

Total Physical Response (Ch8)

Introduction

In this lesson, students will learn about Total Physical Response. Total Physical Response, or TPR, was developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University in California. It is based around the coordination of speech and action. It attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about Total Physical Response and its techniques and principles.

Learning Outcomes

- **Principles:** Students will be able to describe key principles of Total Physical Response such as its goal, affective filter, comprehensible input, and comprehension-based instruction.
- **Techniques:** Students will be able to describe and express their thoughts about the predominant techniques used in a Total Physical Response lesson.
- **Application:** Students will be able to create an Action Sequence for a set of given resources (i.e., playboards with peel and stick figures on the topics of *The Kitchen* and *The Airport*) that follow the principles and techniques of Total Physical Response.

Key Vocabulary

- Comprehension Approach (p. 103)
- James Asher (p. 103)
- Comprehensible input, $i+1$ (p. 103)
- Affective filter (p. 104)
- Command (p. 105)
- Fun and humour (p. 108, p. 109)
- Spoken language (p. 108)
- Modelling (p. 109)
- Nonverbal (p. 109)
- Zany commands and humorous skits (p. 110)
- Oral modality (p. 110)
- Imperatives (p. 110)
- Role reversal (p. 112)
- Action sequence (p. 112)

Video (watch before class)

- <https://youtu.be/YuS3ku-PSL8>

Understanding Total Physical Response

1. What is the goal of Total Physical Response?
2. Evaluate the statements below. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - a) Comprehension abilities precede productive skills in learning a language.
 - b) The teaching of speaking should be delayed until comprehension skills are established.
 - c) Listening skills transfer to other skills.
 - d) Teaching should emphasize meaning rather than grammatical form.
 - e) Teaching should minimize learner stress.

Experience

3. Consider the Total Physical Response video, the sample lesson in the textbook (pp. 104-107), and the observations and principles of Total Physical Response (pp. 107-111).
 - a) Which aspects of language (i.e., grammar, vocabulary) does the teacher teach?
 - b) What is the role of the teacher?
 - c) What is the role of the students?

- d) How does the teacher know the students had comprehended her commands?
- e) Why does the teacher demonstrate the commands first with individuals and then move to the whole group?
- f) Why did the teacher write the language on the board at the end of the lesson instead of at the beginning?
- g) What is the role of humour in a TPR classroom?

Reviewing the Techniques and Principles

4. Look at the list of techniques on textbook pages 111-112, in particular Action Sequence. The example action sequence is for **writing a letter**:

Take out a pen.
 Take out a piece of paper.
 Write a letter. (imaginary)
 Fold the letter.
 Put it in an envelope.
 Seal the envelope.
 Write the address on the envelope.
 Put a stamp on the envelope.
 Mail the letter.

What other “everyday activities” have steps that can be made into action sequences?
 Create an action sequence for **brushing your teeth** or **downloading a smartphone app**, or any idea of your own. Write it on the lines below.

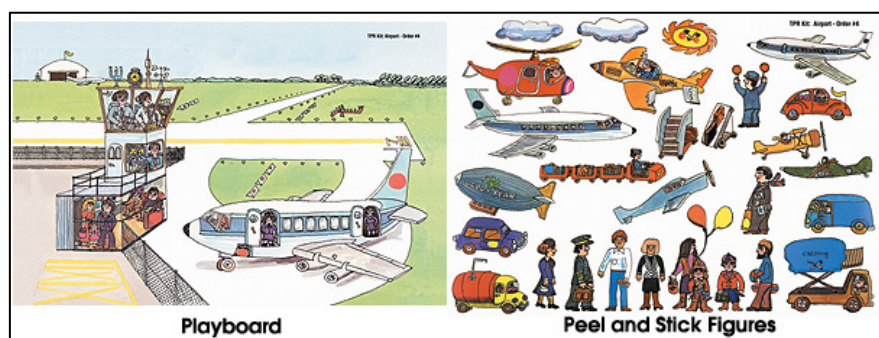
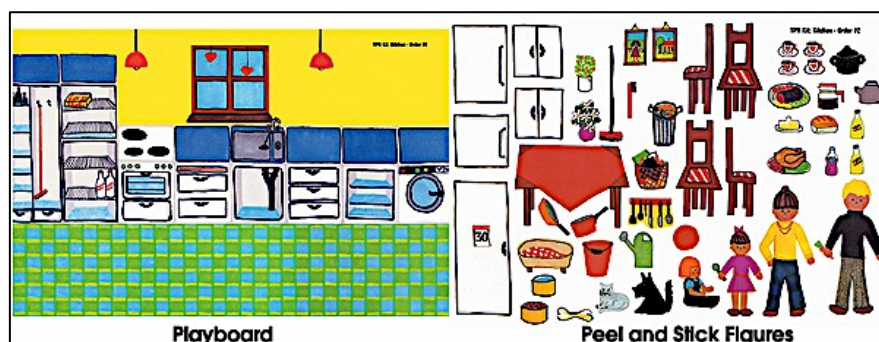
What do you think?

5. Let's find out what everyone thinks about Total Physical Response. The textbook on page 113 asks several questions for reflection. First, **choose one question** that you want to discuss with your classmates. Second, **prepare a sample answer** to share with the class.
- a) Does it make any sense to delay the teaching of speaking the target language?
 - b) Do you believe that students should not be encouraged to speak until they're ready to do so?
 - c) Should a teacher overlook certain student errors in the beginning?
 - d) Which, if any of the other principles do you agree with?
 - e) Would you use the imperative to present the grammatical structures and vocabulary of the target language?
 - f) Do you believe it is possible to teach all grammatical features through the imperative?
 - g) Do you think that accompanying language with action aids recall?
 - h) Would you teach reading and writing using Total Physical Response?
 - i) Would you want to adapt any of the techniques of TPR to your teaching situation?
 - j) Can you think of any others you would create that would be consistent with the principles presented here?
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In-Class Activity

6. In this question, you will apply what you have understood about Total Physical Response. You have been asked to teach an **elementary school beginner** language class.

Use one of the resources below to create an **Action Sequence** (see textbook page 112).



Source: <http://www.tpr-world.com/>