

Teaching Grammar

Teaching grammar with awareness of learner needs

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What is the problem with:

"Read the rules and do the exercises"?

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- Language is presented out of context, so it is difficult to understand the meaning.
- It is dull.
- It caters to the preferences of more motivated, rule focused students.
- It is less memorable as learners do not have to think about MFP
- Pronunciation is rarely addressed.
- As teachers we should be doing more to cater to the needs and preferences of our learners.

Look at the stages and timings of a grammar lesson:

- **Put the stages in the correct order.**
- **Decide how much time is appropriate for each stage (imagining you have a 40 minute lesson).**

Staging (and timing) of a grammar lesson

The teacher sets a task which elicits the target language, for example a comprehension question related to the reading or listening, where the answer is the grammar structure for the lesson.	2
The teacher addresses meaning.	4
The teacher addresses form.	2
The teacher addresses pronunciation	4
The teacher provides controlled practice of the structure.	12
The teacher provides freer practice of the structure.	15

Dealing with meaning

How is meaning conveyed in the classroom?

Language is presented in an understandable and
accessible context.

Dealing with meaning

She noticed a cave that she had missed on her first visit.

Dealing with meaning

She noticed a cave that **she had missed** on her first visit.

Is this the past, present or future?

How many actions were there?

Which one happened first?

Form

....a cave that **she had missed** on her first visit

....a cave that she had missed on her first visit

Subject + had + past participle

Pronunciation – What to focus on?



....a cave that she had missed on her first visit

Sentence stress and weak forms

....a **cave** that she'd **missed** on her **first** visit

- What is problematic about drilling longer utterances?
- What can we do to overcome this?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of drilling from a written source?
- When we conduct drilling, is it just helping pronunciation?



Strategies for drilling longer utterances:

- Backchaining: break the utterance into chunks and start drilling with the final chunk first, building forward, and ending with the complete utterance.
- Keyword drilling: identify the stressed words in the utterance and drill these first to establish the rhythm. When students are comfortable with the rhythm drill the complete utterance .



Strategies for drilling longer utterances:

- Backchaining: break the utterance into chunks and start drilling with the final chunk first, building forward, and ending with the complete utterance (because the part at the end of the utterance is the bit the students need to remember for the longest).
- Keyword drilling: identify the stressed words in the utterance and drill these first to establish the rhythm. When students are comfortable with the rhythm drill the complete utterance (because English is a stress-timed language, it draws attention to how words are often linked together).

Practice



If I had known you were stressed, I wouldn't have shouted.

Catering to learners' needs when we teach grammar:

- Language should be presented in context.
- Learners learn best when they are cognitively involved, rather than just being presented with rules.
- Prioritise the treatment of meaning, check understanding.
- Remember, pronunciation is a key learner need. Be ready to address sentence stress and weak forms.

Think about the ideas from this session, which ones will be most useful to implement into your own grammar lessons?

Any questions?



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