

## Class Activities To Support Young Learners Reading English

### *Listening comprehension*

#### Total Physical Response Procedures

1. Introduce important vocabulary
2. Set up
3. Demonstrate actions while you read/say the TPR story.
4. You read/say the TPR story while students do the actions.
5. Repeat
6. Extension – some students can join in as you say the TPR story.

You're a bird.  
You're going to fly.  
You're walking.  
You're running.  
You're running faster.  
You're flapping your wings.  
You're flapping and running.

from *The Children's Response: TPR and Beyond*, Caroline Linse

Support verbal explanations with non-verbal cues, including,

- • Gestures and facial expressions
- • Props, realia, manipulatives, and other concrete materials
- • Visuals, graphs, pictures, and maps
- • Demonstrate or “acting out” the meanings of words (Helena Curtain)

### *Letter Knowledge*

#### Air Writing

- Stand with your back to the class. Make a letter shape in the air moving from left to right. Be sure to model the correct strokes to form each letter.

b d p q m n u w

- Get the students to follow you and write in the air in a similar way.
- Variation: Back Writing - A student draws a letter on another student's back and the first student guesses the letter.

Teach letter names separate from letter sounds.

When writing on the board, use capital letters to write names, places and to begin sentences only. Focus identification and writing instruction on “small” letters.

Practice identifying the letters of the alphabet and numbers randomly. When some sentences are written on the board, ask a student to go to the board and circle a “t,” then ask another student to circle a “d,” and so on. The same activity can be done saying letter sounds rather than the name of a letter.

Use familiar environmental print to introduce whole words and practice beginning letter sounds: Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Safeway, Kuwait, Dubai, hamburger, etc.

## *Phonological Awareness*

### **Play the “I Spy” Game**

“I spy something that begins with *f*. Can you name it?”

Work with students as they guess. For instance, if a student guesses an incorrect object that starts with the same letter, comment on his or her mastery of the letter's sound. If a student guesses an object that does not start with the prescribed letter, gently point out that the initial sound of the object named is not the same as the letter stated. Give hints as necessary. As students become more proficient in identifying initial consonant sounds, change the game to “I spy something that ends with the sound /d/.” Beware that the sounds at the ends of words do not always match the spelling, so focus on sounds, at this stage students do not know how to spell anyway. (from the *EFL Playhouse*)

Explore the sounds of English using rhymes, poems and songs. Focus attention on word families for later decoding ease.

### **Create a Letter**

This activity is good for large classes and those who have access to an outdoor space. Groups must arrange themselves to create the shape of the letter that represents the word's initial sound. Divide students into two or more groups, with at least six students in each group. Then say a word.

Variations of this activity include calling a word and asking students to identify the final consonant sound, the initial or final consonant blend (with larger groups), or the vowel sound, then form it with their bodies. You can also just say the name of a letter of the alphabet and ask them to create it, if they have learned the letter names. (from the *EFL Playhouse*)

## *Knowledge Bases*

### *Content Knowledge*

Read a story aloud showing the pictures as you read. Select stories that extend student knowledge. Ask a group of students to retell the story in the order in which you read it.

- Examine the title of a book helping students connect the title with the storyline.
- Take a “picture walk” through the book. Examine the pictures with the students for clues and information as to what the book is about.
- Use graphic cognitive organizers such as semantic maps, story maps and Venn Diagrams to connect story elements. (Helena Curtain)

### Preview/Review

- Elicit information from students about a topic/concept in their home language putting it into a graphic organizer on the board.
- Teach the lesson in English without code-switching.

- At the end of the lesson, summarize the main points of the lesson or activity in the home language.

Open each English lesson using standard procedures: greetings, talk about the weather, talk about student activities, talk about the news and tell the students about today's lesson. This allows students to prepare ahead to participate in each lesson.

Link stories and/or subject content to student experiences outside of school. Discuss linkages in the home language.

### *Semantic Knowledge*

#### The House Game

Draw a house (animal, spaceship, car) on the board. Ask the students to tell you all the words they know that describe the house or other object.

#### Story Reinactments

Students reenact parts of a story that has been told to them or read aloud. Students assume the role of a character and speak like that character.

Use Cloze type oral activities that leave out a word or phrase.

Explore different means for words and their use in different contexts.

### *Syntactic Knowledge*

Ask students, what the difference is between words, such as: jumps/jumping/jumped. Draw a time line on the board to help students visualize the time difference of the tenses.

### **Sentence Building**

Explain the meaning of the basic phrase and ask students to explain the extension sentences. Provide students with opportunities to say each phrase or sentence focusing on the rhythm and fluency. Ask students if they can think of a word that can be substituted for the repeated word. Guide student awareness about the location of target words within the sentence. (from sChOOL English, Book 1, Lithuania)

<p>Let's <b>draw</b>.</p> <p>Let's <b>draw</b> a picture.</p> <p>Let's <b>draw</b> a bird.</p> <p>Let's <b>draw</b> a girl.</p>
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<p>a <b>room</b></p> <p>the <b>room</b></p> <p>in the <b>room</b></p> <p>She's in the <b>room</b>.</p> <p>My mother is in the <b>room</b>.</p> <p>Let's go to the <b>room</b>.</p>
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<p><b>She</b> is a girl.</p> <p><b>She</b> is my sister.</p> <p><b>She</b> is from Kuwait.</p>
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### **Who, What, When, Where**

- Cards with pictures of people or textbook characters are WHO cards.
- Cards with actions are WHAT cards.

- Cards with time indicators, hours are the easiest are WHEN cards.
- Cards with pictures of places are WHERE cards.

Students select three cards – either WHO, WHAT, WHEN cards or WHO, WHAT, WHERE cards. Then students say or make a sentence to go with the cards selected. Call attention to the place in the sentence of each card and ask if the cards can be rearranged within a sentence.

### *Lexical Knowledge*

Word Wall: A word wall is a systematically organized collection of words displayed in large letters on a wall or other large display place in the classroom. It is a tool to use, not just a display. Word walls provide environmental print with opportunities for group learning and sharing. Teachers should be selective about what words go on the wall, limiting additions to those common words that are used regularly.

Make words very accessible by putting them where every student can see them, writing them in big, black letters, and using a variety of background colors so that the most often-confused words (there, their; what, when) are different colors. Daily -

- see the words
- say the words
- chant the words (snap, clap, stomp, cheer)
- act out the word or show an object associated with the word
- use the word in a sentence
- tell about where and when you have heard the word before
- trace around the words with your finger
- draw or find pictures that illustrate the word
- write the words and check them together with the teacher

### *An Introduction to TEXT*

**Read Aloud!** Identify the title of the book and the author. Show the front of the book and the back of the book.

Use Big Books to model reading behavior and build linkages between the story and visual images.

#### Predictable Books

*Across the Stream* by Mirra Ginsburg

*All Fall Down* by Brian Wildsmith

*I Like Books* by Anthony Browne

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. and Eric Carle  
(Illustrator)

*The Cat Sat on the Mat* by Brian Wildsmith

#### Familiar Stories

*The Gingerbread Boy* by Paul Galdone

*Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young* edited by Jack Prelutsky

Ladybird books