



Online Teaching Action

# TOTA Techniques Mother Document

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## Technique

This section offers detail on the techniques, please learn them thoroughly.

### 1. Objectives, rules and routines.



The most important aspect of your lesson is remaining focused on your objectives. These objectives will go to parents, before and at the end of each lesson including advice on how to revise and extend what the child learned.

Before you start a lesson, the screen will show your learners clearly what they are learning.

Today we are going to (e.g.)

- look at the words for our family
- get better at reading and answering questions
- get better at speaking by talking about food.
- get better at listening skills.

These objectives will come with translation to support meaning.

### 2. Partners Groups.



As much as possible, think about opportunities for interaction with partners. We know that interaction creates a need to use language to express meaning, and this is what we want our learners to become good at.

### 3. Repeat Task with Different Partners.



Have learners repeat tasks they have done with a new partner in order to build their language complexity and fluency. Do this by dragging two faces to center screen, then retaining one for a conversation with a new partner.



#### 4. Instructions.

You can do an example together or model the task with a learner as part of giving your instructions.

Checking the instructions reduces the number of learners who just guess what to do; ensures learners are focused on the task; and gives learners confidence in how they are applying their efforts. This also saves you a lot of time getting learners who are confused onto the task. Examples include: 'Are we going to draw or write?' 'Are you going to move this picture or this picture?'



#### 5. Body Language.

A mobile tutor, one who walks about sometimes, and when sitting also moves (while remaining in camera) is much more engaging for young learners.

For this to be effective, you will need a good camera or head set and wireless mic (or a long cable, max 5 meters length). Experiment with what happens with your hand/arm movement. Is it clearly visible; what is the best speed to avoid blurring the image?

Use body language when you give instructions, for example, *Listen (hand behind ear)*, *Quiet (finger in front of lips)* etc. all of these can be clearer and more meaningful if accompanied by body language.

Use your body in songs and chants to add meaning and interest to the lyrics.



#### 6. Call out Answers

If you want everyone to answer, say *Everyone!* but train learners to wait till you say *Everyone!* or name a learner. You can train learners for this by muting all the learners and



then unmuting and saying *Everyone!* This boosts overall class attention to the task, and reduces the tendency for teachers to select only the good learners to give answers. Asking questions and adding the name at the end of the question, for example,

What's a another way of saying that (pause, select and name)....Ming? means all the class has time to think of an answer, and you can choose any learner to answer.



## 7. Concept Checking Questions (CCQs)

Ask questions that show whether learners have understood the lexical item or grammatical structure. Asking *Do you understand?* will not give you this information.

- Concept Check Questions should be simple and short, and not include the new language.
- Yes/no questions. *Is an elephant big? Is summer hot? Are there other tables in this room? Can you jump?*
- 50/50 chance questions. *Is it a tiger or a monkey? Is it yellow or red? Do you walk to school or fly?*
- Information questions. *Can you point to the policemen? Why do you wake up early? When do you eat breakfast. Where do you play ping pong? What is a banana? How do you brush your hair?*
- Discrimination questions. *Can you wear a jacket under your shirt? Is a cat the same as a dog?*
- Shared experience questions. *Are there any green bags in your room/on the screen?*
- Life experience/culture questions. *Have you ever eaten fish? Are there any alligators in your city?*



## 8. Teacher Models and Transfers to Learners.

To model language/demonstrate a dialogue task, drag a learner face to the central screen to be one half of the dialogue. You are the other half. (Mute the rest of the class and tell them to listen carefully to you and to try to repeat what you say).

After the modeling and the task with one learner, select your face center screen and be one half of the discourse or dialogue with the whole class being the other half. (Unmute the class). Swap roles, so you have modeled and had all learners copying both roles.

You can divide the class into two groups, with one half reading one side, and the rest reading the other. Remember to comment on the language.

9. Drag and Drop



For various tasks, you will want students to drag words to images, drag words to make sentences, questions etc. Not only does this have good linguistic outcome, but it will create variety, engagement and movement, all of which you will want to have as part of your lesson.

10. Draw



Children love drawing and if you can bring a language element to this 'Draw a dog / your face / your father' they will be engaged in the act of drawing while picking up the language. When they do this, it is a good opportunity for you to comment on the drawings and introduce language that enriches the learning.

11. Make it Real Life.



As much as possible, use the learners' background environment for things to ask about. This can also include family members.

As soon as the learners have practiced the target language give them the opportunity to extend it. For example, after a task in which a text is targeting *Is he verb+ing?* have the learners point to different real learners and ask the same type of questions, for example, *Is Xiaomei sleeping?* You can answer to model the reply, and then allow the learner to choose someone else to reply. This personalizes language use and gives learners a sense of language as a tool for communication, not just for practice of what they do in class

12. Learners Compare Answers.



Have learners compare answers after a task. This increases opportunities for meaningful communication, allows learners to discuss and negotiate answers, and builds confidence. You can set this task by first, making sure your learners know how to say *What have you got/what did you get for...?* (or writing this on the screen), selecting two learners and telling them *Danny ask Mary 'What have you got for...?'*

If the learners' language level is high enough, you can then ask why they chose the one they did. This encourages clear reasoning and deepens processing before class feedback. The comments learners give in the feedback will be more intelligent as a result, and the teacher can ask further questions to deepen processing. Learners using reasoning in discussing answers develop clear thinking and can potentially understand *why* their original thinking was wrong. And so can the teacher!



### 13. Dice

If you want to introduce an element of fun and the unpredictable into how you allocate who does what or what comes next in a lesson, you can let the children roll the dice. The child with the highest number can take a particular role / go first / do a particular task.



### 14. Give Learners Time to Think.

When you introduce a new task or key ideas, give learners quiet time to think about meaning. This means they have better concentration and memory for the task you want them to do. Examples of instructions for this include: *You have one minute to try to remember what words or phrases we studied in our last class/ You have one minute to draw your face before we talk about it/Please look at this part and study it for one minute. After this, when I say go!, tell your partner what you have remembered/learned.'*

Doing this throughout the lesson boosts fluency and accuracy.



### 15. Drilling: Short or Full

A short, listen and repeat the teacher adds accuracy to any task. A full drill adds a great deal to language use.

In a natural language learning environment there are endless opportunities for young learners to hear and listen to key high frequency language. Such exposure develops a memory of language patterns and a sense of what sounds right or wrong. This memory means the learners have a big store of correct models which their minds organize into

patterns – this patterning is the basis of their language acquisition. In the classroom, one of the ways we try to build acquisition of English is to have lots of exposure to key language when we drill it.

#### Drilling (with technology upgrade)

For a drill, double click all the learners (to move them to the center screen), but move yourself into the center of the screen with screen word prompts so the learners can see your face and arm movement, and have the learners copy your voice and arm movement for intonation. Remember to include substitutions to build language accuracy and fluency. Do a quick drag of two learners at a time to be teacher and learner center screen; and set the task for the rest of the class to comment/signal interruption when a learner makes a mistake.

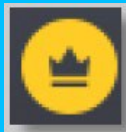
#### 16. Learners Ask Questions.




Encourage learners to experiment and take risks with the language rather than just repeat what they already know. When, for example, you introduce any *Wh* question *like What is this? Who is that? What is ... doing? Where can you find a...? What time is...?* ask the learners to ask you questions: ask them to make the questions harder. Select the responder



and allow the learner who chooses it to ask you about normal life or things on the



screen. Authorize everyone and tell the learners to ask each other questions by writing a learner's name and question and on the shared screen. Allow them to use any resource they have, including the Chat Box  Allow learners to post questions for everyone or for you to answer.

#### 17. Pairs Copy Pairs





When the technology allows, you can encourage listening accuracy by setting square partners. *The two, for example, oldest learners (C and D below) repeat exactly what your younger friends say.* CCQ: *Will you repeat exactly or almost exactly? (exactly).* Get a group of 4 to demonstrate.

Listen and Copy	
A: How are you?	C: How are you?
B: I am fine. You?	D: I am fine. You?
A: Good, but a bit tired	C: Good, but a bit tired
B: Yeah. The same. Especially today.	D: ....



#### 18. Pairs Translate Pairs.

When the technology allows, you can build a class accuracy culture through translation. This is very similar to the above mirror, but is a translation task. *Only two people – you decide who – will talk together in Chinese about (for example) your family ... The other two people in the group will translate.* Get a group of 4 to demonstrate. Ask *What happens if you think the translation is not good? (Suggest corrections). What happens if you think it is good? (Congratulate them).'*



#### 19. Memorize Vocabulary.

You can ask learners to memorize target vocabulary and compare what they remember



with each other. Set the timer to give them time to think. And then select a learner to center screen for the 'test'.



## 20. Listen and follow words with your finger

When learners are listening to an audio, get them to follow the text on the screen with their finger. As they hear each word they move their finger at the pace of the voice. You can also get them to say it at the same time. This builds an awareness of spelling, voice speed, linking, pausing, etc.



## 21. Listen and remember

To encourage good listening skills and memory skills, you can tell the student to listen to a short text, and memorize it. Wait, say, 8 seconds and then ask them to repeat it.



## 22. Point

Use your pointer when you can to highlight words or items you want to draw attention to. Verbal instructions can be hard to understand for children, or audio delay can make following what you say difficult. Using the pointer will focus attention on what you want children to look at.



## 23. Play

The repetition and variability in play is particularly attractive to children because it parallels what they do all the time: they play with life as they make meaning in it. If you can manage to construct tasks in such a way that is play-like and includes language, you have provided very effective learning.



#### 24. Sing or chant.

To start each lesson, it is great to have your learners sing the recommended song. Ensure you sing it (loudly, if you sing well, softly if you don't). Get up and move to the song and the learners will too - treat this as a kind of performance event (like kids TV) and act so the learners want to copy you. Make sure the words are displayed and use the karaoke highlights to help keep the rhythm and speed of the song.

You can ask half the class to sing one line, and the rest of the class the next line. You can have boys sing one line, girls the next. If you have learners who sing well, you can give them a special part to sing. You can sing it slowly, quickly, happily, sadly, etc. The benefits are in motivation and retention through repetition, etc.

Similarly you can display a chant, clap it out/move your arm/hand/body and have the learners repeat it (as above) in different groupings

Try to finish the lesson with a 1 minute song.



#### 25. Say what you learned.

Before the end of each lesson you can say: *Okay. Let's think quietly for 1 minute about what you have learned, or got better at. When I say 'go!' you can tell your partner about this. Set the timer (see 30).* This encourages learners to do their own mental sorting of what they have learned, and learn what their partner has learned. This boosts recall, and may aid their motivation to concentrate. This is also an opportunity for the teacher to monitor the effect of the lesson.



#### 26. Test.

While your learners have lots of opportunities to engage in meaning and learn through questions and drilling, it is very beneficial to test them in class so you are aware of what

they have learned. This will help learners be aware of what they are achieving, and help you decide what they need to review. The teacher who monitors through tests can learn a lot about the effect of their teaching, and what they need to change.



## 27. Teacher Asks Questions

Keep everyone on group talk if you can and control the class by nomination.

Asking learners lots of questions drives language use, models questions types, and sets the frame for interaction in the classroom.

Ask any given learner who should do the next task to generate a sense of groupness and interaction.

Periodically authorize everyone and let them call out the answers – for a little sense of excitement and a change in dynamic.



## 28. Vocabulary Question List

When you want learners to pay attention to vocabulary, after or before memorization, ask them

- I say it, you spell it. (Ask the whole class)
- Tell me where you can find... (Name a learner)
- Ask me a 'Wh' question (how, when, where, why or how) about this word. (Use the Responder)
- Is this a noun (thing), verb (action), adjective (describing a thing), or adverb (describing a verb or adjective)? (Use the Responder)

Display a series of lexical items that need matching on the center screen. Authorize all the learners and let them race to drag them to the right match. The match could be by where you find the item, an opposite, what part of speech it is, etc.

Comment on the answers and do a CCQ.

Highlight items you want the learners to attend to, and ask 'So, everyone, 'What is this?'/What is another way of saying this?/What is an opposite of this?'

### 29. Read



There are many interesting things you can do with reading. You can, for example, display a story center screen, read it and have learners make sounds that fit in the story; read and have learners clap/move/ shout when they hear their word; read and pause (hiding the next word) and ask what it is; read, and allocate character parts to the learners who read them at their part in the story...

### 30. Matching



Periodically you will have matching tasks in which children match words and pictures; characters and pictures; characters and language etc. This is easy to do on Blackboard and creates

### 31. Puppet



Children react very well to puppets. You can use the puppet to represent the character and have a conversation. When you talk to the puppet – turn it sideways so they know you are talking to it. Turn it frontwards so it is talking to them. You can have the puppet talk to the students, or the students talk to the puppets.

### 32. Timer



Setting a timer for a task can create an extra sense of achievement when it is completed. It can also add a sense of competition in which children raise their game in an effort to excel relative to their friends,

### 33. Write



Clearly, there is benefit for children to write what they can and use this language for communication, even if it is as simple as writing 'yes' or 'no' or their name, or the name of a picture object. While we don't want to over-do this for the youngest learners, as the GESE levels rise we expect the writing contribution to increase in lessons.