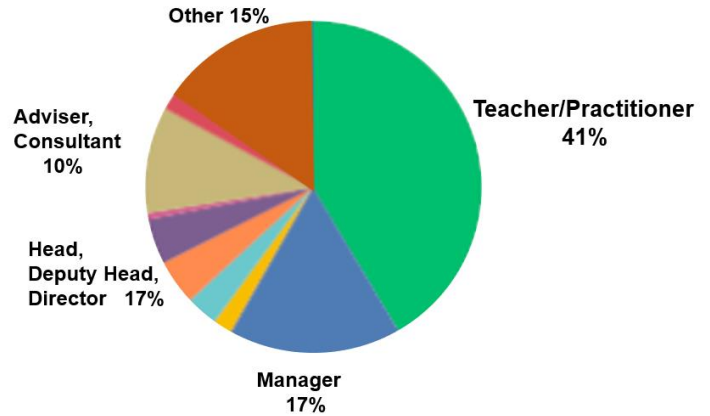# Draft 1 online consultation responses

14 December 2020 to 11 January 2021
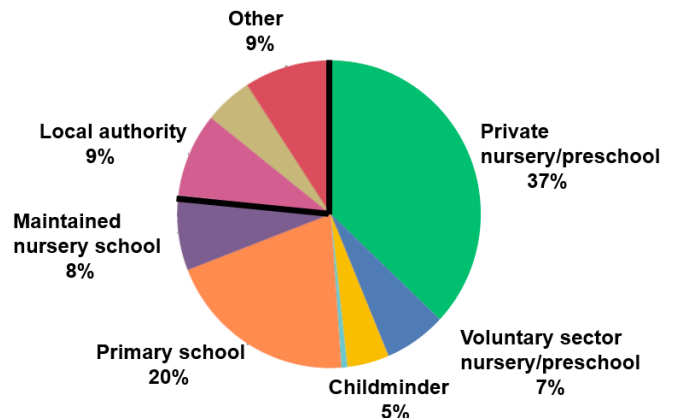
total responses 321

Q 1: What is your job role?

Respondents were predominantly working directly in early years settings (75%). The 'Other' category (15%) also contained teachers and preschool staff, alongside lecturers, students, and other roles.


Other 15%

Adviser, Consultant 10%

Head, Deputy Head, Director 17%

Teacher/Practitioner 41%

Manager 17%

Q 2: What type of organisation do you work in?

The great majority (77%) work directly in settings. Also included were local authority (9%) and colleges/universities (5%).

Other 9%

Local authority 9%

Maintained nursery school 8%

Primary school 20%

Childminder 5%

Private nursery/preschool 37%

Voluntary sector nursery/preschool 7%

Q 3: How long have you worked in the early years?

A high proportion of the respondents were very experienced in the early years sector, with 12% under 5 years, 23% 5-10 years, and 65% over 10 years.
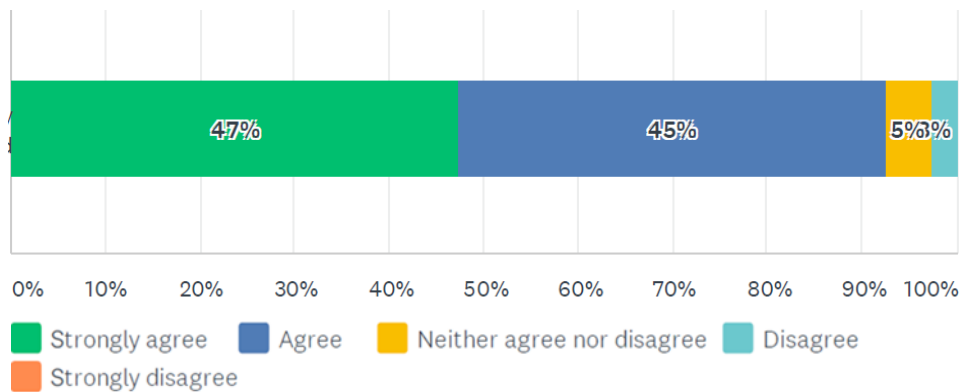

Less than a year 3% (8)

1-2 years 3% (10)

2-4 years 7% (21)

5-10 years 23% (72)

10 years + 65% (209)
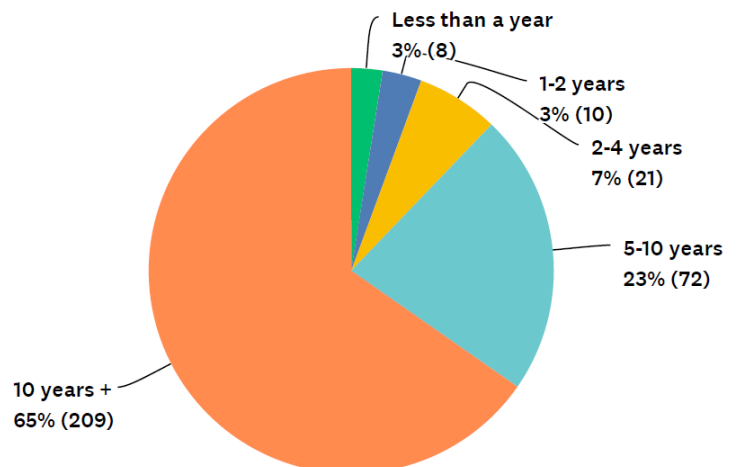
Q 4. What is your highest early years qualification?

The sample is highly qualified relative to the sector as a whole, with 23% up to Level 3, 23% Foundation and Bachelors Degree level, 35% YET/EYP/QTS, and 20% other post-graduate qualifications.
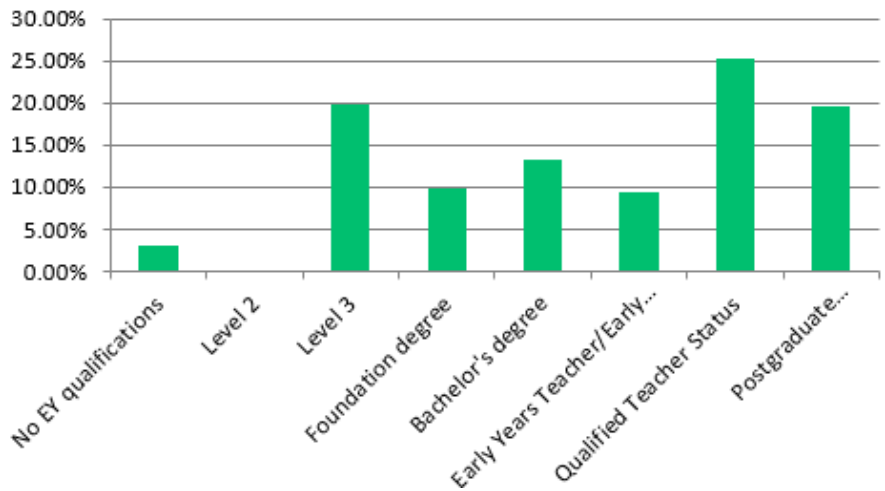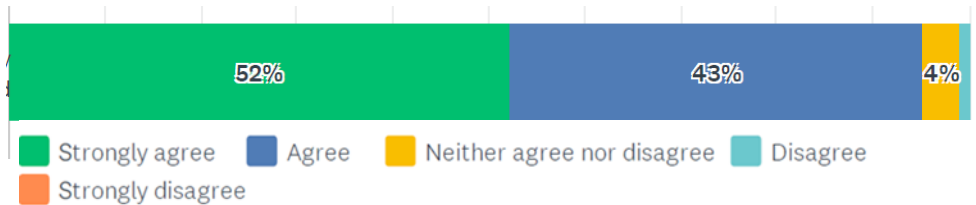

Q 5. Is the **Introduction** clear and easy to understand?

92% agree
3% disagree

Q 6. Is the section on **EYFS principles** clear and easy to understand?
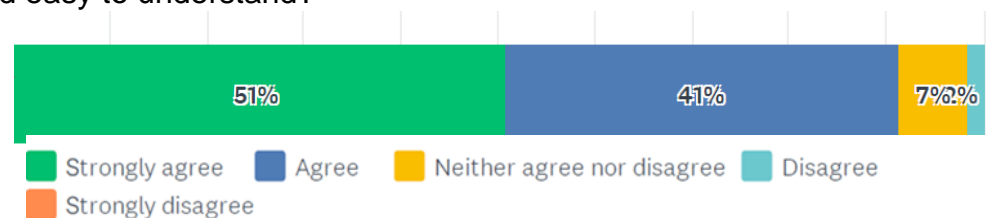
95% agree
1% disagree

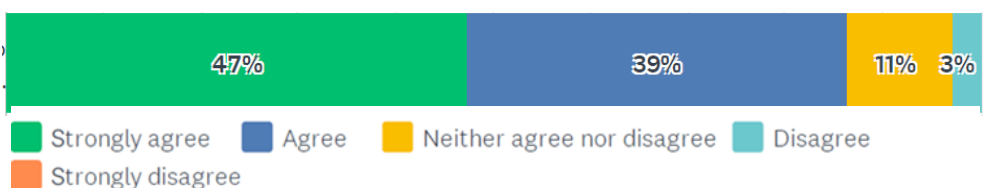**Q 7: Promoting voice and inclusion**
Is this section clear and easy to understand?

92% agree
3% disagree

Will it help to support practice?
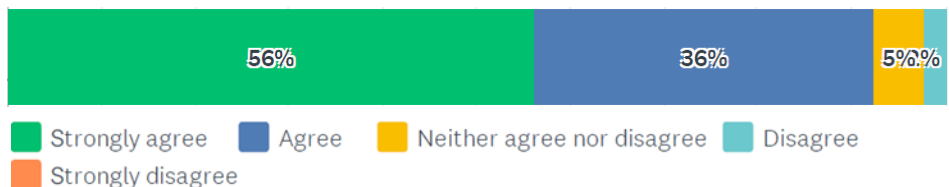
86% agree
5% disagree

Q 8: Play

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

93% agree
2% disagree

56%	37%	5%	%

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Will it help to support practice?

92% agree
2% disagree

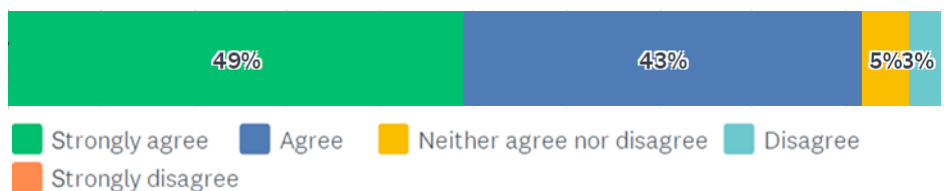|			
56%	36%	5%	%

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Q 9: Quality improvement and leadership

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

92% agree
3% disagree

49%	43%	5%	3%

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Will it help to support practice?

90% agree
2% disagree

50%	40%	8%	2%

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree
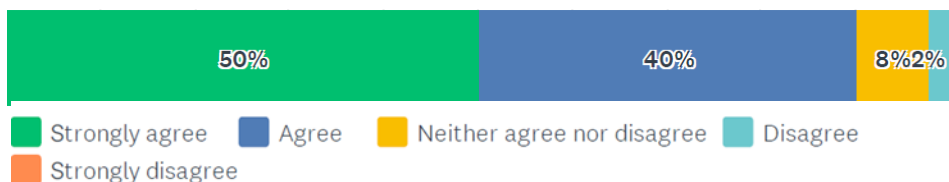
Q 10: Transitions

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

92% agree
1% disagree

57%	35%	7%	%

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Will it help to support practice?

88% agree
2% disagree

54%	34%	10%	2%

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree
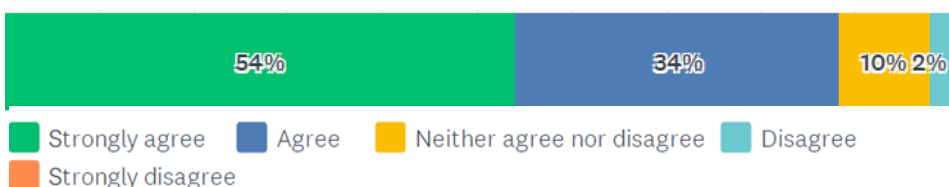
Q 11: **Is there anything missing or anything that we could improve in the section Building and maintaining highest quality provision for children (including subsections on promoting voice and inclusion, play, quality improvement and leadership, and transitions)?** (72 comments)

There were 5 comments that the guidance was too 'wordy', e.g.
'Feel it is too 'wordy'. More visuals. Simplify / condense text more somehow. Make it easier on the eye.'

'Thank you for producing Birth-5 Matters! Agree with the content but I think some sentences are overly long and complex and may loose their meaning and impact because of this'

Four respondents commented favourably on the key points boxes, with suggestions of standardising and highlighting these, including *'Put the 'boxed' key points throughout B25Matters into an attractive, illustrated poster, making it easy for all levels of practitioner to refer to it daily and absorb it over time.'*

There were several comments about a desire for further background information to be available, and one comment that *'I think that these sections will be crucial to less experienced or newer practitioners to EYFS.'*

Respondents mentioned interconnections: *'A model which shows how the subsections build and interlink to create high quality provision.', ' The ways in which play, child centred learning and adult directed learning should combine and intersect'*

The focus on play was valued: *'No, felt this was well covered and incredibly in depth and the focus on play and the importance of play throughout the sections and provision was excellent to see.'*

One comment, repeated in response to later questions as well, emphasised play-based pedagogy beyond early years: *'My only criticism of the document is that it stops at 5! The ECF's Charter for Early Childhood requests a statutory framework to age seven. By calling this document 'Birth to Five' you're consolidating the cultural assumption that children should start formal schooling at age five. Ofsted will continue to issue top-down directives which privilege instruction in literacy/numeracy over developmentally appropriate play-based pedagogy.',* while another comment suggested there should be more emphasis on play in Year 1.

Q12. **Child Development**

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

91% agree
4% disagree

48%	43%	5% 4%

Will it help to support practice?

86% agree
3% disagree

48%	38%	10% 3%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Q13. Characteristics of Effective Learning

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

92% agree
4% disagree

54%	38%	4% 2%

Will it help to support practice?
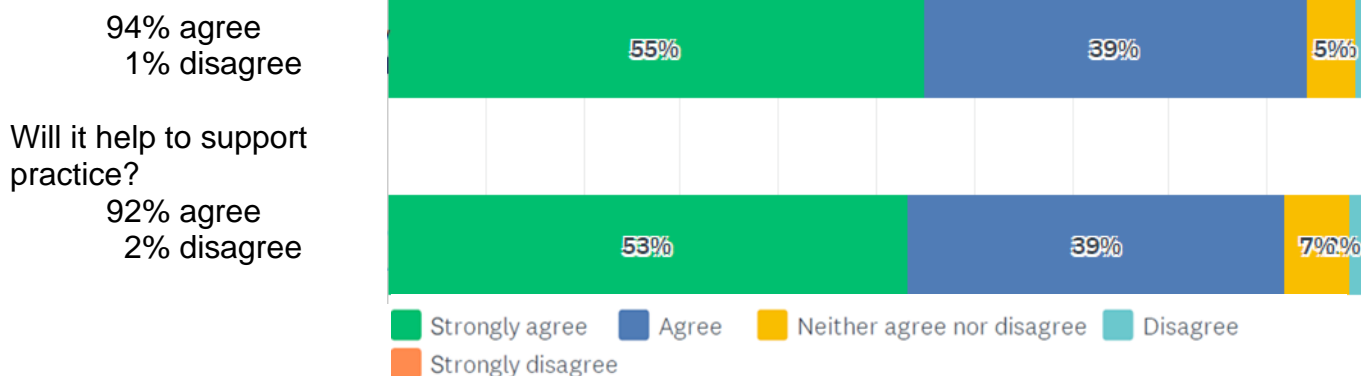88% agree
3% disagree

54%	34%	9% 3%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Q14. Inclusion and Equalities

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

94% agree
1% disagree

55%	39%	5%

Will it help to support practice?

92% agree
2% disagree

53%	39%	7%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Q15. Is there anything missing or anything that we could improve in the section on the Unique Child (Child Development, Characteristics of Effective Learning, Inclusion and Equalities)? (61 comments)

There were several comments on the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Learning and how to communicate this to practitioners, e.g.

'Characteristics of effective learning (p35-37) Emphasis on this is marvellous!! In fact, much of the guidance document could be about this.'

'Characteristics of Effective Learning should be headlined as a key distinctiveness of B25Matters: it's a valuable insight for practitioners, preparing children for their 21st C realities'

'Under Characteristics of Effective Learning it would be useful to share some exemplars. These are further on in the document but having them within this section would give practitioners clear examples of the characteristics in practice.''

'I think the examples of CoEL may fit better as a separate table rather than within the 7 areas of learning and development tables.'

Other respondents wanted more clarity on Characteristics of Effective Learning:

'The wording in the new EYFS statutory framework is Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning and it would be good to see the same wording in this document to make clear the link between teaching and learning in developing the characteristics. There are still many practitioners who view the CoEL as inherently either 'there' or 'not there' for a child and don't fully grasp how their role as an adult can influence the way that a child learns.'

'Unclear use of 'self-regulation' on CoEL'

'The CofEL are properties of good practice - here they are presented as properties of the 'unique child' this is extremely misleading.'

'A visual picture/summary of the characteristics would be useful to include which can be shared and easily understood without necessarily reading all the text.'

The section on Inclusion and Equalities was welcomed, and generally praised for its guidance on race though some respondents wanted to see more about SEND.

Q16. Parents as Partners

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

92% agree
2% disagree

58%	34%	6% 2%

Will it help to support practice?

90% agree
3% disagree

55%	35%	8% 3%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree
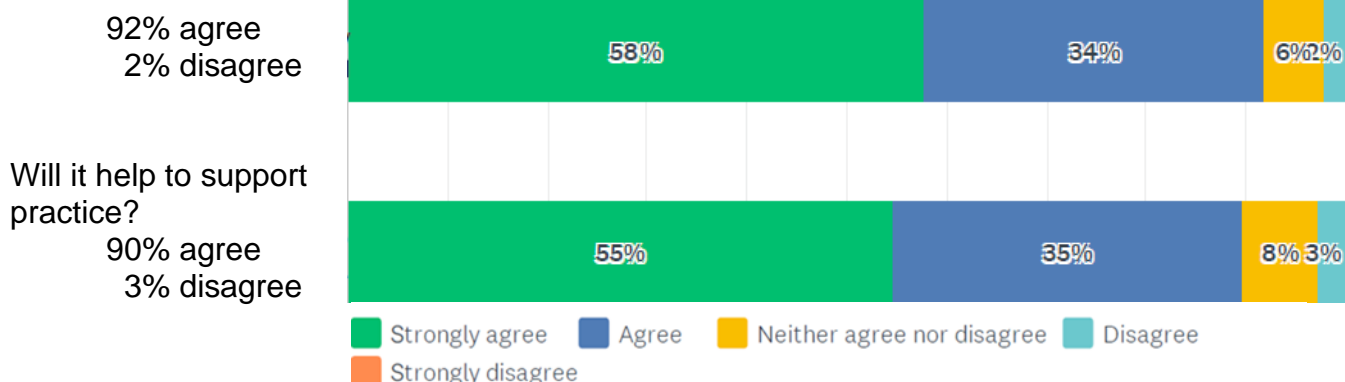
Q17. Attachment and role of the key person

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

93% agree
2% disagree

| 59% | 34% | 5% | 1% |

Will it help to support practice?
89% agree
2% disagree

| 57% | 32% | 9% | 2% |

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Q18. Supporting Learning

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

91% agree
2% disagree

| 53% | 38% | 7% | 2% |

Will it help to support practice?
89% agree
2% disagree

| 52% | 37% | 9% | 2% |

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Q 19. Is there anything missing or anything that we could improve in the section on Positive Relationships (Parents as Partners, Attachment and the role of the key person, Supporting Learning)? (56 comments)

Respondents welcomed attention to both working with parents and the Key Person role, and asked for emphasis on it as priority and legal requirement including more guidance on key person role in reception classes. There were comments on the high bar set in terms of qualities and knowledge base of key persons, and the challenges posed by the quality of training and qualification levels in the sector.

Q 20. The Wider Context
Is this section clear and easy to understand?

88% agree
3% disagree

| 49% | 39% | 10% | 3% |

Will it help to support practice?
83% agree
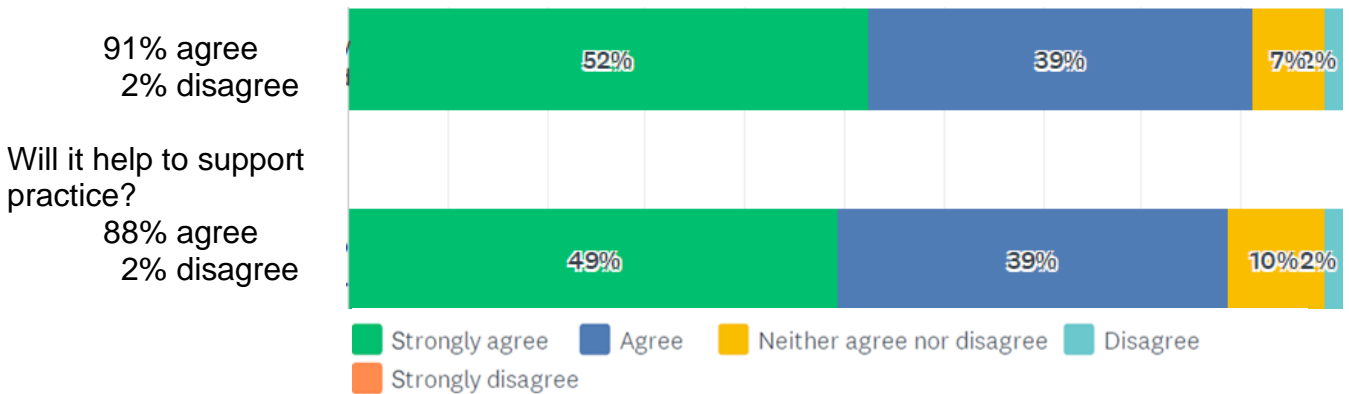2% disagree

| 46% | 37% | 14% | 2% |

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Q 21. The Learning Environment
Is this section clear and easy to understand?

91% agree
2% disagree

52%	39%	7%2%

Will it help to support practice?

88% agree
2% disagree

49%	39%	10%2%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree
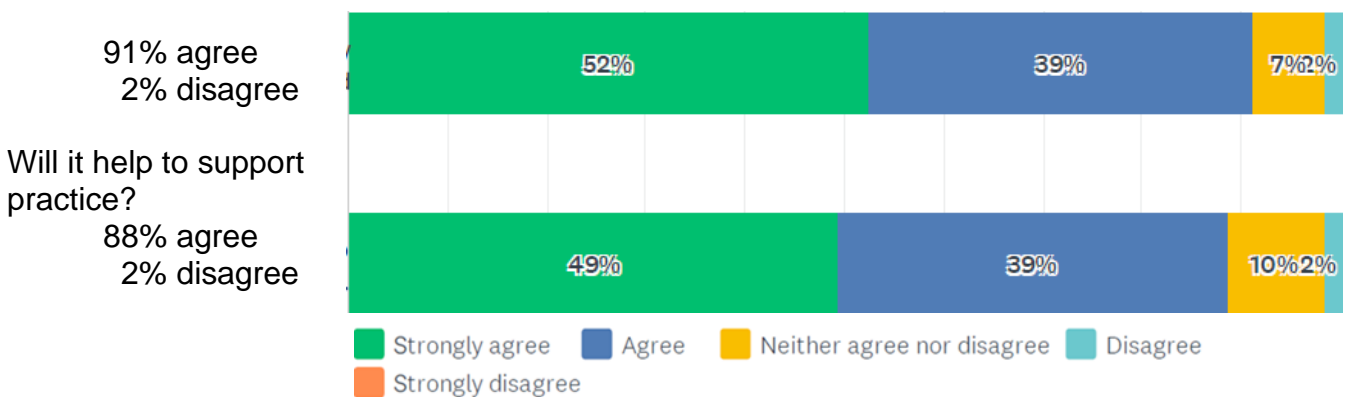
Q22 Is there anything missing or anything that we could improve in the section on Enabling Environments (Learning environment, the wider context)? (48 responses)

Comments included wanting more on babies and toddlers in enabling environments, and that audit tools for developing environments would be useful to improve practice.. Attention to sustainability was welcomed, while mention was made of the need for practitioners to develop their own knowledge in areas such as sustainability and antiracism.

Q 23. Observation, Assessment and Planning
Is this section clear and easy to understand?

89% agree
3% disagree

45%	44%	8%	4%

Will it help to support practice?

83% agree
2% disagree

45%	38%	11%	4%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree
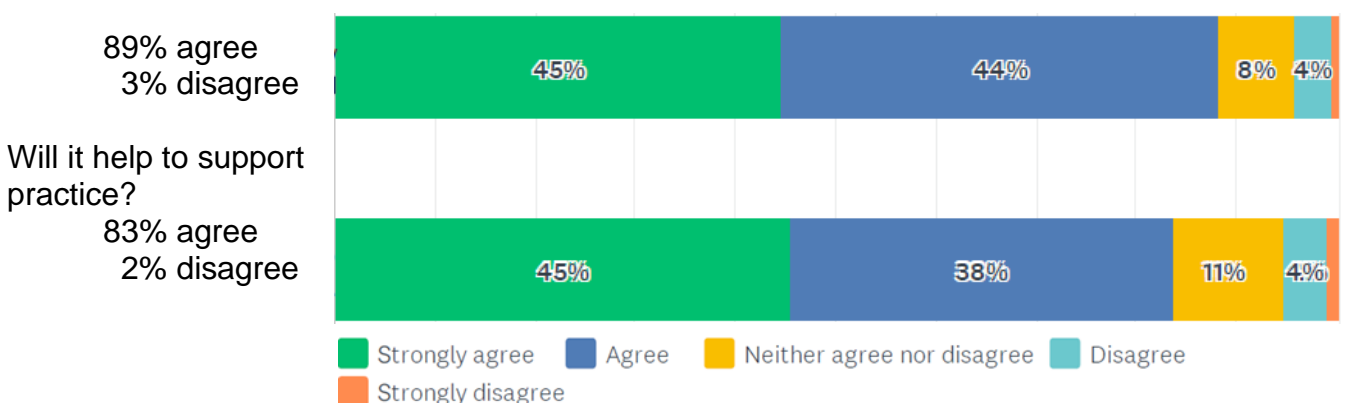
Q 24. Overview of Characteristics of Effective Learning and Areas of Learning and Development

Is this section clear and easy to understand?

88% agree
6% disagree

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
56%	32%	5%	5%	

Will it help to support practice?

88% agree
4% disagree

| Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
52%	36%	7%	4%	

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree
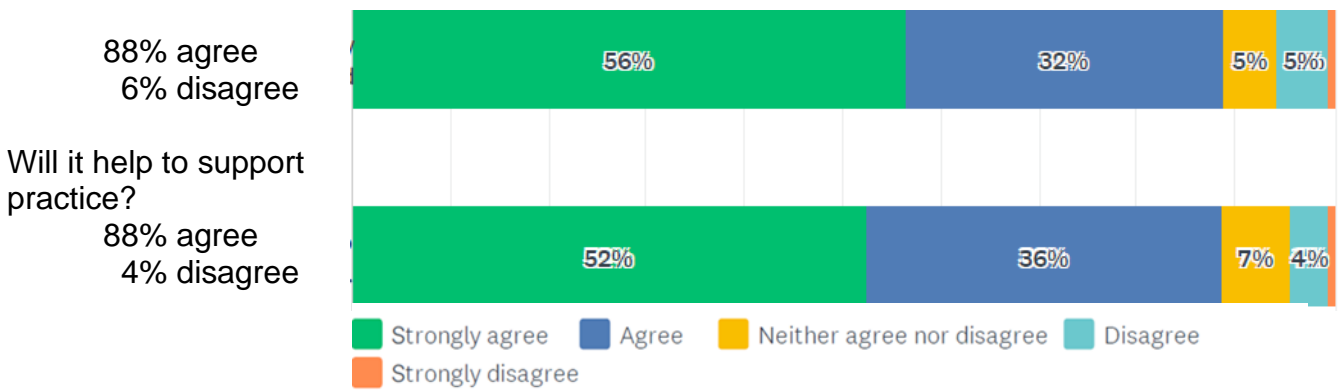
Q 25. Supporting Development and Learning in Practice
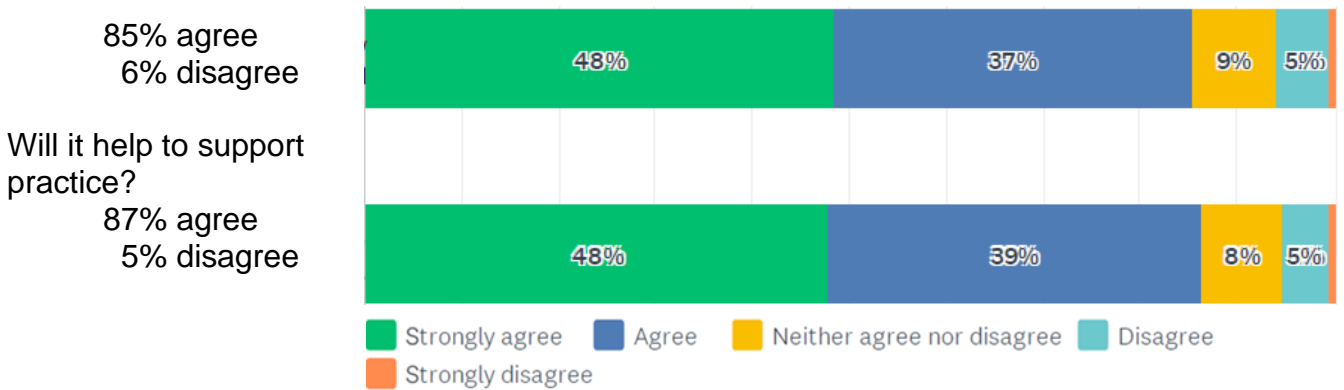
Is this section clear and easy to understand?

85% agree
6% disagree

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
48%	37%	9%	5%	

Will it help to support practice?

87% agree
5% disagree

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
48%	39%	8%	5%	

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Q 26. Will the guidance for each Area of Learning and Development on the Unique Child, Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments support practitioners' understanding of child development?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	52%	36%	6%	4%	
Communication and Language	51%	38%	6%	4%	
Physical Development	52%	36%	7%	4%	
Literacy	51%	37%	6%	5%	
Mathematics	48%	39%	6%	5%	6%
Understanding the World	49%	39%	7%	4%	
Expressive Arts and Design	50%	37%	6%	5%	

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

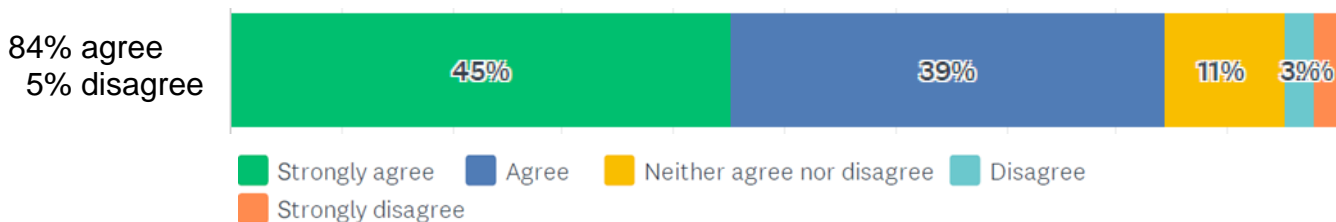**Q 27.** **Will the guidance for each Area of Learning and Development on the Unique Child, Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments support practitioners to provide appropriate interactions and environments for children?**

Area of Learning	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	53%	36%	7%	3%	
Communication and Language	53%	36%	8%	2%	
Physical Development	54%	35%	7%	3%	
Literacy	53%	35%	7%	4%	
Mathematics	51%	38%	6%	4%	
Understanding the World	52%	36%	8%	3%	
Expressive Arts and Design	52%	35%	8%	4%	

Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
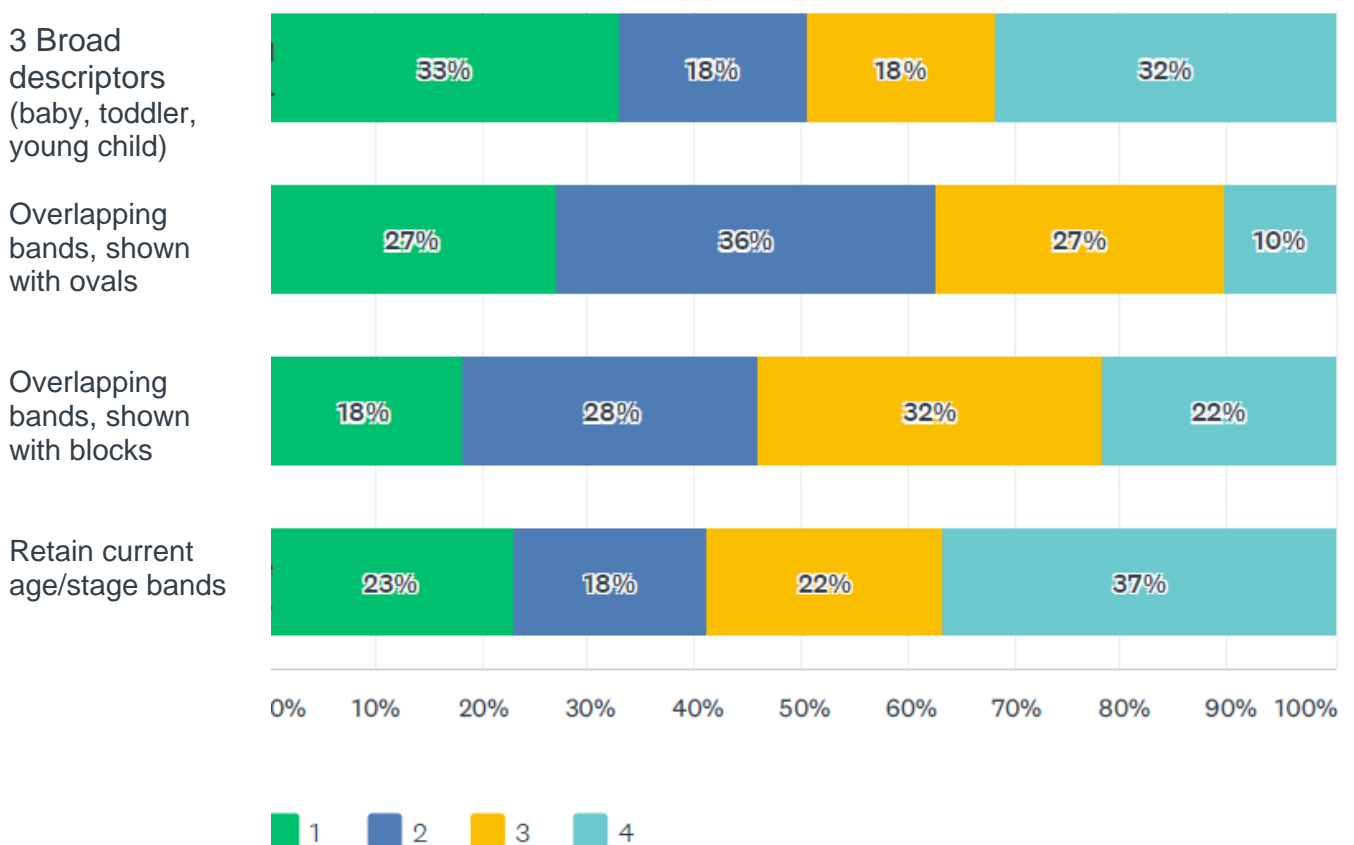
There were comments on the Areas of Learning and Development entered in response to other questions, including suggestions to reduce and simplify, and '*Keep the existing 503 Development Matters 2012 Statements, as everyone is already familiar with them, and the changes introduced in B25Matters are not helpful, are convoluted, arbitrary and repetitive, and do not relate properly to the new statutory learning goals*'.

Q 28. **The Early Learning Goals are not the curriculum, but practitioners have a statutory duty to support children towards them. Will this guidance support practitioners to do this?**

84% agree
5% disagree

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
45%	39%	11%	3%	

Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Q 29. Throughout our consultations so far, there has been strong sector support for bands which present a progression in the Areas of Learning and Development. There is, however, uncertainty about the best way to link the bands to ages. There is an overall progression in development and learning, but learning does not run in a straight and predictable line and children develop at different rates, so individual children should not be expected to match the outlines in the bands at particular ages. On the other hand, age links can be useful for supporting knowledge of child development, and to identify when children may be in need of additional support. In place of the current age bands, the draft includes three different models for presenting the age/stage bands. Please rank the three new options and the existing model in Development Matters 2012, from 1 (your preferred model) to 4 (your least favourite model). (182 responses)

	1	2	3	4
3 Broad descriptors (baby, toddler, young child)	33%	18%	18%	32%
Overlapping bands, shown with ovals	27%	36%	27%	10%
Overlapping bands, shown with blocks	18%	28%	32%	22%
Retain current age/stage bands	23%	18%	22%	37%

The responses were strongly split on the option of three broad bands, with a third listing it as first preference, and a third listing it as least preferred.
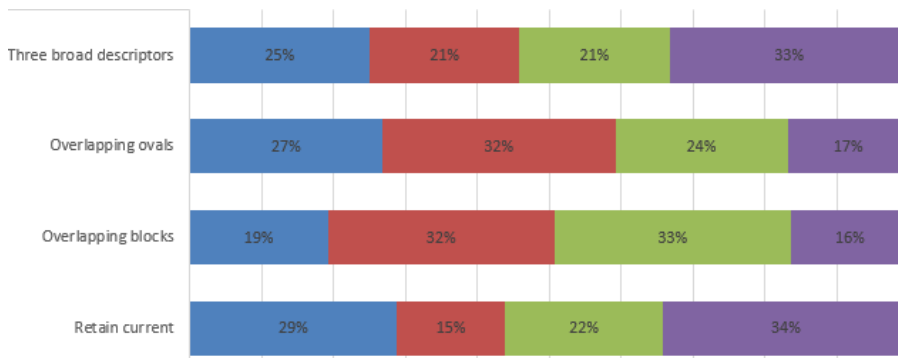
The two options for overlapping bands were chosen by a total of 45% as first choice. Overall overlapping bands shown with ovals showed the most consensus, with only 10% placing it as least preferred.

There was least support for the option of retaining the current age/stage bands, with 37% listing it as least preferred.

Since Birth to 5 Matters is guidance aimed to support practitioners and given previous comments from consultations that descriptors linked to age bands are particularly helpful for less experienced and less qualified practitioners, it is helpful to break down the overall responses to look at different groups within the total.
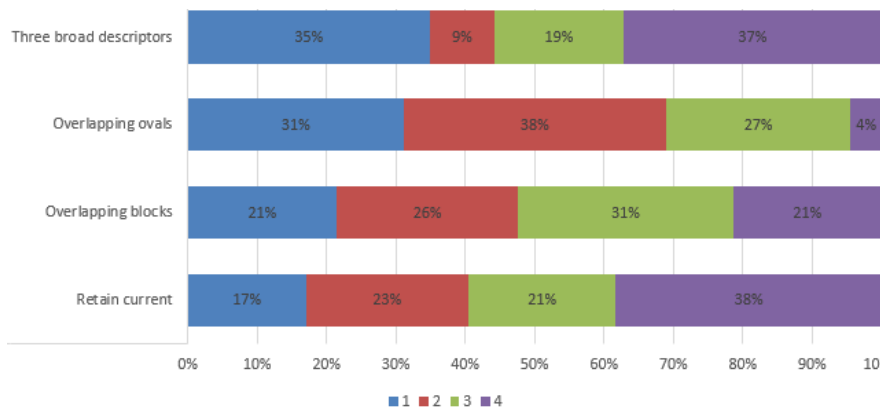
Comparison of frontline practitioners with leaders

Frontline practitioners (practitioners/teachers, supervisors - 64)

Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	25%	21%	21%	33%
Overlapping ovals	27%	32%	24%	17%
Overlapping blocks	19%	32%	33%	16%
Retain current	29%	15%	22%	34%

Responses from practitioners currently working with children in settings show a slight preference for overlapping bands shown with ovals, and relative rejection of both the current model and 3 broad stages.
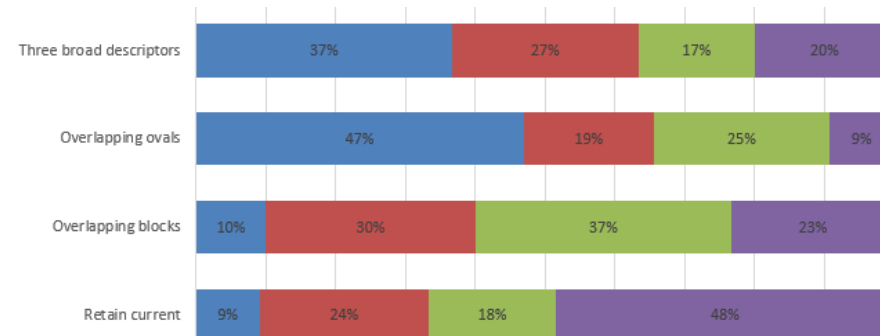
Leadership (managers, headteachers, deputy/assistant headteachers - 39)

Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	35%	9%	19%	37%
Overlapping ovals	31%	38%	27%	4%
Overlapping blocks	21%	26%	31%	21%
Retain current	17%	23%	21%	38%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4

Those in leadership positions also reject the current model and 3 broad stages, and show a more definite preference for overlapping bands shown with ovals. .
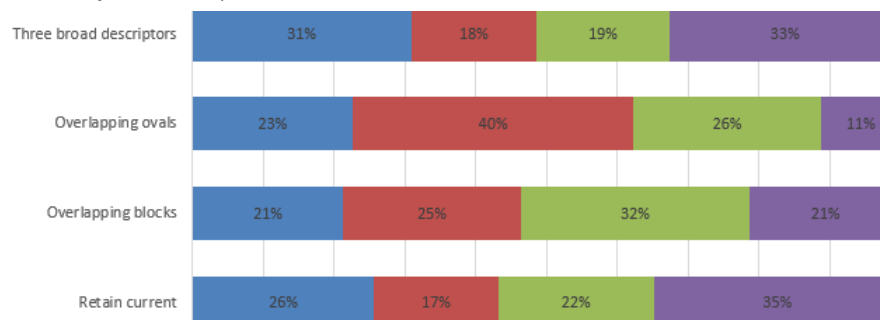
Comparison by level of qualification

Up to Level 3 (30)

Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	37%	27%	17%	20%
Overlapping ovals	47%	19%	25%	9%
Overlapping blocks	10%	30%	37%	23%
Retain current	9%	24%	18%	48%

Among practitioners who are unqualified and Level 3, overlapping bands shown by ovals is the most favoured model overall, with a strong rejection of retaining the current model.
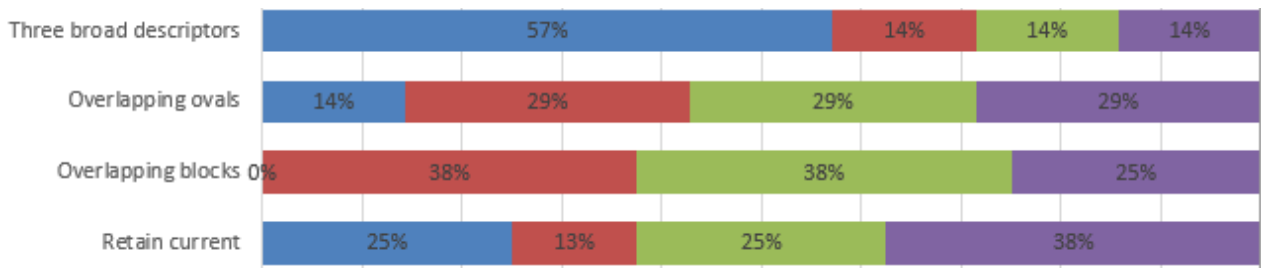
Most qualified (Qualified Teacher/EY Teacher/EY Professional, Postgraduate – 107)

Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	31%	18%	19%	33%
Overlapping ovals	23%	40%	26%	11%
Overlapping blocks	21%	25%	32%	21%
Retain current	26%	17%	22%	35%

Among the most qualified, there is a split regarding 3 broad stages, with roughly a third listing it as both first and last preference. Overall, the balance of preference favours overlapping stages shown by ovals.
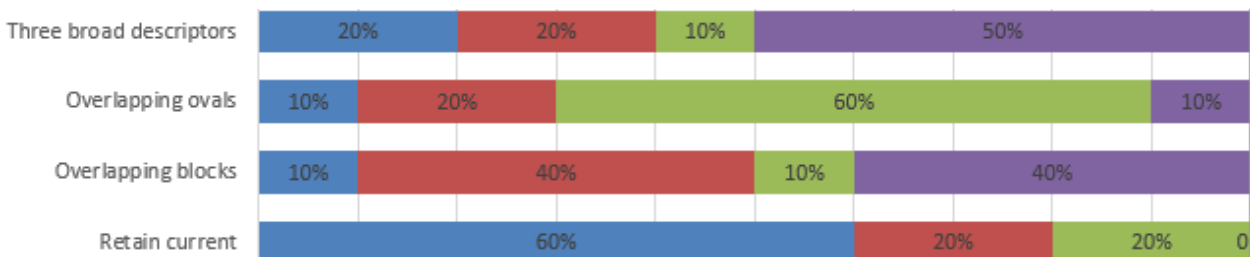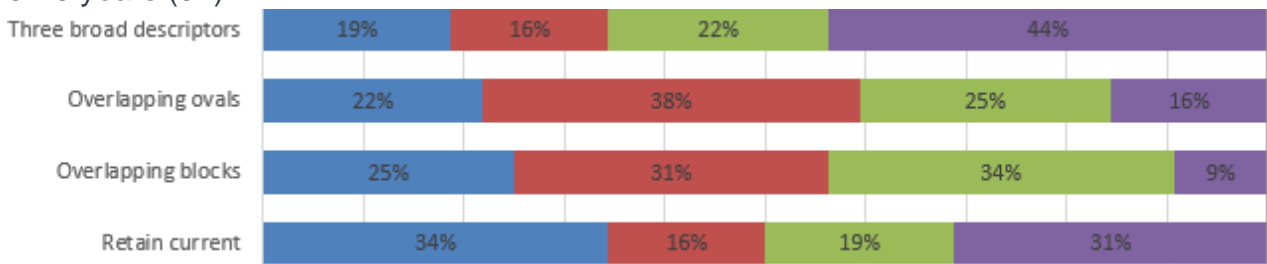
Comparison by experience

Up to 2 years (7)

Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	57%	14%	14%	14%
Overlapping ovals	14%	29%	29%	29%
Overlapping blocks	0%	38%	38%	25%
Retain current	25%	13%	25%	38%

Strong support for 3 broad stages was shown in this small sample of students and newly qualified practitioners.

2-4 years (10)

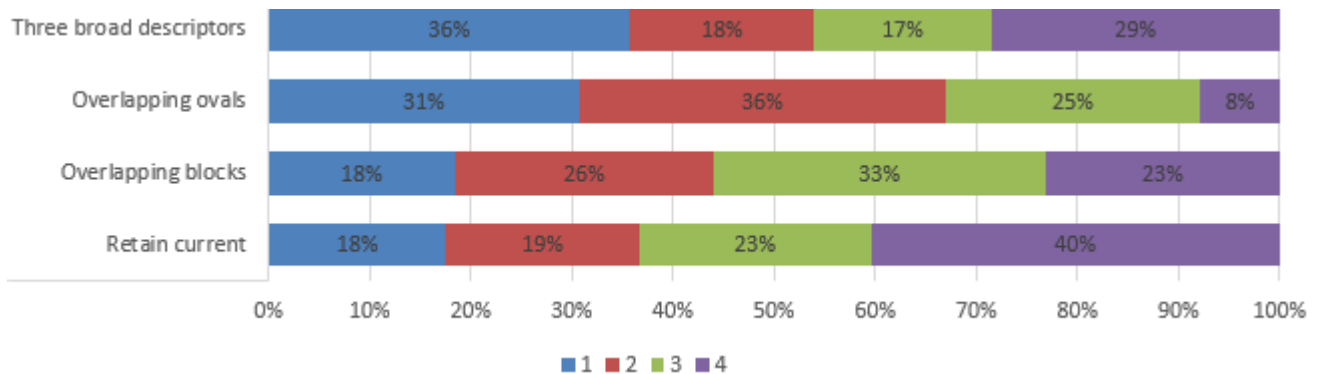| Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	20%	20%	10%	50%
Overlapping ovals	10%	20%	60%	10%
Overlapping blocks	10%	40%	10%	40%
Retain current	60%	20%	20%	0

The reverse pattern is seen in early-career respondents, who reject 3 broad stages and favour retaining the current model.

5-10 years (32)

Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	19%	16%	22%	44%
Overlapping ovals	22%	38%	25%	16%
Overlapping blocks	25%	31%	34%	9%
Retain current	34%	16%	19%	31%

These responses show a split on retaining the current model, rejection of 3 broad stages, and moderate approval of overlapping bands shown by either ovals or blocks.

Over 10 years (127)

Model	1	2	3	4
Three broad descriptors	36%	18%	17%	29%
Overlapping ovals	31%	36%	25%	8%
Overlapping blocks	18%	26%	33%	23%
Retain current	18%	19%	23%	40%

■1 ■2 ■3 ■4

Among the most qualified, there is somewhat stronger support for 3 broad stages, but it is still rejected by 29%. Overall, overlapping bands shown by ovals is preferred, and retaining the current model is rejected.