

We have ways of making you talk.

Anonymous, based on a line in
the film *Lives of a Bengal Lancer*

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about classroom management in TPRS high school classes. Likewise, we appreciate Ben Slavic's permission to print his essay about dealing with one of his students. We also appreciate the contributions of Joe Neilson, Diana Noonan, Mark Webster and Von Ray in Appendix J. Our thanks to Amy Catania for most of the material in Appendix K. And we are most grateful to Stephen Krashen for his letter at the end of Appendix F about his experience as a student in a TPRS Mandarin course.

Last, but far from least, we thank the myriad teachers who continue to contribute their ideas to strengthen TPRS through their comments on the MoreTPRS listserv and in other fora.

Evolving and Spreading TPRS (Preface to the Fifth Edition)

As TPR Storytelling® continues to evolve and improve, it keeps spreading both in the United States and abroad. More and more students are gaining fluency because of TPRS™. We don't know how many, but very likely somewhere in the tens of thousands. I (Blaine) have given workshops in all 50 of the United States and in 15 other countries — India, Singapore, Japan, Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Austria, Spain, Canada, Egypt, Senegal, the United Arab Emirates, the Bahamas, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Numerous other teachers also give workshops on TPRS and specialties within it (see Appendix A). The National TPRS Conference is becoming more and more international. We even considered changing the name to the International TPRS Conference. (We decided against it because of tradition.) The 2007 conference in Denver was attended by teachers from 20 countries. Growth is also seen on the MoreTPRS listserv, which now is subscribed to by nearly 5,000 teachers. It has been just over 20 years since I began to develop TPR Storytelling, and we now have, in a sense, second-generation TPRS teachers, teachers who acquired the language they're teaching largely in TPRS classes.

Among the most important ideas that have emerged in recent years are multi-level classes. We have seen surprising success from teachers who have eliminated levels and instead put mixed levels in one class. (See my article "Multi-Level Classes with TPRS: Unexpected Gains"

in Appendix J.) I believe we will see more success with this in the future.

We continue to give the greatest emphasis to the key concepts (1) that all classes should be completely comprehensible to all students, (2) that students must hear over and over the grammatical features and basic vocabulary that are essential for fluent expression of ideas and (3) that every moment of every class should be interesting or even captivating to every student. Our ever-increasing success gives testament to the validity of these concepts, which are in general agreement with the hypotheses of Stephen Krashen. Krashen attended the most recent National TPRS Conference and, like nearly all of the other participants, took a Fluency Fast[®] course. At our request, he wrote us a letter about his experience in the course and about his subsequent use of the target language in Taiwan. His letter is at the end of Appendix F, "Letters from Teachers."

I (Contee) first came across TPR Storytelling in late April of 1992 at the annual conference of the California Foreign Language Teachers' Association (CFLTA, now known as the California Language Teachers' Association (CLTA)) in Modesto, where Blaine was giving a workshop. I was impressed as never before, most especially by the performance of "Princesa," one of the two first-year high school students Blaine had brought along. He asked her if she knew the story "Little Red Riding Hood." She said she did. Had she ever heard it in Spanish? No. Blaine said, "OK, I'll give you five minutes to get ready. You can draw some pictures as cues if you want to. In five minutes you can tell the story in Spanish. OK?" She said OK and remained seated facing the audience while Blaine went on addressing us teachers.

Five minutes later he said to her, "OK, ready?" She stood up and told the story in Spanish with some pauses and *uh's* and *um's*. She didn't know the word for *wolf*, so she substituted the word for *dog*. She told the story quite well with little preparation. She didn't use any pictures as cues. She had had about seven full months of 55-minute Spanish classes for a total (taking time out for vacations and holidays) of about 140-150 55-minute hours. Ray said that both she and "Guapo"

(handsome), the young man with her, were two of his best students. He also said that even his "F students," the ones who didn't do a lot of the work that is required of them, were also able to tell stories without much trouble, although they made more mistakes.

I must have asked 50 questions, so many that even the most seasoned presenter would have felt bugged. Blaine never showed any irritation and has never mentioned this to me. He just kept giving clear, honest answers. One of the things that concerned me the most was how to get the less-talented students to acquire grammatical features of the target language correctly. At that time Blaine didn't seem to have a satisfactory answer for this question. Then and for some years afterwards, he thought that some students just couldn't acquire much of the grammar.

Now, 18 years later, as things have developed (with no influence from me about this matter), with the techniques now in common use by TPRS teachers, it turns out that even students who are on the lower end are able to acquire grammatical features and use them in their own speech. It just takes them longer than most other students.

I used to think of language teaching methods as one thing and a teacher's ways of dealing with students as another, although I knew they were both important in helping students to succeed. "Student Rapport," Chapter 13 in this edition, has not changed since the first edition was published in 1997. However, emphasis on the way students are regarded and treated has grown immensely, to the point where in recent years it is clearly an integral part of TPRS. Many key techniques are now in common use that make students and their lives central to the method and that help teachers to be truly caring about students' succeeding in school and in life. These two separate elements are both extremely effective. Integrated together they constitute a remarkably powerful package.

Blaine Ray and Contee Seely
Arroyo Grande and Berkeley, CA, respectively
February, 2008

Please note:

Some of the information given in earlier prefaces is no longer valid.