

Pointed Pronunciation

Prep Time: 10 min / 20 min

Aim: To target specific sounds that students have trouble distinguishing/producing
Level: Elementary or for focused practice at higher levels
Time: 5-10 minutes
Materials: One pronunciation table for each student and teacher/tutor
Arrangement: Small groups of students with a teacher/tutor for each would be ideal

Description

An activity that gives students a chance to focus specifically on single syllable sounds that they may be struggling to distinguish and/or produce clearly.

In Class

- 1 Students sit in small groups with a teacher/tutor for each group.
- 2 Each student is given a pronunciation table
- 3 The teacher/tutor says one of the sounds on the table. Students point to the sound they think they heard.
- 4 This process is repeated, hopefully with students improving in the accuracy of their responses.
- 5 When students seem to grasp the sounds well, the teacher/tutor directs them to take turns saying a sound. The teacher/tutor indicates what sound they think the student said.
- 6 Finally, the sounds are quickly practiced in the context of words and sentences that the students are already familiar with.





jiān	qián	diǎn
jū	yú	qǔ
jī	yí	qǐ



Notes

This type of activity can be a very effective way to give direction to inexperienced tutors. You may need to stress to the tutor that the activity should not last very long (set an alarm if necessary!). If this type of drill lasts much more than eight or nine minutes, it quickly becomes tiresome and probably is of little lasting value since the sounds are not closely connected to meaning. The follow up of putting sounds in the context of words and sentences is the chance to counter that aspect.

While this is a relatively quick and easy way to target specific sounds, it is a form of 機械操練 *mechanical drill*. I don't throw out such drills automatically, but I would suggest using this activity very sparingly. While it could be used at the beginning stage of a course to introduce Pinyin and basic sounds, my personal feeling is that it is better saved for later as a tool for very specific pronunciation work. In this context, my students have commented that they feel it was interesting and beneficial. I'm not certain they would feel the same way if it was used much more than five minutes a week. It is the kind of activity that can quickly become dull.

			
dōu	tóu	zǒu	hòu
duō	tuó	huǒ	zuò
xiān	nián	tiǎn	xiàn
jiān	qián	diǎn	jiàn
jū	yú	qǔ	qù
jī	yí	qǐ	qì

