Teachers' Beliefs in Teaching English for Kids at a Kindergarten: A Case Study of Students from the Department of Applied English

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to explore the changes in teachers' beliefs before and after teachings among four students from the Department of Applied English at Hungkuang University, who were conducting English teaching at a kindergarten. Teacher's beliefs included four aspects in terms of English teaching, teacher-student interaction in class, curriculum planning and English learning.

The study results revealed that before and after teachings, there were no significant differences in teachers' beliefs between the aspects of English teaching (e.g. teaching resources and the preparation of lesson plan) and English learning (e.g. understanding of the kids' learning conditions). Inconsistent viewpoints in the beliefs of teacher-student interaction in class and curriculum planning were reported.

Constructive suggestions to the curriculum plans for Module of Teaching Children English at the Department of Applied English were proposed for assisting students interested in teaching children English and undertaking further research on this topic.

Keywords: teachers' beliefs, English teaching for kids, department of applied English

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Motivation

A kindergarten or a nursery school is a place for kids or children to develop infinitely and exert themselves heartily. Children from different family background lead to different growing process. A close relationship with family members, school teachers or learning environment all deeply affects their growth, as children are good imitators from what adults behave in daily life (Feng, 2001). Therefore, how to use positive guidelines and attitude to educate kids/children is considered as an important topic.

Because of globalization development in Taiwan nowadays, bilingual kindergartens or English cram schools for kids/children have been growing ubiquitously. Learning English at an early age has become significantly important for children. Parents all desperately wish their children starting English learning as early as possible in order to possess fluent English speaking skills and global views, which could benefit their achievement in their future.

With the progress of the times, parents provide different expectation on kindergarten teachers. How to make early English education more professional and pursue more qualified teachers in teaching becomes the essential topic of education reform. Tang (1996) pointed that it was imperative to enhance teachers' quality and professional competence. Teachers should hoist their capacity in editing lesson plans through their reflection (Hung, 2000), which was exceptionally beneficial to the children's education.

How to select English teaching materials, plan curriculum, conduct class management and initiate children's learning motivation are core issues to be considered in teaching children English. According to Chang (2004), instructors needed to design lesson plans and edit their teaching contents in a clear and understandable way. Lu (2008) addressed that how to effectively use teaching materials, develop teaching contents and show vivid and interesting body language in the well-planned curriculum was a big challenge for most of the kindergarten teachers. If teaching based on theme-based, team-based and contest–based scenarios, children would report better learning effects than the regular teaching.

1.2 Importance of the Study

Instructors in this study were students from the Department of Applied English, at Hungkuang University (HKU). Although they were not formal English teachers in this study, they showed strong interests in teaching English for children. All of them retained high motivation to become competent English teachers in the future.

There have been few studies focusing on exploring the differences of instructors' beliefs before and after teachings in the field of teaching children English. This study was expected to reveal the comparative results (teacher's beliefs before and after teachings) through the instructor's self-reflection and teaching experience sharing. It would enable the college departments to develop appropriate curriculum plans which not only fit students' career needs, but also improve the instructor's teaching skills and psychological adaptation simultaneously.

1.3 Research Questions

Currently most of the studies in English teaching have investigated instructors' teachings from elementary schools. English instructors in the kindergarten are rarely investigated among related studies. The study was mainly to explore whether there was a difference in teachers' beliefs in students from the Department of Applied English before and after serving as an English teacher, based on the four aspects in English teaching, teacher-student interaction in class, English curriculum planning and English learning.

2. Literature Review

Related literatures about definitions and approaches of teachers' beliefs were collected as follows.

2.1 Definition and Importance of Teachers' Beliefs

2.1.1 Definition of Teachers' Beliefs

Scholars reported different definitions in teachers' beliefs, which were shown in previous studies as following terms: teaching thoughts, teachers' viewpoints, emotional cognition, and personal practical knowledge etc. (Clark, 1988; Pajares, 1992). These terms may not completely the same but similar to the concepts of teachers' beliefs.

Clark (1988) pointed that teachers' beliefs combined personal experiences, beliefs, values, prejudice and bias. According to Tabachnick and Zeichner (1984), teachers' beliefs were steps of action in teachers' teaching process as well as their requests toward the classroom management. Pajares (1992) showed that teachers' beliefs were teachers' attitude toward education, teaching, learning and students. Pajares' perspective of teachers' beliefs was adopted in this study.

2.1.2 Importance of Teachers' Beliefs

According to literature review, teachers' beliefs were extremely important to teachers' teaching behavior. Teachers' beliefs significantly facilitated teachers' understanding of personal teaching (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Beliefs helped individuals understand oneself and environment they were in (Pajares, 1992). No double that teachers' beliefs played an important role in the whole teaching process and decision making in the classroom (Nien, 2002).

It was necessary for instructors to examine personal beliefs and thoughts about teaching, which could assist them to understand how to manage teaching tasks and reflect personal beliefs clearly (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). In addition, instructors' knowledge and thoughts were the fundamental framework or model of classroom activities, which were derived not only from themselves but also the learners.

Shulman (1986) claimed that teachers' beliefs were a combination of new experiences, old knowledge, old experience and attitude. Nespor (1987) brought up an idea that beliefs affected how individual organized and ascertained his/her tasks and problems. Burn (1996) declared that interaction between teachers and students facilitated the proceeding of classroom activities.

There were many studies related to teachers' beliefs which caused various definitions and statements. The diversity of definitions was trying to prove the importance of teachers' beliefs, which was to assist individuals to understand one's inner side and external world so as to interpret new phenomenon and draft new comprehensive thoughts to explain the teachers' problems while teaching.

2.2 Contents and Approaches of Teachers' Beliefs

This chapter collected related literatures to explore the contents and approaches of English teachers during teaching in terms of English teaching, teacher-student interaction in class, curriculum planning and English learning.

2.2.1 Beliefs in English Teaching

Teachers' beliefs included messages, facts, principles and thinking toward the educational values, which could be observed based on teaching methods and materials adopted by teachers. The big challenges that English teachers faced included how to gain and dominate effective learning methods and teaching materials, how to assist students to speak English fluently and confidently in their daily life, and how to convert the traditional "teacher-centered" teaching to "student-centered" oriented.

Different beliefs in language teaching resulted in various interactions in the classroom. Richards and Lockhard (1994) reported that different teaching methods caused various teachers' beliefs. Johnson (1992) declared that 30 ESL teachers used different teaching methods reported different teaching results and teachers' beliefs.

2.2.2 Beliefs of Teacher-Student Interaction in Class

The interaction between teacher-student in the classroom was an important part of language teaching, which comprised the best observation of teaching under a natural scenario. Richards and Lockhart (1994) suggested that teachers could involve more interaction with students by a common topic or categorize it into various session in the teaching. Ellis (1985) believed that using interactive teaching methods easily affected learning effectiveness. Interaction in class was imperative for the 2nd language learning.

According to a study by Chang (2004), most of the kindergartens laid an emphasis on implementation of Whole English teaching, in which teachers were requested to speak English in the whole teaching and set up a learning environment with English only. They thought English learning effect would be improved in a straight English surrounding. However, developing English comprehension through verbal expression was another important training for children in learning English.

The classroom guidelines were indicators indispensable to the class. Chang (2005) pointed that the classroom guidelines referred to regulations and expectations toward students at school, including classroom rules and classroom procedure. Classroom rules referred to behavior guidelines that teachers expected and agreed to, which were used to regulate students' behavior and manners. Classroom procedure was guidelines drafted to allow students to finish routine work and activities smoothly and successfully. All the classroom guidelines were drafted by teachers, with written regulations or oral agreement agreed by teachers and students jointly.

2.2.3 Beliefs in Curriculum Planning

Teachers' curriculum planning included curriculum timetables, syllabi, and how to present and facilitate course materials.

Different teachers offered different beliefs in their curriculum planning, which guided them to teaching differently (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Some teachers regarded textbooks as "bible" of teachings, so their beliefs concentrated on completing the whole textbook in their teaching. On the contrary, some teachers considered textbooks as origin that "hinders their creativity". More self-editing or supplementary materials were adopted in class instead of textbooks only.

Since textbooks and course materials affected the teacher's teaching behavior and achievement, it is a good start to understand teachers' beliefs from their curriculum planning.

2.2.4 Beliefs in English Learning

English has gradually become popular worldwide. There were more than 750 million people communicating in English (McCrum, MacNeil, & Cran, 2002). With the trend of globalization, many Asia-Pacific people were fostering the capability in English learning progressively (Nunan, 2003). In Taiwan, all elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, colleges and even adult education all are devoted in learning English. Most of parents are highly concerned the age of learning English for children. They sincerely believe that learning English in the very early childhood would provide a well-preparation for children's future. Due to the insistence, the age of children in learning English has kept decreasing recently, which promotes kindergartens to plan English curriculum as one of the features in schools.

Teachers' beliefs affected teachers' teaching. Brindley (1984) pointed that teachers emerged their own beliefs on students' learning process. They manipulated not only on what the learning contents were, but also how children to learn. Most parents believed the critical period for language learning, at which children could learn English more easily than other age periods.

Teachers usually implemented their beliefs to the aspect of English learning while conducting English lessons. Some teachers focused on exploring the factors of affecting foreign language learning and completing teachings by following teaching objectives; however, some teachers focused on enhancing learners' reading and writing

proficiency through taking more practices in class. Moreover, teachers' personal English learning experience affected their teachers' beliefs, which resulted in their teachings.

Based on aforementioned about teacher' beliefs, this study were to explore the changes in teachers' beliefs before and after their teachings, in terms of four aspects: English teaching, teacher-student interaction in class, curriculum planning and English learning.

3. Method

Instructors in this study were four students from the Department of Applied English, who were interviewed by the researcher between Aug. 2012 and Jan. 2013, before and after their English teaching periods.

3.1 Research Scenarios

This study resulted from an industry-academy cooperation project in teaching English for kids signed by the Department of Applied English and the affiliated kindergarten at HKU. The purpose of this project was to develop an English training program, to assist the kids at the affiliated kindergarten in HKU to learn daily English in a natural scenario via rhymes, games, songs, story books and other related activities. Students from the Department of Applied English would be able to practically apply their knowledge and theories acquired from the Module of Teaching Children English, and combined with their practical experiences from the interns to enhance their capability in English teaching. The kids were from two main classes (K2 and K3) at the affiliated kindergarten of HKU. The teaching took twice a week per class, 40 minutes each time (12:30~13:10pm). Each class was conducted by two instructors.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were four juniors, who were anonymous as B1, B2, B3 and B4, from the Department of Applied English at HKU. They were introduced as below, respectively.

B1 studied in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at a vocational high school, and hadn't attended any English teaching activities with kids. Because of her good English proficiency and a preference in studying English, she chose the Department of Applied English as her major in the college. After completing the intern at the affiliated kindergarten in HKU, she expected herself to learn and foster more knowledge and capabilities from various English teaching activities, so as to gain the beneficial opportunity in seeking a good job in the future.

Although B2 studied in the Department of Information System at a vocational high school, she showed strong interest in English and considered learning English as a prosperous development in the future. The reason for her to participate in this teaching program was mainly to understand the possibility of having a further development in terms of teaching children English aspect. In addition, she would like to accumulate more teaching experiences and gain more knowledge with regard to English teaching for kids/children.

B3 studied in the Department of General Education at a high school. To fulfill her mother's wish, she chose Department of Applied English as her major in college. She did not show a preference for English teaching in particular. It was a test to predict if she would be a good English teacher for kindergarten kids.

Although B4 studied in the Department of Applied English at a vocational high school, she has few experience involving in related English teaching activities before joining this program.

3.3 Research Data

The data of this study retrieved from the interviews with the four instructors. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the changes of instructors' beliefs before and after their teachings.

3.3.1 Data Collection

Semi-structured interview was used in this study to analyze the four interviewees' teacher's beliefs. The feature of this qualitative study provided a face to face mutual communication between the researcher and interviewees under a natural scenario, and allowed interviewees to fully express their inner feeling, experience and opinions upon the research questions. The questions referred to a study by Nien (2002) which declaimed that teachers' beliefs were mainly divided into 4 aspects: beliefs in English teaching, beliefs in teacher-student interaction in class, curriculum planning, as well as beliefs in English learning. The context of data collection included transcripts, audio-recording and interview outlines. The researcher tried to sort out the main categories from the collected data and interpreted the transcripts as clearly closed to the instructors' inner thoughts as possible.

3.3.2 Interview

The whole interview process was audio-recorded and then compiled into transcripts afterwards. Mandarin (mother tongue) was used in the interviews to allow the interviewees to express their thoughts completely in depth (Yin, 1984). A comfortable room with no interference was arranged during the interviews, where the instructors could address their teacher's beliefs in a natural and detailed mode. The interviewees were asked to browse text records after the transcripts were completed, so as to verify if the interview contents and transcripts were consistent.

Based on the research ethics, interviewees (generally referred to as "instructors" in the study) were processed in anonymity and were coded as B1, B2, B3, B4, respectively. B1 represented the first instructor. B1-1 stood for the first interview of B1instructor and so forth.3.3.3 Interview timetable

3.3.3 Interview timetable

Two interviews were carried out from Aug. 2012 to Jan. 2013.

Steps	Date	Data Processing
1st interview	Aug. 14th , 2012	Audio-recording
2nd interview	Jan. 10th , 2013 to Jan. 15th , 2013	Audio-recording

The first interview was taken on Aug. 14th, 2012. It was aimed to explore the instructors' teacher's beliefs before processing English teaching for kids at the affiliated kindergarten in HKU. The second interview was held between Jan. 10th and Jan. 15th, 2013, with a main purpose to recognize any different teacher's beliefs occurred from the instructors after teaching for a period of time. Each interview lasted for about one hour by using opening questions, which were handed to interviewees for pre-reviewing before the interviews (Please see Appendix A).

3.3.4 Data Analysis

All the interview contents were translated by "open coding" and "axial coding". Relevant meanings among research topics, keywords, or key events were interpreted into different categories first, comparison and summarization were made next, finally formed the four main frameworks - English teaching, teacher-student interaction in the classroom, curriculum planning and English learning.

4. Results

Based on the four aspects of teachers' beliefs, the comparison of both (before and after) teachings related to the instructors' lesson plan preparation (beliefs in English teaching), perspectives on student disciplines (beliefs in teacher-student interaction), curriculum planning (beliefs in curriculum planning) and perspectives on students' learning (beliefs in English learning) were described as below .

4.1 Preparation of Lesson Plan (Beliefs in English Teaching)

4.1.1 Resources of Teaching Materials

1) Before teaching, the resources of curriculum materials mainly adopted from the internet. In addition, the seniors, who were the student-teachers in the previous year, project supervisor and the class mentors in the kindergarten, were willing to share their teaching materials and experience with the instructors.

Some references came from the teacher (mentors) as well as the information on the internet, such as Youtube. Also we referred to the teaching materials used by the teachers in the kindergarten. (B1-1)

I referred not only to the old materials, word cards and picture cards left by the seniors, but also the teaching experiences shared by the mentors in the kindergarten. Sometimes I revised the materials from the senior's. (B3-1)

After teaching, the instructor's teaching resources came from the internet, other instructors' lesson plans, experiences and information of seniors, and the themes and references provided by the class mentors.

The resources of my teaching materials mostly come from my own thinking. I also got some CDs from the teachers (the supervisor or the class mentors). Those CDs are about teaching English for kids. On the other hand, I found some music CDs, but they were not applicable…I revised the lyrics and melody. (B3-2)

The best way to check if my lesson plan appeals to the kids' interest in learning English is to estimate the kid's preference in English class. Would they be bored in class? The kindergarten teachers told me not to use too difficult games. We usually follow their suggestion and modify the games into simpler ones. (B4-2)

In spite of a similarity in the resources of lesson plans before and after teachings (such as online resources, reference books provided by the class mentors, and teaching materials and lesson plans from the seniors), this study found that partial instructors used their own designed lesson plans to process teachings and tried to make their teachings different from last one.

4.1.2 The Difficulty in Preparing Lesson Plans

To understand the biggest obstacle that the instructors faced during the process of lesson plan preparation.

1) Before teaching, the instructors were all confused about the teaching procedure while they were preparing for lesson plans.

The most difficult part is how to choose the topics, how to arrange the process and how to design the games while teaching. (B2-1)

To me, course arrangement is what bothers me a lot! We even don't know what level they are in yet, but have to arrange the courses for them in advance….also, we are worried whether they will get crazy or go out of control while playing a game. (B4-1)

2) After teaching, the most difficult part of preparing lesson plans for instructors was how to consolidate the lesson plans and self-designed games together in the teaching.

…consolidate contents and activities in the sessions, I think are the most difficult part for me. (B1-2)

Games, I think! As we are not expected to use the same games frequently, we feel stressful on how to increase the effects of teaching by using different games. Some games may suit kids, but some are not suitable for kids of this age. (B3-2)

The study found that course arrangement, teaching contents and designing games were the difficult parts for instructors while preparing a lesson plan. Because they didn't provide clear concept about children' cognitional and psychological development, they had to revise lesson plans to fit kids' understanding each class.

4.1.3 Instructors' Psychological Barriers

To understand what the psychological barriers were during the instructors' teachings, and how they conquered them.

1) Before teaching, the instructors' psychological barriers came from personal issues, such as introverted personality. They worried that their English pronunciation were not perfect, and even didn't know how to get along well with children.

Actually I have many psychological barriers. I worry my incorrect English pronunciation will lead to a mistaken teaching. I also worry that kids may laugh at me if I don't teach well, or the class mentor may be suspicious about my professional … (B4-1)

A psychological barrier of personality, I think. I am an introvert. (B1-1)

2) After teaching, the psychological barriers from the instructors were related to their introverted personality, mistaken English pronunciation, poor classroom management and oblivion in the teaching process sometimes.

I am shy and not good at expressing my own thinking…I asked my classmates to offer me a speaking training after class…. Or I tried to give myself more opportunities to speak in class. (B1-2)

I wonder I am not good at teaching, due to incorrect English pronunciation and unclear reading in sentences. What I can do is to consult with the teacher about how to modify my pronunciation, or to make more practices with my classmates. I listen to their pronunciations first and then imitate later. (B2-2)

I keep the teaching process in my mind tightly, but when it comes to teach, those thoughts are completely gone. I need a person to remind me aside…. (B3-2)

There were two types of psychological barriers carried by the instructors. First, due to the introverted personality, the instructors worried they couldn't manage well in their lecturing process and make good classroom management. They even had problems getting along with kids. Second, because of timidity, the instructors felt nervous during their teaching process. These barriers existed before and after the instructors' teachings.

4.2 Perspectives on Student Disciplines (Beliefs in Teacher-Student Interaction)

4.2.1 Set Up Proper Rules in the Classroom Management

To understand what basic rules that kids should follow in the classroom were.

1) Before teaching, the instructors thought the kids should provide basic manners, understand daily life

guidelines and make mutual respect to each others.

I think kids should learn how to say "May I come in" before they enter the classroom. I usually say the word "attention" to draw their attention when they are distracted, or clap my hands to get their attention. These classroom language will be taught in the first class. (B1-1)

Respect each other. (B3-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors thought kids' basic manners, such as obey to classroom rules and respect to others, were to be developed.

Classroom rules….for example, they need to say "Yes" when I say "attention". Also there are other reminder phrases. For example, when I say "Look at me", they need to reply to "Look at you". When I say "Listen to me", they need to say "Listen to you" etc.... (B1-2)

They need to learn how to respect others; everyone has a right to learn without being interfered. (B2-2)

It's clear that kids' basic manners played an important role in their learning process no matter before or after teachings. If kids acquire regular manners and respect others, it will enable them to develop a happier learning life at school.

4.2.2 How to Handle Kids When They Were Not Concentrated in Learning

To understand the instructors' attitude and solution when kids weren't concentrated in learning.

1) Before teaching, the instructors thought the best way to manage kids' class behavior was to "remind" them often and play games.

I will clap my hands to attract their attention and draw them back to the topic we are in.. (B1-1)

Use a game, for example, who could give me the fastest response will be the winner...As a result, they will be more concentrated. (B3-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors tried to use different sound pitches to draw kids' attention back. Sometimes, a more serious tone was going for an advice.

I will pat his head to give him a soft reminder….Every kid is different. Sometimes those kids with high concentration may read aloud, then I will praise them in front of those absent-minded kids and ask them to behave as well as them. Sometimes, I will say "I've heard someone is talking aloud"... to bring their attention back. (B2-2)

I will let him/her know if it happens again, he/she will be grounded in the room after class and has a talk with the instructor. (B3-2)

The instructors tried to pull kids' attention back by using body action (clapping) or playing games before teaching. However, after teaching, the instructors had successfully corrected kids' inattentive attitude in class upon a psychological condition of not being a loser or unwilling to be punished in front of other kids.

4.2.3 Relationship between Instructors and Kids

To understand what bonds or relationship that instructors would like to set up with kids in the classroom.

1) Before teaching, the instructors would like to establish a relationship as being a teacher, as well as a friend, with kids in the classroom.

That's to be joyful. It would be the best if everyone would cooperate well with each other. (B2-1)

I wish they could respect me as a teacher in the class, but play around or chat with me relaxedly after class. They need to recognize me as a teacher instead of a big sister in class. (B1-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors wished to have mutual respect and keep a proper distance with kids in the classroom. They didn't like being too closed with kids. It was important to clarify teacher-student relationship before and after class.

A teacher-student relationship is requested in class. But during the intern, I wish the kids and I just like young brothers/sisters and a big sister. We are developing our close relationship with each other, which will be helpful for them to get acquainted with me during teaching. (B3-2)

About teacher-student relations….we may have good interaction during the class, but unnecessarily too intimate. (B2-2)

In order to make kids respect the instructors as kindergarten teachers, the instructors intended to keep a distance

from kids in the class. However, to develop good relationship, the instructors were willing to play with them after class.

4.3 Perspectives on Curriculum Planning (Beliefs of Curriculum Planning)

4.3.1 Use of Textbooks

To understand if the textbooks were a necessary teaching tool during teaching.

1) Before teaching, the instructors all considered textbooks as a supplementary tool.

I feel that textbooks could be a good resource to refer to. Textbooks are just some references about how to teach and enrich the teaching contents. (B4-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors reported the same viewpoints towards textbooks as before. They thought textbooks were a supplemental tool in teaching. Their lesson plans mainly adopted from the teaching experiences of the seniors, supervisor or class mentors. Self-designed materials by the instructors were included in the lesson plans, too.

I think it is ok to use the textbooks, but it would be better if I refer to teaching materials from the teachers or the seniors, or some teaching methods used in the industry, or some teachers' experiences with kids before. (B1-2)

Textbooks would be a guideline for teaching in class. Some good contexts could be found from textbooks … such as "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?"—A short story. (B2-2)

Basically, we prefer to design the course contents by ourselves. We hardly use textbooks…. textbooks don't give me a lot of help. (B3-2)

The instructors thought that textbooks could be regarded as a reference tool in terms of teaching before and after. However, after teaching, materials from textbooks, class mentors and seniors would be the primary resources to refer to.

4.3.2 Setting of Teaching Objectives

To understand how the instructors set up achievable teaching objectives before and after teachings.

1) Before teaching, the instructors referred to the supervisor's teaching experience first, consolidated their own thinking and then wrote out proper teaching objectives.

In terms of teaching objectives … from the supervisor's experience sharing, it is expected to have good interaction with kids. (B1-1)

I will discuss the teaching objectives with other instructors in advance. (B4-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors reviewed weekly teaching topics and regular requirements conducted by the kindergarten to edit their teaching objectives.

We are expected to tell short stories about festivals sometimes. Help kids learn the origin of a festival and some vocabularies about it. (B3-2)

Before each class, we will explain the topic to kids, and let them know what they are going to learn. For example, if the topic is "color", I will introduce 3 colors in class. After finishing teaching, we will ask them what colors they have on their clothes. The kids may raise their hands if they have the colors that the instructor says … One of our objectives is to make kids respond on the colors once they have heard about them ... (B4-2)

The instructors didn't conduct an explicit definition of teaching objectives before teaching; but owned a clear concept of it after teaching. Some instructors merged their own teaching objectives with the one in the Chinese class after teaching.

4.3.3 Check the Achievement of Teaching Objectives and Find Solutions

To understand how the instructors examined the achievement of teaching objectives and what the solution would be if the teaching objectives were not reached.

1) Before teaching, the instructors asked kids questions to observe their understanding in English. Kids' responses were the evaluation of the achievement of teaching objectives.

Look at kids' reaction in class… to see if they really understand what the teacher have taught… whether they are happy in class… are they paying attention to the class? … In fact, it is easy to observe how they feel during class. (B2-1)

I will ask some questions in class and observe whether they are distracted by the way. (B4-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors made reflection and tried to modify their teaching contents, to be slow down the teaching speed or to extend class time as to help kids learn well in English.

Teaching time will be increased if teaching objectives are not achieved … I will reserve more time to do review in next teaching. (B3-2)

If a majority of kids fail to achieve the learning goal, we will strengthen the same materials in the following class. If a minority of kids fails to achieve learning objectives, they are going to take some remedial learning with the instructor after class. (B4-2)

The instructors tried to understand the kids' learning condition in class before teaching. If the teaching objectives were not achieved, those unachieved items would be listed out for discussion after teaching and be improved next time. After teaching, the instructors revised their teaching contents to enable kids more opportunities in practicing English.

4.4 Perspectives on Students' Learning (Beliefs of English Learning)

4.4.1 The Improper Learning Attitudes from Kids

To understand how the instructors corrected kids' inadequate attitudes toward learning in class.

1) Before teaching, the instructors thought that setting up class rules or telling short stories were convinced ways to manage kids' behavior.

… Try to use some rules to draw their attention to the teaching contents ... (B1-1)

For those talkative kids, I will ask him/her to prepare a short story to share with everyone. Then let everybody admire him/her to gain a sense of superiority. Also let him/her know that he/she has to be obedient. (B1-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors stopped kids' improper behaviors in class by reminding, grounding or communicating with them for their bad behavior. They showed a much tougher attitude in advising kids' bad behavior than before.

Just to remind him/her….without using mean words to scold him/her, to motivate him/her by peers' encouragement…If he/she is not attentive as still, I will pat his/her head and tell him/her we are having class right now! (B2-2)

If the kid disturbs others in class, we take him away immediately, and tell him what happens to him/her? I may ask him/her if he/she gets ready to the class. It's the way to keep him/her calm down and back to the track soon. (B1-2)

It was obvious that instructors adopted a milder correction for kids' improper learning attitudes, such as distraction and talkativeness, before teaching. However, after teaching, they used a slightly stricter discipline, such as patting his/her head or shoulders gently, to urge and remind kids not to interfere the teaching process. Those who disturbed others in class would be taken aside to calm down.

4.4.2 Arouse Kids' Interests in Learning

The instructors had a strong desire to arouse or lead kids to be interested in learning English.

1) Before teaching, the instructors used games, English songs and rhymes, English cartoons during class to arouse kids' interests in learning English.

Playing games with them under a happy phenomenon will make them pop out the vocabularies they have learned suddenly during the games. (B1-1)

As it is the first time for kids to learn English, I think it would be more convenient to bring in with songs, which will be easier for them to get into it. (B2-1)

In my opinion, some English videos and cartoons will help a lot, from which they might have more interests to learn. (B3-1)

2) After teaching, in addition to games, picture cards, other teaching aids or role playing were taken by the instructors to attract kids' attention during class. Following with the topics related to festivals, teachers might use their body language and tone pitches to arouse kids' interests in learning English in the role playing.

There is a game about stair climbing … to let them feel like playing a game and learn something at the same time. (B1-2)

… I may use picture cards to play games and conduct activities … or knock something with a hammer, or use teaching aids to increase their interest in English, such as sticky balls or flip cards, to allow them to learn and

play. (B2-2)

For example, the theme of Christmas has to be associated with Santa Claus. Role playing is a good activity. I costume myself as a Santa Claus on Christmas in the whole teaching. (B3-2)

The instructors believed that using games in learning would arouse kids' big interest. They thought kids would learn better in the joyful environment. After teaching, the instructors used related festival topics to teach vocabularies and phrases, and even added more role-playing to arouse kids' interests in learning English.

4.4.3 Understand Kids' Achievement in Learning English

To understand how the instructors assess kids' learning achievement.

1) Before teaching, the instructors tested kids' learning achievement by playing games, joining activities and holding competition.

After teaching, I usually examine kids' learning performance by playing games … (B1-1)

… to design some games that could show up kids' learning performance … it might be just game-playing instead of having classes. (B4-1)

2) After teaching, the instructors examined kids' performance through game-playing, which not only reviewed the contents kids had learned, but also increased kids' English efficiency.

We won't place a formal test for kids. I think the best way to assess their performance is to play games. The games include whole English contents they have learned in class. It stands for an OK learning situation if he/she could accomplish all the requests in the games. (B4-2)

The instructors all agreed that through games-playing was the best way to evaluate kids' learning performance no matter before or after their teachings.

5. Conclusions

Beliefs are the guidance of individual's behavior and thinking, with ideas and knowledge formed as an inter-connected system to derive personal viewpoints and behavior. Beliefs not only affect teachers' perception and the management of class lecturing, but also play an important role in forming teaching objectives and teaching missions. There is a tightly connection between teachers' beliefs and their practical teachings. Research findings and suggestion about teachers' belief before and after the instructors' teachings were summarized as follows.

5.1 Conclusions

1) Beliefs of English teaching: Instructors showed slight difference in using the resources for preparing lesson plans in both teaching periods. The sources of lesson plans mainly came from the internet, teaching experience sharing by the seniors, the supervisor and class mentors. Due to the introverted personality, the instructors felt shy and unconfident in their English pronunciation in both periods.

2) Beliefs of teacher-student interaction: A significant different perspective on kid's disciplines in the classroom was shown before and after teachings. Although the instructors in both periods agreed that basic manners were essential for kids, they thought soft reminders to drag kids' attention back were enough before teaching. However, they realized that a serious tone, facial expressions, eye contacts or even a small punishment were better ways to warn the kids to behave well after teaching. They even preferred to keep a distance from kids in class in case of being too intimate to control. Both of the teachings agreed that the instructors provided an active interaction in the class increased the kids' interests in English learning.

3) Beliefs of curriculum planning: The instructors reported consistent viewpoints toward textbooks, which they thought as supplemental materials, before and after their teachings. However, they declared that more self-designed teaching materials made more benefits for kids' learning after teaching. Moreover, the instructors modified their lesson plans and teaching objectives through self-reflection to assist kids at efficient learning. They recognized the importance of examining the achievement of teaching objectives and took some remedial teaching after class for those kids who failed to reach the teaching objectives. It's clearly to know that the instructors considered kids' learning more after processing experienced teaching.

4) Beliefs of English learning: The instructors believed that English songs, rhymes, games and stories motivated kids' interests in learning English during both periods. Furthermore, game-playing was the best way to examine kids' learning performance, too. More attention on kids' learning conditions was taken by the instructors after experiencing teaching. They believed that harsh tone was a more effective way to push kids' attention back to class, which was different form their initial concept of teaching. Finally, they distinctly understood how to

complete an integrated lesson plan and made revise progressively through the practical teaching after teaching.

5.2 Suggestions

The section proposed suggestions as below based on the analysis of interviews.

1) Suggestion to the curriculum design at the Department of Applied English

Due to the lack of practical English teaching experience for kids and children, the instructors had difficulty in preparing lesson plans, compiling teaching contents, correcting one's inaccurate English pronunciation, handling classroom management. They expected to have more courses with regard to "English Teaching Principles and Materials" and "Classroom Management" from the Department of Applied English.

2) Encourage students to participate in related English teaching activities.

Due to this industry-academy cooperation project, most instructors showed considerable intention in taking related activities for teaching kids/children English, which may enhanced their professional knowledge in English teaching and accumulated more experience of English teaching before starting their new career in the coming future.

3) A recommendable course list for students interested in teaching English for kids/children

Students who are interested in teaching English for kids/children are encouraged to choose the Module of English Teaching at the Department of Applied English or other interdisciplinary English programs. Some courses are recommended, such as Class Management, English Teaching for Kids, Introduction of English Teaching Methods, Children English Teaching Methods and Materials, Children Development, Psychology of Children Education, Child Literature, Application of Games and Toys for Children … etc… Those courses may strengthen students' profession in teaching English.

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Appendix

Preparation of lesson plans before teaching

1) Where are your sources from when you design a course?

2) Which part of the lesson plan is the most difficult for you to prepare?

3) Do you have any psychological barrier before teaching and how do you conquer it?

1) Perspectives on student disciplines what are the rules that kids should learn in class from your point of view?

2) If kids are not attentive to class, how do you deal with it?

3) What kind of relationship do you like to establish with kids in class?

Perspectives on curriculum planning

1) Do you think there is a need in textbooks for teaching English to kids?

2) How to set up your teaching objectives before teaching?

3) How do you work with it if it fails?

Perspectives on student learning

1) How to arouse kids' interest in learning English from your point of view?

2) How do you ensure understanding of kids' learning conditions?

3) Which way would you use to correct kids' improper attitude toward learning?

Background of the instructors

1) Which department did you study at your senior high/vocational high school? And why did you choose this department in college?

2) Why do you join in this project?

3) What is your motivation to join?

4) Are you interested in English teaching for kids? Why?

5) Have you ever taken courses with regard to English teaching for kids?

6) Do you think those courses recommended to the department will be beneficial to students?

7) If there are subsequent activities in English teaching, would you be willing to join again?