Module 12: Younger Learners (K-5)

Preview Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attention span</td>
<td>Amount of time learners are able to pay attention.</td>
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<td>Authentic materials</td>
<td>Materials used in the target culture for actual communicative needs.</td>
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<td>Bins</td>
<td>Storage boxes that contain materials for classroom use.</td>
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<td>Chant</td>
<td>Words or phrases that are repeated again and again, in a rhythm.</td>
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<td>Classroom library</td>
<td>An area of the classroom where students can find books and resource material for self or group study.</td>
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<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>The way in which the teacher manages the students and content of classroom learning. It includes use of time, physical arrangement of the room, direction of students, choice of activities, etc.</td>
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<td>Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)</td>
<td>Instructional approach for grades K-8 for low and intermediate language level learners that provides authentic opportunities for use of academic language, maintains highest standards and expectations for all students, and fosters voice and identity. Primary language is provided by trained, bilingual teachers, trained bilingual aides, trained parents, or cross-age / peer tutoring. Emphasizes teacher collaboration. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrated among all content areas with an emphasis on science, social studies, and literature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holistic language</td>
<td>Language treated as a whole, with integration of skills.</td>
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<td>Individualized learning; differentiated instruction</td>
<td>Opportunities for students to interact with material at their own rate and level of proficiency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Experience Approach (LEA)</td>
<td>Uses learners' own experiences as a basis for classroom speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities. Learners dictate to the teacher or assistant, who writes down what they say.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonics</td>
<td>A reading approach that teaches the written symbols which represent the sounds of a language.</td>
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<td>Skit</td>
<td>A short dramatization or play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound-symbol correspondence</td>
<td>The relationship between the sounds of a language and the written forms of those sounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Physical Response (TPR); TPR-Storytelling (TPR-S)</td>
<td>A language teaching approach that combines language learning with physical movement, initially based on commands. TPR-Storytelling (TPR-S) adds the additional component of oral performance.</td>
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<td>Transition techniques</td>
<td>Techniques for changing from one activity to another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning centers; stations</td>
<td>Areas of a classroom that are set up for specific purposes, such as reading or working with objects.</td>
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Now start the video. Listen to the introduction. Complete the guided observation and reflection tasks for each of the video segments. The next part of the manual is for trainees and is available on separate pages for ease of copying.
Focus on the Learner

Module 12, Younger Learners (Grades Kindergarten through 5)

Introduction, Expanded Narrative

Younger learners are those from about 5-10 years of age or from Kindergarten to Grade 5. Teaching younger learners is different from teaching adults. Younger learners are social, active, and creative.

Younger learners need to have opportunities to physically move during class and to play. As they play, they learn and practice social skills, including communication and language skills. They are curious and usually willing to learn another language. Because their cognitive abilities are still developing, they deal better with language as a whole, rather than with rules about language. Since they are still in the stage of developing their native language rules, they are able to generalize and create their own rules about a second language as they use it. Given that their cognitive and motor skills are still developing, they have stronger oral skills than literate skills, so this strength can be used in teaching a second language. To do so requires a lot of repetition and clear directions.

Younger learners also have a shorter attention span than adults, which suggests that a variety of short activities during a class would be better than one long activity. However, as they get older, children's attention span becomes longer, their motor skills develop, and they are able to do more reading and writing.

Module Focus

Some teaching techniques and strategies to use with younger learners:
•  Create a warm, friendly, and comfortable classroom. Be sure that desks, chairs, tables, and blackboards are suitable for the children's size. Materials posted on the walls or bulletin boards should be at their reading level.
•  When giving directions and explanations, be clear and simple. Set up predictable classroom routines and put children in charge of them (according to their age). Be sure that the transitions between activities help children understand what they are to do.
•  Use lots of different types of activities that require different types of participation and different skills.
•  Include much oral repetition during activities.
•  Use language as a whole, integrating different language skills in each activity.
•  Set up the classroom space and create activities that give children the chance to move around and allow for different activities to go on at the same time.
•  Set up activities to enable children to work together in groups, which allows for practice of communication and negotiating skills, and to balance serious work with work or learning play that is fun.

Video Segment #1, Younger Learners: Observation Guide
[Read before viewing.]

Look for answers to the following as you watch the video.
1. What is the purpose of this activity?
2. List the steps that the teacher goes through to enable students to do this activity.
3. Look for behaviors that tell you whether students are enjoying this activity and whether they are meeting the learning goals (purpose).
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Reflection
[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. The students are learning vocabulary for parts of the body. What are the two techniques that are being used to help them learn? Do you think they are effective? Why, or why not?
2. Look at your list of the steps that the teacher goes through to do this activity. Compare them with someone else in your group. Not all of the steps are pictured in the video. What additional steps do you think are necessary to do this activity successfully?
3. Do the students look as if they are enjoying this activity? Have they learned the vocabulary? What behaviors tell you that?

Video Segment #2, Example Activities A: Observation Guide
[Read before viewing.]

1. Look at the activity and decide what the purpose for it is.
2. Notice the verb form the teacher is using in her directions. Can you understand the directions? Pay attention to the teacher’s voice and how she uses language.
3. List the different movements the students do. Notice whether or not they do them correctly.
4. What technique do you think the teacher is using? If you’re not sure of its name, write down any characteristics about it that you observe.

Reflection
[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. What kind of activity is this? What is the language purpose for this activity? Can you think of another possible purpose?
2. What form of the verb is the teacher using? Are her directions clear? What makes them clear?
3. Compare your lists of student movements with someone else. How many different ones were there? What happened when a student did not follow directions correctly?
4. What approach do you think this technique is from? Does it seem to be effective? Is this something you have done in your class? Was it effective?

Video Segment #3, Example Activities B: Observation Guide
[Read before viewing.]

1. List the stations in the room and the different types of activities going on at them.
2. Notice how chairs, tables, and rugs are arranged in the room. Look at how each station is set up and list some of the resources available at each station. Draw a quick sketch of how the room is arranged.
3. Look at the size and height of the chairs and tables, and where materials are posted on the walls.
4. Look for the teacher and describe what you see her doing.

Reflection
[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. Compare your list of stations and activities with a partner. How many stations are there? What activities did each of you notice, and what functions do they serve?
2. Describe how some of the stations are arranged in the room. Why do you think they are arranged like this? What are some of the possibilities for arrangement in your classroom (you may need to start with a modified plan or smaller scale)? What stations do you think might be useful for your
Focus on the Learner

students? How might a teacher encourage students to be responsible for their behavior and actions at the stations?

3. What effect does the low placement of materials and resources have on the classroom atmosphere and learner productivity?

4. What do you think the teacher was doing? What do you think her purpose was? Would the teacher’s techniques be different for a larger class? If so, in what way(s)?

Summary Discussion

1. Revisit the teaching techniques and strategies suggested for younger learners at the beginning of module, relating them to the video demonstrations. What examples of the techniques did you see in Video segment #1? Video segment #2? Video segment #3?

2. List characteristics of younger learners, using both the introduction to this module, your visualization of yourself as a child, and your own experience.
   - Did you see any of those characteristics in the video segments? Which ones?
   - Are there any of these characteristics you consider to be more important than others?
   - Which of these characteristics are you most aware of in your classes? What techniques do you use to channel those characteristics into productive directions?

3. After viewing this module, which of these techniques and activities might you experiment with in your class, and why?

Now You Try It—An Action Plan

Step 1
You can read some of the articles on the topic of contextualizing language (see Module 12 Readings plus the List of Additional Readings and Resources below). Using the video, you have seen a few examples and ideas from other teachers’ classes. Now, think about your own classes and how you could use some of the techniques listed to further. Talk about your ideas with others in your group.

- Create a comfortable classroom, suitable for the children’s age group.
- Provide opportunities for language use and build confidence in ability to use the language.
- Enable practice and repetition.
- Provide opportunities for physical movement, both during and between activities.
- Make sure students understand both the content of an activity and what they are to do.
- Provide opportunities for different levels of cognitive and physical development.
- Provide opportunities for socialization and learning through play.

Step 2
Design a lesson or prepare a classroom change that includes the use of some of the techniques and activities you listed.

Step 3
Share your plan with others. Explain what activities would come before and after your segment. Get their ideas and feedback.

Step 4
Change your design, as needed. Try it with your class. If you are not teaching, ask the trainer or another experienced teacher for feedback.