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Content Introduction	<i>Teaching Children English</i> talks about an activity-based approach to teaching young learners and non- native students. It offers various teaching activities appropriate to students. It focuses on non-native students' needs in learning English. Besides, it emphasizes the management of classroom and students. This book lists out various of classroom curriculum in teaching English for our references.

# **Teaching Children English: A training course for teachers of English to children**

**David Vale with Anne Feunteun**

## **Abstract**

*Teaching Children English* talks about an activity-based approach to teaching young learners and non-native students. It offers various teaching activities appropriate to students. It focuses on non-native students' needs in learning English. Besides, it emphasizes the management of classroom and students. This book lists out various of classroom curriculum in teaching English for our references. There are ten chapters in this book. Each chapter discusses "a specific aspect of teaching methodology and classroom practice". Each chapter lists out stories, rhymes, songs, practical tasks and language tasks which can more easily catch students' attention.

## **Methodology and Classroom Practice Which Can Be Used with Students**

As teachers, we should constantly consider and find out the most appropriate methodology to the teaching of English to children. What we should notice here is that we don't impose a particular approach but the most suitable teaching methodology on non-native students. In other words, by means of reading David Vale's *Teaching Children English*, this study focuses on the relevance of teachers' present methodology/methods. Moreover, This study aims to emphasize a whole language and classroom practices to the teaching of English, stimulates discussion on key issues relating to the teaching of English, figure out and solve the problems to the teaching of English, increase the interactions between teachers and students, and improve students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities through classroom practices/activities.

Before figuring out the most suitable methods to the teaching of English, we are supposed to think of what our views on teaching English are, in other words, what our attitudes on teaching English are. Consider the following statement: 1. students learn English because... 2. Adult learn English because... 3. I (am going to) teach English to non-native students because... Those are the most important key issues connected to teaching English to non-native students. Make your views clear, you may join another group of teachers to discuss the most important issues related to teaching English. And you will find out the diversity of expectation on the effect of teaching English which each teacher may have.

Let's have a look of three teaching overviews. I don't mean other teaching English approaches are not good. Vale intends to build alternative ways of starting a language course for our references. The first one is to prepare the first lesson, make masks, and start activities. The second one is to establish examples of action songs. And the last one is to design a tune for an action song and singing it. The three methods are to form an "activity-based" approach which requires a changeable teaching attitude and strategy. The "activity-based learning" pays attention to what students need in learning English.

The following I am going to discuss how to set up a teaching sequence. By using a story as the central point of a unit- *The giant potato*: storytelling, teachers instruct students to play potato games and potato (puppet) role play. These activities belong to “language-based” part. In contrary to “language-based” part, the author brings in “potato bingo” and “chant” which are related to “activity-based” part. David Vale not only builds an English teaching sequence to non-native students but (also) suggests we as English teachers can build our own language and activity-based units to activate our teaching. In this way, this method makes students be more interested in learning English and improves our teaching experiences.

What is “a balanced teaching diet”? In Vale’s view, especially in the teaching of English to younger learners, it is very important for teachers to change their teaching paces according to the current teaching situation, and provide various activities which are balanced for improving non-native students’ English abilities. Vale also highlights “such a balance must be dynamic and flexible” in terms of the teaching situation teachers involve in. In other words, this balance changes “from lesson to lesson, day to day, and class to class. Moreover, Vale points out several crucial issues that the teachers have to take into consideration while deciding the teaching balances. The first one is that teachers are supposed to figure out what students need “in terms of learning”. Vale emphasizes that it is very important for students to learn language by means of classroom curriculums. While teaching a lesson, teachers have to adjust their teaching paces and classroom activities according to students’ learning reaction. What’s more, teachers should “spend some time on classroom organization”. In order to have students have a good understanding of language, teachers should help them to review and consolidate their language abilities through various curriculums. Teachers also should ask students to review and absorb what they have learned in one lesson “at his/her own pace”. The last one point is that teachers have to realize “the value of errors and risks” that happen in learning a language.

The next part we are going to talk about is “storytelling, comprehension, errors and correction”. What is storytelling and reading? While reading, we often just find out “what happens next in a story,” and can answer those comprehension questions related to a text. However, in Vales’ view, reading is more than those. What teachers and students’ parents have to do is that they should help students get accustomed to be

the identity of readers. And students should be used to play a role in figuring out the texts' meaning. In this way, they "learn about reading by reading". Students are totally involved with any kind of texts, including books, comics, magazines and so on, realizing what the happiness of learning is. Teachers also make students to be used to reading any kind of writing. So what should we do in order to help students to be good readers? Vale focuses on "constructive and creative comprehension" to help students to be good readers. We should follow the following four steps: 1. Picturing and imaging. Students have to imagine what they are reading and listening to during their lessons. 2. Predicting and recalling. Students can imagine what is going to happen next in the story. 3. Identification and personalizing. Students can find identification in stories' characters according to their life experiences. 4. Making value judgments. Students can have their own judgment to those characters in the stories.

"Classroom management and organization" is very important for the teaching of English to children. Teachers should be good at with organizing the space in the classroom in order to take control of the whole class and let each students be fully involved in the learning English. After having organized the space in the classroom, Vale suggests storytelling as a starting point of teaching English to catch the students' attention, especially non-native ones. In this way, your students can concentrate on their textbook more. Then we are going to discuss is "management of time" since it is a key issue. Before teaching, you have to think what the most important part is "on your time, that is to say, "how much time in each lesson is *effective learning* time?" After having taught one lesson, you can take notes and reflect "how your time is spent." And then the most important part teachers should notice is the management of students. At first, teachers are supposed to figure out what students learning needs are. Of course, their learning needs are the first priorities. Second, managing students is to have a good relationship with students. Remember not to blame bad students all the time but to encourage them to try to enjoy teaching curriculum with other students. At last, Vale advises us try your best to catch students' attention, make them quiet, and have them have regular behavior during the class.

English is very difficult to learn for Taiwanese students because Taiwan is a non-English-spoken country. In Vale's opinion, we live in a world where "words and

picture clues are put together” everywhere, such as in public places, home, television and so on. Thus , it’ better to take visual materials as teaching aids to establish a good learning atmosphere in order to have students enjoy the happiness of learning. Besides, it is inappropriate to use the same visual teaching aids. Teachers should find out what the most suitable visual aids for students. Vale points out several visual aids, including making masks, lanterns, and lanterns witch rhyme/ *Winnie the Witch*, casting a spell, video, and spell competition.

Vale intends that teachers not only teach English well but also observe students’ reaction during classes, assess their teaching methods and procedures constantly, writing down records day by day. These make teachers inspect the effect of teaching English to students during and after the classes. In this way, teacher can reflect if their teaching methods and curriculums related to the lessons make children be more interested in learning English. Teachers can inspect if the teaching activities they put into practices during classes work well.