

Andrea Puskás: *The Challenges and Practices of Teaching Young Learners*. Komárno: J. Selye University, 2016. ISBN 978-80-8122-178-1

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Teaching young learners is one of the most challenging jobs nowadays. There are various methods and books about teaching the young generation, but who can say which book can provide the most suitable information for teachers.

This book shows a great picture about the basic things that a professional teacher can use during his/her career. The main aim of the author is to create such a world in which both the teacher and the young students can work together easily in a playful way. Despite the fact that lots of books have dealt with this topic, the book of Andrea Puskás gives you new perspectives on teaching kids and has some new ideas which are purposeful, enjoyable, playful and fit into the requirements that other teachers expect in the modern educational system. The author also has lots of experiences, because she worked with young learners during her teaching career and she also applied the strategies and techniques mentioned in the book.

The monograph is a really good guidance both for beginner and professional teachers. It identifies some important questions such as teaching vocabulary, grammar, drama techniques and many other things. It emphasizes that teaching young learners needs more knowledge and more creativity from both side. The teacher should create a good atmosphere in the classroom, should organize various activities that should be motivating, playful and enjoyable, and last but not least, he/she should treat children equally as himself/herself and find the proper way to make connection with children. The role of the teacher in that case is not just teaching children, but he/she is a prompter, an observer, a facilitator, a psychologist in one person. The book shows us these kinds of features of being good teacher and how we can use these pieces of advice when we work with young learners.

As I have pointed out before, the book can be a good friend or guidance. Why? The author gives us some practical tips and hints that we can use in our profession. She enumerates the advantages and the disadvantages of the given area (choosing a coursebook, teaching grammar, assessing students, etc.). The second part of the book is the practical part (resources). The book introduces different kinds of activities from various coursebooks that teachers use worldwide and these activities are very practical if you want to teach something new and special to young children and believe me: they will enjoy them!

The book consists of several chapters. The beginning of the book introduces some key points about who young learners are and this is a very brief and useful overview about defining their age, the aims and attitudes on teaching English to young learners and the characteristic features of different learners.

In Chapter 2, the author presents some new and old approaches that the teachers could use. These approaches and methods are compared and give us a choice which method will be the most appropriate one, and this is very subjective which is really good, because everything depends on us, we have the right to choose. The author gives us some beneficial approaches, not just one, and also mentions some demands which influence small children when they start to learn a language.

Chapter 3 deals with the problem of using and evaluating coursebooks. It is a very

hard question from the beginning that which coursebook will be the best for both the teacher and the learners. This chapter is a really good part of the book, because the author does not say which coursebook is the best, but offers the pros and cons of using a coursebook in the language classroom. I really liked the idea that the using a coursebook should be followed by evaluation. The author writes about four types of evaluation and we can compare these ideas to pick up the most suitable one. The ending of this part mentions some practical hints regarding the choice of the perfect coursebook.

Chapter 4 and 5 deal with the issues of teaching grammar and vocabulary. Both parts are really important, because some teachers keep arguing about which are should come first. The introduction of the book also emphasizes the contrast between them, but the author does not commit herself to one of them and tries to describe both the advantages and the disadvantages of the two areas. She claims that teaching grammar and vocabulary should rely on guided practice, the teacher should create a personalized atmosphere between children and teaching should be successful and motivating. Both chapters suggest some practical activities and hints for teachers, really creative ideas that children will definitely enjoy.

Games have an important role in teaching young learners, because children need an interactive and playful way to make their learning process more effective. Chapter 6 highlights the most important types of games and gives some practical advice on how to use games and creative activities during teaching.

Drama techniques are very popular nowadays. Various teachers suggest that these activities should be the integral part of the teaching process. Chapter 7 describes the most specific features of drama techniques. It emphasizes that using drama with children is very effective and give both the teacher and the children some kind of freedom. This technique involves lot of skills such as imagination, improvisation and creativity. The children can move in the classroom, they get closer to each other and with the usage of this they overcome the barriers during learning. In that case learning becomes a problem-solving, creative activity, and the learners become the principal agents. The author names some popular drama techniques such as *miming*, *mirroring*, *teacher narrative*, etc.

Chapter 8 deals with assessing young learners. It names different kinds of criteria (their age, language level and several other factors) which have to be taken into account. This chapter mentions different kinds of assessment and provides information about the types of tests and evaluation processes. This chapter highlights the importance of paying attention to the negative side of assessment. The author compares assessment and evaluation and gives us some practical tips for carrying out valuable and objective evaluation about the child's work or performance.

The last chapter (*Resource Bank*) lists activities based on the theoretical assumptions and principles elaborated in the theoretical parts. These activities can function as guidance for teachers, because they focus on different language areas and skills such as vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing. This part is rather practical and combines the four skills that need to be improved during the language class: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

In conclusion, this book provides a great picture about young learners and indicates some good ideas which can be useful for beginner and also professional teachers. It can function as a guide and whenever the teacher has some troubles, this book will help. You just open it, read it and will immediately find the perfect solution.