

Introduction

Teaching grammatical concepts to students is often faced with struggles and resentment from the students and can be an overall negative learning experience for most students. Most students struggle with learning grammatical concepts because there are many different components to grammar that can be difficult to identify within sentences. However, grammar is an important concept that students need to learn in order to succeed throughout not only their school careers, but their entire lives, and therefore, grammar should be taught in a way that is enjoyable for the students and where they are engaged and eager to learn.

Prepositional Phrases

An important grammatical concept that I believe is especially important for good writing is prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases are defined as “a group of words that begins with a prepositional and ends with a noun or pronoun, which is called the object of the preposition” (Ruday, p. 104). Some frequently used prepositions include behind, in, across, with, on, and past, and these prepositions help provide a locational context for a sentence. For example, the sentence “Parker drove across the bridge to visit his grandma” includes the prepositional phrase “across the bridge”. This is a prepositional phrase because it begins with the preposition “across”. The prepositional phrase “across the bridge” gives clear locational contexts for where Parker had to drive in order to visit his grandma. Prepositional phrases also provide context around time as well. For example, the sentence “Parker drove to visit his grandma at 3 o’clock” contains the prepositional phrase “at 3 o’clock”. This prepositional phrase gives clear contextual information about the time that Parker drove to his grandma’s house.

Prepositional phrases create an important aspect to writing that other grammatical concepts are unable to express; they provide information regarding the location and time that an event is taking place. The above sentence “Parker drove across the bridge to visit his grandma” would be lacking in important contextual information if the prepositional phrase was not included; the reader would lose the information about where Parker is driving and therefore would not get the entirety of the picture in their minds. The same goes for the above sentence “Parker drove to visit his grandma at 3 o’clock”; if the sentence did not contain the prepositional phrase “at 3 o’clock”, the readers would not have that information about the time he went to visit his grandma. Another good example of the importance of prepositional phrases is from the novel *A Tale Dark and Grimm* by Adam Gidwitz: “At last, the whole family sat before a glowing hearth in the private wing of the castle” (Gidwitz p. 173). In this example, there are 2 prepositional phrases, one being “before a glowing hearth” and the other being “in the private wing of the castle”. Without both prepositional phrases, the sentence would just be “At last, the whole family sat”, and this sentence would lose all of the contextual information regarding where they are sitting, and overall loses all of the detail of the sentence. All of these prepositional phrases are important because they create clear pictures for the readers as they are reading that they would miss if the prepositional phrase was not included. Without prepositional phrases in writing, there would be a lacking of locational and time context in the story that would overall create a dull and confusing scene for the readers, since they are unable to clearly picture where or when events are happening in the story.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching grammar in a classroom setting can be a challenge; it can be difficult keeping young students engaged in learning in a topic like grammar that can be difficult, especially to

students with learning disabilities that struggle with learning writing topics. Since I am planning on becoming a high school Special Education teacher, my example on how I would teach prepositional phrases will be geared towards those students that I would be teaching in my classroom[S4] .

Grammar can sometimes be a very boring subject to learn about, so I would set up my instructional implementation of prepositional phrases around the students in my class favorite books. I would explain to my students that prepositional phrases provide location and time-related information to the sentence. I would provide an example sentence on the board, such as "Parker drove across the bridge.", and label the part of the sentence that is the prepositional phrase. I would then have the students look through their books, with help from an adult faculty member, and find a sentence that has a prepositional phrase. Once they have located their sentence, I would have them share their example out loud to the class so that the students hear more examples that have varying prepositions. Then, I would have the students either write or type their sentence from their book down, and then have them change the prepositional phrase in their sentence. For example, if the student found the sentence "Hansel fled through the wood, thrilling at the terror of the chase" (Gidwitz p.79-80) from the novel *A Tale Dark and Grimm*, with the prepositional phrase "through the wood", then the student could change the preposition so that the sentence reads "Hansel fled around the fountain, thrilling at the terror of the chase." After having them share out loud their new sentences they came up with, I would ask them to explain what was different between the original sentence they found in their books and the new ones that they created from those sentences. I would[S5] create a word wall of the prepositions that the students found in their books and the ones that they created in their new sentences so that they are being exposed to the topic of prepositional phrases around the classroom and so that they are able to look at the chart if they believe they have come across a prepositional phrase in any activity. This list on the wall would have room to be

updated as well if a student comes across a preposition that is not already included on the poster so that the students are always on the lookout in their activities for a prepositional phrase. After completing this activity, I would continue to point out, when I am reading to my class or having a student read out loud, when a prepositional phrase pops up so that they are always being exposed to this element of grammar without having to necessarily be directly learning about grammar.

I came up with this idea of teaching prepositional phrases through my student's favorite books because it will keep my students engaged in their learning, since they are getting to choose what to use for the assignment, and also expose them to all of the different types of prepositional phrases that are evident in all types of writing, instead of just the one example they found in their books.. By having the students find a book that they enjoy and being able to identify prepositional phrases within that book, they are not only going to be more engaged in what they are learning, since they are using books that they get to choose, but they are also going to build their abilities in understanding and identifying the importance of prepositional phrases. This is especially important to students with disabilities that may present themselves in my future classroom because they struggle with learning[s6] as it is, so any way that I can adapt my lessons to be more geared towards things that they enjoy will better their experience in my classroom and help them understand the concepts that I am teaching them in a way that they don't feel like it is strictly learning and no fun is to be had. Doing a lesson, such as the one I described above, where there are more hands-on activities for the students are able to keep students with disabilities engaged in their learning because they have something that they are able to physically see and hold, such as a book, and are not just staring at a worksheet that can be difficult for students to contextually grasp. Lessons and classwork that is just lectures and worksheets won't keep the students' attention, especially if it is on a topic that they do not already enjoy and do not want to learn about, so by implementing a lesson plan where the

students get to choose what they use to successfully achieve the goal of the lesson, such as my example above, they are overall more engaged and eager to learn since they have the ability to be in control of how they grasp the concept. I also choose to implement the word wall of prepositions because it challenges the students to always be on the lookout in their activities in all subjects of prepositions that are not on the wall, and therefore, are continuing to learn more about prepositional phrases in a non-traditional learning way that is fun and engaging for the students.

Conclusion

Grammar has been a topic that most students dread to be a part of their daily lesson plan in school because of the traditional ways that grammar was taught in the past. However, I believe that grammar can be something that is engaging and entertaining for students to learn about through using examples and activities with topics that students enjoy. Prepositional phrases do not need to be taught through a worksheet; instead, they can be taught through the students leading the activities by using books that they enjoy as examples and continuing to look themselves for examples in every class, not just during the time they are directly learning about grammar. This will overall create a better learning environment for your students, as well as allow them to continue their learning beyond the classroom setting[S7] .

Works Cited

Gidwitz, Adam. *A Tale Dark and Grimm*. Puffin Books, 2010.

Ruday, Sean. *The Elementary School Grammar Toolkit*. Routledge, 2020.
