

# **Extension Activities**

## **for the TPR Storytelling classroom**

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Regarding these extension activities -- I did fewer and fewer of them each year. The more I did TPR Storytelling (and the better I got at TPR Storytelling) the less appealing "other stuff" was and the less I needed "fillers."

When I first began using TPR Storytelling I did lots of "other stuff" because I was doing TPR Storytelling too fast!

Some of these ideas were actually invented by somebody else. Sorry if I forgot to give credit for something!

*Susan Gross, 2004*

### **ACTIVITIES BASED ON TEACHER-GIVEN INPUT**

A. Teacher (or student) tells a variation, students draw it

*Lesson plan suggestion: Partners re-tell*

B. Teacher tells a variation, groups each draw one episode on white board (or butcher paper or cling sheet.) Each group then retells the episode they illustrated.

C. Teacher tells a variation, individuals draw

*Lesson plan suggestion: partners retell*

D. Teacher retells the PMS, but the students all act it out at the same time (Elaine Carey's idea)

E. Dictée: Teacher tells a variation and students write it.

### **ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT CREATIVITY (This is **OUT**put, so limit the amount of time.)**

A. Sequential story: Each student may add one sentence (or 20 seconds of talking, whatever you prefer) to create a story in class. To make it more interesting, require certain grammatical/vocabulary items. Students then vie to see who can do the most creative way to incorporate the required item.

*Lesson plan suggestion: each student stands in order while one student tries to retell the whole thing from the beginning!*

B. Each student brings in two or three pictures (cut out of a magazine, hand-drawn, photographs, etc.) Each group looks at all their pictures and

then picks 4. They put the photos in order and make up a story so that the pictures illustrate their story.

*Lesson plan suggestion: for when you are tired!*

C. Partners invent a new story using current vocabulary, draw the story and ask others to act it out

*Lesson plan suggestion: Excellent substitute day lesson plan!*

D. Individuals draw a new story, or complete a story (for homework)

*Lesson plan suggestions: Telephone (SEE BELOW)*

*Nobel Prize for Literature (SEE BELOW)*

. **Telephone** = Homework was to draw an original story. In class, all partners follow this scenario: A tells his story to B. Then B tells A's story, thereby "earning" possession of A's story. B tells her story to A. Then A tells B's story thereby "earning" possession of B's story. Both A and B go to the black board (now holding each other's stories) where it says "I need a partner" As other partners go to blackboard, they partner up with the waiting kids and repeat the procedure. But when the procedure is repeated, notice that NOBODY is telling his or her own story, but instead is telling the PARTNER's story. Again each student "earns" a new story by successfully telling it.

OK now if you get how this works, here is what is wonderful: All the kids tell lots of DIFFERENT stories, and at their own speed. As soon as a partnership is finished, they just go to the board and get new partners, so nobody has to wait for EVERYBODY finish... the whole class is talking the whole time! And they really get a kick out of hearing different stories.

*Classbuilding suggestion: I conclude this activity by asking kids to tell a story they heard which they thought was good.*

**Nobel Prize for Literature** = In groups of four, they all show and tell their work. Each group of four selects best (Pulitzer Prize.) Then all Pulitzer winners show and tell their stories to the entire class. Shy kids can select a spokesman to talk for them. Class votes on the Nobel Prize winner.

E. Teams create and illustrate a new story, cut the pictures apart, scramble them. Each team rotates to a new table and tries to reconstruct and then retell the story of that table.

*Lesson plan suggestion: The "original authors" almost always want to tell the story as they had conceived it!*

F. Put all the words in a big bowl or hat. Pull out 12 and list them on the board. Each group must create a story using as many words as possible. When they present the story, the groups have a narrator(s) and actors. If they use 8 words, they get applause. If they use 9 words, they get applause and cries of "Bravo!" If they use 10 or more words, they get a standing ovation with stomping feet and applause and cries of "Bravo!"

*Lesson plan suggestion: for when you are tired!*

G. Videotape the kids acting out stories that they invented! Great to watch later.

### **ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE CHAPTER BOOK (LICT, LICTMore):**

A. Re-tell chapter story from illustrations, but embellish it. Many students offer suggestions so that the chapter story becomes very long and convoluted.

*Lesson plan suggestion: Re-tell with all embellishments*

B. Use individual frames for listening section of a test.

C. What happens next? Imagine one or two more episodes of the story.

D. When students do the exercises in book for homework, they must write three different possible answers! (Helps them see how to make creative stories.)

E. Story strips in LICTMore:

- Use for the speaking part of test.
  - Put students in pairs, sitting back to back. One student describes a story strip (or single frame) for partner to draw.
- Use individual frames for listening section of a test.

F. Versions A & B

- Ask for volunteers to spontaneously retell a frame.
- Elaborate them. Student narrates with all the elaborations
- 15-second sequential retells.
- Back to back partner descriptions

G. Drawings of beginning and end, students fill in. (LICTMore)

- Partners tell to each other
- Copy and use them for your own creative ideas – readings for tests, dictations, etc!

H. 10 mini-stories at end of chapter in LICT

- Students each illustrate one. Randomly distribute the drawings. Student has to guess which one it is.
- Translate them like readings.
- Embellish and use like "Student creative activity."

## **CLASSBUILDING ACTIVITY**

**(Classbuilding is not for acquisition; it is for creating atmosphere.)**

A. Students pair up and interview each other for about 5 mins. You may want to prepare questions, or topics, ahead of time. Each student then introduces partner. Allow ample time for sharing, 20 mins+, maybe.

B. Week-long classbuilding idea that I stole from someone:

Give each student 3 post-it sticky notes. They write something that they didn't tell about themselves. (use different pens and disguise their writing.) for example, they could tell a favorite food, movie, book; tell about their vacation, etc.

Collect all the stickies. Next day have students' names listed (or pictures) on bulletin board and below each name, post the stickies randomly. Have stickies posted by when kids return next day.

Explain that for the next few days, as students are coming and going, if they finish something early etc., they should go to board and remove any stickies that are below their name **if** they did not write them. Ask them to try to match them with the right person. If someone has correctly placed one, they are to leave it below their name. **HOWEVER**, they may not move their own stickie below their own name!

Then allow some time, at end of week, for tying up what was discovered.

## **WRITING ACTIVITIES**

1. Do an "Invention" on overhead. You write, they copy, you do lots of pop-up explanations and questions about the language.

- quiz next day: T/F or short answer
- Following the "class invention", instead of just a T/F quiz that you make up for each class, have the students (using their own copies of the story) write 10 sentences in English about the story: 5 of them true, and 5 of them false.

2. Try this with the timed writings: At the end of the allotted time, have them turn to a partner and read their stories aloud. The partner writes a summary of the story in English.

## **ACTIVITIES BASED ON READINGS**

A. Julie Baird's game

Kids are divided into teams of 2 or 3 people per team. Using cards with the students' names on them, I call on a student and ask a question. That student has 15 seconds to answer the question. S/He can ask the rest of the team and/or flip through the book to find the answer. That student must give me the answer, not a teammate. If that student answered the question correctly in German, the team received 2 points. If it was correct in English, the team received 1 pt.

To make sure the questions were random, I typed them up before hand and alphabetized the questions. That way the kids couldn't follow along in their book. They had to listen to the question and think.

B. Answer questions as fast as you can in 30 seconds game. I typed up questions from the book but in order, put them on the overhead, set the timer for 30 seconds and began asking! Students said, "Pass" if they wanted to go to the next question. We all counted to see how many they got right. As we went around the room, we went back to the beginning of the question list and started over. It didn't matter because it was just for fun and a review of the story line "so far."

C. Act out a chapter of the story while teacher reads in target language. You **MUST** do this with the truly exciting passages! Use props and make the "hams" act with melodramatic acting!

D. Write the next chapter.

### **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

1. Use famous artwork (posters, slides, in a power point) as the center of a class discussion. You can use them from the first day to teach:

Body parts (What body parts do we see? What body parts are MISSING?)

Colors

Weather

Emotion words

TPR words

Animals

Descriptions

2. Show a famous painting. Students look at it for a minute or two, then they do a timed writing based on the picture. They may put themselves into the painting, make up a story about it, etc. They always want to know about the title, artist, etc after having invested their own energy into the painting!

3. Cooking. I did it TPR the day ahead using imaginary food. Then on the day we went to the kitchen, we actually cooked while I told them the directions in French. We made crêpes, omelettes, croque monsieur, diabolos, mousse au chocolat in class.

4. Cultural simulation of the metro in Paris. I used different colored streamers to represent different "lines" and taped the names of the stations along the streamers. They could take the metro by moving along the streamer and could only change lines when the station was taped on two streamers.

5. Cultural simulation of a visit to Paris. I began with a simulated plane ride to France and then a simulated *bateau mouche* ride. Two students holding posters of the sites glided by on the right and the left to simulate the scenery gliding by! I was the tour guide and told about each monument, its history, significance, etc IN FRENCH. Then we learned the map of Paris and the monuments.

6. Geography lesson. Map of France drawn on a shower curtain – lay this on the floor. During the first couple of weeks of level 1, have student stand on, sit on, dance on, turn around on, jump on different locations. Then ask question (TPR style) about who is doing what and where. Lots of language acquisition!

7. Show slides and talk about them: of cities, countries, cultures you have visited, of famous art work.

8. Use realia: WalMart newspaper inserts from Canada, for example. Menus, hotel brochures, tourist brochures, etc. Ask questions, do written or orally.

9. Show movies. Begin with short segments so that it is comprehensible and replay the same segment (repetition!) The video series "15 Minutes" and "Muzzy" and a few minutes of the video that accompanies the typical textbook work well for level one.

10. Songs. I gave them the lyrics and the translation of the lyrics. Sometimes they had to gesture the lyrics, sometimes not. I always tested the songs (vocabulary.)

## **CLASS DISCUSSIONS**

A.. Talk to the kids, discuss their weekends and their lives.

B. Discuss topics, ranging from serious to weird. My best-ever discussion happened when I asked my kids, "What is a dog's worst nightmare?"

C. Teacher tells about “Dear Abby” or another controversial topic. Get kids to take a position and then defend it.

D. Discuss topics of current interest (like a news story from “Good Morning, America.”). It is important for them to hear you describing topics of importance so that they hear different types of discourse.

## **READING ACTIVITIES**

A. Free voluntary reading. Build a classroom library. Give students time to read whatever they like.

B. Kindergarten Day. One of my favorite teaching practices is called “kindergarten day.”

I read a children’s book to my class just as was done in elementary school. This activity is a sound practice both affectively and pedagogically.

Affectively, the act of reading a children’s book out loud encourages the teacher to smile, to look in the eyes of her students, to speak to them with a warm voice. The students can sit on the floor if they wish, and on occasion we even treat ourselves to milk and cookies. The pretty colors, delightful illustrations, and large print of children’s books are inviting and make the story accessible.

Pedagogically, we must keep uppermost in our minds that language is acquired from comprehensible input. Any activity that provides comprehensible input is a good use of class time. Children’s books provide a rich, varied, and interesting source of language input. The teacher assures comprehensibility of the story by asking questions about the pictures, about the characters, and about the story line. I blend these questions with more questions about my students, their attitudes, their preferences, and their predictions about the story.

## **JUST FOR FUN Improv ideas**

A. "No You Didn't!"

Someone is chosen to tell a story, and they begin it like any other story, but someone else in the group is supposed to disagree with them and they just keep trying to tell the story with the person's interruptions. For example:

(s)toryteller: So, last weekend I went to this concert....

(i)nterrupter: No you didn't.

(s): Okay, so it wasn't a concert, it was a play.

(i): No it wasn't.

(s): Okay, so it was a puppet show (interrupter is silent, so the storyteller can continue). I was only there because my mom asked me to take my cousin....

(i): No she didn't.

(s): Oh yeah, it was my cousin who begged me to take him.

(i): No it wasn't.

(s): Fine, so I really wanted to see the puppet show! Anyway, several people came with me....

(i): No they didn't.

(s): Actually, I went alone so that no one would know that I went....

#### B. "What are you doing?"

The first person begins by pantomiming an action (ex: brushing hair). The person to their left says "What are you doing?" and the original person responds with something that they are not doing (such as "eating popcorn.") The second person then begins to pantomime that action, and the third person asks them what they are doing, and soon. For example:

1. (brushing hair)
2. "What are you doing?"
1. "Eating popcorn"
2. (begins pretending to eat popcorn)
3. "What are you doing?"
2. "Taking off my shoes"
3. (begins pantomime)
4. "What are you doing?"
3. "Watching a movie"

Anyone that pauses or repeats something that someone else has said is taken out of the circle, and the game continues until you've got one person.

#### C. "Channel Surfing"

Three or four students in front of room on chairs. Another student faces them with a "remote" in his hand. He points to one of the students in front of the room and "clicks" the remote. That student pretends to be something on TV. The student with the remote then clicks on another student, and so forth.

D. Games. There are countless games for foreign language classes. PLEASE evaluate the value of a game before deciding to use it. Does it actually promote acquisition or is it just an entertaining way to spend minutes of class time?