



Five things you always wanted to know about Generation Y (but were too afraid to ask)

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ジェネレーションYについてあなたがいつも知りたがっている(ただし人に聞くのは躊躇する) 5つのこと

Nicky Hockly explains aspects of technology which some people may be embarrassed to confess they don't really understand. In this article, she covers Generation Y (and in passing, Generations X and Z).

Nicky Hocklyは、人によっては、自分が理解していないと告白するのは恥ずかしいと感じるテクノロジーのいくつかの側面を説明する。この論文では、(ジェネレーションXとジェネレーションZにも言及しながら) ジェネレーションYについて説明する。

Keywords: Generation Y, Generation X, Web 2.0, technology, language teaching

So now we alphabetise generations? When did this start?

Actually it started with Generation X (not with Generation A as would seem logical). Generation X, or Gen X, are people born between about 1960 and 1980. The term became widely known through the eponymous novel by Canadian writer Douglas Copeland, published in 1991. Before Generation X we had generations with names, not letters. You may have heard of the Lost Generation (those who fought in the First World War), or the Baby Boomers (those born between the Second World War and the early 1950s, when birth rates increased worldwide).

Generation Y (or Gen Y) is the term coined to refer to the generation following Generation X (those born between the early 1980s and 1990s).

You may also see this generation referred to as the Millennial Generation or Net Generation. Gen Y were born in the digital age, and are the so-called *digital natives* (a term now falling out of favour), the ones who have grown up with technology and are therefore *tech-comfy* (comfortable with technology). These terms were popularised by Mark Prensky, a good name to bandy around if you want to appear tech-comfy yourself. Tip: Gen Y (and Gen Z – those born between the early 1990s and now) can often be recognised by the number of technological gadgets they are plugged into, such as iPods, digital cameras, or mobile phones.



What's so special about this Generation Y?

For a start, let's listen to what they have to say about their experiences of mainstream education:

- *I will read eight books this year, 2300 webpages and 1281 Facebook profiles*
- *We will write 42 pages for class this semester, and over 500 pages of e-mail*
- *I facebook through most of my classes*
- *I bring my laptop to class, but I'm not working on class stuff*

These quotes are from a class survey conducted by a group of university age students in the USA. They produced a wonderful five minute video about this in 2007, which you can watch on YouTube: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=48Xnxgjt0k>.

OK, so they like technology, but what has Generation Y got to do with me?

Even if you yourself are not a product of Gen Y or even Gen X, it has a lot to do with you. As we saw above, Generation Y are the learners that are now entering or already in further education, and you probably have several of this age group in your language or teacher training courses.

What does this mean for teachers? Evidently that we should be making sure we bring technology into our classrooms, and that we help these learners to improve their English by using not just traditional means but also by ensuring we offer options that use technologies these learners already use on a daily basis. Look again at the quotes in the previous point -- to what extent do your own (Gen Y) learners feel this? Have you ever asked them?

What sort of things do these Generation Y kids do with technology then?

Many of today's English learners who are currently in their late teens to mid-twenties regularly blog, facebook, tweet, or text (these are all verbs, by the way), at least in contexts where there is easy access to computers and broadband. If you have learners or teacher trainees belonging to this demographic, ask them yourself about what they use technology for. How many of the class have a blog or a Facebook page? Have they ever uploaded videos to YouTube or photos to Flickr? Do they use any other social networking tools such as Twitter (Hockly, 2009a)? You could prepare a questionnaire to find out what technologies your learners use in their daily lives, how often, and what for. Or better still, get the learners to prepare the questions and survey themselves, like those in the above video.

But exactly how can I cater to these Generation Y learners and their technology in my classroom?

The first step is to start bringing some simple Web 2.0 technologies into your classroom. You could set up a class blog, for example. This is one of the simplest technologies to use with students, and an excellent place for a teacher to start. Of course you first need to set up a blog yourself, to

ensure that you know how to do it, and you also need to think about what you might use your class blog for (Hockly, 2009b).

Find out more about Web 2.0 tools, and how other teachers are using them already with foreign language students. Join a free online teacher development group such as the *Webheads* <www.webheads.info> and take a look at the fantastic ICT projects they are doing. Get some training and attend seminars and conference talks about new technologies -- there are plenty of free *online* conferences and webinars in our field for you to attend (you can do this for free via Webheads by joining their annual EVO training courses). Check out my blog for some suggestions on how to get up to speed with technology and how to cater to your Generation Y learners more effectively <www.emoderationskills.com>.

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Author bio

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The art and artistry of language teaching

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言語教育のわざ(技術)と手腕(芸術的才能)

Is education about opening up the diverse creativity within everyone, or about ensuring a life-threatening conformity? I will begin by critiquing the current paradigm, which seems dedicated to conformity, achieved by narrow curricular specification, an almost religious devotion to tests and examinations, and an industrial metaphor. I will suggest an alternative paradigm based on an aesthetic view of education. I will focus on how this might be done through the Matter (the content) of teaching, the Method (the kinds of activities we use) and the Manner (the human climate in which it is done).

教育とは、誰もが持っている多様な独創力を引き出すこと、それとも、生命を脅かすような画一化を保障することであろうか？本論は、精密なカリキュラムや、テストや試験に対するほとんど宗教的な傾倒やインダストリアルメタファー（教室が工場、教師が上司、学生が部下のような関係を表わす隠喩）で確立された画一化に貢献しているように思える現在のパラダイム（方法論）を批評することから始める。次に、教育の美的見解に基づいたもうひとつのパラダイム（方法論）を提案する。教育の中身（内容）、方法（我々が使うアクティビティーの種類）、仕様（その中で教育が行われる人間が作り出す環境）を通して、どのようにその方法論を実践するかを重点的に説明する。

Keywords: aesthetic, creativity, education, alternative, critical

Related article: Creative writing for language learners (and teachers)¹

What is creative writing?

Creative writing normally refers to the production of texts which have an aesthetic rather than a purely informative, instrumental or pragmatic purpose. Most often, such texts take the form of poems or stories, though they are not confined to these genres (Letters, journal entries, blogs, essays, or travelogues can also be more or less

creative). In fact, the line between creative writing (CW) and expository writing (ER) is not carved in stone. In general, however, CW texts draw more heavily on intuition, close observation, imagination, and personal memories than ER texts.



One of their chief distinguishing characteristics is a playful engagement with language, stretching and testing its rules to the limit in a guilt-free atmosphere, where risk is encouraged. Such writing combines cognitive with affective modes of thinking. As the poet R.S. Thomas once wrote, "Poetry is that which arrives at the intellect by way of the heart." The playful element in CW should not, however, be confused with a lax and unregulated use of language. On the contrary, CW requires a willing submission on the part of the writer to the *rules* of the sub-genre being undertaken. If you want to write a limerick, then you have to follow the rules governing limericks. If not, what you produce will be something other than a limerick: obvious, perhaps, but important, too. The interesting thing is that the very constraints which the rules impose seem to foster rather than restrict the writer's creativity. This apparent paradox is explained partly by the deeper processing of thought and language which the rules require.

What are the benefits of CW for learners?

CW aids language development at all levels: grammar, vocabulary, phonology and discourse. It requires learners to manipulate language in interesting and demanding ways in attempting to express uniquely personal meanings. In doing so, they necessarily engage with the language at a deeper level of processing than with most

1 This article originally appeared as part of my blog as Guest Writer for the British Council/BBC Teaching English website in December, 2009 <www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think>.

expository texts (Craik & Lockhart, 1972). The gains in grammatical accuracy and range, in the appropriacy and originality of lexical choice, in sensitivity to rhyme, rhythm, stress and intonation, and in the way texts hang together are significant.

As mentioned above, a key characteristic of CW is a willingness to play with the language. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in the role of play in language acquisition (Carter, 2004; Cook, 2000; Crystal, 1998). In some ways, the tsunami of the Communicative Approach has done a disservice to language teaching by its insistence on the purely communicative functions of language. Proponents of *play* rightly point out that in L1 acquisition, much of the language encountered by and used by children is in the form of rhythmical chants and rhymes, word games, jokes and the like. Furthermore, such playfulness survives into adulthood, so that many social encounters are characterized by language play such as punning, spontaneous jokes, *funny voices*, metathesis, and a discourse which is shaped by quasi-poetic repetition (Tannen, 1989). These are precisely the kinds of things L2 learners are encouraged to do in CW activities. This playful element encourages them to play creatively with the language, and in so doing, to take the risks without which learning cannot take place in any profound sense. As Crystal (1998) states, "Reading and writing do not have to be a prison house. Release is possible. And maybe language play can provide the key."

Much of the teaching we do tends to focus on the left side of the brain, where our logical faculties are said to reside. CW puts the emphasis on the right side of the brain, with a focus on feelings, physical sensations, intuition and musicality. This is a healthy restoration of the balance between logical and intuitive faculties. It also affords scope for learners whose hemisphere dominance or learning-style preferences may not be intellectual or left brain dominant, and who, in the normal process of teaching, are therefore at a disadvantage.

Perhaps most notable is the dramatic increase in self-confidence and self-esteem which CW tends to develop among learners. Learners also tend to discover things for themselves about the language and about themselves too,

thus promoting personal as well as linguistic growth. Inevitably, these gains are reflected in a corresponding growth in positive motivation. Among the conditions for promoting motivation, Dornyei (2001, pp. 138-144) cites:

5. Create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere.
6. Promote the development of group cohesiveness.
13. Increase the students' expectation of success in particular tasks and in learning in general.
17. Make learning more stimulating and enjoyable by breaking the monotony of classroom events.
18. Make learning stimulating and enjoyable by increasing the attractiveness of tasks.
19. Make learning stimulating and enjoyable for learners by enlisting them as active task participants.
20. Present and administer tasks in a motivating way.
23. Provide students with regular experiences of success.
24. Build your learners' confidence by providing regular encouragement.
28. Increase student motivation by promoting cooperation among the learners.
29. Increase student motivation by actively promoting learner autonomy.
33. Increase learner satisfaction.
34. Offer rewards in a motivational manner.

All these conditions are met in a well-run CW class. The exponential increase in motivation is certainly supported by my own experience in teaching CW. Learners suddenly realize they can write something in a foreign language that has never been written by anyone else before, and which others find interesting to read (Hence the importance of *publishing* students' work in some form). And they experience not only a pride in their own products but also a joy in the *flow* of the process (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Finally, CW feeds into more creative reading. By getting inside the process of creating the

texts, learners come to understand intuitively how such texts function. This makes similar texts easier to read. Likewise, the development of aesthetic reading skills (Kramersch, 1993; Rosenblatt, 1978) provides the learner with a better understanding of textual construction, and this feeds into their writing.

And teachers?

I have argued before that teachers as well as learners should engage with extensive reading. In the same spirit, I would argue there are significant benefits to teachers if they participate in CW:

- There is little point in exhorting learners to engage in CW unless we do so too. The power of the teacher as model, and as co-writer, is inestimable.
- CW is one way of keeping teachers' English fresh and vibrant. For much of our professional lives we are in thrall to the controlled language of textbook English and the repeated low-level error-laden English of our students. As teachers of language, we surely have a responsibility to keep our primary resource alive and well.
- CW seems to have an effect on the writer's level of energy in general. This tends to make teachers who use CW more interesting to be around, and this inevitably impacts on their relationships with students.
- The experimental stance with regard to writing in general appears to feed back into the teaching of writing. Teachers of CW tend also to be better teachers of writing in general.

My evidence for these assertions is largely anecdotal, backed by a survey of writing teachers I conducted in 2006. One of the interesting facts to emerge was a widespread belief among writing teachers that CW had a positive effect on students' writing of expository texts and helped them develop that much desired but rarely delivered *authentic voice*.

Space does not allow me to expand on these findings, nor on some of the possible activities teachers might try. I will attempt to make good these omissions in some of my blogs. I will also make reference there to ways in which CW inter-

sects with some of our major current concerns. Meantime, anyone interested could sample some of the books from the list below: Fry (2007), Koch (1990), Matthews (1994), Spiro (2004, 2007), Whitworth (2001) and Wright and Hill (2009).

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Creating languaging agencing

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ランゲージングエイジェンシング (言語表現の仲介) の創造

Creating and structuring successful interactive moments of language use (languaging) are perhaps the most empowering things teachers can do for their students. The successful use of language to convey our meanings not only helps us learn more about language (such as grammar and vocabulary), but it also provides us with a feeling of agency in our environments (where we can act meaningfully with more resources). This is actually one of the greatest thrills that can happen in language classes, i.e. to actually use new material purposefully. It greatly depends on the creativity of teachers to scaffold and structure moments when students can assume creative control over language and use it mindfully. To the degree we are successful, we are agencing others.

好結果の言語使用における相互交流の瞬間を創造し、構造化することは、学生のためにできることの中でおそらくは最も教師に達成感を与えてくれることだと考える。伝えたいことを効果的に言語にすることは、言語(例えば文法や語彙など)についてももっと学習することができるだけでなく、我々がいる(もっと色々なリソースを駆使して有意義に振舞える)環境の中の仲介役としての感情をわれわれに与えてくれる。これは、実際に言語学習クラス内で発生し得る、最も大きなスリルのひとつである。すなわち、実際に新しい教材を、目的を持って使うことができるからである。そのスリルは、学生が創造的に言語をコントロールし、注意深く使い始める瞬間を、教師が足場をかため、構造化するその創造力によるところが大きい。我々がうまくやりこなせれば、他の学生の仲介役をこなしているということである。

Key words: creating, languaging, agencing, flow, dopamine, self-theories

Please creatively answer these questions before reading, as doing so will help you learn more. What is creating? What is agencing? What is languaging? What are incremental and entity self-theories? What is dopamine? What are the connections between creating, languaging, and agencing?



Some people think creativity is not a thing, that it is not even an *it*! That we need to *verb* it into a process, into creatING! They see it as a universal process we can make more likely under certain conditions and contexts. We language (Swain, 2009) and agence (Murphey, 2009) our way into creating.

Languaging and agencing

I am the youngest of five kids and somehow ended up living alone with my father through my high school years. He had perhaps benefited from experimentally languaging and agencing my four older siblings to certain degrees. I

distinctly remember running ideas by him, but he never told me exactly what to do. “These look like the options. But it’s your decision,” he would say. When I said I wanted to play football in college, he said, “Yes, that’s a possibility. You could do that.” The implication of the *could* was that my dreams were possible, but there were also many other things out there that I *could* do. He was not only leaving the top of the proverbial box open, he was taking down the sides for me to see more, in what might be called an unrestricted discourse, a discourse of possibilities and assumed agency.

The mindful could

Later in life, I read Langer (1989, 1997) whose research shows that people think much more diversely and creatively when teachers and experimenters use the *language of possibilities*, such as *could* and *possible* or imply un-categorically that what they are learning is merely one way of understanding something (as in, *some people think...*). Teachers, for example, could encourage more creative thinking by simply saying things like, “What could the answers be? How many different ways could you respond to this question?” instead of fishing for only one answer.

We can also creatively *nudge* our colleagues and students through languaging possibilities. For example, we *could* make this way of conversing the default way of approaching things until we have firmer resolutions and directions. This could also help us think more creatively and diversely! You could also look at the book *Nudge* (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) and realize how many of the nudges they propose have creative parallels in education.

Incrementalizing vs entifying

Carol Dweck (2000) describes incremental and entity self-theories which fit nicely with Langer’s mindful learning concepts. Dweck has shown repeatedly how people restrict or liberate themselves with their self-theories. When people believe they are either good or bad at something and their traits are fixed (entities), they use maladaptive coping strategies when confronted with failure. Those with flexible beliefs accept they are developing, that mistakes are normal.

They see themselves as not set in stone, but continually able to develop new abilities (incrementally) and learn gradually through making and reframing what others may call mistakes. We tend to think like this (developmentally) about how small infants progress with no judgment of errors (ever heard anyone talk about crawling mistakes?). But later we (and our language) seem to impose *entifying characteristics* on ourselves as we proclaim, “he is a fast/slow learner,” or “she is (not) very creative.” Ironically, complementing positively can also create entity beliefs and keep children from risking the loss of the positive label. A better way might be to praise the effort and the strategies used to develop and change over time (we need more research and exploratory practice).

These distinctions are often clear when I bring out my juggling balls. Often people will immediately proclaim an entity self theory, “I am not a ball/sports person. I could never learn to juggle.” These are the people I most enjoy working with because when they do progress in juggling (if they stay with it awhile), they often are able to shift a great portion of their worldview to *anything can happen, anything can be* (Silverstein, 1974). Note also that in certain contexts, for certain things, we may have entity beliefs, but not for others. Playing sports as a child I was mostly incremental (let me at it and who cares about the mistakes). But when I tried to play the piano like my older sisters and it did not sound anything like them, I convinced myself for some years that *I am not a musician*. And of course no one ever is, until they start becoming one. Creativity is a process that needs becoming, exercising, exploring, enjoying, and most of all an appreciation for intelligent fast failure (Matson, 1996).

Agency and dopamine

Primatologist Robert Sapolsky’s Class Day Lecture on the *Uniqueness of Humans* in September 2009 (available on YouTube and at TED.com) captivates us throughout an inspiring 35-minute presentation. My own hyper-excitement began around minute 26:30 when he started showing data from experiments with primates that measured their dopamine surges. Dopamine is the natural neurotransmitter that basically shows how excited we are. Sapolsky showed data in

which a signal is typically given (i.e. light goes on) to mark the beginning of the experiment, then a task is given (work), and then a reward is given (such as praise or a banana). When the reward is given in the first few trials, scientists see a surge in dopamine (excitement). However, after the experiment is repeated a few more times, the primate has a dopamine surge as soon as the initial signal is given, when the light goes on. Why does it change and what does this change mean? Sapolsky has two explanations: One is that this reaction is due to the anticipation of reward, the other is that the primate recognizes the experiment and gets excited about knowing how it works and being able to do it (what I call *agency*, having some control over events).

My own understanding is that the *anticipation of reward* more or less equals *extrinsic* motivation, but that the knowing how to handle a situation is much more exciting because it is *intrinsically* rewarding to *know how things work* and be able to control them--we are excited to have some control. Some in our field refer to this as having autonomy or independence. Sapolsky describes further experiments in which they manipulated the success rate so that the primates got it right only 50% of the time. Many of us would expect the dopamine surges to decrease, but actually they doubled! Why? Sapolsky attributes it to the addition of *mystery* to the equation. It becomes challenging and intriguing, and in Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) terms, *flow* is attained as ability meets challenge. They then manipulated the success rates again to 25% or 75% successful. The 25% rate was too depressing, and the dopamine surges went down. At 75% it was too close to always getting it right, so the surges were not as high as a 50% success rate.

Whether it is learning a new technique on the computer or finding a shorter route to our destination, we become excited with our creative agency (autonomy, independence) to increase control over our world. The fun of increasing it is more exciting than *getting there*. I sent an email to Sapolsky telling him what I thought, and he graciously responded, "I agree completely... another realm where the reward / payoff is, in some basic ways, not the point." This corresponds easily with Alphonse Kohn's (1993) ideas about how children, who naturally love to learn, are sometimes tragically weaned off this natural

excitement and driven toward extrinsic rewards such as grades and golden stars in their notebooks. In addition, this also correlates with why the extremely rich are often the least happy—if money can buy everything, the urgency to strive decreases (So be thankful you are poor and striving! It drives your creativity to attain more agency and your agency to be more creative).

The transdisciplinary implications of this research on our own creative teaching need addressing. We need to help students be more comfortable with lower success rates to keep them creatively striving, help them be more comfortable with making mistakes and facing challenges in which the amounts of failures and successes are roughly equal. A 50% success rate is not a magic number, but we need to help students risk more intelligent fast failure (Matson, 1996) so they can learn more and be more creative in their learning. Success is over rated!

Asking questions first and allowing students to answer correctly or not allows them to hold on to correct information longer than if they were simply given it (Roediger & Finn, 2009). Apparently, asking questions stimulates creation of mental *could be this* or *could be that* networks, making us curious enough to network places for answers. Then, even if a question is answered incorrectly, there is a networked place for the answer to go to later. If teachers just spoon-feed information, no creative *wondering* work has been done to create a space for it, and the information washes over minds like water over rocks. Information is over rated; questions are at the heart of creative agentive learning.

An agentively creative conclusion

We empower or dis-empower to different degrees ourselves and the people we talk with by the words we choose, the ways we communicate, and the activities we do. Recently my students wrote their language learning histories and then analyzed them in small groups to write reports with suggestions for students, teachers, and MEXT (acts of creating language agencing). Suggesting they analyze their histories and write advice to students, teachers, and MEXT was an incremental pedagogical risk assuming they could create, language, and agence their ways into better positions to be

heard. They took it seriously and ended up even making a creative three-minute YouTube video summarizing their findings about JHS and HS English education in Japan <www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwsZ0KiHhRg>. Then we actually sent the reports and video link to MEXT (creatively exercising our agency), which can be accessed at <www.eltnews.com/columns/mash/2010/01/the_real_voice_of_japanese_stu_1.html>.

We all have the potential to speak in ways that empower and dis-empower, of finding mistakes joyful, challenges engaging, incremental development natural, and exercising our developing agency and creativity. Creating and agencing are co-constructing concepts. One of the best developmental processes is incremental languaging and agencing with equal doses of intelligent fast failure through discussing meaningful questions which keep us in state of creative flow. Our ways of teaching are almost never innocent. We are continually framing the worlds we present as entities or incremental processes, set traits or creative developmental question-adventures, or quests with multiple answers.

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Author bio

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Tim Murphey (スイスの Université de Neuchâtelで博士号取得、応用言語学)は、神田外語大学の教授で、TESOLのProfessional Development in Language Educationシリーズの編集者でもあり、Zoltan Dörnyeiと共にGroup Dynamics in the Language Classroomの共著者でもある。現在は、学生の発言、仲介、アイデンティティー、コミュニティの構成に重点をおいたSCTの応用について研究している。彼は、1、2、3の出版社から本を出版しており、5、6ヶ国で本会議講演の経験があり、また、アメリカ、台湾、日本の大学院で教えた経験もあり、ハワイ大学のNFLRCで、9本の自由にダウンロードが可能なビデオを提供している。彼は学生の言語で表現する能力に対して、創造的に足場を作ってあげること(仲介役をすること、としても知られているが)を非常に好み、また、人々に手品(ボールでの曲芸)を教えるのを楽しんでいる。



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Challenges in teaching English as a foreign language to young learners

Marianne Nikolov,
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児童学習者に外国語としての英語を教えることへの挑戦

The aim of this talk is to provide insights into what challenges teachers of English to young learners meet. I will overview classroom studies conducted in various contexts in different countries and discuss realistic aims of early EFL, how children's proficiency in English develops in the early years, how their uses of first language and English interact, and the role of affective factors. Finally, I'll focus on teachers: what qualities are necessary, what advantages generalists, specialists, native and non-native teachers have, and how they can benefit from reflection on their practice.

この講演の目的は、児童に英語を教える教師が対峙する挑戦についていくつかの洞察を提供することである。様々な国で、様々な状況下で行われた教室研究の全体像を描き、児童向けEFLの現実的な目標、児童期における英語の習熟度の発達の方法、第1言語と英語の相互作用の方法、また感情的要素の役割についても議論する。最後に、教師に重点をおき、どんな資質が必要か、ジェネラリスト、スペシャリスト、ネイティブとノンネイティブの教師の強みは何か、また教師が自らの実践を省みることで得られる利益について語る。

Key words: early language learning, teachers of young learners, classroom research, English as a foreign language

Teaching modern foreign languages to young learners (YLS) has become extremely widespread over the last few years.

This fairly recent development is the third wave of international early language learning (ELL), following the first wave of the late 1960s-early 1970s, and the second wave twenty years later (Johnstone, 2009). The most important features of this trend comprise the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) and the dynamic spread in Asian countries as well as Europe and other parts of the world (Graddol, 2006).

As to the theoretical underpinnings of ELL, recent discussions cast unanimous doubt on

the relevance of the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) as the main argument for ELL (e.g., Muñoz, 2006; Nikolov, 2000). However, the most important reason why ELL is a great initiative is that by early exposure children may enjoy the potential advantages of starting young (relative ease of acquiring the sound system and unanalyzed wholes, higher levels of motivation, lower anxiety, and more time over years), as well as profit from what they experience at later stages in their language learning. As is widely accepted, ELL may also influence learners' affective, cognitive and metacognitive development over the years.



My relationship with teaching EFL to young learners began with an 18-year period when I taught at the primary level in my home country of Hungary. At that time I could never have imagined the enormous worldwide increase of enthusiasm for ELL that we are currently experiencing. As a teacher I taught groups of learners over 8-year periods between the ages of 6 and 14. I gained insights into how young children learn, and how I could scaffold their development in English by using materials and tasks matching their levels and needs, thus maintaining their motivation over a long period of time.

In the second phase of my teaching career, I have been involved in teacher education and research into ELL. My understanding of the international research is that the issues are very similar in different countries across the world. It is therefore my aim to provide insights into what challenges teachers of English to young learners meet in general by reviewing classroom studies conducted in various contexts in different

countries. It is important to look into the theoretical background and the empirical evidence related to the idea that younger children are better language learners than older beginners to see to what extent and how they underpin this assumption (Nikolov, 2000).

Over the last decade an amazing amount and variety of studies have documented the dynamic spread of ELL all over the world. Currently, it is almost impossible to integrate the huge body of research into ELL; therefore, the points I will discuss here are highly selective. The interested reader should go to the references for a fuller picture and further explorations (see edited volumes by García Mayo & García Lecumberri, 2003; Enever, Moon, & Raman, 2009; Moon & Nikolov, 2000; Nikolov, 2009a, b; Nikolov & Curtain, 2000; Nikolov, Mihaljević Djigunović, Mattheoudakis, Lundberg, & Flanagan, 2007; Muñoz, 2006 and a recent state-of-the-art review Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006).

Overall, research on ELL has become sophisticated and complex (Nikolov, 2009c), and the main issues in most contexts include: realistic aims, appropriately educated and motivated teachers, and transfer and continuity of programmes.

I will start with an overview of classroom studies conducted in various contexts in different countries and touch briefly on (1) realistic aims of early English as foreign language programmes; (2) how children's proficiency in English develops in the early years; (3) how their uses of first language(s) and English interact; and (4) the role of affective factors. From this point I will zoom in on teachers: (5) what qualities are necessary, (6) what advantages generalists, specialists, native and non-native teachers have, and (7) how teachers can benefit from reflection on their practice. This last point includes two perspectives: how teachers are seen and how they see their professional contribution in the classroom.

Research has revealed that the teacher is rarely considered a key variable in studies on young learners (Nikolov, 2000; 2009c). With this statement I will move to the second part of my presentation, a focus on the ELL teacher, and raise a strong and impassioned voice to the contrary. A teacher of young learners can

leave lasting positive or negative imprints on young learners and single-handedly colour a child's attitude for future FL study. In the end, everything filters down to what happens in the classroom. Among the many essential variables in ELL, teacher education is one of the variables that we can control. Research continues to reveal there is much more to the challenge of teaching EFL to young learners than first impressions may suggest. This calls into focus the training of ELL teachers and our responsibility to address their many challenges and concerns.

It is still all too common for uninitiated novice teachers observing good practice to see adorable and motivated children absorbing English in playful activities and fall in love with the idea of playing the role of charmer, caretaker, playmate and teacher all in one. In many cases, "the younger the student the less experienced the teacher" (Nikolov, 2000, p. 43) and "in most contexts minimalist solutions are paired with high expectations" on the part of parents and other stakeholders (p. 39). Often research reveals that teachers are inadequately prepared to teach children, as their expertise falls short in one or more extremely important areas: proficiency in English, most importantly fluency, age-appropriate classroom techniques focusing on meaning rather than form, skills and strategies in managing young learners in a classroom and scaffolding their learning, and an understanding of how children learn a new language. Many teachers of young learners are insecure in their job, wish they could teach older, more mature students, and worry about slow development and errors. The list of challenges is long.

The use of various types of data will hopefully cast light on the wide range of challenges teachers face and will underpin my message: teachers should look at their practice as one of the main sources of valuable information for their professional development. As I will argue, certain conditions need to be met in order to make sure that early exposure to English is beneficial and rewarding both for children and their teachers. These conditions include social factors (attitudes towards the target language, its speakers and language learning in general), educational factors (curriculum, methodology, physical surroundings, continuity, scheduling, frequency, class size) and teacher qualities. I will suggest

ways of involving young learners in their own development and strategies for integrating reflections on one's practice into daily routine.

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Author bio

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Marianne Nikolovは、ハンガリーのUniversity of Pecsの英語の応用言語学の教授である。彼女の研究は、現代言語の早期学習と教育、教室内研究、言語教育の過程と結果の評価、個々の相違、言語政策を含む。小学校教師として、8年間(6歳から14歳までの)英語学習者を教えた。彼女の研究は、論文や小論文として、ハンガリーや他の国々の学術誌にて出版された。2010年9月には、スタンフォードのthe Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences のフェロー(特別研究員)になった。

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