

Grammar Micro-Lessons

Grammatical deficits limit a student's ability to express meaning, encode a variety of messages, and effectively participate in conversations. If not targeted, poor grammar skills can persist well beyond the preschool years and impact academic success and literacy. The following strategies can provide opportunities to develop your student's grammar skills during authentic activities involving reading, writing, and speaking:

Record the errors: Make notes of what your student is saying and writing incorrectly. Keep a list of erroneous sentences and discuss them with your Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP).

Understand the errors: Learning the jargon that describes the error will help you communicate with your SLP and teach the student what he is incorrectly producing. For example, you will need to know what a relative clause is in order to teach your student how to speak or write them. Past tense, auxiliary verbs, plurals, pronouns, and subordinate clauses will become your friends again!

Targeting the errors: Once you know the grammatical targets, you can target them in your student's academic and conversational activities.

What are micro-lessons?

This involves interrupting the activity as problems arise and then providing a brief explanation and practice. For example, you might say "That was a hard sentence for you to write/say. Let's practice that kind of sentence." During daily activities, try:

Expansions and extensions: Repeat or rewrite the student's sentence by adding anything that is missing or even adding new information to a correct sentence. Say it out loud, have the student write it down, and then explain.

Student: You pour the acid *slow* into the beaker.

Teacher: You pour the acid *slowly* into the beaker. Let's write that down.

Vertical Structuring: Ask follow-up questions and add the student's responses to his sentence.

Student: This boy sees the lion.

Teacher: Tell me something else about him.

Student: He's wearing a baseball cap.

Teacher: Yes, the boy *who is wearing a cap* sees the lion. And what about this boy?

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Paraphrasing: Repeat the student's sentence by preserving the content but changing the form. Ask him to choose the one that sounds better.

Student: The demonstrators were attacked by the police with tear gas.

Teacher: What if you say it this way instead; Tear gas was used by the police to attack the demonstrators?

Multiple Choice Modeling: Give the students options for elaborating on sentences:

Student: This boy sees the lion.

Teacher: Which boy sees the lion, the boy who is wearing a cap or the boy who is wearing the red shirt?

Student: The boy *who is wearing a cap* sees the lion!

Partial Modeling: Model a sentence with different content but the same form.

Teacher: So tell me about muscles.

Student: Muscles are part of the body and they make you move.

Teacher: What about using a relative clause sentence like this one? Cereal is a kind of food *that you eat for breakfast*.

Student: Muscles are a part of the body *that make you move*.

Prompting: Tell them what to do.

Student: *Her* ran home to get lunch.

Teacher: Remember your goal is to use the word *she* when talking about a girl. Can you tell me that again using the word *she*?

Student: *She* ran home to get lunch.

By using your student's written and spoken activities in the class with the above strategies, teaching grammar becomes more relevant and motivating for your students.

Resource in Henry Grube Library:

Contextualized Language Intervention: Scaffolding Prek-12 Literacy Achievement by Teresa Ukrainetz.

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