



TEYL Teaching English to Young Learners & Teenagers

This module is an introduction to Teaching English to Young Learners and Teenagers and is intended to give you a brief idea of what is expected of a Younger Learners teacher. For the comprehensive TEYL course which gives you the TEYL qualification you will have to complete the 120hr Comprehensive In-class TESOL course at the institute first, as practical experience in an EFL context is a necessity.

Introduction



WHAT IS TEYLT?

TEYLT is a branch of language teaching that focuses on the teaching of younger learners and teenagers. Historically the methods of teaching of English as a second language have been focused mainly on the teaching of adults and young adults, a “post-education” education, if you will; as such the teaching methodologies you learn in TEFL courses are aimed primarily at conveying concepts and lessons to an older audience.

In recent years there has been a growing trend in non-native English-speaking countries to educate their citizens in the English language at an increasingly younger age, to the point where now many ESL teaching positions in China, for example, are with groups of children ranging from kindergarten to primary school ages.

This is where the TEYLT course comes in. In the TEYLT course you build on the methodologies you learn in the TEFL course and learn how to reinterpret that knowledge to be used on a younger audience. Trainers now not only have to concern themselves with students who can translate concepts from previously acquired knowledge in their native language over to English, but now you as a trainer have to be aware of the different stages of not only educational but also cognitive development of the student, understand what kind of work is appropriate to the student at their level and age, and possibly convey entirely new ideas to them in a foreign language.

Therefore, it is highly beneficial for budding ESL teachers to have even a rudimentary understanding of the theories behind child education, the different methods to best convey lessons, and appreciate the approaches used to create a positive and engaging educational environment for young learners.



LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

"The goal of linguistic theory is to seek an explanation for the problem of language acquisition."

– **Coopmans, P.**

One of the most popular L2 (second language) acquisition theories is the concept of Universal Grammar (hereafter referred to as UG).

In order to draw on UG in the TEYL classroom, we must first recongnise Noam Chomsky's linguistic theory as a basis of language acquisition. Chomsky sustained mankind's innate ability to assimilate their respective L1s (first language) and said that our language faculty has the ability to develop despite, what linguistic theory calls, poverty-of-the-stimulus.

In other words, during L1 acquisition, children understand which words are nouns, verbs or adjectives without being taught. Though they may not have the vocabulary to express 'noun' or 'verb', young learners automatically acquire an understanding of their native language's phonology, semantics and syntax. How? Through tactile, aural, visual and emotional experiences.

UG substantiates Chomsky's belief that all languages are comprised of common properties (i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, punctuation etc.) UG and children's innate cognitive functions play an important role in the L2 classroom and should be used to their fullest potential.

The primary objective of teaching YLs is to encourage a natural acquisition of English. The TEYL teacher must constantly create and facilitate stimulating experiences, harness that enthusiasm and channel it into a positive learning environment. Child development is not a simple concept.



Self Assessment Task

Research the following child development theories.

- Social
- Behavioural
- Cognitive
- Psychosocial

Below is a table of some of the more influential theorists in their respective fields along with famous factors associated to their work

THEORIES	THEORIST	FAMOUS FACTORS
Social	Lev Vygotsky	Elementary mental functions
Behavioural	John B Watson	Experiments on Little Albert
Cognitive	Jean Piaget	Concrete formal operations
Psychosocial	Erik Erikson	8 stages of development

Probably the most influential of all cognitive developmental theories is Jean Piaget's 'stages of cognitive development'. It examined four age groups in relation to acquisition as well as the consolidation periods of concrete and formal operations.

Concrete operations mean children can only apply logic to physical objects; formal operations refer to their ability to think abstractly.

Cognitive functions in relation to age (according to Piaget) are as follows:

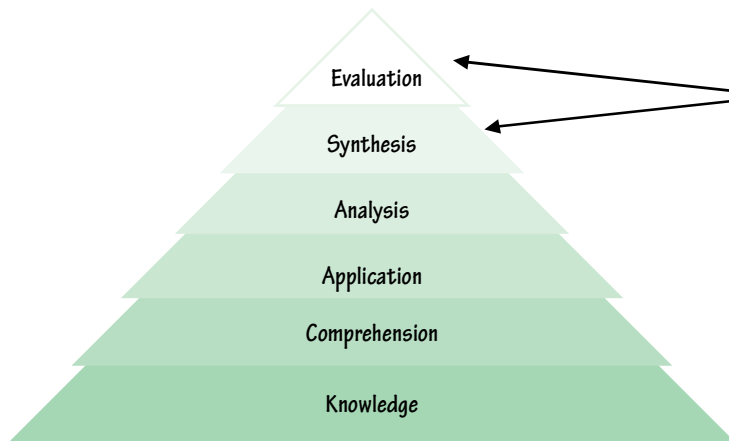
- 6 YEARS – ACQUISITION OF CONCRETE OPERATIONS;
- 9 YEARS – CONSOLIDATION OF CONCRETE OPERATIONS;
- 11 YEARS – ACQUISITION OF FORMAL OPERATIONS;
- 15 YEARS – CONSOLIDATION OF FORMAL OPERATIONS.



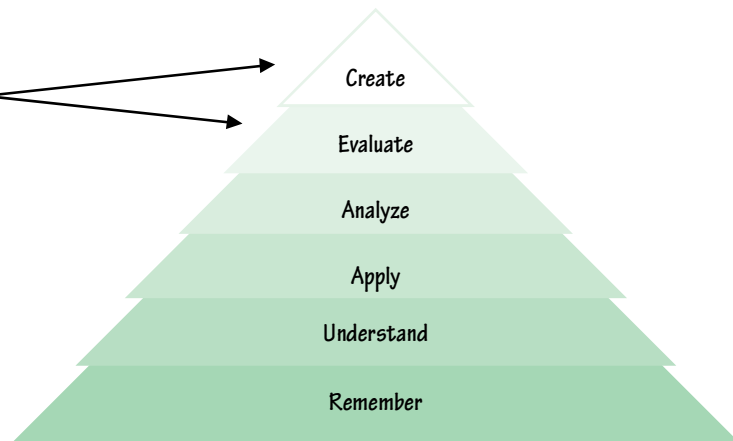
Bloom's taxonomy here displays Piaget's theories on the stages of a child's cognitive development

Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain

Bloom 1956



Bloom's revised taxonomy Anderson & Krathwohl 2001



Cognitive Domain

The cognitive domain involves the development of our mental skills and the acquisition of knowledge. The six categories under this domain are:

1. Knowledge: the ability to recall data and/or information.
Example: A child recites the English alphabet.
2. Comprehension: the ability to understand the meaning of what is known.
Example: A teacher explains a theory in his own words.
3. Application: the ability to utilize an abstraction or to use knowledge in a new situation.
Example: A nurse intern applies what she learned in her Psychology class when she talks to patients.

4. Analysis: the ability to differentiate facts and opinions.
Example: A lawyer was able to win over a case after recognizing logical fallacies in the reasoning of the offender.
5. Synthesis: the ability to integrate different elements or concepts in order to form a sound pattern or structure so a new meaning can be established.
Examples: A therapist combines yoga, biofeedback and support group therapy in creating a care plan for his patient.
6. Evaluation: the ability to come up with judgments about the importance of concepts.
Examples: A businessman selects the most efficient way of selling products.

<https://explorable.com/domains-of-learning>

Self Assessment Task

Do you think this theory applies to all students?
Give reasons.

Characteristics of Young Learners

For the successful teaching of English in primary schools, above all, it is essential for the teacher to understand the young learners' characteristics, instincts, and interests in their cognitive, linguistic, and emotional aspects, because this will play a crucial role in how the teacher builds a lesson, how they can make sure that the young learners are fully involved in the learning process, how they achieve the objectives of a lesson, and how they respond.

Here are some characteristics of younger learner.

They have short attention spans. Teachers should vary their techniques to break the boredom. They should give varied activities such as handwriting, songs, games etc. to keep the students engaged and present.

They are very active. Don't let young learner's need to be active become a hinderance in your lessons, but rather use it as a tool. Get them to play games, role play dialogues and involve them in competitions.

They respond well to praise. Always encourage them and praise their work. Younger learners are far more likely to engage and stay engaged when in a positive environment.

They differ in their experience of language. As with language learners of any age you are likely to have a class with varied levels of English. Treat them as a unit; don't favour those who know some English at the expense of those who do not.

They are less shy than older learners. As above, allow this extroverted quality of younger learners to sustain momentum in your lessons, not disrupt them. Ask them to repeat utterances, resort to mechanical drills.

They are imaginative. Use realia or pictures to teach new vocabulary related to concrete meanings.

They enjoy learning through playing. Young learners learn best when they learn through games. Let games be an essential part of your teaching.

They are natural mimics. They enjoy imitating and are skilful in listening accurately and mimicking what they have heard. Incorporate this characteristic into games and ways that can assist in the learning of the language.

They respond well to rewards from the teacher. Keep the learners motivated through activities, such as competitions, that are rewards based.

Imagination vs reality. They are imaginative but may have some difficulties distinguishing between imagination and reality.

Multiple Intelligences

Read through the multiple intelligences descriptors. Which multiple intelligence are you?

Linguistic intelligence relates to words and/or word meanings. A child with strengths in linguistic intelligence will:

- Remember words and meanings
- Write poetry
- Enjoy reading
- Play word games
- Put words easily into orders and patterns.

Logical mathematical intelligence is related to numbers and/or reasoning, A child who is strong in logical-mathematical will:

- Create mathematical sequences
- Solve puzzles
- Conduct experiments
- Have an inquisitive nature
- See patterns and relationships

Visual-Spatial intelligence relates to spaces and images. Children with this skill:

- Have a visual memory
- Like to draw
- Are more likely to be artists and designers
- Learn from charts and graphs
- Like visual puzzles

Bodily-Kinaesthetic intelligence is related to controlling the body motions and manual dexterity type skills. Children with this skill:

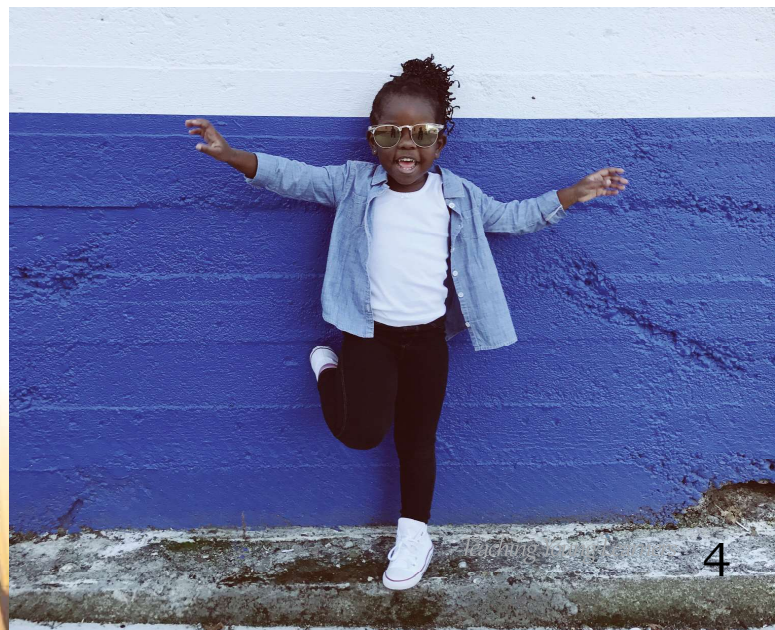
- Work with their hands
- Like movement
- Act things out
- Learn by doing
- Like touch

Musical intelligence relates to musical skills. Children with this ability will:

- Learn through music or rhythms
- Create music
- Identify with music
- Play a musical instrument
- Be sensitive to sounds around them

Interpersonal intelligence focuses on relating to people. Children with interpersonal intelligence:

- Can read other people and their emotions
- Have a lot of charisma
- Are typically leaders
- Learn through groups and interaction



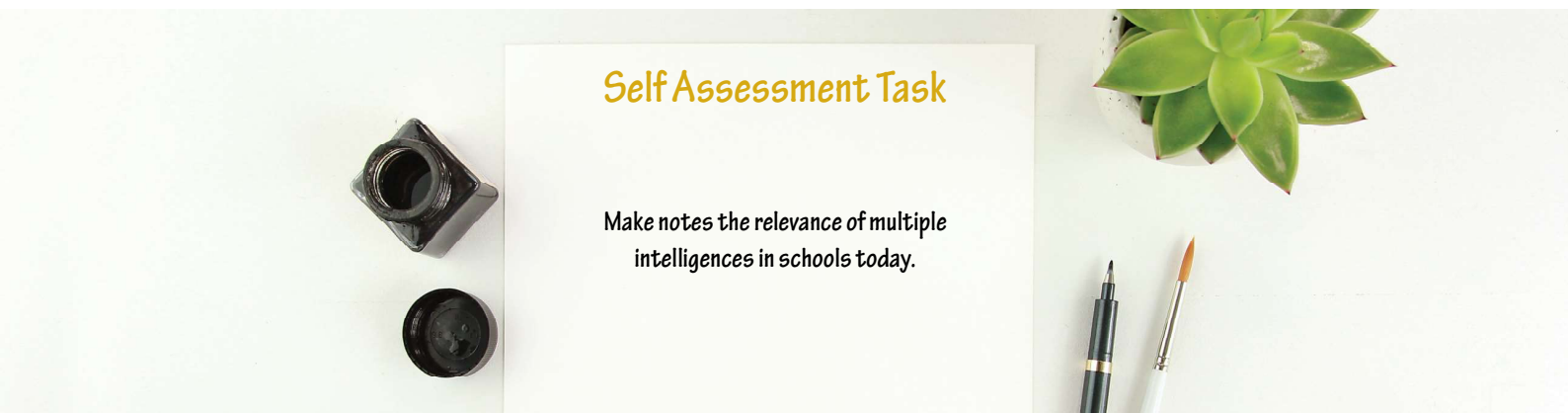
Intrapersonal intelligence allows one to understand their inner world. Children with intrapersonal intelligence:

- Prefer to work alone
- Are usually quiet
- Are deep thinkers
- Like to reflect
- Have strong wills and strong opinions



Naturalist intelligence relates to sensitivity toward other living things, such as animals and plants.

- Recognise and classify things in nature
- Show an interest in Earth science
- Enjoy being outdoors
- Describe relationships in nature
- Show concern for the environment



There are theories discussing the instructional relevance of learning styles in the classroom; the most common of which is the "Meshing" hypothesis.

Meshing argues that, in order for optimal learning to occur, instruction must be provided in a format that matches the YLs learning style. Visual learners require visual instruction and activities in order to do their best; kinaesthetic learners require kinaesthetic interaction in order to do their best; and so on.

There is some debate about the over-all effectiveness of Meshing as it doesn't leave much room for YLs to develop other learning receptors. A YL with a visual learning style can be coaxed into engaging with auditory instruction and vice versa.

TEYLT teachers must create specific interactions between instructions and learning styles. Know your students well; identify their learning styles as early on as possible. Play on their strengths, encouraging cognitive development, and give each YL a fair opportunity to excel. Teachers tend to teach in accordance with their own learning styles but they must be conscious of their students' needs.

"If teachers and students alike are aware of differences in teaching and learning styles, and if both try to make allowances for the differences, both will benefit: teachers will teach more effectively, and students will learn more effectively."

– Thompson, T. C.



WHY ARE GAMES AND ACTIVITIES SO IMPORTANT FOR TEACHING ESL?

By Dan Wheadon

Games are a great tool to help students learn. Not only do they provide students with an opportunity to have fun whilst learning but there are many other pros to using games and activities in your classroom.

Games are fun!

Not only are games fun but they provide students with a stimulant, peak their interest and motivate them to learn.

Following on from that, if students are interested, they will participate. More often than not they will get involved in the game and that, in turn spreads energy around the classroom. Their participation is also an opportunity to promote some student-to-student interactions and cooperation among teams.

So, it's the taking part that counts, right?

Yes...Friendly competition can be good, but only if managed well. If not, this can have a negative impact on students and class morale.

Personally, I feel that this is a great opportunity to teach your students a tough life lesson about winning and losing and that neither really matters. This can be softened by rewarding each student for participating and trying their best.

Games have rules

When it comes to classroom management we know how important rules are but even the rules within games can have a positive impact on student behaviour and how they conduct themselves. Being fair and reaffirming those rules will also cement your position as teacher.

Teaching English is an important aspect

However, classroom activities can incorporate other factors. Confidence is one of these. A lot of this is interlinked. But the fun, the participation, the interactions, the learning and the taste of accomplishment can all help develop student confidence.

Games should be positive

A positive environment creates positive attitudes and that's what we want for our students. Children can refuse to involve themselves for a number of reasons but with laughter, a joke or a game they might open up. It's all infectious and it spreads.

Games have a beginning and an end

Or at least they should. The end is a goal for the students and something they are working towards. It's a great chance to give them a sense of achievement, so definitely acknowledge those achievements no matter how small. Throwing a ball at a target or rolling a six might seem silly to you but to them it's not.

Finally

Some games can enhance their physical development, concentration, memory, motor skills and creative awareness. There's a lot to be said for games in the classroom. The sounds, the actions, the movement, the energy, the laughter, winning or losing will benefit your students in some shape or form.

10 Benefits to playing games in the classroom

1. More Motivation

2. Controlled Competitiveness

3. Strategy Simulator

Most games require problem-solving strategies and planning. By applying a range of strategies in a game, students are able to use their working memory to solve problems, increasing their mental cognition. Stimulating the brain with strategies in a game can be a great brain workout!

4. Peer Positivity

Using games in a lesson, as part of teaching and learning, helps to create positivity around the lesson, motivating students with their participation and creating a positive attitude towards learning

5. Smaller Stress

As an alternative to worksheets, games can be used as a less stressful way for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skill and understanding of a topic. Being less stressed will help students to have a more positive perception of their learning environment and give a true indication of their own learning.

6. Mighty Memory

7. Class Cooperation

Students need to work together as a team when playing as a whole class against the teacher, or in small team groups when playing games with each other. Through games students learn how to take turns, build respect, listen to others and play fairly. Classroom games can also be used as a team building exercise.

8. Alert Attention

Playing games requires students to pay great attention to detail. As games can move quickly, when playing a game, a student needs to be alert and attentive.

9. Friendly Fun

10. New Knowledge

After teaching new content to the class, provide students with a game that will consolidate their understanding and make connections with what they already know. Asking students to create their own content specific games can also be a great way to assess students at the end of a unit of work.



10 Circle Time Games

By Carolyn Ross Tomlin

It's no wonder the games used during "circle time" often become a special and favorite part of our preschoolers' day. Children love to suggest favorite games and take turns being the leader. The familiar routine and comforting aspects of circle time lend themselves to terrific opportunities for movement, quality social interactions and enthusiastic learning.

Circle time is also a wonderful way to transition children from one part of the day to another, including the "wait time" at the end of the day when children are passing time until their parents arrive to collect them.

Here are ten sure-fire circle time games - some old favorites and some new ones - to enrich your child care program. Children may either stand or sit in a circle to participate.

1. **NAME THAT TUNE.** Play a familiar song and choose a child to provide the title. The preschooler giving the correct answer becomes the chooser for the next tune.
2. **DOGGY, DOGGY WHERE'S MY BONE?** A child leaves the room and a child in the circle places the paper bone behind his/her back. Bring the seeker back into the room and have them deduce which child is holding the bone.
3. **QUIET MOUSE, STILL MOUSE.** Children sit in a circle as the leader announces which child (eventually, you hope, all of them) has become a mouse by being very quiet and still.
4. **ALPHABET SHOPPING.** Using the first letter, match the child's name with something to buy that begins with that letter. For example, "My name is Connor and I will buy a coat." This facilitates teaching categories and organizational skills by using alphabet animals, foods and places.
5. **BEGINNING SOUNDS AND RHYMING WORDS.** Children sit in a circle and someone says a beginning sound or rhyme-able word. They choose the person to provide the answer by rolling a large ball to that person.
6. **I SPY.** "I spy something with my little eye, and the thing I see is (green)." Use colors or shapes to complete the sentence. The child who is "It" calls another person's name and if they answer correctly, they become "It."
7. **HOT, WARM & COLD.** One person leaves the group while someone is appointed to be "It." The seeker returns and walks around the circle while the others call out hot, warm and cold as the child get closer or further away from the child secretly "It."

8. **SIMON SAYS.** "Simon says stand up. Simon Says touch your nose. Sit down!" If a child follows the command without hearing, "Simon Says," they have to sit down. Use some of the following: Wiggle your fingers, stand on one foot, hop one step, etc. You can draw stick figures for the hearing impaired.
9. **HOT POTATO.** Children sit in a circle and pass a potato as music plays. Pass it fast; pass it slow as the musical selection indicates. When the music stops, the person holding the potato is out.
10. **LISTEN AND CLAP.** Say the child's name. Clap out the syllables.

Recognize that most children react badly to being "out," and may feel ostracized. An easy way to handle this is to have the children, as they are sent out of the game, move to a book area for quiet reading time or a simple craft. Circle games reinforce listening skills, socialization and working together as a group, and physical activity helps to reduce discipline problems. Modify and adapt games to accommodate children with special needs.

Carolyn Ross Tomlin has taught kindergarten and served as assistant professor of education at Union University, Jackson. She contributes to numerous education publications.

Link to the article: [LINK](#)





CERTIFICATE ASSESSMENT TASK - 9

TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS & TEENAGERS

This assignment is comprised of two components.

A. Review the child development theories you researched at the beginning of this module and choose one that you think is most relevant in today's young learners classes. Write a few paragraphs explaining why you chose this theory and why you believe it to be most relevant. (250 - 500 words)

B. Create a game for a YL class. You may choose to create one for either the Beginner or Pre-intermediate level (you may refer to the Level Descriptors for a breakdown of the different abilities per level). In the process of creating this game you must take into consideration the learning styles and multiple intelligences of your class and explain how your game will cater to the varied students.

To be included in your write up:

- Materials - explain what materials you would need for this game.
- Audience - explain the age and level of the students you are designing this game for and why.
- Example - explain the process of the game and the execution, paying special attention to the description of how each component of the game can cater to the different learning styles.