

## REPLACING MAIN-STREAM TEXT WITH SITUATION-ORIENTED MATERIALS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The main concern of this paper will be to explain how the method of Total Physical Response Theory, which is now used alongside other methods and techniques, resulting in its supplementary standard can be used effectively to inculcate a three- dimensional knowledge into Kinder-Garten students focusing on:-*

- 1. The linguistic knowledge*
- 2. The behavioral and social knowledge*
- 3. Inculcating environmental consciousness*

*For this, few limitations of Total Physical Response Theory is considered and the conclusion was that giving more focus on the monotonous main-stream rhymes were partially one of the problems which had a greater impact on the current teaching method. The remedy was found to be the replacement of these rhymes with more effective materials which would serve the purpose of implementing the concept of three-dimensional knowledge mentioned above.*

## INTRODUCTION

The present education system has become capable of reflecting the world, its problems and the solutions to these problems through the lessons learners are taught in higher classes of the age group 12-18. However, this has not permeated into the realm of basic education, like KG classes. These classes include children of the age group 3-5. According to current teaching practices, we view learners of this age group are capable of acquiring linguistic knowledge and others at a greater pace. The theory, “Critical Theory Hypothesis” which was first proposed by neurologist Wilder Penfield and Lamer Roberts in 1959 and popularized by linguist Eric. H. Lenneberg in 1967 supports this by explaining how children of the age group 3-5 are capable of acquiring linguistic and other essential knowledge at a greater pace efficiently. According to the theory, after this age, language acquisition becomes much more difficult and less successful. Therefore, education at this level is effective for long term knowledge and habit formation in kids. Why nurture the branches when you can nurture the roots? For this, the method with which the teaching should be implemented is very important. This is where TPR method for KG students can come into action.

As far as Total Physical Response Theory method is concerned, it is one of the least used method for English language teaching, now-a-days. It has lost its importance to the extent that it is no more a fundamental method, but supplementary. The problem is not within the method itself, but in its implementation. Moreover, Child Psychology explains the learning capability of any child through action, listening and images that forms a greater impact on the cognitive and intellectual development in a child ,than any other means. If that is the case, then there is no need that this the method of Total Physical Response Theory be supplementary anymore.

Through this paper, a new idea or concept called the three-dimensional knowledge is introduced along with the method Total Physical Response Theory which would serve the purpose more efficiently, as, through this, there is a direct pavement into the social, culture and intellectual behavior of a KG student. The three-dimensional knowledge concept introduced deals with three main concerns :-

1. The linguistic knowledge
2. The behavioral and social knowledge
3. Inculcating environmental consciousness.

## THEOROTICAL BACKGROUND

Asher's TPR method is a teaching method that gets outside main-stream applied linguistics for its theoretical basis. It is a language teaching method build around the coordination of speech and action. It attempts to teach language through physical activity. It was developed by James Asher, professor of Psychology at San Jose State University, California.

TPR is linked with the trace theory of memory in psychology. Asher sees first language and second language learning as parallel processes. Second language teaching and learning should reflect the natural processes of first language learning. For this, Asher sees:-

1. Children develop listening competence before they develop the ability to speak.
2. Children's ability to listening comprehension is acquired because children are required to respond physically to spoken languages.

3. If a foundation in listening comprehension is established, speech evolves naturally out of it.

He states that listening should be accomplished by physical movement. Asher bases these assumptions on his belief in the human brain of a bio-program for language, which defines an optimal order for first and second language learning.

TPR requires initial attention to meaning rather than to the form of items. Grammar is thus taught inductively. Asher also suggests that a fixed number of items can be introduced at a time to facilitate ease of differentiation and assimilation. The movement of the body seems to be a powerful mediator for the undertaking organization and storage of macro details of linguistic inputs.

In TPR, learners have the primary role of listener and performer. Their functions are to listen attentively and respond physically to commands. The teacher plays an active and direct role in TPR. The teacher decides what to teach. He or she models and presents the materials. In 2007, he published an article entitled “TPR after forty years: Still A Good Idea”. TPR represents a useful set of techniques and is also compatible with other approaches of teaching.

It is described here about how TPR method can be explored innovatively to create a lively classroom experience. The first step taken would be to replace the idea of relying solely on text books for any kind of knowledge. This would also include the idea of replacing some of the mainstream rhymes which we think has not been effective in creating a practical knowledge other than the knowledge of vocabulary and essence of language. Our aim is to include in children, the following:-

1. Identification of ideas
2. Sense of belonging to one's own environment
3. Right conduct and behavior to any social situation and
4. Personal attitude development

(By social situation, we mean, the problems of current social scenario. Some of them can be the excess pollution, water scarcity etc. The problems doesn't end with these external issues, it extends even to the level of intolerance that are prevalent in the minds of today's world. Such issues are also considered.)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In an article, "Teaching Children Using a Total Physical Response Method: Rethinking" by Handoyo Puji Widodo, says that teaching English for children should be enjoyable, interesting, repetitive and understandable. The article also states that an alternative that can be applied in the classroom is the so-called Total Physical Response Theory. The method tries to introduce some language skills of components in an action in which a teacher serves three roles, an order taker, a model provider, and action monitor in which in which learners serve as models and action performers until they feel ready to speak out.

In another article, "Nursery Rhymes: Foundation for Learning" by Susan Kenney deals with how rhymes work on the student in the areas of their language development, habit formation etc. This inspired us to show how important is the role of rhymes in a student of the 3-8 age group.

## METHOD

Let us evaluate some of the rhymes which can be found in the current curriculum of kindergarten schools across the states of this country. For instance, the rhyme *Ring a Ring o' Roses* is irrelevant to be taught to a KG student in an Indian classroom. Anyone would wonder how such a student would relate to words like “Posies”, “a tissue”, or “buttercup”! Other than that, this poem wouldn't have made any sense to this child. It wouldn't have been relatable to anyone of us reading this, either.

As another example, the rhyme *London Bridge is Falling Down* was found recurring in most of the syllabi which is went through. What impact what so ever is made in the minds of an Indian student when he repeats the line “London bridge is falling down” after the teacher? Who would he think “the fair lady” is? The relevance of this rhyme to this child in any sense is questioned. Few more examples can be laid. Rhymes like *I Had a Little Nut*, *Hot Cross Buns*, *Yankee Doodle Went to Town* etc are those. Therefore we felt a need for “replacement”.

Here is the relevance of this approach. The attempt is not to challenge the prevailing norms but to suggest a way of making pre-primary education which is the basic education standard. This could be made more effective by bringing few changes and adopting new methods which can be collaborated with the TPR method.

For this, few rhymes which would serve this purpose are introduced. The characteristics to these selected rhymes are already discussed above. The concept of three-dimensional knowledge is illustrated here, which would cover the areas of this new method through a few rhymes, such as, *When Your Mommy Tells You Something*, *Eat Healthy Food Every Day*, *Good*

*manners, I Don't Walk Alone, The Clean Up Trash Song, Mother Earth, Save Water, The More We Get Together, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, We are Indians, Bold and Free etc.*

For instance, let us take the poem, *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* .

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Its very easy to do

It's simple to remember

Recycle what you use!

Separate glass and paper

Separate plastic and tin

Then put them their places

In the recycling bin!

As this poem is replaced, the aim is not to keep this rhyme limited to new words in a text, like those already existing rhymes. Here we apply Asher's TPR method to bring in the three dimensional knowledge concept. Let us see how we can do it.

Our first step is to create a "set up". By this, is meant, to create an environment where this rhyme can be applied. Let us say, the set up is to litter few glass, paper, plastic and tin wastes keeping recycling bins. The teacher would now take control over the class and make the students stand in a circle around this. Now the teacher would depict the rhyme by picking up the waste and putting it in the right bin while singing the rhyme. Now he / she brings in the participation of the students by volunteering them do the same. This is repeated twice. The next time, when the

teacher sings the rhyme, students alone will do the task singing along with her. As a final stage, the student are revised of what they have done.

Now, let us take another example

Water we drink, and water we water we use,

To wash our vessels, our clothes and shoes,

With water we bathe, and wash our hair,

But what do we do, when it isn't there ?

Shut the tap when you don't need it,

Don't let waste overflow

When you learn to save water,

You will have enough and more.

This rhyme is dealt with more of a situation oriented approach where children are brought outside the class for the sake of creating the environment. Children are taken to the school washroom area. Here again the teacher washes a lunch box towel and her hands while singing the rhyme and focuses on closing the tap each time to be the important lesson to learn. The same can be repeated for few days till the children learn the rhyme. This way, the children catch the habit of using adequate amount of water and closing the tops after use when the teacher can also demonstrate the need of saving water in class hours as part of the revision.



Now let us see how three dimensional knowledge concepts has been implemented through these rhymes. Students are now capable of handling the above situations mentioned in the rhymes at any point of time. An awareness is successfully created among the students for the need of waste management which is a culture that is in the verge of need for alteration in an India scenario where waste is been dumped anywhere and everywhere. Once they memorize the rhymes, language is acquired involuntarily where they at least learn five-six nouns and verbs each, for any replaced rhymes.

As we conclude, the method mentioned in the paper, is suggested as an approachable method for Kindergarten students since it can work on the knowledge of the student in a three-dimensional angle and create a more friendly classroom environment than it is today. The finding that TPR could have a greater impact on the memory capacity of the child is a bonus to using this approach. Our finding is based on the fact that anything acted out than said could have a greater impact on the habit development of a young child than merely learning few words and phrases byheart, which might not make much sense to the child. The choice of rhymes for replacing the main-stream rhymes is based purely on the three-dimensional knowledge concept which is introduced through this paper. TPR method was found to be the apt method to implement this way of teaching for a kindergarten student.

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