



Using TPR Storytelling in Sonrisas Level III

TPR Storytelling[®] (TPRS) is a method of teaching languages that was developed by Blaine Ray, a Spanish teacher in California. In a nutshell, it's a way of teaching language holistically without having to teach grammar rules.

The method requires the teacher to lead students through a process of telling a story, in the target language, which the students actually create by adding their own details to the story. (This is a process called “asking” the story).

The method occurs in three steps: students are first pre-taught vocabulary structures that are used in the story in order to establish comprehensible input; then, students create the story by adding their own details; and finally, they perform a reading and translation that incorporate the language structures from the story.

TPRS is a highly effective language-learning method because:

- It is very effective at building comprehension and speaking skills.
- It provides students with lots of conversational repetition in the target language using comprehensible input—giving them the opportunity to internalize vocabulary and language structures by developing a strong sense for what sounds correct in the target language.
- Student engagement is high. Students take ownership of the content of the story because they create it.
- It's fun for students—it engages their imaginations and gives them the opportunity for deeper learning. Their retention of language structures increases through connection to the story, and they're able to apply grammar concepts throughout a fun and creative process.
- Students are not learning vocabulary and language structures in isolation; rather, students are practicing them throughout the storytelling process and applying them during the reading.

In Sonrisas Level III, TPRS is the central part of each unit. We've found it to be very effective with upper elementary students and middle school students. The cultural theme and grammar concepts for each unit are woven into each story—creating a deep learning experience for students over the course of each unit.

Students not only engage conversationally with the stories; they also practice writing Spanish as they transcribe each story they create. Teachers also have the option of incorporating art and drama into the storytelling process.

TPRS involves several unique techniques that we explain in more detail in the section of the Level III Teacher's Manual, *How to Teach Sonrisas Level III*. We also include TPRS training videos on the Level III Resource CD and on the Sonrisas Spanish channel on YouTube.