

## PROVIDING TEACHING RESOURCES FOR YOUNG LEARNER CLASSES: BEST PRACTICES IN EFL CONTEXT

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### Abstract

The availability of teaching resources is one of important factors to create successful lessons in teaching English to young learners (TEYL). Teachers can use flashcards, toys, songs, rhymes, books, audio visual materials, digital recourses and others to support teaching and learning process. Ready-made materials are available in stores, however they are usually expensive. The aim of this article is to share one of the best practices in providing resources for young learners in learning English. In the academic year of 2018, 40 students of English Department of IKIP Siliwangi took English for Young Learners (EYL) course for two credit hours. This is the second subject which is related to teaching young learners after they learned TEYL subjects as the perquisite subject in the previous year. In this course, students re-learned the concept of TEYL and the concepts how to provide teaching materials and resources for TEYL classes. At the end of the course, they should show their projects and demonstrate how to use them in TEYL. The findings reveal that students' are very creative in designing resources for TEYL classes. This ability is very crucial in order to create child-friendly pedagogy in EYL classrooms.

**Keywords:** *TEYL, Best Practices, Teaching Resources*

### INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, communication in English is unavoidable. People from different regions of the world meet and communicate through English. Therefore, the ability to communicate in English is essential for everyone who wants

to survive in communication, including young learners. TV programs, internet websites, games, gadgets, and so on are usually in English. Therefore, many parents start to assign their children to learn English as early as possible, for example they send

their children to international schools, bilingual schools or even the send their children to English course as an additional lesson. Indonesian government also has set English as one of subjects in elementary school level.

However, teaching English to young learners is not easy. Teaching young learners is totally different from teaching English to adults. Based on students' characteristics, young learners need concrete object to study. They cannot catch up abstract thing easily. Consequently, English teachers of young learner classes must be able to equip the class with resources which are interesting and user-friendly so they will be able to help students to learn English better. This paper deals with describing the best practice on how to provide resources for young learners in EFL classes. In the academic year of 2018, 40 (forty) students of English Department of IKIP Siliwangi took English for Young Learners (EYL) course for two credit hours. This is the second subject related to teaching young learners after they learned TEYL subjects as the prerequisite subject in the previous year. In this course, students re-learned the concept of TEYL and the concepts how to provide teaching materials and resources for TEYL classes. At the end of the course, they should show their projects and demonstrate how to use them in TEYL.

### **Characteristics of Young Learners**

Young learners are unique. They have different characteristics from adult learners. That is why English teachers of young learners need to have different strategies when they teach young learner classes. Linse & Nunan (2005), Musthafa (2000) and Scott (2001) elaborate specific characteristics and cognitive development of young learners.

The first characteristic of young learners is they love hands on activities. Young learners generally learn by doing specific activities. They learn something by

doing. In other words, they learn something through hands on experience and through manipulation of object in their surroundings. In addition, young learners' understanding about something comes from their physical experiences by seeing, hearing, touching and interacting, not from explanation (Harmer, 2007). Consequently, English teacher of young learners need to avoid teaching abstract concepts. Brown (2001) also adds that when teaching young learners, language should be context-embedded. In other words, abstract concept should be helped by explaining the context, or by using teaching aids. Brown (2001) also claims that language in abstract, isolated, unconnected sentences will be much less readily tolerated by children's mind.

The second unique characteristics of young learners is that they need to have their five sense stimulated. Learning activities should help children to internalize the language they learn. (Linse & Nunan, 2005; Musthafa, 2000; and Scott & Ytreberg, 2001)

### **Young Learners' Intellectual Development**

All children go through stages of intellectual development (Piaget, 1964). He elaborates four identifiable intellectual developments of young learners. They are: 1) Period of Sensorimotor. This is a period from birth to approximately two years old. In this period, young learners tend to explore the world physically and grasp things; 2) Period of Pre-operational Thought. This period is between two to seven years old. In this period, young learners learn language and vocabulary for the first time, and also learn about good and bad. 3) Period of Concrete Operations. This period is between seven to eleven years old. Young learners usually need references to familiar actions, objects, and observable properties; and 4) Period of Formal Operations. This is between eleven to fifteen years, when young learners can

reason with concepts, relationships, abstract properties, axioms, and theories. All of the stages of young learners intellectual development should become consideration for English teachers so they will conduct learning process effectively and they will choose or create materials which fit young learners' period of development.

### **Teaching English to Young Learners**

Teaching English to young learners has become very popular today. Critical Period Hypothesis is one of the reasons. This period refers to the ability to acquire language biologically linked to age (Vanhove, 2013). Based on this hypothesis, there is a period of growth from early childhood to adolescence, in which full native competence is possible when learning a language. Many parents send their children to international schools which use English for communication. Besides, many parents also send their children to take English course as additional lessons. They believe that "younger is better" when learning language, since young learners learn more quickly and efficiently than adults.

The other reason of popularity is that English has been a lingua franca nowadays. In other words, English is one language which is used for communication between people whose languages are different (Harmer, 2007) Parents also want their children to learn English as early as possible so that they will be able to benefit from English as an important part of their academic in the future. Seeing children with good ability in English give many benefits.

### **Benefits of Learning English**

Many young learners start learning English at very early ages. Pinter (2006), Paradis (2004) and Johnstone (2009) elaborate a number of reasons why children can benefit from learning a foreign language, they are:

1. Young learners acquire languages with greater ease, especially the sound system, and develop implicit competence since they can rely on natural acquisition processes.
2. Young learners are undeniably better at acquiring the sounds and rhythms of the target language.
3. Young learners have lower affective filter than older learners do and they are also more intuitive and less anxious.
4. Young learners have more time to learn the target language and larger capacity to gain awareness about the potential intercultural identity.

### **METHOD**

In this research, a qualitative design with descriptive research method was employed. This method was chosen due to the research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Knupfer & McLellan, 1996). Qualitative research methods are used to examine questions that can best be answered by verbally describing how participants in a study perceive and interpret various aspect of their environment (Crowl, 1996). Qualitative research provides opportunities for researchers to study social phenomena in relation to people's everyday lives. Through a process of data interpretation, qualitative research provides information about what, why and how a phenomenon in a society happens. This is line with what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) say that qualitative research also involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. Yin (1994) also elaborates that employing qualitative method provides researchers with opportunities to represent the views and perspectives of the people/participants in a study.

### **RESEARCH SITE**

This research was conducted in English Education Program of IKIP Siliwangi. As has been mentioned earlier, in the academic year of 2018, 40 students of English Department of IKIP Siliwangi took English for Young Learners (EYL) course for two credit hours. This is the second subject related to teaching young learners after they learned TEYL subjects as the prerequisite subject in the previous year. In this course, students re-learned the concept of TEYL and the concepts how to provide teaching materials and resources for TEYL classes. At the end of the course, they should show their projects and demonstrate how to use them in TEYL.

### Participants

**Table 1.** Profiles of Participants

<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>AGE</b>
Female	25	17-22 years old
Male	15	17-20 years old
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	

### Procedure

The research was conducted in two steps. The first step was teaching learning process of English for Young Learners (EYL) course which lasted for six weeks (600 minutes). In this step, students re-learn about the concepts of teaching English to young learners. They discussed 6 (six) topics, namely: 1) characteristics of young learners and children's intellectual development, 2) teaching English to young learner in Indonesian context: potentials and challenges, 3) Teaching speaking and listening to young learners, 4) Teaching reading and writing to young learners, 5) Teaching English through songs and stories, 6) Designing materials for young

There were 40 students were involved in this research. The age is between 17-22 years old. They took English for Young Learners (EYL) course for two credit hours. This is the second subject related to teaching young learners after they learned TEYL subjects as the prerequisite subject in the previous year. In this course, students re-learned the concept of TEYL and the concepts how to provide teaching materials and resources for TEYL classes. At the end of the course, they should show their projects and demonstrate how to use them in TEYL. All of them joined English for Young Learners (EYL) for 14 (fourteen) weeks (1400 minutes). The detail percentage of participant is summarized in the figure below.

learners. All of these topics have been studied when students were the previous semester in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) course for 2 credit hours. TEYL course is a prerequisite course before students take EYL course.

Then, after the six meetings were over, the students were put in groups. Then they should make certain teaching resources based on the topics given. The topics are about: numbers, colors, family, fruits, vegetables, shapes, transportation, etc. In week 14, students present their teaching resources and demonstrate how to use it. The procedure of the research can be seen clearly in table 2 below:

**Table 2:** Procedure of Research

MEETING	TOPICS	STAGE
1	Characteristics of young learners and children's intellectual development	Stage 1: Learning the Concepts of TEYL
2	teaching English to young learner in Indonesian context: potentials and challenges	
3	Teaching listening to young learners	
4	Teaching speaking to young learners	
5	Teaching reading to young learners	
6	Teaching writing to young learners	
7	Teaching grammar to young learners	
8	Teaching English through songs	
9	Teaching English through stories	
10	Teaching English through games	
11	Designing materials for young learners	Stage 2: Doing the Project
12	Designing materials for young learners	
13	Designing materials for young learners	
14	Project Presentation (Group 1-4)	Stage 3: Presenting the Project
15	Project Presentation (Group 5-8)	
16	Project Presentation (Group 9-10)	

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Principles of Providing Resources for Young Learners

Teaching English to young learners is different from adult. Therefore, English teachers of young learners have to comprehend and apply theories about teaching young learners. Besides, the English teachers are not only required to be able to teach well but also to be able to design materials so that they can apply approaches, methods, and techniques of teaching-learning English appropriately.

To provide resources for young learners in EFL classes, teachers need to consider children's needs, wants, and lacks. These considerations are usually known as Need Analysis stage. By doing Need Analysis stage, English teachers will be able to make a number of decisions regarding the materials and resources for young learners which are suitable with the students' characteristics, strategies, strength and motivation (Burden and Byrd, 1999).




Hutchinson and Waters (1987) describe the steps in Need Analysis stage, which cover several questions started with Who, Why, How, Where and When. Teachers need to consider who the students are and their characteristics, such as: age, sex, nationality, social background, and also interest. This is in line with what McNeil and Wiles (1990) claim that a good beginning for teachers is to find out some general information about their students, for example ethnic, family background, family status, parents' level of schooling, religious orientation, etc. The information about students' background in this stage will help teachers to determine specific and appropriate materials based on students' characteristics. This information will also help teachers to determine what approaches, methods, and techniques to be used in the teaching-learning process (How).




The next stage in Need Analysis is the question about what purposes the young learners in learning English (Why). This step is very important for the teachers to make young learners' purposes and the learning materials fit each other. As Corder

(1973) says that the best result in language teaching is likely to be achieved when the linguistic content of the course most closely approximates to the learner's functional needs.




**Resources for Teaching Young Learners Made by Participants**




<p>1</p>		<p>This pop up can be used for teaching about alphabets</p>
<p>2</p>		<p>This puppet can be used for teaching about animals</p>
<p>3</p>		<p>This media can be used for teaching about parts of a house</p>

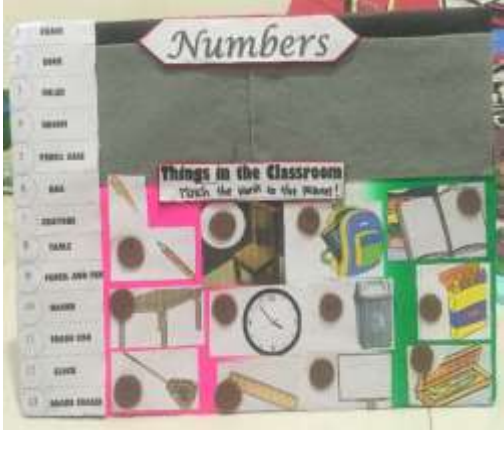


4		<p>This fishing rod can be used for teaching about colors</p>
5		<p>This pop up can be used for teaching about food and drink</p>
6		<p>This media can be used for teaching about vegetables</p>

7		<p>This play dart can be used for teaching about profession</p>
8		<p>This snakes and ladders can be used for teaching about vegetables</p>
9		<p>This puppet show can be used for teaching about family</p>



10		<p>This puzzle can be used for teaching about food and drink</p>
11		<p>This story book can be used for teaching about transportation</p>
12		<p>This media can be used for teaching about shapes</p>

13		<p>This snakes and ladders can be used for teaching about fruits</p>
14		<p>This family tree can be used for teaching about family</p>
15		<p>This pop up book can be used for teaching about parts of body</p>

<p>16</p>		<p>This media can be used for teaching about numbers</p>
<p>17</p>		<p>This puppet show can be used for teaching about profession</p>
<p>18</p>		<p>This pop up book can be used for teaching about clothes</p>

**CONCLUSION**

Teaching resources is one of important factors in teaching learning process. In English for Young Learner (EYL) class, students learned the concept of young learners characteristics, cognitive developments, as well as things to consider when designing materials and providing resources for young learners. Need Analysis is a step that must be done by teachers of young learners, so the materials

and resources provided for the young learners will be child-friendly, which fit their characteristics.

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