

TCI-TPRS Presentation Information

Teaching with Comprehensible Input (TCI-TPRS)

Teaching with Comprehensible Input (TCI) is an approach to second language acquisition (SLA) which is based on contemporary SLA research. Inspired by the idea of using comprehensible input in his high school Spanish classes, a US teacher, Blaine Ray, developed a method called **Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS)** in the 1990's. The method continues to be developed to this day by a vibrant community of language teachers and its popularity in the US is increasing every year. The TPRS method is used with great success with students of all ages including primary school children through to adults and across a wide variety of languages.

A key feature that differentiates TPRS from most other methods is the focus on language *acquisition* rather than language *learning*. Acquired language (by virtue of the fact that it has been acquired) is not forgotten as often happens when language is “learnt”. Success is at the heart of this approach, and most students find they are able to achieve well with little effort. This in turn creates a virtuous circle in which students are happy and enjoy their language classes which then leads to greater participation and better outcomes.

About this presentation

This presentation will delve into what Teaching with Comprehensible Input (TCI) is, explain how it is being implemented in classrooms in a Queensland high school, and the results that are being obtained with the school's Years 7-9 students.

Participants will discover how TCI-TPRS students acquire language naturally through fun and interesting student-created stories and personalised questioning which encourage high engagement. Once targeted language has been acquired/ comprehended following extensive input provided by the teacher, students are then guided to read a scripted language text (Chinese) without pre-learning or memorising any characters. Examples of student speaking and writing will be presented to show that output, when it appears, is spontaneous, unprepared, unforced and often without many of the errors that occur with traditional teaching methods.

This presentation will cover:

- 1. A short demonstration of a TPRS lesson:** Participants will understand how effective TPRS is by participating in a short demonstration Chinese lesson in which they will experience first hand what a TPRS class feels like for a student. They will experience the difference between a class taught with the goal of language acquisition rather than language learning. Participants will come to appreciate why acquiring target structures and new words via story (rather than trying to learn them via memorising vocab lists, reading textbook dialogues, doing exercises and pair work) works so well with young students.
- 2. What is Comprehensible Input?:** The distinction between *acquisition* and *learning* will be discussed, and how using an acquisition paradigm differs to the learning paradigm that is embedded in traditional grammar, text books and most communicative language teaching approaches.
- 3. How does one teach with Comprehensible Input?:** Some of the key techniques of the TPRS method will be described and discussed.
- 4. Results we are seeing in the classroom:** While the focus of TPRS is on input, student speaking and writing output when it appears is spontaneous, unprepared and unforced. Participants will see what students can do when language is acquired rather than practised, memorised or rote “learnt”. A video will show students reading an unfamiliar story and

answering spontaneous questions about the story. Some examples of students' written work will illustrate how students can produce original work spontaneously without preparation. We will discuss the topic of Cold Character Reading (CCR) and show how teachers of scripted languages can have beginner students reading character stories in the very early stages without the need to teach characters! CCR is a game changer for scripted languages that gets impressive results.



About the presenter

Ian Perry is an Experienced Senior Teacher at The Gap State High School in Brisbane where he is the Subject Area Co-ordinator. He has taught Chinese across all year levels from Years 7 to 12 since the early 1990s, is a current member of the QCAA State Panel for Chinese and is the Convenor of the MLTAQ TCI (Teaching with Comprehensible Input) Network. In 2015 he was awarded the Confucius Institute at QUT Excellence in Teaching Award and was selected as a finalist in the Excellent Leadership in Teaching and Learning category of the 2016 Queensland College of Teachers Excellence in Teaching Awards.

In 2014, Ian began implementing TCI-TPRS in his junior secondary Chinese classes and in July 2015 he trained in the TPRS method with Terry Waltz PhD at the US government-sponsored Startalk program at the University of Hawaii for 3 weeks. Since returning from Hawaii, Ian has given many presentations across Australia including the 2016 National Chinese Language Teachers Conference held at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, the 2016 State Conference of the Chinese Language Teachers Association of South Australia, the 2017 IML (Institute of Modern Languages) Annual Professional Development Evening at the University of Queensland, and recently at the 2017 Japanese Language Teachers Association of Victoria (JLTAV) Annual Conference. In January 2017, in conjunction with the MLTAQ, Ian organised the first TCI-TPRS Conference in Australia which was held in Brisbane and conducted by two leading overseas presenters and attended by over 130 participants from across Australia. For the past two years Ian has opened his classroom to teachers to observe TPRS classes in action and to discuss the techniques used by a TPRS teacher to teach Chinese.

Contact Ian
mltaqconvenortci@gmail.com