Professional Development Programme

Adopting Effective and Creative Strategies to Enhance Students' Grammar Knowledge in the Primary English Classroom

Patrick Leung
Centre for Applied English Studies, HKU

Workshop Agenda

● An overview of learning and teaching of grammar in context (e.g., form, meaning and use)

● Enhancing teachers' knowledge in grammar teaching (e.g., material selection, effective and creative grammar learning and teaching strategies, assessment of grammar at the text level)

● Demonstration and hands-on activities

What is Grammar?

- Grammar is an essential component of language learning.

- "a knowledge of what words can go where and what form these words should take" (Harmer, 2015, p. 32)

- "the way words are put together to make correct sentences" (Ur, 2012, p. 76)

- "a nourishing resource that will strengthen students' learning of the language" (Burns, 2011, p. 76)

What is Grammar?

● Four major senses of grammar (Weaver, 1996):

1. Grammar as **prescriptions** for **how to use structures and words**

2. Grammar as a **description** of **syntactic structure**

3. Grammar as **rhetorically** effective use of syntactic structures

4. Grammar as the **functional command** of sentence structure that enables us to **comprehend and produce language**

English Language Education

Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide
(Primary 1 – Secondary 6)

Prepared by
The Curriculum Development Council

Recommended for use in schools by
The Education Bureau
HKSARG
2017

KS 1	*teach grammar in context* through **reading materials** and *adopt task-based activities* to develop students' language skills and generic skills (e.g. communication skills and creativity)
KS 2	enhance grammar learning by providing a wide range of materials and activities in which students have to apply what they have learnt *in context*, *and reduce the use of mechanical grammar drills*

Learning and Teaching Grammar in Context

Grammar is a means to an end rather than a body of knowledge to be learnt for its own sake. Grammar is best learnt in meaningful contexts, where students are exposed to authentic language use and can make connections between language forms and functions. The task-based approach to English language learning readily lends itself to the learning and teaching of grammar as it provides a context and purpose for engaging students in a task which requires the effective use of the language for its completion. Through learning and teaching grammar in context, students can gain a better understanding of how, why and when to use particular language items and structures.

Form, Meaning and Use

● Knowing form ≠ Knowing meaning and use in authentic discourse

● Knowing form ≠ Communicating the intended meaning

● "… the FMU distinction is a useful guide to help teachers decide the focus of their lessons as well as how to describe and explain grammar to students." (Crawford, 2020, p. 10).

Form, Meaning and Use: Grammaring

● "Grammaring" as a "fifth skill": "the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately" (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 143)

● Accuracy (form)
● Meaningfulness (meaning)
● Appropriacy (use)

Task-based Grammar Learning

English Language Education

Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide
(Primary 1 – Secondary 6)

Prepared by
The Curriculum Development Council

Recommended for use in schools by
The Education Bureau
HKSARG
2017

- Pre-task: Before the task, the teacher identifies the language items and structures needed for completing the task and considers the language support required by students. The teacher then engages students in exercises or activities to help them understand and practise the forms and functions of the target language items and structures.

- While-task: During the task, students apply their grammar knowledge in an authentic context that involves meaningful use of the target language items and structures to complete the task. Students are guided to evaluate their own learning and reflect on how grammar makes meaning in the process.

- Post-task: Extended tasks or projects which provide new contexts for the use of the language items and structures previously learnt can be provided for further application and consolidation purposes. Concepts about the use of the target language items and structures are clarified and reinforced.
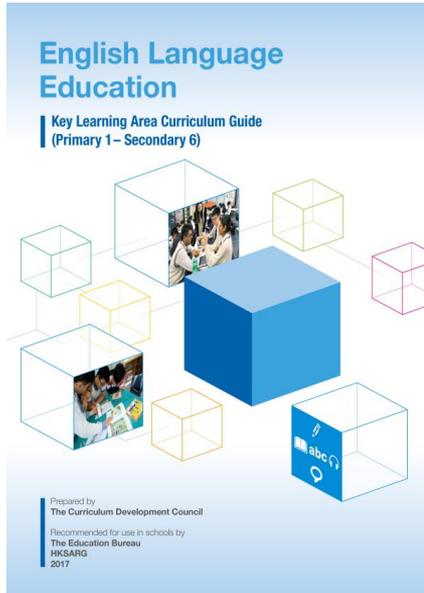
English Language Education

Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide
(Primary 1 – Secondary 6)

Prepared by
The Curriculum Development Council

Recommended for use in schools by
The Education Bureau
HKSARG
2017

4.2.4   Learning and Teaching of Text Grammar

The task-based approach engages students in interacting and communicating in the target language with their attention principally focusing on its meaningful use rather than the language form. Tasks, which often involve the use of different types of texts (e.g. information, persuasive, literary, imaginative), provide opportunities for the learning and teaching of text grammar, which enables students to see how the choice of language items is affected by the context and how it shapes the tone, style and register of a text. Knowledge of text grammar also enables students to understand the organisation and structure of texts. In extending grammar learning from the sentence level to the text level, teachers can guide students to note the forms and functions of the target language items through exploring the salient grammar features (e.g. imperatives, passive voice, relative clauses) of a text and making hypotheses about the communicative functions they perform in awareness raising activities such as text comparison and guided discovery activities.

For the learning and teaching of text grammar, teachers are encouraged to select a variety of text types (e.g. advertisements, biographies, manuals, speeches), themes and content so that students can better understand the features associated with a particular text type and apply the knowledge acquired in writing and creating relevant texts.

English Language Education

Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 6)

Prepared by
The Curriculum Development Council

Recommended for use in schools by
The Education Bureau
HKSARG
2017

Text types

Text types refer to different forms of speech and writing. The intended purpose and audience of each text type determine its structural, stylistic and linguistic features.

To assist students in their development as proficient users of English, it is important that they are introduced systematically to a good variety of text types. Different text types provide meaningful contexts for the learning and purposeful use of specific language items and vocabulary. An awareness of the demands of different text types is essential for successful and effective communication.

Examples of Text Types for Key Stages 1 – 4 (P1 – S6)

A text is produced for a given purpose. Hence, the text types listed below can be of different natures such as narrative, informational, procedural, expository, persuasive, depending on the purposes they serve. Teachers might like to draw students' attention to both the conventions and features of a particular text type and the purpose the text serves in the learning and teaching process.

Text Types for KS1 (P1 – 3)	Additional Text Types for KS2 (P4 – 6)	Additional Text Types for KS3 (S1 – 3)	Additional Text Types for KS4 (S4 – 6)
• Advertisements • Captions • Cards • Cartoons and comics • Charts • Conversations • Coupons • Diaries • Directions • Fables and fairy tales • Forms • Illustrations • Instructions • Labels • Leaflets • Lists • Menus • Notes and messages • Notices • Personal descriptions • Personal letters • Personal recounts • Picture dictionaries • Poems • Postcards • Posters • Product information • Rhymes • Riddles • Rules • Signs • Songs • Stories • Tables • Timetables	• Accounts • Announcements • Autobiographies • Biographies • Blogs • Brochures • Catalogues • Children's encyclopaedias • Dictionaries • Directories • Discussions • Emails • Explanations of how and why • Formal letters • Informational reports • Jokes • Journals • Maps and legends • Myths • News reports • Pamphlets • Plays • Procedures • Questionnaires • Recipes • Telephone conversations • Tongue twisters • Weather reports • Webpages	• Book reviews/reports • Encyclopaedias • Film reviews • Interviews • Itineraries • Letters to the editor • Manuals • Memoranda • Newspaper/ Magazine articles • Presentations • Short films • Short novels • Social media texts • Talks • Trailers	• Abstracts/synopses • Agendas • Debates • Documentaries • Editorials • Essays • Feature articles • Films • Minutes • Novels • Proposals • Speeches • Resumes • Thesauri

Key Stages 1 – 2 (P1 – 6)

The table below outlines the communicative functions that students are expected to learn in KS1 – 2.

| Communicative Functions for KS1 (P1 – 3)	Additional Communicative Functions for KS2 (P4 – 6)
- Ask a person's name and make other simple enquiries - Ask and describe what people are doing - Ask and tell the time, days and dates - Ask permission to do simple things - Bid farewell - Describe the weather - Describe what people do regularly and when and how they do it - Express and respond to oral and written prohibitions - Express and respond to thanks - Express basic needs and wants - Express good wishes - Express inability to understand or respond to something - Express likes and dislikes - Give a simple description of oneself and others in terms of name, age, members of the family, occupations, personal characteristics, habits and abilities - Give and respond to simple rules and instructions - Greet people and respond to greetings - Identify common animals and plants, and give simple descriptions - Identify common objects and describe their sizes, shapes and colours - Identify common signs in Hong Kong - Identify names of some places in Hong Kong - Introduce oneself - Make and respond to apologies - Make simple requests	- Ask and describe what people do regularly and when and how they do it - Ask for and give explanations - Describe simple processes, situations and conditions - Describe the manner and frequency with which people carry out actions, and the purposes and results of these actions - Draw others' attention to people and things and describe them briefly - Express concern and sympathy - Express preferences, ideas and plans - Give a simple account of past events and what people did in the past - Identify names of some cities and countries - Make excuses and give responses - Make predictions and refer to future actions - Make simple comparisons of various kinds - Make simple conditional statements - Make simple suggestions - Offer one's services - Open, maintain and close telephone conversations - Set regulations and give warnings - Talk about future events, actions and processes

Nouns

KS1 (P1 – 3)		KS2 (P4 – 6)	
	Examples		**Examples**
Use nouns or noun phrases to • identify people, animals, events and objects • indicate time, days and dates • show possession	He is a teacher. I like dogs. This is a beautiful bag. Today is my birthday. It is half past ten now. Today is Monday. It is 2ⁿᵈ July today. It is Peter's toy car.	Use nouns or noun phrases to • indicate conditions • refer to quantities or units	I have a headache. I need a piece of paper. I bought a pair of trousers yesterday.
Use the singular form of countable nouns to • refer to one person, animal, event and object	I have a bicycle.	Use "-ing" nouns or noun phrases to • refer to activities	I enjoy singing. My brother likes collecting stamps.
Use the plural form of countable nouns to • refer to more than one person, animal, event and object	Jo has two brothers. She has four balloons.	Use plural nouns to • refer to some tools and other things that people use	You can use scissors to cut the thread. Put on your headphones.
Use plural nouns to • refer to some clothes and other things that people wear	Where are my shorts? Miss Lee wears glasses.	Use collective nouns to • refer to a group of people	Our class is very smart. The shopkeeper called the police.
Use uncountable nouns to • refer to uncountable objects • refer to general things which are not used with numbers	I have milk for breakfast. This is good work.	Use the possessive form of nouns to • refer to a point in time	I have to hand in the project in a week's time.

Verbs

KS1 (P1 – 3)		KS2 (P4 – 6)	
	Examples		**Examples**
Use the simple present tense to • describe habitual actions • talk about present states • express simple truths • express interests, feelings and opinions	I brush my teeth every day. My father is a policeman. Lemons are sour. Cows eat grass. I like swimming. She is afraid of snakes. Mr. Cheung is a nice teacher.	Use the simple present tense to • express needs • express preferences • express thoughts and ideas • talk about schedules • talk about future possibilities or plans	I need a new schoolbag. I like playing volleyball more than basketball. I think Siu Man is correct. The train leaves at 3:00 p.m. If it rains, we shall stay at home.
Use the present continuous tense to • describe actions taking place at the time of speaking	They are singing in the playground now.	Use the simple past tense to • express past conditions • express past needs, interests and feelings • express past thoughts	I had a cold last week. I enjoyed the movie last night. I thought the visit was interesting.
Use the simple past tense to • talk about past activities or events • talk about past states • describe activities or events in a story	Daddy washed the dishes. I was a fat baby. Alice opened the pink box. A little fairy jumped out.	Use the past continuous tense to • refer to actions which were going on when a second one took place • refer to actions which were in progress at a given time in the past	They were watching TV when the fire broke out. At 3:00 p.m. yesterday, we were playing hide-and-seek under a tree.

Selection of Materials: Factors to Consider

- Relevance (e.g., curriculum, topic, theme, students' needs and interests, teacher expertise)
- Clarity (e.g., easy to understand? Logically presented?)
- Appropriacy (e.g., age and level of students; not too easy, not too challenging – comprehensible input)
- Engagement (e.g., engaging and captivating)
- Variety and diversity (e.g., topics and text types)
- Authenticity
- Progression (e.g., build on previous learning – vocabulary and grammar?)
- Practicality (e.g., require excessive preparation or complicated procedures?)
- Adaptability (e.g., can be adapted easily to suit the needs, goals and preferences?)
- Multimodality
- Cultural sensitivity (e.g., avoid biases and stereotypes)
- Skill integration
- Personalisation
- Differentiation
- Contextualization
- Recency
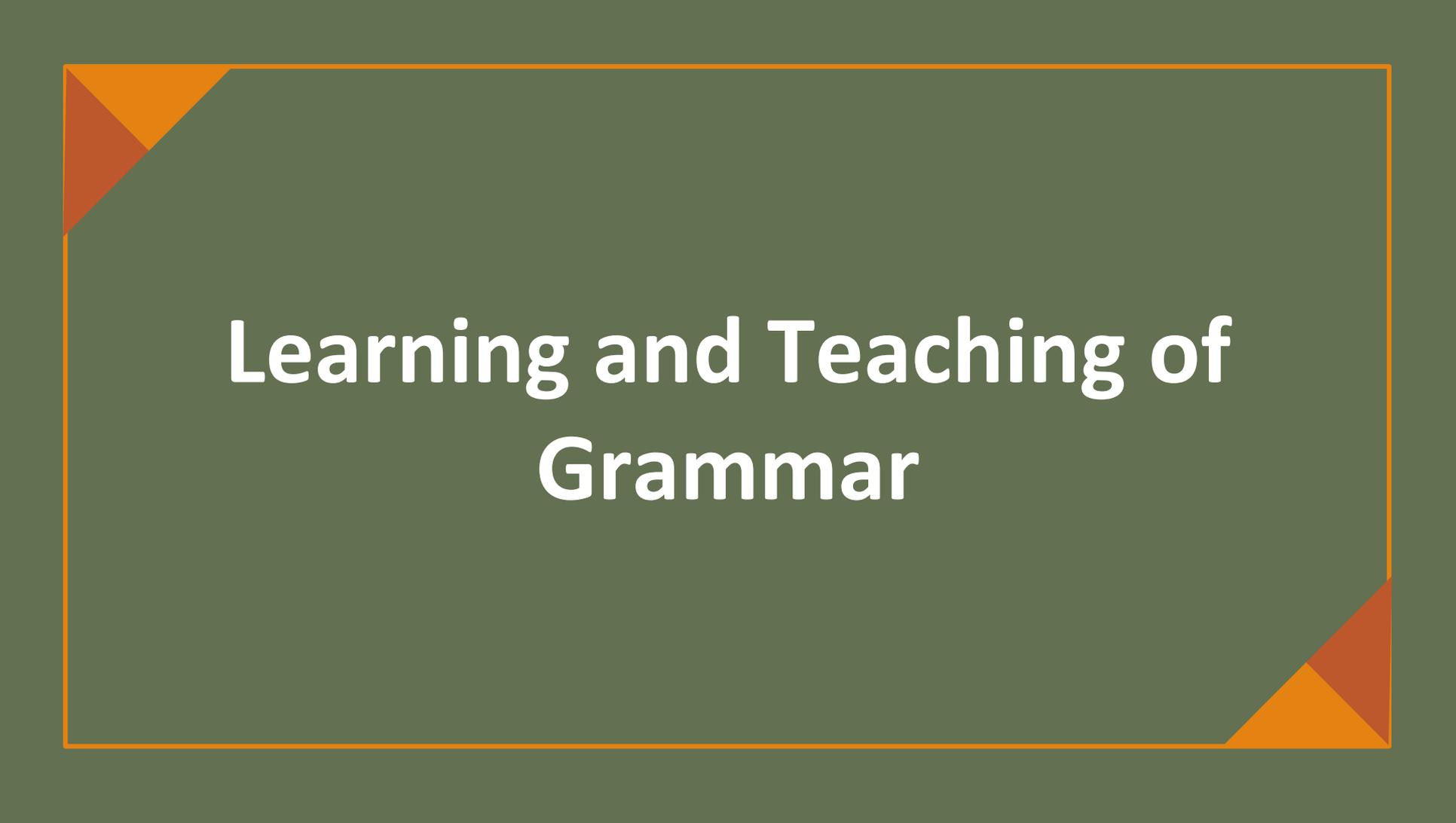
Learning and Teaching of Grammar

Major Grammar Teaching Approaches

Deductive approaches

Inductive approaches

Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks
(Revised March 2023)

Background

Quality learning and teaching resources can facilitate students' construction of knowledge, development of skills and nurturing of positive values, attitudes and behaviour. They help raise students' interest in learning, meet their diverse learning needs, motivate them to extend their learning beyond the classroom and create meaningful learning experiences. Besides, effective use of learning and teaching resources can also develop students' generic skills and enhance their self-directed and independent learning capabilities, thereby laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning and the acquisition of essential skills and qualities required in the 21st century.

Printed Textbooks and e-Textbooks

2. Students can learn in different environments and different ways. Learning is not bounded by textbooks or confined to classrooms, but may take place through a diversity of learning materials and learning experiences. Though textbooks are not the only materials that facilitate learning and teaching, they are still crucial to student learning. Textbooks are not only teaching materials for teachers, but also students' learning materials for lesson preparation, revision and self-learning beyond lesson time.

3. Quality textbooks should be learner-centred, comprehensive and self-contained. They should provide holistic and organised units of learning which can be used as students' learning materials and can help teachers formulate learning and teaching plans to achieve the curriculum targets. They cover not only the core elements of the subject curriculum but also the learning strategies useful for the study of the subject. As textbooks are important learning materials for students, prudent consideration should be given to the quality and quantity of the learning materials in textbook selection / writing / review, so as to equip students with relevant knowledge and skills, and nurture their positive values and attitudes.

4. Textbooks and learning materials on the Recommended Textbook List (RTL) and the Recommended e-Textbook List (eRTL) of the Education Bureau (EDB) have been reviewed under a rigorous quality assurance mechanism. They are written in accordance with the curriculum documents prepared by the Curriculum Development Council to support the implementation of different subject curricula.

Overview of Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks

5. The Guiding Principles aim to -
- provide criteria for teachers in selecting quality textbooks for their students;
- offer a set of criteria for reference by textbook writers and publishers; and
- provide textbook review criteria for textbook reviewers to facilitate the

Guided Noticing

"Second language acquisition research has drawn attention to ***the role of consciousness in language learning***, and in particular to ***the role of noticing*** (Schmidt, 1986, 1990). Consciousness of features of the input can ***serve as a trigger which activates the first stage in the process of incorporating new linguistic features into one's language competence***. The extent to which items are 'noticed' may depend on ***the frequency of encounter with items***, the perceptual saliency of items, ***instructional strategies that can focus the learner's attention*** as well as the kind of task the learner is taking part in."
(Richards & Reppen, 2014, p. 13)

Text-based Approach

● Using a reading/listening text as a springboard for grammar discovery

Reading / listening text	**Comprehension questions**	**Examples of target language**

Practice	**Form**	**Meaning**
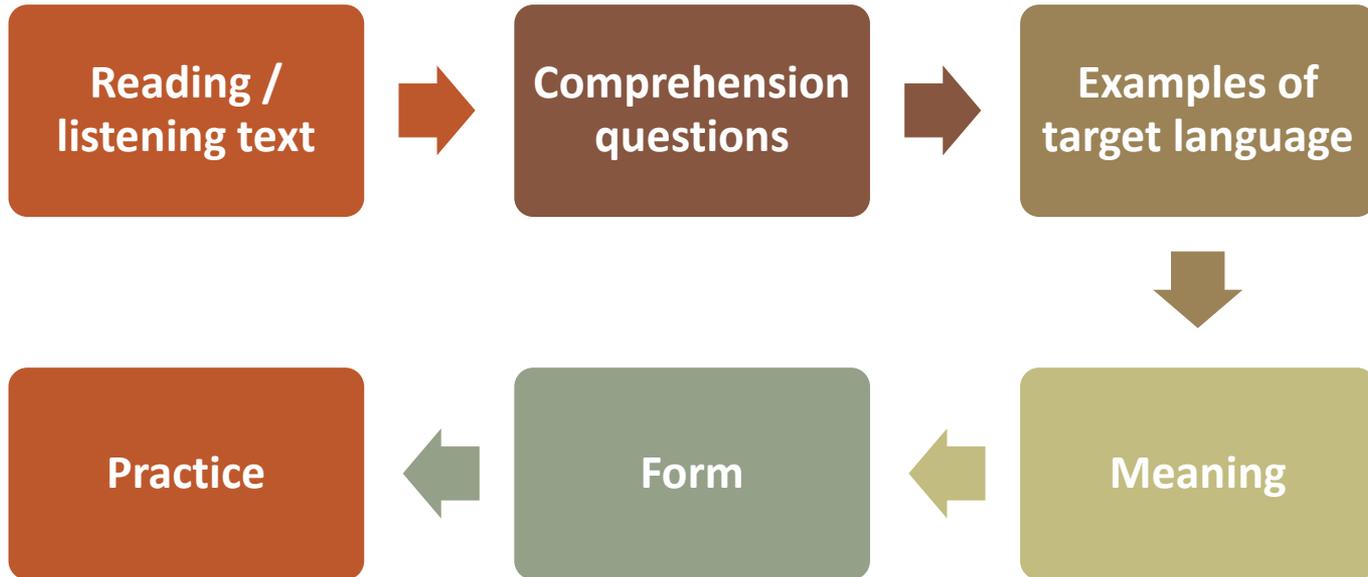
Illustrating Target Language

● "you want the learners really to focus in on a piece of grammar, to see it, think about it and understand it, to become much clearer on its form, meaning and use" (Scrivener, 2011, p. 163).

Teacher explanation

Guided discovery

Self-directed discovery

Illustrating Target Language: Guided Discovery

● Get learners to notice the target language and think about it

● Enable learners to generate their own discoveries and explanations

Possible tasks (Scrivener, 2011):
- ❖ Ask questions that focus on the meaning, context and form
- ❖ Ask learners to analyse sentences from texts
- ❖ Ask learners to reflect on language they have used
- ❖ Ask learners to analyse errors
- ❖ Offer appropriate examples for analysis and discussion

Practical Techniques for Guided Discovery

CR tasks	Minimal grammar pairs	Study examples → Match rules
Tabulation	Pictures to differentiate similar objects	Examine errors

Consciousness-raising (CR) Tasks

● "**deliberate attempt to draw the learner's attention** specifically to the formal properties of the target language" (Rutherford & Sharwood-Smith, 1985, p. 274)

● "**make learners conscious** of the rules that govern the use of particular language forms while providing the opportunity to engage in meaningful interaction" (Benati, 2020, p. 137)

● "In designing CR tasks, the first step is to isolate a specific feature for attention. The learners are provided with **input data illustrating the feature** … They are then required either to **understand** it, or (if they have not been given the rule) to **describe the grammatical structure** in question." (Nunan, 2004, p. 99)
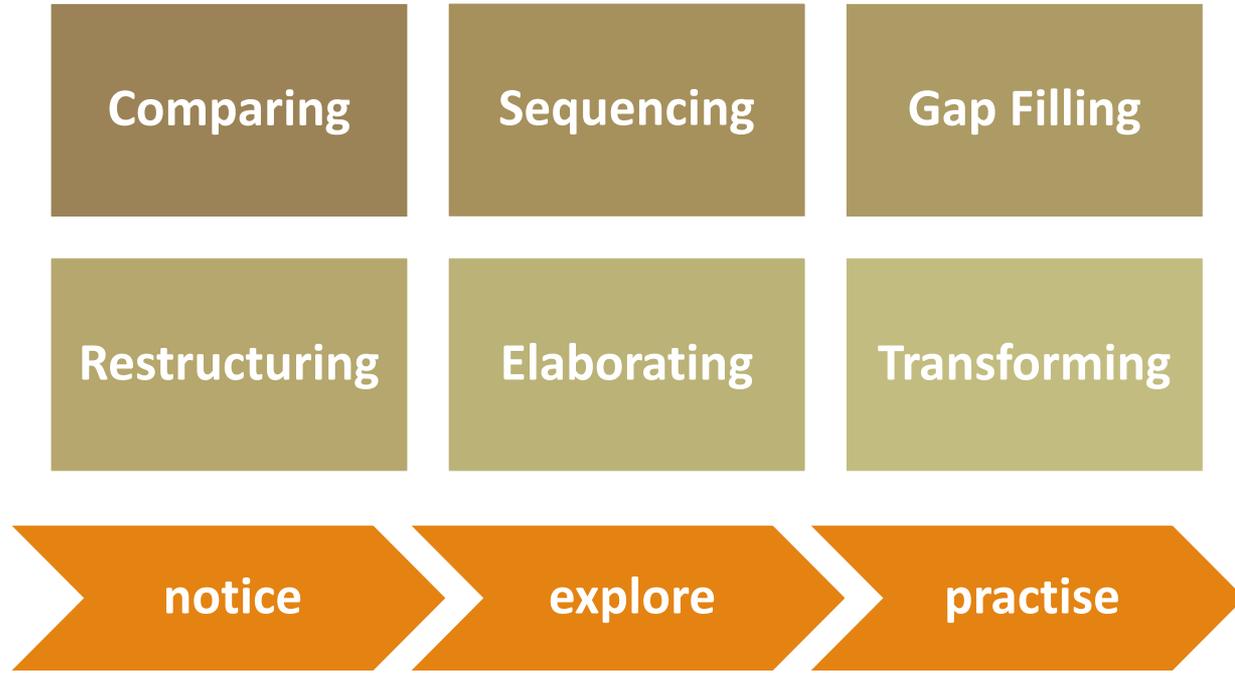
Basic Principles for Grammar Teaching

- Presenting target grammar items in context
- Inductive vs. deductive approaches
- PPP vs. CLT vs. TBLT vs. …
- Form, meaning, use
- Relevance + Personalisation
- Cognitive depth vs. affective depth
- Input → Output
- Accuracy vs. fluency
- Controlled practice vs. free practice
- Corrective feedback
- Incidental teaching vs. intentional teaching
- Task-based: Pre-, While-, Post-
- Teach vs. test
- Students' active involvement
- Differentiation

Creative Grammar Tasks / Activities / Games

1. Grammar Bingo
2. Finding the Other Half
3. 20 Questions
4. Swap Seats If …
5. Memory Test
6. Dictogloss

General Procedures for Teaching Grammar

Comparing	Sequencing	Gap Filling
Restructuring	Elaborating	Transforming

notice → explore → practise

(Jones & Lock, 2011)

Summary

- Form, meaning and use

- Task-based grammar learning and grammar in context

- Deductive and inductive approaches

- A text-based approach to illustrate grammar items inductively > noticing and active processing through comprehensible and meaningful input

- Creative grammar practice tasks/ activities/ games

- General procedures for teaching grammar