

USING TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE TO TEACH VOCABULARY

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ANNOTATION

TPR stands for Total Physical Response and was created by Dr. James J Asher. It is based upon the way that children learn their mother tongue. Parents have 'language-body conversations' with their children, the parent instructs and the child physically responds to this. This article discusses methods of using total physical responses in teaching vocabulary.

Keywords: Total physical response, physically interact, strategy, mental connection, meaningful movement.

INTRODUCTION

Learning vocabulary is an important matter for children, especially for students in Elementary School. When teaching vocabulary, the teachers only writes it on the whiteboard. Then, students rewrite the vocabulary on their notebook and they should repeat the words or vocabulary after the teachers say. Actually, it has the good aims for students. But, it can make the students get bored. Boredom makes the students only repeat without understanding of what they said and the vocabulary is forgotten. However, the teachers also get many problems in getting new vocabulary. The students are easy to forget the vocabulary. Because of the reasons, Elementary School teachers need appropriate methods to teach the students. Aimed at making the students do not feel bored when they study in the class and cannot forget the vocabulary easily. So, the teachers use Total Physical Response (TPR) to teach the students of Elementary School. TPR is one of methods of teaching language by using physical activity to respond a command. TPR is linked to the "trace theory" of memory in psychology which holds that the more often on the more intensively a memory connection is traced, the stronger the memory association will be recalled. There are several advantages of the use of TPR. Firstly, language learning will be easy to understand by children if associated with physical activity on a particular word and they tend to like physical response than verbal response. Secondly, in learning vocabulary, the actions or activities can help the children for remembering vocabulary and strengthening the connection in the brain. Thirdly, TPR that involves game like movements make the children became active, effective, and creates a positive mood.

Total Physical Response is a strategy in which students make connections to words, phrases, and sentences by creating physical movements to define them. TPR is a way to physically interact with language and to solidify and demonstrate comprehension. The strategy can be used to learn new vocabulary words, to demonstrate comprehension of words, phrases and sentences, to demonstrate the understanding of a sequence of sentences, or even the progression of events in a story. Physically interacting with language requires mental connections that trigger memory and increase recall; so, with the repetition of meaningful movement with hearing and/or reading words, students improve their ability to recall particular words and definitions.

Struggling students are many times hesitant to engage during instructional times because of their challenges, challenges like sitting still, paying attention, or understanding. TPR allows struggling learners time and ample opportunities for physical activity, repetition of content/concepts, and mirroring of others, all of which improve outcomes for struggling learners. Having more time and being allowed to mirror others reduce anxiety and the chances of embarrassment for students who struggle to respond in front of others.

Physical activity stimulates blood circulation thus oxygenation in the body. With an increased blood and oxygen flow, students are more alert and attentive. Also, physical activity reduces the chances of students becoming sleepy, bored, or “zoned out.” TPR is engaging not only to students who are physically present in the classroom but to students who are participating in virtual, synchronous learning as well. When videos are activated, students and teachers can see each other create physical movements to define words and concepts. They can respond to each other’s physical definitions, mimic others, and engage in learning.

When using Total Physical Response in the classroom, a proper teaching cycle should be used; after following the cycle of teaching new language, words, or concepts, a variety of games can be played with the strategy. The proper teaching cycle to use when employing TPR starts with preparation. The teacher gathers the vocabulary words, phrases, sentences, and/or passages that allow for enactment. The words and phrases should include highly descriptive nouns that are representable by actions, verbs that can be physically shown, or language that is not abstract. After preparation the teacher models by stating the word, phrase, etc. and then by creating a physical movement to represent or define that which was stated. Next the teacher asks a sampling of students to represent the language using their own physical movements. Following the teacher’s model and the student volunteers’ models, all students are asked to participate or engage. The teacher repeats the word, phrase, sentence, etc. and all students define it or demonstrate meaning by creating physical movements to match.

Up to this point, the interaction with language has included auditory stimuli, which is the verbally stated language, and physical stimuli, which is the definitions through motion. Now that students have made connections to the language and can demonstrate their understanding, teachers should write the words, phrases, sentences, etc. for students to see. The teacher or the group reads and then physically responds to show meaning. By writing and reading the content, visual stimuli and visual literacy is involved. Repetition and practice with the same words and language will increase the longevity of the learning, so it should be done consistently.

As spiral review or even formative assessment opportunities, the teacher can create games using TPR. For example, the teacher and students can play “Simon Says” by having the teacher call a word, phrase, etc. and the students only physically define it if the teacher said, “Simon Says.” Another game using the TPR strategy is called “Circles.” It’s similar to an old childhood favorite, “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Students make a circle around the teacher. The teacher calls out a word and students act out the meaning of the word; however, the last student to respond is “out.” This is repeated until there is one student remaining and that student becomes the winner.

Teaching and learning can be challenging due to differences in people: different languages, different learning style preferences, different intelligences, different attention spans and memories, and the list goes on. Finding a strategy that addresses many needs and improves

the learning outcomes of many different learners is golden; Total Physical Response is golden. So you have been aware that , Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method of teaching language or vocabulary concepts by using physical movement to react to verbal input. The process mimics the way that infants learn their first language, and it reduces student inhibitions and lowers stress.

LITERATURES

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