

Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Young Learners

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Abstract. This article below notes real problems and difficult situations in English teaching and working with young learners all over the world. By the way, the article written gives some extraordinary ways in order to be helpful to both teachers and pupils.

Keywords: TEYL, YL, VYL, visuals, movement, limited time, flexibility, proficient, discussion, physical energy, colorful puppets, to pay short attention

Introduction

Teaching English to Young Learners has become its own field of study as the age of compulsory English education has become lower and lower in countries all over the world. It is widely believed that beginning the study of English as a Foreign Language before the critical period—12 or 13 years old—will create more proficient speakers of English. However, there is no empirical evidence supporting the idea that an early start in English language learning in foreign language contexts builds better English speakers. If an early start alone is not the solution, then what can English language teachers of young pupils do to take advantage of the flexibility of young minds and the malleability of young tongues to grow better speakers of this language?

As the age for English education lowers in classrooms across the globe, EFL masters of children struggle to keep up with this trend and seek effective ways of teaching. This article contains some helpful ideas to incorporate into the TEYL classroom.

Methodology.

These ideas come from the discussions and assignments done in practising on teaching students aged 5-12 by masters came from a number of different classroom situations and countries in the Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. The ones taught in immersion classrooms; others worked with their students in class from two to three hours a week. Regardless of the country and the types of classrooms these teachers of young learners came from, the list of helpful ideas below seemed to be applicable to difficult situations. To clarify for whom the ideas are targeted, it is important to define young learner's age. "Young Learners" (YL) were accepted as 7-12 years old and "Very Young Learners" (VYL) were defined as under 7 years of age in the definitions provided by Slatterly and Willis (2001). In addition, the opinions given below can be applied to English language learners ranging from approximately 5 to 12 years old and can be used for various proficiency levels.

Results.

1. Lessons with bright and colorful visuals, and moving exercises.

Young learners tend to pay short attention and have lots of physical energy. Therefore, children are linked to their surroundings a lot and are more interested in the physical movement. The easiest thing to capture children's attention and keep young students engaged in lessons is to supply the activities with lots of brightly colored pictures, animal toys, balls or objects to match the others used in the stories

that you tell or songs that you sing. These things also provide to make the language comprehensible and can be used for reviewing activities, such as re-telling stories or guessing games. You should prepare the visuals on thick paper or laminate in order to use them in the future. Objects and toys can be donated by parents or another teachers. For instance, parents donate unnecessary toys to schools or kindergardens for another children and nurses or teachers give them to poor family's child then. Additionally, it is recommended to get students physical moved inside the classroom or outside. This method of teaching the language is Total Physical Response (TPR), James Asher's (1977) method, that young leaners listen, then physically answer to a number of teacher's instructions. They have fun with getting movement. Especially, the more fun for children, the easier they will remember the new vocabulary learned.

2. Make students interested in creating visuals.

It is important to involve pupils in the preparation of the realia or pictures in order to make the teaching more fun. Masters may have leaners draw the numerous characters of animal for a story or create toys. If your pupils can't draw pictures, have children color the photos of characters copied on paper and cut out. A "show and tell" exercise is a perfect style to get children interested in the activities with their own puppets.

3. Moving from activity to activity.

As stated before, kids are not able to pay attention for a long time. For young leaners, aged from 5 to 10, you should move quickly from one activity to another one. Recommended lasting time is not longer than 15 minutes for children who are 8-10 years old, not more than 10 minutes for kids aged 5-7.

Discussion.

As the article written demonstrates, the ways of teaching abovementioned that come out different and difficult situations all around the world maybe helpful in order to improve classroom skill. All opinions given has been practised and discussioned by lots of familiar professionals in this field of English teaching. Therefore, English Teachers, professionals must continue the discussion through their own communities to create more necessary and helpful ways, methods for TEYL.

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