



Primary Times

~~Memory~~ - ~~Memory~~ - **Memory**

Welcome to the 30th issue of **Primary Times** and to the new school year which has just started. As readers will realise when browsing the index below, the contents in this issue are a little different than in previous editions.

We have invited contributors to **Primary Times** to write a special feature article using the same title as their starting point.

The teachers who have written the articles were free to interpret the title as they wished. We, therefore, have great pleasure in publishing six articles entitled:

Linking words to physical movement in order to facilitate memorisation

It is generally accepted that when a sentence is accompanied by an action, children tend to remember the language through the action: Learning through doing. However, methodologically the teacher must take extra care in preparing the children for this type of activity which, if not well planned in advance, can end up being fairly disruptive in the class.

Each of the teachers approaches the title from a different viewpoint and they all make very interesting reading. The photocopiable worksheets which readers normally find in **Primary Times** are replaced by the teaching ideas and worksheets included in the articles.

This issue of **Primary Times** also includes an article which examines another aspect of a child's learning process. Children retain very little of what we teach them so that teachers spend a great deal of time recycling, reinforcing, revising language in an effort to move memorisation from short-term to long-term memory banks. Have a great school year!



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Feature article: Linking words to physical movement in order to facilitate memorisation



Philip Curtis, Donatella Santandrea

You put your left hand in, your left hand out,
In out, in out,
Shake it all about;
You do the hokey cokey and you turn around,
That's what it's all about.
Oh, do the hokey cokey,
Oh, do the hokey cokey,
Oh, do the hokey cokey,
Knees bend, arms stretch,
Ra ra, ra.

This traditional song and dance, the Hokey Cokey*, with its easily assimilated melody and repetitive structure, has taught generations of English-speaking children the difference between left and right, the names of parts of the body and several useful verbs, among other things. In addition, it has provided hours of fun and exercise for over-excited children at millions of birthday parties (and relief for their exhausted parents!)

It was James Asher, an American professor of psychology, in the 1960's, who – through the observation of mother tongue language acquisition in young children – originally developed Total Physical Response (TPR). This idea is based on the theory that memory is enhanced through association with physical movement. Asher applied this theory to the teaching of a second language and provided teachers with a useful and adaptable teaching strategy. As Tim Bowen writes in his article "Teaching Approaches: Total Physical Response", "TPR as an approach to teaching a second language is based, first and foremost, on listening and this is linked to physical actions which are designed to reinforce comprehension of particular basic items."

There is no doubt that the use of such an approach, particularly with beginner learners, can be highly successful. Here is a list of some of the advantages of activities involving physical movement:

- They tend, by definition, to be energy raisers: they are fun and motivating and respond to young children's need for variety and stimulation. (On the contrary, they can provide an immediate 'control mechanism' for a teacher who needs to calm an over-excited class.)
- They involve repetition and allow for easy assimilation by the learners, even if they are unable to reproduce them accurately themselves.
- They don't require children to read or write and therefore are particularly suitable for very young learners. They require few resources... the teacher's voice is often

sufficient, and they can be performed in the class or outside and with any number of children.

- They develop listening skills in a meaningful context. Bowen also lists some of the potential weaknesses inherent within the TPR approach, pointing out correctly that the language input is limited and that there is always the danger of over-repetition but he concludes: "Short TPR activities, used judiciously and integrated with other activities can be both highly motivating and linguistically purposeful. Careful choice of useful and communicative language at beginner level can make TPR activities entirely valid."

Worksheet: Move it!

- Aim:** Provides a series of physical gestures linked to simple instructions and school objects to facilitate memorisation.
- Suitable for:** 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes.
- Method:** If the children can't read, the teacher demonstrates the gestures and words (slowly) line by line and asks the children to repeat both the words and the appropriate gesture, using the images on the worksheet as a guide. Children who are able to read can work directly from the worksheet. *Sit down, Stand up, Point, Look* are obvious. *Pen*: one hand over the head, *Pencil*: both arms by one's sides, *Rubber*: crouching down and shuffling feet, *Book*: both arms open, these will need to be demonstrated. *Sit down, Stand up* and *Look* are repeated from the first line with the addition of *Listen*: hands cupped behind the ears.
- Extension:** 1. (for the 2nd and 3rd classes) The words are written on the board and a pupil comes to the front and points to a particular word; the rest of the class have to make the appropriate gesture. The pupil indicates another word and so on.
2. *Simon says*. Teacher says *Simon says, Pen*: the children have to make the gesture. *Simon says, Point*: the children have to make the gesture. If the teacher just says *Schoolbag* without *Simon says* the children have to stay still. Those who do the gesture are out.

* A filmed recording of a group of children singing and dancing this song can be found on **Sing Along!** LANG Edizioni, 2000.



MOVE IT!

WORKSHEET



sit down



stand up



point



look



pen



pencil



rubber



book



sit down



stand up



listen



look



Feature article: Linking words to physical movement in order to facilitate memorisation

Sarah Gudgeon

Action Stories



Using action stories is a fun way to help children remember new vocabulary. There are various stages to be followed to ensure optimum learning and the first of these is to create *an affinity* between the children and the main characters of the story. This can be done by creating puppets or cardboard cut-outs and allowing the children to have some personal input, perhaps by letting them choose the colours of the clothes or by allowing them to add accessories of their choice, such as sunglasses, for example. Then the teacher should introduce the characters, supplying the basic information and eliciting additional information through leading questions:

Teacher: *Is he happy?*

Child: *No, he's sad.*

Once the children are familiar with the characters they can move onto the next stage: *listening to the story*. Interest can be generated by asking the children what they think is going to happen to the character and by proposing some ludicrous scenarios, just to fire their imaginations. With very young learners L1 can be used for this stage. To focus their attention, it is imperative to give children a task to do while they are listening. One of the most effective ways is to give them a jumbled set of pictures that illustrate the story and ask them to put them in the correct order.

Before playing the recording again, give the children the story text cut up into sections or sentences. While the children listen for a second time, ask them to match the text to the pictures.

Once the children have a complete set of characters, story pictures and text they can start to act out the story. Divide the children into small groups, depending on the number of characters, and assign each of them a role. Ask them to highlight or underline everything they have to say in the story and give them a few minutes to read it again. The story will, of course, concentrate on a limited number of lexical sets and structures so that children will find themselves saying virtually the same things throughout the story, with just a few changes, which means that memorisation should not be difficult.

The key to memorisation though, as the title of the article suggests, is *physical movement*. Therefore, it is essential to identify the key words in the story and invent a corresponding action for each one that the children can imitate. The class or group should then read the story with each child reading aloud their lines and doing the actions at the right time with the teacher prompting where necessary. Once the children are fairly confident, they can perform autonomously in their small groups.

To *consolidate* the new lexis ask the children to take the story home, maybe even read it to their parents and then at the beginning of the next lesson ask the whole class to act out the story, without making any reference to the written text. Teachers will be amazed at the results!

Primary Times

keeping the teacher informed



THE FROG FAMILY

WORKSHEET

Picture 1

NARRATOR: This is a story about a family of frogs.

MUMMY FROG: Hello! I'm mummy frog!

DADDY FROG: Hello! I'm daddy frog!

BROTHER FROG: Hello! I'm brother frog!

SISTER FROG: Hello! I'm sister frog!

BABY FROG: Hello! I'm baby frog!

Picture 2

NARRATOR: It's sunny and the frogs are very hot. The frogs see a big leaf on a pond.

DADDY FROG: Look! A big green leaf. I'm very hot!

NARRATOR: Daddy frog hops and hops and sits on the leaf.

DADDY FROG: I'm not hot now!

NARRATOR: Mummy frog is very hot too.

MUMMY FROG: I'm very hot!

DADDY FROG: Come here!

NARRATOR: Mummy frog hops and hops and sits on the leaf with daddy frog.

DADDY FROG: I'm not hot now!

MUMMY FROG: I'm not hot now!

Picture 3

NARRATOR: Brother frog is hot too.

BROTHER FROG: I'm very hot!

MUMMY FROG: Come here!

NARRATOR: Brother frog hops and hops and sits on the leaf with daddy frog...

DADDY FROG: I'm not hot now!

NARRATOR: ...and mummy frog.

MUMMY FROG: I'm not hot now!

BROTHER FROG: I'm not hot now!

Picture 4

NARRATOR: Sister frog is hot too.

SISTER FROG: I'm very hot!

BROTHER FROG: Come here!

NARRATOR: Sister frog hops and hops and sits on the leaf with daddy frog...

DADDY FROG: I'm not hot now!

NARRATOR: ...and mummy frog.

MUMMY FROG: I'm not hot now!

NARRATOR: ...and brother frog.

BROTHER FROG: I'm not hot now!

SISTER FROG: I'm not hot now!

Picture 5

NARRATOR: Baby frog is hot too.

BABY FROG: I'm very hot!

SISTER FROG: Come here!

NARRATOR: Baby frog hops and hops and sits on the leaf with daddy frog...

DADDY FROG: I'm not hot now!

NARRATOR: ...and mummy frog.

MUMMY FROG: I'm not hot now!

NARRATOR: ...and brother frog.

BROTHER FROG: I'm not hot now!

NARRATOR: ...and sister frog.

SISTER FROG: I'm not hot now!

BABY FROG: I'm not hot now!

Picture 6

NARRATOR: ...and then splash! They all fall into the water.

DADDY FROG: I'm cold now!

MUMMY FROG: I'm cold now!

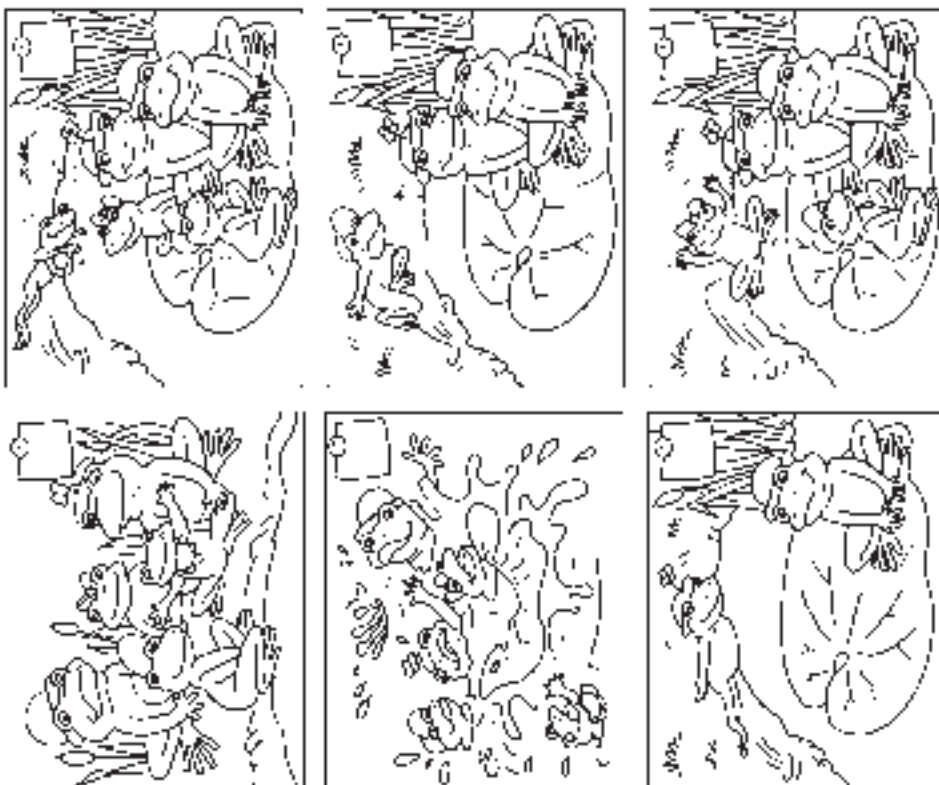
BROTHER FROG: I'm cold now!

SISTER FROG: I'm cold now!

BABY FROG: I'm cold now!

Action Stories

THE FROG FAMILY





Feature article: Linking words to physical movement in order to facilitate memorisation

Stefania Scardigli

It is well known to teachers of English in Primary schools that movement is an essential part of the lesson. Children, especially younger ones, need to move in the classroom, because they are full of energy and because they are very often kinaesthetic learners. Children cannot be expected to sit at their desks, sometimes for hours at a time, as happens in *Tempo Pieno* schools. It is better to channel their need to move into something which can produce effective results in language acquisition. One of the problems that teachers in state schools have to face is that of large classes, sometimes with as many as 25 pupils. Often, in order to avoid possible chaos, teachers choose to have more activities known as "settlers", to calm the class down, than "shakers", to wake the class up.

There are whole class activities, based on TPR (Total Physical Response) that include moving as part of the lesson. Examples are the very well known game *Simon says*, as well as many action songs such as *Head, shoulders, knees and toes*, to name just a few. In this kind of activities, children perform a movement chorally when they hear a specific command, *Simon says stand up*, or word, *Head - Shoulders,...* These are very good activities for small children and for those who are starting to learn a language, because the children are not asked to respond individually, and therefore they feel less inhibited.

Children with more confidence with the language, from Primary year three onward, can enjoy activities that ask for individual responses. Here are some of the activities I have tried in the first, third and fourth classes.

MIME DRILLING

The aim of the activity is to drill different actions. This helps children memorize the meaning of verbs by doing the actions. This activity can be applied to practise all the different verb tenses.

Procedure

Prepare a number of action cards equal to the number of students. For more advanced students, the cards can contain only the verb in the infinitive, while for younger children there can also be a

drawing to remind them of the meaning of the verb. Divide the children into groups or ask the whole class to stand in circles. The teacher takes a place in a circle to demonstrate.

Distribute one action card per child.

Read the action card and mime the action (e.g. *I'm reading*).

The student to the teacher's right repeats the phrase and mimes the action (*I'm reading*), then they read their own action and mime it (e.g. *I'm swimming*).

The game continues with each student having to repeat the words and movements for ALL the actions that came before them, as well as their own.

Attention

The closer a student is to the end of the circle, the more difficult the task becomes for them.

Tips

The first time I tried this activity in a class of 25 children, the last child received a standing ovation from his classmates because of the huge effort he made to repeat all the actions, and for his patience in waiting for his turn. With such large classes, therefore, it's a good idea to split the class into two circles after the demonstration. The students thus wait a shorter time for their turn. Using two different sets of cards allows students to swap and have a second go.

Advantages

It is a great drilling activity. The challenge of remembering all the actions is made easier by linking the action both to movement and to the person who did the movement. You can use this activity to revise the actions that are done during the day (*I wake up, I get up, I wash my face, I brush my teeth, I have breakfast* - or even *I pour the milk, I drink my tea*, etc), or you can use it with other tenses (for instance, Present Continuous for leisure activities: *I'm playing tennis, I'm playing golf, I'm reading a book, I'm playing the guitar*, etc.).

WALKING FINGERS

This activity is useful for both giving and understanding directions. It can be used in the higher classes such as Primary four and five. By using the simplest expressions, the activity can be adapted for younger learners.



Procedure

After teaching the expressions: *go straight on - turn right at the bank - turn left at the supermarket - go past the bus stop - cross the road at the traffic lights - go over the bridge*, etc. the class can spend some time practising following and giving directions.

Provide each child with a finger puppet of the kind you wear on your index and middle fingers, so that these two fingers stand out as legs and walking can be mimed. Students can personalize their puppet to resemble themselves or a character of their choice. On the board draw or put up a pre-prepared map showing streets and buildings of a town and demonstrate how to follow directions. It is useful to provide each student with a copy of the map that is on the board in A4 format, so that they can follow the path both on the board and on their own map. The activity can be divided into steps:

Ask the children to describe the way from point A to B.

Give them the directions from a starting point and ask them to guess what the destination is.

If the children end up in the wrong place explain where they took a wrong turn.

After the demonstration, ask a student to come to the board with a finger puppet and to follow the directions.

Ask another child to give directions to the student at the board.

Finally get them to perform the activity in pairs.

Attention

With large classes, children may get a bit bored before their turn comes, so try and get to the pair work quickly.

Advantages

Using a finger puppet helps children a lot, especially when they have to work out which is *right* and which is *left*, as they are in exactly the same position as the person walking.

Variations

To vary the role play move the activity to the gym or school garden if it is available. A three dimensional map can be built there so that children can actually walk along the streets and among the *buildings* (revise building names – *bank, church, supermarket*, etc). This can also be used as a cross-curricular activity to raise children awareness of street rules when walking in town. For a variation in the class, you can have a child walk as a robot under instructions, and direct them from a starting point up to a classmate. At this point the robot can declare their position in reference to the classmate, using prepositions of place (*I'm in front of Giulia, I'm between Marco and Stefano*, etc).

ACTIVE STORYTELLING

This activity is to reinforce vocabulary memorization, especially adjectives and opposites, and is an activity that can be used during story telling, for all ages, especially for young and very young learners.

Procedure

Choose a story (or make one up) that contains adjectives in pairs of opposites. A good example is *Goldilocks and the three bears*, with the pairs hot/cold, soft/hard, etc. or also the Elmer series. Link each adjective to a movement and mime it to the class along with whatever pre-teaching you feel is necessary.

Read the story, allow the children time to understand the plot.

Mime while reading, to demonstrate to the children what they have to do and to reinforce the adjectives they have just learnt.

Read the story again and get the children to mime while they listen.

They will have to focus their attention; when the words occur, remembering the movement which is linked to the word and miming it. It is a challenging but very enjoyable activity and as the actions are done together the children should not feel inhibited.

Attention

If children lose interest after a couple of times of retelling the story, do the simple storytelling in one lesson and the movements in a future lesson.

Advantages

This is silent drilling to reinforce passive knowledge. You can modify the activity at a later stage, and ask the children to do the mime and say the words, while you leave silent gaps in your story telling.

Variations

Prepare flashcards illustrating the vocabulary you want your students to learn. Read the story for the first time. After the children have fully understood the storyline, get them to participate in the reading by handing out the flashcards of the new vocabulary. Ask the children to stand up showing their card to their classmates when they hear the word on their flashcards in the story. Note that with some stories with lots of repetitions, a word may appear many times. Give the corresponding card to a usually shy child, or to someone who usually does not take part in the activities spontaneously, so that they can take the stage for a longer time. Good examples are Eric Carle *The very hungry caterpillar* for food (use the original or choose other food) and *Winnie the Witch* for house and furniture.



**PROJECTS FOR
CLASS AND TEACHER**

Class project

The Royal Family

Our sincere thanks to the teachers and children who take part in our Class Projects. Record entries were received for the December 2007 project with over **3300** children from **110** Primary schools! The postcards were all very special. The project for this issue gives the teacher the opportunity to introduce one of the aspects of British *civiltà* in the Primary classroom.

Together with family relationships (*mother, father, brother* etc.) introduce the various members of the British Royal family using photographs cut out from magazines or pictures downloaded and printed from the Internet. Ask the children to describe each member of the family using words and expressions of physical description. This activity can also be extended to include Italian personalities.

CLASS Project – October 2008 – Issue 30

Each child must choose one of the members of the Royal Family (encourage the class to choose as many different people as possible).

Each child must draw and colour a picture of one of the Royals and write a description of the person either below the picture or on the reverse side.

A4 size paper is recommended.

All the written language must be in English and physically written by the children.

Teachers are asked not to correct or re-write the sentences produced by the children.

**Each child who takes part in this project will receive a special poster
which can be either kept in the school
or put up on bedroom walls!**

We are producing a new poster illustrating the various parts of the body. This lexical set is very often introduced in the first years of learning linked to numbers and is then extended in later years when *have got, physical descriptions, emotions* and *illnesses* are taught.

The words are listed on the sides of the poster and the teacher can ask the children to label the illustrations at different times over a longer period. If the posters are kept at school, the children can take them home when they are completed.

Send the project materials together with the completed project form to:

Primary Times, Class Project – Issue 30
Pearson Paravia Bruno Mondadori spa, Corso Trapani 16
10139 Torino

The materials should arrive in our offices by 31.12.2008.

We may publish extracts from some of the projects in future issues of **Primary Times**.

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This form must be completed and attached to the front page of the project materials.

30

Name of school _____

Address _____

City _____ CAP _____

E-mail _____ @ _____

Name of teacher _____

Number of children presenting their illustrations and texts _____

Signed by the teacher _____ Date _____

Kids' Corner

Giulia Abbiati

Welcome back to school!

After the summer break children are happy to meet their school-friends and teachers again and expect that the new school year will be full of wonderful surprises and new things to learn... but they are also sorry to have left all their new friends in the places where they spent their holidays and for the end of that special kind of freedom that children experience only when they are away from school.

This is one of the reasons the children are happy to speak about their holidays and this topic can be used as a springboard for revision activities.

The first activities in this issue's **Kids' Corner** are useful to re-focus the children's minds to a studying mode. These activities give children the

Kids' Corner is a special section dedicated to very young learners.



chance to both think back on their holidays and to build some new small objects that they can keep for the coming school year.

Many of the other activities are inevitably linked to Halloween. Teachers may find a little repetition in Halloween activities and cut-outs (ghosts, witches, bats and scary objects) but children in the first years of primary school like repetition, which is useful for memorisation. Of course, there will always be new first-year classes, who have never experienced the enjoyment of Halloween craft tasks!

So, enjoy a new October **Kids' Corner**!



Activity 1: Back from summer holidays poster

What you need:

- big sheets of paper (poster size) – one for each group of children – or many small sheets to be taped together
- white paper
- tape
- glue
- coloured pencils and felt-tip pens
- pictures or postcards from last holidays anything children might have brought back with them: seashells, sand, dry flowers, stones...

What you do

1. Divide the children into groups of 6-8.
2. Divide the blank poster by the number of children in the group, giving each child the same space.
3. Draw three/four lines on the bottom side of each space where children will write.
4. Ask the children, in turn, to write their name and the place they want to illustrate on their part of the poster.
5. Ask the children to draw the place where they have been and to stick the drawing onto the poster. They can also glue postcards or pictures onto the poster. Remind them that they will have to write a short description (a couple of lines) about the place they are





illustrating, or a couple of lines about why they like this place, so they should not glue too many things in their space.

6. Ask the children, in turn, to write, with a coloured felt-tip pen, a short description of their drawing/pictures or postcards: This is... . *The sea is blue and there are many beaches.* or *This is... I love the mountains because...* Children can also write the names of their holiday friends and glue their pictures onto the poster.
7. Help the children who want to glue small things like seashells, to put glue onto the paper and to stick their small objects. They can glue sand, too.

Follow up

Especially with classes in years 4 and 5, the children can be asked to prepare class surveys based on the information on the posters; *how many children went to the sea/mountains etc.*

Activity 2: Schoolbag name tags

This can either be a *back-to-school* activity or a *Halloween* activity depending on the lexical sets chosen for the illustrations.

What you need:

- cardboard
- a pencil
- coloured felt-tip pens
- scissors
- a short piece of ribbon or string



What you do

1. Encourage the children to choose a subject (lexical set) from which to choose a name for their new schoolbag name tag. Sets can include: animals, cartoon characters, abstract subjects or the Halloween set (i.e. a bat or a witch's hat etc.).
2. Get the children to draw their character or subject onto the cardboard.
3. Tell them to colour it but to be careful to leave a blank space in the middle or on one side where they can write their name and that of the class.
4. Ask them to cut it out and punch a hole on one side of the tag.
5. Get them to thread the ribbon through the hole and tie it to their schoolbag.
6. To make the name tags more resistant they can be covered with adhesive plastic.

Activity 3: Beaded key-rings

What you need:

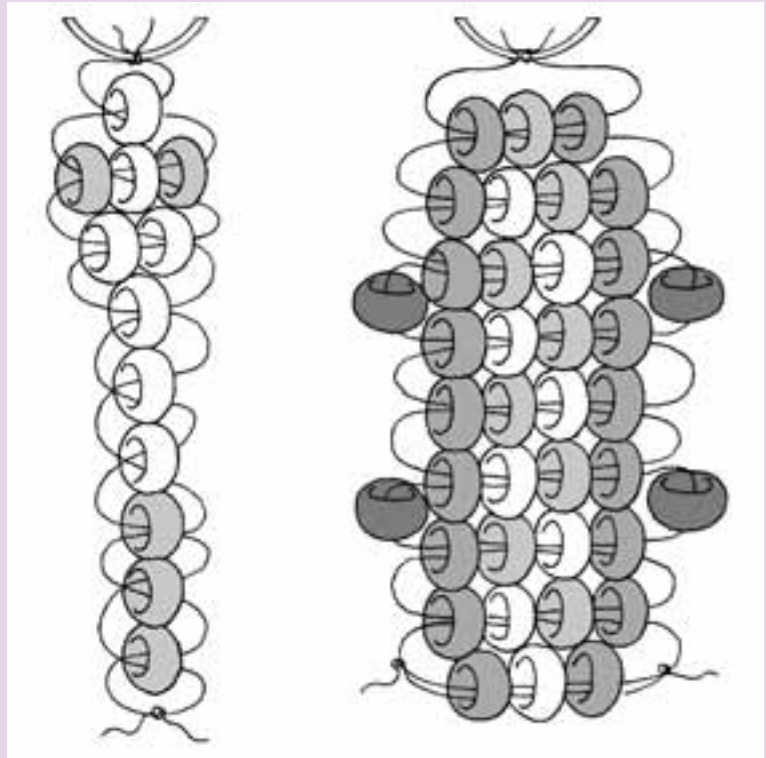
- photocopies of the template
- coloured beads
- two long plastic threads
- a short keychain (or a ribbon)
- a key-ring





What you do

1. Distribute photocopies of the template.
2. Ask the children to choose an object from the ones illustrated on the template.
3. Get them to tie a knot at one end of the thread.
4. Tell the children to thread the beads. They will have to fold the ribbons so they should pay attention to drawing.
5. Then get them to tie the free end of the thread to the short keychain or directly to the key-ring.
6. To complete the activity, ask the children to tie a knot at the end of the thread.



Activity 4: Secret wizardry box

This activity can also be used as a back-to-school revision craft activity. Make minor changes in the instructions such as the Halloween subjects and colours.

What you need:

- an empty shoebox
- black paint
- a large brush
- white cardboard and coloured felt-tip pens or coloured cardboard
- scissors
- glue
- a long piece of brown string
- a short wooden stick
- a white felt-tip pen



What you do

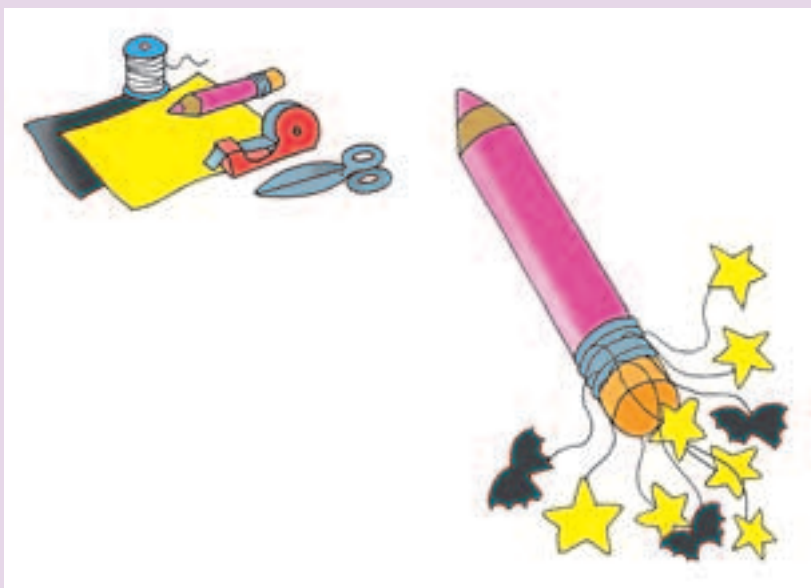
1. Tell the children to paint the shoebox and lid black.
2. Get them to draw and colour on the white cardboard (or draw only onto the coloured cardboard): a bat, a jack-o-lantern, a witch's hat, a broom, a spider and anything scary the children can think of.
3. The children cut out all the scary things and glue them onto the box. They must leave a blank space in the middle of the lid.
4. With the white felt-tip pen, get them to write their name and 'My secret wizardry box' onto the lid.
5. Get the children to use the brown string to close the box and to tie the wooden stick to the other end. They can keep all their wizardry secrets in the box!



Activity 5: Halloween pencil wands

What you need:

- a pencil
- a wooden pencil with rubber on top
- strong plastic thread
- yellow and black cardboard
- scissors
- tape

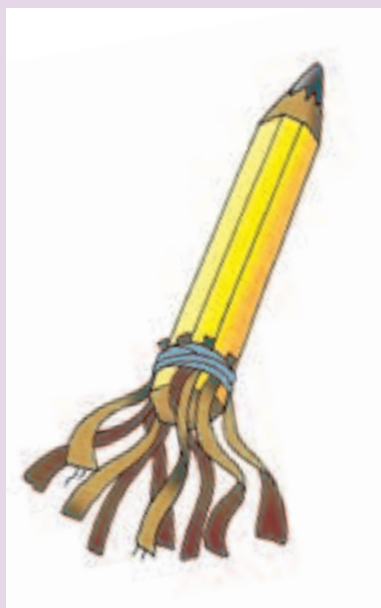


What you do

1. Ask the children to draw small stars onto the yellow cardboard and small bats onto the black cardboard and to cut them out.
2. Get them to cut short pieces of the plastic thread and to stick one end of the thread onto the back of the stars and bats.
3. Finally, ask them to stick all the free ends of the threads onto the metal part of the pencil and wrap them with tape before casting their Halloween spells!



Activity 6: Pencil brooms



What you need:

- a dark brown wooden pencil
- a piece of brown cloth (the size of a tissue or a napkin)
- scissors
- a piece of brown string

What you do

Ask the children to cut the brown cloth into thin strips and to tie them onto the top of a pencil with the brown string.





Feature article: Linking words to physical movement in order to facilitate memorisation

Matilde Gagliano

Top Ten favourite games and activities involving movement

Teaching at primary level can be a rewarding and stimulating experience for the English teacher. We should bear this in mind when we enter the classroom and, especially with very young learners, we should be able to put all our troubles aside – or else be very good actors – and be ready to be active and enthusiastic entertainers with no fear of engaging in all types of activities (including jumping up and down, singing, miming, acting etc.).

The more you give your students in terms of energy, cheerfulness and empathy, (i.e. understanding their needs), the more they will give you back in terms of motivation and consequently in learning. As it is difficult to fake enthusiasm we should constantly devise new activities that can be interesting and fun for both the teacher and the students.

The type of activities that children of all ages and latitudes enjoy the most are generally those involving moving and playing. Incidentally this is also a type of exercise that helps long term memorization of the targeted words and expressions because, as is widely accepted, the easiest way to learn is *learning by doing*. Even with everyday class life routines, such as *sit down, close the door* etc., we can exploit the activation and internalisation of learning that come from the association of words with actions. For

instance when a pencil falls on the floor ‘accidentally’ instead of getting angry we should make the most of the situation and say something like *stand up and pick it up*. After we have said this sentence a hundred times – which is about as many times as pencils fall on the floor every day! – and they have performed the action, they will never forget it.

Obviously this type of approach is not entirely stress-free because getting young learners into motion is often a chaotic and noisy procedure (you say something like – *move your desks, make space for the game* and your friendly next-door neighbouring colleagues come and ask whether there has been an earthquake). Naturally you don’t have to (and don’t want to!) do these type of activities all the time – especially from the third year onwards – but it can be a good idea to alternate more sedentary activities with more active ones.

The good news about these activities is that they produce instant interest, attention and motivation even among those students who usually stare at you blankly or, worse, pretend they are paying attention but in fact are reading their secret diary hidden under the desk! Even kids who normally experience all sorts of learning problems or those who generally spend their time chatting or annoying everyone, magically become involved and active, revealing language notions you had never suspected they possessed.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Level suggested: 1st, 2nd, 3rd year

An all-time favourite to practise vocabulary. All that is needed is a set of flashcards (choose a specific topic – e.g. colours, animals, parts of the body etc. – or various topics for revision) and space to arrange the chairs in a circle, one for each player. Place one flashcard face up on each chair and then play some music or one of the unit songs while the children go round holding hands inside the circle of chairs. At some point stop the music and say one of the names of the items on the flashcards. The students have to sit on a chair avoiding the one displaying the mentioned item. The child who sits on that chair is eliminated from the game. One chair is removed and the game goes on until there is only one student left. He/she wins the game. Once the game has been played a first time, the children will never stop begging you *Please, can we play it again?*



RUN AND TOUCH

Level suggested: 1st, 2nd year

This game can be used to introduce new vocabulary or practise it. Stick with tape the flashcards onto all four walls distant from each other but at a height the kids can reach. Say the words a few times pointing to each flashcard and ask the children to repeat. Ask two children to stand in the middle of the classroom. Say one of the words and the kids have to run to the right flashcard. The first one to touch it is the winner and continues to play, the other kid sits down and another one takes his/her place. When all the kids have had a go, let the winner choose the child he/she wants to challenge.

FIND SOMEONE WHO...

Level suggested: 3rd, 4th, 5th year

This game practises structures: *Have you got a (ruler)? Yes, I have. / No, I haven't. or Can you (play the piano)? Yes, I can. / No, I can't. or Do you like (fish)? Yes, I do. / No, I don't.* and so on. Give each student a flashcard face down on the desk. Send one student out of the classroom and choose a flashcard (of a pencil sharpener, for example). Call the student back in and tell him/her to *Find someone who has got a... (pencil sharpener)*. The child asks three students (depending on how big the group is) *Have you got a (pencil sharpener)?* and the child answers *Yes, I have.* or *No, I haven't.* If the groups are large this game can become a speed competition between two players who ask the questions simultaneously to different students. In this case the winner is the one who finds the person first. The game can be played individually or in teams.

RUNNING DICTATION

Level suggested: 3rd, 4th, 5th year

This activity has two great advantages: it practises all four skills – listening, speaking, reading, writing – and keeps the children busy for a while! Select a short text containing words the children are familiar with (paragraphs about 'civiltà' from the textbook, for example). The children work in pairs. Arrange desks in a row so that a child from each pair can sit at a desk with something to write on. Put a copy of the text for each pair on the wall facing the desks. One child reads and memorises one or more words and runs to the other child and dictates the words. The other writes them down. Set a time limit. Tell them that the winning pair is the one that writes the most correct words in the given time, not who finishes first.

MIMING A STORY

Level suggested: 1st, 2nd, 3rd year

This activity works better with stories which include actions. Play the recording of a story and ask the children to imagine they are in the story and to do all the actions the characters do, also miming their facial expressions. Kids love this especially if the story includes events such as falling down, jumping, diving in the water, swimming, dancing etc.

WHAT'S MISSING?

Level suggested: 1st, 2nd, 3rd year

This can be done both with flashcards or word cards. Choose six/eight words to practise, show cards and say the words a few times. Ask a number of students, one fewer than the words, to stand in front of the group. Give one card to each and keep one for yourself. When you say *Ready, steady, go!* the students show their cards and the others have to say which one is missing. The first one to say the correct word is the winner and joins the standing group, taking somebody else's place. He/she can choose the boy or girl who has to sit down (they especially like this bit!). Perfect to teach the days of the week (with word cards).

CHANGE SEATS IF...

Level suggested: 3rd, 4th, 5th year

This game is excellent for practising structures such as *have got + adjective + hair/eyes*. A spacious classroom is required: all the children but one sit on chairs (one fewer than kids) arranged in a circle. One student stands in the



middle and says a sentence such as: *Change seats if you have got... (brown eyes)*. Write the model sentence on the blackboard before beginning. All the children with brown eyes have to stand up and swap chairs and the child who was standing finds a free chair to sit on. Another student is left standing and has to say a new sentence. It can be more fun if the children who make mistakes (standing up when they shouldn't or vice versa) have to pay a penalty (count up to thirty while jumping on one foot, for instance). It is advisable to clarify in advance what colour everybody's hair/eyes are (there's usually someone who can't decide whether his/her hair is light brown or blond for example). This activity is also indicated to practise clothes vocabulary although it doesn't work if the children are wearing school uniforms. In this case the children say: *Change seats if you're wearing... (a blue jumper/brown shoes etc.)*.

GIVING DIRECTIONS

Level suggested: 4th, 5th year

This activity is an obvious follow up to giving directions – *go straight on, turn right, turn left*. Ask a student to go out of the classroom while the other kids hide a small object. The student then goes back in the classroom and has to find the object by listening to the other kids' directions. Pre-teach expressions like: *look in front of you/under/on/in...*, *You are near / far away* etc. This can also be a team game with the teacher timing how long it takes each team to find the object.

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE

Level suggested: 1st, 2nd year

The traditional run and chase game with one kid saying *I spy with my little eye something... (red)*. He/she has to touch the other children before they touch something of that colour. Good to practise colours in the school playground.

LAST ONE TO...

Level suggested: 1st, 2nd year

This is a natural way of linking words to physical movement. The teacher says: *Last one to ...+ an action* (examples: *stand up, jump, run, turn around, touch something red, touch your nose, point to the door*, etc.) and the children have to do the action. The last one to do the action and/or whoever makes a mistake is out. Alternatively, this can be a simple routine activity done at the beginning or at the end of every lesson or whenever the kids are tired and need a bit of shaking up: say an action verb and demonstrate the action. Then let the children do it. Add unusual verbs such as: *fly, stretch, scratch your head/back...* etc.





Moving language from children's short-term to long-term memory

Philip Curtis e Donatella Santandrea

Why can Giovanni, who is studying in the 3rd year of an Italian primary school, remember all the names, dates of birth and nationalities of all the players of his favourite football team and all this team's results and yet not manage to remember ten English words for food? This is a common problem faced by teachers, parents and children. It is a problem not exclusive to the learning of English but is reflected in all school subjects. Why does our memory recall some things so easily and seem unable to remember others however many times we revise them?

The Stage Model of Memory proposed in 1968 by Atkinson and Shiffrin divides memory into three phases: sensory, short-term, and long-term. Sensory memory is fleeting and momentary lasting for less than one second. It is important for the teacher to realize that while sensory systems (i.e. hearing, smell vision, etc.) are bombarded with an overwhelming amount of information, it is sensory input that is the door to the pupil's memory and, therefore, his learning. The second phase, short-term memory, is working and active but is maintained primarily by rehearsal. Rehearsal means to repeat. Short-term memory is limited to approximately seven items or less for primary school children.

Long-term memory is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for both the teacher and pupil. Once information enters sensory memory and processes in short-term memory, it can enter and be organized in this unlimited and highly stable area in the pupil's mind. Learning has truly taken place when information can be recalled from the pupil's long-term memory. It is essential that information placed into a pupil's long-term memory be linked in a way that the he/she can retrieve it later. The teacher who understands the relationship between memory and retrieval can gear a lesson plan to assist the pupil in the process that enhances learning.

How can we as teachers encourage pupils to place information in their long-term memory? The key is to make our lessons meaningful. Meaningful means memorable. If our lessons are meaningful then the children themselves create the conditions favourable for the transfer of language from the short-term to long-term memory. As William Ward says: *The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.*

Memorable lessons:

- have a clear structure: they are linked to previous work and will, in turn, link to future work
- offer a variety of activities focussing on different learning styles; reading, listening, speaking, writing, drawing, moving, playing
- have pace and energy
- offer the chance for the learner to personalise their learning
- involve pupils in their own learning, in an academic and emotional way, offering them the chance to reflect, and enjoy and challenge themselves

These laudable targets are far-reaching. How can one put them into practice? To return to Giovanni and his food words for a moment. Dry rote learning of the food words clearly doesn't work: how about asking him to create a Crazy Menu or a Disgusting Cake complete with list of ingredients and a drawing? By offering Giovanni the opportunity to use the language in a creative and individual way, the learning becomes meaningful and therefore memorable.

We offer two worksheets. It is impossible in one worksheet to cover all of the above but with these



examples we can illustrate how some of the principles can be applied in a real classroom. The key is the reinterpretation of vocabulary and structure with a view activating the associative memory through the stimulation of individual (or collective) creativity. By involving the pupils and giving them choices, their learning becomes meaningful.

Worksheet 1: My Invention: Super Chair

- Aim** : Provides a revision and reinterpretation of the structures *has got* and *can*.
Suitable for : 2nd and 3rd year classes.
Materials : 1 copy of the worksheet per pupil. Scissors, glue, colouring pencils.
Method : Pupils are encouraged to create their own fantastic invention, in this case a *Super Chair* selecting from the options offered, working individually or in small groups. They write, cut and stick in the appropriate places and create their own *Super Chair*. The modelling provided on the worksheet is important. New vocabulary is introduced (e.g. *springs*) while familiar structures and vocabulary are revised. Pupils can then present their invention to the class or the worksheets can be collected into a class book or shown as a wall poster.
Extension : Pupils can invent, design and demonstrate their own invention.

Worksheet 2: It's Super Me

- Aim** : Provides a revision of the structures *I can* and *I can't* plus conjunctions *and* and *but*. Introduces many verb collocations. Promotes and reinforces self-esteem.
Suitable for : 4th and 5th year classes.
Materials : 1 copy of the worksheet per pupil. 1 copy of the *Can / Can't* chart below per small group. Colouring pencils.
Method : Pupils are encouraged to read and select from the list the superpowers that they possess and the superpowers that they don't possess. By doing this in groups discussion is stimulated. The children have fun. Don't be surprised if they ask you to translate other superpowers not on the list, offering a natural opportunity for the teacher to promote the use of the dictionary as a learning tool. They complete the worksheet individually then introduce themselves to the rest of the class. Again a class book or a wall poster can be made.

Can/Can't chart:

**READ AND CHOOSE
YOUR SUPERPOWERS! ...**

AND YOUR WEAKNESSES.

I CAN...

... see in the dark
... run from here to... (America, China, London etc.)
... transform myself into a(n)... (robot, computer, animal etc.)
... climb up a skyscraper
... put out a... fire, volcano...
... be invisible
... move a mountain, a house...
... pick up a car, a lorry...
... swim across the ocean
... fly to the moon/the sun...
... fire rockets
... fly a spaceship
... destroy my enemies with a look
... read thoughts
... speak every language in the world
... talk to animals

BUT I CAN'T...

... brush my teeth properly
... comb my hair
... help mum/dad... to wash the dishes/clean my bedroom
... write a good essay at school
... memorize a poem
... study Geography/History/Science...
... memorize the multiplication tables
... save the world from an alien invasion
... help people in need
... solve Maths problems
... paint a good picture
... win a football/basketball... match
... remember my school timetable
... do my homework properly
... carry my schoolbag
... cook an egg
... prepare my breakfast/lunch/dinner



WORKSHEET 1

MY INVENTION: SUPER CHAIR!

- Write, cut and stick.

SUPER CHAIR CAN

.....

SUPER CHAIR HAS GOT

.....



- Read and choose.

☐ FLY



☐ SWIM



SUPER CHAIR CAN...

☐ RUN



☐ JUMP



SUPER CHAIR HAS GOT:



TWO WINGS

TWO FLIPPERS

FOUR TRAINERS

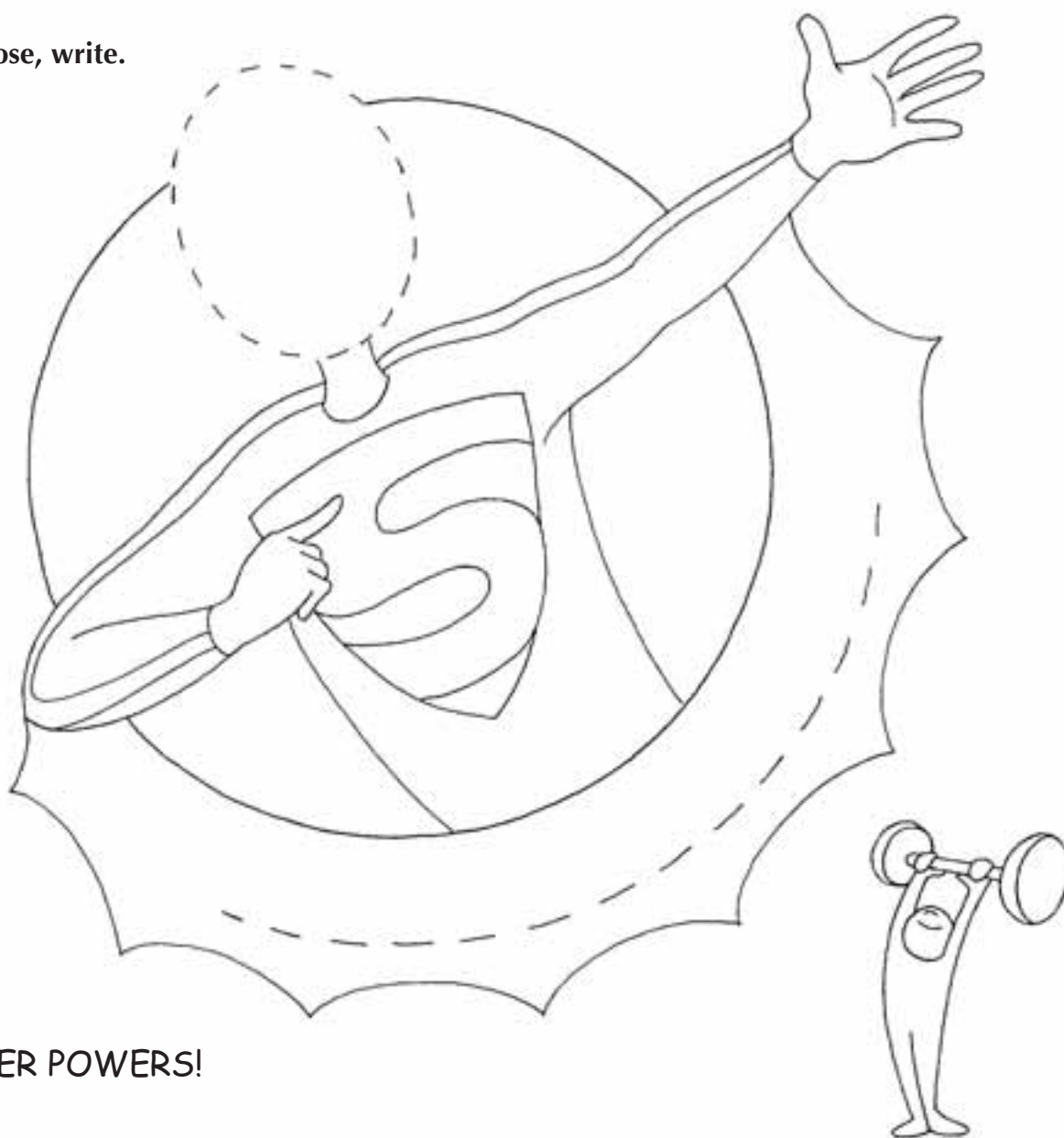
FOUR SPRINGS



WORKSHEET 2

IT'S SUPER ME!

Read, choose, write.



MY SUPER POWERS!

I CAN, AND

BUT (MY WEAKNESSES)

I CAN'T, OR





Feature article: Linking words to physical movement in order to facilitate memorisation

Roberta Calboli and Paola Pasini

The problematic elements to be considered when planning an English lesson in the Primary school are very different from those to be considered when preparing a Maths or Italian language lesson as the children are not able to use English as an active language.

Indeed teachers of Italian as L1 are, very often, not familiar with flashcards, body language, visual and listening supports, aspects of L2 language teaching techniques.

Different kinds of communication have to be introduced and practised. For example, L2 teachers use **nursery rhymes, rhymes, chants, songs, tongue twisters** and **drama** more frequently.

These activities help to increase the children's involvement in the learning process and to facilitate memorisation of new words and structures in the foreign language.

In the latest documents referring to the Italian National Curriculum, it is underlined that teachers in the Primary school should use a methodology based mainly on **doing** (*learning by doing*). CLIL, *Content and Language Integrated Learning*, is also mentioned as an important aspect of learning, the teaching of the English language through integration into the teaching of other non-linguistic subjects and vice-versa. For instance, linking music and movement together can be used to encourage and increase memorisation of new lexis and structures for these main reasons:

- rhythm of music helps children remember stress and sequence of the words in an enjoyable and involving context
- body movement reinforces learning (T.P.R.)
- children are generally interested in music and through its use motivation is increased
- working together gives everyone the chance to play an active role.

The following describes an activity that combines music and movement to help memorise lexis referring to the body.

The methodology can also be used for different topics.

Song *If you're happy*

Step 1

Sing the song and act the following movements:
clap your hands snap your fingers
stamp your feet nod your head

Step 2 The Music Box

Write the instructions in step 1 on cards, fold and put them into a special box, the Music Box. Ask a child to take a card out of the box and to read and say the sentence. This child becomes the first *orchestra director*; when he/she opens the card, the other children have to play the body sound or repeat the words together and when he/she closes the card the children have to stop immediately. The children who do not stop quickly enough miss a turn or are eliminated from the game. The teacher can add other words according to the class level.

Step 3 Cut and stick your body actions

Distribute copies of the worksheet. The children have to read, cut and stick the body actions next to the right part of the body.

Step 4 Body percussion

Write on the blackboard a *body percussion* sequence using drawings instead of words. For example, *hands, hands, feet, feet* can become two drawings of two hands plus two drawings of two feet. Body percussion means using the body as a musical instrument: it can be used to play music by beating different parts of the body. Play it with the children who, of course, have to act and say the word at the same time. Chants, rhymes and songs can all be accompanied by body percussion.



WORKSHEET



<i>CLAP YOUR HANDS</i>	<i>STAMP YOUR FEET</i>	<i>NOD YOUR HEAD</i>
<i>SNAP YOUR FINGERS</i>	<i>SLAP YOUR KNEES</i>	<i>SLAP YOUR ARMS</i>
<i>SAY "HELLO"</i>	<i>SLAP YOUR LEGS</i>	<i>SLAP YOUR HEAD</i>



Feature article: Linking words to physical movement in order to facilitate memorisation

Cecilia Perillo

Children will remember what is meaningful and attractive: memory within the learning experience.

The word 'memory' comes from the name of the Greek goddess of memory – **Mnemosyne**, pronounced 'Nem-o-seen'. Memory is the ability to recall to our minds what we know, our experiences, those things we are able to do and how to do them. We rely on our memories to perform everyday tasks and to cope with the future. **Mnemonics** (another Greek word), pronounced "ne-mon'-ics" is defined as a device which aids the memorisation of all those things I mentioned previously. A common mnemonic device is a rhyme.

The following is an example of how teachers can help children to use practical, authentic language through a **rhyme**. Children love to dramatise and act and **movement** encourages and assists memorisation and provides an element of fun. The more you get movement and rhythm involved in your classes, the more **real** the 'picture' will be in the child's mind.

How are you? I'm fine, thank you.
How are you? I'm fine, too. (picture: shaking hands)

The idea is to cater for all learning styles and **physical movement** can play an important role in language input in EFL classes. Movement-based activities can be used as warmers or as input to introduce language or for consolidation activities at the end of a learning process. **Kinaesthetic** learning is a process where students learn by actively carrying out physical activities and pedagogical research has indicated that it is a powerful learning style. Young children are not conscious language learners and therefore it is necessary to give them ample opportunities to experience language and take part in activities in which communication takes place naturally and **learning styles** are taken into consideration.

Total physical response (**TPR**) combines listening with physical movement and actions are used to represent vocabulary taught in the target language. This is a very engaging way to introduce new vocabulary and to generate movement in the classroom. In this way, it becomes very easy to practice and remember, for example, the definite and indefinite article:

Go to the bookshelf, take a book, open the book, close the book, put the book back on the shelf.

Skills including physical co-ordination, learning a dance

step, sports, crafts, miming, acting, cooking instructions (*put three teaspoons of sugar in the cup*), and learning magic tricks (*take a 5 euro note and fold it in half...*) are some examples of interacting with the space around children in order to **remember** and process information.

Tips

- **Frequently move the children around the classroom for different activities.**
- **Increase your use of drama, dance and physical education.**
- **Increase opportunities for learning through playful exploration and manipulation of objects.**
- **Help children remember information by using shapes, colours and space.**

It is often easier to remember long lists of words by grouping similar things together. Try the worksheet activity which focuses on trying to remember lists of sports through the **movement** of matching, colouring, covering the list and writing down all the sports that the student can remember. When you are thinking about words, numbers and lists you are using the left side of the brain and when you notice colours or pick up the rhythm in your favourite song or use your **imagination** it is the right side that is doing the work. It is important to use your imagination when learning and remembering things because it gets the right side working hard, when normally you would rely on the left. This can happen a lot at school because many of the things a child needs to learn such as dates, facts and figures belong to the left side of the brain. **Association** is all about making links between what we know. For example, if you visit your old school, you might see or hear something that brings back a vivid memory. This means that the memory has been stored in your brain and the sight or sound has triggered off your memory *muscle*. The right side of the brain is sometimes referred to as the *artist*, whereas the left side is regarded as the *judge*. Pupils learning in a **creative climate** usually have a strong inclination to use their imaginations, they are able to play around with ideas and experiment with alternative approaches to problem solving. Imagination is used to create and strengthen *word-image* associations. The more vividly you imagine and visualize a situation, the more effectively the memory is stored for **later access**.

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Cecilia Perillo is a teacher at all levels in both the public and private sectors. She is a teacher trainer for LANG-Pearson Longman and co-author of *Sing Along*, *Primary Teaching Files* and *Let's Celebrate CD*, LANG-Pearson Longman.



WORKSHEET

- Match the word to the picture.
- Colour the pictures.
- Cover the worksheet and remember the sports.

skiing



basketball



tennis



ice-hockey



ice-skating



golf



beach-volleyball



swimming



rugby



cricket



END NOTES

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