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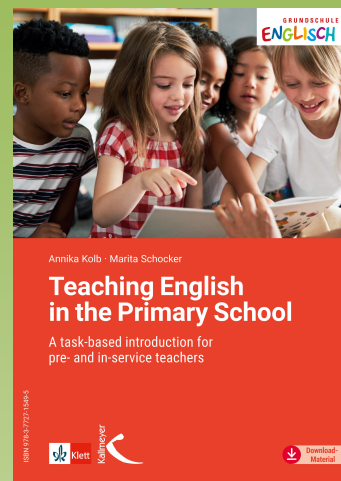
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**Auszug aus:**

*Teaching English in the Primary School*

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## **Thank you, Mitch & Günter**

We would like to dedicate this book to Mitch Legutke and Günter Gerngross.

Thanks, Mitch, for your ever present enthusiasm and support.

Thanks, Günter, you primary EFL pioneer, for your outstanding sense of humour and generosity.

## **List of abbreviations used in the book**

- BICs = basic interpersonal communicative skills\*
- CALP = cognitive academic language proficiency\*
- CEFR = Common European framework of reference\*
- CLIL = content and language integrated learning\*
- CMC = computer-mediated communication
- EFL = English as a foreign language
- ELP = European language portfolio
- FL = foreign language
- FonF = focus on form
- ICC = intercultural communicative competence
- ICT = information communication technology
- L1 = first language(s)
- L2 = second language(s)
- PE = physical education
- YL(s) = young learner(s)
- ZPD = zone of proximal development

## **Reading guide**

The \* at the end of words indicates that they are explained in the glossary (p.227). We only mark the technical terms when they are used for the first time in a chapter.

We refer to chapters in which a topic is dealt with in depth as follows (→ Chapters 3 and 4) and in the same way to available download materials (→ Download materials 3.1).

## Introduction

### Why a new book on primary EFL?

It has been more than 12 years since Michael Legutke, Andreas Müller-Hartmann and Marita Schocker published their book on *Teaching English in the Primary School* in 2009. In the intervening years a great deal has happened within research into primary EFL, at the practical level in classrooms themselves, and at the national and international level, where, thanks to the *CEFR\**, language teaching in primary schools has been placed under the spotlight in an unprecedented way. We felt it was time, therefore, for a comprehensive update on the new and evolving priorities, the resulting educational goals, on the exciting and expanding body of ‘bottom-up’ research in the field of primary EFL, and lastly and most importantly on the practical consequences for the classroom.

### Who is the book for?

We have written this book for teachers of English in primary education, both pre-service teachers in their 1<sup>st</sup> university-based and 2<sup>nd</sup> internship phase of teacher training and also in-service teacher educators. The structure and approach of this volume is designed in such a way that it can be easily used as a course book for seminars at universities. Further, it offers students abundant opportunities for self-study and carefully selected recommendations for follow-up reading. We have also tried to provide a consistent and clear structure and an easily accessible writing style, which we hope will facilitate understanding and enjoyment. Finally, we hope that experienced teachers will find this book an encouragement to explore and reflect on their teaching. They are, after all, ideally placed through their current practice to gauge the ideas we present in this volume as we try to link theory and research through best-practice examples from primary classrooms. It is our firm belief that teachers develop as professionals by reflecting on their work and the work of others, and at the same time by being able to critically read and understand the relevance of research published in their own field.

### What has changed in the field of primary EFL?

#### Diversity of language learners and their *lived experiences\**

Our starting point is the diversity of language learners and their specific and heterogeneous needs which have a fundamental impact both on the choice



of content and on appropriate ways of learning English today. Primary teachers increasingly face the challenge of working with children whose lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, mixed-ability and educational needs vary more than ever before. Children often have extensive out-of-school experiences with the English language which have an influence on their motivation to learn and their awareness of English as a lingua franca. Their *multilingual\** and multicultural experiences contribute to the richness of the learning environment and lend themselves well to develop their curiosity, sensitivity and empathy towards others and to prepare them for interaction with people from a multiplicity of backgrounds. Finally, children come to primary school with experience of a variety of media forms that can be productively incorporated and built on.

### European education policy recommendations

Meanwhile, English has not only been introduced as a compulsory subject in almost all European countries, including Germany, but there is – despite the ongoing debate about when it is best to start – no dispute about it being a constituent part of every child’s literacy. The European Commission recommends “exposure to more than one language taking place in an early childhood education and care setting in a pre-primary school context” (European Commission 2011: 6), which has fundamentally affected curricula and educational goals from the time when children attend elementary education. Policies of inclusive education and life-long learning support the acquisition of key competences “that allow full participation in society” (Council of Europe 2018c, n. p.). These key competences involve the “provision of language learning, which is increasingly important for modern societies, intercultural understanding and cooperation” (*ibid.*). They include multilingual competences which are defined as:

A positive attitude [which] involves the appreciation of cultural diversity, an interest and curiosity about different languages and intercultural communication. It also involves respect for each person’s individual linguistic profile, including both respect for the mother tongue of persons belonging to minorities and / or with a migrant background and appreciation for a country’s official language(s) as a common framework for interaction. (*ibid.*)

The goals that the European Commission pursues with early education therefore go far beyond the linguistic skills of being able to speak, write, listen and read but they advocate a broad concept of education which includes attitudinal competences such as open-mindedness towards other languages, cultural otherness and related beliefs, world views and practices or enjoy-

ment of language learning – foundations which need to be built in pre-school and primary education.

### **Developments in primary foreign language education and research**

The last decade has seen extensive empirical research on relevant areas of primary foreign language education as a result of the growing provision of primary English world-wide. Meanwhile, the teaching and learning of EFL has developed to be an established discipline in its own right, with a primary EFL specific methodology, professional *journals*\*, conferences and professorships at universities. Developments concern, for example, research in appropriate methodology, the acquisition of the written language and reading skills, the role of literature and cultural learning, digital media in the classroom and issues related to a smooth transition from primary to secondary education.

### **Technological advances in ICT**

The availability of the internet, computers and mobile phones – despite the challenges for teachers as they add to the complexity of their language learning environments – offers children the opportunity to engage with others and to experience English as an authentic means of communication. Many children grow up with ICT technology and use it as a cultural practice from an early age. We will integrate its potential throughout the book.

### **What pedagogical approach is appropriate in meeting these new priorities?**

The present volume considers the heterogeneity of children's backgrounds and takes a *learner-oriented perspective*. Consequently, we subscribe to the *task approach* to language teaching and learning which starts by considering the needs of the children when they are learning English. It has become an established approach to language teaching and learning world-wide for various reasons: there is comprehensive national and international empirical classroom research which has confirmed its appropriateness and it is the approach that is recommended by European and national education policies (→ Chapters 3 and 4). The concept of *task*\* if used in the context of education refers to language *learning activities*\* which “conceptualize learning from learners’ perspectives, that is, their needs, their ideas, their *discourses*\*, their competences and considers the resulting support that seems appropriate for each classroom and each individual learner in this classroom” (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker 2018c: 238). Tasks invite learners “to focus primarily on meaning exchange and to use language for real world, non-linguistic purposes” (Van den Branden 2006b: 1). A broad perspective on tasks in-

cludes a reflection of the quality of the language learning environment – the classroom – and considers ways to provide a positive, safe class climate for the children (Devlieger & Goossens 2007). The role of the teacher is no longer one of transmitting pre-selected knowledge to her class but has changed to one of a guide and facilitator who considers learners' needs by reflecting (ideally in cooperation with the children) the following elements of any lesson:

1. What is it that we should concentrate on, why is it relevant? (Level: content, topics)
2. Who is interested in what we have to say, who can we exchange ideas with and in which contexts? (Level: audiences, modes of communication [CMC, real], learning environments)
3. What form is appropriate for communicating this lesson's content to audiences? (Level: language skills, genres, discourses)

**In what way does our book consider new priorities?  
What are the chapters and how are they organized?**

It is one of the fundamental principles of our book that we develop theory and principles of teaching and learning from empirical observation and research of successful classroom practice. We therefore hope that our book will convince readers to see the immediate relevance of research and theory for their own contexts of practice. Our examples, taken from practice, serve more than simply to illustrate theory. They are the starting point of any reflection. Through this inductive '*bottom-up*' approach we strongly believe that theory may become relevant and meaningful to teachers.

The chapters in this book address the context factors which have an impact on the teaching of English in primary schools and provide a survey on available research (→ Chapters 1 and 2). They describe how to organize children's learning through challenging and motivating tasks and how to manage the resulting processes in the classroom effectively (→ Chapters 3 and 4). They illustrate how to integrate the competences and a FonF in a meaningful way; and they discuss the role of literature, cultural learning and the use of media and teaching materials (→ Chapters 5 – 11). Finally, they describe ways of acknowledging and assessing learners' achievement (→ Chapter 12). Each of the 12 chapters is organized as follows: an introduction, which raises readers' awareness of the relevance and focus of the chapter, is followed by a reflection that is practice-based (e. g. it asks readers to reflect upon a scenario taken from a primary classroom, a task or a learner text) and encourages readers to activate their existing ideas and assumptions about the topic in question. Following practice-based discussions of the content of the main chapter, we

conclude with a summary of the key findings, address remaining issues and suggest ideas for further independent reading. A glossary of relevant technical terms supports the accessibility of the text. Additional download materials are provided which comprise annotated websites, extra materials or further useful references and practice ideas. Finally, we have decided to use the female form for primary teachers throughout, simply because most of the primary EFL teachers are women.

### **Acknowledgements**

For this major update of the original book, which became a completely new version in its own right, the authors were delighted to welcome Annika Kolb to the writing team. Michael Legutke agreed to be our senior advisor and accompanied the project throughout with his careful reviews of our work. We were also glad to have Howard Thomas join the team whose thoughtful reading and editing of our chapters went far beyond what we could have expected from this expert in the field of language teaching. And finally, Flavia Reiff has proofread our text meticulously for any formal inconsistencies and for readability. To you, Mitch, Howard and Flavia, our thanks for your contributions to this new volume. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with you.

Freiburg, April 2021, Annika Kolb & Marita Schocker

# 1 English in the primary school

## 1.1 Introduction

The introduction of FL learning in primary schools has been characterised as “possibly the world’s biggest development in education” (Johnstone 2009: 33). Whereas children used to start learning a FL in secondary school, FL teaching has now become an integral part of primary school curricula around the world. In Europe, this development is linked in part to the opening of borders and the enormous rise in economic and cultural exchanges as by-products of globalization. Children grow up in an increasingly *multilingual*\* world. Many of them speak different languages at school and at home; they meet people from diverse cultural backgrounds and use a variety of languages to communicate through digital media. The English language plays a special role in this multilingual environment. In most countries, primary school children encounter English in their surroundings on a daily basis. Its role as a lingua franca makes English an indispensable tool for exploring children’s environments. The diverse, out-of-school experiences of the children combined with the key role of English in coping with the demands of today’s world make an overwhelming case for the relevance of teaching English in primary schools.

### Reflection



What do you believe are the relevant aspects to consider when teaching English at primary school level? Please make a list and take into account:

- the context: purposes of primary English; advantages and disadvantages of teaching primary school children compared to older learners; challenges of this context;
- the learners: children’s *lived experiences*\* and resulting language learning needs; the cognitive, social and emotional characteristics of this age group;
- the primary EFL classroom: primary school pedagogy.

While reading the chapter, compare your notes to the issues we will discuss.

In this chapter, we will first shed some light on the wider political and educational context of FL learning, and in doing so we will take a brief retrospective view of its development and present relevant European and national

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**Annika Kolb** ist Professorin für Englisch und seine Didaktik an der *Pädagogischen Hochschule Freiburg*. Sie ist ausgebildete Grundschullehrerin und unterrichtete Englisch in der Primarstufe in Deutschland und Spanien. Ihre Arbeits- und Forschungsschwerpunkte sind Englischunterricht in der Grundschule, Übergang in die Sekundarstufe und Einsatz von Literatur im Englischunterricht.



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The present volume provides a comprehensive introduction to the teaching of English in the primary school. Following a task-based and learner-oriented approach, the volume focuses on the German teaching context while taking relevant international research into account. Starting from the diverse lived experiences of today's primary school children and the complexity of the foreign language classroom, the 12 chapters illustrate how theory and classroom practice relate to each other.

Topics include learning through tasks, classroom management, the integration of skills, focus on form, working with literature, cultural learning, the use of media and teaching materials, integrating subject matter and assessment. The chapters present a variety of classroom examples and suggestions for further reading.

The volume is aimed at students, trainee teachers and primary school teachers. It is a helpful resource for both pre-service and in-service teacher education.

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