

B10

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Assessing young learners' progress in a longitudinal study: valuing learners' perception

This contribution is aimed at presenting some of the emerging results of a longitudinal study on the development of learners' perceptions of classroom activities, of the importance of foreign language (FL) learning and of their learning achievement. The study is part of a large-scale European project (Early Language Learning in Europe) started in 2006 and to be completed in 2010. In Italy the study has been carried out on a cohort of 163 Italian young learners of English (age: 6-9) with a specific focus on a sample of 49 focal learners drawn from the eight primary classes that are part of the study.

In order to investigate young learners' development of their aural and oral skills, different quantitative as well as qualitative instruments have been used: classroom observations, teachers' interviews and questionnaires, learners' self-assessment, analysis of country specific documents and materials, and specific listening and speaking tasks. The focal learners' perception of the importance of FL learning and of their own learning progress and achievement was elicited through oral interviews. All the listed measures were applied in both years (grades 1 and 2) that the participants were followed.

In the presentation the author will discuss the findings in terms of the observed changes of the young focal learners' FL development and of their perceptions during the two years.