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The Art of Teaching English to Young Learners

Strategies, Stories, and Success

Editors:
Dadang Solihat
Fahrus Zaman Fadhly

AISEE
The Association of Indonesian
Scholars of English Education


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The Art of Teaching English to Young Learners

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A Note from the Editors

We are delighted to present *The Art of Teaching English to Young Learners: Strategies, Stories, and Success*. This book offers a comprehensive examination of teaching English to children, focusing not only on effective instructional methods but also on the personal and professional growth that educators experience throughout their teaching journey. Our goal is to provide readers with both theoretical foundations and practical applications essential for creating engaging and impactful language learning experiences.

In today's interconnected world, English proficiency opens the door to countless opportunities. Early English education plays a crucial role in equipping young learners with the skills needed to navigate a globalized society. This book is designed to support educators in fostering not only language development but also curiosity, creativity, and a passion for lifelong learning among their students.

The chapters in this book bring together insights from experienced educators, researchers, and practitioners, offering a diverse range of perspectives on teaching strategies and classroom approaches. Covering topics such as gamification, differentiated instruction, digital storytelling, and phonics, the book provides valuable guidance on addressing both the challenges and opportunities in early English education.

We recognize that teaching young learners is both rewarding and complex. Through the experiences and insights shared in this book, we aim to encourage teachers to innovate, reflect, and persevere in their teaching practices. The strategies and tools provided are adaptable to various learning environments, helping educators create joyful and successful learning experiences.

This work also highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers, parents, and communities. We believe that strong partnerships play a vital role in fostering the holistic development of children. The ideas presented in this book emphasize the significance of collective efforts in building inclusive and nurturing learning spaces.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the contributors whose research, experiences, and reflections have shaped this book. Their generosity in sharing their expertise adds depth and value to the teaching community, inspiring others to continuously improve their classroom practices.

We also want to express our appreciation for the dedication of teachers who work tirelessly to make a difference in their students' lives. Their passion, creativity, and commitment serve as a source of constant inspiration. It is our hope that this book will become a valuable resource for educators, guiding them through the joys and challenges of teaching English to young learners.

More than just a teaching manual, this book is a tribute to the transformative power of education. It celebrates the artistry of teaching and encourages educators to embrace new challenges with confidence. We believe that every classroom moment has the potential to shape the future, and we hope this book empowers teachers to make the most of every learning experience.

With this introduction, we invite you to embark on a journey through the art of teaching English to young learners. May the stories, strategies, and successes shared within these pages inspire you to ignite a love of learning and unlock the potential of every student you teach.

Warm regards,
Dadang Solihat & Fahrus Zaman Fadhly

Foreword

It is with immense pride and enthusiasm that I introduce *The Art of Teaching English to Young Learners: Strategies, Stories, and Success*. This book encapsulates the essence of teaching English to children in a dynamic, engaging, and inspiring manner. As the President of the Association of Indonesian Scholars of English Education (AISEE), I have witnessed firsthand the profound influence that dedicated educators have in shaping young minds and instilling a lifelong passion for learning.

Teaching English to young learners requires more than just fluency in the language; it demands creativity, empathy, patience, and adaptability to meet the diverse needs of students. This book seamlessly integrates theory and practice, presenting innovative strategies, practical experiences, and insightful reflections from educators who have embraced the challenges and rewards of teaching English to children.

The importance of early English education has never been more critical. In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to communicate in English is a fundamental skill for future success. Early exposure not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also nurtures confidence and curiosity, encouraging young learners to explore different cultures and ideas. This book offers valuable guidance on how teachers can foster these skills, paving the way for students' academic and personal growth.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its holistic perspective on education. It acknowledges that learning is a collective journey that involves teachers, students, parents, communities, and institutions. The chapters highlight the significance of collaboration, interactive learning experiences, and inclusive teaching methods to ensure that every child feels valued and supported.

I am particularly impressed by the diverse topics explored in this book. Covering areas such as phonics instruction, gamification, differentiated learning strategies, and digital storytelling, the contributors provide a wealth of practical tools and ideas for educators. These strategies are not only research-based but also adaptable to different classroom settings, making them highly relevant and accessible for teachers.

As we navigate the evolving landscape of education in the 21st century, this book serves as a reminder of the importance of reflection and ongoing professional development. It encourages teachers to critically examine their own practices, learn from peers, and seek creative solutions to challenges. Through continuous improvement and innovation, educators can create meaningful learning experiences that leave a lasting impact on their students.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the editors, contributors, and everyone involved in bringing this book to life. Their dedication and passion shine through every page, offering inspiration to educators striving for excellence in their teaching. Additionally, I express my deep gratitude to teachers worldwide who dedicate themselves to guiding and empowering young learners, helping them reach their full potential.

I hope *The Art of Teaching English to Young Learners: Strategies, Stories, and Success* serves as both a practical resource and a source of inspiration for educators. May it ignite your creativity, strengthen your passion for teaching, and motivate you to embrace the challenges and rewards of shaping the future through education.

Warmest regards,

Pupung Purnawarman
President of AISEE

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9. The Role of Teacher Training and Education in Promoting Multilingualism and TEYL

Nur Fatimah & Erna Andriyanti

Starting from 1990s elementary school students in Indonesia officially learned English as a foreign language (Diyanti & Madya, 2021) along their process in establishing their knowledge and skills in Bahasa Indonesia. In addition, many of them also learn local or native languages. Consequently, they have to deal with learning different languages at the same time. Meanwhile, in teaching young learners, the teachers must be adept at addressing the diverse needs of learners from various linguistic backgrounds while managing the complexities of multilingual classrooms. More than that, the teachers are required to fulfil professional, pedagogic, social and personality competencies. Some of the English teachers are from class teachers whose major is not English. This makes the context of teaching young learners in multilingual contexts more complicated.

Indeed, teaching English in multilingual contexts is challenging. Both linguistic and non-linguistic factors influence how teachers teach their students. They can be related to the linguistic diversity, student motivation, curriculum and syllabus, and course programs (Paudel, 2020; Alfaro & Martínez, 2017; Wernicke et al., 2021; Yıldırım, 2019). Some other challenges are on teacher resistance to change, underestimating required resources, and communicating with parents/guardians of English language learners (Early & Kendrick, 2020); teacher's confidence in using English (Mutiah et al., 2020).

With a multilingual background, English classes of young learners present unique challenges. One of the primary hurdles is

ensuring comprehension and engagement among students who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Teachers must navigate varying levels of English proficiency, making it difficult to maintain a uniform pace of instruction (Le et al., 2024). Some students may grasp new concepts quickly, while others struggle, leading to potential feelings of frustration or disengagement. Additionally, young learners often rely heavily on their native languages to make sense of new material, necessitating instructional strategies that can bridge linguistic gaps and foster an inclusive learning environment (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020; Getie, 2020). Teachers must be adept at using visual aids, gestures, and context-based learning to facilitate understanding and keep all students on track.

Another significant challenge is fostering effective communication among students who may not share a common first language. Group activities and peer interactions, which are crucial for language acquisition and social development, can be hindered by language barriers. This requires teachers to be creative in designing activities that encourage collaboration and communication despite these barriers. Moreover, teachers must be sensitive to the cultural nuances and backgrounds of their students, which can influence learning styles and classroom dynamics.

Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) in multilingual settings has gained increasing attention since 2020, particularly concerning the importance of students' identity and native or local language. Research highlights that recognizing and valuing students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds can significantly enhance their learning experiences and outcomes. Incorporating students' native languages into the curriculum not only supports their cognitive development but also fosters a positive self-identity, which is crucial in a globalized world (Kidwell & Triyoko, 2024; Cummins, 2021). Moreover, teacher education programs need to equip future teachers with the skills to manage and leverage multilingual classrooms effectively (Wernicke et al., 2021). This

includes strategies for integrating students' native languages into English instruction and creating an inclusive learning environment that respects and celebrates linguistic diversity. Such an approach ensures that young learners can develop proficiency in English while maintaining their cultural identities.

Professional development and ongoing training in multilingual education strategies are essential for teachers to effectively address these challenges, promoting a classroom environment where all young learners can thrive and succeed in their English language acquisition journey. Thus, with those challenges, teacher's preparation and professional development is important to be conducted (Slaughter et al., 2024; Badenhorst et al., 2023; Mutiah et al., 2020; de Jong & Gao, 2023; de MEjIA & Hélot, 2015). This article focuses on multilingual TEYL and the teachers' professional development.

Multilingual TEYL Contexts

The term of multilingual refers to the settings where more than one language exists (Grutman, 2019). Individual multilingualism refers to the personal sphere and covers the acquisition and use of several languages by an individual, while societal multilingualism is the contexts, circumstances, order, manner and routines of use of languages in different kinds of communities, organizations and groups (Aronin, 2019). Another notion is that multilingualism is a linguistically and culturally diverse population of students living in a multilingual daily reality (Deng & Hayden, 2021). Mother tongue or first language, local language, second language, and/or even foreign language may expose young learners at the relatively same time.

In multilingual TEYL contexts, teachers must be scrutinized to develop more just and equitable settings of teaching and learning. Students' cultural, social, and linguistic differences must be taken into consideration in the teaching practice in the classroom (Badenhorst et al., 2023; Lindahl et al., 2020). In Yogyakarta,

Indonesia, for example, when learning English as a foreign language, young learners are also exposed with Javanese, other local languages, and or/the national language. It is the fact that Yogyakarta is very cultural city where Javanese and Indonesian are predominant languages. Young learners may have different ethnical backgrounds, many are Javanese, some are Sundanese, Bataknese, etc. Rarely do they find surrounding people communicate in English. Considering that the city of Yogyakarta is very plural, most of the children use Bahasa Indonesia to help them communicate at school and in the society, this is part of their identity, and of their national identity. And this affects them in learning another language including English. When decoding a new language, a language learner connect the learning process metacognitively to their prior knowledge (Spechtenhauser & Jessner, 2024). They link the process of learning English to how they learned L1, local or national language. Their experiences in learning their existing languages, first, or second language will be taken as part of their strategies in learning English, and their understanding in their existing language can interfere their learning the foreign language (Le et al., 2024).

Foundations of Effective Teacher Training

The teachers must be competent. According to Indonesian Government Law No 14/2005, teachers must be fulfilling the professional, pedagogy, personality, and social competent indicators. They must have a mastery on the subject matter. An EYL teacher in multilingual setting must be able to deal with the linguistic needs of young learners. Also, they have to be able to deliver the materials well applying suitable methods (Andrade González, 2023; Wong & Tai, 2023; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2020). Good teachers have good characters and personality. To colleagues and related parties, teachers are required to be good as well.

Language multilingualism must pay attention to linguistic and socio-political aspects to be effectively implemented.

Linguistically, it involves recognizing and valuing the diverse languages spoken by students and using them as resources in the learning process. This includes developing curricula that incorporate multiple languages and training teachers to be proficient. Socio-political aspects, on the other hand, involve understanding the power dynamics and historical contexts that influence language use and policies. It's essential to address issues of language dominance and marginalization, ensuring that minority languages are given equitable status. Policymakers must create inclusive language policies that support linguistic diversity and promote social cohesion. Furthermore, schools should foster an environment where all languages are respected and celebrated. By considering both linguistic and socio-political factors, multilingualism can be a powerful tool for educational equity and social justice.

In a multilingual setting, teachers must be culturally responsive and inclusive to effectively meet the diverse needs of their students (Aguayo et al., 2024; Ateh & Ryan, 2023). This means understanding and valuing the cultural backgrounds and linguistic resources each student brings to the classroom. Teachers should incorporate culturally relevant materials and practices that reflect the identities and experiences of all students. By doing so, they create a more engaging and respectful learning environment. Additionally, teachers need to foster an inclusive atmosphere where all languages and cultures are acknowledged and celebrated. This approach not only enhances students' sense of belonging but also promotes cross-cultural understanding and empathy. Ultimately, culturally responsive and inclusive teaching empowers students to succeed academically and socially in a diverse world.

Augmented and alternative communication are two of the important aspects to support young learners (Tönsing & Soto, 2020). Augmented and alternative communication (AAC) are crucial aspects to support young learners, particularly those with speech and language impairments. AAC encompasses a range of

tools and strategies that supplement or replace spoken language, enabling children to express themselves more effectively. These tools can be as simple as picture boards or as advanced as speech-generating devices. Implementing AAC in early education helps children develop essential communication skills, promoting their social interaction and participation in classroom activities. Teachers need to be trained to integrate AAC into their teaching methods, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to engage and learn. Additionally, involving families in the AAC process is vital for consistency and reinforcement at home. The use of AAC also fosters an inclusive learning environment, where children with communication challenges can thrive alongside their peers. Research has shown that early intervention with AAC can lead to significant improvements in language development and overall educational outcomes. By prioritizing AAC, teachers can create a more supportive and equitable learning experience for young learners.

Designing Teacher Training Programs and Professional Development

Curriculum needs to be designed in such a way to prepare and support English teachers to young learners in multilingual contexts. This must be the concern in teacher education or training. The aspects in the curriculum should include theoretical foundations, practical implementation, and opportunities for practice and feedback.

To design and develop the training program, it is important to confirm teachers' belief on multilingualism. It comprises nature of language in connection to culture and identity, multilingualism, language demand, dan responsibility for language teaching (Deng & Hayden, 2021). In relation to this, reflecting and appreciating teachers' view on multilingualism also matter (Morea & Fisher, 2023). How they view multilingualism will affect them in teaching.

Incorporating multilingualism theories, such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cultural sensitivity, and child development, and learning theories, is crucial in the curriculum of teacher training for several reasons. First, understanding sociolinguistics helps teachers appreciate the complex language dynamics in multilingual classrooms and tailor their teaching strategies accordingly (Le et al., 2024; Andrade González, 2023; Wong & Tai, 2023; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2020).

Pragmatics equips teachers with the skills to teach language use in context, enhancing students' communicative competence. Cultural sensitivity fosters an inclusive learning environment that respects and values students' diverse backgrounds, promoting engagement and motivation. Knowledge of child development and learning theories allows teachers to design age-appropriate and developmentally suitable lessons, ensuring effective language acquisition (Bayley, 2024). These theories together enable teachers to address the unique challenges of multilingual settings and support students in navigating multiple languages. Additionally, they provide a foundation for creating curricula that integrate students' first languages, leveraging their existing linguistic knowledge to facilitate English learning. Ultimately, this comprehensive approach prepares teachers to deliver high-quality, culturally responsive, and linguistically inclusive education, benefiting young learners' overall academic and personal growth.

An example of teaching models for multilingual setting is MADE. It stands for e Multilingual Approach to Diversity in Education (Christison et al., 2021). As an instrument of observation and feedback for teacher education and professional development, MADE has eight indicators. They are: classroom as multilingual space, interaction and grouping configurations, teacher language use, learner language use, language and culture attitudes, metacognition and metalinguistic awareness, teaching materials, and multiliteracy. Through the teaching and learning process framed with MADE, students are exposed with learning space

reflecting linguistic and cultural diversity. Also, they are facilitated to experience interactive learning process with the teacher as well as with their classmates enabling translanguaging that help them when to use English and when to adjust to their national or local language. This can lead them to their respect and sensitivity to language and cultural diversity. They develop their learning strategies metacognitively and raise their metalinguistic awareness, supporting their accomplishment in English learning. Teachers help the students by creating the materials that encourage the students' literacy practices across languages.

The professional development must be continued. Teaching in multilingual settings is more challenging. Continuous trainings are in needs. Otherwise; they can feel underprepared (Piller, 2024). EYL teachers should keep up with lifelong learning and stay updated with latest methodologies. Traditional face to face learning and online learning are two to consider. Recent advance in technology provides more opportunity for the teachers to create more networks for peer support and knowledge sharing. It is also good to have roles of mentorship in professional growth and development.

Technology and Innovation in Teacher Training

Indeed, it is important to be skilful in employing digital tools and resources. It means that the teachers need to be able to utilize technology for effective teaching. Bates' SECTIONS model can be applied in selecting and deciding media to use in teaching. It stands for Students, Ease of use, Costs, Teaching functions, Interaction, Organisational issues, Networking, Security and privacy (Hurayah & Hidayat, 2022). Utilizing technology for effective teacher training in multilingual settings offers numerous benefits while also presenting some challenges.

Technology provides access to a wide range of resources and tools that can enhance teacher training programs (Ho et al., 2023; Barros-del Río et al., 2022). Through computer programs and

online resources, the technology shares learning activities including exercises and games to stimulate communication and develop skills in understanding, speaking, reading and writing in different languages, with teachers and students from different countries (Bakhriyeva, 2024). Online platforms, webinars, and virtual classrooms enable teachers to engage in continuous professional development regardless of geographical constraints, promoting a more inclusive and accessible learning environment.

SimInClass is a 3D teaching simulation that facilitate teachers to improve management skill. It is intended to be used by pre- and in-service teachers. Therefore, it can relate teacher training and the teaching practice (Kelleci & Aksoy, 2021). This game starts with preparing the lesson and continues with in-class activities simulation. Such a simulation in teaching education has positive effects in enhancing teachers' self-confidence, time management, behaviour management and classroom management (Yilmaz & Hebebe, 2022; Seufert et al., 2022; Delamarre et al., 2021). Digital tools can simulate real classroom scenarios, providing practical training experiences that help teachers develop their skills in managing classrooms. Furthermore, technology facilitates collaboration and knowledge sharing among teachers from different regions, fostering a global community of practice.

However, there are challenges associated with integrating technology into teacher training. One significant issue is the digital divide, where disparities in access to technology and internet connectivity can limit the participation of some teachers, particularly those in rural or underserved areas. Additionally, the effective use of technology requires a certain level of digital literacy, which may necessitate additional training and support for teachers who are less familiar with these tools. There is also the risk of over-reliance on technology, which can sometimes overshadow the importance of face-to-face interactions and hands-on experiences that are crucial in teacher training (Baskici et al., 2024; Imran et al., 2023). To address these challenges, it is

essential to provide equitable access to technological resources, offer comprehensive training in digital literacy, and strike a balance between online and offline training methods. By doing so, teacher training programs can harness the full potential of technology to support teachers in multilingual settings effectively. It is expected that it will lead to innovative practices in teacher training.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are two to take into account in promoting multilingualism in teacher education. Language training programs conducted have to be assessed and evaluated in order to ensure their effectiveness (Beshah & Anshu, 2024; Iftikhar et al., 2022; Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2022). Various tools and methods can be employed to achieve this, such as pre- and post-training assessments, which measure changes in knowledge and skills. To respond to questions or requirement of the assessment, the students can use their multilingual repertoires to express their ideas (De Backer et al., 2020). To make the assessment valid and effective, students' language maybe used to ensure that the test takers get the points asked, for example, by finding the synonym of the word/phrase related to certain concepts in the questions.

Further, surveys and feedback forms filled out by participants can be made to provide insights into their experiences and perceptions of the training. Observations and evaluations of teaching practices can be conducted to see how well the training translates into the classroom environment. Additionally, performance metrics, such as student outcomes and engagement levels, can be tracked to gauge the long-term impact of the training. Using a combination of these tools and methods allows for a comprehensive evaluation, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement in the training programs.

Also, feedback is important in continuous improvement. Constructive feedback from participants helps trainers understand what works well and what needs adjustment, ensuring that the

programs evolve to meet the teacher's and students' changing needs (Imran et al., 2024; Beshah & Anshu, 2024). Reflection training and reflective practices are essential components of this process (Deng & Hayden, 2021; Morea & Fisher, 2023). By encouraging teachers to reflect on their learning and teaching experiences, they become more aware of their strengths and areas for growth. Reflective practices promote a culture of continuous professional development, where teachers are proactive in seeking out new knowledge and strategies to enhance their effectiveness. Regular reflection sessions and peer discussions can foster a collaborative learning environment, where teachers support and learn from each other, ultimately leading to improved teaching practices and better learning outcomes for students in multilingual settings. It is important to hold reflection training and reflective practices (Almusharraf et al., 2022). The assessment and evaluation are to refine and improve training program.

Effective teacher training programs prepare and equip teachers with strategies to support language development, foster inclusive learning environments, and implement culturally responsive teaching practices in teaching English to young learners. They encompass comprehensive language and culture awareness to cater to diverse linguistic backgrounds. Integrating innovative technology in training enhances the learning experience, providing teachers with modern tools and methodologies to address the unique challenges of multilingual classrooms. Foundational elements of teacher training, including robust assessment and evaluation mechanisms, ensure that teachers are well-equipped to deliver high-quality education.

Continuous professional development ensures that teachers stay updated with the latest pedagogical approaches, technological advancements, and research findings, enabling them to enhance their instructional methods and better serve their students learning in multilingual environment in becoming proficient in English while valuing and maintaining their national, and or local language.

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