

Salahaddin University- Erbil  
College of Basic Education  
English Language Department

# **Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary**

## **Third Year Students**

**2022-2023**

# Teaching grammar and vocabulary Assessment Scheme

- Group tasks (analysing and designing activities) + quizzes 10 Marks
- Daily participation 5 Marks
- Mid-term exams 20 Marks

**Group task (plan a two-hour lesson + teaching it) 25 Marks**

**Final exam 40 Marks**

## On Defining Grammar

Historically, grammar has been considered to be:

- Nouns;
- Verbs;
- Participles;
- Articles;
- Pronouns;
- Prepositions;
- Adverbs; and
- Conjunctions.

While more recently Grammar is defined as:  
‘the way words are put together to make correct sentences’.

A specific instance of grammar is usually called a **structure**.

When presenting a **structure**, it is essential to:  
show the **meaning and usage** of the structure  
• show how the structure is **formed**.

Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary  
3<sup>rd</sup> Year Students

**To teach or not to  
teach...grammar?**

## Attitudes to teaching grammar

- *'There is no doubt that a knowledge - implicit or explicit – of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of a language'* (Penny Ur)
- *'The effects of grammar teaching appear to be peripheral (minor) and fragile'* (Steven Krashen)
- *'A sound knowledge of grammar is essential if pupils are going to use English creatively'* (Tom Hutchinson)
- *'Grammar is not the basis for language acquisition, and the balance of linguistic research clearly invalidates any view to the contrary.'* (Michael Lewis)

## The Case for Grammar:

- The sentence machine argument
  - Item learning alone limits what can be achieved in a language. Knowledge of grammar gives speakers the possibility to create huge numbers of original sentences.
- The fine-tuning argument
  - Grammar allows for more subtlety( sensitivity) than the lexical system alone can manage e.g.
    - *'After speaking a lot time with him I thought that him attracted me.'*

- The discrete item argument
  - By organising language into categories for learning, a language becomes 'digestible'
- The learner expectations argument
  - Learners may expect to be taught grammar and think that it is essential to their mastery of a language



# The case against grammar

- The knowledge-how argument
  - Language is a set of skills not just a body of knowledge. We learn by doing (using language), not by learning how to do something (learning rules).
- The communication argument
  - Knowing a language involves more than knowing its grammar.

- The acquisition argument
  - Draws on theory of L1 acquisition. Learning vs acquisition. Learning is of limited use for real communication and what is learned can never become acquired (Krashen)
- Learner expectations argument
  - Some learners may be put off by a heavy focus on grammar – especially those who need to improve their communicative skills
    - (Thornbury 1999)

## ■ Concept questions

also referred to as concept checking questions or CCOs. They are **questions designed to check learners' understanding of a language item.**

You can use questions to check that learners understand new language.

### Example

*It can't be John at the door – he's gone overseas.*

Is the speaker talking about now or the future? (now)

Is the speaker certain or does he think it's a possibility? (certain)

Is he 100% certain or more like 95%? (more like 95%)

*Look! They're painting the wall*

Example concept questions

- Is it happening now?      Yes
- Can you see it?      Yes
- Is the painting finished? No
- Are they painting now?      Yes
- Is this the past, present or future?      Present

## Devising concept questions

- Make sure the questions are simple e.g. Yes/no questions, either/or questions and simple 'wh' questions,
- Don't use the new (target) grammar in your questions,
- Don't use unfamiliar vocabulary,
- Use as many questions as possible to check various aspects of the language and to cover as many learners as possible.

## Task: Group work

- Write your own concept questions for the following sentence.

***If I won the lottery, I'd buy a new car.***

## Task: Group work

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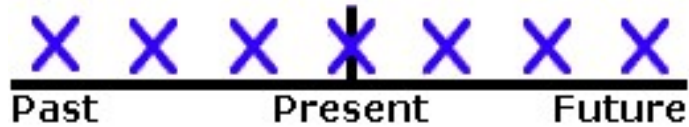
*If I won the lottery, I'd buy a new car.*

- |                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| ■ Have I won the lottery?        | No           |
| ■ Am I going to win the lottery? | Probably not |
| ■ Am I going to buy a new car?   | Probably not |
| ■ Has he got a lottery ticket?   | Maybe        |
| ■ Is this real, or imaginary?    | Imaginary    |

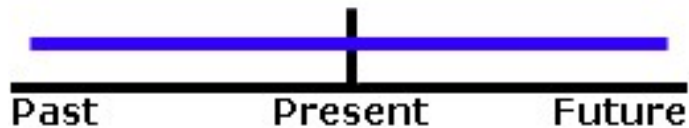
# Using Timelines to Check Understanding



The train leaves at 6.30pm.  
I am going to the cinema tomorrow



He's always leaving his clothes on the floor



The earth moves around the sun



I'm watching TV. What are you doing?



We're eating in the kitchen this winter



## Types of grammar practice activities

- Practice activities offer students a chance to use the target language structures
- Practice may be:

### 1. **Very controlled** e.g. drills

Teacher: It's cold outside. Students: It's cold outside. Teacher: It's warm outside. Students: It's warm outside.

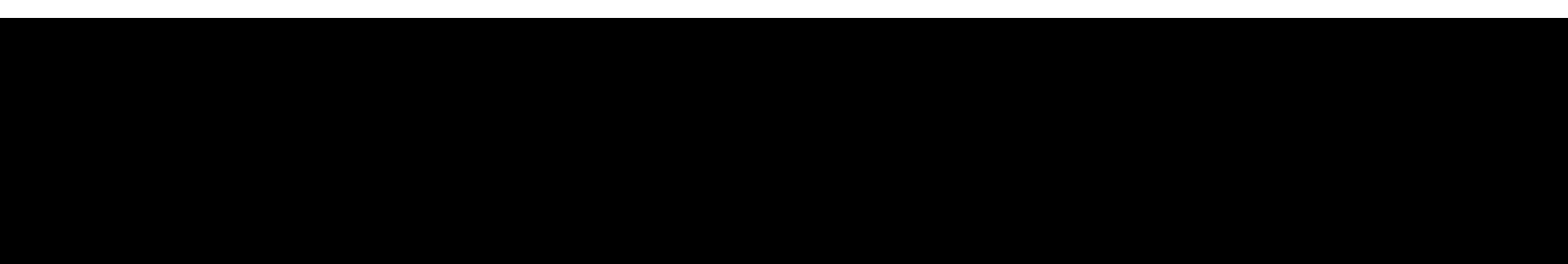
### Substitution drills

Teacher: You're a student, aren't you? farmer

Students: You're a farmer, aren't you?

**2. Controlled** i.e. the students participation is managed and monitored by the teacher and often focuses on accuracy and features a narrow range of language e.g. dialogue, open pairs, gap fill

**3. Free/communicative practice** students use the language freely



## Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Students

- An **open pair** is a pair of learners working together with the rest of the group observing. They can be compared to closed pairs, where all the learners work in pairs that do not monitor each other. Example: The learners are working on developing telephone conversations using prompts. The teacher asks one pair to continue working while the rest of the group watches.
- In the classroom Open pair work can be a fast and effective way to highlight language learners might need for an activity, and clarify that people understand what to do. It needs to be managed sensitively, choosing confident learners to demonstrate, and dealing with errors through a "hotsheet"; a record of errors in performance, which can be discussed later.

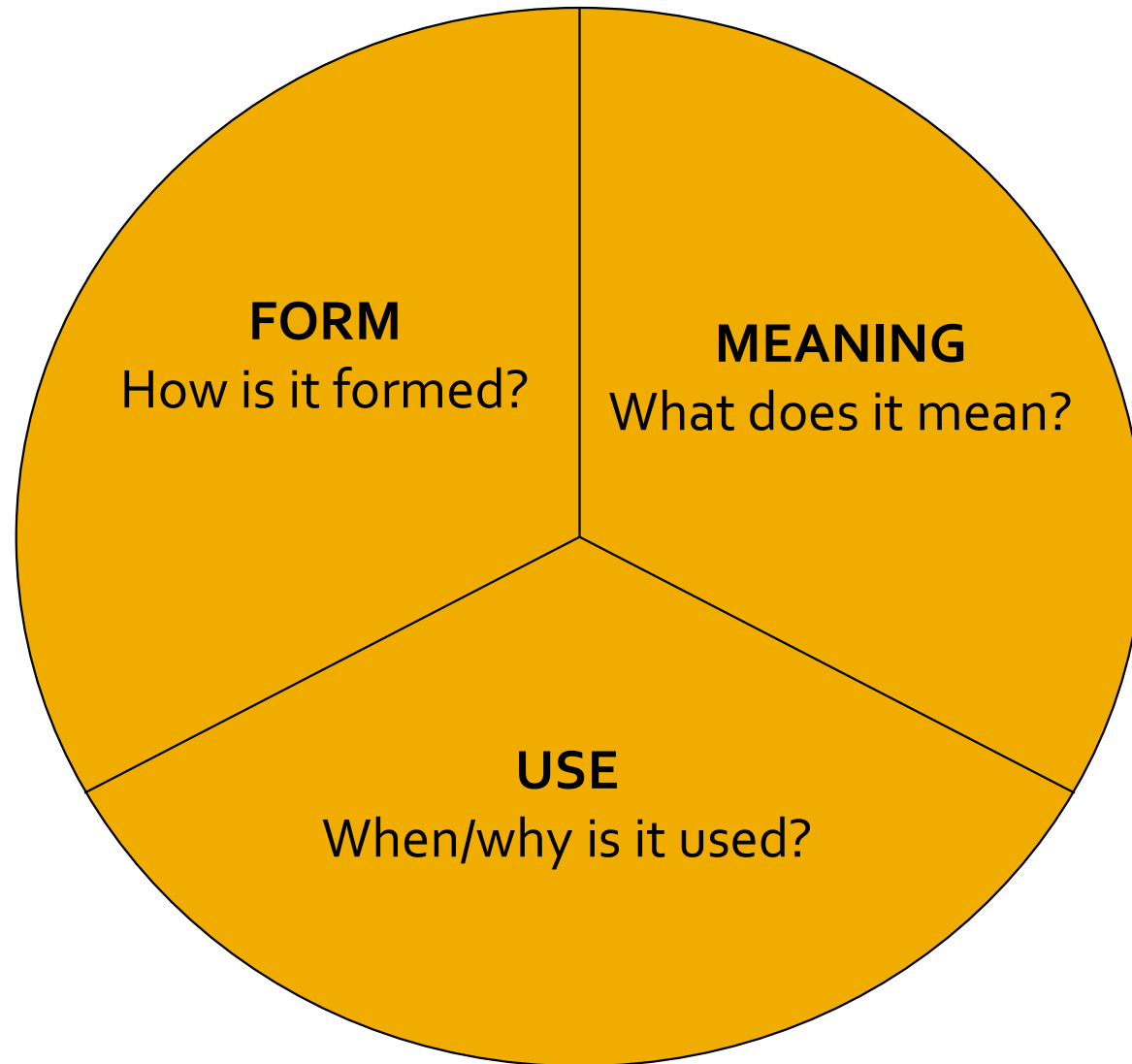
# Presenting Language

# Presenting Language

- Presentation is the stage at which students are introduced to the **form, meaning** and **use** of a new piece of language

# Form, meaning and use

Grammatical structures have **FORM** and are used to express **MEANING** in context-appropriate **USE**





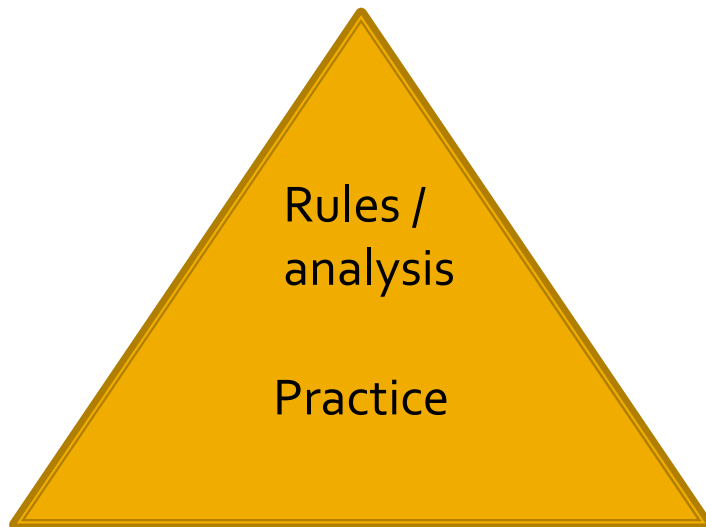
# Criteria for effective presentations

- Memorable – interesting/lively
- Efficient – gets to the point quickly
- Clear – the meaning/use of language is conveyed with little risk of confusion
- Personalised – students can apply the new language to themselves
- Sufficient opportunity and language for communication
- Pre-existing knowledge is checked

# Types of presentation

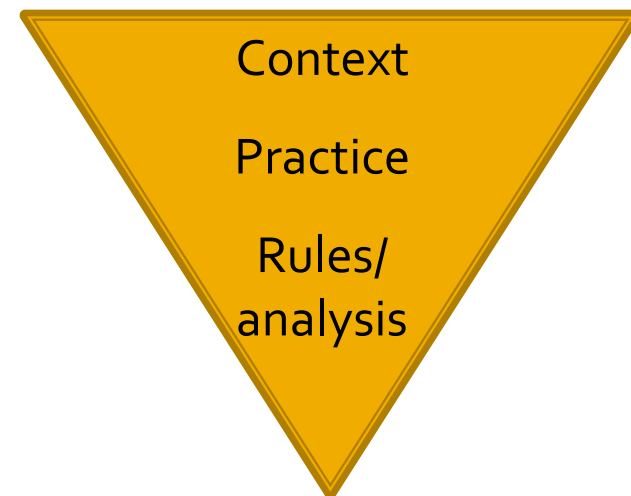
## DEDUCTIVE

- 'Explain and practise'  
Students given rules or explanations and then use the New language



## INDUCTIVE

- 'Discover and practise'  
Students see examples of language and try to work out the rules themselves



# The case for and against

## DEDUCTIVE

- Quicker
- Objectives clearer to students
- Can be good for lower level students
- Suits many learners expectations
- Teacher centred
- Less 'cognitive' – not learning for themselves
- Less attention often paid to production

## INDUCTIVE

- Student-centred: finding out for themselves
- Challenging/cognitive which may help acquisition
- More naturalistic – students learn to observe and analyse language in context
- Time consuming
- Can be confusing

# The PPP Model - a deductive approach

- **P**resentation, **P**ractice, **P**roduction
- Derived from the audio-lingual method
- Very popular model on initial teacher training courses but...
- Came under sustained attack in the 1990s

# PPP Lesson Stages

- **Presentation**
  - Teacher sets context for the language taught
  - Key language elicited from students of provided
- **Practice**
  - Teacher drills students in the language
- **Production**
  - Students use language to make their own sentences in a freer way using the target language

# PPP Lesson Stages

- **Presentation**
  - Teacher sets context for the language taught
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# Views of PPP

Work in pairs.

- In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using a deductive approach like PPP?
- How effective would this style of lesson be in your own teaching context?

# Task-based Learning (TBL)



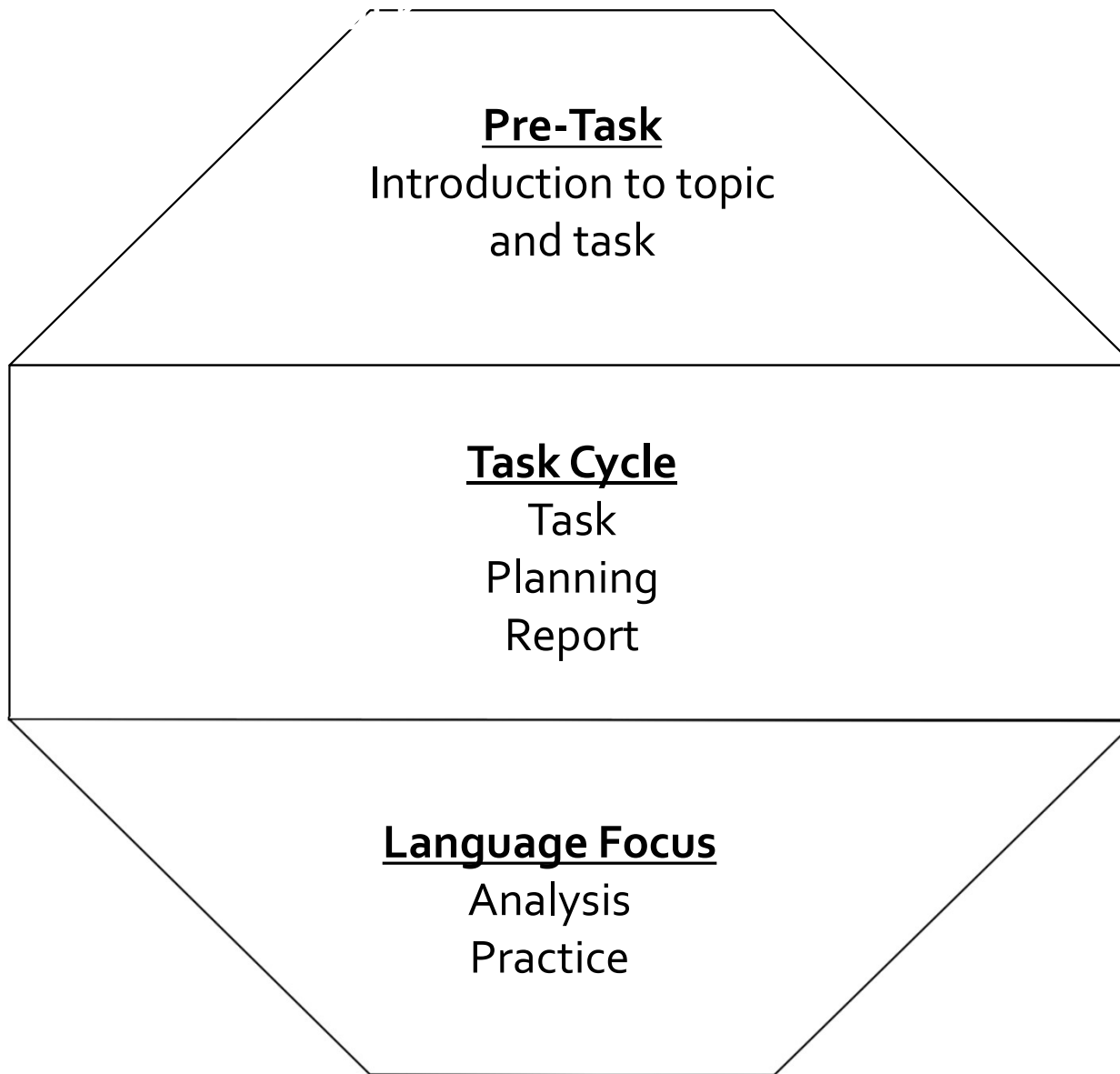
# Overview

- What is task-based learning (TBL)?
- TBL in practice – planning lessons
- Arguments for a task-based approach
- Criticisms of TBL

# A definition

*'Task-based learning (sometimes referred to as Task-based Instruction, or TBI) makes the performance of meaningful tasks central to the learning process. It is informed by a belief that if students are focused on the completion of a task, they are just as likely to learn language as they are if they are focusing on language forms.'*

Harmer (2007:71)



Willis (1996)

**Watch this video and comment**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59XMhMOoFMU>

# TBL Lesson sequence

# The Pre-task

- Help students understand the key themes and, objectives e.g. brainstorm (exchange ideas) , mime (act), tell a story etc to set the scene,
- Students complete a pre-task, e.g. odd-word-out game, word search,
- Teacher highlights useful words and phrases
- Students have preparation time to think about the task.

# The Task Cycle

## Task

- Task is completed by pairs or groups.
- Teacher monitors progress and helps students to say what they want (but doesn't correct errors of form).

## Planning

- Students plan for the report stage and draft or rehearse (practice) what they want to say.
- Teacher suggests phrases and helps them to refine their work.

## Report

- T asks (some) pairs to report on what they have done/found.
- Teacher comments on content of reports but doesn't correct overtly.

# Language Focus

- T sets language focused tasks e.g.
  - Find words and phrases related to the title or topic of the text
  - Read a text and find examples of grammar and discuss the meaning
  - Compare a listening of a native speaker doing the same task – what's the difference?
- T gives students practice activities.
- Students MAY repeat the task again with a different partner.



# Effective Tasks

# Characteristics of effective tasks:

1. The activity **engages learners' interest.**
2. There is a primary **focus on meaning.**
3. Learners are allowed **free use of language.**
4. There is a **clear outcome** for learners to achieve.
5. **Completion** of the task is a priority.
6. It relates to **real world activities.**

# Seven types of task

- ✓ **1. Listing: brainstorming and/or fact finding**
  - ✓ e.g. qualities, priorities, places, things, features, things to do, reasons.
- ✓ **2. Ordering and sorting: sequencing, ranking, classifying**
  - ✓ e.g. sequencing story pictures, ranking items according to cost, popularity, negative or positive.
- ✓ **3. Matching** e.g. Listen and identify, listen and do (TPR), match phrases/descriptions to pictures, match directions to maps.

- **4. Comparing: finding similarities or differences**
- e.g. comparing ways of greetings or local customs, playing ‘Spot the Difference’ , contrasting two countries.
- **5. Problem-solving: real-life problems, case studies, incomplete texts** e.g. logic problems, giving advice, proposing and evaluating solutions, predicting a story ending.
- **6. Projects and creative tasks** e.g. doing and reporting a survey, producing a class newspaper, planning a radio show, designing a brochure.
- **7. Sharing personal experiences: story-telling, anecdotes, reminiscences, opinions, reactions** e.g. early schooldays, terrible journeys, embarrassing moments, personality quizzes.

(Jane Willis 2010)

# Arguments for and against TBL

# Arguments for Task-based Learning

1. TBL provides learners with natural **exposure** (input), chances to **use language** to express what they want to mean (output), to focus on **improving their own language** and to analyse and practise forms.
2. TBL is more likely to keep learners **motivated** since it builds on whatever language they know in a **positive** way.
3. Learners are **actively engaged** throughout the task cycle, and get chances to think for themselves and express themselves in the security of their group.
4. Learners become more **independent** and feel **empowered**, gaining satisfaction from successfully achieving things through the FL.

# Criticisms of TBL

1. May promote a limited range of linguistic forms i.e. those relating to task-solving
2. It may promote learners ability to use language but it less likely to be effective for teaching new language.

# ESA

**Engage Study Activate**

**Lesson cycle**



# Engage

- The teacher tries to arouse student's interest.
- Get them involved in the lesson.
- If they are involved and interested, they will find the lesson more stimulating and fun.

For example, the teacher will show the students a picture of someone and lead that into a discussion before reading about that person. Or, if the language topic is for example, can/can't, the teacher might start with pictures and a discussion about favourite animals before discussing what they can and can't do etc.

Remember, if students are engaged, they will learn far more effectively than when they are disengaged.



# Engage

The following methods can all be used to help engage the students and to elicit/explain meaning:

- Realia.
- Mime and action.
- Pictures.
- Contrast.
- Discussion.
- Discovery.



# Study

- These activities are those where the students will focus on the language and how it is constructed.
- Sometimes the teacher will explain the language, at other times the teacher will want the students to discover it for themselves. They may work in groups studying a text for vocabulary, grammar etc.
- In short, study means any stage where the students will be focused on the construction of the language.

# Study

- Study activities can include:
  - Gap-fill exercises
  - Word searches
  - Crosswords
  - Matching exercises
  - Example sentences
  - Pronunciation exercises such as drilling
  - Study from texts and dialogues

# Activate

- This is the stage where the students are encouraged to use any/all of the language they know as freely and communicatively as possible.
- The focus is on fluency rather than accuracy.
- Typical activate activities include role plays, games, discussion, story telling etc.

# Activate

The activate stage of a vocabulary lesson may include such activities as:

- Open class, small group or pair discussion
- Role-play
- Simulation
- Story building
- Material production task (poster, advertisement, etc.)
- Debate

# ***What do students need to know about a vocabulary item?***

- Meaning – what it means
- Use – how/when it is appropriate to use
- Word grammar – where it belongs
- Interaction – how it interacts and affects other words
- Spelling – how it is written
- Pronunciation – how it is spoken



# Introducing new words

- Pointing
- Naming
- Substitution (synonyms, antonyms)
- Miming and acting out
- Flashcards
- Listing
- Drawing
- Realia

# Games for teaching vocabulary

- Charades
- Claymation
- Bingo
- Memory
- Pictionary
- Hot chair
- Checkers
- Trashcan Basketball
- Flyswatter Game

# A typical/sample 'straight arrow' structured ESA vocabulary.

- (for household furniture vocabulary) lesson for lower level students with the learning objective – “At the end of the lesson students will be able to use vocabulary associated with houses, rooms and furniture” might look something like this:
- N.B: please note that this isn't the right way to approach it. It is just one way. There are many other ways of achieving the same end.

# Engage

- Open class activity where students share information about where they live, type of house they live in, rooms they have. Maybe students can be asked in the lesson before to bring pictures or draw a floor plan to show other students. If this is likely to create any social discomfort, the teacher can bring a picture of his/her house, or houses in general, for discussion.

# Study

- Teacher shows a small text, or plays dialogue, of someone describing their house. Checks pronunciation, spelling, meaning, etc with some of the study activities mentioned before.

# Activate

- Teacher tells small groups or pairs of students that they can design their perfect house, complete with furnishings, money no object.
- Later students present their 'dream' house to the class and the class has a discussion on pros and cons of each house before voting on which house they would like to live in.

# A sample of ESA lesson plan

- A typical ESA patchwork **grammar** lesson for mid level students with the learning objective – “At the end of the lesson students will be able to talk/write about **films and books using the past simple tense.**”:

- **Engage** Students discuss favourite books/films, what they liked about them, etc. If teacher has told them in advance, they can bring copies in.
- **Activate** In pairs students write brief summary of a book or film they have read and seen.
- **Study** From the summary, analyze the usage of the past simple tense. Further study activities to reinforce meaning, formation and pronunciation.



- **Activate** In groups students write short story from picture prompts.
- **Study** Group passes story to another group who check for correct usage of past tense. Any errors discussed/analyzed in class.
- **Activate** Chain story communication game. One student starts the story, the next continues, and so on.

# Putting language in context

Techniques for putting language in context and conveying the meaning can include:

- Pictures
- Written text
- Listening text
- Story/situation
- Actions/demonstration

# Task 2

Work with a partner. Complete the table by suggesting at least one way you could convey the meaning of the following grammar items. You don't need to fill in every box.

- Going to (future intentions)
- Can/can't (ability)
- Used to (past habits)
- Present continuous (for activities happening at the moment)

# Can/Can't

Demonstration	Visual aids	Situation
Ask learners to perform actions in the class – some should be possible, some impossible e.g. 'Touch the ceiling' (to elicit 'I can't')	Pictures of animals to elicit e.g. A cheetah can run fast A bat can't see very well A kangaroo can jump etc	Interview for a job requiring lots of skills e.g. nanny: Can you cook? Can you drive?

# Used to (for past habits)

Demonstration	Visual aids	Situation
	Picture of 'before and after' e.g. A house A person A town	Story of a person who has had a major life change e.g. a lottery win, marrying into royalty, going to prison

# Present continuous

Demonstration	Visual aids	Situation
Perform actions e.g. walking, waving, opening doors and describe (or elicit) what you are doing	Picture with lots of things happening e.g. a scene of a busy town, beach, classroom	A journalist describing what's happening i.e. a royal wedding, a crime scene

# Group work

- How important is “game” in teaching vocabulary?
- Think of some games that can be used in teaching vocabulary.