Put Context and Meaning in your Grammar Instruction

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http://esl-teacher.net
5 Principles to **LEARNING** Grammar

1. **Students learn** better within a context.

2. **Students learn** differently.

3. **Students learn** better in manageable chunks.

4. **Students learn** better by doing activities that move from controlled to open-ended.

5. If **students learn** how to **learn**, they will acquire grammar better.

For more information, go to http://esl-teacher.net
Accuracy + Fluency = COMMUNICATION
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Grammar Instruction

Accuracy
- segmentals,
- structure, syntax,
- writing standards

Fluency
- audience,
- authentic communication,
- purpose, suprasegmentals,
- skill development
Rank

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

What areas do your students spend most time practicing in class?
CONTEXT is the Secret!

“We believe, after examining the findings of cognitive science, that the most effective way of learning skills is "in context," placing learning objectives within a real environment rather than insisting that students first learn in the abstract what they will be expected to apply.”

Executive Summary of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS).
Context Provides

Purpose
Motivation
Relevancy
Interest
Usefulness
Examples of Context

1. On your handout, write different examples of how you might introduce context. For example, a picture could introduce context. Put your answers above the line.

2. Now walk around the room and speak to other people to see if they have additional ideas. Write only one new idea (if any) from each person below the line.

3. Share ideas with the group.
Examples of Context

- Pictures
- Readings
- Stories
- Video
- Realia
- Real-life tasks
- Real-life forms
- Dialog /Role play
- Audio
- Personal questions / Polls
- Problems / Situations / Data
- Charts / Graphs
Establishing Context

Context should be *meaningful*.

Context should be *relevant*.

Context should be *interesting*.

Context should be *engaging*. 
Apply Learner-centered Instruction

“Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves”.

Chickering & Gamson (1987)
Context is Always Present

Establish Context - Objectives
(Warm-up – Introduction)

Maintain Context
(Presentation / Practice / Evaluation)

Apply Context - Outcomes
(Application)
Grammar Lesson Plan

✓ Establish context
✓ Present limited concepts (chunks)
✓ Practice each concept *mechanically*
✓ Practice concepts together *meaningfully*
✓ Practice concepts together *communicatively*
✓ Check for understanding in preparation for application
✓ Apply to the students’ lives

For more on this lesson plan, see [http://esl-teacher.net](http://esl-teacher.net)
Establish the Context
# Maintain Context

## Simple Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I, you, we, they</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hold</td>
<td>I hold the monkey’s hand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show</td>
<td>You show the monkey how to spin the coconut.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring</td>
<td>We bring the monkey to a tree.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They let the monkey play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He, she, it</th>
<th>holds</th>
<th>He holds the monkey’s hand.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shows</td>
<td>She shows the monkey how to spin the coconut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spins</td>
<td>It spins the coconut.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Notes

We use the Simple Present to describe
- actions that happen regularly
- facts

Mechanical exercises to follow with similar context.
Maintain Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Present: 3rd Person Spelling Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We add s to most verbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We add es to verbs ending in s, ch, sh, x, z, o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We change the y to i and add es to verbs ending in consonant + y.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronunciation Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes we pronounce the final s /s/: lets, twists, picks (After voiceless consonants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes we pronounce the final s /z/: Holds, shows, brings (After voiced consonants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We pronounce es /lz/: uses, encourages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mechanical exercises to follow with similar context.
Grammar Lesson Plan

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For more on this lesson plan, see [http://esl-teacher.net]
4. Meaningful
Describe the video about Monkey College to a partner.

3. Mostly Meaningful
Complete the sentences based on information from the chart about Animal Training.

2. Mostly Mechanical
(little to no meaning necessary)
Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the simple present.

1. Mechanical (no meaning necessary)
Circle the correct spelling of the 3rd person singular form of the verb.
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Apply Context

1. In groups, list “how –to” steps to training an animal to do something you want done. Use a real example if someone in your group has one.

2. Share your steps with another group.
   Albert trains his dog to get the paper.
   1. First he shows it the newspaper.
   2. Etc.
Our Mission

Give students challenging opportunities to be successful in their language-learning experience so they develop confidence and become independent, lifelong learners.
More information

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