

# PLAGIAT MERUPAKAN TINDAKAN TIDAK TERPUJI

## ABSTRACT

Lestari, Atiek Pratitis. 2011. *Teaching English to Very Young Learners*. Yogyakarta: The Graduate Program in English Language Studies, Sanata Dharma University.

Very young learners (VYLs) who are still undergoing the early process of physical and psychological development require special treatment in their learning. Motherly attention and patience are essential to initiate the children's habits of learning during their first interaction with other people outside the family. A good teacher for VYLs needs to meet those qualifications. Not all teachers are capable or willing to deal with the VYLs. It also happens in one of non-formal English language institutions which offers a Kindergarten program.

This phenomenon made me interested in conducting a research in this particular issue. A teacher has very crucial roles in a VYL class. Therefore, I formulated the research question as "*What is the teacher's lived experience in teaching English to the VYLs?*"

This research aims 1) to describe and to explore the participant's lived experiences in teaching English to VYLs; 2) to interpret the participant's ideas and beliefs of the programs for VYLs through the lived experience stories.

It is a progressive qualitative study conducted by employing hermeneutic phenomenological approach. A resourceful participant who has taught all kindergarten levels of the program and dealt with the kindergarten classes continuously was chosen. She had rich experiences and she was able to articulate her meaningful experiences teaching the VYL classes. Firstly, I asked the participant to make the daily journal of her teaching experience for 4 months. Then, I observed and recorded some of the participant's classes. Next, I conducted in-depth interviews with the participant for more comprehensive stories and accurate data. Finally, the data were analyzed and interpreted to answer the problem formulation.

The findings of the study was the description of the participant's story and the interpretation of the essential themes. The essential prefigured themes were: (1) good knowledge of characteristics of VYLs; (2) creativity; (3) flexibility; (4) cooperation; and (5) commitment. Moreover, the emergent themes were: (1) patience and firmness; (2) negotiation; (3) responsibility; and (4) trust. By having sufficient knowledge of VYLs, a good teacher could treat the VYLs appropriately. The creativity of the teacher would enhance the VYLs' creativity as well. Knowing the characteristics of the VYLs led the teacher to be flexible in dealing with them. Good negotiation led good cooperation between the teacher and the colleagues, share teacher, students, and the language institution. Dealing with the VYLs, a teacher should be patient, firm, responsible, and committed so that s/he could gain the trust of the parents and the institution.

The findings of this study obtained from the reflections of the participant's lived experiences will build better understanding of VYLs to the participant, me as the researcher, and the readers. Consequently, we can enhance our knowledge and understanding of the significance of teaching English to VYLs. Hence, the

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participant will be able to perform better in her field and to actualize herself more effectively. Most of all, this study serves as a reflection of non-formal English program for the VYLs in Indonesian context. With the cultural differences, the participant's lived experiences can represent what kind of English program that is the most suitable for the VYLs within Indonesian culture. Hence, the quality of teachers, English program for VYLs, and English education in Indonesia can be improved.

