PROCEEDING

The 2nd National Conference on Teaching English for Young Learners in Indonesia (TEYLIN)

July 10 - 11, 2012 at Muria Kudus University

TEYLIN:

From Policy to Classroom

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY
MURIA KUDUS UNIVERSITY

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ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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Teaching English for Young Learners in Indonesia (TEYLIN): from Policy to Classroom

Editors

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PREFACE

It is a great honour that the English Education Department of Muria Kudus University gets the second chance to host the 2nd National Conference on Teaching English for Young Learners in Indonesia (TEYLIN). The conference is conducted to address the efforts that have been dynamically made for improving the quality of Teaching English for Young Learners in Indonesia (TEYLIN). It is also to respond to the ideas and suggestions on policy which have been continuously encouraged to endorse the efforts. Policies and new teaching models are necessarily promoted in intensive discussions to make the programs of TEYLIN a success. With regard to the efforts, the English Education Department of Muria Kudus University has called for paper to be presented in the 2nd National Conference on Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYLIN) which is conducted on July 10-11, 2012.

Theoretical and/or empirical (research-based) papers of TEYLIN presented in the conference have been compiled in a proceeding. The proceeding is published to document all the papers presented in the conference. The plenary and parallel session speakers present their views on emerging issues related to the Teaching English to Young Learners in Indonesia (TEYLIN). The topics of the conference include the TEYLIN-related areas such as (1) Current Development and Implementation of TEYLIN, (2) Syllabus, and Material Development of TEYLIN, 3) Cultural Insights for TEYLIN, (4) ICT, Games, Media, Methods, and Assessment/Evaluation for Practices of TEYLIN, (5) Local Literature for TEYLIN and (6) Linguistic Aspects of TEYLIN.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all contributors of the presenters in plenary and parallel sessions of the conference. Because of time constraints and other technical matters, the committee has realized that there are several weaknesses in the proceeding publication. Hopefully this publication of TEYLIN will be of some theoretical, empirical and practical significance.

Kudus: July 10, 2012
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Applying Post-Method in Teaching English to Young Learners

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Abstract

Young learners or commonly called children are unique in nature. They are human beings that culturally learn from adults and from everything they live with. They try to understand what adults say to them and ask them to do by constructing meanings based on contexts. However, they cannot be treated as adults because they are not adults in miniature. Adults should cater them with meaningful input texts, tasks, contexts and appropriate methods when helping them to construct meanings, including when they learn a foreign language –English. In teaching English as a foreign language to young learners, therefore, the English teachers will be appropriate, effective, and efficient if they apply suitable methods for certain groups of children coming from certain socioeconomic cultural backgrounds when conveying certain English materials, post-method. To do so, in classrooms for English teaching and learning process, the English teachers should 1) find out students' socio economic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, 2) identify students' characteristics, 3) adopt, adapt, select, develop, or create suitable English teaching materials, 4) apply certain methods in delivering certain English materials based on students' backgrounds and characteristics, and 5) reflect what they have done to plan and to execute the next teaching.

Key words: *young learners, children, teaching, English, post-method*

A. Introduction

Life is changing. Everything is changing, so are approaches and methods in language teaching. They are continually changing from time to time because of a certain demand to fulfill. Experts in language teaching, therefore, conduct research scrutinizing components and what happens in language teaching to generate such theories from which methods of language pedagogy are set to find out the best and most effective way to meet the end of language teaching. As a result, there are a number of methods in language teaching offering excellences if they are correctly implemented in classrooms, language classes. Such popular approaches/methods are Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Cognitive-Code Approach, Silent Way, Desuggestipedia, Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching, Natural Approaches, and Cooperative Learning.

Besides, it is true that an approach to language pedagogy itself is not just a set of static principles "set in stones". It is dynamic (Brown, 2002: 11) based on what happens during the teaching learning process. In fact, the language teachers are those who are competence with such situations in particular classrooms. They are the persons that actually deal with and really know classroom activities attended by a group of students coming from different

backgrounds. Certain procedures of language teaching, teacher-made methods, can possibly be derived from best experiences from the language classes by language teachers.

However, it is difficult to come to conclusions about which approaches and methods are best or most appropriate for certain situations (Harmer, 2001: 96). Searching for 'one best method' is elusive and ultimately proved to be futile. The teachers, including English teachers, have a wide range of practices in the ordering and prioritizing the tasks during the teaching learning process. They are the ones having opportunities and competences to develop their own classroom practices based on what works best for them in their own particular situation and circumstances they and their students have (Nunan, 2003: 10). They do not implement such a language teaching method anymore. They tend to arrange such procedures best work on the basis of learning environment –teachers, learners with their own socioeconomic linguistic and cultural backgrounds, support services, and settings. It means that they come to an era so called post-method, a method emphasizing on the process of language teaching and learning in classrooms.

In language teaching and learning, post-method pedagogy has tree parameters: particularity, practicality, and possibility. Parameter of particularity refers to sensitivity to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners in a certain situation and context based on a certain socioeconomic linguistic and cultural background. Parameter of practicality refers to two terms, broad sense –the relationship between theory and practice, and narrow sense –the teachers' skills in monitoring and controlling what happens during their teaching in the classroom. In short, there are professional theory generated by experts based on research and personal theory developed by teachers based on their experiences during conducting language teaching and learning (It can be in the form of classroom action research.). However, personal knowledge "does not simply entail behavioral knowledge of how to do particular things in the classroom; it involves a cognitive dimension that links thought with activity, centering on the context-embedded, interpretive process of knowing what to do" (Freeman in Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Parameter of possibility is linked to power and dominance and is aimed at creating and sustaining social inequalities. This parameter emphasizes on students' and teachers' individual identity, and it stresses "the need to develop theories, forms of knowledge, and social practices that work with the experiences that people bring to the pedagogical setting" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 171-174).
In English language teaching and learning, the English teachers should continually be open, interact, and collaborate with their colleagues about practices and research to search for and devise themselves with the most appropriate methods they can for who they are, who their students are, and the conditions and contexts of their teaching. They need to inquire into their practice based on their "real world teaching" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 187), not based on a certain method with its strict set of procedures. Prior to do so, the English teachers, however, should equip themselves with relevant theories –theories of language, learning, psychology, and pedagogy. Their knowledge related to theories should be synchronized to face what happens in the class and to facilitate their students with what they need and their characteristics, applying post-method in English language and teaching.

In applying post-method, the English teachers focus their English teaching and learning on the process, emphasize their techniques on their students' needs and characteristics, and solve problems springing up in the classroom rather than describe a central role to methods as the key to successful teaching which employ a set of strict procedures. Here, English teachers,

children as learners with their socioeconomic linguistic cultural backgrounds, and setting are the key components to take into account in conducting English teaching learning process in the classroom. Therefore, the English teachers should cater their students (children) with materials suitable for their needs and characteristics and relevant to their learning environment.

To apply post-method in teaching English to young learners, children, the English teachers are suggested 1) finding out students' socio economic cultural backgrounds, 2) identifying students' characteristics, 3) adopting, adapting, selecting, developing, or creating suitable English teaching materials, 4) applying certain methods in delivering certain English materials based on students' backgrounds and characteristics, and 5) reflecting what they have done to plan and to execute the next teaching. Those five steps are mutually related to and affected with one another and sometimes they seem to be overlapping. Each of these steps will be discussed in details and mutually interrelated in the following section.

B. Suggested Steps in Apllying Post-Method

Teaching English to young learners, children, is probably more complicated than that to adults for children are human beings who are not adults in miniature. They have their own characteristics as children and as learners learning a foreign language, English. In learning language, including learning a foreign language, English, they try to understand what adults say to them and ask them to do by constructing meanings based on contexts. English teachers, therefore, should cater them with meaningful input texts, tasks, contexts and appropriate methods suitable for their students with their own socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds when facilitating their English learning –applying post-method. To do so, the English teachers are suggested doing the at least five steps as follows.

1. Finding out Students' Socio Economic, Linguistic, and Cultural Backgrounds

To be successful in conducting English teaching and learning process, the first step that the English teachers should do is scrutinizing who their students are. Knowing who the students are is essential in English teaching because it is related to what to teach –materials relevant to students' needs and backgrounds, and how to teach –methods in conveying the materials and ways treating the students. It is in line with McNeil and Wiles (1990: 79) stating that a good beginning for teachers is to find out some general information about their students (e.g., ethnic and family background, family status, parents' level of schooling, religious orientations, and soon). Ayers and Gray (2000: 2) also suggest that the teachers should take consideration of pupil differences with regard to their ability, attainment and also underachievement, levels of motivation, gender, ethnicity, and special educational needs. The English teachers should pay attention more to students having special educational needs. They should be well treated in order that they are able to optimally develop their linguistic competences and performances. Besides, Stevenson and Stigler (1992: 52) emphasize that families, schools, and wider cultural beliefs all play a part in children's successes or failures. Furthermore, recently, the aspects of learners' experiential language learning which acknowledges socioaffective components in the teaching learning process is well established (Nunan in Eyring, 2001: 334).

In relation to family status, students are described as experiencing severely disrupted relationships with parents, teachers and peers and as having a low level of educational

attainment or as underachieving referring to wide range agencies: police, social services, the educational social work service, the educational psychology service, and child guidance (Ayers and Gray, 2000: 54). The students coming from police family will be different from those coming from teacher family, psychologist family, and doctor family for instance. The existing differences will probably be fields of interest, toys they love, ways they behave, vocabulary and expressions they use, and soon. Those differences cause different needs in learning English.

Parents' level of schooling will affect demands of degree of materials learned in the class. Ethnicity and linguistic backgrounds will probably influence how fast the students learn English sound system, pronunciation. Sundanese, for example, find difficulties in pronouncing sounds /f/ and /v/. They usually change sounds /f/ and /v/ into /p/. Ethnicity is closely related to cultural backgrounds. Ethnicity and cultural backgrounds will affect what activities and games the students prefer to have.

Religious orientation also plays an important role in deciding types of activities the students do. For certain religious groups, for instance, male and female students are not allowed to shake hands. Vocabulary used, clothes, and food they eat will also vary from one group to others. Sex also needs to take into account. Different sex will probably also have different interests. Economic backgrounds also contribute a lot in individual differences. Students coming from the well-to-do family will differently behave compared to those coming from low economic level family. This is closely related to life styles. Age, on the other hand, does not contribute a lot of impacts. Usually, students attending a certain level of schooling have similarities in age; therefore, mostly they have the same characteristics related to age.

All differences above are factors to take into consideration in deciding mainly what to teach, materials, and also slightly affecting how to teach. If the English teachers are able to find out their students' backgrounds, they will appropriately cater them with appropriate learning English learning materials. They will also easily handle the class and make conducive learning atmosphere.

2. Identifying Students' Characteristics

Identifying students' characteristics is almost the same as what is discussed in the previous part, finding out students' socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This step, however, is closely related to learning styles and learning strategies. Knowing students' characteristics will well devise English teachers to suitably treat their students because each of the students has his/her own language learning style and strategy. Besides, different students have different strengths because they have distinct intelligences, therefore, the teachers should help them realize their full potentials (multiple intelligences: logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and verbal/linguistic (Gardner in Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 169-170).

Brown (2007: 129) classifies that students learning English language can be visual, auditory, or kinesthetic in learning styles. Visual learners are good in observing objects, therefore, they prefer to read texts, charts, or other graphic information, or even they draw objects. Facing and treating students having this type, the English teachers should provide them with enough objects or realia. The teachers can also give them tasks observing objects surrounding the class to be analyzed and described either in the written or spoken forms.

Auditory learners are good in listening. They like listening to lectures, stories, audiotapes, and others involving listening. They will enjoy the class and easily understand the materials presented in recordings. Therefore, teaching-learning activities in language laboratories will suit these type students. The English teachers should equip themselves with resource books and media that can be operated in the language laboratory, or at least can be listened to.

Kinesthetic learners like demonstrations and physical activities, body movements. They clearly seem to like playing games, outing, singing, and others involving body movement. Total Physical Response, therefore, will best suit these type students. The English teachers are insisted to be well prepared with activities for particular purposes.

Nunan (1999: 91) has different classification. Students in a class are classified into concrete learners, analytical learners, and authority-oriented learners. Concrete learners are those who prefer learning by games, pictures, films and video, talking in pairs, learning through the use of cassette and going on excursions. Analytical are those that like studying grammar, studying English books, studying alone, finding their own mistakes, having problems to work on, and learning through reading newspapers. They mainly employ their cognition in learning. Whereas communicative learners are those that like to learn by observing and listening to native speakers, talking to friends in English, watching TV in English, using English in shops etc., learning English words by hearing them and learning by conversations. They focus on language use and practice the language they are learning as a means of communication. Whereas authority-oriented learners are those that like their teachers explaining everything, writing everything in a notebook, having their own textbook, learning to read, studying grammar, and learning English words by seeing them.

Besides language learning style, each student has his/her own language learning strategies which are important in language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement for developing communicative competence (Oxford, 1990: 1). Learning strategies in general are divided into two terms, direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies consist of a) memory strategies, b) cognitive strategies, and c) compensation strategies. Indirect strategies involve a) metacognitive strategies, b) affective strategies, and c) social strategies (Oxford, 1990: 16). Therefore, the English teachers should know, direct, and enhance their students' language learning strategies in order that their students can reach the optimal end of their English learning.

Another task that the English teachers to able to maximize their students' learning is that they have to identify whether there are gifted and able students or not. Gifted and able students have special educational needs. English teachers should cater them with personal support, higher order questions, challenging tasks, and supplementary study outside the lesson (Goodwyn and Branson, 2005: 124). In this case, the English teachers should have additional materials and exercise bank. To anticipate bad impacts and to help them enhance their competences, children with special needs should be identified as soon as possible after entering the school system (Goodwyn and Branson, 2005: 125).

Comprehending students' characteristics will result in different instruction, or at least different treatment for different students having particular knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Differentiating instruction means creating multiple paths so that the students of different abilities, interest or learning needs experience equally appropriate ways to absorb, use,

develop and, present concepts as a part of the daily learning process (Theroux in Goodwyn and Branson, 2005: 131). English teachers wishing to humanize the classroom experience treat students as individuals, patiently encourage self-expression, seriously listen to learner response, provide opportunities for learning by doing, and make learning meaningful to students. Therefore, they focus on students' needs and become active coparticipants in the teaching learning process (Eyring, 2001: 335). To summarize this step that the English teachers should do, the English teachers should know their students' characteristics in order that they are able to appropriately treat them and facilitate their English learning to optimally meet the pre-determined teaching objectives.

3. Adopting, Adapting, Selecting, Developing, or Creating Suitable English Teaching Materials

The English teachers should facilitate their students' learning by providing them with suitable learning materials. The criteria of being suitable are that the learning materials are adopted, adapted, developed, or even created on the basis of students' socioeconomic linguistic cultural backgrounds, needs, and characteristics. Suitable learning materials will foster students' motivation and make them keep learning and practicing what they are learning. If it is too hard to create or develop learning materials, they can select abundant materials provided by private publishers which are suitable for the students' needs and characteristics (or possibly adapt, or even adopt, if the materials are really relevant to contexts and appropriate for the students). It is in accordance with Nunan and Lamb (2000: 116) suggesting that teachers should determine whether contents of learning materials are relevant to the students or not. It is important because such learning materials are related to determining certain patterns of interaction with new culture in the classrooms.

Good teachers always know what materials to use with a given class and have access to them. The teachers can also use coursebooks written by experts (Allwright in Crawford, 2002: 81). English teachers can use such English coursebooks relevant to the students because they can provide, attractively and economically, all or most of the materials needed. They can reduce the teachers' workload and relate the school and home (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard, 2004: 152). However, selecting learning materials or English coursebooks is also a problem itself. It occurs because the learning materials or English coursebooks that theoretically good, probably empirically not. They do not work in a certain language class. Therefore, the English teachers should be careful and meticulous in selecting materials or English oursebooks.

The teacher should cater the students with materials in the forms of hand outs, modules, or corsebooks that make it possible for the students to relate language to the social meanings that it carries and to use it as a vehicle for social interaction. In the teaching learning process, such materials should be performed in meaningful social contexts (Littlewood, 2009: 12). The materials should train the students to use the target language as a means of communication. Therefore, such meaningful expressions frequently used in real life situation should exist, be conveyed, and be trained to the students.

4. Applying Certain Methods in Delivering Certain English Materials Based on Students' Backgrounds and Characteristics

In the post-method era, the English teachers have freedom in using particular methods in delivering a certain learning material to a particular group of students attending the class.

Even the English teachers are allowed to employ their own sets of procedures which best work in the class and best match the students' socioeconomic linguistic cultural backgrounds, needs, and characteristics. They are not limited by a set of strict procedures anymore in delivering suitable teaching-learning materials for the students. When such procedures are appropriate for particular the teachers, students, and learning environment, are practical to apply in the process of teaching and learning, and are possible to apply, the procedures promote learning atmosphere to achieve the pre-determined teaching-learning objectives. They will be admitted and accepted for a certain situation and condition.

However, English teachers teaching English to young learners in elementary school should also pay attention to research on language, learning, language learning, language pedagogy, psychology, and children development concerning characteristics of young learners, especially when learning a foreign language. They need to be taken into consideration in treating students and conveying learning materials.

When conveying learning materials in the classroom, the English teachers should relate what happens in the class to student's real life situation. What is learned in the classroom can be used to interact with others in real social lives. It is in accordance with Lewis (2008: 5) stating that through games children experiment, discover, and interact with their social environment and it is a fun activity which gives the children opportunities to practice their English in relaxed and enjoyable ways (Martin in Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2004: 172). The activities can be thematic discussing a certain topic, the content of the lessons automatically seems to be more important than the language itself because language cannot be studied in a vacuum. This means that it is easier to relate the lessons to the experiences and interests of the pupils (Scott and Ytreberg, 1993: 84).

To help the children meet the predetermined learning objectives, the English teachers can use three type activities: 1) problem solving activities (identifying, matching, sequencing, prioritizing, and classifying), 2) interactive activities (making survey and carrying out interview), and 3) creative activities (making masks, birthday cards, etc.) (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard, 2004: 45). When conducting activities, the teachers should make sure that that children really interact with one another in a class, they are pushed to produce more accurate and appropriate language that can also be used as language inputs for other children (Hedge, 2008: 12).

Activities conducted during the English teaching and learning should 1) focus on language practice, 2) are cognitively simple, 3) are not always personalized to pupils' interest, 4) are not meaningful end themselves, 5) provide a small degree of freedom and choice, 6) provide controlled and guided practice, 7) rehearse specific language items, skills, or strategies, and 8) support the linguistic and cognitive demands of tasks in a structured way (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard, 2004: 51). Such interesting activities to follow should remain focus on contents and language use. They are not merely for fun although young learners love fun and enjoyable activities.

In teaching English to young learners in elementary schools, the teachers should prepare and give various activities to the students because they quickly change their mood in following activities. The teachers can give several activities in one teaching period. It is in line with Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2004: 27-28) stating that children are emotionally excitable, get

bored easily, are excellent mimics, can concentrate for a surprisingly long time if they are interested in, and can be easily distracted but also enthusiastic.

Activities to deliver English teaching materials can be in the forms of telling stories, role play, games, or song. Wright (2004: 3) states that stories, which rely so much on words, offer major and constant source of language experience for children. Stories are motivating, rich in language experience, and inexpensive. Learning English through stories can lay the foundations for secondary school in terms of learning basic language functions and structures, vocabulary, and skills. Stories make children involved in excitement that motivate and challenge them to practice their English by responding to the contents of the stories (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2004: 186-187)

In relation to the use of role play, Ladousse (2009: 6-7) states as follows.

1. A very wide variety of experience can be brought into the classroom through role play. It can be used to train children in speaking skills in any situations.
2. Role plat puts children in situations in which they are required to use and develop those phatic forms of language which are so necessary in oiling the works of social relationships.
3. Some people are learning English to prepare for specific roles in their lives.
4. Role play helps many shy children by providing them with a mask.
5. Role play is fun. It is children's real life situations.

Children in nature love songs, rhymes, and chants. They are such ideal vehicles for language learning in elementary schools (Brewster, Ellis, and Girard, 2004: 162). English materials can well be delivered through songs. This activity is usually combined with body movement, using Total Physical Response.

Such activities like telling story, playing games, doing role play, and singing song are popular activities in conducting English teaching and learning process at elementary schools. However, those kinds of activities in classrooms are not a must. They are used when students really need and the materials are suitably presented through such activities, singing songs for instance. The use of the activity should be matched with the learning materials, students' needs, situations, and learning environment.

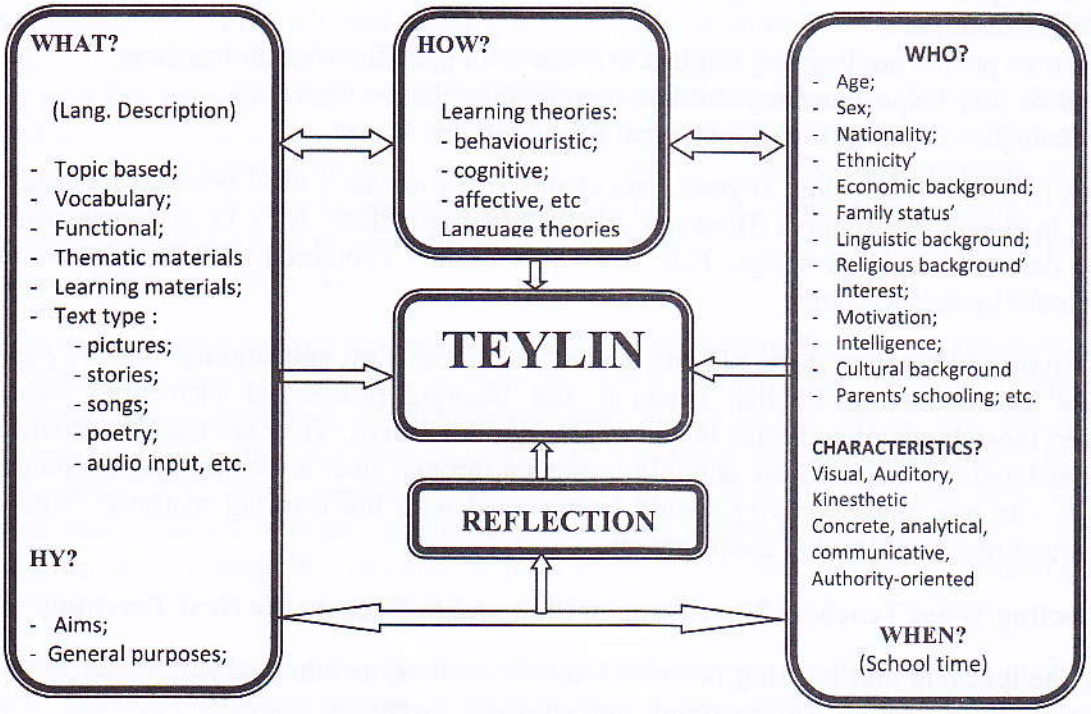
5. Reflecting What Teachers Have Done to Plan and to Execute the Next Teaching.

During the teaching and learning process, English teachers, as other subject matter teachers, do a lot of things dealing with materials and students. There are results and impacts of what has been done. To avoid doing bad things resulting bad impacts, the teachers need to reflect, analyze, and evaluate what works and what does not work in their teaching. If they find something negative, they should scrutinize its cause and solve. In solving problems related to their teaching, they should communicate, interact, and collaborate with their colleagues to discuss what they face. Furthermore, they should also be open to learning about the practices and research of others (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 187). The results of the reflection should be taken into consideration in planning and executing the next teaching. If they can continually do so, they will be better teachers because they are such reflective teachers.

Reflective teachers, therefore, are those who can monitor, critique, and defend their actions in planning, implementing, evaluating language programs, and re-planning the next programs or

teaching. They reflect and evaluate themselves to be better in the following teaching or programs (Nunan and Lamb, 2000: 120). The teachers doing reflection of any teaching can be included as teachers applying post-method –at least one of the characteristics, because post-method pedagogy promotes the ability of teachers to know how to develop a reflective approach to their own teaching, how to analyze and evaluate their own teaching acts, how to initiate change in their classroom, and how to monitor the effects of such changes (Wallace in Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 178). In this case, mistakes can the source of learning and the trigger to be better in the future by avoiding, at least, the same mistakes.

Having been discussed, all five steps above can simply be summarized with the following chart. This chart shows that each of the steps are mutually related and affected with one another. The mutual relationship among the steps occur to facilitate students' English learning with appropriate what to teach and suitable treatment to reach the pre-determined English teaching and learning objectives.



C. Final Remarks

With regard to the discussions above, some conclusions are drawn. To optimally facilitate students' English learning, the English teachers should know who their students are – backgrounds, needs, and characteristics. Having known who the students are, the English teachers should be able to cater the students with suitable learning materials. The English teachers, then, should appropriately treat their students by selecting appropriate methods based on who they themselves are, who their students are, in what learning situations they are. They are not limited to use a certain method with its set of strict procedures; they can use any method appropriate for their teaching and learning process in the classroom.

The English teachers are the persons who really know what best works in the classroom. They can also use their own methods with their own teaching procedures and techniques for a particular group of students having particular needs and characteristics in a particular learning environment, generating teaching procedures based on what really happens in the classroom – applying post-method. However, they should also comprehend related theories on language, pedagogy, language pedagogy, learning, psychology, and developmental psychology focusing on young learners. Besides, they should also be open to others' research on teaching English to young learners, communicate, interact, and collaborate with their colleagues, and continually upgrade professional development.

At the end of teaching, the English teachers should reflect what they have done, why they have done such activities, and why they have used such procedures with their results and impacts in their teaching and learning. The bad things should be scrutinized their causes, minimized, and solved. The good things during the English teaching and learning process should be enhanced for better teaching. They should plan the next teaching based on their experiences at the previous one to continually increase their teaching quality.

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