

Dorota Campfield

## UKKNJA BA SEMINAR

English Language Teaching/English Teaching Methodology

**Seminar title:** Effective Teaching of English – strategies and considerations for young learners in instructional settings

Keeping abreast with developments in language learning and ability to make inferences from research findings relevant to one's own teaching are an important part of being an independent, professional modern-language teacher – as is competent engagement in debate linking practice with developments brought by research. Students need to be aware of the issues. The ability to find research papers or other relevant materials and their critical appreciation, in conjunction with some practical knowledge about the formulation of appropriate research questions should help students towards addressing their own questions. This diploma seminar offers an introduction through direct engagement with research. The seminar aims to guide students through their first research experience by assisting them to carry out a small classroom-based research project. The intention is that they will gain a practical appreciation of research with reference to their own interests and it is hoped that they will develop a broader understanding of the issues.

Seminar participants will receive relevant up-to-date guidance and practical assistance in the following areas:

- Developing research questions by way of critical thinking and scientific reasoning
- Formulating a theoretical framework
- Effective literature search
- Research methodology and classroom research
- Types of data
- Methods of data collection and analysis
- Academic writing
- Appropriate use of references and bibliography
- Study skills training necessary for completing dissertation
- Goal setting, managing time and keeping to deadlines

Students attending the seminar are encouraged to explore (a) FL learning from the perspective of young learners (pre-primary and primary) and (b) strategies for effective teaching of young learners in instructional settings. Starting foreign language (FL) learning at the onset of formal schooling has become the norm almost universally for children. Some people still believe that young FL learners are very similar, keen and

motivated, learn with ease and are successful language learners. However, research has reported that early FL learning is a lot more complex than such beliefs would allow. It is now understood as a dynamic interplay between many factors and is characterised by models of similar complexity to those applied to older learners. Below is the list of broadly defined suggestions to guide student specific research interests to explore in their projects:

1. Age and instructed Foreign Language Acquisition
2. Classroom language – teacher communication (quantity, richness and complexity of L2, use of L1, feedback)
3. Classroom language – child communication (chunking, formulaic speech, approximate understanding)
4. Classroom tasks and activities (age suitability, intrinsic motivation, cognitive challenge, group and pair work, learner autonomy)
5. Developing listening and speaking skills
6. Teaching pronunciation and the role of prosody
7. The role of play in early language learning
8. Use of drama techniques
9. Use of oral storytelling
10. Developing L2 literacy
11. Developing L2 grammatical awareness
12. Developing language awareness and intercultural understanding
13. Organisation of classroom space (play, activity and learning areas)
14. Use of materials (picture books, stories, authentic materials, computer, material choice and development)
15. Assessment (assessment *of* learning vs. assessment *for* learning, self-, peer- and teacher assessment)
16. Collaborative teaching in pre-primary education (language and early years teachers)
17. Out-of-school exposure (extra-curricular activities, the home language environment, parental engagement)
18. Individual differences (cognitive and affective factors: aptitude, motivation, attitude, self-concept, beliefs, willingness to communicate, learning style, learning strategies, anxiety)
19. Approach to teaching children at risk of dyslexia and SLI
20. Relationship between L1 and L2 (reciprocal influence)

The above list should serve as an indication of possible areas only and students are free to pursue their own interests in their diploma projects. Students are expected to share, communicate and cooperate during session. It is further hoped that activities will encourage the required qualities to flourish in students' future classrooms.

Students will receive guidance and regular feedback through a combination of direct group and individual tuition as well as distance learning using the University platform.