

Upper secondary English teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices of assessing writing in Sweden: A survey study

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Abstract

Assessment of writing skills is a part of teachers' everyday life. According to previous studies on a similar subject, teachers' education in assessing writing is limited. The lack of education for teachers may lead to negative consequences for the whole educational system. For this reason, the purpose of this study focused on the analysis of English upper-secondary school teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices in assessing writing in Sweden.

The method for this study was adapted from Crusan et al. (2016) research. An Internet survey was used in order to receive information about teachers' cognition. Firstly, the survey was published in different Facebook groups, and secondly, it was sent to upper-secondary teachers of English in different counties in Sweden via email. In total, 52 English teachers from upper-secondary schools participated in this study.

The results showed that teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices are co-dependent. Teachers need to be aware of their cognition regarding knowledge, beliefs, and practices. In-service teachers need to receive more training as a form of professional development, while institutions for pre-service teachers need to re-evaluate their educational plans. More research about teachers' cognition and assessment of writing is needed in Sweden.

Keywords

Assessing English L2 writing, teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices, teachers' cognition, utilizing rubrics for assessing L2 writing.

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1. Introduction

Assessment is a complicated task that teachers are required to do daily in all educational institutions. Assessment is essential not only for teachers and their profession but also for pupils and students who need to be assessed to complete their course or a specific educational level. The educational system in Sweden depends on grades, so assessment has a significant role. For example, pupils who have completed the lower-secondary level of education and want to continue their studies at the next level need to apply to different upper-secondary schools. Their grades will define which school they can get admitted to. English is one of the subjects pupils must complete to be able to apply for upper secondary school (SFS 2010:800, chapter 16 §30). The same admission system is applied to students who completed the upper-secondary level of education and want to apply to university. English is one of the subjects which is included in general entry requirements (SFS 1993:100, chapter 7 §2, §5). Thus, assessment and grades affect students' future both during lower-secondary and upper-secondary school.

However, assessment is not just about grading because it can also help teachers to educate their students. For example, when it comes to second language acquisition (SLA), assessing students' level of proficiency can provide more information about things that need to be developed and that students have already acquired. When teachers know more about students' current level, they can provide comprehensible input according to the Input Hypothesis (see Krashen, 1985). Teachers can also revise their lesson plans based on assessment outcomes.

Assessment of second language learners' performances is a complex and broad subject, and several studies have focused on teachers' assessment of *writing*, particularly their knowledge, beliefs, and practices in assessing writing. For example, Crusan, Plakans, and Gebril (2016), whose method is adopted for this study (see section 3), reported their results about teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices. The study showed that almost 26% of the participants have limited or do not have the required training, which is necessary for assessing writing.

While there have been studies on teachers' perspectives on assessing L2 writing elsewhere, such as Crusan et al. (2016), there is a limited number of studies about the topic in the context of secondary school in Sweden. To address the gap, this study aims to investigate upper secondary English teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices in the assessment of writing in the context of Sweden. The following research questions will be analyzed and discussed:

1. What is upper secondary English teachers' knowledge of assessing writing?
2. What are upper secondary English teachers' beliefs on assessing writing?
3. What are upper secondary English teachers' practices for assessing writing?
4. Are the teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices correlated with each other?

2. Background

In this section, I will present a literature review, which consists of a theoretical framework about teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices regarding the assessment of writing, assessment in general, and teachers' cognition. This section will also review previous empirical studies on the same topic.

2.1. Assessment in Sweden

According to the Education Act (SFS 2010:800, chapter 15 §24), students should receive a final grade at the end of their course according to the grading criteria, and the final grade should match students' knowledge to grading criteria. The principals are responsible for ensuring that grading is done correctly and according to the education act (SFS 2010:800, chapter 3 §14). Teachers' responsibility for assessing and grading students is regarded as very important in Sweden. If the teacher does not have a teaching license yet, then the assessment should be done together with a teacher who has a teaching license in the subject that requires assessment and grading; in other cases, principals can grade students (SFS 2010:800, chapter 3 §16). When it comes to grades, teachers need to be able to motivate their assessment for both students and their legal guardians (SFS 2010:800, chapter 3 §17).

The Swedish National Agency of Education (*Skolverket*) has presented new guidelines for assessment since the 1st of July 2021 for upper-secondary school and upper-secondary adult education. The new guidance (Skolverket, 2022a) explained what teachers and principals need to do before grading and during grading and how to follow up on grades. Before grading, it is crucial that teachers can create situations where students' knowledge can be developed, elaborated, and tested. This means that teachers need to collect the basis for assessment in different ways. After that, teachers should evaluate students' knowledge according to knowledge requirements, course plans, and core content. For example, Skolverket (2022a, p. 20) emphasized that teachers can use rubrics, different text examples, and other tools to create assessment situations. At the same time, Skolverket (2022a, p. 18) described that teachers should co-assess and come to an agreement on how the basis for assessment can be graded and analyzed.

Skolverket has a website where teachers can find course plans, knowledge requirements, various scientific articles about different types of schools, and even some materials which can support teachers' assessment. However, when it comes to English as a subject at upper-secondary school, no materials about writing skills and assessment of writing were found (see Skolverket, 2022b).

2.2. Theoretical framework

2.2.1. Assessment of writing

It can be challenging and frustrating for many teachers to assess writing because writing cannot be measured as easily as other language skills (Troia, 2014). However, assessment of writing can be done with the help of different methods and tasks. Troia (2014) suggests

a way to assess essays where students are assessed on how well they followed the instructions. Another method for assessing writing is a portfolio, where students can collect various written texts, such as complete texts or self-evaluations (Troia, 2014). Troia (2014) was critical of large-scale assessments because there are several limitations of large-scale exams, which often focus on one specific genre or require students to answer multiple-choice questions. Jönsson (2020) mentioned that multiple-choice questions could show students' knowledge, but the analysis of answers to this type of question cannot be qualitative. Troia (2014) emphasized that the assessment of writing needs to include both large-scale exams and other assignments.

There are different forms that can provide material for writing assessments. Portfolio is one form of assessment where students can save their work over a period of time. There are some advantages that teachers and students can experience regarding portfolios. For example, students' anxiety can be reduced because they get more time to work on their projects, which creates a focus on the process and not only on results (Lee, 2017). At the same time, students' writing can develop with the help of portfolios because they can reflect on their writing, which leads to more accurate production (Mak & Wong, 2018). However, there are some opposing sides of portfolios that teachers need to be aware of because assessment of writing in portfolios can take much time, and teachers also need to have knowledge about how to assess portfolios (Weigle, 2007).

Another form of assessment is self-assessment which teachers can implement so their students can reflect on their achievements, which can help students to analyze their writing and it can help students to develop their writing competence (Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, & Vigayanti, 2018).

Neumann (2014) explained that writing could be done only when a learner has knowledge about the content involved in writing. This is an important part of creating a text in both learners' native and second languages. When it comes to second language learning, then it is connected to grammar and accuracy, which are essential in productive skills. However, some teachers often tend to put a lot of focus on grammar and accuracy and hence ignore the content of a text and other relevant questions about assessment.

Writing is a skill that is often tested during standardized tests. Crusan (2010) analyzed and presented the advantages and disadvantages of large-scale testing. The main advantage of large-scale testing is that validity, reliability, and other issues which come along with the creation of the test are the responsibilities of test makers and not teachers (Crusan, 2010). However, it is important to reflect on the disadvantages; Crusan (2010) mentioned that large-scale and standardized tests are often criticized. Many teachers have a negative attitude toward tests that are standardized because one written exam or test cannot show all of the skills and students' knowledge.

Jönsson and Thornberg (2014) explained that during the last decade, there have been questions about assessment and equality of assessment between different teachers. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2012, later Skolinspektion) reviewed and reassessed national tests in English, and the results from upper-secondary showed that almost 40% of assessed tests had deviations. Most of the deviations were done during the written parts

of the tests. To solve these problems, Skolverket (2009) recommended that teachers co-assess national tests to minimize the deviation. Skolverket (2009) explained that co-assessment could be necessary to assess some tests that teachers find difficult to assess. Co-assessment can be used in order to assess other assignments apart from national tests. Simultaneously, co-assessment can help teachers to develop their teaching and create alignment between steering documents and assessment (Jönsson & Thornberg, 2014). Jönsson and Thornberg (2014) emphasized that co-assessment can be a part of teachers' professional development because it provides possibilities to reflect on assessment and teachers' own knowledge about assessment.

2.2.2. Using rubrics for assessment

For assessing writing, Hyland (2003) suggests using rubrics. It is essential to distinguish the words "rubric" and "rubrics". The rubric is one of the main elements that teachers need to create while designing a written task that will be assessed. On the one hand, the rubric can be described as an explanation or instruction of how students need to work with their tasks, and the rubric should be "as clear and as comprehensive as possible" (Hyland, 2003, p. 221). On the other hand, the word "rubrics" is a synonym for "scoring guides." Rubrics explain the criteria which are connected to the tasks but do not give instructions.

Teachers also need to do the scoring of students' assignments. There are three types of scoring: holistic, analytic, and trait-based (see Hyland, 2003). According to Hyland (2003), holistic scoring can help teachers see an overall picture of a written assignment and fulfill some specific criteria. However, this type of scoring does not always work for assessing written assignments because it focuses on longer assignments, and the length can affect the assessment in general. For this reason, holistic rubrics should be used for summative and not for formative assessment (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020). Analytic scoring is another scoring that Hyland (2003) presented. This scoring can help teachers create an assignment focusing on specific criteria and works as a diagnostic tool for assessment. This type of scoring and rubrics are mainly used for formative assessment. Nevertheless, there are some disadvantages with this scoring because there can be some practical issues since it can be very time-consuming. The trait-based scoring is a flexible type because it allows teachers to create a writing space about different topics and genres and can work with creative writing. With the help of trait-based scoring, teachers can evaluate students' weaknesses and strengths in order to give feedback. This means that rubrics and scoring can help teachers to create, evaluate and assess writing.

Researchers present both disadvantages and advantages with rubrics. There are disadvantages when it comes to rubrics; Panadero and Johnson (2020) explained that sometimes rubrics could have a negative impact on students' learning because they learn how to fulfill the criteria but do not possess knowledge about the subject. Hence, rubrics can create limitations for writing. The advantages of rubrics mainly consist of the notion that rubrics can be used for communication between teachers and students regarding criteria and intended learning outcomes, formative assessment, and self-assessment (English, Robertson, Gillis, & Graham, 2022), which means that it will be more

straightforward for students what their teachers expect and how grading is done. Jönsson (2020) argued that students who use rubrics could have better outcomes because they can self-assess their writing, but it is necessary that teachers explain and, together with students discuss rubrics.

At the same time, Dempsey, PytlikZilling, and Bruning (2009) explained that the usage of rubrics can inspire teachers to include written tasks in their teaching; however, this field requires more investigation and research.

2.2.3. Teacher cognition

Teacher cognition is a combination of what teachers know, what they believe, and how they practice teaching. Hence, teachers' cognition can be described as a concept that can be analyzed and studied from different points of view because the importance of teachers' cognition in research is significant since there is a connection between pedagogical implications and teacher cognition (Li, 2020). Borg (2015) mentioned that teachers' beliefs and knowledge could influence each other because these factors play an important role in teachers' practices.

Borg (2015) emphasized that research on teacher cognition highlighted that teachers' educational institutions need to make some changes. Pre-service teachers, during their studies, have some beliefs which will affect how they filter the material which is taught to them; Borg (2015) described that pre-service teachers need to receive an education where they can reconsider some of their beliefs in order to learn and acquire knowledge which can affect their teaching career. Even if educational institutions for teachers can lead to positive consequences, it is important to highlight that not all changes regarding teachers are positive. There is a difference between changes in education for pre-service teachers and contextual changes for in-service teachers. Borg (2015) mentioned that changes for in-service teachers could lead to two outcomes. The first outcome consists of the idea that teachers will change their cognition. However, the second outcome shows the negative side of changes because it can lead to a problematic relationship between beliefs and knowledge (Borg, 2015, p. 325).

It is essential to mention that Borg (2019) explained that teachers' cognition as a term needs to be reconsidered because there are other factors, such as teachers' identity, which can affect cognition. In this study, teachers' cognition will be analyzed in terms of knowledge, beliefs, and practices because they are co-dependent on each other. Li (2020) explained that cognition is dynamic because it can change with time, different aspects of cognition can affect each other, and the impact of changes can be positive or negative.

2.2.3.1. Teachers' knowledge

Knowledge is a broad term with many different explanations. Regarding teachers' knowledge, Johnson (1999) explained that there are four types of knowledge: "subject matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of context" (Johnson, 1999, p. 24). While *subject matter knowledge* focuses on the subject and field, general *pedagogical knowledge* focuses on curriculum, policy

documents, etc. The concept of *pedagogical content* is connected to teaching, where teachers need to connect curriculum, topics for teaching, and didactics in general in order to make lessons and materials comprehensive for learners. The last type which Johnson (1999) presented is *knowledge of context*, where teachers need to connect learning to a specific group of students or settings. However, the assessment was not presented by Johnson (1999) in regard to knowledge, but assessment is an essential part of teachers' working routine, which requires knowledge about many different things which teachers need to take into consideration.

Assessment can be challenging for both novice and experienced teachers because assessment is directly connected to their teaching, lesson planning, and planning of tasks. For this reason, teachers need to know their subject and also have knowledge about how to assess students. For example, Weigle (2007) presented various considerations which teachers need to keep in mind while working with written tasks and assessment of writing. The knowledge of assessing is crucial because the assessment, in general, needs to be done correctly so that it can be valid according to the national policies and steering documents. Weigle (2007) clarifies that teachers sometimes avoid developing their skills in assessment, which can lead to unfair and invalid assessments of students' work. It is mentioned by Weigle (2007) that teachers need to know how to create, implement, score, and present the results of a task.

Regarding writing tasks, teachers have to consider several things that can affect the assessment and results. The validity, reliability, and even practicality of a writing task play a significant role in assessment. When it comes to validity, Weigle (2007, p. 196) explained that teachers need to think about what has been taught and what is being assessed because students cannot complete tasks that have nothing to do with their course. This means that teachers need to know how to relate what is taught in a classroom to writing tasks. Teachers also need to know how to achieve the reliability of writing by choosing topics according to students' level of proficiency carefully, so the task is feasible and comprehensive (Weigle, 2007). Practicality is another issue that teachers need to be aware of because it is essential to decide how and when the students should do a specific task and how and when this task will be assessed (Weigle, 2007).

Since assessment has a crucial role in all educational systems, it is important to understand why teachers' knowledge about assessment is fundamental. Popham (2009) described that teachers' professional development, particularly further developing the knowledge of assessment, needs to increase. For the question of why teachers need to have and develop their knowledge about assessment, Popham (2009) explained that such knowledge helps create various types of tasks and instruction which will be assessed and, at the same time, can help to create different types of assessments.

2.2.3.2 Teachers' beliefs

According to Johnson (1999), teachers' beliefs can consist of thoughts and opinions which affect what teachers do in the classroom. For example, teachers can have established beliefs before they start their teacher education program, which they often unconsciously use during their education. For this reason, it is difficult to change these

beliefs even if teachers have knowledge about new subjects and work-related experience (see Johnson, 1999). These beliefs can be constrained for their teaching, assessing, and reasoning. Thus, according to van der Schafer, Stokking, and Verloop (2008), teachers who are aware of and understand their own beliefs can change and develop their practices and revise and renew their beliefs.

Alonzo, Labad, Bejano, and Guerra (2021) emphasized the importance of investigating teachers' beliefs because they affect how teachers' practices, assessment of students' work, and choice of tasks for assessment. According to them, teachers' beliefs on exam-based assessment as most valuable and practical often go against proper and meaningful practices. Many countries implement new educational language policies which are meant to shift focus from exam-based performance to student-centered performance. However, as Alonzo et al. (2021) explained, these policies are not successful because teachers already have well-established beliefs, which do not open the doors for changes. For this reason, it is essential to learn more about teachers' beliefs so different institutions can change their programs and courses, aiming to increase assessment literacy in general. It can be understood that programs and courses about knowledge and practices cannot solve all of the problems around assessment because beliefs tend to overrule both knowledge and practices (Alonzo et al., 2021).

Crusan et al. (2016) note that teachers could experience a conflict between their beliefs and practices because beliefs affect how teachers react during different situations. Some teachers may see that their beliefs do not provide a basis for adequate education for their students. Johnson (1999) explained that conflicts between beliefs and practices could arise because many new teachers ignore their institutional knowledge and use informal knowledge about language learning. This can lead to a lack of didactical and theoretical frameworks during teaching, and for this reason, teachers need to learn how to manage their beliefs with their practices.

2.2.3.3 Teachers' practices

Dempsey et al. (2009) described that many teachers ignore and avoid teaching writing because they lack knowledge about how to teach their students to combine different skills which are helpful in writing. This can also be connected to teachers' knowledge of assessing different levels of written text and their ability to give feedback. Johnson (1999) explained that teachers could gain experience and knowledge when they work with different problems and solutions. Sometimes when teachers cannot solve a specific problem, they can talk to their colleagues to discuss and solve problems together as a team. Johnson (1999) emphasized that it is important to understand what, why and how teachers make some choices. Understanding teachers' practice is, however, not straightforward, as there are many issues that teachers need to handle facing classroom reality (Lee, 2010).

Regarding teachers' practices in Sweden, all written examinations in English subjects at upper-secondary schools should be done with the help of digital tools (Skolverket, 2022c; SFS 2010:2039, chap. 8, §3c-3d). This is part of digitalization at schools which is made

in order to increase the reliability of national tests. This means that all in-service teachers of English need to assess writings digitally (when it comes to national tests), for which they should practice the usage of digital tools in order to do assessments and grading examinations. This can evoke the question if teachers have time to develop digital competence besides their ordinary work duties (Dappen, Isernhagen, and Anderson, 2008). When teachers cannot fit practices into their schedule, it may negatively affect their motivation and confidence, leading to avoidance of writing tasks and lacking practices of assessing writing.

2.3. Previous studies on teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices in assessing writing

When it comes to studies about teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices in assessing writing, there is a gap in research because most researchers focus either on beliefs or practices (Lam, 2019). Crusan et al.'s study (2016) is exceptional, and it investigates all three aspects combined with assessing writing by second language teachers. In total, 702 respondents from 41 countries participated in the study. The results showed that most respondents have received training in the assessment of writing and had a positive attitude when it comes to assessing multiple drafts produced by the same learners and using rubrics. The study also reported that non-native teachers have more experience than native ones regarding assessment. The study showed more positive results regarding knowledge and practices in comparison to other studies (cf. Mertler, 2009; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Dempsey et al., 2009; Weigle, 2007). Crusan et al. (2016) noted that many teachers, irrespective of other variables such as training, tended to lack confidence regarding the assessment of writing and the creation of their own rubrics. A weakness of the study can be that, to look at teachers' practices, the researchers did not obtain data through classroom observation but solely relied on respondents' accounts.

Mertler (2009) presented a study about teachers' knowledge of assessment in the US. Many teachers in the study lacked training and formal education for assessment. The researcher examined if a two-week workshop for different assessment tasks would impact the teachers who had not to have proper training in assessments. The study results showed that the workshop positively affected teachers because they received meaningful information about the assessment and gained confidence regarding it. However, the results should be further attested with long-term observations, specifically increasing teachers' knowledge, confidence, as well as professional development.

Lam (2019) conducted a study on teachers' literacy assessment regarding second language learners' writing skills in Hong Kong. The study was done with the help of a mixed-method design, where qualitative and quantitative data were triangulated. Their results (2019) showed that teacher participants tended to have a good knowledge of how to assess writing and that they tried to create different assignments in order to assess writing. However, the results also showed that teachers lack knowledge about assessment quality (specifically validity and reliability) and different assessment forms. Crucially, the researcher noted that working conditions lead to situations where not all teachers who participated in his study could practice assessment of writing. This means that teachers in

Hong Kong need to receive more knowledge about various factors which can affect the assessment. At the same time, these teachers need to continue their practices.

Vogt and Tsagari (2014) did a mixed-method study regarding assessment and training of assessment in seven European countries. The study was conducted in the following countries: Cyprus, the Republic of North Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, and Turkey. Data collection was done with the help of a questionnaire and interviews with some of the participants. The results of the study showed that most teachers did not receive enough training regarding assessment, which can lead to the point that teachers could have difficulties with reviewing and evaluating different tests. Nevertheless, teachers explained that they could receive knowledge about assessment through practicing assessment with the help of colleagues (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). The overall conclusion of this study was summed up with notions that teachers need to have possibilities to learn more about assessment and the details which are connected to the assessment.

Theoretical framework and previous studies were used as a basis for this degree project. A literary review of previous research led to an adaptation of Crusan et al.'s (2016) method and instrument for data collection. Both theoretical frameworks and previous studies will be used during the analysis of data in order to discuss the results of this study.

3. Method

This section presents the method of this study, in the order of the instrument, data collection procedure, respondents and data analysis procedure. This is followed by a discussion of ethical considerations. Here I represent the research questions introduced earlier:

1. What is upper secondary English teachers' knowledge of assessing writing?
2. What are upper secondary English teachers' beliefs on assessing writing?
3. What are upper secondary English teachers' practices for assessing writing?
4. Are the teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices correlated with each other?

3.1. Instrument

As discussed earlier, I adapted the survey questionnaire created by Crusan et al. (2016). A survey questionnaire is appropriate for researchers who want to find out more about what participants think and believe about themselves (Mackey & Gass, 2015), and thus the method was suitable for this study. The questionnaire was created by means of Google Forms to collect data online, with awareness of its advantages and disadvantages. The main advantages of the internet survey are speed, accuracy, and sample. It was important that participants could answer the survey when it suited them because it could lead to more accurate answers (Cohen et al., 2018). With the help of the Internet survey, it is possible to reach many participants from different parts of Sweden. However, some disadvantages come with the Internet survey, and according to Cohen et al. (2018, p. 363), response rates can be low if the survey takes a long time to complete or is complicated to answer. This is something that affected the data collection (see section 3.2).

The survey consisted of five sections (see Appendix A): (1) consent, (2) information about participants, (3) teachers' knowledge about writing assessment, (4) teachers' beliefs about assessing writing, and (5) teachers' practices about assessing writing. The first section had only one closed question, which worked as a consent form, where the participants could accept or decline their participation. By selecting "yes" participants could continue to complete the questionnaire; by selecting "no" participants were addressed to the end of the survey. The second section consisted of nine questions about participants' demographic information, including age, gender, education, and teaching experience. The third section had seven closed questions with a Likert scale about teachers' knowledge of assessing writing, one closed question about training, and two qualitative questions: one about rubrics and one about the development of knowledge. The fourth section had 20 questions with a Likert scale regarding teachers' beliefs about assessing writing. The fifth section consisted of 12 closed questions with a Likert scale concerning research questions about teachers' practices of assessing writing.

The purpose of including qualitative data in this study was to make integration and legitimization between quantitative data with many closed questions and qualitative data (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 250). This would increase validity because the researcher can compare quantitative and qualitative data.

The majority of quantitative data was collected with the help of the Likert scale without a "neutral" point. Many people prefer to choose it if they are unsure about the answer. To avoid the issue, I chose to include a four-point Likert scale (from 1: strongly disagree to 4: strongly agree) to 'push' respondents to agree or disagree. Chang (1994) explained that four-point scales could have better reliability because the participants do not have many options, and there is a minimal risk that the participants will use different points interchangeably. Cohen et al. (2018) explained that the order in which questions appear could affect the results, and for this reason, the instrument was set to present questions randomly to different respondents to remove the training effect and achieve high validity.

3.2. Data collection

To find out more about English upper-secondary teachers in Sweden, a convenient sampling was done as I, as a student researcher, was not capable of carrying out a random sampling which could be ideal. To ensure that all participants currently worked in upper-secondary schools in Sweden and that they taught English by the time data was collected, the survey was distributed via social networks for English teachers on Facebook. The online survey was posted in several different groups in order to collect as many answers as possible. However, the response rates were low, presumably because of the extensiveness of the survey with quite many questions (see Cohen et al., 2018, p. 363). For this reason, the second round of data collection was necessary, and it was done via email sent to 582 upper-secondary teachers of English from different schools and regions (counties) in order to have a bigger sample of data. In total, 52 teachers participated in this study.

3.3. Respondents

The 52 respondents were teachers of English who worked at upper-secondary schools when data was collected. Regarding the gender of the participants, 24 participants identified themselves as man and 24 as women, two participants identified themselves as non-binary, and two participants preferred not to say their gender. Regarding age, respondents belonged to one of the categories: (1) 18-24 years old, (2) 25-34 years old, (3) 35-44 years old, (4) 45-54 years old, (5) 55-64 years old, (6) 65+ years old. There was only one participant (1,9%) who was between 18 and 24, and one participant (1,9%) who was older than 65, while 21 (40,4%) of the participants were between 25 and 34, eleven (21,2%) of the respondents are between 35 and 44, and eleven (21,2%) were between 45 and 54, while seven (13,5%) were between 55 and 64.

As for the educational level of the participants, 34 (65,3%) respondents had a degree of Master, while 17 (32,6%) had a degree of Bachelor, and one of the participants (1,9%) preferred not to answer this question. In Sweden, teachers are required to have a teaching degree (*lärarlegitimation*). 48 (92,3%) of the participants had a teaching degree in English, while 4 (7,7%) participants did not have a teaching degree in English; however, these 4 participants had a degree of Bachelor. Out of the 52 respondents, 11 (21,2%) were native speakers of English, while 41 (78,8%) were not. This means that the majority of the participants were non-native speakers of English.

3.4. Ethical considerations

At the beginning of the survey, the respondents could see information about this study, its purpose, and how ethical issues would be addressed. It was explained to the respondents that participation would be voluntary and that their identity would not be revealed because the respondents did not need to fulfill their name or place of work. The survey included a consent form where respondents could choose if they wanted to participate in this study or if they did not want to. It was also mentioned that the participants could still withdraw their participation at any time without explaining the reason for withdrawal. The survey also included the researcher's contact information.

3.5. Data analysis

Two types of data analysis were done. Firstly, I analyzed what teachers know about the assessment of writing, what they believe regarding assessing writing, and how teachers practice assessment. Secondly, the correlations among teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices were checked.

3.5.1. Process

Data analysis began with an overview of the survey and data collection. The survey was exported from Google Forms into Excel. All answers were presented in the excel sheet, but in order to import data into the IBM SPSS software, quantitative questions were separated from qualitative ones. Quantitative data as the primary source was analyzed first. Secondly, qualitative data was analyzed to triangulate the outcome of quantitative data. Cohen et al. (2018) explained that while working with quantitative data, it is

important to start analyzing scales of data. There are two types of data scales: nominal and ordinal. The nominal data used as individual variables may have affected respondents' answers, including educational degree, types of schools, and adequate amount of education in training in writing assessment. All closed questions for knowledge, beliefs, and practices with the Likert scale produced ordinal data, where each scale received a number. Strongly disagree was marked with number 1, disagree with number 2, agree with number 3, and strongly agree was presented as number 4. After all necessary modifications data from the excel sheet was imported into IBM SPSS software in order to be able to use descriptive statistics and correlate teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices, which would contribute to the data analysis.

3.5.2. Knowledge, beliefs, and practices

Firstly, it was important to divide in which order the data should be analyzed. I started by analyzing quantitative answers about knowledge, beliefs, and practices. As mentioned earlier, all Likert-scale questions and answers were imported into IBM SPSS. The analysis was done to identify frequencies (converted into percentages) of different answers descriptively and the mean ranking as well (see Eddington, 2015). All graphs and statistics were saved in order to present the results (see section 4).

3.5.3. Correlations among knowledge, beliefs, and practices

Regarding correlation, inferential statistics were produced to check if there were any correlations among knowledge, beliefs, and practices. In doing so, I also checked whether there were effects of individual variables mentioned above on the correlations (i.e., teachers' years of experience, teachers' degrees, the type of school where teachers work, and the self-reported data regarding the notion of adequate amount of training). That is, the question with nominal scales were to be compared to questions about teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices, which are categorized as ordinal scales by means of Kruskal-Wallis tests.

In order to find out the correlation between teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices, I created the following groups of correlations: "knowledge and beliefs", "knowledge and practices", and "beliefs and practices. The correlations were analyzed with the help of Spearman's correlation tests suitable for ordinal data (Eddington, 2015), and the statistical significance of correlations was indicated with *p*-value for 95 or 99 percent confidence.

4. Results and discussion

In this section, I present the results of the data analysis addressing the four research questions, for each of which a section is allocated. The results are discussed in relate to the theoretical framework and previous research.

4.1. What is teachers' knowledge of assessing writing?

The main results about teachers' knowledge indicate that teachers do have the required knowledge in assessing writing and designing rubrics and tasks for writing. However, the results also showed that many participants did not receive proper education about the assessment of writing during their pre-service education. In the context of Swedish in-service education, it was found that there are some limitations regarding participation in conferences about assessment of writing.

With the question: "I know how to assess students' writing," 65,4% of participants strongly agreed (=4, on the Likert scale), and 32,7% of participants agreed (=3), while the mean rank is 3,63. The reasoning for this high knowledge of assessment may be connected to teachers' education, where they received training regarding assessing writing. 21,2% of respondents reported that they had not received training in the assessment of writing. Crusan et al. (2016) presented similar findings about teachers' training because a similar percentage of participants in their study received training. However, previous training may not automatically mean that the training was sufficient. 57,7% of the participants disagreed with the statement that they had received adequate amounts of training regarding writing assessments (mean rank = 1.58). This appears to mean that their teacher education in Sweden provided assessment training, but it was not enough for teachers to assess students, similar to the finding of Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) study, where many teachers from different European countries did not have education about assessment.

According to Mertler (2009), the lack of knowledge regarding assessment leads to a negative effect on students, and teachers need to receive more knowledge about assessment with the help of, i.e., workshops, conferences, and other types of professional development. In this regard, the result of this study is somewhat negative. Regarding the question about participation in conferences about assessment of writing, more than half of the teachers (51,9%, mean = 2,58) did not participate in conferences about assessing writing, indicating that teachers may have limited opportunities for professional development after their pre-service education.

Assessment is a complicated subject for teachers because there are many things teachers need to combine to create assessment tasks and provide assessments (Weigle, 2007). Before working with assessment, teachers need to design tasks that will later be assessed. With that in mind, the results were hopeful. 96,2% of teachers (mean = 3,52) reported that they knew how to design a good assessment task. This finding shows that many teachers appeared to have knowledge of the design of the task. Writing tasks need to be connected to the rubrics to create alignment between instructions and assessment so that teachers can explain what students need to achieve and how teachers assess students' writing (Hyland, 2003; English et al., 2022). The usage of rubrics has many advantages because rubrics lead to clear and better communication between teachers and students (English et al., 2022); rubrics can work as an inspiration for teachers in order to create different writing tasks (Dempsey et al., 2009). Given this reported importance of rubrics in assessing writing, my survey result indicates that English teachers may be 'doing well.'

78,8% of the teachers (mean rank = 3,04) answered that they knew how to design rubrics for writing tasks. This apparent confidence in designing rubrics appeared to be developed through working as a teacher. That is, 92,3% of the teachers understand (mean = 3,29) what scoring rubrics mean, while teachers' training regarding rubrics is low because 36,5% of the teachers do not have the required training.

Answers which were provided by teachers could be affected by their education. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there is one correlation between the comparison of the degree of Bachelor and the degree of Master to teachers' knowledge. It is statistically significant that teachers who have a degree of Master have had more opportunities to participate in conferences about writing and its assessment ($p = 0,045$).

Taken together, it may be that upper secondary English teachers in Sweden do have knowledge about assessing writing developed through their teaching practice, although training during and after pre-service education may not be enough. In particular, education about how to design and use rubrics seems to be lacking, and the teachers' professional development may need to be extended to fill the gap between teachers and their knowledge by including more in-service teacher training in assessment. Popham (2009) mentioned that professional development is crucial for teachers because it can help teachers understand how assessment works; Weigle (2007) explained which parts of assessment teachers need to think about and practice.

4.2. What are teachers' beliefs of assessing writing?

The results of teachers' beliefs indicated that assessment is important in writing and that it should be mastered by teachers. Many teachers reported that they should master the assessment even though they are confident about their position as writing teachers because many students have good results regarding writing.

Firstly, as for teachers' belief about the vitality of that assessment in writing classes, the results showed that 78% of teachers think that assessment is crucial (mean = 3,15). We can see that several researchers (e.g., Mertler, 2009; Crusan et al., 2016; Dappen et al., 2008) mentioned the importance of teachers' confidence because if teachers have low self-esteem regarding assessment, they may avoid assessment of writing assignments, which may, in turn, have a negative impact of both teachers and students. The results from this study showed that many teachers think they are good writing teachers (76,9% agree and 15,4% strongly agree, mean = 3,06); they were also confident that there many of their students were high achievers in writing (with the question of whether students perform poorly in writing assessment, the mean rank was 1,92, indicating that they did not agree with the question). These teachers were also asked if the assessment of writing needs to be mastered, and the results showed that 73,1% strongly agree with this statement, while 26,9% agree (mean = 3,73). With the question of whether training in assessment does not help teachers, the results showed that 96,2% of teachers disagreed and believed that training could help teachers. This question was necessary to include because confidence can be connected to the training; hence participants needed to report their beliefs regarding assessment training.

Skolinspektionen (2012) criticized teachers' assessment of writing based on the finding that there have been many deviations between teachers' and Skolinspektionen's assessments of the same texts. For this reason, participants in this study received a question about the assessment's accuracy and objectivity. More than half of the participants (69,2%) think that the assessment of writing can be accurate (mean = 2,13). Regarding the objectivity of assessment, the results look like this: 61,5% of teachers believe that assessment of writing is subjective (mean = 2,65).

The results about teachers' beliefs varied, but what all teachers had in common was the knowledge requirements for grading, so teachers were asked if accuracy and grammar should receive less weight than content in written texts because Neumann (2014) mentioned that many teachers indeed put too much weight on grammar/accuracy and pass over the content. 63,5% of teachers (mean = 2,33) believe that content should receive more weight. This can be compared to knowledge requirements from Skolverket; all aspects should be taken into the assessment.

The deviations in the assessment were an issue in Sweden during the previous decade. For this reason, Skolverket (2009) recommended that teachers co-assess exams. However, Skolinspektionen (2012) found many deviations in assessment. Hence, teachers in this study were asked if they believed that co-assessment of written examinations is challenging, and the results showed that only 28,8% agreed and 7,7% strongly agreed that it is challenging (mean = 2,17). Similarly, when teachers were asked if it is hard to achieve agreement regarding assessing writing, only 21,2% of teachers agreed, and 3,8% strongly agreed. These results indicate that many teachers seem to practice co-assessment, and most of the results show positive collaborations with their colleagues.

Since there are different methods for assessing writing (Troia, 2014), my survey requested teachers' beliefs about the following methods: the usage of multiple-choice questions, beliefs about written examinations and essays, tasks where students need to combine writing with other skills (reading and listening), the usage of portfolios and self-assessment. When it comes to the usage of multiple-choice questions and assessment of writing, then teachers reported the following: 46,2% strongly disagree, and 28,8% disagree with this statement (mean = 1,83). The variation between teachers may affect how they implement the usage of multiple-choice questions and how they assess writing.

When it comes to writing examinations and essays, the results are more aligned among teachers because 50% agree and 30,8% strongly agree that written examinations such as essays are the most efficient way of assessing writing (mean = 3,10). Teachers have received a similar question about essays and written examinations to find out if teachers believe that essays and writing exams can provide a good estimate of students' writing, and the results showed that 44,2% agree and 51,9% strongly agree (mean = 3,48). Teachers were also asked if their own materials for writing tests were better than national tests provided by Skolverket. Teachers' results showed that 63,4% (mean = 2,67) believe that their own materials are better than material from Skolverket. This resonates with what Crusan (2010) presented about large-scale tests, where many teachers tended to

criticize national tests and exams because they thought national exams presented only a limited amount of information about students' skills in writing.

Another method for assessing writing is portfolios. The results showed that the majority of teachers reported positive attitudes towards portfolios ('agree': 53,8% & 'strongly agree' 21,2% (mean = 2,94), resonating with the evidence that portfolios have a positive impact on students because portfolios can help to reduce students' anxiety (Lee, 2017).

Furthermore, regarding the question about the integration between writing, listening, and reading. The general beliefs were positive because 75% of teachers (mean = 3,06) agree/strongly agree that writing can be combined with other skills. 92,3% (mean = 3,17) of the teachers who reported their beliefs think that self-assessment can be helpful for writing assessments, while only 61,5% (mean = 2,69) of teachers think that self-assessment can show students' skills in writing showed no significance. However, the Kruskal-Wallis test also showed that teachers from public schools tend to believe that self-assessment shows students' writing skills ($p = 0,041$).

4.3. What are teachers' practices of assessing writing?

Results about teachers' practices of assessing writing will be divided into three sub-sections: practices of assessing writing, the usage of rubrics, and assessment tasks.

4.3.1. Practices of assessing writing

The results regarding the practices of assessing writing showed that teachers have positive experiences of co-assessment and that many teachers think that they should practice assessment. However, the usage of digital tools for assessment is surprisingly low.

Schools in Sweden have been digitized, and the national tests need to be done digitally (SFS 2010:2039, 8 chapter §3c-3d), which means that teachers need to use digital tools while assessing writing. At the same time, Skolverket (2017) presented their reasoning about the importance of digitalization for students at upper-secondary schools. Regarding the assessment of writing and teachers' use of digital tools for assessment, 69,2% of teachers used digital tools. This is a high percentage, but on the other side, it was surprising that 30,8% still did not use digital tools when assessing writing (mean = 2,94).

After all, assessment/grading is a skill that teachers need to master in order to provide accurate grading. This study showed that 75% of the teachers (26,9% strongly agree and 48,1% agree, mean = 2,94) practice grading. Again, interestingly, although many teachers gave grades to assessed writing products, quite a few teachers did not. Many teachers also explained their grading for students (38,5% agree and 61,5% strongly agree, mean = 3,62), indicating that many teachers had the ability to explain the results of the assessment, which is a part of teachers' knowledge (Weigle, 2007).

As Skolverket (2009) recommended, teachers reported that 71,2% of teachers co-assess writing examinations (mean = 2,79). It would be interesting to find out why 28,8% of teachers still do not co-assess. The qualitative data have 22 answers where teachers wrote that co-assessment is a way of developing knowledge about assessment of writing, as seen in the following extract:

Sharing experiences, participating in conferences/meetings about the subject. Everyone has a different point of view on the subject, so it is helpful to constantly re-assess what you think you know and look at things from a different perspective. (Participant 25)

The overall result of teachers' practice of assessment showed that most of the teachers practice grading, develop their skills at assessment writing, and follow the guidance from Skolverket and Swedish laws. However, as Participant 24 noted below, many teachers wished that Skolverket should provide more specific guidelines and support for assessing writing:

Practice is key, but you also need some sort of guide. More importantly, I think Skolverket needs to trust in each single teacher's ability to assess their students. Right now, the grading criteria is unclear and does not fully believe that a teacher has the necessary skills to assess and grade properly. They need to make up their minds - either make the grading criteria more of a skeleton, or provide much clearer instructions and examples - as of now, they are doing neither. This leaves teachers in a limbo, and that limbo is not helping confidence, or the will to develop knowledge about assessment in general. (Participant 24)

4.3.2. The usage of rubrics in assessing writing

Scoring rubrics is a tool that teachers can use to present knowledge requirements and grading criteria to better communicate with students about what is being assessed (Hyland, 2003; English et al., 2022). Teachers-respondents reported that only 67,3% (mean = 2,75) use rubrics to assess writing.

When it comes to how teachers use rubrics, then there are two sides to the usage. On the one hand, 51,9% (mean = 2,58) of teachers answered that they copy Skolverket's rubrics without changing them. On the other hand, 48,1% (mean = 2,44) of teachers create their own scoring rubrics. This means that more than half of the participants use rubrics presented by Skolverket and made for teachers and educators. Therefore, it is crucial to take into consideration that these rubrics are not made for students. Hence, this can negatively impact students' self-assessments because rubrics are written in an advanced and abstract language mainly used by teachers, educators, and policymakers. Nevertheless, 75% (mean = 2,94) of teachers reported that they explain rubrics to their students. This is an important part of working with rubrics (Jönsson, 2020) regardless if teachers use their own rubrics or Skolverket's because students need to understand what they need to do and how they will be assessed.

Since it was detected that quite a few teachers did not use rubrics in assessing writing despite their importance, it would be worth reporting some teachers' accounts for why they are reluctant to use rubrics. For example, Participants 18 and 29 discussed the followings:

No, I think the problem with rubrics is that they are too limited and that they tend to make students (and teachers) focus more on what is easy to evaluate rather than the factors that will definitely help the students to improve their writing (e.g. thinking and developing ideas). (Participant 18)

In this case, Participant 18 explained that rubrics do not support students in their writing, and do not lead to the progress of writing skills.

No, since they are rather limited and don't necessarily cover relevant aspects of a certain written task. They can also be interpreted differently, which could lead to different assessments. (Participant 29)

Participant 29 suggests that assessment can vary because the rubrics cannot be counted as universal grading criteria, and this can affect the assessment.

4.3.3. Assessment tasks

The results of this study showed that when it comes to assessment tasks, there is a tendency to include multiple drafts when students work with writing skills. Simultaneously, many teachers provide an opportunity for students to do a self-assessment during writing activities.

Regarding how teachers practice self-assessment in written tasks, the results showed that 61,5% (mean = 2,62) included tasks that require self-assessment. Ratminingsih et al. (2018) explained that self-assessment is essential because students can have better progress in writing which will lead to the development of writing skills. This means that many students do not have opportunities to reflect on their writing during self-assessment because their teachers do not provide this task.

Even though several teachers did not include self-assessment for students' reflection about writing, the results of teachers' reported practices showed that 71,2% (mean = 2,94) of participants use multiple drafts while working with writing; this can create possibilities for self-reflection and learning about students' own writing. The last question about teachers' practices was about writing skills and integration with other skills, and 88,5 % of teachers answered that they include other skills while creating an assessment for writing (mean = 3,27).

4.4. Are the teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices correlated with each other?

This section will present information about the correlations which were found regarding teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices. The findings showed that all statistically significant correlations have a very weak (less than .2), weak (bigger than .2 but less than .4), moderate (less than .5), or strong (bigger than .6 but less than .8) coefficient of correlations.

4.4.1. Correlations between knowledge and beliefs

A Spearman Correlation was used to examine the relationship between teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs. Table 1 presents the overview of the statistically significant correlations between teachers' knowledge and beliefs. The strengths of relationships between knowledge and beliefs are very weak and weak. The results also showed that only ten beliefs out of 20 were correlated with seven out of eight questions about knowledge. This suggests that knowledge and beliefs are not very closely related to each other.

Teachers' confidence and knowledge are co-dependent because, without knowledge, teachers may avoid assessment and rubrics (Crusan et al., 2016; Dempsey et al., 2009; Mertler, 2009). The teachers who believe and identify themselves as good writing teachers reported that they know how to assess students' writing and how to create tasks for assessing writing. In the matter of assessment, the results indicated that teachers' beliefs about the cruciality of assessment in writing classes were correlated with four statements about teachers' knowledge, which are: (1) know how to assess writing, (2) received training about writing assessment, (3) know how to design writing tasks, and (4) know how to design rubrics. However, it is interesting that the teachers' opinion about the cruciality of assessment was not correlated with in-service education or with the questions if teachers received an adequate amount of training regarding the assessment of writing skills. This finding is surprising because it might be a part of a more significant issue regarding the lack of pre-service and in-service education, which was described by Popham (2009) and Mertler (2009). At the same time, it raises the question of what Swedish English teachers can do to increase their knowledge and confidence in assessing second language learners' writing.

In addition, knowledge was somewhat correlated with what teachers believe concerning various writing tasks. The results indicated that teachers with previous training in the assessment of writing believe that multiple-choice questions can be used in order to test students' writing skills. In contrast, training in scoring rubrics was correlated with the usage of portfolios as a part of writing assignments. No other correlations regarding the beliefs about writing tasks were found. Moreover, the finding, which showed that teachers' belief about grading content or grammar was slightly correlated with the training in scoring rubrics. These findings can indicate that teachers with various educational backgrounds can use different tasks and have different focuses for assessment according to their beliefs.

Table 1. Correlations between teachers' knowledge on writing assessment (questionnaire numbers 11-18) and beliefs on writing assessment (questionnaire numbers 21-40).

- Only significant correlations appear on the table.
- Questions are shortened to be better presented in the table
- **p* value < 0.05; ***p* value < 0.01

Knowledge Beliefs	know how to assess writing.	received training about writing assessment.	participated in conferences.	received training about scoring rubrics.	know how to design writing tasks.	understand the concept of scoring rubrics.	know how to design rubrics.	received an adequate amount of training.
Multiple-choice questions can be used		.281*						
Assessment never accurate.				.278*				
Assessment is not objective.								
Challenging to agree with colleagues					.278*			
Examinations are the most efficient way of assessment								
Can be integrated with listening and reading.								
Self-assessment can be helpful								
Essays are a good estimate of writing skills.								
Writing instruction is a good starting point for feedback.								

Knowledge Beliefs	know how to assess writing.	received training about writing assessment.	participated in conferences.	received training about scoring rubrics.	know how to design writing tasks.	understand the concept of scoring rubrics.	know how to design rubrics.	received an adequate amount of training.
Training in assessment does not help teachers.								
Assessment with the help of portfolio.				.428**				
Accuracy and grammar should receive less weight.				.346*				
Self-assessment shows students' writing skills.								
Assessment is crucial in writing classes.	.417**	.317*			.283*		.312*	
Teachers should master how to assess writing.	.361**							
Assessing writing takes a lot of time.			-.277*		-.300*			
Co-assessing is challenging						-.284*		
Teachers' own material are better than national tests.								
I am a good writing teacher.	.475**				.294*			
My students usually do poorly on writing examinations.								

4.4.2. Correlations between beliefs and practices

Teachers' beliefs and practices are another part of teachers' cognition which was analyzed with the help of Spearman correlations. The findings indicated that there are only very weak, weak, or moderate coefficients of correlations (see table 2).

Teachers' beliefs that assessment is crucial in writing classes were correlated with practices where teachers work with rubrics. The results showed that teachers create their own rubrics and explain them to students in view of the fact that they believe and think that assessment is important concerning writing skills.

Teachers' view on co-assessment regarding writing tasks that consist of several drafts. Teachers' beliefs that collaboration with other teachers was challenging were negatively correlated with using multiple drafts. Another interesting finding which was analyzed is the usage of Skolverket's rubrics. Rubrics are a part of teachers' practices since teachers are obligated to use them for assessment and grading. The difficulties with collaboration during assessing written examination is a belief that was negatively correlated with using Skolverket's rubrics.

In addition, the relationship between the efficiency of written examination and the usage of digital tools for assessment was moderately positive ($\rho = .561$). However, it was surprising that teachers who reported that they practice grading also reported that they have a negative attitude towards national tests, which Skolverket provides. The findings showed that teachers believed that their material was better ($\rho = .410$) in comparison to national tests, even though teachers think that written examinations such as national tests are a good standing point for assessment.

It can be seen that teachers' beliefs and practices are not closely related to each other because there are a low number of correlations. Since it is not possible to explain the influence between correlations, this limits the discussion about the findings and results.

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Table 2. Correlations between teachers' beliefs on writing assessment (questionnaire numbers 21-40) and practices on writing assessment (questionnaire numbers 41-52).

- Only significant correlations appear on the table.
- Questions are shortened to be better presented in the table
- * p value < 0.05 ; ** p value < 0.01

Practices	use scoring rubrics in order to assess writing.	co-assess my students' written examinations.	integrate writing with other skills with writing	my students do self-assessment	assess with the help of digital tools.	practice grading.	create my own scoring rubrics.	explain scoring rubrics to students.	explain my grading to students.	use multiple drafts during writing tasks.	copy Skolverket's scoring rubrics without changing it.	introduce scoring rubrics to my students.
Beliefs												
Multiple-choice questions can be used												
Assessment never accurate.												
Assessment is not objective.								-.416**				
Challenging to agree with colleagues										-.303*		
Examinations are the most efficient way of assessment					.561**							

Practices	use scoring rubrics in order to assess writing.	co- assess my students' written examina tions.	integrate writing with other skills with writing	my students do self- assessm ent	assess with the help of digital tools.	practice grading.	create my own scoring rubrics.	explain scoring rubrics to students.	explain my grading to students.	use multiple drafts during writing tasks.	copy Skolver ket's scoring rubrics without changin g it.	introduc e scoring rubrics to my students.
Beliefs												
Can be integrated with listening and reading.			.336*									
Self-assessment can be helpful				.421**								
Essays are a good estimate of writing skills.								.276*				
Writing instruction is a good starting point for feedback.			.328*	.405**						.334*		
Training in assessment does not help teachers.								-.300*				
Assessment with the help of portfolio.												

Practices	use scoring rubrics in order to assess writing.	co- assess my students' written examina tions.	integrate writing with other skills with writing	my students do self- assessm ent	assess with the help of digital tools.	practice grading.	create my own scoring rubrics.	explain scoring rubrics to students.	explain my grading to students.	use multiple drafts during writing tasks.	copy Skolver ket's scoring rubrics without changin g it.	introduc e scoring rubrics to my students.
Beliefs												
Accuracy and grammar should receive less weight.												
Self-assessment shows students' writing skills.				.281*								
Assessment is crucial in writing classes.	.294*			.319*	.398**		.369**	.344*				
Teachers should master how to assess writing.			.283*									
Assessing writing takes a lot of time.												
Co-assessing is challenging regarding written exams											-.299*	

Practices	use scoring rubrics in order to assess writing.	co- assess my students' written examina tions.	integrate writing with other skills with writing	my students do self- assessm ent	assess with the help of digital tools.	practice grading.	create my own scoring rubrics.	explain scoring rubrics to students.	explain my grading to students.	use multiple drafts during writing tasks.	copy Skolver ket's scoring rubrics without changin g it.	introduc e scoring rubrics to my students.
Beliefs												
Teachers' own material are better than national tests.						.410**						
I am a good writing teacher.												
My students usually do poorly on writing examinations.												.286*

4.4.3. Correlations between knowledge and practices

This section presents the relationships between teachers' knowledge and teachers' practices regarding the assessment of writing. Table 3 includes the statistically significant correlations, and their coefficients vary between very weak and strong.

The explanation of the grading is a necessary point regarding the communication about assessment. The practice of explaining gradings was correlated with teachers' training in the assessment of writing and with the knowledge about the design of rubrics. However, before teachers explain how they assess students, it is essential to explain knowledge requirements for students, so they know what is expected.

Teachers' knowledge was correlated with several different statements about teachers' practices. Explaining rubrics to students is one of the practices that correlates with almost all of the statements regarding teachers' knowledge. Rubrics are crucial in assessment, and they should be adapted and explained to students in a comprehensible way that students can understand (Hyland, 2003). Explanation of rubrics was correlated with the following: knowledge of assessing writing, training in assessing writing and scoring, and also with knowledge of designing tasks and rubrics. However, teachers' practice of creating their own rubrics was not correlated with any statements regarding teachers' knowledge.

The opposite side of creating own rubrics is the usage of Skolverket's original rubrics, which present knowledge requirements for the whole course at upper-secondary school. The analysis showed that copying Skolverket's scoring rubrics without making any changes was correlated with training in writing assessments and participation in conferences.

When it comes to how teachers work with assessment, it can be seen that teachers provide possibilities for students to have multiple drafts of the same text, and this was correlated with teachers' knowledge of assessing writing. Another practice concerning assessment that was found is the co-assessment of writing examinations, which was correlated with participation in conferences. This shows how teachers work with designing tasks and how they assess national tests/examinations.

The results between teachers' knowledge and practices indicated different correlations, which cannot be explained regarding the effect or influence, but these correlations can be a starting point for further research about assessing writing from a teachers' perspective.

Table 3. Correlation between teachers' knowledge on writing assessment (questionnaire items 11-18) and teachers' practices on writing assessment (questionnaire items 41 – 52).

- Only significant correlations appear on the table.
- Questions are shortened to be better presented in the table
- **p* value < 0.05; ***p* value < 0.01

Knowledge	know how to assess writing.	received training about writing assessment	participated in conferences	received training about scoring rubrics.	know how to design writing tasks.	understand the concept of scoring rubrics.	know how to design rubrics	received an adequate amount of training
Practices								
use scoring rubrics in order to assess writing.						.292*		
co-assess my students' written examinations.			.291*					-.296*
integrate writing with other skills when I create written assignments.								
my students do self-assessment								
assess with the help of digital tools.	.300*	.417**	.362**					
practice grading.			.325*					
create my own scoring rubrics.								
explain scoring rubrics to students.	.339*	.371**		.398**	.328*	.434**	.656**	
explain my grading to students.		.412**			.281*		.395**	

Knowledge Practices	know how to assess writing.	received training about writing assessment	participated in conferences	received training about scoring rubrics.	know how to design writing tasks.	understand the concept of scoring rubrics.	know how to design rubrics	received an adequate amount of training
use multiple drafts during writing tasks.	.288*							
copy Skolverket's scoring rubrics without changing it.		.285*	.381**					
introduce scoring rubrics to my students.				.381**		.399**	.500**	

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze upper-secondary teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices regarding the assessment of writing and correlations between the three constructs. The results provided information about teachers' own accounts regarding knowledge, beliefs, and practices, and to conclude this essay, I highlight some important discussions of the findings in the following, such as changes in pre-service education, increased possibilities and opportunities for professional development in in-service teachers.

- Teachers have knowledge about the assessment of writing even though their pre-service education did not provide opportunities for training in assessing writing. Teachers need more training in assessment because their education may affect teachers' cognition.
- The opportunity to receive training for in-service teachers is also limited because more than half of the teachers who participated in this study never attended conferences about the assessment of writing, which means that teachers lack professional development. Hence, educational institutions for teachers, Skolverket, and the Ministry of Education and Research must take some actions and create more mandatory training for in-service teachers since policies and laws change very rapidly.
- Some teachers who participated in the study created their own rubrics and explained them to students, while the majority of teacher respondents answered that they simply copied Skolverket's material without big changes.
- The findings about the correlations among teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices showed that beliefs are not closely allied with practices (Borg, 2015). For this reason, it is important to investigate more about teachers' cognition and assessment of writing.

This study had some limitations to acknowledge. Only 52 participants participated in this study which cannot be counted as a large sample. Thus, it is necessary to emphasize that this study cannot be generalized because this sample is too small to make some drastic conclusions about the assessment in Sweden. Another limitation is the chosen methodology because teachers' practices are self-reported. For this reason, it is recommended that practices should be observed in a classroom situation and compared to teachers' self-reported knowledge and beliefs in further studies.

Further research in the same area is needed because there are several gaps in studies about teachers' professional development in assessing writing in Sweden and how it might influence teachers' beliefs and practices regarding assessing second language learners and their writing skills.

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Appendix A - The questionnaire

Questionnaire

Section 1:

Upper secondary English teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices of assessing writing in Sweden: A survey study

Dear Teachers,

My name is Valeriya Mykhaylova, and I am currently doing my last term of the Upper Secondary School Teacher program at Stockholm University. This term, I am working on the *assessment of writing*. This survey is used to create a degree project that aims to find out more about teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices of assessing writing and the use of scoring rubrics in the Swedish context.

The survey is voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous because you do not need to fulfill any data which can reveal your identity. However, you can always withdraw your participation whenever you want, and you do not need to provide a reason for withdrawal. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions or want to receive a copy of this degree project when it is done, please contact the author - Valeriya Mykhaylova (e-mail: valeriya.mykhaylova.teacher@gmail.com).

Your responses will be very helpful to my degree project. I greatly appreciate your time in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Valeriya Mykhaylova

1.) The participation in this degree project is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. Do you agree to participate in this study?

- ☐ Yes (Continue to Section 2)
- ☐ No (Questionnaire completed)

Section 2: Information about you as a participant.

In order to be able to analyze the answers, this survey has some questions about you. None of the questions below can reveal your identity. The anonymity is guaranteed.

2.) What is your gender?

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other _____

3.) How old are you?

- ☐ 18-24 years old
- ☐ 25-34 years old
- ☐ 35-44 years old
- ☐ 45-54 years old
- ☐ 55-64 years old
- ☐ 65+

4.) Is English your native language?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5.) In which county do you live?

- ☐ Stockholms län
- ☐ Uppsala län
- ☐ Södermanlands län
- ☐ Östergötlands län
- ☐ Jönköpings län
- ☐ Kronobergs län
- ☐ Kalmar län
- ☐ Gotlands län
- ☐ Blekinge län
- ☐ Skåne län
- ☐ Hallands län
- ☐ Västra Götalands län
- ☐ Värmlands län
- ☐ Örebro län
- ☐ Västmanlands län
- ☐ Dalarnas län
- ☐ Gävleborgs län
- ☐ Västernorrlands län
- ☐ Jämtlands län
- ☐ Västerbottens län
- ☐ Norrbottens län

6.) What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High school (sv. gymnasieexamen)
- ☐ The degree of Bachelor (sv. kandidatexamen)
- ☐ The degree of Master (sv. masterexamen)
- ☐ The degree of Doctor (sv. doktorexamen)

7.) Do you have a teaching degree (sv. lärarlegitimation) in English language subject?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8.) How long have you been teaching English?

9.) Which course (or courses) do you currently teach?

- ☐ English 5
- ☐ English 6
- ☐ English 7

10.) In which type of school do you currently work?

- ☐ Public school
- ☐ Private school

Section 3: Teachers' knowledge about writing assessment

Below you will find some questions which aim to find out more about teachers' knowledge of writing assessments.

11.) I know how to assess students' writing.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

12.) I have received training in assessing writing.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

13.) I have participated in conferences about assessment of writing.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

14.) I have received training about scoring rubrics.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

15.) I know how to design good writing tasks.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

16.) I understand the concept of scoring rubrics.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

17.) I know how to design rubrics for writing tasks.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

18.) Do you think that you received an adequate amount of training when it comes to assessing writing?

☐ Yes

☐ No

19.) Do you think that the usage of rubrics can help teachers to assess students' writing? If yes, why? If no, why?

20.) What do you think can help teachers to develop their knowledge about assessing writing?

Section 4: Teachers' beliefs about assessing writing

Below you will find some questions which aim to find out more about teachers' knowledge of assessing writing.

21.) Multiple-choice question can be used for assessing writing.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

22.) Assessment of writing is never accurate

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

23.) Assessment of writing is not objective

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

24.) When it comes to assessing writing, then it is challenging to achieve agreement with colleagues.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

25.) Written examinations such as essays are the most efficient way of assessing writing.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

26.) Assessment of writing can be integrated with listening and reading.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

27.) Self-assessment can be helpful for writing assessment.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

28.) Essays and writing exams provide a good estimate of writing skills.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

29.) Writing instruction is a good starting point for feedback in writing assessment.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

30.) Training in assessment does not help teachers.

- ☐ Strongly agree

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

31.) Assessment of writing can be done with the help of portfolio.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

32.) Accuracy and grammar should receive less weight than content in assessment of writing.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

33.) Self-assessment shows students' writing skills.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

34.) Assessment is crucial in writing classes.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

35.) Assessment of writing is an essential part which teachers should master.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

36.) Assessing writing takes a lot of time.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

37.) It is challenging to cooperate with other teachers during assessment of writing examinations.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

38.) Teachers' own material for writing test are better than national tests.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

39.) I think that I am a good writing teacher.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

40.) My students usually do poorly on writing examinations.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Section 5: Teachers' practices of assessing writing.

Below you will find some questions which aim to find out more about teachers' practice of assessing writing.

41.) I use scoring rubrics in order to assess writing.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

42.) I co-assess my students' writing examinations.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

43.) I integrate writing with other skills when I create written assignments.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

44.) My students do self-assessment when it comes to written tasks.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

45.) I assess writing with the help of digital tools.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

46.) I practice grading.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

47.) I create my own scoring rubrics.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

48.) I explain scoring rubrics to my students.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

49.) I explain my grading for my students.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

50.) I use multiple drafts when my students work with writing tasks.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

51.) I copy Skolverket's scoring rubrics without changing it.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

52.) I introduce scoring rubrics to my students.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

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