

Language Instruction

POCKET

PROMPTS

Adapted from:

I Speak English by Ruth J. Colvin
Teaching Adults: An ESL Resource Book
by Laubach Literacy Action
ESL Handbook and Trainer's Guide by
Evelyn Renner

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The Communicative Approach

- ❖ Stresses comprehension.
- ❖ Uses all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, writing.
- ❖ Encourages use of authentic, real-life material and vocabulary.
- ❖ Is learner centered and directed.
- ❖ Is collaborative—the students are involved in all parts of the lesson.

Note: Honor silence. Allow students time to think and formulate responses. See that more advanced or vocal students do not override those needing additional encouragement and confidence building.

Gestures



Listen



Stop / Wait



**Come on
Now you**

TPR – Total Physical Response

- ❖ Comprehension and retention are increased by employing sensory cues and active participation.
- ❖ Even lowest level learners can experience success by understanding and carrying out commands.
- ❖ Helps in creating a safe learning environment as students can be involved before they are comfortable speaking.

Example: Using ball or selected object with appropriate actions and repetition.

Teacher – “[Name], catch the ball.”

“[Name], throw the ball to me.”

“[Name], throw the ball to [Name].”

COMMANDS

Directing Student to Action

Stand up.	Turn around.
Sit down.	Stop.
Walk.	Come here.

Point to	the door.	the floor.
	the table.	the book.
	the window.	the pen.

Touch	your nose.
	your finger.
	your hand.
	your head.

Pick up	the book.
	the red book.
	the black book.

SUBSTITUTION DRILL

Simple

Substitute one word in a sentence using an appropriate action for comprehension.

Here's a book.

Here's a chair.

Here's a pen.

I'm sitting.

You're sitting.

We're sitting.

Write your name.

Write my name.

Write his name.

Where is the coffee?

Where is the spoon?

SUBSTITUTION DRILL

Change only one element at a time.

Make sure lesson is clear before moving to another type of change.

I'm	eating. reading. thinking.	
You're	carrying	the bag.
They're		the bags.
He's	reading	a book.
She's		a recipe.
I'm	eating	my lunch.
We're		our dinner.
It's	hot dark	outside. inside.

SUBSTITUTION DRILL

Complex

After giving a basic sentence, give only the cue word for substitution.

T — "Maria is walking to school."

S — " Maria is walking to school."

T — "running"

S — "Maria is running to school."

T — "work"

S — "Maria is running to work."

T — "Juan"

S — "Juan is running to work."

TRANSFORMATION DRILL

Positive to Negative

(holding up pen)

T — "This is a pen."

S — "This is a pen."

(holding up book and shaking head)

T — "This is not a pen."

S — "This is not a pen."

T — "Josefino is happy."

S — "Josefino is happy."

T — "Not."

S — "Josefino is not happy."

RESPONSE DRILL

Confidence and independence are fostered by presenting real life scenarios.

T — "I'm eating dinner."

S — "I'm eating dinner."

T — "What are you doing?"

S — "I'm eating dinner."

T — "José is in the kitchen."

S — "José is in the kitchen."

T — "Where is José?"

S — "José is in the kitchen."

Have students question and respond to each other.

SENTENCE COMBINING

1. Teacher says two short sentences.

T — "The coffee is hot."

"The coffee is strong."

2. Student repeats.

S — "The coffee is hot."

"The coffee is strong."

3. Teacher gestures to combine them and says,

T — "The coffee is hot and strong."

4. Student repeats.

S — "The coffee is hot and strong."

Once student is comfortable, this can be simplified as follows:

5. T — "The coffee is hot. The coffee is strong." (gesturing to combine)

6. S — "The coffee is hot and strong."

CHAIN DRILL

Sitting in a circle, conversation moves from left to right or right to left

#1 — "My name is Sally." (turning to neighbor) "What's your name?"

#2 — "My name is Agnes." (turning to neighbor) "What's your name?"

#1 — "I'm from New York State. Where are you from?"

#2 — "I'm from Puerto Rico. Where are you from?"

#1 — "I like to play cards. What do you like to do?"

#2 — "I like to cook. What do you like to do?"

#3 — "I like to work on my car. What do you like to do?"

BACKWARD BUILDUP

If student has trouble repeating a complete sentence as modeled, start by using the last phrase of the sentence.

He starts/ to work/ at six o'clock/ on Monday morning.

T — "... on Monday morning."

S — "... on Monday morning."

T — "... at six o'clock on Monday morning."

S — "... at six o'clock on Monday morning."

T — "... to work at six o'clock on Monday morning."

S — "... to work at six o'clock on Monday morning."

T — "He starts to work at six o'clock on Monday morning."

RESTATEMENT

Ask students to restate a sentence, using the appropriate words.

T — "Tell me that you are enjoying your dinner."

S — "I am enjoying my dinner."

Giving cue words (e.g. *today, yesterday, tomorrow*), have students restate a sentence using appropriate verb tenses.

T — "Today I'm riding the bus to town."
"Yesterday."

S — "Yesterday I rode the bus to town."

T — "Tomorrow."

S — "Tomorrow I will ride the bus to town."

COMPLETION DRILL

Gives students additional practice in forming correct sentences and provides a chance for creativity.

T — "I went shopping and bought..."

S — "I went shopping and bought five apples."

A small group can continue around the circle in a chain drill with each student adding another piece.

#1 — "I went shopping and bought..."

#2 — "I went shopping and bought five apples."

#3 — "I went shopping and bought five apples and two oranges."

#4 — "I went shopping and bought five apples, two oranges and a box of cereal."

CONTINUING STORY

To encourage more advanced students to speak spontaneously. Teacher begins, then leaves last sentence incomplete, as does each in his turn.

T — "I know an old man. He lives..."

S#1 — "He lives across the street from us. He enjoys watching..."

S#2 — "He enjoys watching the cars going by. He is..."

S#3 — "He is very poor but he always smiles and says hello."

T — "I bought a used car. It is a..."

S#1 — "It is a 1982 Chevy, four door. It's in good condition except..."

S#2 — "Except it has a bit of rust. It also needs..."

S#3 — "It needs some new tires and a muffler."

Minimal Pairs / Contrasting Sounds

Some sounds are difficult for learners to differentiate both in hearing and speaking. Pictures and gestures can be used for games.

thorn	torn
thread	tread
three	tree
thug	tug
bash	batch
cash	catch
mash	match
wash	watch
thought	sought
think	sink
fit	feet
mitt	meat
sit	seat
man	men

Role Play

Dialogues of conversational exchanges between two people. These should represent meaningful situations that learners will encounter.

Keep initial scenarios simple and limit to four lines:

1. "What's this?"
2. "It's an orange."
1. "Do you like oranges?"
2. "Yes, oranges are good."

Possible topics:

- Asking directions ➤ Making change
- Talking to a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist
- Ordering food in a restaurant
- Using phone to make an appointment
- Asking landlord to make repairs
- Returning an item to a store
- Buying stamps or a money order

Activities

Listening—finding key words

Weather report Taped conversation
Popular song Directions

Music

Alphabet song
Row, row, row your boat
Them bones

Tactile

Writing word cards
Playing card or board games
Checkers or dominoes

Sentence unscrambling

Teacher gives word cards or sentence cards in random order, asking students to put them in proper sequence.

Vocabulary Games

Male/Female

boy	girl
man	woman
father	mother
brother	sister
uncle	aunt
son	daughter

Plurals

man	men
boy	boys
foot	feet
woman	women

Opposites

short	tall
thin	fat
strong	weak
sharp	dull

Rationale

These cards are not intended to be a definitive resource for language instruction, but rather a handy reminder and reference tool.

Cards are one-sided to leave room for notes, examples, and expansion of ideas.

Exercises are non-sequential in order.

Mix and match the suggested techniques, exercises, and activities, adapting them to real life situations and vocabulary needed by students.

Teacher's Tool Kit

It is extremely helpful to develop a portable bag of lesson props and realia.

- A few suggestions:
- playing cards
 - clock face
 - play money
 - color cards
 - menu
 - bus schedule
 - phone bill
 - toy phone
 - table setting
 - grocery flyer
 - Shopper newspaper
 - ruler/tape measure
 - measuring cups/spoons
 - plastic food
 - calculator
 - TV Guide
 - calendar
 - picture file
 - camera
 - maps
 - thermometer
 - laundry labels (from clothes)

Use the back of this card to add other items to your list.

Cloze Exercises

Fill-in-the-blank exercises to increase auditory recognition, comprehension and vocabulary skills.

Simple: Offer a choice between two words.

Diego takes his dirty _____
(clothes / dishes)
to the laundromat to wash them.

Open: Various answers are possible.

Once upon a time, there was a _____
Princess who lived in a _____.

Listening: Write out words to a popular song leaving periodic blanks. Provide missing words in a Word Bank. Leave tape and work sheet with student.

Idioms

Many commonly used expressions make no sense when translated literally. Use simple dialogues to introduce ones learners are likely to encounter.

Q. What's wrong with Alejandro?

A. He's broke (caught a cold/lost his temper)

Q. You mean he has no money? (...is sick/
...got very angry)

Other expressions:

- Give me a ring.
- Give up.
- It was a real steal.
- Piece o' cake.
- What a blast.
- He's tied up right now.
- Who will take the heat on this?