

Developing Grammar Skills In English Language Learners

This course explores the role grammar plays in helping English language learners (ELLs) improve their language skills. You'll begin from a global perspective by exploring seven definitions of grammar. You will then move to the differences between patterns and rules and why second-language learners benefit from instruction on both.

Next, you'll analyze why students need to understand the three dimensions of grammar—form, meaning, and use—and how viewing grammar as a dynamic and changing system helps students overcome many challenges. You'll also discover why teaching grammar in a way that makes it personally meaningful to your students brings the best results.

Because teaching isn't just about presenting lessons, you'll also review the importance of "reading" your students—observing them in order to figure out what learning processes they're using. By contrasting rote—or mechanical—grammar practice with meaningful practice, you will gain insight into which activities and exercises help students overcome the unique challenges grammatical structures present. Finally, you will learn how the specific errors students make reveal their unique challenges, allowing you to develop practice activities that pinpoint these challenges.

Course Objectives

After completing the course, you will be able to

Module 1

- Learn several different meanings for the term *grammar* and the reasons why teaching grammar to English language learners and English as a foreign language students is so important.
- Examine the three dimensions of grammar: form, meaning, and use.
- Analyze your students' language patterns.

Module 2

- Learn to think of grammar as a dynamic system.
- Apply grammar not only to phrases and sentences, but also as an important contribution to the organization of sentences in discourse.
- Identify the elements of cohesion.

Module 3

- Explore the connection between grammar and vocabulary words (the lexicon).
- Identify grammar rules and the reasons behind them.
- Analyze your students' errors and determine what rules need to be taught or retaught explicitly.

Module 4

- Apply the challenge principle to define the learning challenge present in each of the three dimensions of grammar.
- Explore the different theories of grammar learning and learn how learner differences can affect the learning process.

Module 5

- Explore three ways of teaching grammar: taking the traditional PPP (present, practice, and produce) approach, focusing on form within a communicative approach, and grammaring.
- Examine the differences between teaching grammar with and without explicit rules and terminology.
- Practice using the PPP approach with a grammatical rule.

Module 6

- Distinguish between rote and meaningful practice activities for addressing grammar.
- Examine reasons for giving feedback.
- Provide high-quality feedback for student growth.

Course Syllabus

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| Module 1 | Defining Grammar and Its Three Dimensions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: The Many Definitions of Grammar • Reading 2: Grammar as Rules and Patterns • Reading 3: Corpus Linguistics • Below and Above the Sentence Level • Reading 4: Why Teaching Grammar Is Necessary • Reading 5: Three Dimensions of Grammar • Reading 6: Defining Form, Meaning, and Use • Reading 7: Form • Reading 8: Meaning • Reading 9: Use • Summary • Knowledge Check • Application: Analyzing Patterns of Language • Post-Module Reflection |
| Module 2 | Grammaring and the Discourse Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: The Dynamics of Grammaring • Reading 2: The Inert Knowledge Problem • Reading 3: Psychological Authenticity and Language Teaching Methods • Reading 4: The Discourse Level of Grammar • Reading 5: Cohesion • Reading 6: Coherence • Reading 7: Texture • Reading 8: Summary (Optional) • Application: Identifying Elements of Cohesion • Post-Module Reflection |

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| Module 3 | Lexicogrammar, Reasons, and Rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • The Grammar and Lexicon Connection • Reading 1: The Grammar of Words • The Lexicogrammar of Patterns • The Word What • Reading 2: Phrasal Verbs: Straddling the Line Between the Lexicon and Grammar • Reasons and Rules • Reading 3: Reasons Are Broader Than Rules • Reading 4: Reasons to Eliminate Rote Learning • Reading 5: Reasons Explain Exceptions • Reading 6: Summary (Optional) • Knowledge Check • Application: Analyzing the Reasons Behind Grammar Mistakes • Post-Module Reflection |
| Module 4 | The Challenge Principal and Learning Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: Defining the Learning Challenge • Reading 2: Defining the Challenge in Another Way • Reading 3: Using the Learning Challenge to Guide Teaching • Reading 4: Learning Grammar • Reading 5: Observing Learner Behavior • Reading 6: Different Learning Processes, Different Learners • Reading 7: Summary (Optional) • Knowledge Check • Application: Analyze a Text and Identify the Challenges • Post-Module Reflection |

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| Module 5 | Teaching Approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: The Traditional PPP (3-P) Approach • Reading 2: Focus on Form Within a Communicative Approach • Reading 3: The Grammaring Approach • Reading 4: Implicit and Explicit Teaching of Grammar • Reading 5: Deductive and Inductive Teaching • Use of Grammatical Terminology • Reading 6: Summary (Optional) • Knowledge Check • Application: Present, Practice, Produce • Post-Module Reflection |
| Module 6 | Practice Activities and Providing Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Video: Rote Versus Meaningful Practice Activities • Reading 1: Types of Learning and the Three Dimensions of Grammar • Reading 2: Practice Activities • Reading 3: What Is an Error? • Reading 4: Giving Feedback • Grammar Textbooks and Syllabi • Adapting Textbooks • Adapting the Syllabus • Summary • Knowledge Check • Application: Providing Feedback • Post-Module Reflection |

References

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