

The impact of teacher beliefs on Young Learner lesson planning

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Teacher beliefs are influential during lesson planning because they result in different classroom experiences for learners. Beliefs also influence activity and material selection. Consequently, the success of any curriculum is partly determined by teacher beliefs. Equipping teachers with specific training and tools, like the Pearson Global Scale of English can help ensure these pedagogical decisions are based on quality research.

This presentation aims to raise awareness of how teacher beliefs influence lesson planning for very young learners (VYLs). Specifically, audience members will have the opportunity to:

- Practise identifying teacher beliefs from individual case studies
- Find evidence in lesson plans where teacher beliefs are influencing pedagogical decisions
- Determine whether these beliefs are congruent with VYL pedagogy and child development theories, as well as providing them with concrete learning objectives, such as the Pearson GSE given that teaching young learners is oftentimes well below the A1 starting point on the CEFR. Most newly-qualified teachers receive little formal training in VYL pedagogy, making research into teacher beliefs and researched learning objectives vital as they determine the learning experiences students will essentially have in class. The process for change begins with the analysis of these beliefs and raise awareness of the tools that are available to young learner teachers, for example Pearson's GSE scale for young learners.

Shay currently works in Barcelona, with 18 years' experience in ELT she specialises in YLs, specifically teacher cognition and curriculum design. She contributes to online newsletters, journals, blogs, & course material. She's the current Social Media Coordinator for the IATEFL YLT Special Interest Group. She holds a BA in Psychology, the CertTESOL, & an MA in Applied Linguistics.

Key takeaways

- Each teacher has their own story which forms a part of their teaching
- Teacher Cognition is rarely explored during pre-service teacher training even though it directly impacts the classroom experiences students will have
- Early years teachers have little to no specific training in teaching this age group, resulting in oftentimes negative first classroom experiences, which has lasting effects on teachers and their beliefs
- The Global Scale of English is a good starting point for teachers of young learners to help with age and level appropriate classroom experiences
- Having a research-based starting point, like the Global Scale of English helps improve the learning experience

Further Reading

- Teaching children how to learn by Gail Ellis and Nayr Ibrahim (book)
- <http://simon-borg.co.uk/blog/> Simon Borg is the teacher cognition person
- EFL Teacher Cognition: Beliefs and knowledge of teachers regarding young English language learners: four case studies by Louise McLaughlin
- VYL Teacher Cognition by Shay Coyne:
<https://www.morebooks.shop/store/gb/book/vyl-teacher-cognition/isbn/978-3-330-03301-6>

Key links

- <https://www.pearsonelt.com/about/gse/teacher-toolkit.html>
- <https://www.english.com/blog/>
- <https://www.pearsonelt.com/professional-development/events/iatefl.html>

Pearson English hopes to see you next year!