PPP Method of Lesson

The Teaching Process for EFL

During your [SEE TEFL certification course](https://seetefl.com/4-week-tefl/) you will become more familiar with an established [methodology for teaching English as a foreign language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_pedagogy) known as 3Ps or PPP – presentation, practice, production. The PPP method could be characterized as a common-sense approach to teaching as it consists of 3 stages that most people who have learnt how to do anything will be familiar with.

The first stage is the presentation of an aspect of language in a context that students are familiar with, much the same way that a swimming instructor would demonstrate a stroke outside the pool to beginners.

The second stage is practice, where students will be given an activity that gives them plenty of opportunities to practice the new aspect of language and become familiar with it whilst receiving limited and appropriate assistance from the teacher. To continue with the analogy, the swimming instructor allowing the children to rehearse the stroke in the pool whilst being close enough to give any support required and plenty of encouragement.

The final stage is production where the students will use the language in context, in an activity set up by the teacher who will be giving minimal assistance, like the swimming instructor allowing his young charges to take their first few tentative strokes on their own.



Advantages of the PPP (3Ps) Method

As with any well-established methodology, PPP has its critics and a couple of relatively new methodologies are starting to gain in popularity such as [TBL (task based learning)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Task-based_language_learning) and [ESA (engage, study, activate)](https://albisto.blogspot.com/2007/06/engage-study-activate.html). However, even strong advocates of these new methodologies do concede that new EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers find the PPP methodology easiest to grasp, and that these new teachers, once familiar with the PPP methodology, are able to use TBL and ESA more effectively than new trainees that are only exposed to either TBL or ESA.

Indeed, there are strong arguments to suggest that experienced teachers trained in PPP use many aspects of TBL and ESA in their lessons, and that these new methodologies are in truth, the PPP methodology with some minor adjustments.

At this stage you might well be asking, It’s all very well having a clear methodology for how to teach but how do I know what to teach? The language that we call English today has absorbed a great many influences over the last thousand years or so. It has resulted in it becoming a language that can provide us with a sparklingly witty pop culture reference from a Tarantino script, 4 simple words spoken by Dr. Martin Luther King that continue to inspire us today, and something as simple and mundane as a road traffic sign.

The Job of the EFL Teacher

As EFL teachers our job is to break down this rich and complex language into manageable chunks for our students. These chunks of language are what EFL teachers call target languageWe are going to look at an example of what a piece of target language might be and then you will be given more detail on how this would be taught in a PPP lesson before finally watching three videos with some key aspects of each stage of the lesson highlighted for you.

During the course we will spend a great deal of time in the training room equipping you with the tools to employ a successful methodology for teaching the English language. You are going to get opportunities to both hone these skills in the training room and put them into practice in authentic classroom settings.

Of course you might be thinking, I don’t have any experience of being in a classroom! How on earth am I going to cope with standing at the front of a class with 20 plus pairs of eyes looking at me waiting to see what I do?

All good TEFL courses are designed to train those with no teaching experience whatsoever. We will spend the first part of the course in the training room making you familiar with all the new skills you will need whilst giving you opportunities to practice them in a supported and controlled environment.

Only after that, will you be put in an authentic classroom environment. It goes without saying that the first time anybody stands up and delivers their first lesson will be a nerve-racking experience. However, it is also an experience that mellows over time, and one that all teachers remember fondly as time goes by and they feel more at home in a classroom.

There will be some of you out there with experience of teaching in a classroom already. You may be well versed in employing many different methodologies and strategies in your classroom already, but many or most will have been with native English speaking students, or those with a near-native levels of English. This means that some of the skills we will be equipping you with may feel a little alien at first, but your experience will not prove to be a hindrance. Indeed, you will already have successful classroom management skills that can be adapted to fit a second language classroom fairly easily and other trainees on the course will benefit from your presence.

In addition, some of the skills that you will learn on the course can also be adapted to work in a classroom of native speakers too, and it is not unusual for experienced teachers to comment on exactly this after completing a good TEFL course.

Target Language in an EFL Lesson

Recall how it is the job of the EFL teacher to break down the rich tapestry of the English language into manageable bite-size chunks, suitable for study in an average study period of 50 minutes. As mentioned, we refer to these chunks as target language. As EFL teachers we will select target language that is appropriate for both the skill level and the age of the students.

The target language that you will see being presented in the videos is Likes and dislikes for 6 food items.

The teacher you will watch in the video has a clear aim, which is to ensure that:

\*\*By the end of the lesson, students will know the names of 6 food items in English and will be able to express whether or not they like them in a spoken form by entering into a simple dialogue consisting of,

* Do you like \_\_\_?,
* Yes, I like \_\_\_., or
* No, I don’t like \_\_\_.

The six food items are \_\_\_. In short, the students will be able to name the 6 food items by the end of the lesson and tell whether they like them or not.\*\*

Presentation – Part 1 of PPP

You may have delivered a few presentations in your time but the type of presentation we deliver in a second language classroom will differ quite a bit from those. For a start, you were speaking to proficient users of the English language about something they were, most likely, vaguely familiar with anyway. In an EFL classroom we don’t have those luxuries, so we have to be careful about the language we use and how clearly we present the new language that we wish for our students to acquire.

Let’s look at 4 key things that should be occurring in an effective second language classroom presentation:

1 – Attention in the Classroom

Learners are alert, have focused their attention on the new language and are responsive to cues that show them that something new is coming up. A simple way to ensure some of the above is if the teacher makes the target language interesting to the students.

The language will of course, be of more interest to the students if it is put into some type of context that the students are familiar with. In the case of likes and dislikes for young learners a visual associated with a facial expression will be something they can relate to. Naturally, the easier it is for them to relate to the context, the more likely they are to be interested in the language presented.

In the case of the target language for the videos a smiley face visual and a sad face visual on the whiteboard linked to the phrases I like \_\_\_. and I don’t like \_\_\_., respectively. A teacher might make exaggerated facial expressions whilst presenting these ideas to make the ideas both fun and easy to perceive for the students. This is often referred to as contextualization in EFL classrooms.

2 – Perception and Grading of Language

We want to ensure that the learners both see and hear the target language easily. So if a whiteboard is being used, it should be well organized with different colors being used to differentiate between different ideas. If images are being used, there should be no ambiguity as to what they represent and sounds made by the teacher should not only be clear, but should be repeated and the teacher needs to check the material has been perceived correctly, and can do this by asking the students to repeat the sounds he or she is making.

Learners will be bombarded with a series of images corresponding to sounds made by the teacher during the presentation stage and it is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that they are not overloaded with information and that clear links are being made between the images and the associated sounds.

Therefore, there is an onus on the teacher not to use any unnecessary language at this stage. That is to say the grading of their language should be appropriate for the level of their students and the language they use should consist of the target language and any other essential language required to present the ideas clearly such as commands like listen! The commands should, whenever possible, be supported by clear body language.

3 – Target Language Understanding

The learners must be able to understand the meaning of the material. So in the case of likes and dislikes they perhaps need to see an image of a happy face and associate it with liking something and a sad face and associate that with disliking something.

We also need to have a way of checking if the learners did indeed, understand the material presented without asking the question, Do you understand? as this invariably triggers the response yes! from learners who are keen to please their teacher and not to lose face. We, as teachers, need to be a little more imaginative in checking our student’s understanding of material presented. Ideally, we should be checking the learners’ understanding in context. In the videos you will see, expect to see the teacher doing this during the presentation stage.

4 – Short-term Memory in the Classroom

The learners will have to retain the information from the presentation and use it further on in the lesson when we have consolidated their learning of the material and we will give them an opportunity to produce it on their own.

For the target language to be retained by the learners, it needs to be engaging and we need to consider that different learners will remember the material in different ways. Some by the way the material is seen, others by the way it is heard, and others if it is associated with a physical movement perhaps. We need to make sure our presentation has something to enable all these types of learners to retain the information.

Presentation Stage of a PPP EFL Lesson with subtitles

Practice – Part 2 of PPP

Practice can roughly be defined as the rehearsal of certain behaviors with the objective of consolidating learning and improving performance. Below are some of the characteristics of an effective language practice:

1 – Practice Validity

The practice activity must have learners rehearsing the skill or material it purports to practice. So in the case of the lesson you will view shortly, it must have the learners practicing both the food vocabulary items and the structure of the dialogue, i.e.,

* Do you like \_\_\_?,
* Yes, I like \_\_\_, or
* No, I don’t like \_\_\_.

2 – Pre-learning

Before we ask our learners to practice new language, we must have ensured that they have some understanding of the new language. We will have done this during the presentation stage. If they have not had the new language clearly presented to them and been aided in being given some understanding of it, then they (the learners) will not be practicing at this stage but will be going through another initial learning stage. Worse still, they will feel like they are being tested on something they haven’t been allowed to gain an understanding of.

3 – Volume (Amount) of Practice

Here, we are referring to the number of opportunities every student in the class has to practice the new language and not the level of sound. The more opportunities each student has to practice the target language, the more effective this stage of the lesson is.

So in the case of likes and dislikes, we might give the students individual worksheets where they have to fill in some part of the dialogue and the name of a food.

4 – Success Orientation

The students should have an opportunity to practice the new language and in order for this to happen they need an activity that both stretches them and is a task they can complete because of course, if it wasn’t, they wouldn’t be getting any opportunity to practice.

5 – Issuing Activity Instructions and Managing the Activity

Of course, whilst it is important to select an appropriate activity, it is equally important to issue clear and unambiguous instructions for the activity itself so all of your students are clear as to what is expected of them. We will be issuing instructions for the activity in the student’s second language so we need to make use of clear visuals to support any language we have to use and strong demonstrations of what is expected.

Managing the activity should consist of the teacher being mobile during the activity, offering praise and being on hand to show struggling students where relevant information may be found on the whiteboard.

Practice Stage of PPP EFL Lesson with subtitles

Production – Part 3 of PPP

The students have now had the target language presented to them clearly and have had an opportunity to practice it in a controlled environment. If we return to the swimming instructor analogy, it is now time to let them take their first few tentative strokes in the pool on their own with supervision and encouragement from the instructor.

As with the practice stage, we have to initiate an activity that allows them opportunities to use the target language in the classroom. In fact, the characteristics of a production stage activity are quite similar to the practice stage with one key difference and that is, student autonomy.

During this stage, the students will be producing the target language with minimal assistance from the teacher as opposed to the practice stage where the teacher will be on hand to assist students rehearse target language that has only just been presented to them.

Here are some of the key aspects of a production stage activity:

1 – Volume (Amount) of Production

As with practice, we want to create as many opportunities for our students to produce the target language albeit this time, more independently. This means we avoid activities where the students speak to the teacher as this allows limited opportunities (the students have to wait their turn before they get a chance to speak to the teacher). Instead for spoken activities, we look to get the students speaking in pairs, speaking to each other as much as possible, whilst we as the teachers go around the classroom offering minimal assistance but lots of positive reinforcement.

2 – Production Validity

Again, we should initiate an activity that allows the students to produce the target language that we presented to them and not a variation on it (although this is not strictly true with higher level students).

So, in the case of likes and dislikes for food, we should set up an activity where the students are saying, Do you like pineapple? as opposed to, What do you think of pineapples?

3 – Production Contextualization

The activity should simulate a real–life situation where they (the students) may use the target language. In the case of likes and dislikes for food this might be a menu with images of the food items or perhaps a series of images of the food items to prompt the dialogue,

* Do you like \_\_\_?,
* Yes, I like \_\_\_\_, or
* No, I don’t like \_\_\_.

Note that a successful production activity will also have aspects that set it apart from a practice activity, including:

4 – Student Autonomy

Students will be speaking, using the target language, with ideally, little or no support from the teacher.

They shouldn’t be looking things up on either the whiteboard or on any materials they have on their desk (e.g. a completed practice worksheet) so a teacher may choose to erase information from the whiteboard for this stage and the teacher might also choose to get students to clear their desks.

5 – Issuing Instructions for an Activity

As with the practice stage whilst it is important to select an appropriate activity, it is equally important to issue clear and unambiguous instructions for the activity itself so all of our students are clear as to what is expected of them. We will be issuing instructions for the activity in the student’s second language so we need to make use of clear visuals to support any language we have to use and strong demonstrations of what is expected, just as we will have done during the practice stage.

6 – Correcting Errors During the Activity

It is important that the students get as many opportunities to speak using the newly acquired language. Therefore, a teacher shouldn’t be drowning them out by speaking at length, over the top of them to correct any errors. This obviously differs from the practice where students expect the teacher to assist them as they rehearse (not produce) newly acquired language.

Clever use of body language by the teacher will enable them to be discrete in correcting errors and will allow them to offer much needed encouragement to students as well.