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Key personality traits of a good English teacher as viewed by students of a selected secondary school

Bakalářská práce

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Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

V Olomouci dne …………   Podpis ……………………….

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Content

Abstract

As the title suggest, this thesis will be dealing with the personality traits that are considered essential for an English teacher to be considered good and effective. The primary objective of this thesis is to identify the most frequently mentioned personality traits and qualities of educators in their works and analyze them in greater depth to gain a comprehensive understanding. The first chapter is devoted to the most commonly mentioned personality traits that a good and effective teacher should possess, exploring their meaning and their impact on students. The second chapter later explores additional beneficial qualities and skills that contribute to an idea of a good teacher and provide practical suggestions on how to integrate these skills into teaching practices. The practical section of this thesis consists of a closer look on secondary school students' perspectives on their favorite English teachers' personality traits and qualities that made them the best.

Introduction

Any person who decides to embark on a career path in education, possesses certain qualifications and meets the requirement can be considered a teacher. However, not all teachers can be considered as good teachers. From personal experience, I have come into contact with a large number of teachers who only recited the material without considering the students' understanding or the connection of each lesson. So in the eyes of me and my classmates, the people standing in front of the class were teachers just because they came in at the beginning of each lesson, left again at the end and sometimes scolded us for being too loud. They were quite different from my favorite teachers, who in contrast brought a good atmosphere to each lesson, knew how to deliver the content effectively and served as role models for their students, conveying values and views along with the curriculum. My interest in what makes a good teacher has led me to explore the topic in more depth, specifically focusing on the personality traits and attitudes that students prefer in teachers, rather than just the material taught.

Therefore, the objective of this bachelor thesis is to investigate whether students prefer personality traits and attitudes towards learning over the actual material delivered by the teachers. The thesis aims to provide insight into what makes a good teacher of English in the eyes of students, which could serve as a guide for future teachers to improve their teaching practices and become more effective in their roles.

Research questions:

1. Question 1: Please describe the personality traits of your favorite teacher of English, what made him/her stand out?
2. Question 2: What kind of relationship did the teacher have with his students, was he more authoritative (high control) or indulgent (low control)?
- Question 3: Do you have any shared experiences or moments that made you consider him/her to be the best?

The first chapter of this thesis analyzes expert literature in the field of education and examines the personality traits that are deemed necessary for an English teacher to be considered effective. The chapter aims to help up understand the basic traits that teachers should possess, clarify the meaning of these traits and determine their impact on students. Moreover,

it provides an insight into the personality traits that educational theorists themselves regard as significant, and in some cases, indispensable.

The second chapter delves into additional qualities and skills that are crucial for a teacher to possess in order to be effective. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of these qualities, which are widely recognized as important and can be helpful in creating and fostering a productive environment in the classroom. By exploring these qualities in more detail, we can gain a deeper understanding of how they contribute to a teacher's effectiveness and how they can be incorporated into teaching practices.

The practical part involves the analysis of written essays by secondary school students, which aims to explore the personality traits that were most commonly cited as contributing to the perception of their chosen teachers as the best. This analysis provides a detailed examination of the students' perspectives on effective teaching, including their preferred traits in teachers, their approaches, the quality of their relationship with the class and other additional values.

Theoretical part
1. Personality traits of a good teacher of English

This section of the bachelor's thesis will examine the personality traits that are commonly associated with being an effective teacher of English. The analysis will be based on a review of several relevant articles and publications, which will enable it to explore some of the commonly cited personality traits. Subsequently, it will delve deeper into these traits and investigate their significance in more detail.

1.1.   Being Committed and Passionate

According to Pachina (2019), passion is considered as one of the crucial personality traits that a teacher should possess, given the demanding nature of the teaching profession. Teachers are often faced with high expectations and are required to work beyond their standard working hours. In the absence of passion, teachers may experience a premature end to their teaching career (Pachina, 2019).

In her publication Larrivee (2012) states that stress is an essential occurrence that teachers cannot avoid throughout their careers. One of the most frequent symptoms of stress is an overwhelming sense of fatigue at the end of each day. The imbalanced state brought on by stress can potentially lead to burnout, manifesting in a preoccupation with negative thoughts, a lack of motivation to work, and overall irritability (Larrivee, 2012, p. 5-6). According to Hatch (2021) quality teacher preparation is the key to building confidence and helping teachers manage stressful situations in the classroom. Additionally, it is crucial for teachers to understand their motivation for choosing this profession, as this can help them thrive in the classroom (Hatch, 2021, p. 4-5). People may have diverse motivations and aspirations for pursuing a career in teaching. Some may be motivated by a sympathy and liking for children or a desire to contribute to the education of future generations. Others may be drawn to the profession due to its perceived financial stability and opportunities for work-life balance. These reasons can be classified into two overarching categories: intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Intrinsic goals are those that offer professional satisfaction, such as the opportunity for personal growth and the enjoyment derived from helping others and teaching itself. Conversely, extrinsic goals are characterized by a possessive orientation, such as the pursuit of high salaries, job security, and social status associated with the teaching profession (Reeve, Su, 2014, p. 350).

Regarding passion and enthusiasm, it is worth mentioning the phenomenon of English-Language Voluntourism, introduced by José Aldemar Álvarez V. (2016). This practice involves native English speakers teaching their language at schools in southern regions of the world on a short-term basis. One of the main advantages of this approach is that these teachers bring energy, enthusiasm, and enjoyment to the classroom. Additionally, it provides an excellent opportunity for English speakers to travel the world, as no professional requirements are necessary, and the short-term method is typically sponsored by private corporations or non-governmental organizations. While these individuals may not possess a pedagogical degree, they are highly beneficial, as they make learning more accessible for impoverished children in the targeted southern countries (Álvarez, 2016, p. 193-195).

The author of this thesis mentions the practice of English-Language Voluntourism to underscore the argument that a person possessing the appropriate personality and attitude can create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, even without formal education or training in the pedagogical field. This practice involves individuals without an education degree or experience in pedagogical training teaching English to children in impoverished areas. Despite the lack of formal training, these individuals are able to bring energy, enthusiasm, and joy to the classroom, demonstrating the importance of personality traits and attitudes in teaching.

H. Vasudevan (2010) conducted a study to investigate the impact of teachers' creativity, attitude, and commitment on their students' proficiency in the English language. This study was conducted in Malaysia and involved 310 teachers who were assessed using a questionnaire to evaluate their creativity, attitude, and commitment. The students' proficiency in English was measured using an English proficiency test. The study found a positive correlation between teachers' creativity, attitude, and commitment and their students' proficiency in English. Teachers who demonstrated higher levels of creativity and a positive attitude towards teaching English tended to have students with higher levels of proficiency. Moreover, teachers who were committed to their profession and demonstrated a high level of job satisfaction were more likely to have students who were proficient in English. The study emphasizes the importance of teachers' creativity, attitude, and commitment as significant factors that can significantly influence their students' proficiency in the English language. It is therefore essential for educators to prioritize these factors in their teaching practices to support students' success in language learning (Vasudevan, 2010, p. 17-18).

1.2. Being Caring

Pachina (2019) argues that in addition to passion and enthusiasm, developing a caring relationship with students is essential for effective teaching. The author claims that if students do not feel safe and comfortable in the classroom, their academic performance will be negatively affected. Therefore, a good teacher should demonstrate care and support for their students and establish a nurturing environment in which they can learn and grow. In particular, a good English teacher should not only focus on imparting knowledge, but also be determined to bring out the best in their students. By fostering a caring and supportive learning environment, teachers can help their students achieve their full potential in the classroom (Pachina, 2019).

When starting a teaching career, a potential challenge is to create a positive first impression on students, which can be difficult in a classroom setting. The teacher's demeanor can be perceived as either lenient or tough, and both approaches have their downsides. A teacher who is perceived as too lenient may lose respect from their students, while a teacher who appears too tough may be seen as unapproachable. A good teacher needs to find a balance between a friendly and professional relationship with students while considering their own personality. Maintaining a professional distance while still building a positive rapport with students is a key task for a teacher (Potts, 2021, p. 37).

Teacher is one of the most significant influences a young person can have. Each person who decides to devote his life to pedagogy has got the chance and the motivation to inspire countless number of pupils. However, that is not always the case. According to the J. Amos Hatch (2021), who was a teacher educator at the University of Tennessee, many students applying for some of their coursework answered the open-ended questions in the applications with minimum hope or aim. *"I know I will not make a lot of money teaching, but if I can make a difference in the life of just one student, it will all be worth it,"* was one of the most frequent answers (Hatch, 2021, p. 4). The author argues that even though it might seem like an ordinary catchphrase – something appealing to say, it is also very discouraging and inaccurate. Teachers have the chance to influence the life of every student with whom they work. That is what makes teaching a thrilling and stimulating choice of career (Hatch, 2021, p. 4-5). Finney and Sagal (2016) propose that a considerable number of educators enter the teaching profession without a profound sense of purpose. These individuals for example may find teaching appealing due to their affinity for the English language. However, over time, this initial motivation can evolve

into a desire to fulfill the entirety of their role as a teacher, together with their most cherished values. For many people in this field, the ultimate aspiration is the commitment to become more loving (Finney, Sagal, 2016, p. 18).

Birch and Ladd's (1997) study, published in the Journal of Educational Psychology, examined the impact of teacher care on student academic engagement, performance, behavior, and dropout rates. The study found that students who perceived their teachers as caring were more likely to exhibit greater academic engagement, higher academic performance, and decreased the occurrence of behavioral problems and dropout rates. These findings suggest that when teachers demonstrate care towards their students, it can foster a positive and nurturing classroom environment which leads to students feeling more connected to school and contributes to improved academic outcomes (Birch, Ladd, 1997, p. 61-79). Another study conducted by Martin and Dowson (2009) investigated the impact of caring teachers on the social and emotional development of students. Their research published in the International Journal of Educational Research indicated that creating a nurturing classroom environment had a positive effect on students' well-being. The study found that students who perceived their teachers as caring and supportive were more likely to feel secure, have positive self-esteem, confidence, and resilience. In essence, the study demonstrated that caring teachers can foster a positive and supportive learning environment that promotes not only academic achievement but also social and emotional development of students (Martin, Dowson, 2009, p. 327-365).

1.3. Being Respectful

Respect is a crucial personality trait for teachers of English as they often encounter multilingual students from multiple countries and cultures. A good English teacher should therefore demonstrate respect for each individual, their cultural differences, and traditions throughout their career (Pachina, 2019).

According to Miller and Pedro (2006), a crucial step towards establishing a respectful classroom environment is through building positive relationships between the teacher and their students. As role models, teachers are carefully observed by their students, who can differentiate between genuine and insincere behavior. Students value authentic teachers who set a positive example, which in turn can discourage them from destructive behavior towards school equipment and materials. The authors suggest various strategies for teachers to foster respect in their classrooms, such as modeling respectful behavior, setting clear expectations, employing positive reinforcement, and offering opportunities for students to develop social skills.

Additionally, they underscore the importance of embracing diversity and promoting cultural sensitivity in the classroom to create an environment where all students feel included and respected (Miller, Pedro, 2006, p. 293–299). Empathy is also an essential component of demonstrating respect towards others. Although it is not something people are born with, empathy is a skill that can be developed through consistent effort over time. Its usage is particularly critical in the classroom, as it promotes a positive learning environment that is grounded in mutual respect. In a chaotic classroom setting, students may feel overwhelmed and anxious, leading to an increased fear of failure and disengagement from the lesson. This negative reaction may be triggered by a variety of factors that can create discomfort among students. Therefore, an effective teacher must demonstrate concern for their students' well-being to be regarded successful. Specifically, a skilled educator must possess the ability to employ empathetic strategies in response to unwanted behavior, emphasizing proactive measures over reactive ones (Westman, 2021, p. 30),

In addition to promoting respect towards others, it is also important for teachers to foster a sense of self-respect in their students. As Hatch (2021) points out, low self-esteem can have a negative impact on a student's academic performance. Students should be encouraged to earn their self-respect by successfully completing challenging tasks in areas that interest them. This can help build a sense of accomplishment and self-worth that will serve them well throughout their lives (Hatch, 2021, p. 77-78). It is also important to point out that respect goes both ways. If a teacher desires to have a class full of respectful students, he should be the one to set the example. Central to this undertaking is recognizing that each student brings unique experiences, values, and perspectives that inform their behavior and interactions. In moments of conflict, a skilled teacher must refrain from belittling or humiliating their students. Rather, they should recognize each student as a distinct individual and address any concerns privately, outside the attention of their peers. When confronted with a student who is not performing well enough, it is crucial to evaluate one's expectations. Unrealistic expectations can lead to teacher frustration and hostility towards students who are unable to meet them. This outcome may result from demands that exceed students' capabilities, rather than any deficiency on their part (Meador, 2012).

Mostafaei Alaei and A. Forough Ameri (2021) conducted a study titled *"Research into Teachers' (Dis)Respect for Learners: A Cross-Cultural Study of English Language Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions"* and published it in the Education Research International journal. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of English language teachers and

learners regarding teachers' respect for learners across different cultures. The results of the study indicated that both teachers and learners perceived respect for learners as an important aspect of teaching and learning. However, there were some cultural differences in the perceptions of respect for learners. The study found that both teachers and learners perceived respect for learners as an important aspect of teaching and learning. However, there were some cultural differences in the perceptions of respect for learners. Iranian teachers and learners tended to value respect for learners more than UK teachers and learners. The study also found that the level of respect for learners perceived by learners was higher than that perceived by teachers. The authors suggest that these findings have important implications for teacher education and training programs, especially in cross-cultural contexts. The study emphasizes the need for teachers to be aware of the cultural differences in perceptions of respect for learners and to develop appropriate teaching strategies that promote respect for learners (Alaei, Ameri, 2021, p. 87 - 114).

1.4.   Being Disciplined

Pugh (2018) asserts that effective management skills and discipline are essential qualities for a competent English teacher to possess. These two factors are pivotal in maintaining control over the classroom environment and promoting a productive learning atmosphere (Pugh, 2018).

A significant concern for novice teachers is the ability to manage an unruly classroom. Beghetto and Kaufman (2011) identify two types of teachers who adopt distinct attitudes towards creativity in their classrooms. One group of teachers believes that students should be given the opportunity to express their creativity and avoid passive learning. Conversely, the other group fears that creativity may cause a disruption in the classroom and lead to chaos. To address this dilemma, the authors introduce the concept of *"disciplined improvisation,"* a metaphor that underscores teaching as a creative art (Beghetto, Kaufman, 2011, p. 95). This approach emphasizes the importance of discipline and improvisation, which are essential to maintain a structured classroom environment while allowing for creative expression. It also embodies the art of not only promptly responding to unforeseen circumstances but also skillfully designing lesson plans that allow for the natural occurrence of such contingencies (Beghetto, Kaufman, 2011, p. 94-95).

Maintaining discipline in the classroom is essential for creating a productive learning environment. However, according to Gabriel Young (2022), a family therapist, discipline

cannot be achieved without earning the children's respect. In his article, Young emphasizes the importance of earning respect from children and acknowledges that it is not a simple task. Many people lack an understanding of how children's brains work, which can lead to ineffective attempts at disciplining children. For example, telling a child to respect others may not have the desired effect, as young children's brains are not fully developed until around the age of twelve, and they may not understand the concept of dignity. Therefore, it is crucial to communicate with children using direct and uncomplicated language, such as explaining that sticking out their tongue can hurt others and that they should keep it in their mouth (Young, 2022). There are several strategies available for handling discipline in the classroom, one of them is the Caring Teacher Discipline, introduced by Marilyn E. Gootman (2008). It aims to promote self-control among children. Unlike punishment, which is a consequence of misbehavior, Caring Teacher Discipline is focused on teaching children to make appropriate choices. This approach is centered on developing problem-solving skills, building confidence, and correcting misbehavior. However, many teachers express concern that dealing with disciplinary issues detracts from valuable instructional time. While the implementation of Caring Teacher Discipline may initially require some time, it ultimately results in positive behavioral changes. This approach is advantageous as it encourages collaboration between teachers and students, thereby minimizing undue stress on both parties. Furthermore, the creation of an organized classroom environment fosters a sense of security among students, which can promote positive behavior. By establishing consistent routines and expectations, students are more likely to make responsible choices. Once a secure classroom environment has been established, the teacher can focus on cultivating positive relationships with students and facilitating social connections among students (Gootman, 2008, p. 2-3).

Challenging behavior in children is a complex phenomenon with multifaceted meanings and should not be used as a label due to the negative impact of stereotypes and expectations it may carry. It is a challenge for both the teacher and the child as it often disrupts the learning environment, making it difficult for other students to concentrate. The child with challenging behavior may also face difficulty in participating in classroom activities and achieving their full potential. In order to address this issue, Rasminsky (2021) suggests that teaching children how to regulate their emotions and manage their behavior can be an effective approach. By providing them with the necessary tools and skills, they can learn to navigate challenging situations and engage more positively in the classroom (Rasminsky, 2021, p. 11-12). It is imperative to bear in mind that attributing a student's disruptive behavior to some hypothetical construct is often

counterproductive. For instance, a teacher who criticizes his or her pupils for being disengaged based on their lack of interest or motivation may not achieve the desired outcome (Cambell, 1999). Any challenging conduct is a form of operant behavior, and as such, it can be reinforced by various environmental factors. Criticizing a student's inappropriate behavior in front of the entire class can intensify the situation, as it directs attention to the undesirable conduct. Thus, an effective teacher should aim to establish a framework that reinforces positive and appropriate behavior while reducing the consequences of negative behavior. Failure to provide reinforcement for appropriate behavior may lead to the extinction of such behavior (Cambell, 1999, p. 99).

Relational discipline, as Bender (2012) explains, is a way of disciplining students that focuses on building positive relationships between the teacher and students. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the reasons behind students' misbehavior and using positive reinforcement and modeling to encourage appropriate behavior. Relational discipline acknowledges that students' behavior is often a result of their environment, experiences, and emotions, and aims to provide a safe and supportive classroom environment where students feel valued and respected. Bender (2012) emphasizes that relational discipline is not a quick fix, and requires patience, persistence, and consistency on the part of the teacher. It also requires teachers to be open-minded, flexible, and willing to adapt to the needs of their students. However, the benefits of relational discipline are numerous, including increased student engagement, improved academic achievement, and better social-emotional skills (Bender, 2012, p. 3). A good example of why it is appropriate to start thinking about a good teacher-student relationship if a teacher wants a productive and disciplined atmosphere in the classroom is provided by Larry Brendtro in his essay *"Establishing Relationship Beachheads"*, mentioned in Scarlet, Ponte and Singhs' publication (Scarlet, Ponte, Singh, 2009, p. 53). The essay explains the importance of the teacher serving as a source of insight and a role model, strengthening the social reinforcements. One practical way to build a positive relationship is through small talk, which allows teachers to demonstrate their sense of humor and create a relaxed environment in times of need. Each teacher should approach this method in their own way, based on their own personality and communication skills. There is also a difference between building a good relationship with younger learners and older learners. Younger learners often become attached to their teacher, therefore a good teacher should aim to become a safe space for the children. However, building a relationship with older students may depend on cultural context and can be either casual and playful or more serious. Regardless of the

approach, trust and the challenge to improve should be the essence of a good teacher-student relationship (Scarlet, Ponte, Singh, 2009, p. 53-54).

2. Other qualities of a good English teacher

The significance of personality traits in becoming an effective English teacher cannot be overlooked, as they may differ based on personal preferences. However, this chapter delves into additional factors that can enhance an English teacher's attractiveness to their students.

2.1. Recognizing and addressing the complexity

Teaching, whether it is the English language or any other subject, is a challenging task that involves imparting complex information and processes to students who themselves possess their own set of complexities, in order to be considered successful. Stronge (2018) emphasizes that successful teaching does not only include sharing knowledge related to a particular subject it also includes equipping students with essential life skills such as self-care, empathy for the well-being of others, comprehension of complexity in a rapidly changing world, effective communication across multiple media and the pursuit of personal growth. Possessing these skills allows teachers to be more effective in the classroom. In the classroom setting, students bring with them their own complex experiences and emotions that can significantly influence the learning process and ultimately, their academic performance (Stronge, 2018, p. 254). In their publication Sampson and Pinner (2021), introduced their research focused on distinguishing emotions based on their valence, specifically categorizing them as either positive or negative. However, the results indicated that such a simplistic categorization can be reductive and overlook the complexity of emotions in specific contexts and for individual people. For instance, certain "positive" emotions such as satisfaction can actually decrease motivated effort, leading to failure and low self-esteem, while "negative" emotions such as anger can increase motivated effort, leading to focused courage and high self-esteem. Furthermore, emotional intensity can vary greatly among individuals, with some being more strongly influenced by specific emotions than others. Thus, it is crucial for teachers to be aware of the nuanced and individualized nature of emotions in the classroom, and to adopt strategies that effectively address the diverse emotional needs of their students (Sampson, Pinner, 2021, p. 53).

In the context of the complexity of teaching, it is also necessary to emphasize the knowledge of the subject itself and the requirements for a teacher who wants to make a living in this profession. The definition of a teacher can vary depending on the country and its governing bodies. In the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth provide a definition of a pedagogical worker as someone who engages in direct teaching, direct educational, direct special pedagogical, or direct pedagogical-psychological activities that have

a direct impact on those being educated. This education and training is based on specific legal regulations. A pedagogical worker may be an employee of a legal entity that conducts school activities, an employee of the state, or a director of the school, even if they are not in an employment relationship with the legal entity that conducts the school activities or an employee of the state. Additionally, a pedagogical worker is someone who performs direct pedagogical activities in social service facilities (MŠMT, 2012). The requirements for the professional qualifications of teaching staff may also change depending on the institution in which the individual aspires to teach. The professional qualifications required for teaching staff may vary depending on the educational institution where the individual is seeking to teach. Nevertheless, the necessary qualifications are comprehensively listed in Act No. 563/2004 Coll. This act lays out the fundamental requirements for educational institutions and their staff members in the Czech Republic. It also distinguishes between teachers at primary and secondary schools and teachers at tertiary institutions, with different qualifications required for each level of education. Additionally, there are also specific requirements for teachers of special education and those teaching in vocational schools. These qualifications often include a degree in the relevant subject area, completion of a teacher training program, and passing relevant exams or assessments. To be qualified to teach English in the Czech Republic, teachers must possess a master's degree in English language teaching (ACT No. 563/2004 Collection of Law, on Pedagogical Staff and on the Amendment to Some Other Acts, MŠMT ČR.).

2.2.   Communicating clearly

Communication is central to meaning, especially during English language classes. Every entity, be it a person, animal, or object, is unique, yet they interact with each other in ways that establish a shared information space for navigating the world. In shaping this reality, individuals establish connections and constraints between pieces of information, thereby imbuing them with meaning. This process of assigning meaning to information is essential for creating a coherent understanding of the world (Parikh, Prashant, 2019, p. 3).

In his publication, Alcorn (2016) emphasizes the crucial role of communication between teachers and students, as it forms the foundation for effective learning. The process of learning is not unidirectional, and teachers rely on students' engagement to create opportunities for feedback and influence. This exchange of information is transactional, and various factors, such as teachers' instructions and practices, their dispositions and inclinations toward students, the curriculum and learning activities, and the general social climate of the classroom, all influence

the quality of communication. As such, the relationship between teachers and students is interdependent, creating a set of communication principles that facilitate effective learning. Communication is therefore the inseparable basis of teacher communication. Teacher Communication explores the significance of effective communication in the classroom and provides guidance for teachers to enhance their communication skills in an educational environment. The teacher's role involves communicating with various people including students, administrators, parents, and colleagues, across diverse settings. In all these scenarios, teachers encounter communication challenges such as a student's lack of attention in class, a parent's desire to comprehend their child's learning difficulties, an administrator's need to discuss a student's academic issues, or a colleague's outrages about high-stakes testing (Alcorn, 2016, p. XIII). According to White (2016) good teachers should possess the ability to not only understand the literal meaning of a message but also to comprehend its underlying relational implications. Indeed, every message contains two types of implications: the function of the message and its relational implications. Messages that serve as decision-making tools require responses that concentrate on the issue at hand, and objective, problem-focused disagreements may be appropriate. Conversely, other messages that may appear to be decision-making tools are, in fact, a request for confirmation and acceptance of roles within the organizational structure. Failure to recognize this distinction can result in a response that challenges the hierarchical structure of the school or the authority of the individual. As language is more than just a tool for conveying information, it has the power to shape roles, behaviors, emotions, and actions. Teachers must maintain their role as members of the school, and this necessitates specific maintenance strategies. However, certain strategies can be counterproductive in negotiating a productive role. For instance, avoidant behavior is a poor bargaining tool and can send a signal that one does not accept or affirm one's role as a team member within the school (White, 2016, p. 99).

When preparing lessons, it is important for teachers to consider the age and level of their students. The psychological characteristics of students can vary depending on factors such as age, social conditions, interests, and even gender. As a result, teachers should begin by establishing an overview of the objectives they aim to achieve, including vocabulary, grammar, and language functions for communication, which will inform their planning process. Lesson content should be tailored to achieve these objectives, while recognizing that different contexts will require unique approaches. Additionally, teachers must identify and engage students who are interested, motivated, and enjoy learning a foreign language for communication, as these

learners tend to make better progress and learn at a faster pace than their disengaged peers (Johnson, Batson, Graus, 2022, p. 20-21). The fundamental purpose of schools is to facilitate learning, with teachers serving as facilitators in the process. In the context of English language classes, the role of language is particularly critical, as it can be deceptive. Engaging in dialogue not only contributes to children's cognitive development, but it is also an effective method for improving their communication skills. Consequently, language proficiency constitutes the primary mode of learning, and the language skills of teachers greatly influence students' academic performance in this domain. It can therefore be inferred that students acquire knowledge more effectively when they are actively engaged in speaking, participating in dialogues, discussions, and debates, rather than simply listening passively to the teacher (Wyse, 2010, p. 181).

2.3. Assessing effectively

Stronge (2018) defines assessment as the systematic process of gathering, analyzing, and utilizing relevant data to measure student progress, guide instructional content and delivery, and provide timely feedback to students, parents, and stakeholders. It involves monitoring and assessing student development and work, which is a multifaceted task that requires a high level of professional competency in teaching. Given its critical role in the teaching and learning process, effective assessment practices are imperative for promoting student growth and achievement (Stronge, 2018, p. 134-136).

It is impossible for language teachers to avoid assessment, as it enables teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction and serves as a guide for future teaching. While traditional forms of assessment, such as multiple-choice tests, matching, true and false answers, fill-in-the-blank, short multiple-choice tests and essays are commonly used in language classrooms and can demonstrate progress in language learning, they are being increasingly challenged by alternative assessment methods. Farrell and Jacobs (2010) introduce the concept of Alternative Assessment, which aims to mirror real-life situations and engage higher-order thinking skills. Despite the time-consuming nature of these methods and their potential for scoring inconsistencies, they are gaining popularity due to the limitations of traditional assessments. These limitations include a lack of insight into students' second language competence and an emphasis on measuring only learning outcomes rather than the process of learning itself (Farrel, Jacobs, 2010, p. 98). Wilson (2005) underscores the significance of teachers possessing proficiency in assessment. While some educators can be surprised and frustrated by their

students' outcomes on standardized tests implemented for accountability purposes, assessment-literate teachers are not. They have the knowledge and skills to employ data to enhance student learning, teaching effectiveness, and accountability. These teachers acquire accurate data on the progress of each student, enabling them to evaluate the student's performance and use that information to improve the teaching methods, thus ensuring continuous growth and progress of each student. In this regard, a proficient teacher should monitor the students' progress regularly and implement appropriate teaching strategies (Wilson, 2005, p. 14). It is crucial that teachers acquire data usage proficiency equivalent to, if not better than, that of the public, which is increasingly becoming more sophisticated in their utilization of data. According to the author, anything less will weaken the teaching profession. Koh, DePass, and Steel (2019) assert that assessment literacy is critical for the successful adoption and implementation of alternative forms of assessment. They argue that assessment literacy refers to a teacher's understanding of good assessment practices in the classroom, and it plays a crucial role in global education reforms that prioritize equitable educational opportunities for all students to acquire core competencies such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective collaboration, communication, and self-directed learning. As a means to improve teaching practices and student learning, assessment for learning is being widely discussed in the education community. In this regard, teachers' assessment literacy levels are pivotal in ensuring the successful integration of alternative assessment methods. In essence, assessment literacy refers to teachers' proficiency in employing appropriate assessment practices in the classroom (Koh, DePass, Steel, 2019, p. 1).

2.4. Creating an effective learning environment

Stronge (2018) claims that the organization of the classroom is an equally important aspect of teaching, which demands the same degree of precision and attention as designing a well-structured lesson. The plan for classroom organization consists of several key elements, such as room layout, discipline, a clearly defined routine, and a conducive environment that offers both emotional and physical security. When these critical organizational elements are integrated, the teacher's classroom plan creates an atmosphere that facilitates academic rigor and fosters intellectual curiosity among students. Effective teachers carefully consider the requirements that ensure a harmonious classroom experience for their students (Stronge, 2018, p. 178-179).

When talking about the room layout, in her work Ballard (2017) emphasizes that classroom desk arrangement is often monotonous and uninspiring, with the traditional row arrangement being the norm for a considerable period of time. However, for teachers who aspire to engage their students more effectively during lessons, a more dynamic classroom environment must be created, starting with desk arrangement. To achieve this goal, the teacher must consider the aims and objectives of the lesson. For instance, if the teacher intends to increase the level of student activity, rearranging the classroom space can be a useful strategy. One way of achieving this is by arranging desks in a circular or square formation to encourage collaboration and participation in discussions. Furthermore, rearranging desks to create clusters of two or three can also be an effective method of disrupting dull classroom layouts (Ballard, 2017, p. 15). When designing a classroom environment, it is essential to consider not only the functional but also the aesthetic aspects. As emphasized by Masterson (2021) the aesthetic features of a classroom can have a significant impact on student motivation and engagement, especially for younger students. For instance, aligning the play areas in the classroom with the theme of the curriculum can help create a more cohesive and visually appealing space. Moreover, displaying students' work, such as stories, photos, and artwork, can boost their self-esteem and sense of belonging in the classroom. It is worth noting that even though teachers may use the same curriculum, each class and group of students is unique, and the classroom environment can play a crucial role in shaping their experiences. As such, teachers must take into account the students' interests, needs, and backgrounds when designing their classroom environment. By creating a visually stimulating and welcoming classroom, teachers can help foster a positive learning environment that supports students' engagement and academic success (Masterson, 2021, p. 73).

The initial moments of a class, from the journey to class to the first few moments, are crucial in determining the atmosphere, tone, and effectiveness of a class. It is during this time that teachers welcome their students to the classroom, setting the stage for learning and establishing expectations for behavior. Given that consistency is highly valued by pupils, it is important for teachers to regularly review and objectively assess the techniques and approaches they use in the classroom. Similarly, it is important for teachers to explicitly communicate and model their expectations for student behavior and to regularly review these expectations to ensure they are being met. Garton and Hollis (2020) suggest that an effective approach to classroom management is one of *"anticipation and prevention"*, which should be applied to all aspects of teaching. This involves planning, practicing, and reviewing routines and procedures at every

stage. Establishing effective routines and procedures in the classroom requires time and commitment. Persistence is necessary to get things to the point where teachers want them, while consistency is necessary to maintain them. Although both aspects are necessary, persistence can be particularly challenging to maintain at the outset. In the field of education, there is ongoing debate about the balance between consistency and flexibility within lesson structures (Garton, Hollis, 2020, p. 36). Mansworth (2021) argues that while consistency is important, incorporating flexibility into lesson plans can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Specifically, Mansworth suggests that in English lessons, teachers can vary their lesson structures by spending more time on reading a given book before analyzing it, or by engaging in discussions that explore deeper meanings and concepts related to a particular text. Alternatively, a lesson can be devoted to listening to student presentations, which they have prepared over a longer period of time. However, Mansworth notes that these approaches may not be suitable for all lessons, and the teacher must decide when to use multiple quick activities or focus on one activity to allow students to apply what they have learned in practice. Overall, Mansworth highlights the importance of striking a balance between consistency and flexibility in lesson planning, to promote student engagement and learning outcomes (Mansworth, 2021, p. 71).

Practical part

3. Methodology

Defining the concept of an ideal teacher can be a challenging task. It is a subjective matter which varies based on individual values and preferences. What one person might consider as crucial qualities for an ideal teacher, other person can view it as completely irrelevant and useless in the context of teaching. In the practical part of this thesis, students' perspective on what key personality traits should a good English teacher possess is examined. Furthermore, other qualities of their favorite teachers are introduced and investigated.

3.1. The research aim

The aim of this practical part of the thesis is to present the perception of a good teacher of English among secondary school students, with a specific focus on those pursuing a career in education. The research primarily investigates the idea of a competent English teacher that students who aspire to this profession possess. The goal is therefore to compare the perspectives of secondary school students of a selected secondary school regarding the characteristics of an effective English teacher.

3.2. Research questions

In any research project, the formulation of research questions is essential. Research questions are important as a critical purpose in directing the research towards the achievement of the stated objectives, as well as guiding the appropriate applied methodological approach. The research questions must align with both the research problem and the stated objectives. The research problem can also be delimited and concretized through the precise formulation of research questions. Consequently, the research process can be refined and more efficient. (Švaříček, Šedová, 2007, p. 69) The research questions of this thesis are therefore based on personal experiences of the examined students and their favorite English teacher. These questions are designed to explore the area of preferred personality traits, teachers' relationship with their students and shared experiences.

In this thesis these three questions will be answered:

- Question 1: Please describe the personality traits of your favorite teacher of English, what made him/her stand out?
- Question 2: What kind of relationship did the teacher have with his students, was he more authoritative (high control) or indulgent (low control)?

- Question 3: Do you have any shared experiences or moments that made you consider him/her to be the best?

The results of my research reveal the personality traits that secondary school students believe are essential for an effective English teacher. The next step will aim to determine the preferred teaching approach of the participants and whether they have experienced it. Additionally, the study seeks to examine the significance of the teacher-student relationship and whether the students shared any common experiences with their teachers. In general, these questions could be divided into three basic groups according to what they are investigating.

3.3.   Research method

In this bachelor thesis, the research findings will be based on original data collected through qualitative research. For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen qualitative research as the preferred one. Qualitative research methods are particularly useful in revealing and comprehending the essence of phenomena that are not well understood. Furthermore, they can provide unique perspectives on phenomena that are already known. Additionally, qualitative research methods are valuable in obtaining detailed information that may be difficult to acquire through quantitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1999, p.11). Gavora (2000) emphasizes that qualitative research offers an opportunity for an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of respondents' perspectives. It also allows for a closer connection with the participants, enabling a greater understanding of their viewpoints (Gavora, 2000, p. 31-32).

3.4.   Research limitations

The findings of this study are subject to certain limitations:

A significant limitation of this study is related to the language barrier that existed due to the research being conducted in English so that individual passages could be used as citations in the research findings. All research participants were Czech, which may have posed a challenge for some individuals in conveying their emotions and experiences precisely in a language that is not their native tongue. These limitations should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of this study.

3.5.   Data collection

The data for this study was collected using essays written by third-year secondary school students. The essay writing process was out in a conducive and comfortable environment that

was created to enable the students to write to the best of their ability. Given that the topic of the essays was their favorite English teacher, steps were taken to minimize any potential distractions, including asking their current English teacher to temporarily leave the room. As noted by Švaříček and Šeďová (2014), the degree of trust and openness exhibited by the participants strongly influences the quality of the obtained data (Švaříček a Šeďová, 2014, p. 76). Therefore, I took the measures to create a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere to facilitate the students' trust and openness and thus enhancing the quality of the collected data.

The essays were aimed to gather relevant information from the students. The questions posed to the students were carefully designed to investigate their personal experiences with their favorite teachers of English, including their personality traits and teaching styles. Additionally, the questions were intended to gather insights into the students' approaches to learning and how their favorite English teacher influenced their learning experiences. By focusing on these key areas, the essays were able to provide valuable and insightful data that is pertinent to the research objectives.

The essay writing process was conducted during the students' English class, which provided a familiar setting for them. The classroom was equipped with computers, which allowed the students to easily access online resources to help with the translation of complex vocabulary. The entire writing process was carried out within the duration of one class period, which typically lasts 45 minutes.

All participants were enthusiastic and cooperative. At the beginning of the process, I explained the purpose of this research for my bachelor thesis and for future purposes. I also emphasized the fact that all research results will be published anonymously.

3.6.   Selection of respondents

The research was conducted in collaboration with thirteen third-year students from Kostka Secondary School in Vsetín, who are pursuing a degree in education. As the focus of the was on understanding the characteristics of an effective English teacher, these respondents were considered to be suitable due to their connection with education and their aspiration to become teachers. The primary objective of the study was to gather insights into perceptions of individuals who are pursuing a career in teaching with regards to what constitutes as a good English teacher.

3.7.   Data analysis

Upon completing the data collection, the open coding method was used to analyze the data. According to Švaříček and Šeďová (2007, p. 211) open coding involves breaking down, conceptualizing, and reorganizing data in a new manner. The process involves dividing the text into units, which can consist of words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, and assigning them names or labels, known as codes. The codes are brief descriptions that differentiate one unit from another.

While analyzing the collected data, I carefully read the essays multiple times, identifying and highlighting essential information, and organizing the data into four distinct categories. These categories included the most commonly cited personality traits, the qualities that made the teacher stand out, the preferred teaching approach, and the shared experiences which helped strengthen the teacher-students relationship, either at an individual or class level.

4. Answers to research questions

4.1. The most commonly cited personality traits

Among the personality traits mentioned by the respondents related to their favorite teacher of English, being friendly emerged as the most frequently cited characteristic. More than half of the participants mentioned this trait as the primary reason for their preference. The respondents felt that the friendly nature of the teacher contributed to the creation of a positive and welcoming learning environment, which can be considered to be very important for them. For instance, one of the students expressed that, *"He is friendly, and even if you screw something up, you'll be able to get it right thanks to his help"*. (R 1, Q 1) This shows that students were more likely to seek help and support from these teachers when they needed it. These teachers were approachable and easy to talk to, which resulted in higher participation and engagement in class discussions. This type of engagement was beneficial and led to a better retention of information and improved understanding of English concepts. Many respondents reported feeling comfortable and at ease while speaking in class, even when compared to other teachers, thanks to the friendly demeanor of their English teachers. Lastly, they appreciated the positive feedback and encouragement that they received from their friendly teachers of English. Positive reinforcement boosted their confidence and self-esteem, leading to a more positive attitude towards learning. When the students felt appreciated and valued, they were more likely to take pride in their work and strive for better results.

The second most commonly mentioned personality trait among the respondents was a sense of humor. Many participants reported that they enjoyed having teachers who were able to incorporate fun and playfulness into their English classes, which helped to break the monotony of learning a challenging language. It also made the subject matter more memorable. Students were more likely to remember information that they found entertaining or amusing. Teachers who could make jokes or use humorous anecdotes to illustrate key concepts helped the students retain information and improve their understanding of English. Additionally, most respondents appreciated the positive energy and enthusiasm that funny teachers of English brought to the classroom. They felt that their teachers' occasional jokes and playful behavior helped to strengthen a positive and enjoyable relationship between the teacher, students, and the class as a whole. In students' writing, teachers incorporated humor into teaching by using a variety of techniques, such as jokes, puns, funny stories, or visual aids. As one respondent put it, *"She was very funny, in her class we were always laughing, telling jokes and nobody felt left out."*

(R 2, Q 1) The respondents also appreciated the fact that these teachers were less serious compared to others, which made them more approachable and enjoyable to be around.

The third most frequently mentioned quality is kindness. Kind teachers of English were also effective at creating a positive and supportive learning environment. By demonstrating empathy and compassion, they created a sense of community in the classroom where students felt valued and supported. In the context of English classes, kind teachers made a significant difference in how students viewed the subject matter and their ability to learn it, as one of the respondents highlighted. *"She really changed the way I felt about English, mostly because of her kindness. Every time someone needed help she was there,"* she said. (R 3, Q 1) Another reason why students appreciated kind teachers of English is that they were effective at providing constructive feedback that encouraged growth and improvement. When teachers provided feedback in a kind and supportive manner, the students were more likely to be receptive to it and use it to improve their skills. This helped the students to develop a growth mindset, where they saw challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as obstacles. *"She is very kind and a good person, when I need help she always helps me,"* said one participant about her favorite teacher. (R 4, Q 1) Another main reason why students appreciated kind teachers of English is that they created a sense of trust and security in the classroom. When students felt that their teacher genuinely cared about them, they were more likely to feel comfortable taking risks and trying new things, as one of the students shared: *"I think that even if I made a mistake, he wouldn't do anything because he's so kind and harmless."* (R 1, Q 1) This led to increased confidence and a willingness to participate in class discussions, which ultimately improved their learning outcomes. In addition to creating a supportive learning environment, kind teachers of English were also effective at building positive relationships with their students. When teachers showed that they care about their students as individuals, they created a sense of connection that went beyond the classroom. *"What I liked most about her was that every morning she came to our class and asked if everything was okay and how we were doing." (R 5, Q 1)* This can be especially important for students who may be facing challenges at home or in other areas of their lives. A kind teacher can provide a stable and nurturing presence that can have a profound impact on their students' lives.

Another highly valued personality trait among the respondents was patience, with many students expressing appreciation for teachers who demonstrated patience in the classroom. The students noted that when they felt supportive and understood, they were more likely to take risks in their learning and feel more confident in their abilities. Patient teachers helped them

overcome their fears of failure, so when the students made mistakes, their favorite teachers never lost patience, instead took the time to explain the mistakes and guided them towards the correct path. This approach made the students more comfortable with making mistakes and thus contributing to their engagement in the classroom, which resulted in improvements in their conversational skills, which were considered to be of great importance by the vast majority of respondents. *"She was very patient so I was not afraid to say something incorrectly,"* a student stated. (R 6, Q 1) The participants also appreciated the time and effort that patient teachers invested in their learning. They took the time to explain concepts thoroughly, answer questions, and provide feedback that is both constructive and encouraging. This led to better academic performance and a deeper understanding of English concepts. The teachers also acknowledged that English was not the only subject that the students had to focus on. Consequently, they showed patience even when some students did not study for oral examinations or tests while cultivating patience in their teaching by taking a step back, listening to their students, and being willing to adapt their teaching style to meet the needs of their students. By modeling patience in their own behavior, they showed their students that it is an important quality to have in all aspects of life. They also never tried to humiliate them for their lack of knowledge. Rather, they tried to understand the difficulties the students were facing and focused on resolving those problem areas to provide assistance.

Empathy emerged as another significant personality trait. The respondents expressed a strong liking for teachers who showed empathy towards their students. They appreciated the fact that these teachers cared about their students' well-being and did not view teaching as a mere process of imparting knowledge. Instead, such teachers were willing to show their human side and connect with their students on a personal level. According to the participants, their favorite teachers were always concerned about their students' emotional state and were approachable whenever they needed someone to talk to. For instance, one respondent stated: *"He is really kind and empathetic. When someone is in a bad mood, he always cares and talks about it with them." (R 7, Q 1)* This empathetic approach not only helped in maintaining a positive class environment but also contributed to the overall atmosphere of the class. When students felt that their teacher understands and relates to their experiences, they were more likely to take an interest in the subject matter and participate actively in class. They also appreciated the way that empathetic teachers of English help them to build stronger relationships with their peers. When teachers showed empathy and encouraged students to understand each other's perspectives, it led to stronger bonds between students and a more

positive classroom culture. Additionally, many students felt that empathy was a crucial quality that every teacher should possess. *"I think that every teacher should have empathy and try to establish a good relationship with their students,"* stated another respondent. (R 5, Q 1) Based on the positive response of students towards teachers possessing this particular personality trait, it can be argued that this trait is the most important one. The students' appreciation for teachers exhibiting this personality trait, as well as their own recognition that every teacher should possess it highlights the significance of this quality in the context of effective teaching.

4.2. Qualities that made the teacher stand out

The personality traits that made the students' favorite teachers stand out is passion. Despite some students expressing a lack of interest in the English language, their favorite teachers' enthusiasm for the subject was contagious and helped them develop an appreciation for it. Having a passionate teacher of English improved students' academic performance. When a teacher was passionate about the subject matter, they were more likely to have a deep understanding of the concepts and be able to communicate them effectively to their students. By observing their teachers who cultivated passion in their teaching by incorporating real-world examples and current events into their lessons, the students were able to realize the importance of the language, resulting in learning and improving their English skills over time, as expressed by one of the students: *"She told us about her trips to America and Europe and how she learned English there, which made me realize that it is an important language."* (R 3, Q 1) The teachers also provided opportunities for students to explore their own interests and passions within the subject of English. Another strong indicator of the importance of passion is the respondents highlighting that it was these favorite teachers who taught them the greatest amount of the curriculum, whether it was their former primary school teacher or their present secondary school teacher. Thus, it can be inferred that a teacher's passion for their subject plays a vital role in motivating students to learn and excel in their academic pursuits. Many of the students also expressed their gratitude towards having these effective teachers, which shows the significant role a teacher has in their student's life. They reported actively engaging with their teachers throughout the lessons and either continue to enjoy their classes or remember them with fondness. Overall, the respondents' positive experiences with their effective teachers underscore the critical role of a teacher in shaping a student's academic and personal development.

A passionate teacher can also inspire students, which was another quality that was widely appreciated. One of the most significant ways that students view inspirational teachers of English is as role models. These teachers were not just educators, but also mentors and guides who helped the students to discover their passions and pursue their dreams. They had a deep understanding of their students' needs and motivations, and they worked tirelessly to help them succeed. This was incredibly empowering for students, who often looked up to their teachers as examples of what they can achieve. One of them described her admiration for their teacher as follows: *"She was very inspirational and everything I know is thanks to her."* (R 4, Q 1) Inspirational teachers of English were also effective at creating a sense of purpose in their students. They helped the students to see the relevance of the subject matter they are learning, and how it can be applied in the real world. This was particularly important for students who were struggling to find meaning and direction in their academic studies. When teachers were able to demonstrate how English skills can be applied to various fields, students were more likely to be motivated to learn and achieve their goals. *"Thanks to him, I wasn't afraid at all to speak when I traveled to Scotland, because he showed me that I need it,"* revealed one of the students. (R 7, Q 1) Another way that students viewed inspirational teachers of English is as innovative and creative thinkers. These teachers were not afraid to experiment with new teaching methods or incorporate new technologies into their classrooms. They encouraged their students to think outside the box and challenge themselves, which led to new insights and discoveries. *"He always wanted our classes to be fun but productive,"* a participant highlighted. (R 8, Q 1) This can be especially valuable in English classes, where creativity and self-expression are critical components of the learning process.

4.3.   Preferred teaching approach

Based on the friendly nature of most students' teachers, an indulgent approach or a combination of it with an authoritative one prevailed. Undemanding teachers can have a negative impact on their students if they fail to challenge them or encourage the advancement of their knowledge. However, this was not the case for the respondents, who did not perceive their teacher's low control attitude as an obstacle to their learning. On the contrary, the teachers maintained reasonable demands from the students, which the students found fair. As one participant reported: *"In my opinion, he is more indulgent than authoritative, but he still behaves very responsibly and cares about our knowledge."* (R 9, Q 2)

The participants also expressed a positive attitude towards indulgent teachers, emphasizing their appreciation for the relaxed and informal atmosphere that these teachers create in the classroom. *"He always tries to advise us and no question is stupid for him,"* expressed one of the participants to explain why she feels so comfortable during her English classes. (R 10, Q 2) The students also suggested that they felt comfortable in a classroom that provided them with the opportunity to express themselves and engage in discussions and activities that were relevant to their lives and interests. As another participant noted: *"When the class is tired, he gives us something funny to do."* (R 3, Q 2)

Although some students expressed concerns about the potential chaos that could result from a lack of authority in the classroom, they also noted that their teachers were capable of using the authoritative approach to restore order when necessary. Hence, it appears that the teachers employed a combination of the two learning styles. As one respondent noted, *"He is something between authoritative and indulgent, and it depends on how we cooperate with him."* (R 7, Q 2) Overall, the students' statements suggest that a balanced approach to teaching, which combines friendly interaction with appropriate demands and authority, can create a conductive environment.

However, an authoritarian approach cannot be entirely ruled out as being effective. According to some students, certain teachers adopted a more authoritarian approach in their classroom management, which differed from others. While some students may feel intimidated by this type of teacher, many others appreciated the positive and productive learning environment they were able to create. One of the main reasons why students valued their authoritative teachers is that they establish clear expectations and boundaries. *"She always made sure we understood everything and knew what she expected from us,"* revealed one of the participants. (R 3, Q 2)This approach therefore led to a greater sense of structure and discipline in the classroom, which later turned into promoting greater academic success. Some respondents also reported that their favorite teacher placed an emphasis on speaking, something they had not previously focused on in English classes. This focus helped them realize the practical value of speaking in their daily lives. As one respondent stated: *"Now my teacher speaks with us every day and I learn something that I will use for my life."* (R 10, Q 2) This can be used as an illustration of how authoritative teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled in their subject matter can positively impact their students' learning experiences. This was particularly important for students who were struggling academically or who needed extra support in order to succeed. *"She was able to explain everything so well that I always*

understood everything," noted one of the participants. (R 11, Q 2) Authoritative teachers who were able to convey complex material in a way that is engaging and accessible helped students to develop a greater understanding of the subject matter and achieve greater academic success. These teachers provided guidance and direction, and challenged students to reach their full potential. By fostering a sense of respect and admiration, authoritative teachers created a classroom culture that was conductive to learning and growth. Another mentioned advantage of this approach is that the students felt that they were being guided and that the teachers cared about their future, which is something the students were grateful for. *"He gave me confidence to speak in English and that is something I appreciate about him the most,"* one of the respondents stated. (R 7, Q 2) Moreover, some respondents appreciated that the lessons proceeded smoothly and without any interruptions with the presence of an authoritative and respected teacher in the classroom. As one respondent stated: *"She was more authoritative. Her classes were always quiet and everyone was working." (R 11, Q 2)* It is noteworthy that even when the teachers employed this particular approach, they remained respectful of their students. Therefore, they had high control over their classes and still maintained a sense of fairness.

It is a complex and subjective matter to determine which teaching approach is better, as its effectiveness depends on the individual learning style and preferences of each student. Nevertheless, a noteworthy finding from this survey of respondents' preferred teachers was that a combination of authoritative and indulgent approach was most frequently mentioned, with half of the respondents reporting this approach being used in their classes. This teaching style appears to be a significant contributor to the popularity of English teachers among the respondents.

4.4. Shared experiences which helped strengthen the teacher-student relationship

The relationship between teachers and their students is a crucial aspect of the learning experience. The students agreed that the key element of this relationship is the shared experiences that teachers and students have together. Having shared experiences between teachers and students can help with creating a sense of community and belonging in the classroom. When teachers and students had shared experiences, they felt connected to each other and to the learning process. This led to a more positive and supportive classroom environment, where students were more likely to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. *"I remember that once the teacher decided that the whole class will go on a trip for the*

whole weekend. We had great experiences with her and we got to know each other much better," stated one of the respondents. (R 5, Q 3) Shared experiences also helped build trust between teachers and students. When teachers and students shared their experiences, there was a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's perspective. This led to a greater trust and respect between both sides, which contributed to a more positive and productive learning environment.

The experiences which the respondents shared with their favorite teachers and which they reported in their essays varied. Activities mentioned frequently were longer in nature, either a trip for a full weekend or even longer. One of the respondents described in her writing a trip to England with their teacher. *"It was one of the best experiences I have ever had and I will be forever grateful for that,"* she said. (R 2, Q 3) One of the key benefits of school trips is that they provided a change of environment and a break from the routine of the classroom. This change of scenery was invigorating for both teachers and students, helping to re-energize them and enhance their enthusiasm for learning. It also offered students the opportunity to experience new cultures, meet new people, and encounter new ways of thinking. School trips can also provide hands-on learning experiences that are not possible within the confines of a classroom. For example, a trip to a museum or historical site can offer students the opportunity to see artifacts or documents firsthand, bringing history and other subjects to life. This type of immersive learning experience can help students to better understand complex concepts and can spark their curiosity and interest in the subject. Another benefit of school trips was that they helped to develop important life skills, such as independence and socialization. When students were away from home and their usual routine, they learned to navigate new environments and situations on their own. This helped to build confidence, resilience, and self-reliance. Similarly, school trips offered opportunities for students to socialize with their peers in a different context, helping to build relationships and develop important social skills.

Students were also able to appreciate the shared experiences during the online learning time that all of them experienced. They agreed that even though they could not see each other physically, they remembered them fondly thanks to the teachers who took the time to make their classes fun and enriching. As one of the students stated: *"We didn't have any trips with him, but learning in distance was very funny, he always made the classes fun and enjoyable."* (R 1, Q 2) In a virtual environment, students felt disconnected from their teachers and classmates. However, by creating shared experiences such as virtual field trips or group projects, their teachers helped to foster a sense of belonging and created a shared sense of

purpose within the class. For teachers, shared experiences during online teaching can help to build stronger relationships with their students. By engaging in activities together and fostering a sense of community, teachers can create a more supportive and positive learning environment. This can lead to better communication between teachers and students, and a greater understanding of each other's perspectives and needs. Sometimes even small gestures from teachers are appreciated, as revealed by one of the students: *"Our shared moment that is my favorite is when he named our class on online practice as: My best mateřinky." (R 7, Q 3)* Another benefit of shared experiences during online teaching is that they can help to address the social and emotional needs of students. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of the students, and online teaching worsened feelings of isolation and loneliness. By creating opportunities for shared experiences, teachers helped to address these needs and provided students with a sense of connection and support. Teachers also incorporated activities that encouraged students to share their personal experiences and perspectives, helping to build empathy and understanding within the class, starting with themselves. *"We had conversations with him and my classmates, his life experiences or some things that happened in his life,"* said one of the students. (R 12, Q 3)

Another factor that was often appreciated was the intentional effort on the part of the teacher to bond with the students. Whether it was playing games together in class or gestures such as lending a book that the children liked, students expressed their support for this approach. This approach helped the students to work together and develop a sense of fellowship. Teachers also participated in these activities to develop closer relationships with their students. Showing enthusiasm during shared experiences was also very important in the students' statements. Many of them enjoyed not only the activity itself, but also the good feeling that the teacher himself was excited and happy when something went well. *"We were singing the Alphabet song and she was very happy that we could sing that and that we can tell the whole alphabet, so we sang it three more times,"* one of them said. (R 13, Q 3)

5. Discussion

This bachelor's thesis focused on investigating the personality traits that make a good English teacher. Specifically, we investigated the personality traits that are commonly identified by educational theorists as crucial for a teacher to be considered effective. Subsequently, we conducted research to gather the perspectives of secondary school students regarding the personality traits that they believed were necessary for a good English teacher to possess.

The primary objective of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of secondary school students' perceptions of what constitutes a good English teacher. Additionally, we aimed to identify any other qualities that contribute to a teacher's popularity among these students.

Thirteen secondary school participants were requested to compose essays regarding their preferred English teacher, whether from the past or present. The essays included responses to the following inquiries:

- Please describe the personality traits of your favorite teacher of English, what made him/her stand out?
- What kind of relationship did the teacher have with his students, was he more authoritative (high control) or indulgent (low control)?
- Do you have any shared experiences or moments that made you consider him/her to be the best?

The open coding method was used to analyze the gathered data, resulting in the identification of specific findings for each of the research questions.

Given the qualitative nature of this study and its limited sample size consisting of only one class of students, it is not possible to generalize these findings to a larger population. However, it would be worthwhile to replicate this research on a broader scale by employing questionnaires that focus on the necessary personal qualities that make a good teacher. Furthermore, it would be interesting to compare students' perceptions of a good teacher across different cultural backgrounds to examine if cultural values influence their views. Therefore, the next logical step of this research could be to conduct cross-cultural comparisons of student responses.

6. Findings

It is essential to acknowledge that every individual possesses unique values and preferences that shape their idea of a good English teacher. Being knowledgeable in their field of study is undoubtedly significant, but it is not the only determining factor in becoming an effective teacher from the students' perspective. The findings from the conducted research revealed that the following personality traits were the most highly valued by the participants:

1. Teachers being friendly
2. Teachers having a sense of humor
3. Teachers being kind
4. Teachers being patient
5. Teachers being empathetic

Creating a positive and welcoming learning environment has been identified as a significant factor in effective teaching. Garton and Hollis (2014) emphasize the importance of the initial moments of a class, from the journey to class to the first few moments, as crucial in determining the atmosphere, tone, and effectiveness of a class. During this time, teachers welcome their students to the classroom, setting the stage for learning and establishing expectations for behavior. Moreover, the findings suggest that a friendly nature is essential in fostering a sense of comfort for students in the classroom, which can make it easier for them to reach out to teachers when having trouble. Such findings indicate that teachers who are approachable and display a friendly demeanor have a greater likelihood of creating a positive learning environment and building strong relationships with their students.

The significance of possessing a sense of humor for teachers to effectively deliver curriculum was widely acknowledged. Humor served as a break from the monotony of learning and enhanced the memorability of the learning process. Moreover, humor served as a powerful tool for fostering the teacher-student relationship. Scarlet, Ponte, and Singh (2009) underscore the importance of small talk as a practical approach to building a positive relationship. Through small talk, teachers can showcase their sense of humor and create a relaxed environment during times of need. These insights highlight the value of humor in the classroom and its potential to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Another greatly valued personality trait in this research was kindness. In the research a teacher's kindness greatly influenced how students perceived the subject matter and their ability to learn it. As Hatch (2021) notes, teachers are among the most significant influences in a young

person's life, underscoring the need for kind teachers who can create a supportive learning environment. Such an environment helped to simplify the process of learning a challenging language, as students felt more comfortable seeking assistance and participating in class.

Patience is a crucial personality trait for teachers. In their essays the students expressed their appreciation for patient teacher, as they never tried to patronize them for their lack of knowledge, instead they calmly explained the mistakes and helped the students figure out the right answer. This underscores the significance of patient teachers, particularly in light of Hatch's (2021) argument that a student's low self-esteem can be negatively impacted by impatient and mocking behavior from teachers and can result in decreasing his academical performance.

Westman (2021) argues that fostering empathy is crucial in the classroom as it creates a positive learning environment built on mutual respect. This notion is evident in the statements of students who value this particular personality trait. The empathic approach of their teachers not only helped sustain a positive classroom atmosphere but also influenced the overall climate of the class. When students felt that their teacher comprehended and connected with their experiences, they were more inclined to engage with the subject matter and actively participate in class.

The personality traits and qualities that distinguished each student's favorite teacher included passion and the ability to inspire. Despite some students expressing an initial lack of interest in the English language, the infectious enthusiasm of their favorite teachers for the subject encouraged them to develop an appreciation for it, leading to improved academic results. The students also valued their teachers' deep understanding of concepts and their ability to communicate them effectively. This highlights the significance of positive energy, enthusiasm, and enjoyment in the classroom, as mentioned by Alvarez (2016).

Personality traits are not the sole determinants of what makes an effective teacher. In addition to these traits, the approach to learning itself is an important factor that cannot be overlooked. In the students' responses, this approach was classified into various categories:

1. Indulgent approach
2. Authoritative approach
3. Combination of the two approaches

According to the students' responses, the indulgent approach was predominantly favored in their assessment of effective teaching. This approach was perceived as beneficial to students as it maintained reasonable expectations while still being fair. Additionally, the relaxed and informal atmosphere created by indulgent teachers was highly appreciated by the students. The teachers who utilized this approach were seen as more genuine and sincere, which supports Miller and Pedros' (2006) assertion that students like genuine teachers and their behavior can be positively influenced if the teachers set the right example.

In the context of an authoritative approach, many students appreciated the positive and productive learning environment created by their teachers. This approach resulted in a greater sense of structure and discipline in the classroom, with clear boundaries set by the teacher. As a result, the approach promoted greater academic success. This observation is in line with the statement made by Campbell and Jack (1999) that an effective teacher should aim to establish a framework that reinforces positive and appropriate behavior while reducing the consequences of negative behavior.

The students' comments also highlighted the importance of striking a balance between an authoritative and indulgent approach. They appreciated classrooms that allowed them to express themselves and participate in discussions, while also acknowledging that their teachers were capable of using an authoritative approach when necessary to maintain order. This aligns with Potts' (2021) argument that being too lenient may make the teacher appear weak, while being too tough may make them seem cold and unapproachable. Therefore, a good teacher should find a balance between the two approaches that takes into account their own personality and teaching style.

The significance of establishing a positive teacher-student relationship in the context of shared experiences was underscored by the students in their essays as well. They recognized that having shared experiences between teachers and students can contribute to creating a sense of community and belonging in the classroom. The nature of the experiences that the respondents shared with their favorite teachers varied, ranging from school trips with a longer-term nature to one-time classroom anecdotes that brought the students and their teachers closer together. The students also acknowledged the importance of shared experiences during the online learning period that they all experienced. In a virtual environment, students reported feeling disconnected from their teachers and classmates, but by creating shared experiences, their teachers were able to foster a sense of belonging and a shared sense of purpose within the class. This supports the notion made by Scarlet, Ponte and Singh (2009) explaining the

importance of the teacher serving as a source of insight and a role model, strengthening the social reinforcements.

Conclusion

Teacher's personality traits play an important role in distinguishing an effective teacher from an ineffective one. This set of traits is essential for teachers to create a positive and engaging learning environment. Students are more likely to be motivated to learn and participate in the classroom when their teachers demonstrate certain personality traits that are well-received by students. Therefore, having the right personality traits can help teachers to gain popularity among students and foster a positive relationship with them.

This bachelor's thesis aims to identify the qualities that distinguish a good and effective teacher. It comprises of a theoretical section and a practical section. The theoretical part focuses on the personality traits that are considered important from the perspective of educational theorists and teachers themselves. These traits are introduced and explained individually, and in some cases, advice is provided on how to effectively apply these qualities in the classroom environment. The second chapter later deals with other additional qualities, that are considered just as important as the previously discussed personality traits. It describes the qualities and gives an overview of the complexity and challenges that come with the teaching profession.

The aim of this thesis was to identify the personality traits that are considered important for teachers to possess in order to be perceived as effective by secondary school students. To achieve this, a qualitative research method was carried out. The research aimed to gather relevant information about the personality traits and other qualities that are important to secondary school students. Thirteen participants were included in the study, and we made the efforts to create a comfortable and welcoming environment so they would feel relaxed and encouraged to write the essays about their favorite English teacher openly. The findings were then compared with information from the theoretical part, which included previous publications and expert opinions. While some of the findings supported the claims of experts, others did not. Furthermore, some of the traits that were highly valued by the students were not mentioned in the theoretical part.

While analyzing the essays, we used the open coding method to categorize the data into four distinct categories, which were used to answer the research questions. The study led to several noteworthy conclusions. Firstly, the key personality traits which a good teacher of English should possess according to the secondary school students were friendliness, humorousness, kindness, patience and empathy. The students expressed their appreciation for these specific traits attributing their selection of favorite teachers to these qualities. The

respondents noted that they felt safe and comfortable in the positive classroom environment created by teachers possessing these personality traits. Additionally, students demonstrated a preference for either an authoritative or indulgent approach, or a combination of both, to learning. The indulgent approach was favored for creating a relaxed and friendly classroom environment, while students preferring the authoritative approach stated a preference for a quiet and disciplined atmosphere. However, the majority of respondents reported having teachers who employed a combination of both approaches, finding the balance to be ideal.

This study provides a comprehensive insight into the secondary school students' perception regarding the qualities of a good and effective English teacher. The research findings could be employed to develop future lesson plans, facilitate teachers' self-education, promote their professional and personal growth, as well as prevent challenges associated with the teaching profession.

Resumé

Učitelem se může stát každý, kdo se rozhodne pro kariéru v oblasti vzdělávání, má určitou kvalifikaci a splňuje veškeré požadavky. Ne všichni učitelé však mohou být považováni za dobré učitele. Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo proto zjistit, zda studenti upřednostňují osobnostní vlastnosti a přístup k učení před samotnou látkou předávanou učiteli. Cílem práce bylo poskytnout vhled do toho, co dělá dobrého učitele angličtiny v očích studentů, což by mohlo sloužit jako vodítko pro budoucí učitele, aby zlepšili své vyučovací postupy a stali se ve své roli efektivnějšími. Teoretická část se skládá z analýzy odborné literatury z oblasti vzdělávání a zkoumání osobnostních vlastností, které jsou považovány za nezbytné pro to, aby byl učitel angličtiny považován za efektivního. Dále se zabývá dalšími kvalitami a dovednostmi, které jsou pro učitele klíčové, aby byl efektivní. Praktická část zahrnuje analýzu písemných prací studentů středních škol, jejímž cílem je prozkoumat osobnostní vlastnosti, které byly nejčastěji uváděny jako ty, které přispívají k tomu, že jimi vybraní učitelé jsou vnímáni jako nejlepší. Výsledky provedeného výzkumu ukázaly, že účastníci nejvíce oceňovali následující osobnostní vlastnosti:

1. Přátelští učitelé
2. Učitelé se smyslem pro humor
3. Laskaví učitelé
4. Trpěliví učitelé
5. Empatičtí učitelé

Podle výpovědí studentů převažoval v jejich hodnocení efektivní výuky shovívavý přístup. Komentáře studentů také zdůraznily, že je důležité najít rovnováhu mezi autoritativním a shovívavým přístupem. Jako poslední byl zdůrazněn význam navázání pozitivního vztahu mezi učitelem a studentem v kontextu společných zkušenost

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení	Linda Sehnalová
Katedra nebo ústav	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce	Bačíková Barbora, Mgr.
Rok obhajoby	2023

Název práce	Klíčové osobnostní vlastnosti dobrého učitele angličtiny z pohledu studentů vybrané střední školy
Název v angličtině	Key personality traits of a good English teacher as viewed by students of a selected secondary school
Anotace práce	Jak již název napovídá, tato práce se zabývá osobnostními vlastnostmi, které jsou považovány za nezbytné pro to, aby byl učitel angličtiny považován za dobrého a efektivního. Hlavním cílem této práce je identifikovat frekventovaně zmiňované osobnostní vlastnosti efektivních učitelů publikacích jiných pedagogických teoretiků a hlouběji je analyzovat, aby bylo dosaženo komplexního porozumění. První kapitola je věnována již zmiňovaným osobnostním vlastnostem, které by měl dobrý a efektivní učitel mít, zkoumání jejich významu a jejich vlivu na studenty. Druhá kapitola posléze zkoumá další prospěšné kvality a dovednosti, které přispívají k představě o dobrém učiteli, a poskytuje praktické návrhy, jak tyto dovednosti začlenit do vyučovací praxe. Praktickou část této práce tvoří bližší pohled na pohled středoškolských studentů na osobnostní rysy a vlastnosti jejich oblíbených učitelů angličtiny, díky nimž jsou nejlepší.
Klíčová slova	Učitel, Efektivní učitel, Osobnostní vlastnosti, Kvality, Odhodlaný, Vášnivý, Disciplinovaný, Starostlivý, Respektující, Komunikace, Komplexnost, Hodnocení, Učební prostředí
Anotace v angličtině	As the title suggest, this thesis will be dealing with the personality traits that are considered essential for an English teacher to be considered good and effective. The primary objective of this thesis is to identify the most frequently mentioned personality traits and qualities of educators in their works and analyze them in greater depth to gain a comprehensive understanding. The first chapter is devoted to the most commonly mentioned personality traits that a good and effective teacher should possess, exploring their meaning and their impact on students. The second chapter later explores additional beneficial qualities and skills that contribute to an idea of a good teacher and provide practical suggestions on how to integrate these skills into teaching practices. The practical section of this thesis consists of a closer look on secondary school students' perspectives on their favorite English teachers' personality traits and qualities that made them the best.
Klíčová slova v angličtině	Teacher, Effective teacher, Personality traits, Qualities, Committed, Passionate, Disciplined, Caring, Respectful, Communication, Complexity, Assessing, Learning Environment
Přílohy vázané v práci	-
Rozsah práce	37
Jazyk práce	Anglický jazyk

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Abbreviations

R   respondent

Q   question