reducing the number of theoretical courses (especially in the last semester) and allocating more time to the pre-service training (4).

More practice. Remove the unnecessary theoretical parts from the general teaching module which are mostly utopistic and no one, honestly, uses them in that way. We should spend more time in schools and among teachers and students, only as observers at the beginning. (3 FHSS)

Remove the courses in the last (4th) semester of the MA study, so the students have only pre-service training and their MA thesis. Increase the number of elective courses at the MA level. (13 FHSS)

Implementing the practical part (the actual teaching) at the end of BA courses. (17 FHSS)

What the UWR student teachers' recommended also puts a greater emphasis on the practicalities in teaching (4) and a more balanced and flexible schedule (3).

> *More practical hints how to manage the work in a classroom. More professors who are active teachers in schools. More examples of interesting tasks, exercises, etc.* (6 UWR)

> *More practical and applicable topics covered during the lessons and an appropriate amount of coursework.* (15 UWR)

In summary, what is evident is that both groups strive for more 'hands-on' experiences and for courses that would offer them 'real life' examples i.e. practical application of the theory, or techniques for good classroom management. The weaknesses were addressed by the student teachers by providing several strategies for improvement (See Table 10).

Table 10 – Weaknesses of the TEFL programmes and suggestions for their improvement

WEAKNESS	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	
	FHSS	**UWR**
Not enough practical aspects and insufficient amount of pre-service training hours	Implement more practical courses or electives that deal with teaching. Provide more practical advice. More ECTS points and workload appointed to the pre-service training.	More practical and applicable topics during the courses. Include professors who are active teachers in schools. More examples of interesting tasks and activities.
Overwhelming amount of obligations	Remove all courses from the 4th semester so students have time for the pre-service training and writing the MA thesis. Reduce the overall number of theoretical courses.	Lower the number of electives.
Late realization of the pre-service training in the programme.	Implement pre-service training at the end of BA courses.	-

Source: made by the student

6. DISCUSSION

Both TEFL programmes that are examined in this study fulfill the proposed requirements for accreditation, according to the TESOL Guidelines (2014). If we take a look at both programmes, we will notice that both are course based and offer very similar courses. However, the main difference lies in the structural organization of the programmes. The later start of the pre-service training could possibly be one of the factors in the student teachers' feeling of preparedness to teach. As for the programme requirements and student obligations, they are also fairly similar. However, naturally, due to the shorter time-frame, the TEFL programme at FHSS seems to be much more condensed. On the other hand, the TEFL programme at UWR starts at the BA (for elementary school education), and continues on the MA with a focus on the secondary school and adult learners, with predominantly psychology courses.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have shown that both student teacher groups are moderately satisfied with the TEFL programme they enrolled in in terms of how well it has prepared them for their future profession. However, their insights enabled the study to shed a light on the specific aspects of the programme that are perceived to be effective and valuable, as well as on those that need to be more thoroughly revised and improved. The overarching research question on "what are student teachers' perceptions of the respective TEFL programme" was answered with respect to the obtained theoretical knowledge about pedagogy/psychology and methodology, and teaching skills developed during the pre-service training. Although the complexity of the question denotes the substantial number of variables it includes, as well as the factors that can influence them, some distinctive results would merit further attention.

Firstly, the responses of student teachers about their general preparedness varied. It can be said that both Croatian and Polish student teachers feel moderately prepared for teaching. Interestingly, among FHSS student teachers, one respondent felt completely prepared, while another one claimed not being prepared at all. This might imply, and underscore many research findings that indicated how individual differences and beliefs can have a great impact. Thus, it should be noted that these results cannot be solely used to generalize the programmes' effectiveness. However, the University of Wrocław appears to produce teachers who will more readily step into the classroom. The underlying reason of this

statistics is possibly the duration of the pre-service training which lasts four times longer at their university (240 hours at UWR in comparison to 60 hours at FHSS), or the fact that they, as novice teachers, still have a higher perceived self-efficacy (Sotoudehnama, 2016).

Adding to that, the student teachers gave their own perception on what they thought contributed most to their preparedness to teach and the vast majority believes that the practical training during the TEFL programme had prepared them the most. Classroom observations, microteachings and non-university experiences were also noted as important contributors. Therefore, the highest rated contributor in both groups was "conducting lessons or microteachings" in schools since they represent an opportunity for a more realistic teaching experience (Ashley, 2016). Considering the duration of pre-service training, it would seem that UWR is more effective in this respect. Another similarity is that both student groups also agreed on the lowest rated contributor – "general linguistic courses". Considering that linguistic courses are meant for all EFL students (not just for the teaching module), they rarely touch upon any concrete practicalities that can be used in classroom, so the low score of that component is somewhat expected. However, an interesting disparity can be seen in student teacher experiences with their mentors. While many student teachers at FHSS seem to be moderately satisfied with their mentors, the UWR group does not perceive the contribution of their mentors as equally valuable. This can also be a matter of individual experiences, so it was not studied in greater depth.

Although all prospective teachers realize that a great deal of knowledge will come only after they start working at school, certain learning outcomes were achieved during their university education. For example, both student teacher groups have stated that they are very knowledgeable about the theories on learning and teaching, as well as about the English methodology. Similar to findings of Turner et al. (2004), they all feel most proficient in organizing a lesson and writing lesson plans. It can be assumed, and confirmed through examining the programmes' syllabi, that these outcomes are mentioned simply because they were most often practiced. Students of both groups also claim that they are competent in attending to the different needs of learners. However, it is debatable whether this was stated due to their theoretical knowledge on the topic, or their ability to implement it in practice. Namely, considering the short duration of the pre-service training, it is very difficult to familiarize oneself with the group of learners enough to recognize whether one has catered to their needs. Notably, this is one of the reasons quality mentors and their insights are necessary

for every prospective teacher. It seems that the TEFL courses only deal with the question how teachers should adapt to their class and not vice versa. Moreover, as in Peacock's (2009) research, classroom management and maintaining discipline are the most commonly mentioned outcomes student teachers would like to improve, which implies their understandable lack of experience, but also the insufficient coverage of the topic within the university lessons.

In line with this view, the effectiveness of the programme seems to be greatest in providing student teachers with a theoretical knowledge base (as in Coskun et al. 2010), which is commonly listed as a strength of both TEFL programmes. In particular, at FHSS, student teachers appear to be very satisfied with their methodology courses as well as with the relationship with their professors. Such strength is of great value and importance, because the professors are the ones that can bring about the possibly needed changes in the programme, and can also serve as role models to the student teachers. Moreover, along with promoting self-reflection, getting support and constructive feedback from the professors is invaluable for all students, since it enables them to see their progress and further develop their skills. This being said, the lack of practice in teaching preparation programmes seems to be their greatest weakness, which has also been corroborated by other studies, (cf. Coskun et al. 2010, Ashley, 2016). Moreover, some research that yielded similar results (Peacock, 2009, Turner et al. 2004) indicates that a lack of experiential teaching practice is a common problem in TEFL programmes in general. "A challenge for teacher education then becomes one of acknowledging the totality of experience and of valuing the knowledge of contextualized experiences as a supplement to the theory of the framework to inform the practice of teaching and learning" (Chong & Cheah, 2009, p. 16). In order to be as effective as possible, every programme that offers teacher training should strive for balance in providing the theoretical part but also contextualizing it through pre-service training. Interestingly, despite their complaints about the short duration of the pre-service training, FHSS student teachers perceive it as another strength of their programme. Similar is stated by many at UWR, which only underscores that any teaching opportunity is highly valued and appreciated.

Unfortunately, both groups had a lot more to say regarding the weaknesses of TEFL programs and how they should be improved. The most common weakness of both programmes seems to be the exhaustive amount of course requirements and obligations at the university. To make the situation worse, student teachers at UWR also have to take elective

courses which are time-consuming and not versatile enough in their opinion. Regarding the student teachers' overall satisfaction with the TEFL program, all are also moderately satisfied with their TEFL programme. All of them realize that certain changes could be made to improve the program. For example, both groups agree that more time should be taken away from the theoretical part and allocated to the pre-service training, while FHSS student teachers also propose an earlier implementation of the pre-service training, within their programme. However, it should be borne in mind that there is no educational programme that would fit every student teacher's needs. Even if certain changes were to be implemented, they would probably face criticism, because not everyone would be satisfied. What is important is that student teachers agree in that their programmes cover the most important aspects of teaching and that the main weaknesses are not so critical after all. Ultimately, despite the noticed shortcomings of the programmes, student teachers seem to accept whatever comes their way, because in the end they will obtain the official degree to teach in schools and will continue to develop professionally with time and experiences, in the in-service training and beyond. Finally, it ought to be noted that all of these mentioned weaknesses and recommendations for improvement should not be considered as the TEFL programmes' ineffectiveness or failure to produce good EFL teachers, but as a valuable source of information that can be used for the betterment of the generations to come.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The primary limitation of this research is related to the overall small sample size of the respondents. This is probably due to the fact that the questionnaires were administered online, and consequently, there was a lower number of respondents felt obliged to fill out the questionnaire (n=35). Other researchers have indicated that the response rate for on-line questionnaires is usually only 30% (Nulty, 2008). Although initially envisaged as a "pen and paper" questionnaire, the on-line survey form was used due to its practicality and easier distribution, as the questionnaire was designed after the Erasmus mobility, and it would not be convenient to ask someone at UWR administer it. Nulty's (2008) suggestions to improve the on-line survey response rate were incorporated in the form of frequent reminders, easy access, assuring the anonymity and emphasizing the value of the respondents' contribution. However, what might have possibly discouraged some of the respondents is the length of the questionnaire, which is why some of them started the questionnaire but quit, or skipped some

of the questions. These few student teachers who did not complete the questionnaire usually quit before answering the first open-ended questions, which might be an implication for future research to include these at some later point next time. The next limitation regards the use of non-probability sampling, as well as the nature of this study which does not allow the results to be inferred to the general population of TEFL student teachers. Another possible limitation is related to the time the survey was distributed. Namely, at the end of the semester, students tend to have course obligations and examinations, and filling out a survey was possibly perceived as a waste of time. Finally, student teachers at UWR might have been reluctant, to give critical opinions about their programme to a student of another university.

8. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The results of this research have made a good foundation for drawing out some valuable implications for programme development. In other words, it has elicited and corroborated recurring common themes in TEFL programme development. Examination of the student teachers' perspectives as active participants of the observed TEFL programs has yielded numerous suggestions for the programmes' improvement, and highlighted some practical changes that could easily be implemented. The suggestions derived from the results and solutions proposed by student teachers' include the following.

First, both programmes would benefit from a stronger connection between the theoretical and practical part. With respect to FHSS, in particular, the amount of time spent in pre-service training is not sufficient and it should be increased, and introduced much earlier in the programme. It was suggested that the number of contact hours and ECTS points allocated to the theoretical general education courses on pedagogy and psychology should be reduced in favor of more time for teaching practice. To merely observe the class and be in a school context means more to the student teachers than any decontextualized theory. Nevertheless, if there are certain institutional constraints that would prevent such structural changes, the existing theoretical courses could be more aligned with student teachers' needs by adapting lessons to include more real life examples or simulate a specific classroom situation and discuss how to handle it according to certain pedagogic standards.

Second, continuing on the previous thought, the student teachers' perceived lack of knowledge in classroom management and maintaining discipline could also be solved by exemplifying common issues that arise in the classroom, and discussing how one should handle them. Also, a great addition would be to periodically invite guest teachers from different schools who would contextualize the pedagogical theory, by sharing their first-hand experiences of some typical classroom situations and explaining how they handle them. Not only can they give insight to student teachers on what to expect in real life, but also offer some practical advice or introduce innovative strategies that they use. Mentors that are assigned to student teachers during their teaching practice often focus on fulfilling the course requirements and teaching their regular classes. Thus, many of them might not have time to sit and talk with student teachers about their personal experiences. Introducing "guest lectures" at the universities could be the easiest way to familiarize student teachers with the different classroom situations they will encounter.

Third, the problems student teachers have with the small array of elective courses and the 'unnecessary' content they seem to cover could be solved by introducing new courses that would be more in touch with the real classroom experience. For example, even the previously mentioned "guest lectures" could be organized as an elective course. Moreover, the university should develop and annually administrate a structured self-assessment form which would take in consideration the students opinions. Even though both observed universities have an institutional assessment and quality assurance procedures to gather students' opinions, the evaluations are offered only at a course-level basis. However, the proposed self-assessment tool would focus on the entire program, and thus offer a holistic perspective. Therefore, a beneficial addition to the existent course evaluation surveys would be a comprehensive program-level (or even institutional-level) evaluation. To understand the students' standpoints, it is necessary to see the 'bigger picture' and allow them to express their opinions (for instance, which electives they would prefer). Transitioning to a more standard-based curriculum and establishing stronger connections between the courses would help that current situation immensely. The next step would then be connecting the programme with other intra- and international universities to see what else 'may' be done within the margins of what 'can' be done.

However, before making an informed decision, systematic research should be carried out within the departments and the universities that would include all the respective

stakeholders in the educational process. This study provides only a small glimpse into the student teachers' opinions on the programmes' effectiveness, which is why more thorough and exhaustive follow-up research should be conducted. Another proposition to bolster the presented research is to conduct a longitudinal study which would examine the opinion of alumni student teachers once again after several years of working at schools. In that way, the effectiveness of the programme would be 'tried and tested' and the responses would consequently be more accurate and reliable.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire on the student teachers' preparedness to teach EFL and their overall satisfaction with the TEFL program

Dear student-teachers and colleagues!

This questionnaire has been developed to examine your attitudes towards the TEFL program/module you have enrolled in and its effectiveness for preparing you to teach English as a foreign language at school, as a part of research for my Master's Thesis at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka (Croatia).

I would appreciate you taking the time to complete the following questionnaire which should take about 15 minutes of your time. Your responses are completely anonymous, and will only be used for research purposes.

If you have any questions or would like to receive the results, please contact Monika Telebar (monika.telebar@gmail.com)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND HELP!

1. Gender	a) F b) M
2. Age	
3. At which university are you studying?	a) University of Wrocław b) Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka

4. When have you first taken English language teaching courses?

a) BA level
b) MA level

5. When have you first taught English language in a school context?

a) BA level
b) MA level

6. Did you have any other experience with teaching outside the TEFL context?

a) YES   b) NO

a) If YES, briefly explain what type of teaching:

7. Did you have English language teaching courses and/or teaching practice related to TEFL at the BA level?

a) YES   b) NO

a) If **YES,**

1. Please briefly explain which type of courses and practical requirements you have had.	
2. How many hours of teaching practice in total have you had? _____hours (if not sure, write the approximate number)	

8. Did you have English language teaching courses and/or teaching practice related to TEFL at the MA level?

    a) YES   b) NO

a) If **YES,**

1. Please briefly explain which type of courses and practical requirements you have had.

2. How many hours of teaching practice in total have you had?   _____hours
(if not sure, write the approximate number)

Please rate on the scale from 1-5 to what extent do you agree with the following sentences:

	strongly disagree				strongly agree
The university lessons during the TEFL program have prepared me to teach English as a foreign language in school	1	2	3	4	5
The practical training during the TEFL program has prepared me to teach English as a foreign language in school	1	2	3	4	5
I feel ready to teach EFL	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate how well did the following aspects of the TEFL program have contributed towards your preparedness to teach.

	not at all 1	slightly 2	moderately 3	very 4	extremely 5
general linguistic courses (f.e. phonology, morphology etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
methodology courses	○	○	○	○	○
pedagogy/psychology courses	○	○	○	○	○
learning from my mentors	○	○	○	○	○
classroom observations	○	○	○	○	○
conducting lessons or microteachings	○	○	○	○	○
non-university teaching experience	○	○	○	○	○

Please rate how well the TEFL program has prepared you to do the following:

	not at all 1	slightly 2	moderately 3	very 4	extremely 5
To teach English language from a communicative standpoint	○	○	○	○	○
To choose authentic materials from different resources	○	○	○	○	○
To design appropriate activities and tasks yourself	○	○	○	○	○
To integrate speaking skill in the class	○	○	○	○	○
To stimulate speaking (verbal interaction) in class	○	○	○	○	○
To help learners use communication strategies	○	○	○	○	○
To integrate writing skill in the class	○	○	○	○	○
To raise learners' awareness of language in different text types	○	○	○	○	○
To teach how to structure a text with coherence and cohesion	○	○	○	○	○
To integrate listening skill in the class	○	○	○	○	○
To incorporate development of different listening strategies (listening for gist, specific information etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
To integrate reading skill in the class	○	○	○	○	○
To teach how to handle difficult or unknown vocabulary in a text	○	○	○	○	○
To incorporate development of different reading strategies	○	○	○	○	○
To explain grammar through meaningful contexts	○	○	○	○	○
To select a variety of activities that help learners to learn and expand their vocabulary.	○	○	○	○	○
To incorporate the culture of English native speaking countries	○	○	○	○	○
To promote intercultural communication competence (ICC)	○	○	○	○	○
To promote the value of learning English language	○	○	○	○	○
To set learning aims according to the curriculum requirements	○	○	○	○	○
To write realistic objectives appropriate to the lesson and learners	○	○	○	○	○
To structure and write a good lesson plan	○	○	○	○	○
To balance activities that include a variety of skills and competences.	○	○	○	○	○
To use a variety of organizational forms (frontal, individual, pair, group work)	○	○	○	○	○

To be flexible with the lesson plan to adapt to the particular teaching situation	○	○	○	○	○
To maintain the attention of learners during a lesson.	○	○	○	○	○
To be responsive and interact with learners	○	○	○	○	○
To encourage learner participation whenever possible	○	○	○	○	○
To help learners to develop learning strategies	○	○	○	○	○
To manage a classroom effectively	○	○	○	○	○
To encourage learners to reflect on their own learning progress and outcomes	○	○	○	○	○
To select or develop assessment procedures appropriate to learning aims and objectives.	○	○	○	○	○
To deal with learners' errors in class effectively (error correction)	○	○	○	○	○
To establish a positive learning environment in class	○	○	○	○	○
To take into account students' individual differences (motivation, cognitive and affective needs)	○	○	○	○	○
To adapt to learners of different age groups	○	○	○	○	○
To address different learning styles and inteligences	○	○	○	○	○
To utilize information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom	○	○	○	○	○
To critically assess your own teaching and adapt it accordingly.	○	○	○	○	○

Estimate from 1 to 5 to what extent you are satisfied with a particular aspect of your TEFL program

	not at all satisfied 1	slightly satisfied 2	moderately satisfied 3	very satisfied 4	extremely satisfied 5
Balance between theory and practice	○	○	○	○	○
ECTS workload	○	○	○	○	○
Learning outcomes achieved	○	○	○	○	○
Skills gained	○	○	○	○	○
Support of the professors	○	○	○	○	○
General linguistic courses	○	○	○	○	○
Pedagogical and methodology courses	○	○	○	○	○
Available variety of elective courses on teaching	○	○	○	○	○
Provided teaching opportunities	○	○	○	○	○
Flexibility of the schedule	○	○	○	○	○
Getting feedback and guidelines	○	○	○	○	○
Overall time and obligations balance	○	○	○	○	○

a) In your opinion, which outcomes did the TEFL programme manage to achieve for you as an EFL teacher?

b) Which outcomes can you improve?

c) Please describe what are the STRENGHTS of the programme for preparing you to teach?

d) Please describe what are the WEAKNESSES of the programme for preparing you to teach?

e) What recommendations do you have for improving the current program?

f) Would you recommend this programme to other students who are interested n getting a MA degree in TEFL?
Please circle the answer and briefly explain why.
   a) Yes   b) No   c) Possibly

Please write additional comments if you have any

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR VALUABLE FEEDBACK!