

## The First Month in a Comprehensible Input Classroom - Level 1

*Our goal for the first month should be to establish using 90% target language usage and to teach our students how to play the comprehensible input game by coaching them*  
*Phrase of the month - "Good language learners watch and listen"*

### **Essential materials:**

- question word posters
  - <http://martinabex.com/2012/08/09/posters/>
  - <https://teachforjune.com/resources/>
- phrases on the wall that will allow for expressing emotional responses to statements made by the teacher
  - <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/moretprs/info>
- name tags (markers, card stock/construction paper)
- some type of reading to work backwards from

### **The first month big ideas**

- we are setting up ourselves for success for the rest of the year
- we are teaching the kids how to play the comprehensible input game - COACH THEM!!
- everything we do is building up to be able to run our classrooms in the target language
- have an end in mind. What reading are we working up too? Is it a novel? Is it a reading that you created from the vocabulary in your text book? Is it a short story? An embedded reading?

### **The first month activities**

- A lot of TPR (not too much vocabulary and lots of new combinations)
- Daily Personalized Questions and Answers for the specific students
- A song or a commercial or a dance (exposure to authentic language)
- Do skits with TPR
- Tell stories using the target vocabulary words

### **Day 1 - goal: Let the kids hear a lot of the target language in a comprehensible manner. GO SLOWLY, SPEAK CLEARLY.**

- I like to write key vocabulary and structures on the board in both languages. Here are some of my key structures: stands up, sits down, looks at, smiles, draws, writes, small, big, quickly, slowly and romantically.
- **Day 1, Part 1 - Total Physical Response (TPR) - (5-7 minutes)**
  - The students come into class and I have a sign that I am holding that says; "Good morning/afternoon, please look for your seat." (my class is sectioned into 3 countries)
  - Once the kids are seated I do a quick TPR session with the words - stands up, sits down, writes, draws, looks at and I play with the adverbs and different combinations with the countries
  - After about 5-7 minutes of this I introduce myself in the target language very quickly (English Translation on the board) and then I break to English. This is the first time that the kids will have heard me speak English. I go over the hand signals and what they mean; "Stop, you lost me" "Slow down" and "I want to speak English".
- THIS is where I start testing the kids. I will rattle off something in the target language and see who stops me. If even ONE kid doesn't stop me I stop the class and remind them of the rules.
- **Day 1, Part 2 - Take roll (10 minutes)**
  - Taking roll in the target language. On board have the phrase "Where is?" written in both the target language and English. The students have 3 options; raise their hand, say "present" or "here", say "I am here" - Again, this should be written on the board in both languages.
- **Day 1, Part 3 - Name Tags (10 minutes)**
  - After taking roll, go back to TPR. Add ONE new word "he/she wants". Once you establish wants run through the TPR again quickly, pausing and pointing. "The class writes, the class draws, the class looks at, etc."

- This is where I begin to give instructions in the target language. Write on the board in English and the target language “On the paper” “your name” and “a thing”. Once that is set up you can then give the rest of the instructions in the target language but remember to go slow and pause and point. “Write your name big and draw one thing that you want small”.
  - Now you have a little break to go around the room and see what the kids are drawing. I don’t say much, if I am going to talk to them at all in English I whisper in their ears. I am fishing for something fun to personalize!

• **Day 1, Part 4 - Where’s Waldo? / Personalized Questions and Answers (15-20 minutes)**

- Once the name tags are completed then we play a little “Where’s Waldo?” I introduce 2 new words - “here and over there”. Remember, you still have “Where is?” on the board from taking roll so then you can coach the kids in choral responses by asking; “Where is Andi?” The class can answer “here” or “over there”.
- After seeing the students drawings for things they want I find one that I think will create humor and a light hearted personalization.
- WARNING...If you go around saying what each person wants you will end up speaking too much english and you will loose momentum. On this first day pick ONE student. For example, last year a boy drew a lizard. I wrote lizard on the board in Spanish and English and the conversation went like this...
  - “Class, Collin wants a lizard!” (the class oohs and aaahhhs and shows emotion. If you don’t get that reaction on the first time, DEMAND it, you are setting the stage for the rest of the year.)
  - “Class do I want a lizard?” (this is an opportunity for a pop up grammar). The class response should be a loud NO. “No class, I don’t want a lizard, Collin wants a lizard.”
  - “Class, who wants a lizard?”
  - “Class, does Collin want a lizard or does Collin draw a lizard?” (Demand the choral answer, if you don’t get it, stop and start again)  
NOW IT’S TIME TO GO BACK TO COLLIN AND GET MORE DETAILS
  - “Collin do you want a small lizard or a big lizard?” (remember, you already have gone over big and small earlier in TPR, the vocabulary that you can use is VERY limited, it’s DAY 1. LEVEL 1”
  - Then ask more questions about that detail.
  - And then go back to the student and ask more detailed questions using the question words.
    - “How many small lizards do you want Collin?”
    - “Where do you want the lizards?”

By the time you finish with this activity you have said the structure “he wants” probably 100 times. You have paused and pointed, you have personalized the student. No one will ever forget from that block that Collin wants 22 small blue lizards in his backpack. In fact, the class named him Lizard Boy and left class that day with a sense of ownership. It was so much fun.

• **Day 1, Part 5 - Syllabus/Policies/Procedures and Room Orientation (20 minutes)**

- I like to do this on day 1 but I know many teachers wait. I like to get it out of the way.

• **Day 1, Part 6 - Song (15 minutes)**

- I always do Shakira’s Waka Waka because it gets the kids out of their seats.
- You could do a song that is easy to sing, has a catchy tune or is a classic that the kids might know already

• **Day 1, Part 7 - Closing ritual (5 minutes)**

- Teach something in the target language that you will close with everyday. I use the chorus from Julieta Venegas and we act it out. “Me voy, qué lástima pero adiós, me despido de ti”

**Day 2 - COACH the game, more TPR and PQA, introduce feelings**

Recycle day 1 vocabulary: stands up, sits down, writes, draws, looks at, wants, big, small, quickly, slowly, romantically, and, with (and then whatever else came up organically that first day)

• **Day 2, Part 1 - TPR words from the first day (10 minutes)**

- play with the countries and novel combinations of the words. Begin asking questions with it. Don’t forget to test them by going to fast or saying things they don’t know and then stopping the lesson to review the signals.

• **Day 2, Part 2 - Take roll and collect syllabus (10 minutes)**

- write on the board the 3 options for answering roll, make sure you have “Where is?” on the board in the target language and in English.

- Teach 2 new TPR words - takes out and puts
  - play with those two new words a little and then say “Take out the syllabus/homework” and “put it here”.
- **Day 2, Part 3 - How are you? (15 minutes)**
  - On board write 3 emotions - good (well), bad and so-so
    - Also write in both languages - How are you? I am \_\_\_\_\_, / (\_\_\_\_) is (\_\_\_\_\_).
  - TPR the emotions, coach big, emotional responses
  - Using the question words ask who is good, who is bad and who is so-so.
    - At this point you are fishing for someone else to personalize, maybe two students. You want to find an emotion and tie it to the name tag picture of something they want.
- **Day 2, Part 4 - PQA (15 minutes)**
  - You may want to introduce the structure “There is”.
  - When you have the student in mind as the student. “Are you mad today?” - The student will respond and you can coach the class on how to respond. Encourage them to use the walls to help with expressions in the target language.
  - Then go back for more detail; “Are you mad because (new word, write it on board) you want an Xbox 360 and (pick another student that wants the same thing in the class) \_\_\_\_\_ wants and Xbox 360 too?” Go back and forth between the students and the whole class asking a lot of questions, pausing and pointing and trying to learn about the kids.
- **Day 2, Part 5 - Song / commercial / or something authentic (10 minutes)**
  - This will give the kids a break and let them hear the target language at a regular rate of speed, beginning to train their ears.
- **Day 2, Part 6 - TPR skits or Begin a story (the rest of the class)**
  - If you have props, use them! You could do lots of TPR skits. Here are some examples: Pick a student: Emma stands up slowly and looks at the paper, she sits down and draws. She draws big. Uh-Oh, there is a problem (new word, new opportunity to coach the class) Emma doesn’t want paper, she wants (pick something from your props). Emma stands up quickly and looks at \_\_\_\_\_. She is good.
    - The students can act this out. You can do a series of 2 or 3. You can ask questions about them.
- **Day 2, Part 7 - Closing ritual**

### **Day 3 - Coach the game, more TPR and PQA, introduce the date and days of the week**

(You may want to make a poster or something that has the days of the week in both languages and that includes the words “the weekend” “today” “tomorrow” “yesterday” and “tonight”)

This would be my structure for Day 3:

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| 1. take roll in the target language                 | 5. pick another student for PQA              |
| 2. review TPR, including “takes out” and “puts”     | 6. add 2 new TPR words and play with them    |
| 3. give a closed eye assessment of TPR and emotions | 7. with a partner, write a story using vocab |
| 4. song   | 8. have students act it out                  |

### **Day 4 and beyond**

- remember that you are working up to a reading
- remember that you should get to know at least one student in detail each class
- remember to expose the students to authentic language so that they train their ears (don’t over do it)
- you are slowing adding vocabulary so that you can give instructions in the target language all year long
- do lots of partner work; re-tells, co-create, conversation carousels, etc.
- don’t force output and don’t grade them on speaking. It’s all about INPUT. It’s LEVEL 1!

### **More ideas**

- Great resource for handouts <https://tprsteacher.wordpress.com/tprs-handouts/>
- Get a copy of Blaine Rays top 100 TPR words and use those to add each day to your lesson
- Continue teaching classroom objects and procedures slowly so that you can stay longer in the target language
- Constantly test your students according to the hand signals - “stop”, “slow down”, “I want to speak English”
- Assess every day through questions and identify your barometer student

Above all else, the first month should have limited vocabulary, a little pop up grammar and a lot of fun!