



YOUNG LEARNERS AND TEENAGERS SIG

C&TS

spring 2012

very young learners



£4 for YLT members

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The Coordinator's Message

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Dear YLT SIG member

Welcome to a new edition of C&TS which, as you will agree, is new in many respects. Doesn't it look great? Thanks to many excellent contributions and the artistic efforts of our new editor/designer, ffinlo Kilner, C&TS now looks luscious and loveable.

On the cards

So, what is on the cards for the next few months? Many exciting initiatives are being explored and will come to fruition in the course of the year.

In this respect, we are now considering the launch of a new and dedicated Very Young Learner network. This may affect the way YLT SIG is organised, our website and C&TS. More news about this to follow...

This year will hopefully continue our collaboration with the British Council in China and the NAFLE teachers' organisation to produce the next instalment of our teacher training efforts there.

Caroline Linse is in the process of setting up an event with ETRA, in Taiwan, for November 2012. (More information on our website in the News column).

In the recent past

Many of you have been able to benefit from the wonderful TESOL EVO online event, moderated by Dennis Newson, Helen Davies and ffinlo Kilner. The presentations are available online, if you weren't able to 'be' there. The event was a great success. We aim to continue YLT SIG involvement with a new series of webinars by committee members and others.

People moving

One of our current editors, Janice Bland, who has done C&TS for many seasons, will change places with Niki Joseph: Janice will take on the job of organising the PCE, and Niki will take on the responsibility of editing C&TS, with ffinlo.

We welcome Kalyan Chattopadhyay in our midst who has taken the post of Advertising and Sponsorship officer for YLT.

Unfortunately, Helen Emery has had to decide to stand down as joint coordinator of the SIG, due to pressure of work. We'd like to thank Helen for all the work she has done for YLT SIG and hope we will see her and work with her on matters SIG in the future still.

Hans



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IATEFL YOUNG LEARNERS & TEENAGERS SIG



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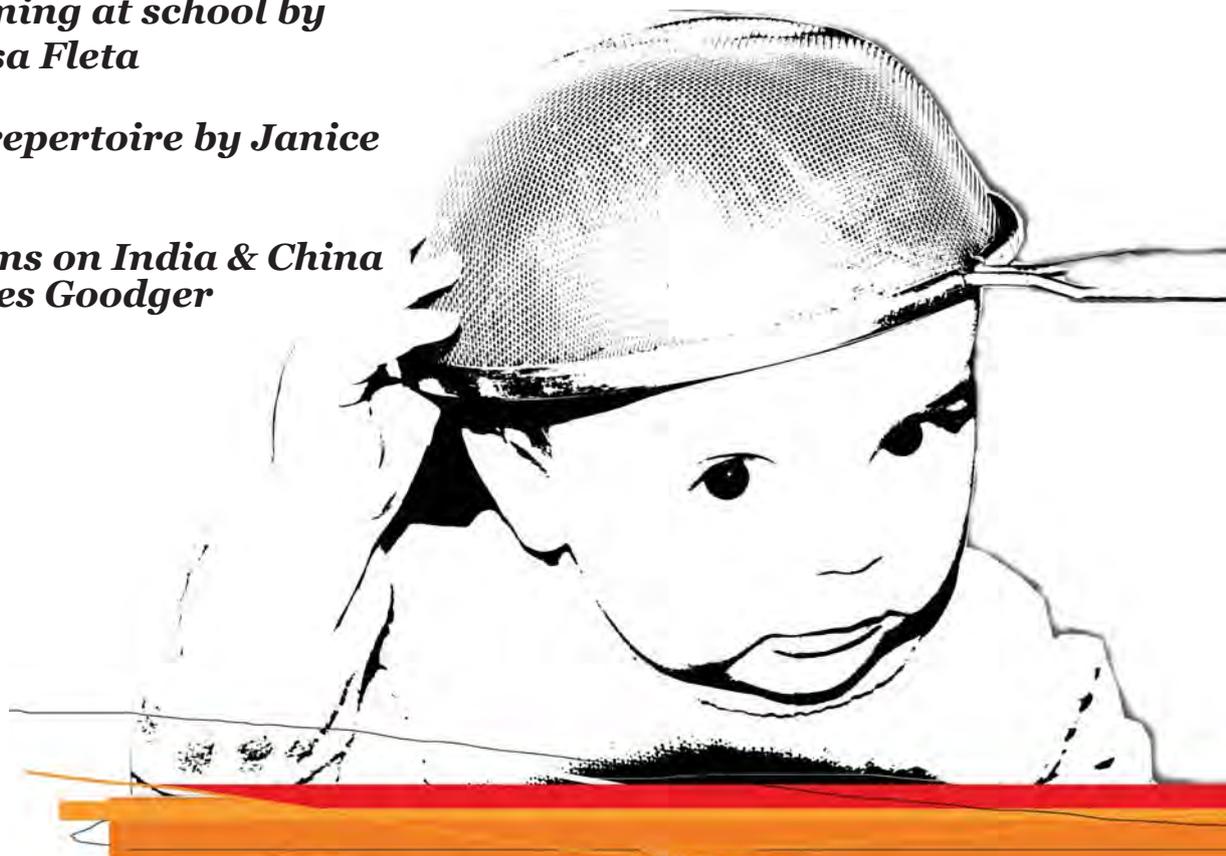
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**Coming
2012**





From the editor

Wow. It's been emotional. But I've had fun. And sworn quite a lot (mostly when no-one was listening). But I'm always more than half afraid that my webcam is somehow transmitting. Do you do that?

It would be nice to start a dialogue with readers on what you think of this issue of C&TS. I have tried to reflect some of the excitement and energy of our profession, a drop of its iconoclasm and some of its breadth.

I love teaching. I love the fact I can draw on every one of my interests and obsessions and work them into my practice. I can play. I believe in playfulness as a teacher and as a man. I listened to Professor Stephen Krashen say in our EVO session (read about it opposite) that classrooms contain one of three states... boredom, confusion or learning and now the sign on my door reads Department of... I would like to avoid the first two with this magazine.

I would like to use design to start a dialogue, what is the point of pumping out work into a great silent vacuum? I would like to ask you to contribute to the magazine so that I can create pages which make you want to read. And I am sure I'll get better at it, but here's a start. Let me know what you think (ffinlo@sul-schools.com).

Thanks to my co-editors Ned (9), Billy (7) & Rosie (4) for all their artwork and support.

VYLs

This issue is on the theme of Very Young Learners. We have contributions from

- Sandie Mourão on Emotional Intelligence
- Shelly Sanchez Terrell on Using Wikis to Engage the Parents of Young Learners
- Renée Sawazaki on Getting Parents involved: Reading with your child
- Dr. Teresa Fleta on Factors concerning early EFL learning at School
- Janice Bland gives us A Lively Repertoire
- Charles Goodger gives us his Reflections on India and China

Correspondence

Correspondence relating to this issue or any other C&TS matters can be sent to ffinlo@sul-schools.com. I welcome contributions!

Disclaimer

Views expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the editor, of YLTsig or of IATEFL.

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YLTsigEVO 2012

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The American based TESOL is probably one of the largest teaching organisations in the world with a membership of over 12,000.

As a lead-up to its annual conference, TESOL organises several free 5-week open online lecture workshops. For example in 2012 there were workshops on 14 topics including; Developing our Mentoring Skills, Digital Storytelling for Young Learners and TESOL-Drama Workshop: Teaching and Assessing English Through Drama.

These free online workshops go by the name of Electronic Village Online (EVO).

Carla Arena, a Brazilian teacher and EVO organiser, met IATEFL president Eric Baber at Brighton 2011, and it was agreed that the participation of IATEFL in the EVO event would strengthen the links between IATEFL and TESOL.

The YLTSIG committee backed the venture which was then organised and run by Dennis Newson, ffinlo Kilner and Helen Davies. The session was called 'The very best of YLTSIG' and 12 inspirational speakers generously agreed to give their time and expertise for an online presentation.

The EVO has a website designed using WordPress at

<http://yltsigevo2012.wordpress.com> which won praise from participants and presenters alike. This site was our hub. Tutorials, including screencasts, were created to help participants use the tools successfully. Extensive use was made of the YLTSIG twitter account (@iatefl_yltsig) to inform participants about the events.

The presentations were screened in front of a live online audience in Adobe Connect, a service paid for by IATEFL.

"It was a great experience... inspiring, full of information -that will take me long to go over again and again- and ideas of how to combine learning and having fun during lessons."

Adobe Connect is an online meeting room with chat areas, webcams, microphone, PowerPoint and so on.

We used YahooGroups to register for the workshops and towards the end of the 5 week session there were 330 people registered from countries including Argentina, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Russia, Tunisia, USA and Vietnam.



YahooGroups also allowed us to create databases and about 140 people completed a survey on what part of the world they lived, what age group they taught. Participants also used the yahoo group to communicate on a variety of subjects—from teaching opportunities, to discipline problems and grammar !

Just under 10% were members of IATEFL and YLTSIG and almost 20% were members of TESOL. Over a third of

participants were primarily interested in teaching teenagers, 10% in teaching young children and just under 5% in teaching the very young.

One participant (Chaouki) was even inspired to write a poem which can be found on the blog.

The highest live online turnout was 69 for Prof. Stephen Krashen. Considering the wide variety of timezones—from Pakistan to Peru— one of the great advantages of Adobe Connect is that participants can watch a recording of the events. Some of the recordings have already been accessed nearly 400 times.

Dennis, Helen & ffinlo 2012

Supporting the development of

by Sandie Mourão

IN this contribution I discuss the different ways early years language teachers can support the development of emotional intelligence in their classrooms. I begin with a brief description of five different strands of emotional intelligence and then look at some simple activities for circle time, using stories, songs and action games, which enable its development.

What is emotional intelligence?

The first definition for emotional intelligence was given in 1990 by Salovey & Mayer: “emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (1990, p. 189). Referred to as EQ or EI (I prefer the latter), it is described as bringing emotions and cognitive skills together to get you through life.

EI includes competencies such as empathy, intuition,

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

creativity, flexibility, resilience, stress management, coping, leadership, integrity, intra-personal and interpersonal skills. In education programmes teachers refer to social, emotional and behavioural skills, (SEBS), though it is not possible to teach these skills in just one lesson for they are a mixture of personality traits and a sense of self-worth, nurtured through interaction amongst peers and adults in an every day world (Mosley, 2005). This nurturing begins at home but school plays an essential role in continuing to support children’s EI development. All children can benefit from having a language educator who is aware of the different aspects of EI and how their practice can support and enable its development.

Skills and competencies

The skills and competencies that make up EI can be divided into five different strands.

1 Self-awareness– the ability to recognize and identify a feeling, this includes knowing why we feel as we do and being able to communicate how we are feeling.

2 Managing one’s emotions– the ability to control emotions in an appropriate and proportional way thus expressing and communicating them in a socially acceptable manner.

3 Empathy– the ability to recognize and to be sensitive to the emotions of others by understanding possible motives for certain feelings and behaviour and communicating this understanding.

4 Handling relationships– the ability to influence the emotions of others in a positive way, to handle conflict constructively and get along well with others.

5 Self-motivation– the ability to keep working toward a goal in the belief that you can successfully reach your goals, to persist and overcome setbacks.

You will note that many of the abilities described in the strands indicate that children should be able to communicate how and why they, or others, feel as they do. Naturally then, we should be helping children do this in the language we are using with them (the L2). Thus through the L2 we can reinforce the concepts they are beginning to understand in their own language (the L1).

Explicit instruction

Explicit activities involve focused instruction using whatever materials you have prepared to specifically work with emotions. Explicit instruction will take into consideration the first and second strands, self-awareness and managing emotions, as we are giving children words in the L2 to communicate their emotions, words they probably already know and understand in their L1.

Though there is some discussion about what the six basic emotions are (cf Prinz, 2004) for the sake of argument those included in the early years tend to be the ones that can be expressed and understood from facial expressions: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, calmness and surprise (sometimes disgust). Children as young as two years old can recognize happiness and sadness, but may still confuse fear and anger. These same children are very capable of showing empathy, and will spontaneously hug a friend who they recognize as feeling sad.

Self-awareness and managing emotions

Simple teacher led activities during circle time help children get to grips with the emotion words which will help them begin to talk about how they feel in the L2. Use emotion picture cards. Show the picture and ask if the children know what feeling the face is showing. If they answer in their L1 recast their answer into the L2. Have the children first imitate the emotion, copy-

the facial expression first. Then extend this to include

how the whole body can show certain feelings. Finally get them to say the emotion word in a way that denotes the actual feeling it is labelling. These acts of imitation will reinforce the concept and help them remember this new word.

Using pairs of picture cards play different games that encourage the use of the emotion words and which stimulate the children's memories. Make a fun emotions dice, an emotions spinner or emotion fans (see links below): get the children to call out the emotion they see and imitate it. This activity doesn't need to take long, and can be repeated over a number of sessions. If the dice is left in a play corner

devoted to the L2, children can play this simple game during free play activities for further reinforcement.

If you know any songs or rhymes you can sing or say these with your group during circle time. I like to use an adaptation of *If you are happy and you know it*. Together the children and I decide



on an action, which we feel represents an emotion. We put together four or five verses ending with *If you are happy...* ! The actions chosen will be culturally specific depending on where

you are in the world. The children I work with are Portuguese and these are two emotion examples they have come up with:

*If you are sad and you know it, go "Sniff sniff".
If you are angry and you know it, stamp your feet.*

Another fun song can be downloaded from my website (see link below). The melody is an unusual one, played on a sitar, and it cleverly evokes the different emotions. The lyrics are simple and it's really popular with pre-school children:

When I'm happy

When I'm happy, I jump!

When I'm sad, I cry!

When I'm scared, I shake!

When I'm angry, I count to 10.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

When I'm calm, I'm happy again.

Through singing this song we are not only reinforcing ways to show emotions but also showing children how they can be controlled. When anger appears in the classroom encourage the child, or children, to count to ten slowly and take a deep breath, just as they do in the song. Helping children to manage their emotions contributes to developing the second EI strand.

Implicit instruction

As children become familiar with the emotion words more implicit activities take over, which will incorporate skills that promote development in the other EI strands. There will be less overall focus upon the actual language of emotion, instead we begin to use the newly learned words to question and describe emotions on a daily basis, for a real purpose.

You can begin by commenting on your own feelings, the class puppet's feelings and then how individual children feel. "Hey! Julio, you are happy today. You are smiling!" or "Oh dear Ana. You are sad today, you are very quiet." Gradually children will pick up on the language you are using and begin using it to describe themselves and others around them.

Using picturebook stories is also a good way for children to put their developing knowledge about

emotions to use. Picturebooks help children see and hear how others show and deal with emotional situations and how they manage challenges. By identifying emotions in others and seeing how others resolve problems children learn strategies of their own. Through the pictures in picture-books children are afforded these opportunities, especially



Using Wikis to Engage the

by Shelly Sanchez Terrell

Integrating technology effectively in the curriculum with very young learners can be quite a challenge!

One challenge is determining which technologies and activities are appropriate for this age group and another challenge is getting parents comfortable with the idea of using technology to improve their child's English. In many cases parents question the use of technology and this is a valid question.

In Germany, I was teaching children from the ages of two years-old to ten years-old. In the classroom, we played games, used Total Physical Response (TPR), sang songs, read stories, and did hands-on activities. These instructional methods tend to be the best ways to motivate children to learn English. The problem was that my young learners were only using their English in the time they spent with me. They were not applying the English to various contexts or objects that surround them to develop their use of the language. According to Piaget, children in this age group are at the pre-operational stage of development, a critical time for learning a language, when they first begin developing their language skills by applying vocabulary to the objects that surround them (Wood, Smith, & Grossniklaus, 2001). Knowing this I wanted to encourage my young learners to use their English while they were playing or immersed in their daily routines. With this aim in mind, I decided to create 'The English Story Time' wiki website.

Wiki Features

Wikis are free websites (usually), which allow embedding and linking. Wikispaces for Educators or PBWorks for Educators offer advertisement free wikis for educational uses. A wiki offers various ways for learners and teachers to add, edit, or revise information on the site. Another advantage is that the wiki can be made private. Anyone who is a part of the wiki can receive emails when the wiki is updated.

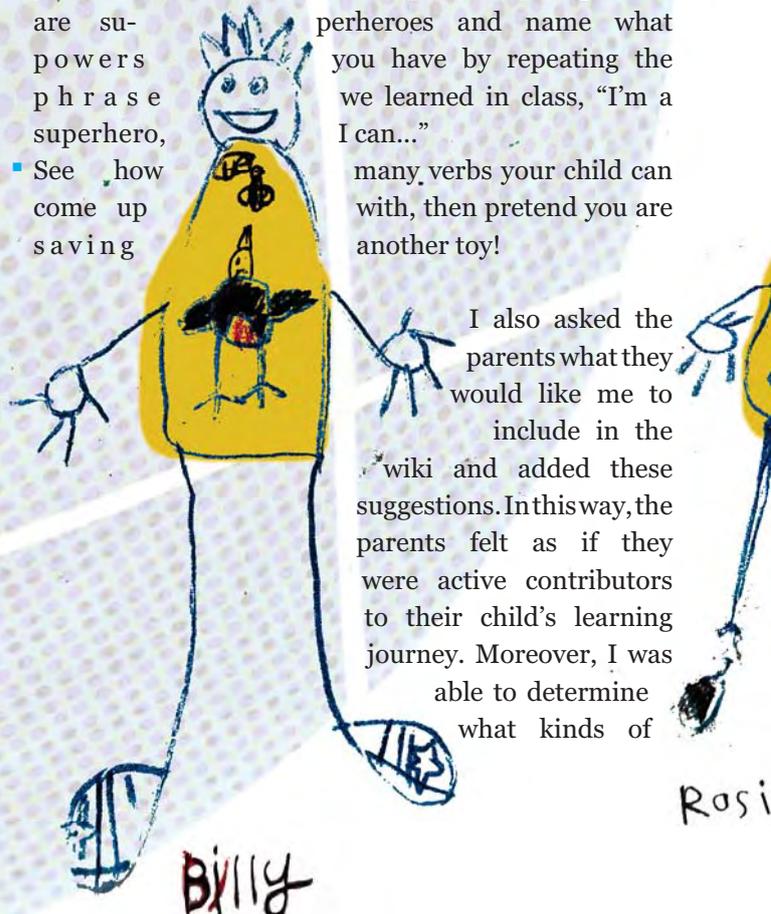
Engaging Parents with the English Story Time Wiki

My English Story Time wiki was designed to encourage the parents of my young learners to repeat the activities we were doing outside the classroom. Each week I

updated the main page with the new theme, the story we were reading in class, websites about the story or author, links to online games or activities to reinforce the vocabulary, and suggested games and activities for parents to do with their children. The template and language are very simple and set-up in lists for the parents to easily scan. The parent then has the option to choose any of these optional activities for further exploration outside the classroom.

For example, when we studied superheroes I included the following:

- Read the book, *You Can Do Anything Daddy* by Michael Rex
- Listen to the Superhero song we sang in class <http://genkienglish.net/superhero.htm>
- Read a story about Superheroes online www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-superhero-high.htm
- Design your own superhero www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-superheroes.htm
- Play a pretend game with your child where you and your child each pick a toy to pretend are superheroes and name what you have by repeating the phrase we learned in class, "I'm a superhero, I can..."
- See how many verbs your child can come up with, then pretend you are saving another toy!



I also asked the parents what they would like me to include in the wiki and added these suggestions. In this way, the parents felt as if they were active contributors to their child's learning journey. Moreover, I was able to determine what kinds of

Parents of Young Learners

activities the parents were mostly likely to do with their children at home. A page was created for English songs with the lyrics, sound files, and also videos showing how to sing and move to the songs. Another page was created for finger plays with lyrics and videos showing how to do the hand movements.

Although the activities were optional, many of the parents would tell me each week that they had performed at least one of the tasks at home. The parents would also send me emails telling me how much their child liked a specific website, activity, or web tool. The wiki also helped me to get the parents on board with using technology to motivate their children to improve their English. The result was that my four to six year-old students were able to participate in an online story with children from Turkey and New Zealand. The parents helped my students practice their scripts at home and



we scanned their drawings online. When the project was over we published this on the wiki!

My Reflection

The English Story Time wiki helped me to break down the walls of my classroom and motivate the parents of my young learners to take an active role in ensuring their children were using the language outside the classroom (Terrell, 2011). The parents also were able to observe their children using English. The wiki itself was only a tool. What made this tool powerful for learning was when I allowed the parents to make decisions about what was included in the wiki. The parents suggested stories to read for each theme, activities they played in their native tongue that could have an English spin, and English songs they already played for their children. One of the most important lessons I learned from this experience was that technology integration becomes incredibly powerful for learning when parents, students, and teachers collaborate. Larry Ferlazzo (2009), author of *Building Parent Engagement in Schools*, points out that engaged parents are those that enter into partnerships with teachers and school staff to provide the best learning



...continued on page 31

Getting Parents Involved: READING WITH YOUR CHILD

by Renée Sawazaki

Japanese parents tend to entrust English education to language school teachers. This article explores a twist on this trend: Parental training at a literacy center so parents can lay the foundation for foreign language literacy in the home.

Language schools in Japan often limit parental involvement to 'Mommy and Me' classes (i.e. mothers with infants and toddlers). The Wordland Literacy Project extended this practice to parents with children up to 8 years old. The results were phenomenal. Families engaged in book reading, storytelling, singing, crafts, project work, and worksheets in the home. Teachers at Wordland acted as 'advisors' for the families.

create a LIBRARY

The literacy center housed two small libraries, a lending library and a resource library, focusing on literacy development for 0-8 EFL learners.

MATERIALS

- Graded readers with audio support
- Big books
- Resource books (songs, photocopiable worksheets, crafts, dictionaries, encyclopedias)
- Materials (arts and crafts, realia)
- Computers, Internet and software



What a child learns by his 3rd birthday stays with him for life (*Mistugo no tamashi hyaku made.*).

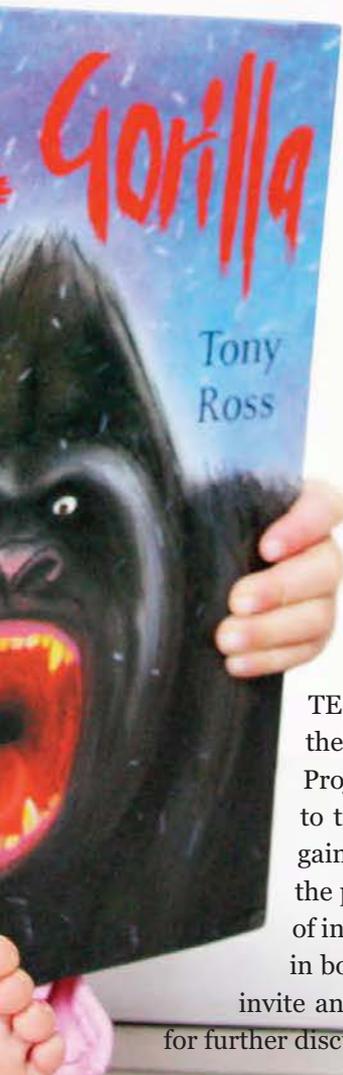
This Japanese proverb urges parents to focus carefully on how they raise their infants and toddlers—through moral, intellectual and spiritual endeavors. It is no wonder, then, that they are willing to invest substantial amounts of time and money into the education of their little ones. But, in terms of foreign language education, is it practical or efficient to leave this task up to language schools which can, on average, provide only 40 hours of instruction annually?

Extensive research illustrates just how important and effective parental involvement is in developing a child's literacy skills in their native tongue and second language. In particular, the act of reading to and with your child may be the single most important thing caregivers can do to help children succeed academically

(Cummins, 1993; Hannon, 1996; Morrison and Cooney, 2002). A recent longitudinal study even proves how these experiences as a child sets them apart academically from their peers by age 15 (Borgonovi, 2011). Some parents fear that they are less qualified than teachers to help their children learn, but she emphasizes that this support requires "genuine interest and active engagement" more than specialized knowledge.

This article is adapted from a paper in the book, *Contextualizing EFL for Young Learners: International perspectives on policy and practice*, published by TESOL Arabia (2011), which details the 2006-2010 Wordland Literacy Project for which the primary goal was to train parents to help their children gain EFL literacy skills. I will highlight the practices and activities that may be of interest to teachers of young children in both the private and public sectors. I

invite any interested readers to contact me for further discussion.



WORDLAND PROGRAM AND PARTICIPANTS

Wordland Literacy Center, sponsored by the Wordland Literacy Project, was housed in a region just north of Tokyo. The primary challenge the center faced in

setting up a caregiver-child foreign language program was convincing the mothers that this was, one, an effective pedagogical practice and, two, they and other adults in the family were capable of being role models and supporters of English language education for their children. Prior to starting the program, I, the educational advisor, met with mothers, gave them literature on the philosophy and practices of the program, and asked for their cooperation and understanding. Several points were highlighted: Family involvement during the sessions and at home; usage of a variety of reading and audio materials for literacy development in lieu of an EFL course book; the educational advisor acting as a guide rather than a traditional teacher; and a long-term commitment (at least one year) in order to see the results. I stressed that laying a foundation in a foreign language requires a lot of exposure to the language with varying ways of practice and a positive attitude. As the Japanese culture prides itself in speed and accuracy, I was careful to reassure the mothers that their children were certain to progress well in their English learning, but that output may not be measurable for at least a few months.

Later, after 8 groups of 2-4 families were formed, a preliminary meeting was set up for caregivers to view and choose learning materials, and to get to know one another.

Purchased materials consisted of sets of EFL graded readers with CDs and Japanese teacher's guides, when available (Examples: Longman's *Mice*, Oxford's *Potato Pals*, and Cambridge's *Storybox* series), picture dictionaries and workbooks (*Longman Young Children's Picture Dictionary*), a songbook and CD (*Wee Sing Children Songs and Fingerplays*), and phonics workbooks (*Scholastic Phonics K*). Families also had access to the lending library and collection of resources.

Families gathered weekly for a one-hour session, a total of 45 times a year. After 2 years, due to my work schedule, the sessions were shifted to once a month. By that time, the participating families had a strong enough base in doing literacy activities at home so that a monthly plan was sufficient for the continuation of their efforts.

During the first half of each session, the children and caregivers shared their favorite library book and checked out new books, CDs and DVDs. Next, the advisor checked the learning diaries that the families had completed. The caregivers were responsible for taking notes on the assignments and recording when it was accomplished and any comments or questions. The advisor went over

these notes and gave each child a sticker for the page as a reward for his/her accomplishments. In addition, each child was encouraged at this point to choose and sing their favorite song and read a book that they had practiced at home. The advisor also checked any completed workbook pages and families shared crafts or books that were made at home.

For the second half, the advisor introduced the new study program materials and modeled ways to practice at home. She then trained caregivers while the children engaged in activities such as card games, watching videos or reading books. The caregivers practiced Dialogic Reading techniques, rhythm and pronunciation, and other linguistic skills for which they requested assistance. Emphasis was placed on reading the books chosen for shared reading and the accompanying song(s). Special attention was given so that the caregivers could easily replicate the techniques and activities at home on a daily basis. In addition, phonics workbook and picture dictionary homework was assigned. Occasionally storytelling or crafts were added to the program.

The participants in this program were as follows: Nineteen families participated, with a total of 25 children ranging from infants to 8-year-olds. For 18 of the families, the mother participated in the sessions with their children. The grandmother attended regularly in one family. For most of the families the father, grandmother, or grandfather occasionally attended a session when the mother was not available. Eight study groups were created based on 3 age groups: infants to 2-year-olds (2 groups; 3 families; 5 children), 3- to 5-year-olds (4 groups; 11 families; 15 children); and 6- to 8-year-olds (2 groups; 4 families; 6 children). All participants were beginners in English with little or no formal EFL instruction prior to commencing the program. The average length of participation was 2 years.

ABC OF READING WITH YOUR CHILD

As training caregivers in Dialogic Reading techniques has been proven effective by past researchers such as Whitehurst et al (1988) and Jiménez, Filippini and Gerber (2006), I chose to focus on this approach. When reading dialogically, caregivers prompt children to become actively involved in the reading process by asking questions and allowing children opportunities to be storytellers. Children describe what they see happening in the books and adults assume the role of active listeners—asking questions, adding information, and assisting

children in increasing the sophistication of their descriptions. This can be particularly difficult when both speakers are using a foreign language, so continual practice and training was necessary.

The first few months of the program focused on getting caregivers used to using English picture books in the home. I focused on what I called the ‘ABC of reading with your child’ and stressed that reading a book was not an act of simply reading to your child or playing a CD, but should be engaging and interactive. Here are some of the main points:

A for Active usage of books to explore language and learn about the world with your child

- Talking about themes, topics and pictures before reading.
 - Predict what will happen (in the beginning and while reading).
 - Explain unknown words in simple English.



- Act out dialogs with your child (particularly good for books with predictable patterns).
- Ask simple comprehension questions (some Wordland children became frustrated when they could not understand the story content).
- Use common themes like number of items, shapes and colors to talk about pictures.
- Make it fun! Add humor by exaggerating voices or changing words to make a silly version; alter the speed; add gestures; do whatever your heart fancies.

B for Bonding with your child

Rituals help keep book reading time consistent and a natural part of the family's schedule. I recommend reading Bernice Cullinan's book *Read to Me: Raising Kids Who Love to Read* (2000) for excellent ideas on how to make reading a natural and fun part of a family's routine.

I often
not to

told the Wordland caregivers be afraid to follow their child's lead when it came to reading preferences. Many Japanese mothers were afraid of not 'reading to their child correctly'. I encouraged them to do as their child requests: Go back and reread pages, skip ahead, stop reading in the middle of the book, read to your child as he or she engages in other activities such as drawing or doing puzzles, and—the timeless favorite— rereading their favorite book over and over again!

C for Creating a love for reading and learning

It is often said that the greatest gift a parent can give a child is the love for reading. I encouraged caregivers to be good role models and read books and other reading materials themselves. Use book reading time as a treat and reward for good behavior. Most importantly, make it fun! One positive outcome of this program which is unrelated to English language learning is that many families replied in a questionnaire that their children seemed to gain a greater interest in reading books in Japanese as well, became engaged while reading and often communicated with their family about books.

LITERACY BASED OF L PROGRAMS

Due to a research leave, I was no longer able to continue this program from the spring 2010. The families loved the activities so much they asked me to help them continue reading in English at home without the group's support or library materials. With the growing accessibility of fabulous

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Factors concerning early EFL learning at school

by Dr. Teresa Fleta

Since English is introduced to children at school from very early on, and since bilingual education is becoming widely spread throughout the educational systems internationally, there is an increasing need to get a better understanding of the route children follow to learn English as a foreign language (EFL). In this paper, I consider the learner's age at the onset of EFL learning at school (L2), and also factors that go along the same route of learning, such as the setting; type of input; length of exposure, and social interaction to practice the language.

Age and the language learning process

Children possess full capacity of speaking any language at birth, but as time goes by, the brain changes, and maturation opens and closes windows of opportunities narrowing the universal capacities and affecting the onset, rate, and the adult decline for language learning. This narrowing of the linguistic capacities is known as the Critical Period Hypothesis and affects L1 acquisition, changing the possibilities from being universal to being language specific. Also, the maturation of the brain affects L2 learning, and different ages have been put forward to be significant for the acquisition process of a second language ranging from nine months (Kuhl, 2010); to four years (Meisel, 2010); to seven years (Johnson and Newport, 1989; Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson, 2003); to puberty (Lenneberg 1967).

acquire new languages.



In recent years, the question of whether childhood is the best age of onset for children to start an L2 at school has been a subject of much debate and of theoretical controversy. For some authors, early starters are more successful learners in the long run than later acquirers. They reach higher ultimate attainment and the reason is based on the argument that they spend longer time exposed to the foreign language and therefore, the learning is more beneficial to younger learners. Moreover, it is also generally assumed that younger learners attain more native-like pronunciation compared to older learners.

According to other researchers, being older is better for the rate of

acquisition. Late starters are much quicker and more efficient than younger learners. They progress faster in the initial stages of the morpho-syntactic development and they do better in tests in the short run. The reason is based on the argument that older learners are cognitively more mature, know how to learn, have

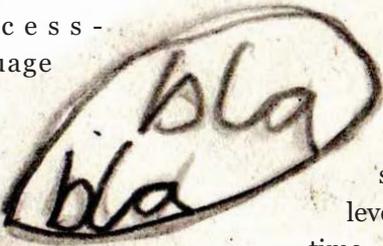
One child and two languages

The ability to learn more than one language is unique to humans and everyone can learn additional languages during their lifespan because there is no time limit to

previous linguistic knowledge; and they have more knowledge of the world.



Something happens during the first year of a child's life that facilitates the acquisition of one or more languages from birth, but that fades out for successive acquisition of additional languages. Today neuroscience, psychology and linguistics go hand in hand to study the process - ing of language at the phonetic, lexical and syntactic levels in real time, and there are tools, non invasive methods, that provide information (Electroencelegraphy; Event-related Potentials; Magnetoencefalography; functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, among others). What current neuro-linguistic research shows is that the brain is more sensitive to linguistic changes between birth and pre-adolescence, and that there are optimal periods for the acquisition of the different domains of the grammar of a language (phonology, semantics, syntax and morphology) which explain the reasons for starting early in spite of the fact that older learners can learn more rapidly and effectively using their more mature cognitive abilities; their socio-psychological development and the previously acquired linguistic knowledge.



hears from the around 800 basic sounds (600 consonants & 200 vowels) in the world language (in English around 40 sounds: 12 vowels & 24 consonants). While maturation opens the window for L1 sounds, it diminishes the ability to hear L2 sounds. (Kuhl, 2010; Meltzoff et al., 2009).

Settings and length of exposure

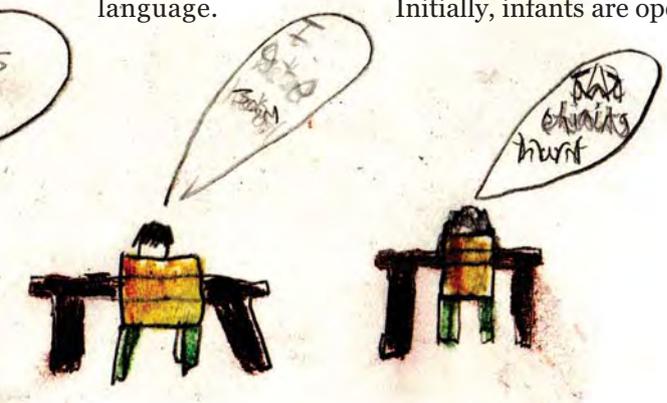
A child learns an L1 immersed in very highly contextualized language, interacting with different people and in different settings during approximately 16 hours daily; 100 hours weekly; and a total of 5.840 hours yearly. One condition to learn to speak is the presence of a human being to interact with. Children absorb a huge amount of information about language through social interaction, gestures, faces, actions and voices of people. Experiments carried out with infants exposed to a language over a TV set, video or audio exposure show that the children did not get any learning whatsoever. (O'Grady, 2005; Meltzoff et al., 2009; Kuhl, 2010).

The exposure time to EFL at school is usually limited to a few hours a week (2-3-5), which compared with the 100 hours a child is exposed to an L1, is not much to be able to achieve native-like command. At school "earlier is different" because children learn language with input from the teacher who, according to Moon (2000:14), is most of the times the main and the only linguistic model available for interaction:

"In a foreign language situation, children will depend almost entirely on the school environment for input, so you as their teacher, may be the only source of language, which makes your role in children's language learning very important"

The amount of time that young learners are in contact with a foreign language at school leads up implicitly to more or less input and output opportunities and to the quality and to the quantity of language. In naturalistic

At phonological level, for instance, the perception for the sounds of an L1 increases between 8 and 9 months of age, but at the same time, it declines for a non-native language. Initially, infants are open to all



possible languages and have the potential to speak any of the approximately 6,000 languages spoken throughout the world because children possess the ability to speak any of them. In phase 1, the infant's task is to figure out which sounds are in the language he

contexts, children have more exposure to the L2 than in bilingual schools, and in bilingual schools, children have more exposure to the L2 than in schools where English is taught as a subject matter a few hours a week.

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A LIVELY REPERTOIRE

by Janice Bland

In my teaching career I have taught EFL to all age groups from four to ninety-four, from highly playful to highly academic. Currently, as a teacher educator, I learn a lot from my student teachers, their enthusiasm and commitment. But which age group has taught me the most? Undoubtedly the youngest, as young children cannot disguise their feelings. I'd like to share some lively activities I have created, tried and tested with VYLs, that have always met with success.

A repertoire for VYLs

At the beginning it is utterly important that the language work involves all the senses, with a rich context of story, action, gestures and mime, facial expressions and inventive repetition. It must be fun so that, like mother tongue games for young children, it can be repeated again and again without becoming boring. Learning begins, like L1 acquisition, with 'collecting' through listening carefully. It becomes 'real' through Total Physical Response, and is recycled playfully, even theatrically, until the children can begin to use some of the language productively. A randomly varied input at this stage may puzzle and stress the children. Think of an attractive and joyous wallpaper or fabric pattern, it is beautiful and pleasing because of the repetition. Repetition is an enriching pattern to VYLs, enriching because they have the chance to internalise the new language chunks. Rituals and repetition give children the chance to discover language patterns over time. This chance is given to all native speakers when, in their early years, they hear language endlessly repeated in nursery rhymes, lullabies, fairy tales, playground games, proverbs and lists of don't, don't and don't.

Warming-up activity no.1

READY, STEADY, GO!

Up, down, turn around

Up, down, touch the ground

Up, down, snap, snap, snap

Up, down, clap, clap, clap

Up, down, hop, hop, hop

Up, down, STOP!

Commands are particularly useful at this preliminary stage of language learning. They are what the children are used to hearing,

reacting to, and giving.

E.g. Give me the pencil, please! Shut the window, please, it's cold. Show me your book.

Both pupils and teachers

use commands

to prompt a fast

response. The combination

of real message and real

response is ideal at

all stages of language

learning. My favourite

warming-up activity,

READY, STEADY, GO! works

like magic (and it's particular

lively magic has kept me

joining in- and young- over the

years). The children jump up,

then sit down on each up,

down command. The other commands

are equally easy to follow and join in (please

remember hop, hop, hop means hopping

on ONE leg). The best moment is the final

command STOP! My rule is: eye contact and concentra-

tion, we must all shout out stop (with a traffic controller

or policeman's gesture) at EXACTLY the same time.

If we don't succeed, we do the rhyme again. You can

imagine how fast the children learn it by heart!

Warming-up activity no.2

The action rhyme I present here contains one

extremely useful chunk: Do you feel

hot? This will serve the children as

a pattern when they want to form

their own questions in future years.

Four and five-year-olds never seem to

get tired of running on the spot, and

inevitably chorus NO! in answer to the

Stretch up tall.

Make yourself s

Run on the spot

Do you feel hot?

Jump up and do

All sit down.

FOR VERY YOUNG LEARNERS

small.
;
own.

teacher should stop miming, and encourage the children to listen carefully. If a child has understood and performs the correct action, the child is praised. The other students will notice and they learn from each other. More complex TPR commands can be:

Walk backwards!
Take a partner
and play leapfrog!

Your
foot hurts–
walk very,
very slowly
to a chair
and sit
down!

Or you can
get the
children to
act out
adjectives:
You are tired
teachers!
You are
hungry
hamsters!
You are
angry
elephants.

Here is a long
list of fun TPR,

question: Do you feel hot? After a little more running on the spot (to the count of 25 if the children are really boisterous), plus a little jumping up and down, the whole class is refreshed and ready for something quieter. Of course the girls can give the commands to try to exhaust the boys, and vice versa. Obedience is prompt; it is all part of the game.

If the teacher can keep a note of the vocabulary and chunks the children have met in their songs, games and rhymes, he or she can bring them into the classroom discourse as often as possible. E.g. Can you stretch up and shut the window, please Lea? Make yourself small, Brian. Nils wants to sit down next to you. Do you feel cold/ tired? Then run on the spot while everybody says the days of the week: Monday, Tuesday... It's time for sports, hurry up! Jump up everybody!

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE

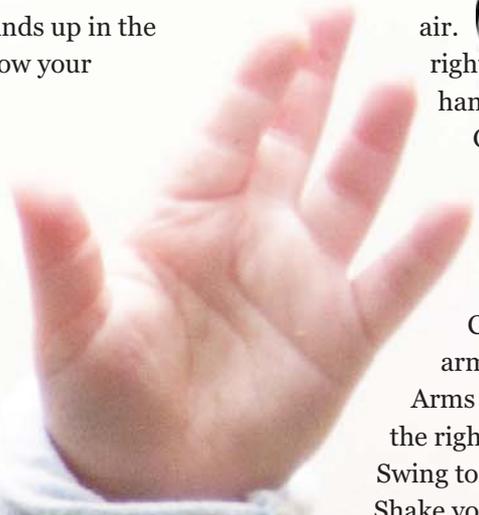
When I taught VYLs, I had a large area where the children could move around to the beat of a drum. One of our favourite activities was what I called Moving Statues. On the gentle beat of a drum, the children moved around. On a loud rap they froze– no moving and no sound– so that they would clearly hear the command that followed. This is an extremely lively game, so the command everybody freeze, represented by a sharp rap on the drum, must be understood and followed from the outset, to avoid chaos.

The commands can be so simple that three-year-olds will understand in the very first lesson, such as Take a partner. Over time, more complex language can be introduced. If the teacher mimes the action, the children can easily follow. As soon as possible, however, the

which can even take place in a classroom.
Please always introduce new commands
only very gradually.

- Count the tables.
- Run around your chair.
- Write your name in the air.
- Draw a circle in the air.
- Touch your toes.
- Hold your nose.
- Shout out your favourite colour.
- Shout out louder.
- Move like a giraffe.
- Climb like a cat.
- Hang like a bat.
- Dig like a dog.
- Jump like a frog.
- Fly like an eagle.
- Dive like a duck.
- Tap wood for good luck.
- Swap places with a partner.
- Swap back again.
- Jump up high.
- Jump higher than your partner.
- Run on the spot.
- Run faster than your partner.
- Sit on your partner's knee.
- Give your partner a pat on the back.
- Tickle your partner.
- Shake hands with your partner.
- Hold both hands with your partner.

Hands up in the
Show your



- air. right hand.
- Give five.
- Show your left hand.
- Give ten.
- Cross your arms like this.
- Arms up. Swing to the right.
- Swing to the left.
- Shake your hands in the air.
- Fly a plane.
- Steer a ship.
- The sea is wild.
- Now the sea is calm.
- Ride a bike.
- Ride on a bus.
- Ride on a camel.
- Gallop on a horse.
- Take a partner. Who is taller?
- Get in a car, both together.
- The taller one drives.
- She drives well.
- She drives badly!
- Get out the car.
- Jump up and down and turn around.
- Make a really funny sound.
- Stretch up tall.
- Make yourself small.
- Lay your head on the desk.
- And have a little rest.

ROLE RHYMES

At this young age children are ideal learners of authentic, idiomatic English as they have a great tolerance of ambiguity. Whereas older learners often find idiomatic expressions puzzling and therefore difficult, younger learners easily pick up chunks such as: It's no good! Let's see. Let me give you a hand!

***Help! It's no good! I don't know!
I'll never understand!
Don't worry! Come here! Let's see!
Let me give you a hand!***

Role-rhymes have emerged through my practical work with children, they make use of rhythm and rhyme as a memory anchor. They make use of drama with all its advantages: encouraging teamwork, building self-confidence in speaking, feeling empathy, experiencing life-like language in a context, training intonation, articulation and emphasis. Children expect to rehearse role-rhymes; therefore repetition is an integral part of a motivating activity.

The first step in learning a role-rhyme is intensive listening. The next step is echoing round the class. The short sentences, e.g. Help! / It's no good! / I don't know! ensure a rapid succession of turns. This role-rhyme has eight sentences. Already after three or four repetitions of the rhyme, every child in the class has spoken a line. The third step, which can wait to the next lesson (never spend too long on one activity in each lesson, however successful: 'variety is the spice of life'), is to divide the class into two groups and to speak the rhyme with two voices in chorus. The children have fun in trying to keep up a rhythmical tempo. This takes practice, and I always help along the rhythm with claves or a small drum. At the same time, almost without noticing it, the children are repeating and learning the lines by heart. The last stage is pair work. The children rehearse in pairs, and perform in front of the class when they are ready.

Learning the meaning of the role-rhymes can take place in steps, approaching and consolidating the meaning gradually. This is how children learn meaning in their mother tongue: first by guessing, then by approximating a meaning that will later be more clearly defined.

Role-rhyme no.2

Our young learners are at a very creative stage in their lives. At this age children are open to puzzles, riddles and poetic language, that's what makes learning fun. If this is encouraged, will become adventurous and creative language learners. Moreover, there is no difficulty between: It's my turn. / Here you are. / Let's have a go! With sufficient repetition, each of these will become second nature.

Can you do it?
I don't know.
Is it easy?
I hope so.
Right. Let's try.
Let's have a go!

Seven Scary Monsters
My monster is monstrous.
My monster is mad.
My monster is merry.
My monster is sad.
My monster is friendly.
My monster is cool.
My monster is scary,
And sleepy at school.

Other useful chunks in these two role-rhymes, apart from the helpful recycling of chunks like Can you do it? / Let's see! are the negatives: I don't know. / Don't worry! These will introduce the children to new opportunities for communication. While working on the role-rhymes, the teacher can concentrate on using lots of negatives, to help the children 'collect' this chunk, too. Look at the picture, Marie. Don't look out of the window! Don't run so fast! I don't want to stop, what about you? Finally, thematically, the role-rhymes fit very well into pre-school life as well as school life. The emphasis is on having a go, being brave and helping each other.

Role-rhyme no.3

This role-rhyme is a fun way to help VYLs use versatile adjectives. While learning through drama and make-believe, role-rhymes are fun for the children to act out and are far easier to memorize than prose. There is concentrated emotional involvement, so that learning by heart never becomes mechanical rote learning. The photo below shows how much fun we have had in playing monsters.



REFRAIN GAMES

Refrain games are often chasing games with a rhyme as refrain— these are sure to be a great success— but impossible to play in the classroom! The refrain games presented here are my own adaptations of authentic playground games, such as the well-known:

Please Mr. Crocodile, may I cross the water to see your ugly daughter?
 Yes, if you're dressed in pink!
 (the child playing Mr. Crocodile chooses a colour)

Nursery rhymes and playground rhymes are lively manifestations of children's culture, they appeal with their vigorous rhythms and rhymes. Nursery rhymes

deliver a sense of harmony and security— where young children often sit or bounce on a parent or grandparent's lap to recite together the words they know so well. Teachers recognize their value as vibrant texts. Strong in rhythm, alliteration and rhyme, they are also a fun preparation for literacy and poetry.

Playground rhymes are group games played outside the home, and adults are not invited to join in these authentic singing, skipping, clapping and ball-bouncing refrain games. Children enjoy these rhymes because they are fun (they are real games), they are sociable (they are played in groups), exciting (many games involve children being chosen in turn to star in the centre of a ring), naughty (sometimes with language not intended for adults ears) and physical (chasing, thumping, tapping and tug-of-war are common elements).

Refrain games, as an adaptation of playground rhymes, are often theatrical in nature— play and make-believe going together to pilot a way through childhood. Therefore they can fit very well into a pre-school and primary school curriculum. The first two are eminently suitable for VYLs who need a great deal of movement.

Refrain game no.1

The children chant together, taking four small steps towards Mr Bear as they ask the question. They can continue to approach him as long as he answers fewer than twenty. But when he answers their question with 20! they must run back to safety, or get caught and become the next Mr. Bear.

**How many
teeth have
you got,
Mr Bear?**

Refrain game no.2

Again, the children chant together, taking four steps towards Mrs Crocodile as they ask the question. Mrs Crocodile answers 1,2,3, I want you for tea! and then names a child. That child will be chased, but can be 'saved' if at least two other children are fast enough to encircle the child by holding hands around him or her.

**Please Mrs Crocodile,
please don't eat me for tea!
1,2,3, I want you for tea!**

Refrain game no.3

For this game the children chant Please Robin Hood, you are so brave and good! Will you let us pass through your deep green wood? Robin Hood lets all the children pass who are wearing the colour he names. Then the other children run into the wood. If Robin Hood catches a girl or a boy, they join his band of Merry Men and help Robin Hood catch as many children as they can in the next round.

Refrain game no.4

**I'm riding my big bicycle,
Zoom, zooming up and down.
Who's wearing green can come
with me,
I'll take you into town.
I'm wearing green. Come and see!
Come and see!
Yes, it's plain to see. Come with
me! Come with me!
It isn't plain to see. No, you can't
come with me!**

The above is a game for when the children can cope happily with longer chunks. The children sit in a circle, and a 'cyclist' is chosen to rotate around the circle. The children chant the first four lines together, but must pause after Who's wearing... to allow the cyclist time to choose a colour. Those children who can find anything e.g. green on their clothes put their hands up and chant I'm wearing green. Come and see! Come and see! The cyclist selects one or two children and inspects their clothes. If the colour is really visible, he or she answers: Yes, it's plain to see. Come with me! Come with me! If, and this often happens, the children have been too inventive in finding the colour, the cyclist chants It isn't plain to see. No, you can't come with me! The cyclist continues rotating the circle, with the chosen children following, their arms around the waist of the child ahead.

With this collection of lively activities, I have tried to show a way of structuring pre-school English through the use of repertoire elements. Recycling of language should be integral to the teaching. While the nature of the language should be authentic and memorable, the language chunks can aid consolidation with a shallow progression.

The activities described have been taken from:

Bland, Janice (2009, 2nd ed.) Mini-Plays, Role-Rhymes and other Stepping Stones to English. Book 1: At School. Book 2: Legends and Myths. Book 3: Favourite Festivals, illus. Elisabeth Lottermoser. California: Players Press.

Janice Bland is a children's literature specialist in the English Department at Hildesheim University, Germany. Janice is co-editor of the peer-reviewed online journal Children's Literature in English Language Education: www.clejournal.org

I was recently invited to hold workshops on the “FunSongs Method” at two national ELT conferences: NAFLE in Beijing, China in November 2011 and IndiaCALL in Gujarat, India, in January 2012. This piece sets out to describe my impressions of the two countries from an ELT perspective after attending the conferences and talking to leading educationalists and teachers at the two events.



Class of Indian Primary Children in Anand learning “Time to Play”

First some background. English has been spoken in India for centuries; indeed it continues to be recognized as an official language in most states and in the High Court. This contrasts with China where until 2000, hardly anyone knew English. However over the last few years both demographic giants have experienced growing demand for the language. Families and education authorities

the commercial success of pedagogically dubious shouting-based courses such as Li Yuan’s Crazy English. The compulsory introduction of English into state primary schools in 2001 continues to drive the need for extensive teacher training. At the NAFLE event I heard from David Huxtable of the British Council in Beijing of a plethora of projects and partnerships between local education authorities and the British Council as well as ongoing projects with several US and UK universities.

In 2009 David Graddol remarked: “China may already have more people who speak English than India. The rate of improvement in the English language skills of the Indian population is at present too slow.”

I did sense at the IndiaCALL conference, though, that since the publication of Graddol’s wake-up call “English India Next”, education authorities across the subcontinent have begun to take a more pro-active approach. Many at the national conference seemed to be involved in teacher training through universities and teacher training institutes. Michael Connolly of the British Council in New Delhi and Dharmendra Sheth of the Indian teachers’ association ELTAI both told me of a series of training courses planned for remoter areas as well as the big urban centres. One strong impression I got was that private companies offering English language services seemed to be more organized and ubiquitous in China than in India.

REFLECTIONS ON INDIA

SOME REFLECTIONS BY CHARLES GOOD

now accept that a working knowledge of ELF is part of a global 21st-century literacy. It is worth remembering that although English is spoken and understood in India by millions of educated people, the latter represent a negligible percentage of the total population of nearly 1.2 billion. China’s population now numbers over 1.3 billion.

In China increasing interest in English has resulted in an explosion of private language schools in the major cities with organizations such as New Orient and

The 17th Annual NAFLE conference was held in the massive Hot Springs Leisure Center hotel complex on the outskirts of Beijing from 4th to 6th November 2011. I had heard much about China and its enthusiasm for ELT. I was not disappointed.

At 9.30 on the first day of the three-day conference, I came down to find the reception area thronged with

THE NAFLE CONFERENCE IN BEIJING



Chinese teenagers learning a FunSongs action song in Foshun

excited teachers queuing up to register for the conference. I was told there were English teachers from all over China flocking to the event, several thousand in all.

One aspect of NAFLE that struck me was the open indifference to learning other foreign languages. There were no seminars for China Spanish or Russian teachers for instance despite the conference organization's name: The National Association of Foreign Language Education. I heard no other languages except for Mandarin and English while I was there— so different to cosmopolitan Riga where I live.

Sandra Mackay from San Francisco University's plenary on linguistic aspects of globalization was interesting. She reminded us that although English comes fourth

Back at Hot Springs I saw a showcase lesson: an entire class of primary school children in uniforms were brought in from a local Beijing school and seated at desks on a raised platform in front of several hundred assembled teachers. The aim was to demonstrate best practices in communicative teaching. Well organized, professional and effective.

My own workshop attracted quite a crowd and everybody took part in the action songs I presented: "Time to Play", "The Monster March" and "I Love Christmas". I had been hesitant about including the Christmas action song but after conversations with several Chinese teachers I was told Christmas is now celebrated in China. The action songs and follow-up activities went down well and there are now a number of schools using the materials.

IndiaCALL January 2012

The event, designed to highlight the growing use of ICT in English teaching, was organized by IndiaCALL led by Kalyan Chattopadhyay and LTSIG led by Graham Stanley of the British Council, Barcelona (who unfortunately could not attend). It took place at the A.D. Patel Institute of Technology, New Vallabh Vidyanagar in Gujarat on 7th and 8th of January 2012. ELTAI, the Indian Association of English teachers, IATEFL and British Council India joined hands with IndiaCALL to make it a success. This was technically an ambitious project as the area is prone to power-cuts. Despite the power going



place in the world's league of most spoken languages, it stands far ahead of all others as the second language of choice in schools. This was nothing new but she presented the facts in a captivating way. Unfortunately I missed Henry Widdowson's talk as it was either that or a trip to the Great Wall...

down three times during the live video link with Nicky Hockly in Barcelona, most plenaries and workshops were successfully streamed live on line including my own which you can view on the WIZIQ link on the FunSongs Education blog.

...continued on page 33

Contribute to our Wider Membership Individual Scheme

Launched at the Aberdeen conference, this initiative is the next phase of our Wider Membership Scheme. It is designed to enable individual IATEFL members to sponsor memberships for colleagues in the less economically developed world where there are no local TAs who are Associates of IATEFL.

Currently, we are focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa. A number of members of the profession have agreed to be scheme founders and have started a fund which we will use to match members' donations. So by donating £25 you can enable a teacher from Africa to become a full IATEFL member. However smaller donations are also very welcome. Please contact Glenda Smart glenda@iatefl.org if you would like to donate or visit the donations section on our website at <https://secure.iatefl.org/onl/donate.php>

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8 April 2013

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9 – 12 April 2013

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Upcoming IATEFL SIG Events

Upcoming IATEFL SIG Events

12 May 2012	IATEFL ResearchSIG	Graz, Austria
1 – 2 June 2012	IATEFL LASIG	Graz, Austria
16 June 2012	IATEFL BESIG & TESOL France	Paris, France
16 – 18 November 2012	IATEFL BESIG	Stuttgart, Germany

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Getting Parents Involved: READING WITH YOUR CHILD

by **Renée Sawazaki**

e-books and reading programs online (*Mee Genius* and *Raz-Kids* are my two favorites.), I was able to assist them, and many are still reading at home, up to five years after starting this program.

It is highly unlikely that a foreign language program can emulate completely the Wordland approach to family involvement, but they can creatively adopt a family support component to their current practices through newsletters, blogs or websites, or training sessions. Most parents want to be involved in their children's education, but do not know how. With a little support, they can engage with their children, and possibly gain new skills themselves.

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Using Wikis to Engage the Parents of Young Learners

by Shelly Sanchez Terrell

Factors concerning early EFL learning at school

by Dr. Teresa Fleta ...continued

Looking into classroom research

environment for children. Engaged parents make decisions and have a say in what happens in the classroom and with the curriculum, including how we integrate technology.

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Shelly Sanchez Terrell is a teacher trainer, author, and international speaker. She is the host of American TESOL's Free Friday Webinars and co-ordinates the acclaimed projects, ELTChat and the ELTON nominated Virtual Round Table language and technology conference. Email: ShellyTerrell@gmail.com



Classrooms are excellent laboratories to investigate the nature of the early L2 grammars, and classroom research, although scarce, shows the path that learners take to learn EFL, and results have an impact on methodology. My studies carried out in the British Council School of Madrid (BCS) with 3 to 9 years of age learners show evidence for the existence of EFL developmental stages. The BCS is a supportive language setting that offers bilingual education to 3 to 18 years of age students and EFL is not taught as a subject matter, but embedded in the school work across the curriculum, from day one, "from start to finish", and everywhere at school (classroom, playground, corridors, or dining-room).

The major findings of the longitudinal, cross-sectional and cross-linguistic classroom research studies carried out at the BCS can be extrapolated to other formal contexts because at an early age, all children learn languages by listening and by speaking. At the grammatical level, the longitudinal study shows evidence for the existence of developmental stages: one word stage, two words stage; multiword stage; simple sentences before complex sentences; syntax before morphology is accurate. Cross-sectionally, the acquisition of interrogatives is developed in a piecemeal fashion—step by step. Cross-linguistically, children go through idiosyncratic stages (is-insertion), similar to those of native and non-native child learners in other learning contexts, which show that there are common intermediate grammars among child learners of English. One of the main differences between the processes in naturalistic environments (Haznedar, 2003) and in the BCS (Fleta 1999, 2001, 2003) is that, in terms of the acquisition rate, children need longer time to acquire the EFL grammar rules in the bilingual setting. A close look at the discourse during classroom conversational interactions in the BCS shows that the most used techniques by teachers were: recasting or reformulation; expansion; explicit correction; elicitation; repetition and wait time.

At an early age, children use implicit language learning strategies that are common among learners of around the same age and they proceed through a similar route than

children in naturalistic contexts. As Genesee (1993:77) explains, it seems logical to think that at 3,4,5 or 6 years of age, children approach additional languages in an unconscious and natural manner: “Bilingual development may differ from monolingual development in superficial ways, but fundamentally they are the same. In particular bilingual children use the same inquisitional strategies as monolingual children”. It seems that at an early age, the brain uses the same psycholinguistic mechanisms to process language in different settings, among others: input comprehension; questions; repetition; formulaic language; code-mixing and translation.

Mapping the route

Starting EFL learning early at school is a slow process that needs huge amounts of exposure to the target language and teachers who are the only source of English need to promote interaction and to provide children with opportunities to hear and to use the language because as Ellis (2000:209) points out: “the learning arises not through interaction but in interaction”. Interaction should be at the heart of all teaching through: daily routines, transitional times, circle time, singing time, play time, story time, choral speaking or retelling.

Is EFL development at school affected by age, time of exposure, learning context, the quality and quantity of input and output? Studies and the evidence regarding those factors are conclusive (Muñoz & Singleton, 2011) and Hatch (1983: 197) states it very clearly: “I don’t make the decision on the basis of physiological age. Rather I think the more exposure to language learning the better. And the more practice the better. The more interaction in the language the better.”

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...continued

Key speakers were Richard Badger of Leeds University (Twitter in ELT), and Pete Sharma of the Learning



Sugata Mitra at IndiaCALL

Technologies SIG who told us: “Technology is moving so fast it’s impossible to make predictions” and Sugata Mitra, the famous “hole-in-the-wall” educationalist from India. Unfortunately Sugata Mitra could not stay and was present only to deliver his plenary and then rush off to catch a plane to Mumbai. It was fascinating to see him live after watching his TED talks. He again reiterated his conviction that given the right tools and incentive, children will learn to do what they want to learn to do and discussed the radical implications of this for the education system.

As well as holding my own workshop I was offered the chance to work with a class of primary school children in a local primary school. I also held a workshop for 120 undergraduate engineering students during which I taught them the action song “Water is Everything” which contains a chemical formula.

Final Thoughts

I left both China and India with a lasting impression of how helpful and friendly the people (and not just those at the conferences) I met were. This, coupled with a strong sense of enthusiasm, curiosity and



Charles Goodger’s action song workshop

energy that is often lacking in Europe, reaffirmed my conviction that ELF can play a key social role in bringing people and ideas together. As the world grows smaller and its population and climate change, people from different cultures and backgrounds will need to communicate well and effectively. These educational conferences are a step along the way.

Charles Goodger, the founder of FunSongs Education, speaks six languages (four fluently) and plays three musical instruments. He is an English teacher, entertainer, text-book writer, and since 2011 a teacher trainer for Pilgrims in Canterbury. Charles also teaches English at Bologna University. He has held workshops for teachers in China, India, Lithuania, Russia, Latvia, France, Germany, Italy, Estonia, Spain and England. Find out more about Charles’ work at FunSongs Education website shortlisted for an ELTons award in 2011.

Supporting the development of EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

by Sandie Mourão ...continued

imaginary person when they say “Bless you!”, and use different actions for each line.

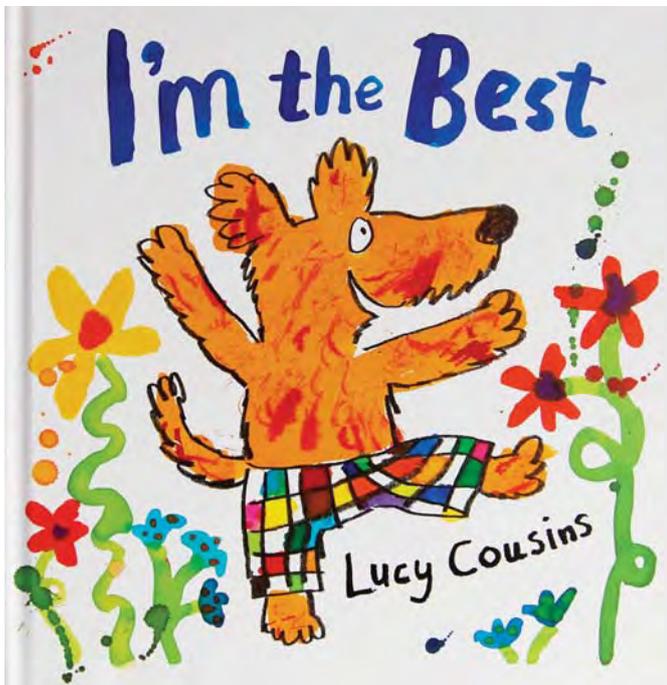
A Polite Song

We say ‘Bless you!’ when we sneeze,
And, if we want something say, ‘Please!’
When we can’t hear we say, ‘Pardon!’
And, ‘Thank you!’ when we receive.
Bless you! Please! Pardon! Thank you!
Bless you! Please! Pardon! Thank you!

“Pardon”, said the giraffe is another title by Colin West, with his characteristic humour and which helps children pick up the expression “Pardon”.

Handling relationships

Another of my favourite picturebooks is *I’m the Best* by Lucy Cousins, about Dog, who thinks he’s the best. Dog has four friends who he loves. Unfortunately, it doesn’t



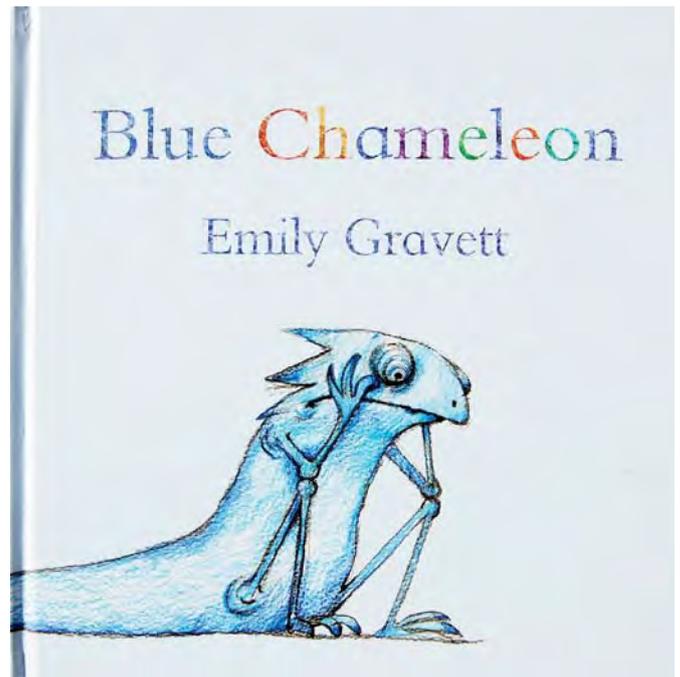
© copyright Walker Books

stop him telling them he can do things better than they can. It turns out that they teach him a lesson, in a kind way, and he realises that it’s important for everyone to have that ‘I’m the best’ feeling! Once again it is the illustrations that show how each character feels, so after sharing this picturebook it is important to go back to particular illustrations and ask the children what they think the characters are feeling and how

they know this. Talk about the way Dog behaved and ask what they think about his behaviour. A nice follow up activity is for children to tell everyone what they are good at. You could create an “I’m the best!” display with children’s drawings and photos. Don’t forget to ensure that children are encouraged to feel proud of what they are best at, no matter what it is.

Self motivation

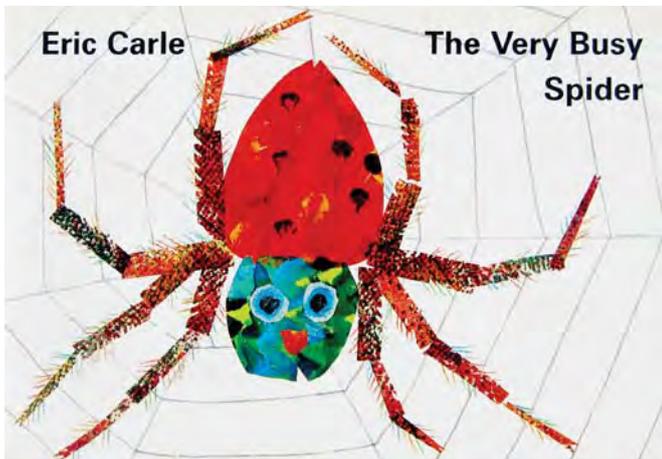
You could say that *Blue Chameleon* by Emily Gravett is a book about colours, but it’s far more than that. Our colour-changing chameleon tries again and again to make friends with different objects and though he has



© copyright Macmillan Children’s Books

his bad moments (like when he turns as grey as the rock he sits upon), he does eventually find a friend and a multi-coloured one at that! Chameleon’s facial expressions and his different postures all show enthusiasm and persistence, he doesn’t want to give up. Then, when he does, all the children you share this picturebook with will go “Ahh”, loudly and empathetically; then cheer when a friend does eventually appear. Help the children you are sharing this book with recognize his persistence and talk about not giving up.

The very busy spider (Carle) is another title, which shows persistence in reaching goals. A tiny spider is blown onto a farmyard fence, where she begins to make her web. All day long the animals ask her to come and play, but she keeps going determined to finish her task. At the end of the day she has a beautiful web, catches a fly and goes to sleep. This picturebook is typical of Eric Carle’s illustrations and the spider’s web shines and is made in relief, so children love touching it. Don’t forget



© copyright Penguin Puffin Books

to talk to them about how the spider managed to complete her web and the importance of not being distracted and not giving up.

Concluding thoughts

Many of the activities we use in our early years classrooms can naturally incorporate an EI slant, but are we taking advantage of them? Once children know emotion words in the L2 we should be encouraging them to use these words daily, supporting development in the different EI strands. Simple songs and games, verbalising concern for others as well as discussion around picturebook illustrations can easily be incorporated into circle time and successfully support the development of children's emotional intelligence.

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Web links

See [<http://picturebooksinelt.blogspot.com/2010/10/books-for-giggling.html>] for other picturebooks by Colin West

See [<http://picturebooksinelt.blogspot.com/2011/02/in-in-love-with-me.html>] for a detailed description of *I'm the best!*

See [<http://picturebooksinelt.blogspot.com/2011/01/emily-gravetts-chameleon.html>] for a detailed description of *Blue chameleon*

Download the "When I'm happy" song from: [<http://sandiemourao.eu/pages/songlyrics>]

Download emotion related resources:

An emotion spinner – [<http://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/class-management/sen/emotion-spinners/>]

Emotion fans – [<http://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/class-management/sen/emotion-fans/>]

Emotion dice – [<http://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/popular-resources/emotions-dice-editable-text/>]

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Blog: <http://picturebooksinelt.blogspot.pt/>



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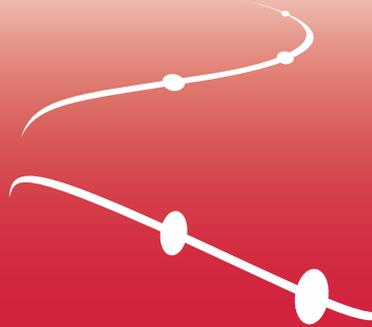
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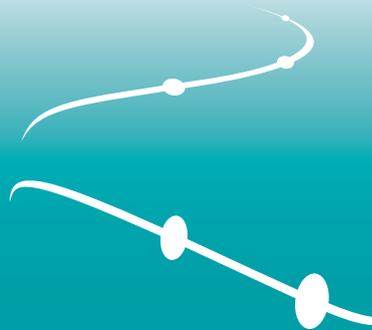
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