

Ask-a-Story

Incorporate PictureTalk with the Ask-a-Story Powerpoint. Available for download at TPRS Books in the free section.

1. Make a statement

The first procedure is to make a statement. After making a statement, the teacher prompts the class to respond with an expression of interest. The expression of interest can be a simple “ooohhh”. Since most classes need constant reminders to respond with expressions of interest, one effective prompt is to give them a visual cue, such as raising your hands, which reminds the students to say “oooohhhhh”.

2. Ask a question with known answer

The second procedure is to ask a question where the answer is known. For these types of questions, the students’ role is to answer the questions out loud and chorally. As the students answer the questions, we have evidence of comprehension. As the students answer the questions chorally, the teacher’s role is to verify the answer. To verify the answer means to repeat the correct answer after the students have answered the question chorally.

3. Ask a question with unknown answer

The third procedure is to ask a question where the answer is unknown. For these types of questions, the students’ role is to guess the answer. The teacher encourages the students to suggest “surprise” answers. The teacher either selects a suggestion of his choice or tells the students the answer.

Guesses should be in the Target Language. The lone exception is English proper nouns. If the teachers asks the students a question and they do not have the language ability to guess in the Target Language, then the teacher will provide the answer.



READ & DISCUSS

A key for the **Read and Discuss** step to be successful is 100% comprehensibility for students. Operating with the mentality of teaching one sentence at a time versus teaching multiple sentences all at once, leads to feelings of confidence towards the new language in students. When asking questions, teachers must pay attention to how many students are responding chorally to questions and how loud the responses are. If the class is understanding at a high level, then the students will be able to answer questions with strong responses and engagement. Conversely, choral responses will be weak in the absence of comprehension. Going slowly and focusing on clear expectations during reading will result in strong comprehension and choral responses.



Go slowly during reading in the following ways:

- Provide space between words.
- Circle information students are not understanding.
- Write unknown words on the board.
- Point and Pause while asking questions.

Even during the reading phase, vocabulary may need to be limited in order to focus on circling the vocabulary, in order to yield strong choral responses. Your primary goal is 100% comprehension.

"The best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is read extensively in it."

-Christine Nuttal, 1996

Read and Discuss Techniques

There are many things a teacher can do with reading in the classroom for **Read and Discuss**. Here are some techniques to go over the reading while providing input for students.

Discussion of content in the story

While the class reads the story with the teacher, the teacher can pause to ask comprehension questions about the story in Spanish. This is meant to highlight the target guide words. This could also include predictions of what they might think is going to happen or interpretations of the content in the story by asking why questions where students have to infer the answer for higher level thinking.



Discussion of students

While the class reads the story with the teacher, the teacher can pause to ask questions about the students based on the language in the story about the students. This could also be used as a technique to build interest for when the interest in the reading is waning.

"People acquiring a second language have the best chance for success through reading."

-Stephen Krashen

Creation of parallel characters

While the class reads the story with the teacher, the teacher can compare and contrast him or herself, students from the class, famous people, or fictional characters with the characters in the reading. This can help a reading to become more interesting when the teacher notices that more circling is necessary for students to increase their processing speed.

Dramatization

While the class reads the story, the teacher can also act out the story to build interest and help the students to understand the information from the reading.

Volleyball Translation

- a. Students sit in pairs in groups of 4 or 6. (A class of ten would have one group of six and one group of four.) Assign each student a number within the group. Students will change partners within their groups when you tell them to rotate. When they rotate, only the students with odd numbers rotate.
- b. Students read/translate in the following manner in pairs. Student A reads sentence one in the Target Language. Student B translates sentence one into English and then reads sentence two in the Target Language. Student A then translates sentence two into English and then reads sentence three in the Target Language. They continue this pattern for about 2 or 3 minutes. Once the time expires, the teachers says, "rotate" and all of the students who have odd numbers rotate within their groups so that everyone now has a new partner.
- c. With his/her new partner, each person indicates how far s/he read with the previous partner. The partner who read less establishes the starting point of the new pair.
- d. This process continues until the slowest students have finished the reading at least once.
- e. For volleyball translation, all of the short readings are treated as one story. This means that when a pair finishes the first reading, they go onto the second lectura breve.

When they finish all of the short readings they start over.

