

# FINDING YOUR GROOVE WITH YOUNG LEARNERS: TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

## Workshop Summary

In this workshop we discussed how focusing on connection and growth mindset can help improve motivation, interest and foreign language enjoyment in the English classroom.

We then looked at practical tips for building on these foundations by exploring learning activities suitable for early primary learners and the options for differentiated implementation of such tasks.

## Key Points

### People-centredness: “I teach people.”

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- Maslow before Bloom
- Motivate learners by building connection with them – show interest in their lives, get to know them, find out what is important to them
- Be authentic in the classroom – allow your students to get to know you too. You are spending time together – in English
- Keep in mind there is no one right way to do things

### Growth mindset

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- Mindset<sup>1</sup>: the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence
- Our mindsets exist on a continuum from fixed to growth – and differ in various life domains
- Learning a language → dynamic, non-linear development of skills
- In the classroom: raise awareness that learning is a journey; introduce the students to the power of YET; cultivate the idea that mistakes help us learn; focus your feedback on the process more often than the product

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<sup>1</sup> Dweck, C. (2017). *Mindset-updated edition: Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*. Hachette UK.

## Practical ideas for the EFL classroom

### 1. Fostering connection:

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#### THE BOOK OF SUPER ME (long-term activity)

- A notebook/folder where students write about themselves
- For every unit/topic you cover, make/find a worksheet to follow up and revise language
- Benefits: personalization (they are the heroes of their own stories), building student agency, having tangible evidence of their effort and learning

#### CONNECTING EVERY DAY (short activities)

- Good ol' chat – just to check in
- Dilemmas – “Are you more like...?”/”Would you rather...?” ([GoNoodle Blazer Fresh](#))
- Ask me a question

### 2. Grammar and students' motivation:

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#### GRAMMAR MAP (long-term activity)

- At the beginning of a school year or term make a big map with greyed out areas
- Ideas: treasure map (pirates, explorers) or city map (detectives, superheroes) or enchanted forest map (fairies)...
- As you acquire new grammar structures/functions, you reveal parts of the map and then get to explicit instruction

#### PATTERN FINDERS (introductory activity)

- Show the students a few examples and then tell them you are stuck with the next one
- Ask them to help you find how to complete the blank

#### MISTAKE DETECTIVES (revision activity)

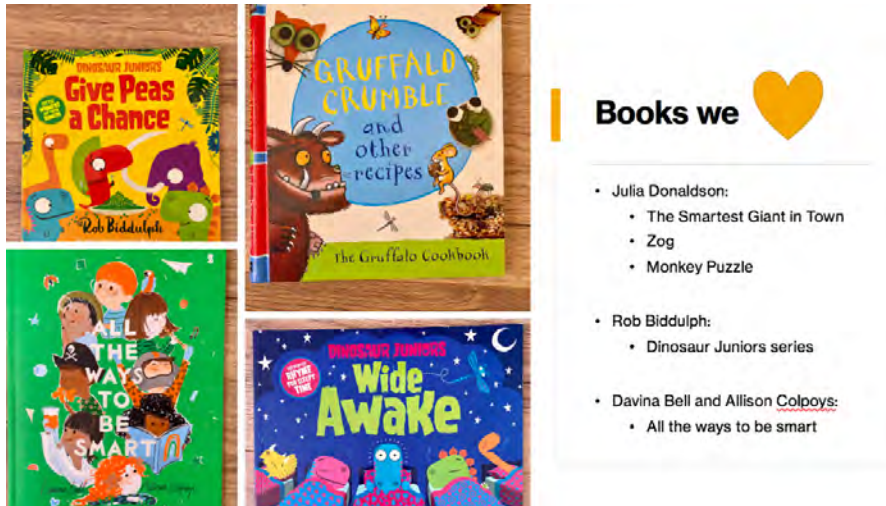
- Divide students into groups and give each group a worksheet with sets of target structures (e.g., 3 examples together – 2 correct, 1 incorrect)
- Ask them to find the odd one out and solve the mystery word on the handout

### 3. Bringing it all together:

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#### AWESOME READERS MONTHLY CLUB (long-term activity)

- Pick a book that consolidates vocabulary or builds on a topic you've covered
- You can do it monthly or at any frequency that makes sense for you; but make sure it's not a one-time thing!
- Read, draw, do quizzes, roleplay...
- Benefits: promoting reading enjoyment and authentic language learning



Ideas for *Wide Awake* soon on [Loud Frog & Wild Bee!](#)

#### Check it out!

##### Watch:

- [Carol Dweck - A Study on Praise and Mindsets](#)
- [What is self-determination theory?](#)

##### Download:

- [Big Life Journal](#) - weekly printables on growth mindset
- [GoZen!](#) - resources on social and emotional learning

##### Put it into action:

- [DrawWithRob](#) - revise vocabulary through drawing (shapes, colours, animals...)

##### Read:

- [What having a growth mindset actually means](#)