

III. COMPREHENSION APPROACH/TPR: Introduction by Diane Larsen-Freeman

1. Meaning in the target language can often be conveyed through actions.
 2. Retention is enhanced when learners respond physically.
 3. Feelings of success and low anxiety facilitate learning.
 4. Listening comprehension comes first. Students will speak when they are ready.
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Video Presentation: Learners' feelings are also given importance in the next method we will see demonstrated. Psychologist James Asher's method, **Total Physical Response**, is being offered as an example of a general approach called the **Comprehension Approach**. The **Comprehension Approach**, as the name suggests, places value on students' understanding the target language, and thus emphasizes the listening skill. Other examples of this approach are Krashen and Terrell's **Natural Approach**, and Winitz' materials, **The Learnables**.

Asher bases his method on the observation that a baby spends many months listening to the people around it long before it ever says a word. The child has the time to try to make sense out of the sounds it hears. No one tells the baby that it must speak. The child chooses to speak when it is ready. Moreover, according to Asher, much of the linguistic input directed to the child contains commands. Look for how Asher's observations about child language acquisition have influenced his approach to second language learning. My colleague, Kathleen Graves, will present **Total Physical Response**.

**[Video Demonstration of Comprehension Approach/Total Physical Response by Kathleen Graves:
See Comprehension Approach/TPR Materials following Commentary.]**

Video Commentary: As we have seen, imperatives can be useful linguistic devices because meaning in the target language can often be conveyed through actions. In addition, retention is thought to be enhanced when learners respond physically.

The teacher's commands do increase in complexity but it's important that she not move too quickly. Students should feel successful as feelings of success and low anxiety facilitate learning. Also, when the students do make an error, correction should be carried out in a non-threatening manner, perhaps by just repeating the command, and giving students an opportunity to self-correct.

From time to time, the teacher changes the order in which she issues commands so students do not memorize fixed routines. She also gives commands which combine previous imperatives in unexpected ways as students need to understand more than the commands used in the training. Besides, novelty is also motivating and can be fun. Language learning is more effective when it's fun.

In the lesson we saw, the students did not do much speaking. They will later, however, when they are ready to do so. They, too, will begin by giving commands. Students are expected to make errors when they first begin speaking. Teachers should be tolerant of them. Work on the fine details of the language should be postponed until students have become somewhat proficient.

This discussion of the **Comprehension Approach** ends the first videotape of this two-videotape series. On the second videotape, you will see demonstrations of **Suggestopedia**, the **Silent Way** and the **Communicative Approach**. Before viewing those demonstrations, however, it might be useful to return to the questions I posed at the outset of this tape:

1. Which techniques or principles, if any, did you find useful?
2. How will you adapt them to your teaching situation?

It is you, after all, who have to make the connection to your own teaching. I wish you well.

[End of Commentary]

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION LESSON PLAN

Teaching Points

1. Vocabulary:

Nouns: sponge, broom, vacuum cleaner, brush, dustcloth, sink, kitchen, floor, rug, counter, bookshelves, living room

Verbs: wipe, sweep, vacuum, scrub, dust

Adverbs: carefully, quickly

2. Structures:

Imperative + Object: Wipe the counter, etc.

Tell someone to Verb + Object: Tell Hassan to scrub the sink, etc.

Tell someone to stop + Gerund + Object: Tell Hassan to stop scrubbing the sink, etc.

While someone is Verb + ing, Imperative + Object: While Siti is wiping the counter, scrub the sink, etc.

Imperative + someone who + Verb: Point to someone who likes to clean the house, etc.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand the vocabulary presented.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate understanding by responding to single commands and sequences of commands.
3. Students will be able to give commands to their peers and respond to those commands.
4. Students will have fun during the lesson.

Lesson Steps in Sequence

1. The teacher introduces the following items and names them: sponge, dustcloth, vacuum cleaner, broom, brush.

2. The teacher asks for a volunteer to come to the front. She gives the command, "Point to the _____." She and the volunteer point to each item in turn. Then she gives the commands at an increasingly rapid pace, while the student points to the items.
3. The teacher gives individual commands and the whole class points to the items. She links two, and then three, commands together and the students point.
4. The teacher demonstrates the cleaning actions.
5. The teacher asks for a volunteer to come to the front. She names the actions and does them. Then she commands the student to do the actions.
6. The teacher gives the commands to the whole group. The first time she does the commands together with the students, then she has them do the commands without her.
7. The teacher strings two commands together with the word then.
8. The teacher commands individual students to tell other individuals to do one of the cleaning actions.
9. The teacher demonstrates the meaning of quickly and carefully.
10. The teacher commands the students to do one action first quickly, then carefully.
11. The teacher gives two and three commands at a time. The students respond to the commands.
12. The teacher works with small groups, giving them two and three command sequences.
13. The teacher introduces while + present progressive. She commands one student to do a cleaning action. She commands another student to do a different cleaning action while the first student is still doing his/her action.
14. The teacher introduces stop + gerund. She commands a student to tell another student to stop doing an action.
15. The teacher asks, "Who likes to clean the house?" She says, "Raise your hands."
16. The teacher asks, "Who doesn't like to clean the house?" She says, "Raise your hands."
17. The teacher commands the students to point to someone who likes to clean the house and then to someone who doesn't like to clean the house.
18. The teacher writes the vocabulary on the board.
19. The teacher asks if the students have any questions.

20. The teacher hands out a sheet with the vocabulary from that day's lesson.
21. The teacher asks the students to review the vocabulary so that they can give the commands themselves the next day.

TEACHER-TRAINING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE VIDEO

1. Humor is an important part of TPR. What were the sources of humor in the lesson?
2. Why did the teacher introduce the items (sponge, brush, etc.) even though she didn't use them in the commands?
3. How did the teacher know the students had comprehended her commands?
4. Why did the teacher demonstrate the commands first with individuals and then move to the whole group?
5. Why did the teacher do the commands with the students at first and then stop doing them?
6. Why did the teacher write the vocabulary on the board at the end of the lesson instead of at the beginning?
7. Why didn't the teacher have the students repeat the vocabulary after she introduced it?
8. What did the students learn?

TEACHER-TRAINING ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE VIDEO

[Analyzing the Steps]

1. View the lesson once. Work in small groups and try to write out the steps of the lesson in sequence. Make a note of the areas you're not sure about.
2. View the lesson again. After the second viewing, rework your list. Have a discussion about what you missed and why.
3. On subsequent viewings, look for examples of the following:
 - strings of commands
 - mixing the same commands in different sequences
 - a novelty command (the combination of two previously heard items into a command the teacher does not demonstrate)
 - one student performing a command
 - a small group of students performing commands

[Peer Teaching]

1. Make a list of the vocabulary and grammatical structures covered and how they were introduced.
2. Working in groups of three, look over the Lesson Steps in Sequence. One of you in the group “teaches” Steps 1 through 8, as you remember it from the video. When you have finished, discuss the parts that were difficult to do and why. View the video again, Steps 1 through 8. Discuss any differences between the way it was done on the video and the way you did it.
3. Follow the same procedures for Steps 9 through 12, with another one in your group “teaching” the lesson. Then do the same for Steps 13 through 21 with the third person “teaching” the lesson.
4. Plan a lesson similar to the one on the video. In this lesson you are going to introduce a morning routine (from getting out of bed to leaving the house in the morning, for example). Choose five different actions, then decide how you would introduce the vocabulary associated with the actions and the sequence in which you would introduce the commands. Choose one other grammatical structure to teach rather than imperative + object.
5. Working in small groups, “teach” each other your lessons.

EXTENSIONS OF THE DEMONSTRATION LESSON: INTERACTIVE/COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES

[Pair Work with Cards]

1. Put the commands from the day’s lesson on small cards, and give one set of cards to each pair or small group of students. Or dictate the commands so the students can make their own sets of cards.
2. One student in each pair gives the commands; the other student does the action. Then the students take turns giving the commands.

[Eliciting New Commands]

1. Ask the students to think of other cleaning actions and list them on the board.
2. Tell the students to demonstrate the actions listed: Command the students to do the actions, following the procedures used in the previous lesson.

[Guessing the Actions]

1. Command individual students in the large group to do one of the actions on the list. Call on individual students or on the whole class to describe the action being done. For example: “Siti is wiping the counter.”
2. Divide the class into small groups and have each student take a turn acting out one of the actions.

The other members of the group guess and describe what their classmate is doing. For example: "You're scrubbing the sink."

3. Then have five students come to the front of the class. Command each of them to do a different action, and to continue doing it. Give commands like the following to the class:

- Point to someone who's scrubbing the sink.
- Point to the person who's scrubbing the sink, etc.

[Comparing Chores]

1. Ask the students to think of all the different chores that need to be done around the house. As they tell you, write them on the board.
2. From this general list, ask each person to make a list of the five chores they don't mind doing, and a list of the five chores they hate doing.
3. Divide the class into small groups and tell the students to compare their lists. Which chores are the top three in each category? Ask each group to report to the class.
4. Have the students write a list of all the different chores that need to be done at home. They should work in pairs and discuss who does which chores, and how often.

[End of Lesson Materials]