

Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers

ANNAMARIA PINTER

Teaching Young Language Learners

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1 Learning and development	5
Introduction	5
Active learning: 'constructivism'	5
Piaget's stages of development	6
Piaget's 'thinking' revolution: from pre-operational to operational stage	7
Criticism of Piaget's stages	8
The pre-operational stage	8
The operational stages	9
The role of interaction: 'social constructivism'	10
Vygotsky's theory of learning	10
Helping children to learn by offering systematic support	11
The importance of language for learning	11
Children are all unique learners	13
Gardner's framework for multiple intelligences	13
Learning styles	13
Exceptional children and mixed ability classes	15
Summary	15
Recommended reading	16
Background theory	16
Tasks	16
2 Learning the first language at home and at school	17
Introduction	17
Why is first language development of interest to EYL teachers?	17
How are child learners different from adults?	17
Universal processes in language learning	18
How is the first language acquired?	19
The role of input and interaction	19
The role of Universal Grammar	19

The achievements of the first five years	20
The influence of school on first language development	21
Language use at home	21
Language use at school	22
Organizing school knowledge and experiences	23
Monitoring own learning	23
Memory development	23
Summary	24
Recommended reading	24
Background theory	24
Tasks	25
3 Learning a second/third language at home and at school	27
Introduction	27
Early bilingualism	27
The effect of age	28
Critical Period Hypothesis	28
Is younger better?	29
Learning a second language in the playground and at school	30
From informal to formal contexts	30
Integrated second language learning	31
Learning English as a foreign language	32
Summary	32
Recommended reading	32
Background theory	32
Practical teacher resources	33
Tasks	34
4 Policy: primary ELT programmes	35
Introduction	35
Contextual factors in language teaching	35
Language settings	35
Educational frameworks	36
Status of English and attitude to English	36
The role of motivation	36
Aims and expectations	38
Exposure to English	38
Integrating English into the curriculum	40
Teacher factors	41
Continuity and the private sector	42
Summary	42
Recommended reading	43
Background theory	43

Practical teacher resources	43
Tasks	44
5 Teaching listening and speaking	45
Introduction	45
Teaching listening	45
Listening—aspects of difficulty	45
Support with listening	46
Teacher talk in the primary English lesson	47
Interactional modifications of language	48
Listening activities for younger learners	49
Listening activities for older learners	53
Teaching speaking	55
Fluent speakers	55
What is realistic for young learners?	56
Speaking activities with younger groups	56
Speaking activities with older learners	58
Need for meaning negotiation	59
The demands of more complex tasks	60
Summary	62
Recommended reading	63
Background theory	63
Practical teacher resources	63
Tasks	64
6 Teaching reading and writing	65
Introduction	65
Why teach reading and writing in EYL classes?	65
Early literacy in English as a first language	66
Reading and writing during pre-school years	66
Reading and writing at school	67
Teaching reading in EYL classes	68
Reading activities with younger children	69
Reading activities with older children	73
Teaching writing in EYL classes	74
What do native speaker children write?	74
Writing activities with younger children in EYL classes	74
Writing activities with older children in EYL classes	77
Summary	79
Recommended reading	79
Background theory	79
Practical teacher resources	80
Tasks	81

7 Teaching vocabulary and grammar	83
Introduction	83
Teaching vocabulary and grammar	83
Vocabulary and grammar are interdependent	83
From picking up words to knowing words	84
Learning grammar is a messy process	84
The role of deliberate practice	85
Vocabulary and grammar for younger children	86
Learning grammar in a holistic way	86
Learning vocabulary	86
The role of rhythm	88
Incorporating new vocabulary into children's existing knowledge	89
Vocabulary and grammar for older learners	90
Vocabulary activities for older children	91
Grammar activities for older children	91
Summary	95
Recommended reading	96
Background theory	96
Practical teacher resources	97
Tasks	97
8 Learning to learn	99
Introduction	99
What is 'learning to learn'?	99
What types of strategies can be developed?	100
Developing social and affective strategies and raising awareness about language learning	101
Activities for younger children	101
Activities for older children	102
Developing metacognitive strategies	104
Learning to reflect	104
Activities for younger children	104
Activities for older children	108
Developing cognitive strategies	109
Activities for younger children	109
Activities for older children	110
Giving space to children's choices	110
Summary	112
Recommended reading	113
Background theory	113
Practical teacher resources	113
Tasks	114

9	Materials evaluation and materials design	115
	Introduction	115
	Using coursebooks	115
	Multilayered syllabuses	115
	Evaluating coursebooks	118
	Supplementing coursebooks	119
	Adapting authentic texts	120
	Adapting a well known fable	120
	Adapting does not always work	122
	Creating own materials	124
	Topic-based planning	124
	Lesson planning	126
	Writing own texts	127
	Summary	128
	Recommended reading	128
	Background theory	128
	Practical teacher resources	129
	Tasks	129
10	Assessment	131
	Introduction	131
	Purposes of assessment	131
	Assessment of young learners	132
	Why are traditional methods problematic?	132
	Gap between teaching and testing?	132
	Child-friendly methods	133
	Assessment techniques	134
	Observation	134
	Self-assessment	136
	Portfolio	136
	Project work	137
	Combining assessment instruments	140
	Summary	141
	Recommended reading	141
	Background theory	141
	Practical teacher resources	141
	Tasks	141
11	Research in the primary English classroom	143
	Introduction	143
	Classroom research	143
	Action research cycles	144

Focus on children: observations	145
Focus on children: asking about their views and opinions	146
Using interviews	146
Using questionnaires	148
Focus on teachers: recording own classroom or inviting an observer	149
Other research instruments	150
Approaching the same question in different ways	150
Using more than one instrument	151
Summary	152
Recommended reading	152
Background theory	152
Practical teacher resources	152
Tasks	153
Appendix: Exploring your own practice: suggested tasks	155
Glossary	166
Bibliography	169
Index	177