

Total Physical Response (TPR)

*When students first start school, they need to know key phrases and expressions that they can use to communicate with teachers and classmates during the school day. Being able to communicate effectively with others is the key for learning to take place. Through **meaningful and fun interactions**, students can develop the type of everyday communication skills that facilitate learning. Teachers can use a strategy called **Total Physical Response** to help students in these early stages of language development.*

Learning key phrases through Total Physical Response

*Total Physical Response (TPR) activities greatly multiply the language input and output that can be handled by beginning English language learners (ELLs). TPR activities draw out whole-body responses when new words or phrases are introduced. Teachers can develop quick scripts that provide ELLs and other students with the **vocabulary and/or classroom behaviors related to everyday situations**. For example, "Take out your math book. Put it on your desk. Put it on your head. Put it under the chair. Hold it in your left hand."*

*Students become ready to talk sooner when they are learning by doing. **TPR activities help students adjust to school and understand the behaviors required and the instructions they will hear**. This will help them in mainstream classrooms, in the halls, during lunchtime, during fire drills, on field trips, and in everyday life activities.*

TPR strategies are good teaching strategies for all students, not just ELLs.

Seven steps of TPR

1. Introduction

The teacher introduces a situation in which students follow a set of commands using actions. Usually props such as pictures or real objects accompany the actions. Some actions may be real while others are pretend.

2. Demonstration

The teacher demonstrates or asks a student to demonstrate this series of actions. The other students are expected to pay careful attention. At first, students are not expected to talk or repeat the commands. But soon they will want to join in because the commands are easy to follow and the language is clear and comprehensible. For example, the teacher gives a command such as "Take out a piece of bread" and the students say the sentence and do the action. "Now, spread peanut butter on it", and so on until a make-believe sandwich is made and eaten.

3. Group action

Next, the class acts out the series while the teacher gives the commands. Usually, this step is repeated several times so that students internalize the series thoroughly before they will be asked to produce it.

4. Written copy

Write the series on the board or smartboard so that students can make connections between oral and written words while they read and copy (or make substitutions of their choice.)

5. Oral repetitions and questions

After students have made a written copy, they repeat each line after the teacher, taking care with difficult words. They ask questions for clarification, and the teacher points out grammatical features such as "Yesterday we ate half a sandwich. Today we will eat a whole sandwich. Did you notice the difference between ate and eat? Yesterday we spread grape jelly, today we will spread orange jelly. Did you notice that the verb spread didn't change? Let's say the words soap and soup. Let's say the words cheap and sheep."

6. Student demonstration

Students can also take turns playing the roles of the reader of the series and the performer of the actions. Meanwhile, the teacher can check on individual students for comprehension and oral production.

7. Partner activities

Finally, students work in pairs or teams of four to tell or read the series. In teams of four, two students give commands and two respond physically. Meanwhile, the teacher monitors each team and suggests ways to elaborate on the vocabulary by adding new words.

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