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# The Development of Two Units for *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*: "Working Successfully with Young Learners" and "Working Successfully with Very Young Learners"

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The Development of Two Units for *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching  
English to Speakers of Other Languages*: “Working Successfully  
with Young English Language Learners” and “Working  
Successfully with Very Young English  
Language Learners”

Heidi Healy

A selected project submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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## ABSTRACT

The Development of Two Units for *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners” and “Working Successfully with Very Young English Language Learners”

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Many thousands of people with varying degrees of preparation teach English as a second or foreign language to many millions of people around the world. Some of these teachers are novice, volunteer teachers, who have not received any professional-level training. These novice teachers help to meet the demand for English teachers by often teaching for little remuneration or in non-ideal teaching conditions. These teachers can benefit from receiving training in how to teach English as a foreign language. *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (BTRTESOL) is a program that is being created to provide training to these novice teachers on a wide variety of topics, including teaching various age groups. Research has shown that children learn language differently from adults. It is therefore important that teachers be aware of the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children and the teaching techniques that help children acquire language. Additionally, important differences exist between very young children (aged 3-7) and children (aged 7-11) that affect how they learn and how they should be taught. In addition to novice, untrained teachers, people who have been trained to teach English to adults may work abroad teaching English to children. They can benefit from additional training in educating children. In sum, training in the distinctive language learning needs of children will help all these teachers and their students to be more successful.

Keywords: teaching children, young learners, very young learners, TESOL, training

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter will provide an introduction to this project including an overview of the BTRTESOL program and its delimitations, an introduction to my units with a discussion of the rationale behind them including information about the growing number of children around the world who are learning English as a foreign language, and an explanation of my personal background and interest in the project

### **Overview of the BTRTESOL Program**

Every Tuesday and Thursday evening in Salt Lake City a group of people crowd into the classrooms and hallways of Guadalupe Schools with the purpose of learning and teaching English. The majority of the students are Spanish- and Vietnamese-speaking adults who have been in the United States for varying amounts of time, some of them for several years, but who have not had the opportunity to learn English. The tutors are community volunteers ranging from college students to retirees, all with various levels of education. The tutors teach basic, survival-level English to adults of various ages in small groups of usually 3-5 students. Besides teaching basic English, tutors also help students study for the American citizenship test. The ability to speak English and a desire to serve the community are the only requirements for tutors. Experienced TESOL professionals provide the tutors with lesson plans, but the actual teaching is left up to the dedicated volunteers; a majority of whom have no professional training in teaching English. The director, a TESOL professional, occasionally provides basic training for the volunteers in teaching English as a second language.

Similar situations to the one described above, occur often across the United States and around the world as minimally or untrained volunteers teach English to a variety of people. Ideally, only TESOL professionals would teach English to speakers of other languages but circumstances make this difficult. First, as English has become an international language the demand for English teachers has grown and there are not enough trained professionals to fill the demand. Second, in many places the teaching situations do not attract trained TESOL professionals with university degrees (and student loans to repay) because of low salaries, limited materials, and large classes. Therefore, volunteers fill a need that no one else will fill.

Volunteers who are willing to teach in poor working condition for minimal remuneration fill an important gap in the English-teaching system because many immigrants and refugees (who need English skills the most to improve their life circumstances) are often the poorest members of their societies and the least able to afford expensive English language professionals (Henrichsen, 2010, p. 13).

Because volunteers and others who are not professionally trained in TESOL teach English (and there is no way to prevent them from doing so) someone should provide training and resources to aid these people in becoming the best teachers they can become given the circumstances.

*Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More* (BTRTESOL) is a book and website currently being developed for people who lack academic or professional training but are either teaching or about to teach English to speakers of other languages and desire training to help them “be more effective, professional and successful” (Henrichsen, 2011, p. 1320). BTRTESOL is not

just another textbook about TESOL, but rather training materials “that are focused upon individuals acquiring very specific skills that they will normally apply almost immediately” (Smith & Regan, 1999, p. 3). BTRTESOL provides basic information on a wide variety of topics relevant to the TESOL field. The units do not cover any topic to the depth that it would be covered in a university-level class in TESOL. Rather they provide a basic introduction using a minimalist, connectivist, and problem-solving approach. The program is meant to be an entryway into the TESOL profession. It is the beginning of volunteers’ professionalization, not an end in and of itself. Currently, there are almost 50 proposed units organized into 10 sections. Several of these units have been completed and are currently available at the website <http://btrtesol.com/>. Other units are currently being developed and evaluated.

Each unit begins with a scenario or case-study. The scenario describes a realistic problem that one might encounter while teaching English either in the United States or abroad. Many of the scenarios are based on real situations encountered by the writers or other teachers. Following the scenario, there are some questions to help users begin thinking about the topic. Next, the objectives of the unit are outlined. The objectives are designed to be very relevant to readers so they can see the connection between the objectives and their teaching situations.

The next section in each unit is titled “The Least You Should Know.” Based on the minimalistic approach, only the most essential information is included about each topic because it is impractical to try to explain everything about teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) in one short unit. Even if it were, such a large amount of information would be overwhelming to most untrained, novice teachers. Therefore, the program designer, Dr. Lynn Henrichsen, determined that each unit would include only the essential information for each

topic. Each unit is limited to 5-7 pages, as this length is more approachable for the average person than the average 20-30 pages per chapter in a textbook. This page limitation requires the author of each unit to carefully consider the content, choosing only the most important information for inclusion. Additionally, the writing style in terms of the sentence structure and the type of vocabulary used is also minimalistic. The goal is to make the materials accessible to people with a variety of education backgrounds including those with only a high school diploma. Therefore, in order to make the materials relatively easy to read and understand so that the users can receive valuable information in a short amount of time with a minimum of effort, the target readability of each unit is no higher than a ninth or tenth grade reading proficiency level.

In order to keep the units simple and short and provide the maximum amount of information, the writers designed the units to be connectivist in nature—connecting to one another and to additional external resources. In describing the connectivist approach, Siemens (2004) explains that in the digital age learning is changing and that one of the important changes in learning is that learners need to know where to find the information they need. He states,

When knowledge, however, is needed, but not known, the ability to plug into sources to meet the requirements becomes a vital skill. As knowledge continues to grow and evolve, access to what is needed is more important than what the learner currently possesses. (Siemens, 2004, Conclusion)

When additional information about a topic is found in another unit, the reader is referred to the unit by name and number. For example, in Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young Language Learners,” I suggest a few ideas for using games to teach English and refer the user to Unit 8C for more information. Thus, connections are provided between interrelated ideas

throughout the materials. Each unit concludes with a list of other units in the BTRTESOL program with related information and additional, external resources. These additional external resources, consist of both books and online sources that the users can reference to gain more in-depth information about the topic, as well as additional ideas that could be implemented in various teaching situations. These additional resources further connect the user to the professional field of TESOL.

Throughout each unit, users are presented with comprehension and reflection questions that encourage them to check their understanding and reflect on what they have learned and how they can apply the information to their individual situations. In the online version of the program, users can respond to the questions and then view the responses of previous users. The online version also contains a video clip for each unit. The users are encouraged to watch the clip and answer questions based on what they saw and what they have read. For those using the materials as a traditional paper book, a DVD of the video clips will be included with the book. The video clips are authentic (not staged) and depict mostly novice, minimally trained teachers teaching in various locations around the world.

As previously stated, the BTRTESOL program is organized into 10 sections or subcategories. Section 5 of BTRTESOL is titled “Knowing Your Students” and includes information on different ages of learners, learning styles, and multiple intelligences. One of the units in this section was originally titled, “Working Successfully with Young Learners” and was planned to acknowledge the differences between adults and children as language learners. This unit was subsequently divided into two and these two units became mine: Unit 5B “Working



Successfully with Young Learners” and Unit 5C “Working Successfully with Very Young Learners.” (For more on the decision to split the unit see Chapter 3: Development Process.)

### **Children Learning English Around the World**

In recent years, as English has become a global language and is required for entrance into universities and even professional employment, more and more children have begun to learn English at younger and younger ages. This is occurring as governments are lowering the age at which children begin compulsory English classes and as parents increasingly enroll their children in private language schools (Cameron, 2003; Nunan, 2003). For example, Cameron (2003) cites that in the year 2000, 150,000 children took the UCLES Tests for Young Learners and Nunan (2003) notes that one publishing company “estimated that there were 600,000 new enrolments in private-conversation schools every 4 to 6 months” in China. Cameron (2003) argues that this shift to teaching younger learners English will result in changes to the English Language Teaching field that will require further understanding of how children learn languages, better training of teachers of young learners and changes in secondary-level teaching.

Nunan (2003) examined educational policies in seven countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, namely Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam, through a case study in which, he examined documents and interviewed various individuals including teachers, publishers, academic and ministry officials. Each of the countries presented a different profile. For example, in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, students began compulsory English classes between ages 6 and 7. In contrast, students in Japan and Vietnam did not begin compulsory English classes until age 11 or 12. The amount of time students spent learning language also varied greatly between countries. One of the major concerns Nunan

expressed for the region as a whole was “a lack of trained teachers” (p.599). For example, in Hong Kong only 27.8% of primary school teachers had a degree and professional teaching qualifications. Nunan (2003) concluded that teachers in the Asia-Pacific region lack English proficiency and methodological skills to teach young learners. He stated,

Anecdotal evidence suggests that governments around the world are introducing English as a compulsory subject at younger and younger ages, often without adequate funding, teacher education for elementary school teachers, or the development of curricula and materials for younger learners (p. 591).

One way that countries are currently providing more proficient speakers of English is by hiring native speakers through various programs. Nunan (2003) argues that what is needed is better training of local teachers to use materials and methods that are appropriate for young learners.

When considering the numbers presented previously, it can be assumed that at least hundreds of thousands and more likely millions of children are learning English as a foreign language. The truth is that there are not enough qualified teachers to teach all these children, so native-speakers that have little to no training in TESOL, nor in teaching young learners, fill the need. For example, International Language Programs (ILP) is one organization that sends approximately 350 volunteers a year to China, Taiwan, Mexico, Ukraine and Russia to teach English to children. Most of their volunteers are college students who spend about 4 months in their assigned country teaching English to school-age children. They receive some training before and during their time abroad (L. Burt, personal communication, October 7, 2010). A quick browse through the results of a Google search of “volunteer abroad teaching English to

children” showed opportunities in Fiji, Thailand, Tibet, India and other places in Asia, South America and Africa. Additionally, people trained to teach English as a second language to adults, or with other university degrees frequently obtain jobs teaching children overseas. For example, on tealit.com there are many posted jobs in Taiwan for English teachers. While many of the ads ask for experienced teachers the only requirements for most positions are being a native speaker and having a bachelor’s degree. These teachers have received little or no specified training or education in teaching children. Nicolas and Lightbown (2008) note the importance of differentiating between teaching English to adults and teaching English to children.

...the evidence suggests that young child second language acquisition needs to be distinguished from both first and older child second language development as well as from second language acquisition by adolescents and adults. The distinctive nature of young child second language acquisition also means that a distinctive child second language pedagogy is required (p.46).

It is, therefore, important to acknowledge the differences between adults and children as second language learners. Additionally, the differences between older and younger learners affect the way they learn and are taught most effectively. Therefore, my two units were written and designed to provide basic training in teaching young learners English, as well as provide users with additional external resources to gain a better understanding of how children learn languages and effective teaching techniques to help both teachers and student succeed.

### **Overview of my Units**

As all BTRTESOL units follow the same organizing template, both units start with a scenario of a person who is teaching English to children outside the United States. Because my

two units are closely related, the “Least You Should Know” section of each unit is divided into four similar sections. The first section is titled “Key Characteristics of Young Learners” or “Key Characteristics of Very Young Learners.” This section describes some of the key characteristics of children that need to be considered when teaching them, including cognitive development. The next section, titled “Principles of Teaching Young People” or “Principles of Teaching Very Young People,” discusses specific principles of teaching children including being actively involved, using concrete examples, and ensuring that instruction is connected. After this broad overview about teaching children, each unit contains some specific suggestions for teaching that particular age group. For example, Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners” suggests ideas for teaching literacy skills, and Unit 5C: “Working Successfully with Very Young Learners” suggests using Total Physical Response (TPR). This section is titled “Effective Teaching Strategies” in each unit. Each unit concludes with information and suggested techniques for having good classroom management that are specific to each age group. Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners” focuses on children aged 7-11, and Unit 5C: “Working Successfully with Very Young English Language Learners” focuses on children aged 3-7. These age groups are based on the split between early childhood education and elementary education explained more in Chapter 2: Review of Literature. Although there is some overlap between the two units, their purpose is to point out the differences between these two age groups and between children and adult learners.

### **Personal Background**

I chose to work on this project for two main reasons. My first reason was my background in elementary education. Prior to beginning graduate-level studies at Brigham Young

University, I obtained a B.A. in early childhood and elementary education from Utah State University, also receiving an endorsement in English as a second language (ESL). While working on my degree, I had the opportunity to observe and volunteer in ESL classes at local elementary schools. These experiences allowed me to observe and implement teaching strategies and become aware of the needs of children learning a second language. During my ESL course work I had the opportunity to learn more about second language acquisition, including the benefits and also potential hazards of children learning a second language as immigrants.

Following graduation, I taught elementary school for 2 1/2 years. During this time I had the opportunity to work at a charter school where Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic were taught. The students received 30 minutes of language instruction each day from a language specialist. My third-grade students, for example, had 30 minutes of Spanish everyday. The language specialists used an immersion approach to language learning and the specialist rarely spoke English to a class. At the charter school some of the kindergarten students were learning Chinese. I often wondered how Chinese could be taught to kindergarteners and if such language instruction was actually effective, as this school was located in a predominately English-speaking area and the only exposure to Chinese the children had was during the school day. This experience along with my education at Utah State made me interested in second language acquisition by children.

Additionally, my education and experiences as an elementary school teacher have given me valuable insight as I wrote the unit. I could rely on my own background knowledge as well as the books and articles I had read to determine what the most essential information was. I often thought to myself, if I could only give a new teacher five pages of information about

teaching children what would those pages contain? My own experiences also helped me better understand what questions I needed to ask and what information would be valuable to my audience.

Another reason I was interested in helping develop the BTRTESOL program is because of my experience volunteering as an ESL tutor. In the fall of 2009, I began volunteering as a tutor for Guadalupe Schools, a community-based non-profit organization in Salt Lake City, Utah. Guadalupe Schools provides adult English classes for primarily refugee and immigrant populations. They depend on an army of volunteers that teach English to small groups (usually 3-5 students). Lesson plans and materials are prepared by ESL specialists, who have degrees in TESOL, but all the teaching is the responsibility of the volunteers. The director of adult education, Kate Diggins, provides periodic training to the volunteers to help them better understand the needs of their students and effective teaching methods. She also provides training to new tutors.

Prior to beginning my work as a volunteer, I was unaware of the many volunteers teaching English in my hometown. While working with Guadalupe Schools, I have had the opportunity to meet many people who also volunteer their time to teach English. These tutors come from a wide variety of backgrounds; they are of different ages, educational backgrounds, and countries of origin. Some are college students, and others are retirees. I quickly became aware of the advantage I had as a tutor because of my basic understanding of TESOL. I was able to apply the concepts I was learning in my graduate-level courses at BYU to help me better tutor my students. This experience made me interested in working on an MA project that would meet a need by helping my fellow volunteers be more effective in their efforts to teach English. As I

have become more aware of the large number of volunteers that teach English around the world, I have become further convinced of the need for the BTRTESOL program and the potential it has to help volunteer, untrained, novice teachers and their students be successful.

### **Summary**

In an ideal world every person that wanted or needed to learn English would be able to learn from a qualified, certified English teaching professional. However, due to the high demand and sometimes poor teaching conditions, this goal is impossible. The need is being partially met by a large supply of volunteer teachers who have good intentions but who would benefit greatly from even basic training in TESOL. This chapter has discussed the need for these volunteers as well as for materials to help them receive training, and it has provided an overview of the BTRTESOL program of training materials and of my two units. The chapter concluded with information about my personal background, which explains my interest in helping develop these materials. The next chapter is a review of the literature that informed the content and development of my two units.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

This chapter will review the relevant literature that informed my two units on teaching English to children. First it acknowledges differences between how adults and children learn and how they are taught. Then, it discusses some of the important theories of child development. Next, it examines how cognitive, social, and emotional development affect learning and explains some specific teaching techniques that are beneficial for working with children. The fourth section discusses a few specific aspects of learning language, such as language stages, L1/L2 transfer, code-switching, and literacy. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of ideas from the literature on classroom management for young learner classrooms.

### **Adults and Children Learn Languages Differently**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2007) has stated, “Educational practices are most effective when they are attuned to the way children develop and learn – that is when they are developmentally appropriate” (p. 5). The NAEYC defines any program that provides care or education for children under the age of 8 as an early childhood program, and encourages specific developmentally appropriate practices for this age group in their position statement. The field of human development also acknowledges differences between early childhood (ages 3-6) and middle childhood (ages 6 -10) (Rathus, 2006). These differences affect how children learn, and, therefore, the way children are taught languages.

In recent years, an increasing number of children at increasingly younger ages are being taught English around the world (Cameron, 2003). Many governments now require students to



study English beginning in elementary school, and some students begin studying English in preschool (Pinter, 2011). Additionally, parents are also enrolling their children in private schools to begin learning English at a young age. As younger-aged people begin learning languages it is important to recognize the differences between the ways that children and adults learn languages. Additionally, it is important to recognize that children also learn differently depending on their ages. As Nicolas and Lightbown (2008) explain,

...young child second language acquisition needs to be distinguished from both first and older child second language development as well as from second language acquisition by adolescents and adults. The distinctive nature of young child second language acquisition also means that a distinctive child second language pedagogy is required. (p.46)

Therefore, it is important that teachers who teach English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) to children recognize the similarities and differences between adult and child language learning “so that they can make their work in the classroom as effective as possible” (Pinter, 2011, p. 1). In his book *Teaching by Principles*, Brown (2007) says that teachers of children require “specific skills and intuitions that differ from those appropriate for adult teaching” (pp. 101-102).

Children are generally seen as being better language learners. However, studies show that older learners have an initial advantage to learning language. When learning in a foreign language context older learners maintain their advantage longer. This advantage may be due to older learners’ abilities to use “cognitive and metacognitive abilities and strategies to learn many aspects of the L2 initially faster” (Ortega, 2009, p. 17). In other words older learners rely more

on analysis to learn language. However, it has been shown that younger learners generally tend to have better ultimate attainment. This may be because younger learners learn a second language more implicitly. Ortega (2009) explains that Keyser and Ross et al, found that aptitude for language learning is only important for older learners which supports the idea that younger learners learn more implicitly while older learners learn more explicitly.

In her dissertation Lily Wong-Fillmore (1974) examined social and cognitive factors related to second language acquisition of English by children in the United States. She noted that any child who spends a few years in an American classroom will learn English “naturally and rapidly” (p.22). On the other hand, she cited that “beyond puberty, Lenneberg believed, second languages can only be learned through conscious effort and diligence” (p.24). In other words children are able to learn language simply through exposure to language because they learn a second language implicitly, much like they learned their first language. Older learners on the other hand require more explicit instruction and greater effort to learn a second language. Wong-Fillmore also noted the importance of socialization in language acquisition by children in that the children in her study used meaningful language before developing rules. She suggested that children first use language, then figure out the rules based on this language and finally, create novel language based on these rules. She also discovered that socialization plays a pivotal role in language acquisition for children and that it was through social interaction that the children in her study learned English. Wong-Fillmore concluded that instruction is not enough for children to progress in language learning but that they need adequate opportunities to socialize and use the language with native-speaking peers.

Because we know that adults and children learn language differently, they also must be taught differently. In investigating differences between adult and child language learners, Hird, Thwaite, Breen, Milton and Oliver (2000) conducted case studies of 18 ESL teachers in Intensive Language Centers in Australia to compare instructional practices based on the age of the students. Ten teachers taught adults and 8 teachers taught children. Each teacher had between 3 and 26 years experience teaching ESL. Each class was observed three times by one of the researchers. One of these times the teacher and class were also videotaped. Additionally, the researchers met with each teacher individually four times to discuss reasons for the observed actions and connections between the actions and reasons. The researchers found that the age of the students did affect the teaching practices in the classroom, though there was some overlap. They found that teachers of children were more likely to have their students involved in a task or activity rather than just using repetition or drilling. Additionally, the teachers of children were more likely to use teaching techniques that encouraged students to experiment with the language. These differences in practice “may have been due to the notion that primary school should be ‘fun’ but it was noted by more than one teacher (of children) that ‘hands-on’ techniques and a multisensory approach were key elements in language learning” (Hird et al., 2000, p. 12). Another reason given for the different approaches was that the children have more time to learn the language and so different techniques that are more developmentally appropriate can be used. Another difference was that the teachers of children used the students’ L1 more and “there were more practices used which allowed students to draw on their L1 cultural knowledge” (Hird et al., 2000, p. 13).

Hird et al’s (2000) study was designed not to evaluate the “correctness” of a specific technique but simply to show that there are differences in how teachers teach based on the age of

the class. In accomplishing this goal, the study was well designed. For example, the researchers used stimulated recall, by showing the teachers videos of their teaching, to help each teacher “recall and report thoughts that he or she had while performing a task” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 78). This use of stimulated recall may have helped the teachers better reflect on their teaching and the reasons behind using specific teaching techniques, rather than trying to remember without such stimulus. The researchers commented that extending the amount of time, using teacher journals, and collecting information from the learners would provide valuable additions to the research. Additionally, it would be interesting to look at teaching differences by age in an EFL setting, where students may have more limited exposure to English and there may be increased pressure from parents or programs for children to progress quickly in their language development. It would also be interesting to examine what differences occur between very young learners and young learners in language teaching classrooms.

### **Child Development: Theories and Implications**

Having established that there are in fact differences between how children and adults learn language and that these differences impact teaching practices in the classroom, this section will now discuss some of the theories of child development and how cognitive, social and emotional development and motivation impact language learning.

**Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s theories of child development.** Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, viewed the child as an active learner who constructs meaning through interactions with the environment, particularly through problem solving (Cameron, 2001). He also believed that “teachers should not simply try to impose knowledge on the child, but should find interesting and stimulating materials” (Rathus, 2006). Though Piaget has received some criticism

in recent years for underestimating children's abilities, his sequence of development is still accepted (Cameron, 2001, Pinter, 2011, Rathus, 2006). Piaget divided child development into four stages: sensory-motor (ages 0-2), pre-operational (ages 2-7), concrete operational (ages 7-11), and formal operational (age 11+). (All ages are approximate.) Children in the pre-operational stage have difficulty seeing other people's point of view and focus on a single aspect of a task. This means that it is important for teachers of young learners to keep instructions simple and remember that young children do not have the same logic as adults. Children in the concrete operational stage begin to think more logically, use analogies, can use symbols (such as letters) more effectively, have a better understanding of causality, and more mature methods of classification. This means older learners are better able to work in groups or pairs, classify information by comparing objects or pictures, and sort words into categories (Pinter, 2011). However, older children still rely on "concrete examples and objects in real life" (Pinter, 2011, p.12).

Another influential theorist, Lev Vygotsky, considered the other people in the child's environment also to be valuable. He noted the ability of children to do and learn more with assistance than they could on their own. He called the difference between what a person could do alone and what a person could do with assistance the *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*. In other words, given the right amount of support or help, children can accomplish more than they can on their own. Vygotsky saw children and others as social learners who create meaning through interactions with others particularly in the ZPD (Cameron, 2001). One way that children create meaning is by talking about what is happening during various experiences with adults or others who understand more than they do. "One of the most important implications from the Vygotskian approach to learning is that classroom talk involving both teachers and learner

deserves a great deal of attention. In fact, classroom talk is where learning happens” (Pinter, 2011, p. 21).

**Cognitive Development.** Considering these theories of child development, teachers of children want to make sure that their teaching is cognitively appropriate for the children they teach. This section will discuss implications of cognitive development related to classification, attention, memory and expertise.

**Classification.** As explained earlier, Piaget looked at how children think differently from adults. Children differ from adults in their ability to think logically, including their ability to classify information. Older and younger children also classify objects differently, and younger children rely more on basic concepts rather than specific ones. This difference in ability to classify in an adult-like way impacts how children learn language, especially their ability to learn formal grammar rules (Nunan, 2010). Brown (2007) explains that the cognitive development of children requires that grammar be taught in context by giving lots of examples, but without teaching rules or grammatical categories. However, older children, who are becoming better able to categorize language and think analytically, benefit from more explicit instruction in language form and structure (Philp, Mackey, & Oliver, 2008). These two seemingly contrasting ideas demonstrate the importance of considering the age of the learner. Very young children should be taught grammar completely in context, because they lack the classification system to learn formal grammar. Older children, especially those who are literate, classify in a more adult-like way and can, therefore, benefit from more explicit grammar instruction (Nicholas & Lightbown, 2008, Pinter, 2011).

**Attention.** Attention span is another area of cognitive development that affects language learning. Attention span refers to the amount of time a person can pay attention to something. Brown (2007) and Nunan (2010) both discuss the importance of being aware of attention span. In order to maintain the attention of children it is important to implement engaging activities that are neither too hard nor too easy (Brown, 2007). Besides having activities at the right level, it is also important to “vary activities so that learners don’t turn off” (Nunan, 2010, p. 61). Nunan suggested using Total Physical Response (TPR) to maintain attention and motivation.

The field of information processing also gives insight into attention (Pinter, 2011). Young children (under age 6) are still learning to direct their attention and thus may find tasks in which they need to compare objects difficult. Therefore, “it is better to plan activities that involve routine patterns of active participation” (Pinter, 2011, p. 23). Older children are more capable of participating in more complex tasks, such as comparing and contrasting. They also have an increased ability to ignore distractions and focus on multiple elements at the same time (Rathus, 2006).

**Memory.** Information processing is also concerned with memory capacity (Pinter 2011, Rathus, 2006). As children get older their memory capacity increases. This is important to remember especially when giving directions, as younger learners are able to remember fewer instructions. Teachers of very young children should limit their instructions to only two steps or instructions at a time, whereas older children can handle more. Additionally, very young children may find comprehension questions difficult because they have limited memory capacity. Therefore, “it is best to develop tasks that allow them to listen and join in with a story, a rhyme, or song as they feel ready to do so.” (Pinter, 2011, p. 31)

**Expertise.** Experience or expertise also has an effect on how children learn (Pinter, 2011). Children who have previous knowledge and experience are able to handle more advanced tasks because they can use their previous knowledge.

In order to help children gain experience and expertise it is important to help them be actively involved and participate in meaningful activities. These are two of three principles that are seen “as forming the basis on which teachers should design the learning environments of today’s school,” according to the International Academy of Education booklet, *How Children Learn* (Vosniadou, 2001, p.6). (The third principle social participation will be discussed in the section on social development.) Vosniadou (2001) suggests teachers use “hands-on” activities, limit the use of lecturing, and allow students to help decide what and how to learn. Brown (2007) explains that children need to use all five senses in learning. He explains that sensory information and hands-on activities help children to internalize the language and concepts they are learning. He encourages physical activities such as games and TPR. Vosniadou (2001) also discusses the importance of activities being meaningful to the students. She explains that it is important for teachers to be aware of the local culture and reflect that culture in their teaching practices. Brown (2007) explains that children are focused on the present. Therefore, they want to know “what this new language can actually be used for here and now” (Brown, 2007, p. 104). He explains that language needs to be authentic and context embedded in order for it to be accepted by children.

Connected to having students be actively involved and participating in meaningful activities are two other principles from *How Children Learn*, making connections and focusing on meaning (Vosniadou, 2001). It is important to help children make connections between their



old knowledge and new information. New information is built on the information that a student already has. Therefore, it is important to help students connect the knowledge they already have with the new knowledge they are gaining. In the case of language learning, this is often learning a new word for a known thing. Additionally, it is important that teachers focus on making meaning, not merely memorizing information. This is especially true with teaching language; it is important that students understand what a word means and not just memorize the sound of the word.

**Social development.** Piaget noted that very young learners have a more difficult time seeing other people's point of view and this limits their ability to interact with other children (Pinter, 2011). Older children are better able to understand themselves as well as others. This increased ability allows them to become better at interactions with others (Rathus, 2006). The remainder of this section discuss types of play and how social interactions provide opportunities for learning.

**Types of play.** Examining Parten's Types of Play provides further insight into the social development of children. Three types of play are considered social: parallel play, associative play, and cooperative play (Rathus, 2006). Children engaged in parallel play are playing with the same toys but their interaction is limited. During associative play children interact but without shared goals. During cooperative play, children play in a group with a shared goal. Often there are one or two leaders of a group, but different members of the group take on various roles in order to accomplish the shared goal. "Parten found that associative play and cooperative play become common by age 5. More recent research continues to show that they are more likely to be found among older and more experienced preschoolers (Howes & Martheson,

1992b)” (Rathus, 2006, p. 341). Therefore, very young children may struggle to participate in small group activities, so it is better to do activities, such as singing together as a group. This way, children can actively participate without needing to interact in small groups. Very young children who have older siblings or often participate in group play experiences may develop the ability to cooperate faster (Rathus, 2006).

***Social interaction is necessary to create meaning.*** Interacting with parents, teachers, other adults, and other children affects children’s cognitive development (NAEYC, 1997). “Children do not construct their own understanding of a concept in isolation but in the course of interaction with others” (NAEYC, 1997, p. 114). According to Vosniadou (2001), social participation is the third core principle of how children learn. She states, “The establishment of a fruitful collaborative and co-operative atmosphere is an essential part of school learning. Research has shown that social collaboration can boost student achievement, provided that the kinds of interactions that are encouraged contribute to learning” (Vosniadou, 2001, p. 9). She suggests having student work in groups, encouraging students to express their opinions and connecting the classroom to the local community.

Interaction with other children provides different opportunities to learn and use language than interaction with adults. Adults provide more support and corrections, whereas other children provide more contextual practice. In addition, because child-child and child-adult relationships are different, they provide different opportunities to use language (Philp et al, 2008).

Pinter (2007) observed the interaction of two 10-year-old boys in Hungary as they did three spot-the-difference tasks over the course of 3 weeks. In each task, the boys were each

given a picture of a house, and they had to talk to each other to determine the differences between the two pictures. The boys were videotaped during their interaction and following the three tasks did a stimulated recall interview. Pinter (2007) observed that as the boys progressed through the 3 weeks they were better able to communicate with and support each other. She recognized the limitations of the study in observing only two boys and encouraged other researchers to investigate the benefits of peer-to-peer interactions with young learners. She stated that age needs to be a careful consideration, as younger learners may find these tasks more difficult. Pinter's results do offer encouragement to include interactive tasks in language learning for young learners and also show the benefits of repetition. This type of study should be repeated not only with more participants but also with participants of both genders and various backgrounds and ages. It would be interesting to examine if the educational background and culture of the students make any difference in their interactions. It would also be interesting to investigate at approximately what age children are able to participate in and benefit from these types of tasks.

**Emotional development.** Older and younger children also differ in their emotional development. Younger learners have high expectations and confidence in themselves whereas older learners have a more complex self-image and compare themselves to others (Pinter, 2011). Brown (2007) also acknowledges the importance of helping students overcome affective factors. He says that children can be especially sensitive to their peers and that in many ways children are "more fragile than adults" (Brown, 2007, p. 103). It is therefore, important that teachers are aware of their students and help them "save face." They do not want students to feel embarrassed or ashamed. It is important to create a safe environment in which students can feel comfortable experimenting with language and making mistakes. Creating an atmosphere in which student are

comfortable, anxiety is low, and the students have a good relationship with the teacher and the other students is essential to teaching language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 21).

The affective filter hypothesis by Krashen and Terrell (1983) explains that students with lower affective filters will learn more. They suggest how teachers can lower students' affective filter and decrease the anxiety often caused by language acquisition. First, students should not be required to speak. Second, students should be allowed to choose when to begin speaking and should be given positive reinforcement when they begin speaking. Finally, errors should not be corrected directly. Krashen and Terrell also state that topics that are "interesting to the students will contribute to a more relaxed classroom" (p. 60).

**Motivation.** Motivation is another important aspect of teaching young learners that is connected to emotional and cognitive development. In *How Children Learn*, Vosniadou (2001) discusses the importance of motivating students by providing feedback and activities to help students develop intrinsic motivation. She suggests using praise, helping students develop confidence, encouraging cooperation, and using interesting tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult. Brown (2007) discusses the importance of the teacher's attitude in keeping students engaged and focused. He suggests that teachers of young children should think of themselves as performing on a stage and that they need to be very enthusiastic about what they are teaching. He also suggests using a variety of activities and using children's natural curiosity to keep them engaged in the learning process.

Nunan (2010) expresses concern that research shows that over time motivation in formal education declines. He cites several possible reasons for the decline, including lack of awareness of progress and the lack of relevance of language learning to the children's lives. Cameron

(2003) fears that teaching English to young learners could negatively affect language learning in later years if early English language learning is boring or too difficult, and thus leads children to believe they are poor language learners.

Therefore, teachers need to help young learners remain motivated to learn English by supplying lessons that are interesting and neither too hard nor too easy. It is also important for teachers to help children feel confident in their ability to learn language.

### **Aspects of Children Learning Language**

This section briefly discusses some of the important aspects of language learning for children such as language stages, L1/L2 transfer, code switching, and language play. It will also briefly discuss teaching English literacy skills to children. Finally, it will examine children's language learning beliefs.

**Language stages.** English language learners will often go through an initial silent period in which they show comprehension of the language but their production is very limited. During this time, while they do not respond verbally they can respond nonverbally (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Nicholas and Lightbown (2008) cite two studies by Liu and Clarke respectively, in which children had extensive silent periods, one of approximately 5 months and the other of almost 10 months. They comment, "the silence in their early learning was not a withdrawal from 'learning', but rather a choice about how to go about that learning" (p. 42). Even though children may not verbally produce language, teachers who continue to interact with the students and involve them in English can actively support them. (Nicholas & Lightbown, 2008) Also, teachers can provide opportunities for children to show them what they know through actions.

According to Krashen's natural approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), following the silent period in which language learners give only nonverbal responses a learner progresses through several stages of language acquisition moving from one-word responses to complex discourse. Tabors and Snow (1994) also use stages to describe second language acquisition of preschool children. According to them, preschool children begin in a nonverbal period in which they do not actively use language for communication. They observe and listen to how language is being used, and they may even rehearse language to themselves by saying words or short phrases very quietly. They then begin to use telegraphic and formulaic speech, which mainly consists of content words and set phrases. Eventually, they begin to connect formulaic speech with object nouns and begin to use language more productively. Tabors and Snow (1994) point out that these stages are not to be seen as discrete stages but rather strategies for approaching language acquisition.

**L1/L2 transfer.** Melby-Lervag and Lervag (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 47 studies examining cross-linguistic transfer of oral language, decoding and phonology skills among young learners. They found a small but significant correlation between L1 and L2 oral communication skills and a larger and significant correlation between L1 and L2 decoding skills. When further examining the correlation among decoding skills, in order to account for variation among studies, the researchers found that students who had received instruction in both L1 and L2 and those that had an alphabetic language as both the L1 and L2 had higher correlations. Thus, it appears more transfer occurs when students are instructed in both languages and when the languages are more highly related (both Indo-European). Additionally the researchers found that there was correlation between decoding skills in L1 and reading comprehension in L2. Younger students showed higher correlations than older students. Though it was not significant

in this study, other studies have shown that socio-economic status (SES) may also play a role in language transfer. The authors noticed that many of the studies in the meta-analysis included participants from low SES backgrounds while only a few included participants from middle or high SES backgrounds. They commented that it would be interesting to further examine language transfer to determine differences depending on SES. The authors also encouraged more longitudinal research into cross-linguistic language transfer due to the lack of longitudinal studies they found while doing the meta-analysis. The authors conducted a well thought out meta-analysis that gives insightful information regarding language transfer among children.

Nicholas and Lightbown (2008) also noted that children “learning a second language can draw on specific features of their first language to achieve particular purposes” (p. 40). For example, children may transfer word order from their first language in order to accomplish more complex tasks such as asking questions.

Research shows that using the L1 is beneficial to children (Celic, 2009). Folsie (2004) explains that in some situations, such as an EFL classroom where all the students speak the same language, translations can be very helpful because they are “the simplest of all definitions” (p. 61). Folsie (2004) also encourages teachers to become aware of the L1 of their students so they can help with translation and also understand when students may struggle with a particular word or be able to easily define it, such as in the case of cognates.

**Code switching.** When children are being taught a second language, they will frequently code switch or code mix. In other words, often they will mix words from both languages to create sentences. Children need to learn when it is appropriate to mix the two languages and when they need to use only one language. Teachers’ responses to these language forms help the

children begin to distinguish when it is appropriate to code mix or code switch and when it is not (Nicholas & Lightbown, 2008).

**Language play.** Nicholas and Lightbown (2008) explain that as children learn language they must negotiate many aspects of language. It is therefore important that teachers allow children to play with language. They need to ensure that children are being given new input and being challenged to continue developing their language; “play can sometimes provide a vital means of exploring, in a ‘safe’ environment, exactly those more difficult aspects of the language” (Nicholas & Lightbown, 2008, p. 44). Children approach language differently from adults and their interactions are often frivolous, spontaneous, and more experimental. Older children enjoy puns, riddles, and other types of language play that contrast literal and figurative meanings. Imaginative play also allows children to assume other roles, which provide additional language practice (Philp et al 2008).

**Literacy.** Literacy is an important consideration when teaching language to children. Being able to read and write affects the way they understand language and the way they think. Pinter (2011) quotes Wood (1998, p. 200),

One line of evidence strongly suggests that literacy and especially the extended use of both reading and writing trigger and facilitate important changes. Both reading and writing involve ways of communicating that transform the nature of children’s knowledge of language and lead to more analytical ways of thinking.

(p. 16)

Children also make important discoveries about language through literacy, such as knowledge about how language can be divided into words and sentences and



knowledge about pronunciation. These discoveries lead to changes in language acquisition, including the types of strategies the learners use. Additionally, L1 literacy provides a beneficial foundation for building academic skills in the second language. (Nicholas & Lightbown, 2008)

Though literacy skills can make language teaching easier, Cameron (2003) expresses concern about teaching early literacy skills. She worries that teaching English literacy skills too early and too quickly may cause children to fail. Cameron (2001) discusses some of the challenges of teaching young learners, especially very young learners who do not yet have established literacy skills in their L1. Even for those with established literacy skills, “English is a complicated alphabetic written language, and almost always requires learners of it as a foreign language to develop new skills and knowledge”(Cameron, 2001, p. 136). Cameron goes on to discuss the importance of forming awareness of the relationships between sounds and letters. She discusses methods for developing literacy skills in young learners such as creating a print rich environment, engaging in read alouds, using the language experience approach (LEA), and teaching phonics. For older young learners Cameron (2001) says it is important to expose them to various discourse structures for both reading and writing.

Cameron (2001) discusses the value of using read alouds to teach literacy skills. She says that when used appropriately stories can be valuable resources for language learning. Pinter (2006) adds,

Listening to stories is the most authentic and popular activity for all children.... Language is picked up easily because stories contain repetition, which makes linguistic input more noticeable. Listening to stories, rhymes

and songs can also lead to learning the words and phrases by heart. (pp. 51-53)

When teachers select books to read with English language learners there are many kinds available. Predictable picture books often have repeating lines that can help children learn through repetition as well as learn the predictive nature of reading. Books that are culturally familiar, such as books of folk tales or fables, can also be beneficial because the children are already familiar with the story so they can understand the language better in the L2. Children's poetry can be another good source for material (Hudelson, 1994). In addition, print-rich environments are helpful in developing literacy skills because they demonstrate various functions of writing. Print rich environments include having charts or signs related to daily routines, and printed words of songs or chants hanging around the classroom (Hudelson, 1994). Teachers may also want to label classroom objects or areas with English words to support vocabulary development (Celic, 2009). Labels provide more exposure to printed words.

Sheu Hsiu-Chih (2008) investigated the use of picture books by 10 EFL instructors in Taiwan. She interviewed teachers who used picture books in their classrooms. She found that the teachers used the books for three general reasons: "(1) linguistic value, (2) the value of the stories, and (3) the value of the pictures" (p.48). The teachers mentioned that picture books help provide language in context for the students and give the students opportunities to see many different ways that words can be used. Picture books were seen as motivating the learners and helping the students connect the information in English class with prior knowledge. The teachers discussed how the pictures increased comprehension and also encouraged discussion and the use of imagination among the students. Pictures in the books were also perceived to

encourage reading skills, especially the development of top-down reading skills. It would be interesting to get the children's perspective on the use of picture books. Additionally, it would be good to see the interviews paired with some qualitative research that shows the learners are actually connecting the language information and understanding the books that are being read.

Cheng-Ying Li and Paul Seedhouse (2010) also conducted qualitative research on using storytelling to teach English in an EFL situation. They compared two teachers in Taiwan. Using a combination of recorded classroom observations and interviews to collect data. Li and Seedhouse first observed the teachers teach a standard lesson. Both lessons included choral drills and focused on teaching colors. They then observed each teacher teach a story-based lesson. The researchers observed increased participation by the students during the story-based lesson, some occurring in the L1. They also noted that the story-based approach appeared to produce higher motivation and participation among the students. The researchers commented that the teaching style of the teacher affected the interaction patterns in the classroom. The authors recognized that this research was done with a very small sample; thus, the external validity of the research is lessened. However, it does give a good example of the way story-based teaching can increase participation for the students and increase their motivation.

Comprehension is an important element to consider when sharing stories with young learners. Cabrera and Martínez (2001) researched listening comprehension by comparing two methods of storytelling. In the first situation, the story was adjusted linguistically and in the second situation the story was adjusted linguistically and other elements were added to aid comprehension, such as, repetition, gestures, and questions. The research was done with 60 Spanish-speaking 10-year-olds in the Canary Islands. A repeated measures test was used and the

students were randomly assigned to one of two groups. After listening to the story the students took a 10-item, opened-ended-question test in Spanish. The results showed that there were significant differences between the two situations. The children did better when provided with both linguistic and interactional modification. The children were also asked to rate the difficulty of the two passages. The children rated the first story (with only linguistic modification) to be difficult and the second story (with linguistic and interactional modification) to be easy. The interactional modification served to both aid comprehension and help the students pay attention to the story. This research was well carried out and shows the importance of providing supporting gestures, repetitions, and questions to aid comprehension. It would be interesting to repeat this study in various EFL locations to determine if similar results occur.

**Children's language learning beliefs.** Finally, I will examine the insights that can be gained by examining what children believe about language learning. Kolb (2007) researched how children view language learning. She had 43 children in Germany, ages 8-9, participate in three different tasks to evaluate their language-learning beliefs, as well as their ability to reflect on their learning. The researchers separated the children into five groups based on their language-learning beliefs. First, many children saw language learning in terms of the number of words they knew. Other children saw language learning as imitation. A third group was concerned with understanding the language. A fourth group of learners wanted to be able to speak themselves. The last group focused on the doing or the action. One student said, "by playing we learn playing in English or speaking English" (p.236). This study showed that children hold their own beliefs about language learning and what works or what does not work. One important implication for teachers was that initially many children ranked playing games low on their ability to help them learn English. After the teacher explained why they were

playing the game and how it helped them practice English the children ranked playing games higher. Thus, it is important that teachers explain, even to young learners, the reasons why they do the activities they do. Being aware of the beliefs of young learners can help teachers better meet the needs of the class. One of the limitations of this study, was that it only involved students in Germany. It would be interesting to investigate the language learning beliefs of children in other countries. Additionally, it would be interesting to know if the method used to teach the children English previously, had any effect on their language learning beliefs. It may be argued that children are not aware of what helps them learn, but Nunan (2010) pointed out that older young learners are becoming aware of their language learning.

### **Classroom Management**

Understanding more about how children learn and which specific aspects of language learning to consider helps teachers be more prepared to teach children in ways that are developmentally appropriate. This will allow for the greatest amount of language learning to occur. However, one of the biggest fears of most elementary-level teachers is not what to teach or how to teach but how to maintain order and manage the classroom so learning can take place. In this last section I will briefly examine aspects of how to manage classrooms of young learners, including routines, expectations, environment, and planning.

**Routines.** Routines are things that happen the same everyday. Teaching children routines helps everything flow smoothly because the children know what to expect and are not surprised. Unknowns cause stress, and learning a language has a lot of unknown information. This stress can cause children to act out. However, “when we [teachers] provide a predictable

environment through consistent routines, rules, and daily schedule, we alleviate that stress and help focus ELLs' mental energies on their learning" (Celic, 2009, p.65).

**Expectations.** All teachers should set high expectations for themselves and their classes because high expectations help both teachers and students succeed. Establishing high expectations also helps children be well behaved (Wong & Wong, 2005). Teachers should state what learners can do, not what they cannot, and then model what they expect the learners to do (Linse, 2005). By telling students what they can do, the teacher sets positive expectations for a class. It is also important that, once the classroom expectations have been explained and established, children are held accountable for those expectations. Individual students and the class as a whole need to be accountable for following the rules (Celic, 2009). For example, if the expectation is that children listen when the teacher talks, the teacher should not talk until the children are quiet.

Especially for teachers teaching abroad, it is important to be aware that different cultures have different expectations for what happens in school. For example, in some cultures students are used to working independently, not in groups, or students are used to being called upon, not raising their hands to volunteer answers. Being aware of the cultural expectations of both teachers and students can help teachers be more successful. (Celic, 2009)

**A positive environment.** Positive, high expectations help the classroom to be a positive place. Wong and Wong (2005) encourage teachers to use students' names, say please and thank you, smile, and show their students that they care to help create a positive environment. When people hear their names, they pay attention because names are important. Using a person's name shows respect and that the teacher cares about the student. Using words such as please and thank

you also show respect. Teachers also show that they care about their students by smiling. Smiling helps create a positive environment because it lets students know that the teacher is there to help them. When students know that their teacher cares about them they learn and behave better (Wong & Wong, 2005).

**Planning.** It has been said that having a good offense is the best defense. If children are actively engaged in learning, they will have fewer opportunities to act out. Teachers of young learners should always have a back-up plan or even several back-up plans (Linse, 2005). The children may not respond to an activity or an activity may go faster than planned, so it is always a good idea to plan a few extra activities. Also, when planning, teachers should think about using different kinds of activities and different sizes of groups. It is good to have a balance of teacher talk and student talk, as well as whole class activities and small group activities (Linse, 2005).

## **Summary**

This review of literature has examined how children and adults learn differently, information related to child development, and various aspects of language acquisition and classroom management. This information proved very valuable as I wrote and edited my two units on teaching young language learners. It helped me to better understand how young learners learn and acquire language. The next chapter explains the development process of writing my two units based on the information from the literature and my personal background in teaching young learners.

### **Chapter 3: Development Process**

This chapter presents the process I went through in developing my two units for the BTRTESOL program. This process included designing the project, developing the units, editing the units, adjusting the readability and doing the final edits.

#### **Project Design**

Before beginning any great undertaking or project it is important to have a clear plan of development. Greer (1988) lists three phases in material development: Project Planning, Instructional Development, and Follow Up. The first phase, Planning, consists of determining the scope of the project and organizing the project. These two steps were mostly completed before I joined the team of graduate students working on BTRTESOL (hereafter referred to as the BTRTESOL team). The 40-50 proposed units for BTRTESOL had been outlined and the instructional approach had been designed to be minimalist, connectivist, and problem-solving in nature. I will briefly explain each of these features, which were explained in greater detail in Chapter 1 of this report. Each unit is minimalistic, covering only the most important information (“the least you should know”) in 5-7 pages and using vocabulary and sentence structure that will allow the users to easily read and understand the concepts. In addition, the materials are designed to be training materials, focusing more on teaching techniques and strategies that users can put to immediate use and less on theory. Each unit is also connectivist, connecting to other units in the program, as well as, connecting the user to additional materials (“where to go to learn more”). Last, each unit begins with a scenario that presents a problem associated with the main topic for the unit. For example, for my unit on teaching very young learners I present a scenario in which



a novice, untrained teacher is faced with teaching English to kindergarten-aged students in Taiwan with few ideas about how to actually teach English to very young language learners. This scenario serves the purpose of engaging readers and helping them connect the text to reality.

Greer's (1988) second phase, Instructional Development, includes gathering information, developing a blueprint, creating draft materials, testing draft materials and producing master materials. The steps of gathering information, creating draft materials and testing draft materials were particularly important to my development process.

First, I worked with other MA students that were also working on the BTRTESOL program to gather information about the need for these materials. Amanda Malaman, Udambor Bumandalai, Julie (Jung-Eun) Chang, and I met weekly to refine and improve the prospectus and get feedback on our individual units. The original prospectus was created by the previous years' group of graduate students who worked on the BTRTESOL program, which was originally called *The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More*. We worked to better understand the need for the materials by contacting various organizations that used volunteers to teach English, as well as conducting web searches. This information led us to better understand the number of volunteer teachers, as well as their need for training. As one respondent stated, "We could really use the type of resources you are talking about producing. With an all-volunteer army, we get a lot of love and desire, but not a complete skill set" (personal communication, September 29, 2010). Additionally, we strove to strengthen and improve the organization of the prospectus by adding citations and developing charts to better organize the information about competing programs. We also carefully reviewed the competing programs that had been previously investigated by the prior team and discovered additional competing

programs. This information proved valuable in understanding the goal of what we were creating. (See Appendix A for the completed prospectus.) With an understanding of the scope and organization of the project I was ready to move on to the next step of gathering information and writing the first drafts of my two units.

### **Unit Development**

I began my MA project with the intention of writing two units for the BTRTESOL program and initially selected to develop Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners” and Unit 6C: “Teaching Reading.” In fall semester of 2010 I enrolled in Ling 678: Advanced Materials Development taught by Dr. Lynn Henrichsen. This class was an excellent opportunity to explore the process of materials development and work on the development of Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners.” (This chapter was initially completed in December 2010 as part of the materials development class.) I decided to focus on developing Unit 5B first because I wanted to wait to work on 6C until I had taken Dr. Anderson’s reading pedagogy class in winter 2011. During this time it was very helpful to meet weekly with the BTRTESOL team as we worked on the prospectus because we also had the opportunity to discuss the development of our individual units and provide each other with feedback.

I began researching teaching English to children and writing Unit 5B. Greer (1998) explains that the process of gathering information requires the materials developer to think about what information is needed by the audience to ensure that the right information is contained in the materials. This was very true with the materials I was producing. I had only a small amount of space (5-7 pages) and needed to cover the key ideas. With all my background in elementary

education and ESL, I found it difficult to narrow my ideas into one brief chapter. I had spent 4 ½ years studying child development, developmentally appropriate practice, theories of child development, teaching strategies, and classroom management. However, it was important to keep my focus on language teaching and specific strategies for teaching language. Additionally, I knew that most young English language learners in the United States are taught by certified teachers in the public school system. So, I knew my intended audience was mainly novice, untrained teachers who would teach abroad. As I researched and read articles and books I intentionally looked for studies that had been done with students in situations where English was being taught as a foreign language. I also thought about what was the most important information I could give to a novice teacher. I thought about what I would tell a person going to teach English if I only had an hour to talk to him or her and I knew that whatever I said in that hour was the only training she would receive. I realized that I needed to focus on strategies and techniques that were useful in teaching children, not the theories and sequences of physical, cognitive, and social and emotional development I had studied. I decided that some basic understanding of child development would be helpful but focused my writing on discussing the impact of such development on language learning. For example, I discussed how children have a difficult time learning formal grammar because of their cognitive development; therefore, grammar should simply be taught in context without explicit focus. I found an article by Cameron (2003) that expressed the concerns she had about children learning languages at a very young age. In that article Cameron (2003) states:

Amongst other knowledge and skills, teachers of young learners need:

- An understanding of how children think and learn

- Skills and knowledge in spoken English to conduct whole lessons orally and to pick up children's interests and use them for language teaching
- To be equipped to teach initial literacy in English. (p. 111)

I realized that this is what I needed to provide my audience. While I did not have the space to cover each of these areas in detail, I tried to make sure I presented some information about each of these topics. Originally, my unit was divided into five sections: "Who Are Young Learners," "Characteristics of Young Learners," "How Young People Learn," "Literacy," and "Classroom Management." I also considered creating a sample lesson plan. In the section "Characteristics of Young Learners," I presented information on cognitive development as well as using curiosity and imagination to help children learn. In the section "How Young People Learn," I discussed specific techniques for teaching children. I originally planned to include a section on literacy, but did not get it written prior to presenting the information. Following presentations and committee meetings I reworked the unit and the information on literacy was included in another section instead of being its own section.

In addition to the information suggested by Cameron, I knew that one of the most common fears among new teachers, even those with training, is how to manage a classroom and what to do so the students will not misbehave. Therefore, I decided that a brief section of my unit should be about classroom management. I realized that there was a unit in the BTRTESOL program dedicated specifically to classroom management, but I also recognized that there are differences between how to manage a classroom of adults and a classroom of children.

Once the first draft was nearly complete I was ready to begin testing the draft materials. In the fall of 2010 the BTRTESOL team along with Dr. Henrichsen presented the materials we

were developing at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah as part of the annual Intermountain TESOL (ITESOL) conference. I was able to present the still-in-progress, original draft of my first unit, Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young Learners,” and obtain feedback from those in attendance who consisted of professionals in the field of TESOL and fellow graduate students. I asked those in attendance to fill out a feedback form. Most of the people who filled out the feedback sheets commented that they liked the content and that the information on characteristics and how young children learn was good. One person wrote, “covered multiple levels of concerns ie: cognitive, behavioral, social, etc.” Another person wrote, “good summary of needs.” This was very positive because it helped me to feel that I was moving in the right direction. I also received some suggestions for resources and websites, such as starfall.com that I later added as an external resource. (For more on evaluating the units see Chapter 5: Evaluation.)

On December 6, 2010, I met with two members of my committee. Dr Lynn Henrichsen and Dr. Ray Graham. I had provided each member of my committee with a draft of the first unit and hoped to get their input for revisions that needed to be made. As we began discussing the project and what I was doing, Dr. Graham suggested that I needed to include more information about the differences between young and very young children. For example, we discussed the differences in cognitive development and attention span between young and very young learners. We also discussed differences related to literacy. Dr. Graham pointed out that a lot of what I had written was geared more towards very young learners, but including information on teaching literacy skills would be more geared to teaching young learners. Dr. Graham particularly believed that both age groups needed to be addressed and suggested making the chapter significantly longer. We explained the page limits of the project and then discussed the possibility of writing two units on teaching children, one focusing on very young children and

one focusing on older children. At first, I was unsure of this suggestion. My hesitation was based on my uncertainty of the need for such units. Based on my educational background in early childhood and elementary education, I understood that there were significant differences in how children learn based on their age. However, I also knew that young English language learners in the United States were generally taught by state certified teachers. Therefore, my audience consisted mainly of international volunteers and other novice, untrained teachers who would be teaching English to children. I was concerned that there was not a significant enough number of novice, untrained teachers teaching very young learners to warrant a unit specifically on very young language learners.

Around this same time, I also met with Dr. Neil Anderson, another member of my committee. I felt that this meeting was very helpful. Dr. Anderson complimented me on my writing style and emphasized the need to have a thorough, well-written review of literature. He also suggested a few additional sources, including *Teaching Young Language Learners* by Pinter and *Practical Language Teaching: Young Learners* by Linse. Both of these sources later became valuable resources for writing my units. Additionally, I felt that they would both be good resources for novice teachers, so I included them in the “Where to Go to Learn More” section of later drafts of “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners.”

Based on the feedback I had received, I edited and completed the first draft of Unit 5B “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners.” (See Appendix B for the completed first draft.) I divided the section on how young people learn into two sections. In the first part, I focused on principles of how they learn such as being active and needing concrete materials. In the second section, I focused on specific teaching techniques that teachers could

use. I also created a Dreamweaver® file using a template provided by Dr. Henrichsen, so the information could be posted to the website.

In the spring of 2011, Dr. Henrichsen informed me that faculty from the TESOL program at Brigham Young University Hawaii had started a class that focused on teaching English to young learners. He suggested that I contact the teacher and ask her to recommend some additional sources. Aubrey Olsen, the instructor, e-mailed me back, informing me that they were using Linse's book *Practical Language Teaching: Young Learners* as the textbook for the class. She recommended several other books as well, several of which, including books by Pinter and Cameron, I had already looked at. She also recommended *English Language Learners Day by Day, K-6: A Complete Guide to Literacy, Content-Area, and Language Instruction* by Christina M. Celic. This book focused more on teaching English language learners in immersion-based programs here in the United States, but provided valuable information.

Also in the spring of 2011 I had more opportunities to share the unit that I had been working on and receive additional feedback. This feedback came from people enrolled in Ling 377: Basic Training in TESOL at BYU and groups preparing to work with the humanitarian aid organization, HELP International. These groups primarily consisted of students who were going abroad to help with humanitarian aid projects including teaching English. In the feedback I received from my presentation to the Ling 377 class, two students commented that they would like more information about the differences between age groups. (For more complete information about the class and feedback see Chapter 5: Evaluation.) Therefore, I realized that more information about different age groups was something that the volunteers wanted, but I still was concerned if there were enough novice, untrained English teachers teaching these age groups

to justify two units. I discussed my concerns with two of my colleagues, Steve Holland and Caprice Bailey, at the English Language Center at BYU, who had taught English to children in Taiwan. They were able to confirm that there are many novice, untrained teachers teaching children. Additionally, both of these colleagues taught English to children, but neither had studied teaching methods related to early childhood or elementary education. (They both received some training while teaching.) I asked them about the challenges they faced and the training they received.

After these experiences, I decided there was indeed a need to write more about teaching young learners and I changed my project scope. I decided to leave Unit 6C on reading for someone else to develop and to write two units on teaching young learners. In the field of child development, researchers generally divide childhood into two periods: early childhood, between the ages of two and six, and middle childhood, between the ages of six and twelve (Rathus, 2006). Additionally, most universities offer degrees in early childhood education that certifies teachers to teach preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or elementary education, which certifies them to teach kindergarten through sixth grade. I decided to split the units based on these age groups. The unit of teaching very young learners covers information on learners from ages 3 to 7 and the unit on young learners covers information on learners from ages 7 to 12.

This decision was more strongly confirmed to me when I was asked to present my unit as part of a training in the Philippines via Internet conferencing. The conference was arranged by GERALYN CHICO, a graduate of BYU Hawaii, who was putting together a training day in teaching English as an employment workshop for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I presented on my unit “Working Successfully with Young Learners.” During my



presentation I learned that many people in the Philippines are teaching English to children without formal training. This information surprised me and further confirmed the need for providing training materials for teaching young and very young learners. Further confirmation came later when in doing further research, I realized that children all over the world are beginning to learn English from a young age. A brief look for jobs teaching English to children showed that the only requirement for many jobs is a bachelor's degree and being a native speaker of English.

Unfortunately, this decision to split the unit slowed my work on both the units because I felt overwhelmed by the idea of writing two units on young learners. I knew I needed to review what I had written and move some of the information from the existing unit into the new unit. I also knew I needed to do more research. For the next two semesters I did more reading and thinking about how I wanted to divide the two units but did little actual work on the units or the project report.

In November 2011 I decided that I needed more background information on how children learn languages. I realized that while I know a lot about teaching children due to my undergraduate degree and quite a bit about teaching English to adults from my graduate studies, I had no experience teaching English as a foreign language to children. I read parts of two books on teaching language to children: *Children Learning Second Languages* by Pinter (2011) and *Second Language Acquisition and the Younger Learner: Child's play?* edited by Philp et al (2008). Both were very helpful in understanding the process of second language acquisition for children. Nevertheless, I still felt that I was lacking perspective, since I had never taught English as a foreign language to children. I therefore, determined to talk to some people who did have

such experience. I started by talking to my friend and colleague, Steve Holland, who taught English to children in Taiwan. Interviewing him proved to be a valuable experience, and I learned a lot more about what is happening with foreign language teaching in Taiwan. He taught at a cram school in Taiwan and was able to tell me about teaching children and the things that he found difficult (Steve Holland, personal communication, November 10, 2011). I also contacted some people who spent a summer teaching English in Thailand. One of these people, Whitney Fehr (personal communication, November 29, 2011), responded that she had a great experience but that she wished she had known how young the students would be. She taught 1 to 7 year olds in a nursery school in Thailand. This information further confirmed my decision to split the unit and provide more information about both age groups of young learners for novice, untrained teachers.

Using all this information, I worked on the two units during late fall of 2011. I decided to use my basic subsections from my original draft for both of the units, which would help them to compliment each other. For the “Effective Teaching Strategies” section of each unit I presented techniques that would be particularly relevant to the unit’s respective age group. For example, in the unit on very young learners I suggested using TPR, storytelling and songs and fingerplays. (Fingerplays are chants with actions that are very common in preschool and kindergarten classrooms in the United States) In the unit on young learners I suggested using competition and games. I also included information about teaching literacy skills in English. I selected the content based on the literature I had read, my knowledge about learning English from my graduate coursework, and my knowledge about teaching children from earning my BA in elementary education and working with young and very young learners. I identified topics or teaching strategies that were mentioned in the majority of the literature I read and included these

in the units. I paid particular attention to the topics that were covered when only a small amount of information was given about teaching young learners, such as in *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* by Brown (2007). For example, almost every book I read suggested using TPR to help students be actively involved in learning and maintain attention. I finally completed the first drafts of my two units in December 2011 and met with Dr. Henrichsen to go over them.

### **Editing**

Following my meeting with Dr. Henrichsen I began editing and revising the units. Both units needed to be revised for content, sentence structure, punctuation, and vocabulary. Unfortunately, even though I tried to write at a basic level, it was very difficult to change from writing graduate-level papers for professors to writing training materials for novice, untrained teachers.

I believed that the content of the units was fairly good, but I needed major changes to the instructional objectives. The original objectives for the units were very academic and not immediately applicable. While it is valuable for a graduate student to be able to discuss and explain the cognitive development of children and how that affects language learning and teaching, the BTRTESOL audience wants concrete information that they can immediately apply in order to be more successful. Therefore, the objectives were rewritten to focus on how information in the unit could be applied by the users. Many of the comprehension questions throughout the unit were also changed to be more specific and concrete. The first section of each unit “Background Information” was edited significantly and combined with the second section “Who Are Young (Very Young) Learners?” This created four main sections in each unit: “Who

Are Young Learners?” “How Young People Learn,” “Effective Teaching Strategies,” and “Classroom Management.” (For the unit on very young learners, very young replaced young in the section titles.) This change eliminated repetitions and unnecessary information and allowed for more space to add more examples to the unit. The examples served to give more concrete illustrations of the principles, as well as provide teaching ideas. One of the suggestions for improvement I received from previous feedback was to include a sample daily schedule. Because of space limitations and various needs of the audience, I decided not to include a daily schedule but tried to provide examples of many activities. Additionally, I decided to reorder the units. Initially, I had Unit 5B “Working Successfully with Very Young Learners” first and Unit 5C: “Working Successfully with Young Learners” second. At the suggestion of Dr. Henrichsen the order of the units was changed so Unit 5B became “Working Successfully with Young Learners” and 5C became “Working Successfully with Very Young Learners”. The justification for this change was that “Working Successfully with Young Learners” was more general, whereas “Working Successfully with Very Young Learners” was more specific.

In addition to editing the content I also went through each chapter and edited for vocabulary and sentence structure. I made changes in vocabulary by using less academic words. For example, I began the sections “Who Are Young Learners” and “Who Are Very Young Learners” discussing cognitive development of children. In order to be more understandable to a wider audience I changed “cognitive development” to “how children think.” I also simplified my sentence structure by cutting out many complex sentences and eliminating transition words, such as *therefore*.

## Readability

Another important aspect of the units was their readability. The Oxford English Dictionary defines readability as “the ease with which a text may be scanned or read; the quality in a book, etc., of being easy to understand and enjoyable to read” ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)). Several factors affect the readability of a text including vocabulary, sentence length, and the motivation and background knowledge of the reader (DuBay, 2007). Grabe (2009) explains that reading is a complex process consisting of higher- and lower-level processing, including word recognition, working memory, background knowledge, and metacognitive skills, along with a variety of other tasks. These factors were important to consider as I continued to revise the units.

From the beginning of the project, I was aware that I needed to write at a more basic level because these materials are being created for a wide variety of people with various educational backgrounds. Therefore, they are written to be relatively easy to read. This meets the need of my audience in two ways. First, it is important that the materials are written at a level that is comprehensible to an audience with various educational backgrounds since the audience encompasses everyone from recent high-school graduates to professionals in a variety of fields. Second, the materials need to be easy to read and understandable so that they can be read quickly. Many volunteer teachers lack either the time or the desire (or both) to commit many hours to learning more about teaching English. If the reading is too difficult or challenging, most people will discontinue reading (DuBay, 2007).

In 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL). The study included “a nationally representative samples of 19,714 adults ages 16 or older” (NCES, 2003, p. 18). The adults were asked to read and

answer open-ended questions to determine their literacy level with three kinds of writing: prose, document, and quantitative. The average score for prose was 275, which would fall into the intermediate level. The scores were evaluated at four levels: below basic, basic, intermediate, and proficient. Intermediate readers are characterized as “reading and understanding moderately dense, less commonplace prose texts as well as summarizing, making simple inferences, determining cause and effect, and recognizing the author’s purpose” (NCES, 2003, p. 3). According to the study, 56% of men and 60% of women read at or above the intermediate level.

According to DuBay (2007), “the average adult in the U.S. reads at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, middle school level” (p. 33). Examination of the readability of several national English publications show that *Readers Digest*, *TV Guide*, and *Time*, magazines with large circulations, are written at approximately a 9<sup>th</sup>-grade level and many popular novels, such as romance novels, are written at or below the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade level (DuBay, 2007). Therefore, having an average reading level slightly below 9<sup>th</sup> grade should make the readability of the two units appropriate for users with a variety of educational levels and ages.

In order to check the reading levels, I used the tool found at [addedbytes.com](http://addedbytes.com) that gives reading levels using the top readability formulas, as well as Flesch’s reading ease score. However, the results of readability scores were not the only thing I considered. In his book *Smart Language: Readers, Readability and the Grading of Text*, DuBay (2007) cautions writers that they need to be aware of all the aspects of good writing, not only readability formulas, as they create materials. He says,

As the experts say, “Don’t write to the formula,” because it is too easy to neglect the other aspects of good writing. Readers need the active voice, action verbs, clear organization and navigation clues and a page design that is

professional and attractive. More than anything else, they need texts that create and sustain interest. (DuBay, 2007, p. 112)

These other aspects of good writing have been considered throughout the development of the BTRTESOL program. The BTRTESOL printed pages have been written using a template designed by Jake Vane and Lance Dobson as part of English 418: Visual Rhetoric and Drama Design in early 2009. It provides clear organization and also uses headings and subheadings to help readers navigate the various units. The BTRTESOL webpages are designed following a similar template with links that allow users to jump to the specific topic or section they want to read. The program also uses graphics and pictures to make the program attractive to the user. Additionally, with the focus on writing training materials that can be easily applied to various teaching situations, the expectation is that the materials will be interesting to users in their desire to be more successful language teachers.

Having taken into account these aspects of good writing, it is also essential to consider vocabulary and sentence structure. As I sat down to revise my units with Dr. Henrichsen, he suggested several places where I needed to use simpler vocabulary and simpler sentence structure.

**Adjusting readability.** I began by simplifying vocabulary and sentence structure to give the units a less academic tone. After multiple revisions I used the vocabulary profile tool at [lex Tutor.ca](http://lex Tutor.ca) to evaluate word usage in the units. This tool, based on Nation's Range program, identifies the words according to three lists. The vocabulary profile program highlights words according to the top 2000 word families as well as the Academic Word List. It also shows those words that do not occur on any of the three previous lists.

This tool allowed me to easily see which words were more academic or off list and, therefore, might cause difficulty for readers. After changing some of the words, mostly those that occurred in the Academic Word List or those that did not occur on a list, I achieved the vocabulary profile I desired for my units, as seen in Table 1. Most of the words occur in the first 1000 words. Only 3%, approximately 80 words, are from the Academic Word List. Some of these include commonly occurring words such as *adult*, *partner*, and *culture*. Many of the words occurring in the off-list section included proper nouns such as the names of people occurring in the scenarios and the names of countries and languages. Some of the words in the off-list section which most people would be familiar with include *classroom*, *nervous*, *scary*, *bored*, and *dinosaur*.

For instructional-level reading, readers should know 95% of the words in a given text and 99% of the words for independent reading (Grabe, 2009, p. 271). Based on the information in Table 1, I think a high-school educated reader would understand 90% or more of the words in the unit.

Table 1

Vocabulary Profile of Unit 5B and Unit 5C

List	Unit 5 B Young Learners	Unit 5 C Very Young Learners
First 1000	87.16%	87.89%
Second 1000	5.01%	4.49%
AWL	3.45%	3.73%
Off list	4.37%	3.89%



I also checked readability using a tool at [addedbytes.com](http://addedbytes.com). This tool scores a text using the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease score and five different readability measures. My two units scored 66.9 and 68.9 on the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease Score. The higher the score on the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease test the easier the text. A text scoring in the 60 – 70 range is considered to have a standard difficulty for adult readers. Those scoring higher than 70 are considered easier, and those scoring lower are considered more difficult (Flesch, 1949). Based on these numbers, my texts would be considered standard reading for adults.

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The tools at [addedbytes.com](http://addedbytes.com) also checks reading level using five commonly used measures of readability and giving an average score based on these five measures. As shown in Table 2 and 3 both my units averaged below a 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.

Table 2

## Readability Results for Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young Learners

Readability Formula	Grade Level
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	7.40
Gunning-Fog Score	9.10
Coleman-Liau Index	12.30
SMOG Index	7.00
Automated Readability Index	8.00
Average	8.76

Table 3

## Readability Results for Unit 5C: Working Successfully with Very Young Learners

Readability Formula	Grade Level
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	7.10
Gunning-Fog Score	8.80
Coleman-Liau Index	11.90
SMOG Index	6.70
Automated Readability Index	7.60
Average	8.42

Though readability scores are based on only one or two of the key factors of reading they are used by almost 90% of textbook publishers and have been found valid for use in legal cases (DuBay, 2007). Readability scores are criticized because there is often a wide discrepancy between various scores (as can be seen in Table 2 and Table 3). DuBay (2007) points out that these discrepancies are the result of differences between the formulas in how they are calculated as well as the criterion used. For example, some tests use the syllables in a word whereas others use the number of letters in a word or only use the sentence length. (My two units averaged 13.8 words per sentence and 1.5 syllables per word (addedbytes.com).) The criterion used to set the scores also makes a difference. For example, the Flesch score is based on 75% comprehension whereas the Gunning-Fog score is based on 90% comprehension, thus accounting for the Gunning-Fog readability score being higher.

With the assumption mentioned previously that the average adult in the United States reads at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level (DuBay, 2007), it can be assumed that both of these units would be readable for the average American adult. Although some terminology might be more difficult, the effort has been made to define these terms in the units. For example, when I discuss attention span I begin with a brief definition of what attention span is.

Once the editing was done and the units were at a good reading level they were ready to be uploaded to the website. I created a Dreamweaver ®file for each of the units using a template provided by Dr. Henrichsen. I also chose video files to be attached to each unit as examples. I watched several examples of novice, volunteer teachers in Thailand, Peru and Guatemala. I tried to select video examples that illustrated the principles I discussed in my units. I used several short clips for each unit to create approximately a 3-minute video.

## **Final Editing**

Unfortunately, because of my efforts to simplify the sentence structure and eliminate transition words, the text of both my units became choppy, consisting of short sentences with few transition or connecting words. While this resulted in a lower reading level, it also caused the text to become slightly unnatural. I again edited my units based on suggestions from Dr. Henrichsen. This time, I added a few more transitions and conjunctions; I tried to avoid words such as *therefore* and use less-academic words or phrases such as *so*. I further refined the questions in several of the sections to make them more specific and better related to the preceding material and I improved the objectives for the units by using action verbs to explain the desired outcomes of the units. I also needed to fix a few problems with pronouns so that my point of view would be consistent throughout the unit. These changes did not significantly affect the reading levels. According to [addedbytes.com](http://addedbytes.com) the average reading level for Unit 5B was 8.6 and the average reading level for Unit 5C was 8.4. As DuBay (2007) pointed out readability is about more than just the vocabulary and sentence structure. By adding more transitions and conjunctions the text for the units is more natural and still falls below the BTRTESOL program's goal of the units having approximately a 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.

## **Summary**

This chapter has discussed my process of developing my two units for the BTRTESOL program. I began with a strong foundation in the project design that had previously been completed and then gathered information in order to develop my two units on teaching English to children. Once the first drafts of my two units were completed, I edited the units for content and adjusted them for readability to ensure that they would be understandable to most novice,

untrained teachers. The two completed units are available online at [www.btrtesol.com](http://www.btrtesol.com) and are also presented in paper form in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4: The Final Versions of the Two Units

This chapter contains the final versions of Units 5B and 5C. The units were written primarily for people teaching English to children outside of the United States. Both units begin with a scenario, as do all the units in the BTRTESOL program. These scenarios present problems that a novice, untrained teacher might encounter and help users relate to the materials. The first scenario is very general and is based on the many teachers who volunteer in various locations around the world to teach English. The location of Thailand was chosen because there were video clips available from schools in Thailand to use for the video examples. The second scenario is more specific and is based on the experiences of a teacher I know who taught kindergarten-aged children at a cram school in Taiwan. The content of the units was selected based on information on child development, second language acquisition by children, and how children learn from various sources, which were reviewed in Chapter two. *Teaching Young Language Learners* by Pinter, *Practical Language Teaching: Young Learners* by Linse, and *Bringing Creative Teaching into the Young Learner Classroom* by Cameron and McKay were all particularly influential in deciding the content and confirming the decisions I had made. The topics chosen were also selected based on the knowledge that I gained during my coursework for my BA degree in early childhood and elementary education and my personal experience as an elementary school teacher. This background gave me a solid foundation from which I could draw in order to write the units.

# Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners

## Introduction

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This unit discusses the needs of children aged 7-12 years who are learning English as a foreign language. The next unit covers younger children, aged 3-7. This unit focuses on teaching English abroad, because state certified teachers teach English as a second language to children in the United States and other English speaking countries. Many other BTRTESOL units can be combined with the information contained in this unit to help you be successful in teaching children.

## Scenario: Going Abroad

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Sara was studying at a university in the United States. She decided she wanted to spend the summer abroad volunteering. She found an organization that sent volunteers around the world to help with various needs. She noticed there was a high demand for native-English speaking teachers. She thought this would be the perfect opportunity for her. Sara applied to volunteer with the organization and was assigned to teach English to children in Thailand. As her departure date got closer, Sara realized that she didn't know very much about teaching basic English to children. Additionally, while she enjoyed playing with her nieces and nephews, she was always grateful when their parents took charge when they were crying or misbehaving. She became nervous as she thought about teaching children English. How was she supposed to teach a language to children? How would the children behave? How would she teach the ABCs to children who used the Thai alphabet? How would she talk with them when they spoke little English and she spoke no Thai?

## Reflection Questions

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What are Sara's four major concerns about teaching English to children?

If you were in her situation, which of these concerns would you address first?

What concerns do you have about teaching English to children?

## Objectives of this unit

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This unit address Sara's concerns and, hopefully, some of your concerns about teaching English to young learners. After you work through this unit, you will be better prepared to work successfully with children by...

- Planning fun, effective lessons to increase motivation and attention
- Planning lessons based on principles of how children learn
- Using activities that help children learn
- Using some basic classroom management skills to help children behave well

# Young Learners -The Least You Should Know

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Young learners and adults learn differently. Very young learners (ages 3-7) and young learners (ages 7-12) also learn differently because of developmental differences. These differences affect how children learn and how they should be taught. These differences also affect classroom management. In this unit you will learn...

1. Key Characteristics of Young Learners
2. Principles of Teaching Young Learners
3. Effective Teaching Strategies
4. Basic Classroom Management Skills

## 1. Key Characteristics of Young Learners

---

Take a minute and think of young learners you know, such as family members or neighbors. Think of children who are about 8-9 years old. What do they like to do? What do they think is interesting? What do they have a hard time with? As you read this unit think about how you have seen the following characteristics in children you know.

### Background Knowledge

Most children in this age group have attended a few years of school and can read and write in their native language. This greatly increases their knowledge about their native language and language in general. This means it is easier to teach them to read and write in English. Their knowledge is based on their experience, so it may still be limited in some ways.

When you teach abroad, your students come from a different culture, so their expectations about school may be different. (See Unit 1D: "Dealing with Cultural Differences and Culture Shock".) You will want to become familiar with the expectations of your students, other teachers and parents.

Some children may hear and speak English only during English class. Others may hear it more often. You will want to find out how much English your students listen to. Most people think children are very good language learners, but the amount children are able to learn depends on the amount of English they hear, use and see. Of course, their learning also depends on the teacher and other things.

Young learners do not want to be treated the same way as younger children. It is important to be sensitive to this need. When you choose games and songs you will want to choose things that won't make them feel like they are being treated "like babies."

### Thinking Processes

Young learners are beginning to think more like adults. For example, they can tell the difference between fantasy and reality. They think more logically and they are beginning to categorize things in a more adult-like way. This allows them to begin simple grammar instruction, such as learning about nouns and verbs. They also have greater memory capacity. This means they can handle more complex directions. Most young learners can remember up to five tasks or directions in a row. You may need to start with fewer or use pictures to help remind them what they need to do, because they are still learning the language. Young learners are also able to focus on a specific thing. They can find differences between pictures or objects. Their experiences, both in and out of school, allow them to understand more concepts than younger children. For example, they can understand grammar better.

### Motivation

Young learners are typically highly motivated and have confidence in their ability to do things. They are also starting to learn to compare and notice differences in abilities. This can cause them to lose their motivation because they notice someone else is doing better. Most children will need to learn English for many years, so it is important that teachers do their best to keep them motivated. Like most people, young learners are motivated by success. It is important that they feel successful and confident in their ability to learn a language. It is very important that teachers be aware of students and help keep them motivated by planning lessons and activities that are at an appropriate level - not too hard or too easy. Young learners



may not understand why they need to learn English, so it is important to make learning fun and exciting. They are motivated by fun activities, rewards, and people that care about them.

### **Attention Span**

As children get older they are better able to stay focused on one thing, but if something is boring or frustrating, they will start doing other things. Planning many different activities will help students maintain attention. Don't have them do any one activity for too long, especially if they are getting bored. If they are enjoying the activity you can keep doing it, but if they are bored it is good to move to another planned activity. Games are a good way to help students pay attention. For example, use a small ball and toss it to a student. The student who has the ball answers a question. Then, he throws it to another student or back to the teacher. Students will pay more attention because they have to catch the ball and answer a question. (See an example of this in the video later in this unit.)

### **Curiosity**

Children can learn about almost anything if they find it interesting. For example, many students enjoy learning about animals and dinosaurs. Even though they have never seen an actual dinosaur, they are able to learn about them because they are interesting. Try to use things in your lesson that your students are interested in. For example, if you are teaching colors, find something that they are interested in that can be used as an example. If you have the freedom to plan your own lessons, find out what the children want to learn about. This is a great way to increase motivation and attention span. (For more information about planning lessons see Unit 2C: "Designing Lessons.")

### **Silence**

Young learners may go through a period of silence during which they don't talk. This does not mean they are not learning, as long as they can understand the language being used. They are simply choosing not to talk. They may not feel comfortable talking in the new language yet. Make the classroom a comfortable place for students by creating a place where it is OK to make mistakes. Don't always correct students. They do not need to speak perfect English. Also allow opportunities to answer by pointing or using gestures. (See information about Total Physical Response [TPR] in Unit 5C: Working Successfully with Very Young Learners.) Students may also be more comfortable telling their answer to a partner than to the whole class. Also, do not be too quick to answer yourself if students are not responding. Young learners sometimes need time to think before they are ready to answer. When you ask questions, give your students time to answer. Many teachers only give students a few seconds to think of an answer. Children need to be given more time to answer. Try counting to 30 or 60 before giving them an answer.

## ***Comprehension and Reflection Questions***



1. Have you seen any of the characteristics mentioned in the behavior of children you know?
2. What are some characteristics of the way young learners think?
3. What are two ways to help children pay attention?
4. What are two ways to help children feel comfortable in class?
5. Have you seen any of the characteristics mentioned in the behavior of children you know?

## **2. Principles of Teaching Young Learners**

Now that you have an understanding of some of the basic characteristics of young learners, let's look at how they learn.

### **Active**

Children learn best by being actively involved. When they are actively involved it makes it easier for them to link things together and make meaning. Language is something that we learn best by using. You may have students repeat words, answer questions, or show their knowledge in other ways. For example, you could play a game where you have a student draw a picture and the other students try to guess what he or she is drawing. For example, if you are teaching about clothing, you could have one student draw a picture of an article of clothing and the other students guess. This activity could be used to review vocabulary for many topics.

### **Connected**

It is important for learning to be connected to students' lives. Many young learners have a good knowledge base from which to draw. Some are connected to the world through the Internet and pop culture, but others may not have this access. When things are connected to their lives, it helps them learn. Be aware and teach them things from their culture and their community. If the place where you teach does a lot of fishing, you could teach them vocabulary related to fishing (i.e.: boat, fish, net, fishermen, shore). They are also able to connect previous experiences with new ones. Your students may be interested in learning about your culture. Find common ground to start from. For example, they may be interested in comparing food and eating in America with food and eating in their countries. You could talk about what they eat for breakfast and what American eat for breakfast.

### **Concrete**

Young learners are beginning to think abstractly, but they still rely on real (concrete) examples. You will want to use pictures or actual items to help your students understand. Some young learners can understand simple dictionary definitions or explanations from the teacher. But, make sure you keep your language simple. (See Unit 3B: Adjusting Your Spoken English.) Generally the older the student the more aware they are of their own language, which allows them to begin to understand more complicated, abstract language. Another way to make things concrete is to use translation. If you know the native language of the children it can be helpful to translate some words or short sentences. This can be especially helpful when words are hard to define. Also, make sure when you give your students a task to do the directions are clear. It can be helpful to show your student how to do an activity before they do it.

### **Social**

Young learners learn by talking and doing things with each other and adults. So, they can benefit from practicing English with each other. Most of them can work with a small group or partner to practice language or do an activity. For example, they can play a game with a partner or practice simple greetings. Children also talk differently when they are talking to adults and when they are talking to other children. They can gain many skills by having opportunities to talk with other children.

## **3. Effective Teaching Strategies**

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Now that you understand a little more about how children learn in general, here are some specific methods you can use when planning and teaching lessons. Young learners can handle some challenging material, but they may not be able to participate in very complex activities such as role-plays, debates and translation, which work well with adult learners.

### **Reading and Writing**

Most children in this age group read and write in their native language. So, they are aware of how written language works. Thus, reading and writing become important tools for teaching the second language. Some students will know a different alphabet. Russian, for example, uses a different alphabet than English. Other students will know a completely different writing system. Chinese, Korean, and Thai use a different system. Chinese is written in characters not an alphabet. If your students use a different writing system,

you will want to spend more time teaching and practicing how to write the alphabet. Some students will use the same alphabet as English, but the letters make different sounds and go together in different ways. For example, in Spanish *h* is silent and *j* makes an *h* sound. When teaching new words, it is important that your students connect the way the word is written and the meaning of the word. Simple pictures are good for learning vocabulary. For example, if you were teaching the word *apple*, have a picture of an apple. You could also bring a real apple to class. Some other ideas for teaching reading and writing skills include

- Read books aloud
- If everyone has the same book, have everyone read at the same time. This way they can practice reading without feeling embarrassed because they don't know a word.
- Create personal dictionaries
- Have students retell a story you have read or told them
- Talk about characters, settings, storylines
- Use graphic organizers (charts, graphs)

### **Language Experience Approach**

Young learners benefit from listening to stories. Stories can help increase vocabulary and help students start to read. One common activity in elementary school classrooms is known as the Language Experience Approach or LEA. LEA helps students with both reading and writing. The class as a group writes a story based on a common experience, such as a fieldtrip. The teacher and the students write the story together. The students tell the teacher what to write on the board or a large piece of paper. Students can also help write the story on the board or in their notebooks. If the students are writing the story be very kind when they make mistakes with spelling. If there is an expectation that things be spelled correctly, you may want to do the writing. If the students make mistakes, they can become embarrassed. (Spelling in English is difficult!) The students then practice reading the story they have created. (For more information see <http://suite101.com/article/language-experience-approach-a51007> or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAMdcyL1RRU> )

### **Games and Competitions**

Young learners enjoy games and competition. Games can be played as a whole class or in small groups. Small groups give students more chances to practice English. Simple matching games or other vocabulary games can be good. Young learners can compare things and sort words and pictures into categories. Whole class games and competitions are also motivating. As seen in the video below, even reviewing vocabulary seems like a game when students are thrown a ball to take turns answering. (See Unit 8C: Using Games and Other Fun Yet Effective Activities for English Language Teaching for more game ideas.)

### **Theme-based Teaching**

Theme-based teaching is very effective for young learners. The content may be connected to what children are doing in their regular classroom or can be specific themes for English class. Common themes include “all about me”, animals, dinosaurs, science topics, food, etc. Pay attention to what your students are interested in, and then plan lessons that help them talk about those things in English. (See Unit 6E: “Teaching Multiple Skills in One Class.”) (For ideas about creating and finding materials see Section 10: “Language Teaching Materials.”)

## **4. Classroom Management Skills**

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Managing the classroom is one of the top concerns for most teachers. You cannot teach if the students are not well behaved. There are several things that teachers can do to effectively manage their classrooms. One of the most important is to have good rules or expectations. Rules are often stated in the negative. (“Don’t run.”) Expectations are stated in the positive. (Walk in the building.) You may need to find out what the rules or expectations are for the classroom or school that you teach at. You also need to set your own expectations and then wait for the children to meet those expectations. For example, never talk louder than your students. When the teacher talks, the students

listen. If your students are talking, wait for them to be quiet before you begin talking. It is also good to have some kind of signal for when you want the students to be quiet. For example, when you ring a bell, the students know they need to be quiet and look at you. Practice the signal. Have the students talk with each other and ring the bell, then repeat several times. (See Unit 5C: “Working Successfully with Very Young English Language Learners” and Unit 3E: “Managing Classes of English Language Learners.”)



### *Comprehension and Reflection Questions*

1. What are three ways children learn and give an example of each?
2. What are three things you need to think about when planning lessons for young children?
3. Give an example of one activity you could do to develop your students’ reading and writing skills.
4. What are two things you can do to manage your classroom so students learn and behave properly?

### **Video example**

This video clip shows a 4th grade class in Thailand led by two volunteer teachers. The class reviews body part vocabulary and then plays a simple game where the teacher tosses a ball to a student who then has to provide the vocabulary word. This is an effective game because it involves all the students – even those that are sometimes quiet.

### **Reflection and Responses**

As you view this video clip of a class of young learners, think about each of the following questions.

1. What was especially good about this class? (What did the teachers and students do right?)
2. What teaching principles/techniques discussed earlier in this unit did you see in this clip?
3. What changes could you make for your class?
4. What other things might you do to make your lessons even better?

Write your reflections in the box provided below. Then, click on the button by each box to see what other people have said after viewing and reflecting on this video clip.\*

That’s it. That’s “the least you should know” about working successfully with young learners. This unit contains only a small amount of information about some of the most important topics to consider. Of course, there is much more that you can learn about learning theories, emotional development, and language acquisition from the recommended resources.

## Where to go to learn more

### **Connections to other units in this program**

Here are some other units in this program that relate to this unit:

- Unit 1D: “Dealing with cultural differences and culture shock”
- Unit 2C: “Designing Lessons”
- Unit 3B: “Adjusting Your Spoken English”
- Unit 3C: “Managing classes of English language learners.”
- Unit 4F: “Developing an awareness of teaching styles and cross-cultural style differences”
- Unit 5C: “Working Successfully with Very Young English Language Learners”
- Unit 8B: “Using songs to increase participation, recall and enjoyment”
- Unit 8C: “Using games and other fun yet effective activities for English language teaching”

## Online and other electronic resources

<http://www.mes-english.com/>



This website has lots of free printables. If you don't have a printer, you could use the games and activities by writing on paper or just using the ideas and adapting them for your personal situation. There are also ideas about teaching phonics – letter sounds and corresponding letters. There is also a forum with information about teaching ESL/EFL and more ideas of games and activities.

<http://www.cal.org/jsp/ESL/esllist.jsp#searchResults>

A web database of various sites with activities and information about teaching ESL. Using the search feature you can find different types of websites. For example if where it says description, you type in “games” the database will show various websites with fun English activities. Some sites are for teachers others for teachers and students. Over 300+ sites.

<http://www.theteachersguide.com/ClassManagement.htm>



A web database linking to various articles on classroom management and discipline. The top link called “Classroom Management Tips” links to videos of classroom management strategies. Includes strategies for different age groups and even specific tips for new teachers.

## Print and paper-based resources

Here are some published books that have proven to be helpful resources for teaching young learners.



Anamaria Pinter. *Teaching Young Language Learners*. Oxford University Press, 2006. Offers theory and practical suggestions on teaching foreign languages to children. It includes learning theory as well as practical ideas for teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. It also includes information about what teachers can expect as far as the abilities of their students. ISBN 978-0194422079. [http://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Language-Learners-Handbooks-Teachers/dp/0194422070/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1336577885&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Language-Learners-Handbooks-Teachers/dp/0194422070/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1336577885&sr=8-1)

Caroline T. Linse. *Practical Language Teaching: Young Learners*. McGraw-Hill: New York, 2007. Information on teaching and assessing young learners. Includes information and ideas about teaching reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary with young learners of all ages. Includes information on working with parents, assessing and classroom management. ISBN 978-0071118415 [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=Practical+Language+Teaching%3A+Young+Learners](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=Practical+Language+Teaching%3A+Young+Learners)



Patricia A. Richard-Amato. *Making It Happen: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom From Theory to Practice*. Longman: White Plains, NY, 1996. The first section covers the theory of language learning. The second section gives example activities and methods for teaching including using music, games, TPR, storytelling. It also gives ideas for teaching reading and writing. The third section discusses classroom management, materials and content areas. The fourth section looks at ESL and EFL programs. ISBN 978-0201420180. [http://www.amazon.com/Making-It-Happen-Interaction-Classroom/dp/020142018X/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336578005&sr=1-3](http://www.amazon.com/Making-It-Happen-Interaction-Classroom/dp/020142018X/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336578005&sr=1-3)

Harry K. Wong & Rosemary T. Wong. *The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher*. Harry K Wong Publications. 2005. Information on setting up a classroom and classroom management. Practical ideas and suggestions in an easy to read format. ISBN 978-0962936029. [http://www.amazon.com/The-First-Days-School-Effective/dp/0962936022/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336578041&sr=1-3](http://www.amazon.com/The-First-Days-School-Effective/dp/0962936022/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336578041&sr=1-3)



# Working Successfully with Very Young English Language Learners

## Introduction

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This unit is about teaching very young learners aged 3-7, while the previous unit (5B: Working Successfully with Young Learners) is about teaching young learners aged 7-12. There are important developmental differences between young learners and very young learners. In order to successfully teach very young learners you need to be aware of these differences and how they change your teaching. Most people think that children learn languages easily, but that is not always true. In some ways teaching young learners can be more challenging than teaching adults, but it can also be very fun.

## Scenario: Going Abroad

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John was an English major at an American university. He had never been outside of the U.S. and wanted to travel and have an adventure. Following graduation he got a job teaching English to children at an English school in Taiwan. John didn't speak Chinese, but he was excited about the opportunity. When he arrived, he found that the education system in Taiwan was very different from the United States. The young children in his class had already spent the morning in school and now had to spend an additional 2 hours learning English. They were often tired and unmotivated. John felt a lot of pressure to keep the kids entertained and meet the parents' expectations. The parents were very worried about their children learning English because English is required for higher education and many jobs in Taiwan. John taught a couple different age groups. One group had ten 4 to 5 year old learners who spoke very little English. There were teaching assistants in the class who spoke Chinese to help with some classroom management, but John was completely responsible for keeping the students engaged and teaching English. The school had a basic curriculum but didn't have many additional resources. John was told what to teach – a topic or concept – but he wasn't told how to teach it. Sometimes, John felt like he was just a babysitter and that the children were not learning any English at all.

## Reflection Questions

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What are four of the challenges John faced in teaching very young learners?

Which of these challenges would you try to solve first? Why?

What challenges do you (or might you) face in teaching English to very young learners?

## Objectives of this unit

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After you work through this unit, you will be more prepared to teach very young learners by...

- Planning lessons based on characteristics of very young learners
- Planning lessons based on your understanding of how young children learn
- Using activities that are fun and promote learning
- Using classroom management skills to prevent misbehavior

# Very Young Learners -The Least You Should Know

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As mentioned before, there are key differences between young learners and very young learners. These differences effect how children learn and how they should be taught. These differences also change the way you manage your classroom. In this chapter you will learn ...

1. Key Characteristics of Very Young Learners
2. Principles of Teaching Very Young Learners
3. Effective Teaching Strategies
4. Classroom Management Skills

## 1. Key Characteristics of Very Young Learners

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Take a minute and think of very young learners you know. They could be family members, or neighbors, someone aged 3-7. As you read about the key characteristics, think about how you have seen these characteristics in this young learner.

### Background Knowledge

Very young learners come with a limited amount of knowledge. They are still learning a lot about their world, which includes learning their native language. Very young learners may not read or write in their native language, or they may have only recently begun to learn to read and write in their native language. For this reason, at this age it is better to focus on speaking and listening skills. If you teach reading and writing, you will want to introduce the alphabet and start teaching the written form of a few simple words. One good way to do this is by labeling classroom objects. For examples, putting a sign with the word *chair* on a chair. You will want to wait to teach reading skills because teaching reading is easier if children can read in their native language. (Teaching basic reading and writing to children was covered in 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners.”) Use pictures and examples more than written words, especially if you are teaching in a country where they use a non-roman alphabet (e.g. China, Thailand, etc.).

If you teach abroad, your students come from a different culture, which may have different expectation about school. By learning about and being respectful of your students’ culture, you will be better able to develop a positive relationship with them. (See Unit 1D “Cultural Differences”.and Unit 1E “Working within Foreign Cultural, Educational, and Administrative Systems”)

Many of your students may have little to no exposure to English outside of school. They may have family members who speak English or may watch TV or listen to music in English. However, many of them may only hear English at school. If that is the case, your students will learn slowly and learning will be more difficult.

### Thinking Processes

Very young learners are still learning the vocabulary and grammar rules of their first language. They are learning other skills and ideas that adults already know, such as cause and effect. Many of these ideas seem easy to adults. Very young learners learn a second language more like the way they learned their first. For example, how does a 2-year-old learn what an elephant is? A parent or teacher points at a picture of an elephant (or a real elephant) and says “elephant.” Very young learners have difficulty thinking abstractly, so it is important to have pictures and real examples to help them learn. Very young learners also categorize differently than adults. They can put red things together or sort by size, but they can’t sort when the category is more complex. They don’t know what a verb or a noun is. This means it won’t do you any good to teach rules or use grammatical categories with very young learners. It is best to give them lots of examples and then let them practice. Also, very young learners have limited memory. This means you need to keep directions simple. Only give one or two directions at a time. They also like and need to hear many



repetitions of things. Do not expect them to learn something after hearing it once. They need to hear it many times. Be prepared to sing the same song or play the same game everyday or many times in one day. Your students will have favorite activities that they will love to do everyday.

### **Motivation**

Most very young learners come to school excited and ready to learn. The challenge is to keep them excited and motivated. People that care about them and activities that are fun and interesting motivate them and make learning fun. This means YOU play a huge role in their motivation. If you smile and are happy, they will be happy. If you sing loudly and do the actions, they will sing and do the actions. If they know you care about them, they will try hard because they want to make you happy. Also, make sure things are at a “just right” level. Don’t teach them things that are too hard. For example, grammar is too hard. Reading is also too hard. At this age learning a language should be about having fun and learning words. Doing activities at the “just right” level keeps young learners happy and wanting to learn. Don’t expect perfection.

### **Curiosity and imagination**

Children are naturally curious. They want to know what things are. They like to touch, smell, see and even taste everything they can. They are also creative and imaginative. Make learning fun and exciting by allowing these natural abilities to shine through. Plan lessons and activities that allow children to be creative. Use their curiosity to keep them motivated. Be aware of teaching moments - when things happen that make it very easy to teach about a certain topic. For example, a rainy day is a perfect time to teach about rain or weather. Maybe you can see a rainbow out your classroom window. You could talk about colors in the rainbow and sing a song about rainbows.

### **Attention span**

Children generally have short attention spans; they can’t focus too long on one thing. To help them, you should make your lessons active and exciting. Also, you should plan to change activities often. If something is working well stick with it. If after two minutes you can tell your class is getting bored, it’s time for a change. This can be a very simple change. For example, you start by teaching your class the names of different articles of clothing and having them repeat the names. Then, you have them practice by saying what they are wearing. Then you play a game where they have to point to the clothes on a picture. When you say shirt, they point to the shirt. As children get older they are better able to stay focused for longer. If children are tired, or sick they will have a more difficult time staying focused. (For more information on planning lessons see Unit 2C: “Designing Lessons.”)

### **Silence**

Most young language learners go through a period of silence when they first begin learning a language. It can last from a short amount of time to months. Do not be surprised or concerned if your students don’t say a lot at first. They are still learning as long as they are hearing language they can understand. (See Unit 3B: “Adjusting Your Spoken English.”) Most of them will start talking eventually, just be patient with them and keep encouraging them. Also, provide them with opportunities to participate without requiring them to speak. Later in this unit you will learn ways to help students participate without speaking.

## Comprehension and Reflection Questions



1. What are two ways that very young learners think differently from adults?
2. Without looking back, name three characteristics of very young children and explain how they affect your teaching.
3. Have you seen any of these characteristics in the behavior of the very young children you thought about?

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## 2. Principles of Teaching Very Young Learners

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Now that you know some key characteristics of very young learners, let's talk about how very young children learn. One of the most important parts of learning is making meaning. Very young learners will not always tell you when they don't understand; they will mouth words or nod their heads even if they don't understand. It is important to be aware of the ways in which young children learn so you can make sure they are making meaning and are not just pleasing the teacher.

### Active

Children learn best by being actively involved and through experience with the environment. Actively participating in language learning also allows children to explore language and keeps them motivated and having fun. If you teach a lesson on colors you might start by teaching the words using a poster or objects in the classroom. Then, you might tell the children a color and have them find the color. For example, you say, "white" and have them touch something that is white, or you might give them colored pieces of paper and have them hold up the color when you say it.

### Connected

Young learners have limited knowledge, so it is important to teach them words that are part of their lives. It is also important to help them make connections between topics. For example, if you are teaching vocabulary to students, use items that they see often. If you are teaching in a tropical country, it is better to teach them "mango" than to teach them "pear." They have seen many mangoes, but may have never seen a pear. It is important to be aware of the place in which you and your students live and the things that they see and do.

### Concrete

Young learners learn best by using real materials. If they can touch, smell, see, hear, or taste it they will remember it better and have a better understanding of the meaning of a word. If real examples are not possible, pictures work well also. For example, if you are teaching words about houses, you will want to use pictures of houses and things that are found inside houses. At the same time remember that things need to be connected and use examples the children see in everyday life. For example, a house in the U.S. may look very different from the houses your students live in.

### Social

Children learn by interacting and talking with each other and adults. This can include playing games, singing songs, and doing other activities. Very young learners have a hard time working in pairs or small groups, so it is better to do activities together as a class. Try to do things where each student can participate. For example, you could sing a song and do some actions to go with the song.

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## 3. Effective Teaching Strategies

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Now that you know some general principles of how very young children learn, here are some specific ideas you can use when planning and teaching lessons. You can make your classes engaging and effective by using play, TPR, and stories.

### Play

Playing allows very young learners to explore, create, and figure out how the world works. They learn by playing with language, making up new words, and trying out different ways to say things. They learn by singing songs and playing games. As a teacher of very young learners, you also must learn to play. You 'play' by doing the actions that go along with the song and singing enthusiastically. You have to be excited by showing them how to play the games and do the activities. There are lots of simple songs and

fingerplays that you can use with very young learners. Finger-plays are chants or songs that have simple actions done with the hands or fingers. One very popular one is “Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed.” (For more information on using songs and games see Units 8B: “Using Songs and Chants to Increase Participation, Recall and Enjoyment” and 8C: “Using Games and Other Fun Yet Effective Activities for English Language Teaching.” The end of this unit also describes some websites that have fingerplays and songs.)

### **Total physical response**

Total Physical Response (TPR) involves using actions to teach language. Instead of having the children sit at their desks and listen, TPR allows the students to be physically involved. TPR is very effective with beginners and with very young learners. It works well with older children as well. TPR also provides a way for students to respond without talking. Some examples of TPR are

- Everyone sings “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” while the students touch their various body parts
- The teacher gives simple directions like stand up, turn around, and sit down, while the students do the actions
- Students point to, touch or hold up things or pictures while the teacher say the words. (For example, the teacher says “white,” and the students touch something that is white.)

### **Stories**

Teaching with stories can be a great way to involve your learners and give them context for using and learning language. Picture books are valuable for teaching vocabulary and reading skills to young learners. (For more information about teaching reading to young learners see Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners.”) Stories help young learners in many ways. They are enjoyable, and most students are familiar with storytelling. You can tell young learners common American stories like fables, fairy tales, and tall tales or look for stories from their culture that have been translated into English. Children understand stories better when you repeat words or phrases, do actions, and ask simple questions while telling the story.

### **Using students’ native language**

It can be very helpful to know at least a little about your students’ native language. Being able to ask a question like “what is this?” or being able to give a translation makes language learning easier. If you don’t know your students’ language, try to learn at least a few words. If you do know their language, use it sometimes to help your students learn, but remember that hearing English helps their English-language skills grow.

## **4. Classroom Management**

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Many teachers worry about what to do when their students misbehave, so here are some ideas to help you with classroom management. Remember the key characteristics discussed earlier of motivation and attention span. (See also Unit 3C: “Managing Classes of English Language Learners.”)

### **Be enthusiastic**

Always remember that when teaching children it is the teacher who makes a big difference. Children will pick up on your mood. If you are happy and excited to be teaching English, the students will be happy and excited to be learning English. If you are upset or nervous, they will know and it will make them feel unsure. Then, they will be more likely to misbehave. Be confident, be happy, and have fun!

### **Use Routines**

The unknown causes stress. In your class activities, it is important to have routines – things you do the same everyday. If the students know what is going to happen and how to do something, they will behave better.

You may also divide your day up into a routine of smaller activities. For example, the students greet you, you review information from another lesson, you learn new information, and the students practice the new information.

Different cultures have different expectations for what happens in school. You may be teaching in a culture where students are used to working alone, not in groups, or where students are used to being called upon, not raising their hands to voluntarily answer questions. Being aware of the cultural expectations of both teachers and students can help you be more successful.

### **Praise Students and Use Their Names**

Another helpful hint for managing classes of young learners is to use praise. If students are behaving well, praise them. Tell them “good job,” or pick them to be first in a game. If some students are following directions and others are not, praise the students that are doing what you asked. The other students will usually change their behavior. Then praise the students that changed their behavior. Try to be positive and tell children what they can do. Also, use their names or nicknames. At first you may need to make name-tags so you can use and learn their names. Using people’s names shows you care about them.

### **Set Them Up to Succeed**

As you plan and carry out your lessons remember to help children succeed. When they experience success they want to keep trying, which helps them to be well behaved. Be willing to change an activity to meet the needs of your students. You may need to make an activity easier. Also, help them to save face. Young learners have very sensitive egos, so it is important to create a safe environment so they can make mistakes without being embarrassed. Do not spend too much time correcting their mistakes

## Comprehension and Reflection Questions



1. What are three of the ways very young children learn? Can you give an example of each?
2. What are two activities you could do with very young learners?
3. What are two things you can do to manage your classroom well?

### **Video example**

You will view two examples. The first is of a 1<sup>st</sup> grade class in Guatemala learning about clothing. The second example on the video is of a class in Peru reviewing vocabulary and taking about how many animals there are.

### **Reflection and Responses**

As you view this video clip of an EFL class of young learners, think about each of the following questions.

1. What was especially good about this class? (What did the teachers and students do right?)
2. What teaching principles/techniques discussed earlier in this unit did you see in this clip?
3. What changes could you make for your class?
4. What other things could you do to make your lessons even better?

Write your reflections in the box provided below. Then, click on the button by each box to see what other people have said after viewing and reflecting on this video clip.\*

That's it. That's "the least you should know" about working successfully with very young learners. This unit has covered only some of the key information about teaching very young learners. Of course, there is much more that you can learn from the recommended resources below about teaching strategies, child development and age appropriate teaching.

## Where to go to learn more

### Connections to other units in this program

Here are some other units in this program that relate to this unit:

- Unit 1D: "Dealing with Cultural Differences and Culture Shock"
- Unit 2B: "Designing an Overall Plan for a Course"
- Unit 2C: "Designing Lessons"
- Unit 3B: "Adjusting Your Spoken English"
- Unit 3C: "Managing Classes of English language learners."
- Unit 4A: "Understanding Basic Principles of Second Language Acquisition"
- Unit 4F: "Developing an Awareness of Teaching Styles and Cross-cultural Style Differences"
- Unit 5B: "Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners"
- Unit 8B: "Using Songs to Increase Participation, Recall and Enjoyment"
- Unit 8C: "Using Games and Other Fun yet Effective Activities for English Language Teaching"

### Online and other electronic resources

[www.esl4kids.net](http://www.esl4kids.net)

"The EFL Playhouse for Teachers of Young English Language Learners (ELLs)" A website with ideas for teaching, teaching tips, and finding teaching resources with specific information for teaching abroad. Includes printouts of activities. Use the drop-down menu at the top of the screen to navigate through the site.



[www.Starfall.com](http://www.Starfall.com)

Starfall is an early literacy site with activities for teaching beginning reading skills. It has online books for beginning readers and phonics activities. There are also activities for common American holidays.



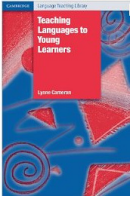
<http://www.esl-kids.com>

This website has worksheets, flashcards, songs, games for working with young children. It also has a section called "in class" that discusses learning styles and classroom management with kindergarteners. The website is by Nick Ramsey, who has been teaching children English in Japan for 10 years.



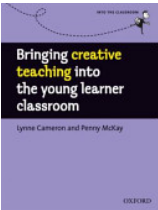
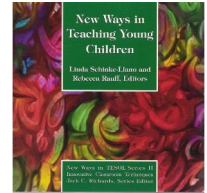
## Print and paper-based resources

Here are some published books that have proven to be helpful resources for teaching young learners.



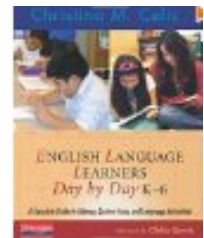
Lynne Cameron. *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge University Press, 2001. Offers theory and practical suggestions on teaching foreign languages to children. It includes learning theory as well as practical ideas for teaching vocabulary, listening skills, literacy skills, and using stories to teach. It also has information about using the native language in EFL classes. Uses examples from classrooms in Europe and Asia. ISBN 0-521-77434-9 [http://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Languages-Learners-Cambridge-Language/dp/0521774349/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336582396&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Languages-Learners-Cambridge-Language/dp/0521774349/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336582396&sr=1-1)

Linda Schinke-Llano and Rebecca Rauff, Editors. *New Ways in Teaching Young Children*. New Ways in TESOL Series II: Innovative Classroom Techniques. Jack C. Richards, Editor. Alexandria, VA: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1996. Presents 14 sections containing various classroom activities. Sections include Social Interaction, Real Life Situations, Learning Through Actions, Music, Drama, Storytelling, Content Areas, and others. A very practical, easy to use resource for teachers of young learners. ISBN 0-939791-63-3. [http://www.amazon.com/New-Ways-Teaching-Young-Children/dp/0939791633/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336582497&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/New-Ways-Teaching-Young-Children/dp/0939791633/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336582497&sr=1-1)



Lynne Cameron and Penny McKay. *Bringing Creative Teaching into the Young Learner Classroom*. Oxford University Press, 2010. Includes various activities to use to teach children, including information on why the activities work and how to adjust the activities for older or younger children. It also contains information on assessment, using technology and involving parents. ISBN 978-0-19-442248-2. [http://www.amazon.com/Bringing-Creative-Teaching-Learner-Classroom/dp/0194422488/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336582543&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Bringing-Creative-Teaching-Learner-Classroom/dp/0194422488/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336582543&sr=1-1)

Christina Celic. *English Language Learners Day by Day K-6: A Complete Guide to Literacy, Content-Area and Language Instruction*. Heinemann, 2009. Includes information on setting up a classroom, assessment, classroom management and teaching literacy and content areas. Explains how to modify teaching to meet the individual needs of learners. Includes good information on establishing routines and schedules. Also discusses how to plan for yearlong instruction, which could be modified for a shorter amount of time. ISBN 978-0325026824 [http://www.amazon.com/English-Language-Learners-Day-K-6/dp/0325026823/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1337783999&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/English-Language-Learners-Day-K-6/dp/0325026823/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1337783999&sr=8-1)



## Chapter 5: Evaluation

Perhaps the most important step in the materials development process is evaluating what has been developed. In Greer's (1988) project management model, evaluation takes place in both the second and third phases. After Project Planning (Phase I), comes Phase II: Instructional Development, which includes gathering information, developing a blueprint, creating draft materials, testing the draft materials, and then creating the master materials. Gathering information, developing the blueprint and creating draft materials were discussed in the previous chapters. This chapter will focus on Step 6 of the Instructional Development phase: Testing Draft Materials. Greer (1988) explains the importance of gathering a target audience and testing the draft materials in order "to make sure that the materials work as they were designed to work" (p. 3). Following the testing of these draft materials, specifications should be made for revision of the materials. Phase III: Follow Up will be discussed in chapter 6 under recommendations.

In developing my units for BTRTESOL, evaluation was necessary to ensure that the units met the needs of untrained, novice, volunteer teachers and that the information contained in the units was informative and helped provide and stimulate ideas for immediate implementation by the users. The units were evaluated over the course of 2 years in three different circumstances: (1) professional presentations at conferences, (2) presentations for untrained, novice English teachers for Linguistics 377 and (3) a presentation for HELP International.

## Professional Conferences

I had the opportunity to present my units at several local and international professional TESOL conferences. These presentations provided me with valuable opportunities to present the units I was developing and receive feedback from TESOL professionals and graduate students.

**ITESOL.** In October 2010, I presented at the annual Intermountain Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (I-TESOL) convention held at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. I presented along with Dr. Lynn Henrichsen, Udambor Bumandalai, Amanda Malaman, and Julie (Jung-Eun) Chung. Dr. Henrichsen introduced the BTRTESOL program by discussing the importance of providing training to untrained, novice teachers and the introductory unit of the program. Udambor, Amanda, Julie, and I then each presented our individual units, which were currently under development. At the time, my unit had not been split, so I presented on the original draft of Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners.” (See Appendix B for the original version.) As part of my presentation, I asked attendees to give some feedback on a short questionnaire. (See Appendix C for feedback I received throughout the evaluation process.) Though my presentation was brief, it was a valuable opportunity to receive feedback from TESOL professionals, fellow graduate students and others in attendance. The feedback I got was positive, and I received some suggestions for the content of the unit and additional resources to include. One attendee wrote, “Be active physically, Lots of TPR Total Physical Response in the classroom. Be silly, kids love silly. Use materials for kindergarten... use lots of props.” Another attendee wrote, “be enthusiastic; be patient and warm; don’t try to teach too much at once.” Attendees suggested I look at *Making it Happen*, starfall.com and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) website as additional resources. I skimmed through the



book *Making it Happen* by Patricia Richard-Amato. The first section provided information about language teaching theory. The second section contained activities and methods for teaching such as using TPR, songs, games and storytelling. The third section discussed classroom management and the fourth section gave examples of both an ESL and an EFL program. I felt that this was a good overview of language teaching and decided to add it as a resource to Unit 5B, as most of the activities were geared toward older children. I also added the website [starfall.com](http://starfall.com), which is an early literacy site that is often used by kindergarten teachers in the United States as an additional resource. As this site contains ideas for early literacy skills and teaching kindergarten, I added it to Unit 5C. I looked at the CAL website and felt most of the information was slightly too academic for BTRTESOL's intended audience, and navigating the website was difficult. I did, however, find a database of web resources on the CAL site that I decided was useful and included in Unit 5B.

In October 2011, I again had the opportunity to present at I-TESOL, this time at Salt Lake Community College in Taylorsville, Utah. I gave two presentations. First, in one 45-min presentation I presented both my units, which were still under development, in considerable detail. In addition, in a second presentation along with Dr. Henrichsen and other members of the BTRTESOL team, I briefly explained my units again. Following my presentations, I asked the attendees to give me some feedback regarding the information contained in my units. I used the same feedback form that I used at my I-TESOL presentation the previous year. However, this was the first time I got feedback on both of the units (now divided into young and very young learners). The feedback I got was positive. The attendees liked the information in the units and its straightforward, easy to understand approach. At least one person commented that she liked the differentiation between very young and young language learners. This feedback suggested

that I was accomplishing the goal of presenting useful information in a clear, concise way and that splitting the units was a valuable change. Attendees suggested that I add information about giving feedback, more information about pacing, and sample lesson plans or case studies. No suggestions for additional resources were provided. Though I considered these suggestions, the length restrictions on all BTRTESOL units made it difficult to cover every topic. I also decided that it would be difficult to provide sample lesson plans due to the variety of teaching situations that untrained, novice teachers may encounter. Additionally, Unit 2C: “Designing Lessons” provides several example lesson plan templates, as well as, instructions about writing lesson plans and other units within the BTRTESOL program cover assessing students and correcting errors. So, the information the attendees were asking for is already available in other units within the BTR-TESOL program. I did add a little more information about giving positive feedback in Unit 5C, in the section on classroom management and I referenced Unit 2C in the “Where to Go to Learn More” section of both units.

In March 2012, the BTR-TESOL team again had the opportunity to present the BTR-TESOL program at a mini-conference for the adult education and higher education interest sections of ITESOL. The conference was held at the English Language Center at BYU. During this conference I was again able to present an overview of my two units to other TESOL professionals and fellow graduate students in TESOL.

**International TESOL.** In March 2011, I presented Unit 5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners” at a poster session at the Graduate Student Forum held in conjunction with the annual Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. I co-presented with Julie (Jung-Eun) Chung. We each

presented one of our units from the BTRTESOL program. It was a valuable experience to be at the TESOL convention. I had the opportunity to discuss my project with graduate students from other universities across the country. One individual remarked about the need for the BTRTESOL program. Another individual asked me about my audience and said he thought it was important to better understand who would be using the materials, so the materials could be written to address the needs of the audience. In reflecting on his comments, I have come to realize that the potential audience includes a wide variety of people. BTRTESOL materials could be useful for people at a variety of ages and from all different educational and cultural backgrounds. This realization was corroborated by my own experience as a tutor at Guadalupe Schools, which has shown me that volunteers come from many backgrounds. Additionally, as I considered the potential audience for the BTRTESOL materials, I realized that teachers who are trained in teaching English, but lack training in teaching children could also use my units. In the resources that I recommend in the “Where to Go to Learn More” sections of my units, I considered this wide span of possible users. Although most of the resources I suggest are less academic, I realized that having a few more academic resources could help meet the needs of a variety of users.

In March 2012, the BTRTESOL team (Dr. Lynn Henrichsen, Amanda Malaman, Udambor Bumandalia, Beth Ann Firnges, Kyle Johnson, and I) presented at the annual TESOL International Conference held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After Dr. Henrichsen introduced the program, each of the other presenters had a brief opportunity to present his or her unit(s). We did not pass out any feedback forms, but we did have the opportunity to take a few questions at the end of the presentation. The last person to ask a question, had only a comment; he said, “Thank you [for developing this program].” That simple comment significantly affected me; it

made me realize that the BTRTESOL program is really serving a need. Later, Dr. Henrichsen told me that this man trains volunteer teachers all over Mexico. At the end of the presentation a woman came up to us and explained that she works with people who teach minority languages, such as Thai and Uzbek. She told us that she wants to use the BTRTESOL website to train the teachers she works with. She told us she had been thinking of creating a similar program for years, but now she could just use ours. She was excited to explain that we had an additional audience for our program that we had yet to consider: teachers of less commonly taught language who speak the language but have little or no preparation in language teaching methods or materials. While I didn't receive any specific feedback on my units, this presentation was one of the most influential for me, because I finally saw the potential of the BTRTESOL program. I left the presentation with real confidence that it will be beneficial to many teachers and students throughout the world.

Though all these conference presentations provided feedback not from my intended audience but from TESOL professionals, the feedback was extremely valuable as it came from people who are experts in the field or undertaking advanced study in TESOL. The feedback I received from these professionals affirmed that my units were not missing any important information. One of the questions on my feedback sheet asked if my units were missing any key points. Besides suggesting more content as previously mentioned, people who gave me feedback did not mention any major points that were missing from the materials. This information was something that untrained, novice teachers, such as the Ling 377 students, probably could not tell me because they have little to no knowledge about TESOL and would not know that something important was missing.

These professional presentations assured me that I was presenting valuable information and prepared me to present to groups more representative of my intended audience.

### **Linguistics 377: Basic Training in TESOL**

Every year students from Brigham Young University travel abroad to help with various humanitarian aid projects or to work in developing nations. Some of these projects include teaching English as a second or foreign language, often to children. Therefore, Dr. Lynn Henrichsen teaches Ling 377: Basic Training in TESOL, to give these students some training in teaching English before they leave to teach in various places around the world. This class is taught using the information from the BTRTESOL program, as well as other resources. The BTRTESOL website serves as the main textbook for this course. As a member of the BTRTESOL team I was invited to help teach the class by presenting my units on teaching young learners.

**Winter 2011.** I first taught a session of Ling 377 in March 2011 with my original unit (5B: “Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners”). (At the time, I was still debating if I should split the unit or not.) This opportunity was an excellent chance to test the materials I was developing. Unlike the audience in my TESOL presentations, in which I was presenting to professionals in the field, these students had little background in teaching English as a second language and thus, better represented my target audience. After presenting my unit to the class, I asked them to fill out a survey (see Appendix C), so I could better understand how they felt about the information that was presented. These surveys proved to be very useful in helping me understand what additional information I needed to think about including in my unit. The students wrote that they found the information about learner characteristics, how children

learn, and specific strategies for teaching, such as TPR, most helpful. They also listed the websites as resources that they would anticipate using. Based on the respondents, response that they were most likely to use the websites, I felt that it would be valuable to investigate and include a few more helpful websites. I added mes-english.com, which has flashcards and games, and later I added additional websites. Two of the respondents wanted more information about classroom management and discipline, two wanted more information about differences between age groups, and one wanted to know more about the sequencing of subjects. These responses made me realize that I needed to examine more closely the unit on classroom management that had already been completed to decide if I needed to add anything else on classroom management with young children. Additionally, I found another resource that would provide information on classroom management. Later, I decided the website I found was too broad and, instead, suggested some other resources that were more focused on classroom management for young learners. The other area where the students wanted more information was on the differences between age groups. I realized that doing two units on teaching children, one focused on older children and one focused on younger children, was perhaps necessary to meet the needs of my audience. At the end of the semester, Dr. Henrichsen had the students rate the presentations and write down what they remembered. Each person remembered different things from my presentation, but they each remembered important points. More importantly, most of the students rated the presentation as being helpful.

**Winter 2012.** I was again invited to teach a session of the Ling 377 class in April 2012. This time, I presented both my units to the students. Additionally, both of the units in their current forms were uploaded to the BTRTESOL website and the students were asked to read the units and provide feedback on a Qualtrics® survey that had been attached to each unit. There

were 11 students enrolled in the class. They were studying a variety of majors, from English teaching to computer science. On the first day of class several commented that they had no experience teaching English. They were asked what they wanted to gain from the class. One student responded, “to not make a fool of myself.” Another responded, “I want my students to be able to learn English.” Another student expressed concern about being able to explain things in English when she did not speak the native language of her students. Although a few members of the class had teaching experience and one had taught English as a second language, these students represent the target audience for the BTRTESOL program, because none of them had formal training in teaching English. Their concerns expressed the desire they felt to be good teachers.

Seven students were in attendance on the day I taught. I presented an overview of both units. I included the video examples from both my units, as well as, a video example from Unit 8C: “Using Games and Other Fun Yet Effective Activities for English Language Teaching.” I did this to help the students understand how the units are interrelated. One of the critiques I had received in the past was that students wanted more examples. Therefore, I showed the students in the class that if they wanted more information about using games they could link to the unit on games.

At the conclusion of my presentation I had the students fill out a brief survey (see Appendix C). I asked them to rank the information on a scale of 1-5 (5 being very helpful, 1 being not helpful). Most of the respondents gave the information a 5 and one wrote, “I liked it.” When asked what in the presentation they found helpful, students responded, “how young learners learn,” “videos and examples,” and “classroom management.” One person wrote, “The

organization really helped comprehension, it was the same for both sections.” Most of the respondents listed one of the websites as the resource they would most likely use. I decided to review the websites I had listed and make a few changes. I deleted the website I had previously suggested on classroom management. I added [www.esl-kids.com](http://www.esl-kids.com), which had activities and games and also included tips for classroom management specifically for kindergarten-aged learners. I felt this website was easier to navigate and more focused than the previous website. I also added [www.theteachersguide.com/ClassManagement.htm](http://www.theteachersguide.com/ClassManagement.htm). This website contained several video examples of classroom management ideas for young learners. I liked the video examples because sometimes it is easier to understand something if you see it not only read about it. I also decided to add the book about classroom management by Wong and Wong (2005), which I used in my review of literature, as an additional resource.

I felt that the students’ response was positive and that there was a good balance of theory based information and concrete examples for the students. In a meeting with Dr. Henrichsen about a week following my presentation in class, he commented that several students had made comments about liking my presentation and finding the information helpful. He also commented that a few of the students said they had never thought about the differences between teaching children and adults and that they didn’t realize that children learn differently from adults. I realized that what I had come to accept as common knowledge is, in fact, very important information to be shared with these untrained, novice teachers. This further confirmed that splitting the unit was a good choice because of the significant differences between how very young and young children learn related to their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Unfortunately, no one completed the online survey, so I did not have feedback from the students actually reading the units.



## **HELP International**

Amanda, Udambor, Julie (Jung-Eun) and I were also asked to help with training for a group associated with HELP International. HELP International is a nonprofit organization that strives “to empower people to fight global poverty through sustainable, life-changing development programs” (HELP International, “Mission”, para. 1). The organization sends volunteers to Belize, Uganda, Thailand, India, Tanzania, Peru, El Salvador, and Fiji, where they work on various humanitarian aid projects, including teaching English as a foreign language. We presented our units to two groups in 45-min presentations. The first presentation had approximately 30 attendees and the second had approximately 50 attendees. Training these volunteer teachers was another great learning experience. Again, I asked for feedback on the presentation, which provided more useful information. This group wanted specifics: specific games they could play, specific information on behavior, and more materials. As mentioned previously, the BTRTESOL program is designed to provide training to teachers, which they can immediately implement in their classrooms and other various situations. Based on this feedback, I realized that I needed to provide specific examples, rather than just explain a general concept or idea. Therefore, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, I added more examples of specific teaching ideas as I edited and refined my units. The HELP international volunteers also wanted more information about sequencing learning. As designing lessons and courses is covered in Units 2B, and 2C I decided that I could not justify the space that it would take to cover more information about sequencing learning. Additionally, due to the length restrictions on all the BTRTESOL units, I simply did not have space in the units. I did reference Unit 2C: “Designing Lessons” in each unit, and I included Unit 2B: “Designing an Overall Plan for a Course” in the “Where to Go to Learn More” section. Respondents wrote that they liked the material about

characteristics of young children and how children learn. They also liked the information about TPR and routines.

From teaching the Ling 377 class and presenting for the HELP International groups, I realized that both groups found the information about characteristics of young learners and how children learn to be valuable. When I was writing the units, I wanted to include the information because based on my background knowledge and experience I knew that this information was valuable. However, I worried that users would not understand its value and only want to be given a list of suggested activities.

### **Summary**

Presenting for a variety of groups helped me to further evaluate and refine my two units. I found that I received helpful information from professionals in the field and from future volunteer teachers who had minimal to no training. The feedback from both groups was positive, so I concluded that the information I had included was valuable. I would have liked to receive feedback based on the actual units, not only on the presentations that I did. Unfortunately, no one chose to complete the online survey for the units on the website. Receiving feedback on the actual online units would have been a valuable addition to the evaluation of my units. I recommend that in the future students in the Ling 377 class be required to fill out the online survey. I will discuss this, as well as other recommendations, along with challenges that I faced and insights I gained while working on my units in the next chapter

## Chapter 6: Challenges, Insights, and Recommendations

Finally, in this last chapter, I reflect on the personal challenges I faced, insights I gained, and things I would have done differently as I developed my two units for the BTRTESOL program. I conclude with recommendations for the program as it continues to be developed and refined in the future.

### Challenges

While working on my units for the BTRTESOL program, I faced several challenges and learned a lot about myself and about the dedication and commitment it takes to develop materials. These challenges included writing the units and maintaining high personal motivation to finish the project

**Writing the units.** One of the biggest challenges of this project was writing the actual units according to the delimitations set by Dr. Henrichsen. As I began to work on writing my units, I quickly realized that the minimalistic approach, while beneficial to the users, was very difficult for me as a writer. I was limited in the amount of information that I could include in each unit. It was a challenge to condense all the information I knew about child development, teaching methods, and second language acquisition by children into 14 pages (seven pages for each unit). This challenge forced me to examine and carefully consider what were the most important things for a novice, untrained teacher to know about teaching English to children. Additionally, as I considered what to include I had to examine the differences between teaching English to children and teaching English to adults.

Besides meeting the length requirements, writing in a minimalistic style was also a challenge. At times it was difficult to decide how to write something without using the academic vocabulary and sentence structure I had become accustomed to using. When I had completed the first drafts of the two units, I thought that I had done a fairly good job of writing in a more basic style. However, Dr. Henrichsen quickly pointed out that both of the units were too academic for the BTRTESOL program. This led to extensive editing of both vocabulary and sentence structure. I also struggled to replace the academic words with easier words as I went through the units with the vocabulary profile program. Often it took more words to explain a topic in a less academic way and I was concerned about using more words because of the page limits. This also led to thoughtful consideration of what was “the least” someone should know in order to be able to teach English to children.

Another challenge in writing the units was connecting to the other units. I felt sometimes that my units connected to every other unit in the BTRTESOL program. It was definitely easier to connect to the units that were already written because I knew what was in them. I could avoid repeating information or I could add some specific information about working with young learners. For example, there was an excellent unit written on classroom management, but it focused on classroom management in a general sense. Classroom management is one of the big issues in teaching because if you don't have control of the class, you cannot teach. I wanted to focus on a few specific ideas for working with children, such as stating rules positively. I, therefore, spent the last part of each unit briefly discussing a few classroom management strategies that are especially important to consider when teaching children.

It was more difficult to connect to units that exist in name only. For example, Unit 6C is on reading and Unit 6D is on writing. Neither of these units has been written yet. I felt that it was important to write about teaching literacy skills to children, but I could not reference the other units because they have not been written yet. Also, there are important issues to consider when teaching literacy skills to children, such as their previous exposure to reading and writing in their native language. I mentioned a few activities for helping students develop literacy in Unit 5B and briefly discussed how literacy influences language learning.

I had to choose which units I felt were most important to connect to and include in the “Where to Go to Learn More” section. I could have listed almost every unit in the program, but that would have been overwhelming for users and impossible based on space restrictions. Therefore, I tried to choose those units that were most highly connected to the other topics I discussed in my units.

**Motivation.** Another challenge was staying motivated to work on the units and project report. I went through several months where I did not work consistently on my project. I would sit down to work on it, but then I would feel overwhelmed or I would become distracted by the many things that I needed to do, such as grading, homework, and other responsibilities.

Motivation has been discussed in several of my graduate classes. We have discussed how motivation affects language learning and how teachers need to help their students be motivated. However, I never spent a lot of time considering my own motivation. I realized that I often let other things, often unimportant things, distract me from working on my project. I realized that the most difficult barrier was not the homework that needed to be graded, or the lessons that needed to be planned, but making the personal decision that I wanted to earn a

master's degree and that I would put in the effort and time required to accomplish this goal. These challenges led to several valuable insights that, for me, are the most important things I learned by completing this project.

### **Insights**

In completing this project I learned many valuable lessons about time management, setting goals, and working with other people. I retrospect, these three aspects caused the most delays, but once I used them for my benefit, they also caused the most progress and success. Working on this project was also a great opportunity to learn more about how second language acquisition is affect by age.

**Time management.** One of the first insights I gained was the importance of good time management. During fall 2010, I was working on my project by completing the first chapter and a review of literature, which were required for two of my classes. It was easy to schedule time to work on my project. The following semesters, when I was not enrolled in classes directly related to my project, I found myself easily distracted by homework, grading, teaching classes, and the other responsibilities that I had. Also, I was distracted by less important things, such as watching movies and reading novels. This was reflected in my time log for working on the project (see Appendix D). I would work for an hour or so a couple days a week and then I would not work for a couple days or more. This made my progress slow, and I felt like I had no specific goals. Sometimes, after not working on my project for a week, it was difficult to get started because I was unsure of where to start. I realized that I needed to plan out my time and set aside specific times to work on the project. In one of my classes, my professor talked about working on his dissertation. At the time, he had a young family, a job, and many other responsibilities. He told

us he would work on his dissertation in his basement at specific times. I realized that in order to finish my project I needed to similarly set aside specific hours of the day to work on my project. I also needed to find a place where I would not be distracted by other people or things. Since, I taught classes in the afternoon, I decided to work on my project every morning for 1 to 2 hours. As soon as I set this goal, I found it was much easier to work on the project on a daily basis, and I felt that I started making better progress toward finishing. I was not always perfect. I still became distracted sometimes, but overall I was more consistent.

**Goals.** Another insight I gained from working on this project was the importance of having specific goals. During the first semester I worked on my project, I had specific due dates. For example, the first unit had to be done by the end of the semester. I also had weekly meetings with the BTRTESOL team during which we talked about how our projects were coming and worked on the prospectus. This provided me with motivation to work on the project. Following the first semester, I no longer had any set due dates. I needed to finish in order to graduate, but I figured that I would have plenty of time. After I decided to split the units and finally started writing again, the project became easier. I also started meeting with Dr. Henrichsen. Having a scheduled meeting with him provided me with more motivation to work on my project. I knew that I needed to show him what I had worked on so that our meetings could be productive. I set goals for each time I met with him, such as having a new chapter to turn in or having edited previous chapters we had discussed. Additionally, we started setting tentative dates for my defense and when I needed to have the project report ready to be sent to my committee. These dates helped me be more dedicated and work harder.

**Working with my chair and other colleagues.** Working with Dr. Henrichsen also helped me to better understand how other people were important in keeping me motivated. Meeting with him provided good motivation because at each of our meetings he always had valuable feedback to share with me. In Spring 2012, Amanda, Udambor and I were all still working on finishing our projects in order to graduate. We all started talking more with each other about our project reports. We talked about our frustrations and our desires to graduate, which helped us all. We would help each other with scheduling time to meet with Dr. Henrichsen or even send messages with one another to communicate meeting times. We talked about graduation and that it would be a great experience to be able to graduate together. Working with the other members of the BTRTESOL team, even in this informal manner, motivated me and also gave me the desire to help my colleagues, so we could all graduate. In retrospect, I wish that we had continued to hold BTRTESOL meetings as we had during that first semester, to continue to help motivate each other.

I also realized that those students who had previously finished their master's degrees and worked on the BTRTESOL program had important insights to share. I had the chance to attend a few defenses by other students who worked on the BTRTESOL program. These opportunities helped me prepare for my own defense. However, I didn't read many of the previously completed project reports initially. I read Iva Crookston's project report in the early stage of working on my project, but Dr. Henrichsen told me that the expectations for my project report would be stricter. Later, after attending one defense, I became slightly paranoid about accidentally plagiarizing the work of another member of the BTRTESOL team. I decided that if I didn't read the other reports I would lessen the chance of plagiarism because their words wouldn't be in my head. Dr. Henrichsen, however, recommended that I read several project reports and sent me



copies so that I could read them, which I did. Reading other project reports sooner would have helped my motivation and made my process easier. Specifically, I would have read about their challenges and their advice for other students working on the BTRTESOL program. As I have talked to other people who have worked on this project and read their project reports, we all say the same things: I had a hard time being motivated, I had to set a strict time schedule, etc. I should have done a better job of learning from the people that went before me, so I didn't repeat their same mistakes and have their same challenges.

The importance of colleagues and having supportive interpersonal interactions with colleagues has been confirmed to me once again as I have completed my project report and defense. I have realized that while we each want to individually accomplish great things, the ability to do great things and positively influence the profession of TESOL becomes possible through working together. Recently, Amanda Malaman held her defense, which I attended. Following her defense I was able to recommend some resources to her for finishing her project. Also, I have realized the importance of supporting one another. For example, I recently received an email from Julie Chung who graduated earlier this year. She sent me an e-mail to wish me luck on my defense and express her confidence in my ability. This helped me to feel more confident. I feel that these experiences will make me a better professional as I strive to help support my colleagues in their endeavors.

**Second language acquisition.** While working on this project I was able to increase my understanding of second language acquisition and particularly how age effects language learning. In my class on second language acquisition we briefly discussed how age effects language learning but through reading various books I have learned more about it. I now better understand

that there are significant differences in how very young learners and young learners acquire language. Teaching a foreign language to children and especially very young children presents unique challenges. It is, therefore, important that teachers are prepared and have a basic understanding of how to effectively teach language to various ages of children.

## **Recommendations**

In this last section I offer a few brief recommendations for future graduate students and future project-level revisions.

**Team-member recommendations.** Currently, there are no graduate students who have chosen to work on the BTRTESOL program in the future. However, if in the future more students work on the project, I would tell them to start getting feedback early on in the process and to make sure to document carefully all the time they spend. Additionally, I would tell them to set specific individual short-term goals, such as a specific date to have a unit or a chapter ready to submit for feedback and to schedule a consistent time to meet with Dr. Henrichsen early in the process. Once I had a goal end-date and started making specific goals concerning what I wanted done for each meeting with Dr. Henrichsen, I found that it was easier to be motivated and work on the project report everyday. Meeting with Dr. Henrichsen provided feedback, motivation and guidance in finishing the units and project report. Also, future students should seek all the opportunities available to receive feedback, especially from users of the program. I encouraged the Ling 377 students to fill out the survey attached to the online versions of my units, but no one did. In retrospect, Dr. Henrichsen said he could have made it mandatory for the students, which probably would have given me more feedback.

Currently, Dr. Mark Davies and Dr. Dee Gardner at Brigham Young University are examining the Academic Word List by Coxhead using data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Hopefully, one result of their work will be a more accurate evaluation of vocabulary demands in written text. If such resources become available, I would encourage future students to use Davies and Gardner's procedures and COCA to better evaluate the readability of their units. For example, the vocabulary profile of their units might be improved and even come closer to Grabe's (2009) recommendation that readers understand 95-98% of the vocabulary in a text for independent reading. Also, in analyzing the text for readability, future students may want to use lexile analysis. Lexile analysis is based on a scale of 0-1600 and is independent of grade levels. It is often used for rating the readability of texts for adults.

**Program recommendations.** As this program continues to be edited and evaluated, one of the most important areas to consider is how well the information is training teachers and preparing them to teach English. Greer's (1988) process of materials development concludes with Phase III: Follow Up, which includes reproducing, distributing and evaluating the materials. This final evaluation is used to "determine the long-term effectiveness of the instructional materials" (Greer, 1988, p. 3). This includes receiving information about the users' abilities to do their job following training and providing recommendations for further revisions based on that information. It would be particularly valuable to talk to the students from the Ling 377 class following their time abroad and have them report on how helpful the information from the program was in helping them teach English. It would also be helpful to gain more information from pilot users here in the United States and abroad. Several organizations have expressed interest in the materials, and it would be interesting to conduct a survey having volunteers indicate if after using the program they feel more prepared to teach and that their teaching is

more successful. Receiving more feedback and learning about the experiences of untrained, novice teachers will help improve the content of the units, as well as assure the program is meeting its purpose of providing training to help untrained, novice ESL/EFL teachers succeed.

Additionally, as more units are developed it will be important to look at the other units that have overlapping information. For example, in Unit 5B I take almost an entire page explaining strategies about teaching reading. Eventually, there will be a chapter on teaching reading skills. The information in each chapter should then be evaluated to make sure there is not too much overlap. The information in Unit 5B, for example, might be condensed and then more information about other topics or other teaching strategies might be included.

The process of developing materials is an ongoing one, especially with this program that is slowly developing units on a broad range of topics. It is important to iterate Greer's model and cycle through the process of evaluation and development many times.

## **Summary**

This chapter has discussed the challenges and insights I gained while working on this project. In addition, I offered recommendations for future graduate students and for these materials as they continue to be developed, refined, and used. Though this project has, at times, been challenging, the lessons I have learned by going through the challenges are the most valuable lessons I take with me. I have learned the importance of managing time well, setting goals, and being very specific in how to meet my goals. Additionally, I have learned the importance of learning from the people that have gone before me and of working with fellow colleagues to accomplish my goals. These experiences have shaped, and will continue to shape, my career for years to come

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## Appendix A

### BTRTESOL Prospectus: December 2010

#### *Basic Training and Resources for TESOL:*

#### *The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More*

Prospectus prepared by

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#### •Product overview

*Basic Training and Resources for TESOL: The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More* is a book and a website (supplemented by video clips) that utilizes a minimalist, connectivist approach to helping minimally trained, novice ESL/EFL teachers be more effective, professional, and successful. It is usable in two ways: in a traditional, face-to-face class with a teacher and regular meetings, or by independent self-study, according to an individual's particular interests, needs, and schedule.

#### • Audience/Market

Many untrained or minimally trained people teach ESL/EFL in community programs, commercial schools, public libraries, churches, homes, language schools abroad, etc. *Basic Training and Resources for TESOL: The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn*

*More* is designed for the thousands of untrained or minimally trained teachers of ESL (in the United States and other English-language environments) and EFL (in other settings around the world). It will also be attractive and useful for untrained people who are on the verge of teaching ESL/EFL. For various reasons (finances, timing, location), most of these teachers are unable to enroll in full-scale TESOL teacher-preparation programs, but they still need and want basic training in effective classroom procedures and materials, as well as in the teaching and learning principles behind them. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (Kutner et al., 1992) initiated a 30-month study into the training of teachers and volunteers working in adult basic education [ABE] and ESL. The study "was launched ... in response to the widespread concern that inadequate training is a major impediment to the effective delivery of adult education services"(Kutner et al., 1992, p. 8). Nine sites were visited across the U.S. to better understand the training of volunteers and teachers in adult education. Reasons cited for lack of training included high turnover, lack of funding, and limited requirements. The most common form of training was a single-session workshop. The study offers two suggestions for developing training programs that are especially relevant, they discuss the importance of giving volunteers ownership in their training and providing training that is easily accessed and meets their needs.

No one knows exactly how many novices or volunteers teach ESL in the United States. The number, however, is undoubtedly large. The 2005-2006 Statistical Report of ProLiteracy states that 120,480 volunteers worked in its 1,200 affiliate programs, 88% of which provided ESL services. The number is undoubtedly greater today with the recent floods of refugees and immigrants to English-speaking countries and the growing demand for English around the world. The 2009 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics indicated that in 2009 the US received 74,602

refugees from various countries, the greatest amount received in the last 10 years (US Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2010). Many companies advertise several tens of thousands of EFL teaching jobs in many locations around the world. The website [volunteerabroad.com](http://volunteerabroad.com) lists 600 plus organizations that send volunteers around the world, many of them to teach English. We contacted several of these organizations to assess the number of volunteers. Three of these organizations totaled 600 volunteers (personal communications, October 2010). Help International sends 150 volunteers a year and International Language Programs (ILP) sends 350 per year (personal communication, October 2010). Some of these programs, of course, provide at least minimal in-house training for their volunteers. Additionally, Bridge TEFL trains 3,400 in certification programs. The number of untrained teachers, who work independently or with programs that provide minimal and often inadequate training, is probably very large. It is these people, a huge group of teachers needing more preparation and resources, that constitute the market for *Basic Training and Resources for TESOL: The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More*.

### •History

Over the years many training manuals have been produced for various volunteer tutors within specific organizations. These manuals desire to provide novice, often volunteer, teachers with the skills needed to teach English to adults in various situations. These programs rely on volunteers to meet a need in the community. *The HER Project: Homebound English for Refugee Women* (Beck, 1982) was developed for the Tacoma Community House. The manual itself consists of approximately 37 pages of basic information about teaching ESL and lesson plans for teaching primarily oral, survival English. The basic information section includes ideas about

teaching vocabulary, structure, pronunciation and listening skills it also includes ideas on evaluation, using visual aids, and general information about teaching ESL. More recently the Tacoma Community House (2001) has produced another handbook for ESL tutoring. This handbook, *Tutoring ESL: A Handbook for Volunteers*, includes information for tutors on activities in the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Additionally, it includes information on assessment, lesson planning, and general teaching tips and techniques. Other information is available on their website [www.nwlincs.org](http://www.nwlincs.org).

Another common method for training volunteers is through a one-time workshop. One workshop by Literacy Volunteers of America – Connecticut, was conducted to train volunteers to teach basic literacy and life skills in ESL. It was a two and a half hour workshop and the participants received information and handouts about curriculum and tutoring techniques.

#### •Approach and Distinctive Features

*Basic Training and Resources for TESOL: The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More* employs a minimalist and connectivist approach to teacher preparation. It does not attempt to cover every teacher-preparation topic in great breadth and depth. Rather, in a large number of short chapters (5-10 pages each), it introduces teachers to key concepts and procedures related to a particular teaching topic and then directs them to other sources for additional, in-depth information.

In contrast to many TESOL teacher-education textbooks that present teaching/learning theories and practices in a didactic fashion and then hope readers will be able to apply them in actual classroom settings, each chapter in *Basic Training and Resources for TESOL* takes an

engaging, highly practical, problem-solving approach to teacher preparation by beginning with short case studies and classroom scenarios situated in ESL (in the United States) and EFL (in non-English speaking countries worldwide) settings that illustrate the challenges that teachers face in the real world. In this way, each chapter immediately confronts teachers with authentic instructional challenges and involves them in realistic analytical and problem-solving tasks. To support the textual explanations in the book, many of the case studies and scenarios are also viewable on an accompanying DVD or on the website.

*Basic Training and Resources for TESOL* also focuses primarily on proven instructional procedures that can immediately be put into practice. In accordance with Hersey and Blanchard's (1985) Situational Leadership Model, the book's underlying approach recognizes that the preparation needs of teachers vary depending on their levels of competence and commitment. Novice, short-term, volunteer teachers—in contrast with the committed, experienced, career-oriented teachers found in many graduate-level TESOL teacher education programs—typically need and want simple, direct teacher training. Therefore, *Basic Training and Resources for TESOL* provides specific instructions for classroom teaching strategies. Chapter one introduces the reader to the scope of this material, however there is no specified sequence to these chapters. Novice teachers are able to assess their needs and focus on relevant units that interest them. Each chapter carefully guides novice teachers through the process of identifying language-teaching problems, setting goals, developing action plans, carrying them out, and evaluating their success. At the same time, it helps them recognize and understand the underlying principles that affect success in language teaching.

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## Competition

Title	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>TESOL Core Certificate Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Includes a 60-hour foundation course in teaching theory and practice.</li> <li>◦ Includes a 60-hour course on language skills and assessment.</li> <li>◦ In the second course one has the option of focusing on adult or young learners.</li> <li>◦ The course designers and teachers appear to be qualified.</li> <li>◦ It has the TESOL name</li> </ul> <p>Focuses on ESL and EFL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ It is costly</li> <li>◦ One must register months in advance so it is not immediately accessible</li> <li>◦ Limited availability (limited number of openings)</li> <li>◦ It is not necessarily connected to a real teaching position (limited applicability)</li> </ul>
<b>Colorin' Colorado</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Many links to other web resources and books</li> <li>◦ Good for an ESL (U.S.) setting</li> <li>◦ Has online webcasts with professionals</li> <li>◦ Good resources for parents and educators</li> <li>◦ Good resource for boosting reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Mainly targeted to Hispanic ESL learners, with only materials up to the third grade in Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Navajo, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese</li> <li>◦ Only targets children K-12, not adults</li> <li>◦ Would not always be as beneficial in an EFL setting</li> <li>◦ Only targets reading specifically and not all skills</li> </ul>
<b>More Than a Native Speaker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Helpful appendixes on course planning, culture topic list</li> <li>◦ Could be useful with other materials that will add more practical information</li> <li>◦ Text is user friendly and readable</li> <li>◦ Does not use big terms, good explanations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Difficult for new or less experienced teachers to decide in what situation, for what level to use examples of assessment, teaching principles, etc.</li> <li>◦ Book is outdated</li> <li>◦ The title does not give us any hint that "More Than a Native Speaker" is a guide for volunteer native English teachers teaching abroad</li> <li>◦ Contains only plain text, no graphics,</li> </ul>



		<p>pictures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Very little about different proficiency levels, classroom management etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Teach English: A training course for teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Very specific guidelines for beginning teachers</li> <li>◦ Step by step instructions</li> <li>◦ Pictures</li> <li>◦ Example lesson plans</li> <li>◦ Activities to be used and copied in class</li> <li>◦ Unit on the importance of assessment and how to use it effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ It is old, but it has been reprinted in several editions</li> <li>◦ The cover does not look interesting</li> </ul>
<b>A Training Course for TEFL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Helpful activities for teacher to help identify teaching strategies and activities for the learners</li> <li>◦ Offers discussion examples of dialogue between students and teachers</li> <li>◦ Gives references for further readings</li> <li>◦ Charts ,graphs and symbols to illustrate principles and ideas</li> <li>◦ Communicative teaching tasks</li> <li>◦ Offers techniques for all skills to be taught</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Outdated, now there are other techniques and strategies that need attention.</li> <li>◦ May be out of print</li> <li>◦ For more technical and graduate level students. Not built for volunteers with little or no understanding of technical language</li> </ul>
<b>Oxford Basics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Offers 25-30 basic lesson plans per book</li> <li>◦ Covers a wide variety of topics including grammar, teaching children, intercultural activities, etc.</li> <li>◦ Affordable price</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Each book focuses on a specific area, listening, speaking, grammar so you may need to buy several books</li> <li>◦ Few overall principals of teaching English.</li> <li>◦ Some of the activities seem very contrived, they try to coordinate lessons across books which sometimes results in either very similar lessons or very contrived lessons</li> <li>◦ All lessons at a beginning level</li> </ul>

**Teaching English Worldwide: A New Practical Guide to Teaching English**

- Helpful visual aids such as charts, cartoons and graphs
- Good explanation on commonly asked questions in chapter 1
- Reasonable price
- Includes the necessary and basic information needed for a teacher who may be responsible to teach all skill areas
- No specific level of learner mentioned
- Not sufficient information in each section
- Hard to create a lesson plan with only the given information

**Highway to E.S.L.: A User-Friendly Guide to Teaching English as a Second Language**

- Helpful information on choosing an overseas job
- Covers a variety of topics in different skill areas
- Offers where to go to find more in each chapter
- User friendly
- Not enough on the different skills
- Analogy of Highway is a bit of a stretch at times
- Useful only for teachers studying abroad
- Not enough meat in each chapter, very simplistic

**Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Dummies**

- Plethora of information
- Author is experienced
- Information on numerous countries and teaching situations
- Lesson planning for different skills presented
- Information on choosing TEFL as a career
- Doesn't cover subjects completely only peripherally
- Focuses mostly on those who are not teachers at the moment, probably would not be helpful for those with more knowledge
- Little focus on developing a teaching personality and classroom management
- Needs more on ESP, EAP and Content-Based Teaching
- No mention on Assessments such as TOEFL, TOEIC and Michigan

Competition: Bibliographical Information

Title	Author	Publication Information	ISBN	Price

TESOL Core Certificate Program	TESOL	TESOL, 2010	N/A	\$1,000
Colorin' Colorado	WETA (with the American Federation of Teachers, National Institute for Literacy, U.S. Department of Education)	Web-based service, 2008	N/A	free
More Than a Native Speaker	Don Snow	TESOL, 1996	0-939791-64-1	\$ 31.20
Teach English: A training course for teachers	Adrian Doff	Cambridge University, 1990	0-521-34864-1 0-521-34863-3	\$32.00 \$28.00
A Training Course for TEFL	Peter Hubbard, Hywel Jones, Barbara Thornton, Rod Wheeler	Oxford University, 1983	019432710	\$15.00
Oxford Basics	Various	Oxford University, 2000	Various	\$12.50?
Teaching English Worldwide: A New Practical Guide to Teaching English	Lindsay, Paul	Alta Book Center Publisher, 2000	1-882483-77-4	\$26.95
Highway to E.S.L.: A User-Friendly Guide to Teaching English as a Second Language	Dang, Pinky Y & Ruiter, Rik	iUniverse Inc, 2005	978-0595342211	\$18.68
Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Dummies	Maxom, Michelle	Wiley, 2009	978-0470745762	\$18.63

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## •Scope and sequence

The forty-plus units in *Basic Training and Resources for TESOL: The Least You Should Know and Where to Go to Learn More* cover a broad range of teacher-preparation topics. The 42 units cover a broad range of teacher-preparation topics, divided into 10 major areas:

1. Introduction: Basic Concepts
  - A. “The Least You Should Know” (the purposes and delimitations of this program and suggestions for follow-up TESOL courses, resources, and professional organizations)
  - B. Differences between teaching English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL)
  - C. Tutoring vs. teaching: How they are different
  - D. Dealing with cultural differences and culture shock (in your students and yourself)
  - E. Working successfully within foreign educational and administrative systems
2. Designing Language-teaching Programs, Courses, and Lessons
  - A. Setting up and operating successful courses for adult English language learners (i.e., administrative concerns)
  - B. Planning a curriculum that fits your students and meets their needs
  - C. Designing effective lessons for language learning and teaching (i.e., lesson planning)
  - D. Assessing your students' language proficiency (for course design purposes and for determining student placement)
3. Developing Fundamental Teaching Skills
  - A. Developing a successful teaching personality
  - B. Adjusting your spoken English to make it comprehensible and helpful to English language learners at various levels of proficiency
  - C. Managing classes of English language learners (encouraging participation, maintaining discipline, building a supportive sense of community, avoiding demeaning or negative behavior, setting up groups, dealing with multiple levels of proficiency in the same class)
  - D. Correcting language learners' errors productively, and developing their self-monitoring skills
4. Understanding Key Principles Behind Successful Language Teaching
  - A. Understanding basic principles of second language acquisition

- B. Creating and using exercises for mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practice
  - C. Using communicative language teaching principles and information gap exercises
  - D. Encouraging cooperative and collaborative learning to increase student interaction
  - E. Creating activities that provide imitative, rehearsed, and extemporaneous practice
  - F. Developing an awareness of teaching styles and cross-cultural style differences
5. Knowing Your Students: Learner Types, Styles, and Strategies
- A. Understanding, respecting, and appreciating adult ESL learners
  - B. Working successfully with young English language learners
  - C. Working successfully with very young English language learners
  - D. Understanding your students' language learning styles—including cross-cultural differences in learning styles—and then teaching them accordingly
  - E. Recognizing multiple intelligences and their implications for language teaching
  - F. Teaching your students to use language-learning strategies commonly employed by successful language learners
6. Developing Language Skills
- A. Developing English language learners' listening skills
  - B. Developing English language learners' speaking skills
  - C. Developing English language learners' reading skills
  - D. Developing English language learners' writing skills
  - E. Integrating multiple language skills in one class
  - F. Teaching content-based language classes
7. Teaching English Language Components
- A. The least you should know about English grammar and how to teach it
  - B. The least you should know about English pronunciation and how to teach it
  - C. Planned and unplanned vocabulary teaching
  - D. Vocabulary teaching and learning strategies that work well
  - E. Understanding and teaching about culture
8. Making Language Teaching and Learning Enjoyable and Memorable
- A. Conducting effective and enjoyable conversation classes
  - B. Using songs to increase participation, recall, and enjoyment
  - C. Using games, and other fun yet effective activities for English language teaching
  - D. Using computers and Internet resources for English language teaching
  - E. Using video for teaching English
9. Testing English Language Skills
- A. Widely used general proficiency tests (e.g., TOEFL, BEST, CET)
  - B. Developing valid and reliable local measures of student achievement
10. Choosing, Creating, and Adapting Language Teaching Materials
- A. Locating, evaluating, and selecting authentic, effective print/electronic teaching materials for language learners
  - B. Collecting and creating your own language-teaching materials
  - C. Successfully adapting existing materials for greater teaching enjoyment and success

These units are designed to be used independently, in any sequence, according to users' interests.

### •Ancillary materials

Each unit includes video clips of ESL/EFL teachers in authentic classroom situations. These clips illustrate the principles and procedures described in the unit, and they provide the basis for observation and reflection activities. For the book, these videos will be provided on an accompanying DVD. They will also be available online as part of the website.

### •Current status of the work

Number of units completed: 8 (video clips to be inserted later)

Number of units nearly completed: 4

Number of units under development: 22 (various stages)

Number of units no one is working on: 6 with others posited as well

Number of units we are working on this semester: 4

Over the next year other units will be developed and finished available for use. As they become available they will also be posted to the website.

### •Field testing

Over the course of the year we will have numerous opportunities for feedback. As a group we meet weekly and give each other feedback, and we have individual meetings with our professor, Dr. Henrichsen, to receive feedback. We gave a presentation at the ITESOL conference in Ogden, UT on October 23, 2010 where we asked attendees to fill out a questionnaire about each of our individual units. We each received feedback on our units. The following is the summary of the feedback on our individual units.

#### Unit 5 B Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners

I received 10 responses to my request for feedback. Most of the people who filled out the feedback sheets commented that they liked the content and that the information of characteristics and how young learners learn was good. It helped me recognize that I have recognized some of the key factors in teaching young learners. Suggestions for improvement included, discussion of expected behaviors, list of teacher characteristics, information on development, information on TPR. I also received a couple of resource suggestions such as, Starfall.com, Center for Applied

Linguistics: Teaching English in the Elementary Classroom, and Making it Happen by: Patricia A. Richard-Amato.

### Unit 6 F Content-Based Language Teaching

Unit 6F received feedback from 14 people. The majority of this feedback was a pat on the back letting us know we were headed in the right direction. Some suggestions for improvement were given including: include more vocabulary practice, use modified texts, use authentic texts, look at local immersion programs, break unit into separate units, move from realia to interaction to writing and reading.

### Unit 6 B Developing English language learners' speaking skills

Ten people gave feedback on this unit. All of the participants indicated that the content of this unit was very interesting and useful. Six people suggested that the following should be included in the unit: grammar, pronunciation, examples to go along with each areas that are involved in speaking, culture, level of learners and ways to identify needs. One comment made on additional resources that would be helpful was TPR storytelling. Another comments was to indicate information on how the tongue, teeth and lips are involved in producing accurate pronunciation. Overall, it was encouraging to know what future users are looking for in this unit and these comments have helped to sort out the necessary things that should go into this unit.

### Unit 8 B Using Songs to Increase Participation, Recall, and Enjoyment

For this unit much of the feedback received commented that including this unit in the book is a good idea as it involves more creativity and fun exercises added to the book. A couple of people suggested that it is important to maintain the class professional while using songs to improve the students' motivation and participation level so that it does not distract the learning atmosphere of the class from being too casual but helps to create a better, enjoyable educational environment.

In Winter of 2011 we will receive feedback from students in Ling 377, a class to train students to teach English abroad for Help International and other organizations. Finally we will receive feedback from pilot users. Pilot users will be able to link from the website to a Qualtrics survey that has been created for each unit.

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## •The Authors

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## Appendix B

### Original Draft Unit 5B

#### Unit 5B

# Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners

## Introduction

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Most of this program focuses on teaching adults, but this unit is dedicated to teaching young learners. While there is overlap between what teachers of adults and what teachers of young learners do, there are also considerable differences (Hird, 2000). In preparing to teach young learners it is important to be aware of these differences and how they affect your teaching. It is also important to realize that though children have a reputation for being good language learners, “teaching children a foreign language may, in some ways, be more demanding at primary level than at higher levels” (Cameron, 2003, p.111). In other words, teaching young learners can be more challenging than teaching adults; however, it is also full of joy.

## Scenario: Going Abroad

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Sara was studying English at a local university. She decided she wanted to spend the summer abroad volunteering. She found an organization that sent volunteers around the world to help with various projects. One of the areas that was in demand was for native speaking English teachers for children. As she was currently studying English in school she thought this would be the perfect opportunity for her. Sara applied to volunteer with the organization and was assigned to teach English to children in Thailand. As the date for her departure got closer Sara realized that while she felt she knew a lot about English, she didn’t know very much about teaching basic English to children. Additionally, while she enjoyed playing with her nieces and nephews, she was always grateful when their parents took charge when they were crying or misbehaving. She became nervous as she thought about teaching children English for the summer. How was she supposed to teach a language to children? How would the children behave? What about teaching them reading and writing?

## Reflection Questions

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The above situation represents reality for many people. They decide to go spend a summer or a year abroad and they think teaching children sounds like fun. They often don’t realize all the work and considerations it takes to teach young learners.



**What would you do in this situation?**

**How would you go about teaching young English language learners?**

**Would you try to teach reading and writing or just focus on speaking and listening?**

**What could you do to make it both effective and enjoyable?**

## Objectives of this unit

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After you read this unit, and think about the reflection questions you will be able to...

- Describe important characteristics of young learners that affect the way you should teach them
- Understand the challenges and the joys of teaching young learners
- Plan and teach effective lessons based on proven principles of how young people learn

## Young Learners -The Least You Should Know

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As mentioned previously there are differences between young learners and adults. These differences affect how they learn and therefore how they should be taught. Additionally, these differences affect the way you manage your classroom. In this chapter we explore some of these differences, including...

1. Who are young learners
2. Characteristics of young learners
3. How young people learn
4. Effective teaching strategies
5. Classroom Management

### 1. Who are young learners?

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#### *Young learners defined*

To begin we need to understand who fits into this category of young learners. In elementary education young learners are typically those younger than 11 or 12. Additionally this group is divided into young learners (ages 7-12) and very young learners (ages 2-6). For this chapter I will use the terms young learners and children to refer to all children ages 4 – 11 (preschool – 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the typical American school system). Special considerations for very young learners will be noted along the way.

#### *Background knowledge*

Young learners come with a limited amount of knowledge, which depends on their age; socioeconomic status; exposure to literature, media and the world in general; and other factors. Your students are still actively constructing their world, which includes developing language skills in their native language. Many of them are still learning to read and write and some of them, especially very young learners, are still learning aspects of the spoken language. This leads to challenges. Asking them to write vocabulary words may exercise their fingers as much or more than it exercises their brains. Especially for children that come from a non-roman alphabet, such as Chinese or Thai, just forming the letters can be challenging. Also, these children come from a different culture, which has different expectations for children and for classrooms. By learning about and being respectful of your students' culture you will be better able to develop a positive relationship with them. (see Unit, 1D Culture) Additionally, the majority of you who teach young learners will be doing so in a foreign country where many of your students may have little to no exposure to English outside of school. They may have family members who speak English or may watch TV or listen to music in English but for most of them their exposure to English will be limited. This is another important consideration in lesson planning as well as expectations for the learners.

### 2. Characteristics of young learners

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We continue with a brief discussion of some of the key characteristics of young learners and how these characteristics affect teaching and learning. Start by thinking of a young learner you know; it could be a family member, neighbor, or someone you babysat. Take a minute and think about this person. As you read about the different characteristics think about how you have seen these characteristics in a young learner you know.

### ***Cognitive development***

As mentioned previously young learners are still actively learning their first language. Their brains are still developing. Along with still learning language they are learning other skills and ideas that adults already know. So, how does this impact your teaching? The very young don't know what a verb or a noun is. They are increasing their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge of their first language while learning a second. For young learners learning a second language more closely mirrors learning their first language. In both cases they are engaging in a search for meaning. This means it won't do you any good to teach rules or use grammatical categories with very young learners. (With older young learners you can use simple categories such as verb and noun.) Instead just give them lots of examples and then let them practice (Brown, 2007). See Unit 4A for more information on the process of learning language.

### ***Motivation***

Most children come to school excited and ready to learn. The challenge is to keep them excited and motivated. Children are motivated by people that care about them and activities that interest them and are fun. YOU play a huge role, if you are smiling and having fun, if you care about your students, if you are willing to make mistakes – try saying something in their language-- they will follow your example and be excited. It is also important to be aware of your students and plan lessons that are not too easy or too hard. Doing activities at the just right level keeps young learners engaged and motivated.

### ***Curiosity and imagination***

Children are naturally curious; they want to know what things are and touch, smell, see and even taste everything they can. They are also creative and imaginative. These are valuable language learning tools. Make learning fun and exciting by allowing these natural abilities to shine through. Plan lessons and activities that allow children to be creative. Use their natural tendency to be curious to keep them motivated. Be willing to step away from your lesson plan and teach something that your students are curious about.

### ***Attention span***

Attention span refers to the amount of time we can spend focusing on one thing. Most of us have had the experience of sitting in a class and after about 15 minutes our mind begins to wander. We begin to think about other things, what we are going to eat for dinner, that new movie that just came out, or that cute boy or girl in our morning class. Children have this same problem; they will not stay focused if a lesson or activity is too easy, too hard or boring. Young learners will not just sit and daydream though they will talk to their friends, or play with things on or in their desks. To help, you should make your lessons dynamic and exciting, also you should plan to change activities often. If something is working well stick with it, if after two minutes you can tell your classes is getting restless, it's time for a change. This can be a very simple change. For example, you start by teaching your class the names of different articles of clothing and having them repeat the names, then have them practice by saying what they are wearing, then practice by

playing a game. As children get older they are better able to stay focused for longer thus it is important to be aware of your class.

### **Silence**

Most young language learners go through a period of silence when they first begin learning a language. It can range from a short amount of time to months. Do not be surprised or concerned if your students don't say a lot at first. They are still learning. Most of them will start talking eventually, just be patient with them and keep encouraging them.



### Comprehension and Reflection Questions

1. Who are young learners?
2. Name three characteristics of young children and explain how they affect your teaching? What are the challenges? What are the joys?
3. Think about a young child you know. Have you seen any of the characteristics mentioned in his or her behavior?

## **3. How young people learn**

Now that we have gone over some of the basic characteristics and how they affect your teaching let's talk about how young learners learn. One of the most important parts of learning for young learners is making meaning. Young learners, unlike adults, will not always tell you when they don't understand, they will mouth words or nod their heads even if they don't understand (Cameron, 2001). It is therefore important to be aware of the ways in which young learners learn so you can make sure they understand and are not just pleasing the teacher.

### **Active**

Children learn best by being actively involved. They learn through experience with the environment. Actively participating in language learning also allows children to explore language and keeps them motivated and having fun, which helps with classroom management.

### **Connected**

At the beginning of the unit we discussed that young learners have a limited amount of knowledge. It is important, therefore, to teach students English that is connected to their individual lives. It is also important to help them make connections between topics. For example, if you are teaching vocabulary to students, use items that they see in their everyday lives. In some cases it may be more appropriate to teach them 'mango' than to teach them 'pear'. It is important to be aware of the environment in which you and your students live and the access they have to English via the internet or other media sources.

### **Concrete**

Young learners learn best by using concrete materials. If they can touch it, smell it, see it, hear it or taste it they will remember it better and have a better understanding of the meaning of a word. This is especially important for very young learners. Older young learners have an easier time thinking abstractly and depending on their level of English may be able to work with dictionary definitions or explanations from the teacher.

### **Social**

Children learn by interacting and talking with each other and adults. Especially older young learners (age 8-11) can benefit from practicing English with each other. It may be simply playing a game with a partner or practicing simple greetings. Children also communicate differently when they are talking to adults and when they are talking to their peers. They can gain many skills by having opportunities to talk with their peers. It is important that the teacher models the task and provides support to allow the students to succeed.

## 4. Effective Strategies

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Now that you know how children learn in general, we will discuss some specific strategies that can be used when planning and implementing lessons. We will discuss ways to make your classes engaging and effective by using play, and TPR. We will also briefly discuss developing literacy skills and using stories to teach English.

### *Play*

Playing allows young learners to explore, create and figure out how the world works. They learn by playing with language, making up new words, and trying out different ways to say things. They learn by singing songs and playing games. As a teacher of young learners you also must learn to 'play'. You 'play' by doing the actions that go along with the song and singing enthusiastically, even if you are not the best singer, children don't care. You have to be excited by showing them how to play the games and do the activities. You have to become a storyteller complete with actions and voices.

### *TPR*

TPR stands for Total Physical Response. It involves having the students get involved in learning language by responding with their bodies. Instead of having them sit at their desks and just listen TPR allows the students to be involved. TPR is especially effective with beginners and with very young learners; however, it works well with older children as well. Some examples of TPR are

- singing *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* while the students touch their various body parts
- teaching simple directions like stand up, turn around, sit down, while the students do the actions
- having students point to or hold up things or pictures while teaching vocabulary

### **Literacy**

Developing literacy skills depends to a lot on the age of the children and their previous exposure to written language. A student who uses a roman alphabet system will have an easier time learning the English writing system than a student who uses a non-roman system, such as Chinese or Thai. Additionally, students who have learned beginning reading and writing skills in their first language already understand some of the foundations of reading and writing which can transfer to their development of literacy skills in English. Some techniques for developing literacy skills include

- Using songs and games to show the relationship between letters and sounds
- Labeling items in the classroom with English words
- Practicing forming the shapes of the letters
- Reading books a loud and sharing the reading of books and other words

- Having children create their own stories by writing them or telling them and having the teacher write.

### *Stories*

Teaching with stories can be a great way to involve your learners and give them context for using and learning language. Picture books have been seen as being valuable for teaching vocabulary and literacy to young learners. Stories help young learners in many ways; they are enjoyable and are a familiar medium for most students. You can tell young learners common American stories like fables, fairy tales, and tall tales. It has been shown that comprehension of stories is increased when you use repetition, gestures and ask simple comprehension questions while telling the story. (Cabrera & Martinez, 2001)

## **4. Class management**

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In conclusion, we will discuss some ideas to help you manage classes of young learners. Remember the characteristics we discussed earlier of motivation and attention span. I will mention only three other guidelines for classroom management. (See also, Unit 3C for more information on classroom management.)

### *Routines*

Routines are things we do the same way everyday. A class may have some established routines, which you also follow, such as the students standing and greeting the teacher. Routines help young learners know what to expect and create a safe environment in which they are comfortable. They also can offer opportunities for teaching. Routines may involve greeting and saying goodbye, passing out supplies, and other daily activities.

### *Use praise and names*

Another helpful hint for classroom management of young learners is to use praise. If a child is behaving well, praise them. Tell them good job, pick them to be first in a game. The other children will usually respond. Also use their names or nicknames, have them make name-tags so you can use their names and try to learn their names. Names carry power, when we use people's names it shows we care about them enough to learn and use their names.

### **Set them up to succeed**

Earlier we talked about the importance of having activities that were neither too challenging, nor too easy. Remember as you plan and carry out your lessons to help children succeed. When they experience success they want to keep trying which encourages them to be well behaved. Be willing to adjust an activity to meet the needs of individuals. Also, help them to save face. Young learners have very sensitive egos so it is important to create a safe environment so they can make mistakes.




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### Comprehension and Reflection Questions

1. What are three of the ways children learn and an example of each?
2. What do you need to consider when planning lessons for young children?
3. What are two things you can do about classroom management?



## Video example

In class we will view a video clip of a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade class in Thailand led by two novice teachers.

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## Reflection and Responses

As you view this video clip of an EFL class of young learners, think about each of the following questions.

5. What was especially good about this class? (What did the teachers and students do right?)
6. What teaching principles/techniques discussed earlier in this unit did you notice in this clip?
7. What adaptations could you make for the situation you are (will be) teaching in?
8. What other things might you do differently to make your lessons even better?

For future (Web-based) use: Write your reflections in the box provided. Then, click on the button by each box to see what other people have said after viewing and reflecting on this video clip.\*

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**That's it. That's “the least you should know” about working successfully with young learners. Of course, there is much more that you will learn later.**

## Where to go to learn more

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### *Connections to other units in this program*

Here are some other units in this program that relate to this unit:

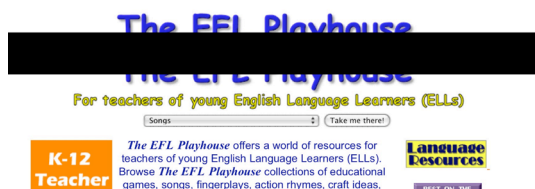
- Unit 1D: “Dealing with cultural differences and culture shock”
- Unit 3C: “Managing classes of English language learners.”
- Unit 4A: “Understanding basic principles of second language acquisition”
- Unit 4F: “Developing an awareness of teaching styles and cross-cultural style differences”
- Unit 8B: “Using songs to increase participation, recall and enjoyment”
- Unit 8C: “Using games and other fun yet effective activities for English language teaching”

### *Online and other electronic resources*

[www.esl4kids.net](http://www.esl4kids.net)

“The EFL Playhouse For teachers of young English Language Learners (ELLS)”

A website with ideas for teaching, teaching tips, and finding teaching resources with specific information for teaching abroad. Includes printouts of activities. Use the drop-down



menu at the top of the screen to navigate through the site.

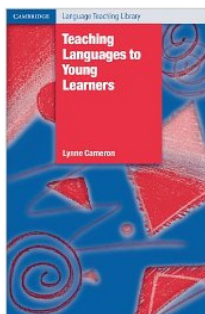
[www.Starfall.com](http://www.Starfall.com)

Starfall is an early literacy site with activities for teaching beginning reading skills. It has online books for beginning readers and phonics activities. There are also activities for common American holidays.



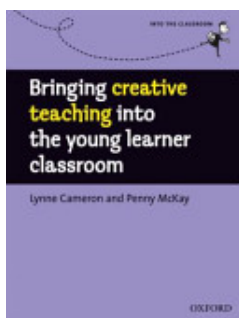
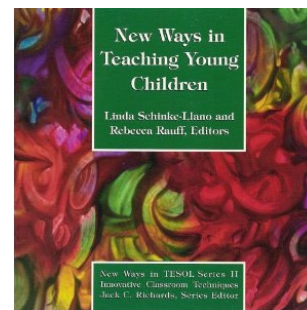
### ***Print and paper-based resources***

Here are some published books that have proven to be helpful resources for teaching young learners.



Lynne Cameron. *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge University Press, 2001. Offers theory and practical suggestions on teaching foreign languages to children. It includes theory as well as practical ideas for teaching vocabulary, listening skills, literacy skills, etc. It also offers guidelines on using stories to teach. Uses examples from classrooms in Europe and Asia. ISBN 0-521-77434-9

Linda Schinke-Llano and Rebecca Rauff, Editors. *New Ways in Teaching Young Children*. New Ways in TESOL Series II: Innovative Classroom Techniques. Jack C. Richards, Editor. Alexandria, VA: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1996. Presents 14 sections containing various classroom activities. Sections include Social Interaction, Real Life Situations, Learning Through Actions, Music, Drama, Storytelling, Content Areas, and others. A very practical, easy to use resource for teachers of young learners. ISBN 0-939791-63-3



Lynne Cameron and Penny McKay. *Bringing Creative Teaching into the Young Learner Classroom*. Oxford University Press, 2010. Includes ideas various activities for teaching children, including information on why the activities work and how to adjust the activities for older or younger children. It also contains information on assessment, using technology and involving parents. ISBN 978-0-19-442248-2

## Sources

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- Cabrera, M. P., & Martinez, P. B. (2001) The effects of repetition, comprehension checks and gestures, on primary school children in an EFL situation. *ELT Journal*. 55, 281-288
- Cameron, A. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. London, Cambridge University
- Cameron, A. (2003). Challenges for ELT from the expansion in teaching children. *ELT Journal*. 57 105-112.
- Brown, H. D., (2007). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York, Pearson Education
- Hird, B. Thwaite, A., Breen, M. Milton, M. Oliver, R. (2000) Teaching English as a second language to children and adults: variations in practices. *Language Teaching Research* 4, 3-32. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=7&hid=7&sid=5fe449c3-2483-469b-8300-027e129557e1%40sessionmgr111>
-

## Appendix C

### Feedback from Presentations

<p>Feedback on Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners</p> <p>1. What did you like or think was good? <i>Ideas and sources</i></p> <p>2. What suggestions do you have? For novice teachers what is essential that they know about teaching young learners? Have I missed any big ideas? (no) <i>you did great by Patricia A. Richard</i> <i>Amr</i></p> <p>3. Do you know of any other resources that would be helpful? <i>Making it Happen</i></p> <p>Thanks for your suggestions!</p>	<p>Feedback on Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners</p> <p>1. What did you like or think was good? <i>Good Power point</i> <i>Dynamic presentation</i></p> <p>2. What suggestions do you have? For novice teachers what is essential that they know about teaching young learners? Have I missed any big ideas?</p> <p>3. Do you know of any other resources that would be helpful? <i>starfall.com</i></p> <p>Thanks for your suggestions!</p>
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Feedback on Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners

1. What did you like or think was good?

Good Resource site.

2. What suggestions do you have? For novice teachers what is essential that they know about teaching young learners? Have I missed any big ideas?

Be active physically  
LOTS OF TPR  
Total Physical Response  
in the classroom. BE  
SILLY. KIDS LOVE SILLY

3. Do you know of any other resources that would be helpful?

Use material for  
Kinder garden  
English speakers.

Thanks for your suggestions!

Use lots of Props -  
stuffed animals are  
great to lead, all kinds  
of grammar and vocabulary

Heidi

Feedback on Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young English Language Learners

1. What did you like or think was good?

Good summary of needs, good Power Point (simple breakdown)

2. What suggestions do you have? For novice teachers what is essential that they know about teaching young learners? Have I missed any big ideas?

Must talk simply; know your own level & be enthusiastic; be patient, and warm; don't try to teach too much at once.

3. Do you know of any other resources that would be helpful?

(No! Sorry.)

Thanks for your suggestions!



Feedback on BTR-*TESOL* units 5B and 5C

What did you like or think would be helpful for a novice teacher?

1. Knowing Younger learners learning ways, learn features and reference to be offered.
2. Teaching strategies for young learners.

What suggestions do you have to improve the content of the unit?

- \* How to give feedback to younger learners to promote their motivation, or help them overcome their frustration.

Do you know of any other good resources for teaching young learners?

Thanks for you suggestions and feedback!

Feedback on BTR-*TESOL* units 5B and 5C

What did you like or think would be helpful for a novice teacher?

I liked the different levels associated with the different age groups. It was helpful to think of the distinctions between the two.

What suggestions do you have to improve the content of the unit?

The content was good & clear cut

Do you know of any other good resources for teaching young learners?

Go to actual school systems & see what resources they have.

Thanks for you suggestions and feedback!





Session Evaluation Form

Name of presenter(s): Heidi Healy

Title of presentation: Developing 2 Units for Basic ...

Circle the appropriate response:  
 1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good 4 = very good 5 = excellent  
 NA = does not apply, or insufficient information to comment

- 1. Preparation 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 2. Clarity 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 3. Followed abstract 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 4. Demonstrated knowledge of subject 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 5. Answered questions adequately 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 6. Usefulness to you 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 7. Quality of handouts 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 8. Quality of visuals 1 2 3 4 5 NA

What did you like best?  
 I liked the differentiation between very young and young language learners. Very interesting  
 Suggestions or comments:



Session Evaluation Form

Name of presenter(s): Heidi Healy

Title of presentation: Developing Two Units

Circle the appropriate response:  
 1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good 4 = very good 5 = excellent  
 NA = does not apply, or insufficient information to comment

- 1. Preparation 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 2. Clarity 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 3. Followed abstract 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 4. Demonstrated knowledge of subject 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 5. Answered questions adequately 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 6. Usefulness to you 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 7. Quality of handouts 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 8. Quality of visuals 1 2 3 4 5 NA

What did you like best?  
 The resource connections (show some)  
 The effective strategies (demo might help)  
 Nice support from Annamula Pinder et al  
 Michael and Lightfoot  
 Excellent description of young learner characteristics

Suggestions or comments:





Session Evaluation Form

Name of presenter(s): Heidi Healy

Title of presentation: Developing two units...

Circle the appropriate response:

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good 4 = very good 5 = excellent  
NA = does not apply, or insufficient information to comment

- 1. Preparation 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 2. Clarity 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 3. Followed abstract 1 2 3 4 3 NA
- 4. Demonstrated knowledge of subject 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 5. Answered questions adequately 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 6. Usefulness to you 1 2 3 4 4 5 NA
- 7. Quality of handouts 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 8. Quality of visuals 1 2 3 4 5 NA

What did you like best?

Very knowledgeable about her topic

Suggestions or comments:



Session Evaluation Form

Name of presenter(s): Heidi Healy

Title of presentation: Developing Units for Basic Training

Circle the appropriate response:

1 = poor 2 = fair 3 = good 4 = very good 5 = excellent  
NA = does not apply, or insufficient information to comment

- 1. Preparation 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 2. Clarity 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 3. Followed abstract 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 4. Demonstrated knowledge of subject 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 5. Answered questions adequately 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 6. Usefulness to you 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 7. Quality of handouts 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- 8. Quality of visuals 1 2 3 4 5 NA

What did you like best?

I liked pointing out the importance of preparing teachers of ESL professionally.

Suggestions or comments:

None --



What did you find especially useful?

learning that adults learn differently than children / ideas like actions, headshakes, ect

What questions do you still have about teaching children?

NONE I can think of

What would you like more information about?

learning materials that would be good to use

Any other comments or suggestions?

great presentation!

What did you find especially useful?

Getting ideas as to what things help people best learn a new language.

What questions do you still have about teaching children?

what things are best for children to learn first

What would you like more information about?

order of teaching  
- does sequence matter (what things should be taught first & last)?

Any other comments or suggestions?

It was helpful 😊



What did you find especially useful?

Material was relevant, new

What questions do you still have about teaching children?

Just specifics, I think I have a handle

What would you like more information about?

Any other comments or suggestions?

Keep Powerpoint light & ~~short~~ Avoid reading Powerpoint.  
Great knowledge level. obvious you care.

What did you find especially useful?

We need to understand what we should ask & do  
as a listening teacher.

What questions do you still have about teaching children?

What if children is frustrated because of their  
poor English (or slow development)

What would you like more information about?

~~None~~ or (I guess children's behavior (reaction)  
~~about the teachers~~)

Any other comments or suggestions?

~~None~~ None



2. Young English ~~learners~~  
 learners need the same things  
 a native speaking child would  
 need.

☆☆☆☆

## 2. Young English Language Learners

- This unit showed me how ~~more~~ important it is to plan my lesson with the right audience in mind
- I also learned how helpful games, songs, and activities that keep the students involved are in teaching kids
- This lesson also helped me to realize the challenges of teaching young learners, particularly in a classroom

## 2. Young English

- Use visuals.
- They like to be artists.
- Stay Simple.

☆☆☆☆

## 2. Young English

- repeat yourself a lot
- they might not speak at first but they're learning
- games + songs good

☆☆☆☆

- (2) I need to know the kids ability before I go off. Kids have a shorter Attention span. They need a routine but lots of different kinds of activities.

☆☆☆☆

## Learning

- there is a period of silence when young learners are just taking in the language

☆☆☆☆



Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young Language Learners  
Unit 5C: Working Successfully with Very Young Language Learners

On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the information? (1 being not helpful, 5 being very helpful)

5

What in the presentation was helpful?

The notes were very helpful and readable.

Which of the suggested resources do you think you might use?

I really think I will use the worksheets that you suggested

Do you have any remaining questions about teaching English to children?

Nope

Thank you for your input!

you are welcome

Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young Language Learners  
Unit 5C: Working Successfully with Very Young Language Learners

On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the information? (1 being not helpful, 5 being very helpful)

What in the presentation was helpful?

The organization really helped comprehension - it was the same for both sections

Which of the suggested resources do you think you might use?

ESL4kids.com

Do you have any remaining questions about teaching English to children?

No

Thank you for your input!



Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young Language Learners  
Unit 5C: Working Successfully with Very Young Language Learners

On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the information? (1 being not helpful, 5 being very helpful)

4

What in the presentation was helpful?

TALKING ABOUT CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT  
AND IDEAS FOR GAMES.

Which of the suggested resources do you think you might use?

STAR FALL

Do you have any remaining questions about teaching English to children?

Nope

Thank you for your input!

Unit 5B: Working Successfully with Young Language Learners  
Unit 5C: Working Successfully with Very Young Language Learners

On a scale of 1-5, how helpful was the information? (1 being not helpful, 5 being very helpful)

5! and liked it!

What in the presentation was helpful?

How young learners learn

Which of the suggested resources do you think you might use?

The online keeping things connected & can create

Do you have any remaining questions about teaching English to children?

Nope!

Thank you for your input!

## Appendix D

### Time Log

Date	Time spent	What?
13 Sept 2010	45 min	BTRTESOL meeting-discussed expectations, prospectus
20 Sept 2010	45 min	BTRTESOL meeting-prospectus, look back 15 years, who are volunteer teachers?
4 Oct. 2010	45 min	BTRTESOL meeting-prepare for ITESOL
9 Oct 2010	1 hr.	Working on chapter for YLs, including reading articles, Brown and Harmer, writing section of characteristics of young children.
11 Oct 2010	1 hr	Team meeting: presentation
20 Oct. 2010	30 min.	Working on slides for ITESOL, reading articles
23 Oct. 2010	1 hr.	ITESOL presentation
25 Oct. 2010	1 hr.	Reviewing feedback from ITESOL presentation
27 Oct. 2010	2 hr.	Working on chapter, formatting, researching for scenario,

27 Oct. 2010	1 hr.	Meeting w/ Dr. Henrichsen, went over outline for unit, copied videos for selection of video segment for unit
28 Oct. 2010	1 hr.	Working on unit
29 Oct. 2010	1 hr.	Viewing videos for unit, working on unit
1 Nov.	1 hr	Team Meeting
4 November 2010	1 hr.	Lit review 5B
8 Nov 2010	1 hr	Team Meeting: prospectus
15 Nov 2010	1 hr	Team meeting: prospectus
22 Nov 2010	1 hr	Team meeting: prospectus
29 Nov 2010	1 hr.	Team meeting: prospectus
9 March 2011	30 min	Presentation for 377
25 March 2011	30 min.	HELP international Presentation
26 March 2011	30 min.	HELP international Presentation
16 May 2011	~2hrs.	Reading Linse
2 June 2011	:25	Reading Celic
7 June 2011	:45	Reading Celic

8 June 2011	1	Reading Celic, TESOL
9 June 2011	:45	Working on chapters, NAEYC
28 July 2011	:30	Reading article the native, the novice...
29 July 2011	:23	Reviewing Monty's write-up
1 August 2011	1:15	Working on chapters, looking for sources
5 August 2011	1:30	Reading sources and taking notes on SLA and younger learner (Philp, Oliver, Mackey)
23 August 2011	1	Reading SLA and the younger learner (Philp, Oliver, Mackey)
24 August 2011	1:30	Reading Children learning second languages
25 August 2011	1	Reading Children learning second languages
26 August 2011	1	Reading Children learning second languages
30 August 2011	1	Working on write-up – Chapter 3: developing the units
31 August 2011	:30	Reading Tabors and Snow (1994)



1 September 2011	1	Looking at resources/ reading
7 September 2011	1	Going over review of lit.
8 September 2011	2	Lit Review
23 September 2011	1	New unit
26 September 2011	1:15	Units
5 October 2011	1:30	Chapter 1
10 October 2011	:30	Chapter 5
12 October 2011	1	Chapter 5
21 October	2	ITESOL presentations
5 November 2011	1:30	Editing/revising
10 November 2011	1:30	Talking to Steve, writing scenario based on conversation
14 November 2011	1:20	Editing units
22 November 2011	1:00	Meeting with Dr. H
7 December 2011	2:30 1:30	Reading, chapter 1 Mtg w Dr. H
9 December 2011	2	Revising units
10 December 2011	1:30	Revising units/readability

5 Jan 2012	1	Video clips, Ch. 1
16 Jan 2012	2	Editing units, reading
17 Jan 2012	2	Editing, Ch. 3, readability
19 Jan 2012	1:30	Ch. 3, readability
20 Jan 2012	2	Readability
21 Jan 2012	2:30	Formatting, readability
26 Jan 2012	1:30	Edit Chapter 1
30 Jan 2012	1:30	Edit Chapter 1
31 Jan 2012	:45	Working on Chapter 6
7 Feb 2012	1	Reading Paul's report, editing
11 Feb 2012	2	Readability
13 Feb 2012	:30	Videos
14 Feb 2012	:45	Abstract, Chapter 3
16 Feb 2012	1	Meeting with Dr. H
17 Feb 2012	1:30	Chapter 1 revisions
21 Feb 2012	1	Reading Julie's report
22 Feb 2012	2	Ch. 2 Review of Lit
24 Feb 2012	2:30	Review of Lit

25 Feb 2012	1:30	Review of Lit
28 Feb 2012	1:30	Ch. 3 – Readability
29 Feb 2012	1	Ling 377 – get to know the students
2 March 2012	30	Meet w/H
6 March 2012	:30	Ch. 4 – formatting
7 March 2012	2	Ch. 2
8 March 2012	1:30	Ch. 2 – research and writing
9 March 2012	2	Lit Review
10 March 2012	2	Ch. 3, lit review, video clips,
12 March 2012	1:30	Lit Review
13 March 2012	2	Lit review, dream weaver files
14 March 2012	1	Lit review
15 March 2012	2	Ch. 3, videos, meet w/ H
16 March 2012	2	Ch. 3 editing
20 March 2012	:30	Ch. 3 editing
21 March 2012	1:30	Ch. 3 editing

22 March 2012	1	Video editing, meet w/H
29 March 2012	1	Presentation at TESOL
3 April 2012	1	Editing ch. 2
4 April 2012	2	Ch. 5, Appendix A, 377 presentation
11 April 2012	1:30	Ch. 5, formatting, table of contents
12 April 2012	:30	Meet w/ H
16 April 2012	1:30	Ch. 5 editing
17 April 2012	1	Ch. 6
18 April 2012	2	Ch. 2 editing, Ch 1
23 April 2012	3:30	Ch. 2, Ch. 5, meeting w/H
24 April 2012	2	Editing Ch. 5, 6 and front matter
25 April 2012	1:30	Editing Ch. 5 and 6, sent to Dr. Henrichsen
26 April 2012	1	Editing Ch. 1, Appendices
30 April 2012	1	Editing Ch.1 Karen's notes
1 May 2012	2	Editing Ch. 2 Karen's notes + APA book
2 May 2012	3	Editing ch. 3 & 4 – Karen's notes, APA, etc.

3 May 2012	1	Editing Ch. 5 – Karen’s notes, consistency with using untrained, novice teachers
7 May 2012	2:50	Editing Ch. 6 and References page-Karen’s notes, APA, Appendices C, D
8 May 2012	1:30	Meet w/H
9 May 2012	3:30	Edit units, Ch. 3, prepare to e-mail to committee
15 May 2012	:30	Meeting w/H, send report to committee
21 May 2012	1	Editing 5 & 6
22 May 2012	:45	Meeting w/ H, Schedule defense for 6/5, went over defense procedures
23 May 2012	1	Final editing for defense copy of project report
Total Hours	147	