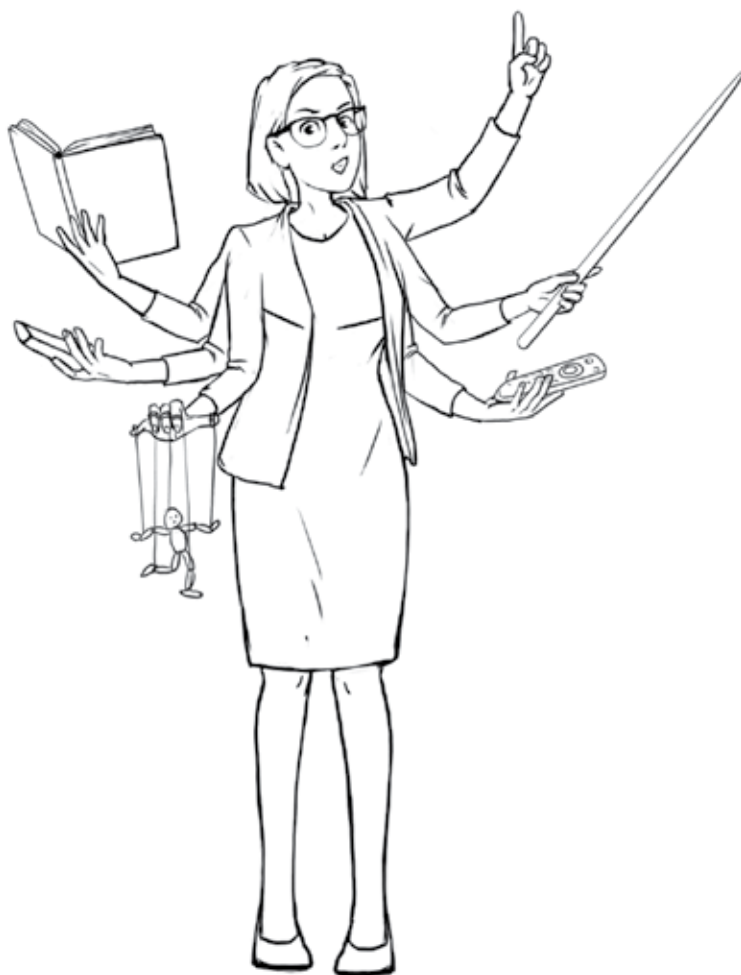


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4

ENGLISH TEACHERS AND THEIR METHODS



4.1 Who is an English teacher?

As it was stated before, a teacher is a person who shares his/her knowledge with students and helps them put it into practice. However, this definition is rather limited and general because there is so much more to being a teacher than just sharing and helping. This leads us to the *teacher's roles*. All of these roles depend on what the students are doing at the exact time. The main ones in foreign language teaching are:

- **Controller** – a person who is in the centre of attention and who dictates students what to do. This role is suitable when explaining grammar or presenting some new material;
- Prompter** – a person who encourages students to cooperate and pushes them to be better;
- Assessor** – a person who tells students how well they have done and gives them marks;
- Feedback provider** – a person who helps students to evaluate their performance themselves;
- Resource** – a person who consults students and gives them more information;
- **Tutor** – a person who guides and advises students what to do next.

There are a lot of other roles which teachers acquire because of the many functions which they have like affecting the students' behaviour, being the main language role model or simply being their friend by creating a good language environment. Thus, teachers need to be flexible and perform all these roles, referring to the situation, but always with care and ease. Harmer (2012: 25) also points out that “good teachers are able to absorb the unexpected and to use it to their and the students' advantage”. They need to think and act quickly and decisively at different parts of the lesson. When their students see that they are able to do so, their confidence in their teachers enhances.

4.2 Ways of teaching English and their characteristics

There is a huge variety of methods applied by teachers in their job. The study, analysis and description of different methods and approaches applied in teaching different subjects, including a foreign language, is *Methodology*. An *approach* in language teaching is the level of the assumptions of the theoretical ideas and beliefs about what a language is

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TEACHING VOCABULARY



An essential part of any language is its vocabulary – words which are single distinct elements of speech that carry certain meanings.

Teaching vocabulary usually takes place when the lesson itself is lexis-based, when there is a need to explain some words before doing a certain task, like reading text, or when the teacher him/herself is asked by the pupil(s) about the meaning of a certain word.

As interesting as it sounds, teaching as well as learning new lexis can turn out to be a challenge.

First of all, in English, one word can have more than one meaning. Thus, translation does not always help. Very often everything depends on the context. For example, *I'm going to the chemist's to get some **tablets***; and *My favourite **tablets** are iPads*. In the first sentence the word **tablets** means a type of medicine, pills; whereas in the other one it is an electronic gadget.

Secondly, some words have connotations, that is, “the meaning can be interpreted in different ways, e.g. *slim/thin/skinny*” (Riddell, 2015).

In addition, the pupil may comprehend what the word itself means but not the context where it should be used, especially when it comes to formal and informal speech.

Other difficulties in teaching/learning vocabulary include the problem of one sound being spelt in more than one way (/k/ - **key**, **call**), one word being more than one part of speech (**a** break - **to** break), some words sound the same but have a different spelling and meaning (/eə/ - **bare**, **bear**).

So, what is the solution to all this? Firstly – **patience**. Some students may learn new vocabulary faster than others but that does not mean leaving the ‘slower’ students behind. Instead, provide everyone with as much **practice** as possible. If your learners ‘meet’ the new lexis only when you are introducing it for the first time, they will obviously have forgotten it by the time you summarise the whole chapter/semester. Otherwise speaking, make sure that the lexis is used over and over again, just like grammar. Let them hear it when doing different listening tasks so that they would remember the pronunciation. Let them see it in different texts when doing reading so that they would remember the spelling. Finally, let them use it in their own speech and writing so that they would remember it even better. It is also a good idea to combine it with the already-known words. However, do not overload your students, or else everything will get mixed up and they will get confused.

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ASSESSMENT, TESTING AND FEEDBACK



Assessment, which is also known as ‘evaluation’, is a device used in education which provides teachers, students and their parents with feedback – information about pupils’ performance in different tasks and about their achievements in learning. Ur (2016) notes that evaluating students may not be the most pleasant part of teaching but it is essential, since we need to be aware of our students’ progress in order to know what do they need and where to go next. Thus, one of the main reasons why assessing our learners is so important is because it helps us to discover not only what they know, but what they do not know, as well. In general, the purposes of assessment are:

- to evaluate students’ overall level;
- to evaluate their progress;
- to evaluate how well they have studied the material they have passed;
- to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

There are two main types of assessment:

- **Summative** – the one teachers use to measure the product of their pupils’ learning in the end of a chapter/semester/year;
- **Formative** – the one which is used to measure the pupils’ abilities as part of a process and it takes place during their studies.

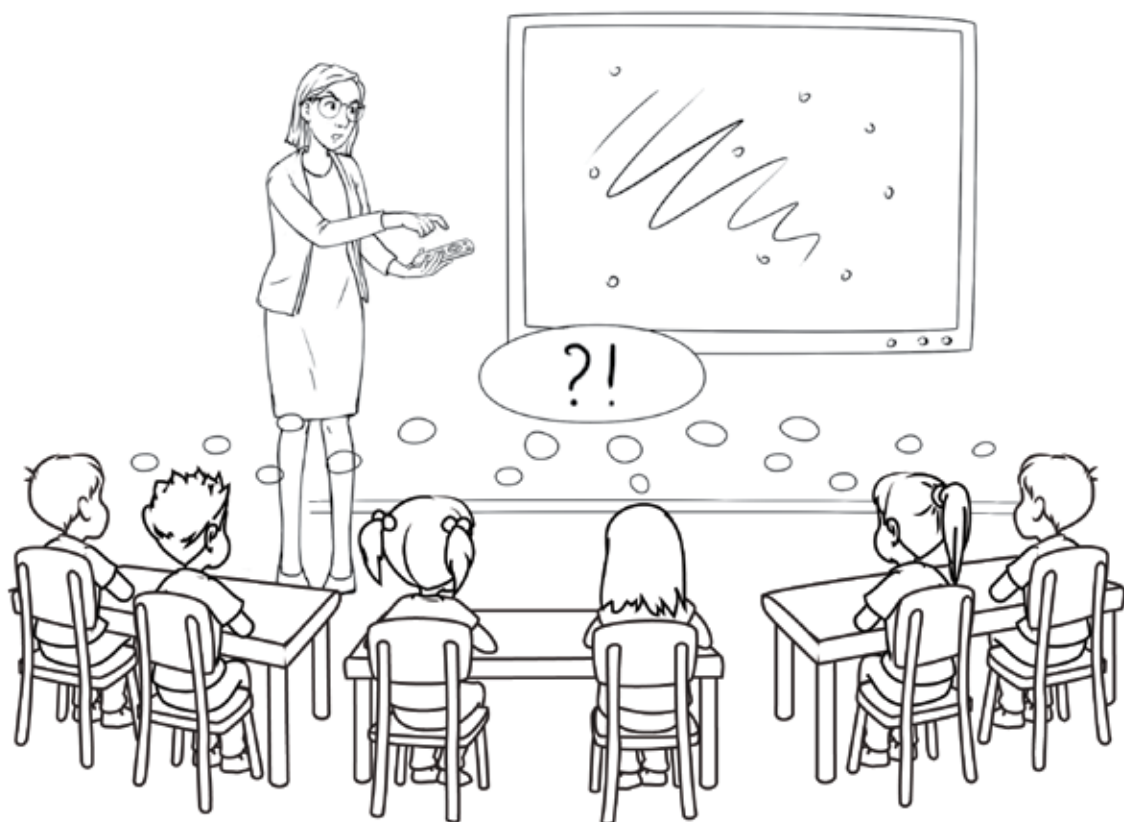
In addition, there is **informal evaluation** that occurs every lesson in order to determine and assess students’ advancement on a constant basis.

Assessing young learners has its own peculiarities. Cameron (2017: 214) points out that “the nature of children’s foreign language learning might be expected to generate a range of assessment issues in need of attention”. There are certain factors which make young learners’ evaluation different from the others:

- **Age** – it is necessary to consider their motor, linguistic, social and conceptual development;
- **Content of language learning** – concentration on their oral skills, lexis enhancement and language use in communication;
- **Methods of teaching** – interactive use of appropriate activities such as games, songs, rhymes, stories, etc;
- **Aims** – besides the language goals, programmes for children also involve social and cross-cultural intentions;

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TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ENGLISH



A large progress that has occurred these days in the sphere of teaching is the dramatic enhancement in the use of various electronic materials. In many classes there are whiteboards, computers with projectors, CD players or, in some classrooms, even tape recorders may still be used. Technology is a normal and even integral part of our young learners' lives who have been growing up in the 21st century. However, a great number of teachers and students prefer teaching and learning by coursebooks most of the time, but they apply different gadgets as additions to their main materials. For example, they often use laptops or recorders to do the listening activities provided in their books. In other words, it is important to make sure that we apply these gadgets to real purposes. "A computer can't teach your students any more than a blackboard or a cassette recorder can" (Scrivener, 2011: 335). In fact, it is up to you as a teacher to decide what to do with all those tools.

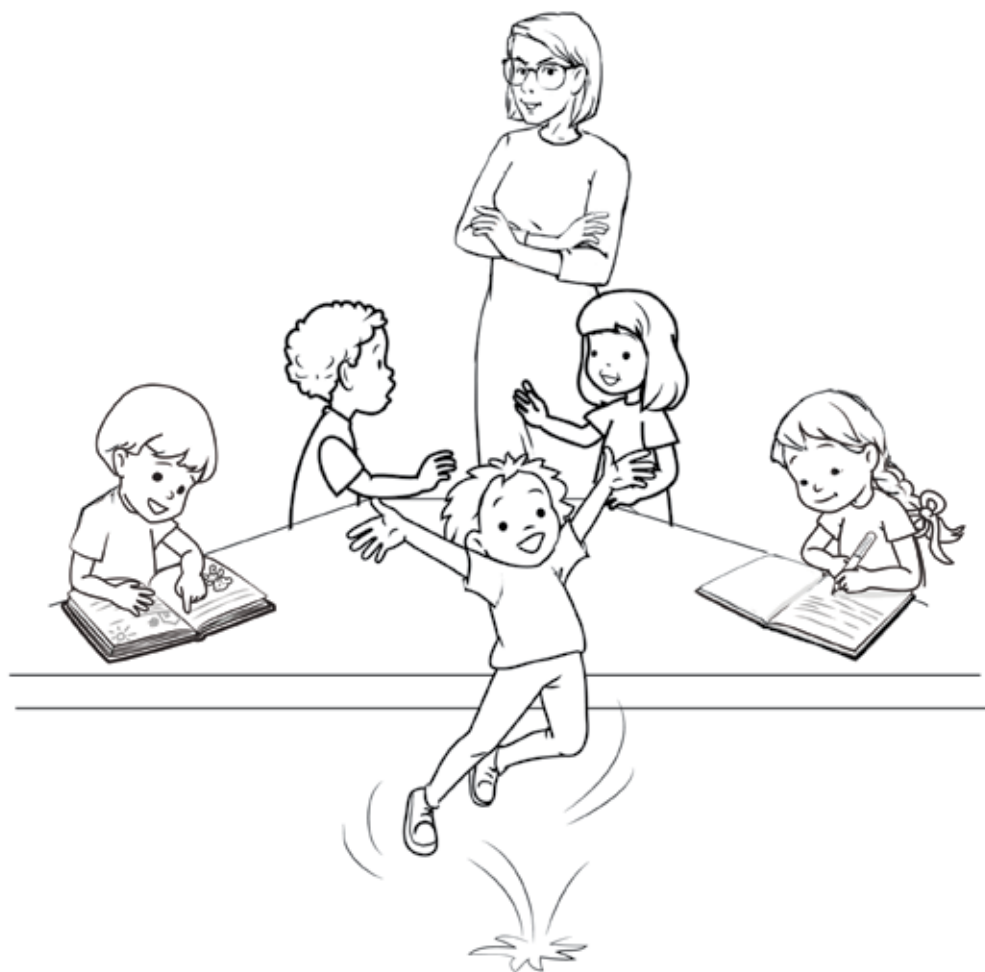
So, what are the advantages of using technology exactly in English teaching to young learners? The main ones are:

- Technology is a natural part of our pupils' lives.
- We can use interactive tasks and games for them.
- By watching videos and audio tracks, we give our learners a chance to hear other people talking in English, including native speakers.
- With the help of the internet, we can find more materials to use in the lesson.
- It provides our learners with an opportunity to communicate with other students and people from all around the world. In fact, it can even help us to connect with our own pupils when they are at home.

In general, technology offers educators more opportunities to make their lessons more interesting and diverse for their students and even for themselves. There are a lot of gadgets used in teaching English. The most popular one is the computer with the internet connection – a device which has multiple functions, including searching for information, making and showing presentations, looking at pictures, watching videos, listening to audios and so on (laptops are often used because they take less space and are easier to carry than ordinary PCs). If all or most students are provided with computers or have tablets, they can also play interactive online games at the same time. Other popular gadgets are:

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ACTIVITIES AND MANAGEMENT



According to Scrivener (2011), the basic block of any lesson is the **activity** or **task**. This is because they activate our students' knowledge and skills during the lesson. The two main objectives of any activity/task are studying a certain language aspect and the result which will then be discussed and evaluated. "A good task produces good learning: from the teacher's point of view, this is the major criterion for its evaluation" (Ur, 2012: 43).

Activities and tasks are usually differentiated by their purposes – to start/end a lesson, to activate or settle down the students and so on, as well as by the language aspect they are made to develop – listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary. In addition, **activities** can be communicative which, in turn, are divided into:

- 1 **Functional communicative** activities which improve the students' ability to find the appropriate grammatical and lexical item(s) with the intention to express a certain meaning in a particular situation.
- 2 **Social interaction** activities which develop students' ability to measure the functional aspects of English with its social ones with the intention to choose the language item which is not only functionally effective but is also appropriate in the given social situation.

When designing an activity or task, there are some *practical principles* which need to be considered in order to make everything work:

- **Validity** – an activity should, first of all, stimulate learners to actively use the language items or skills which it is made to teach/develop.
- Quantity** – the more pupils practise English in an activity, the more likely they will learn.
- Success orientation** – certainly errors and mistakes are obvious to happen, but students should learn from them to make things right next time; thus, teacher's correction should take place but in an appropriate form and at an appropriate time.
- Heterogeneity** – a good activity gives learners opportunities to take part in it at different levels of proficiency within a class.
- Interest** – any activity should meet students' not only age and level but also interests; therefore, it enlarges their motivation, they are more likely to stay on-task which, in turn, leads to better results.

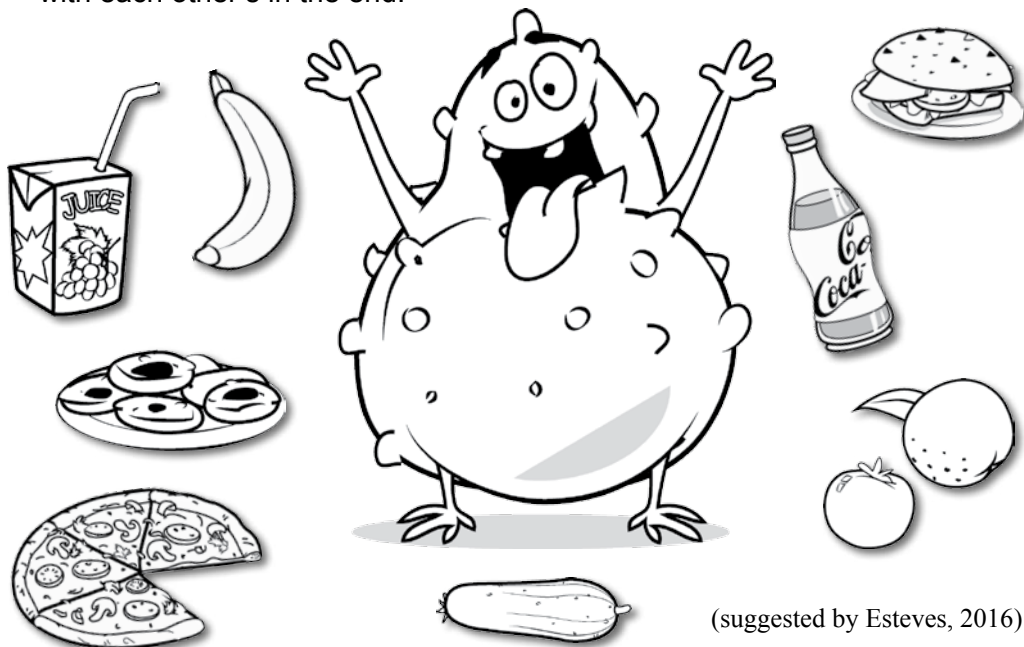
VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

No language can exist without its words. However, teaching and learning them often turn out to be a real challenge. Explaining and remembering new lexis is not always easy and simple, respectively. Frequently, a great number of teachers consider translation as the best way to do it, forgetting about the harm which it can bring. There are many other effective ways to teach vocabulary using games, gestures, mimics, pictures. This part of the Appendix suggests many interesting vocabulary activities with the help of which you can forget about translation and create a great natural English environment right in your classroom.

1 Activity “Hungry Monster Worksheet”

- 1 ask the students to draw a hungry monster with a big tummy, as in the example below;
- 2 give them a sheet of paper with some pictures of different food items;
- 3 let the students choose only the healthy types of food, cut them out and ‘feed’ their monsters, by sticking food items to their stomachs;
- 4 ask the students what healthy food items they have chosen.

Before starting the activity, you can ask them to name all of the food items shown on the sheet and students can also compare their monsters with each other's in the end.



(suggested by Esteves, 2016)

2 Activity “Animal Zoo/Farm”

- 1 prepare a big map of a zoo or a farm without animals on it, as in the example below;
- 2 give each student a card and tell them to draw one zoo/farm animal;
- 3 let the students present their cards and say what their animals eat;
- 4 let the students stick their animals to appropriate parts of the zoo/farm so that they would not eat each other.

(idea taken from Esteves, 2016)

3 Game “What Is It?”

- 1 prepare a few recordings of different animals making sounds;
- 2 switch on the recordings one by one, asking students, “What do you hear?” and let them guess the animal who is making the sound;
- 3 the first student who has guessed correctly stands in front of the class, says what that animal looks like and mimes it.

4 Making Vocabulary Maps

- 1 put the students into pairs;
- 2 give each pair a diagram shown below and in the middle of which there is the name of the topic (‘Food’, ‘Toys’, ‘Free Time’, ‘Sports’, etc);
- 3 let students fill out the gaps with any words related to that topic;
- 4 let each pair present its diagram to the whole class (or exchange and compare their diagrams with each other’s, if there are too many pairs in the class).

