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**Grammatical Concepts Paper**

**Introduction**

Grammar concepts act as tools for individuals in developing a sentence, like tools help in developing a house. However, it is important to understand what each of a grammar concepts function is and how to use them appropriately. Just like you need to know what how to use a stool to build the house, this is where teachers come into play. As a future teacher, I should be able to teach my students the importance of each concept to in writing and what their function is. Grammatical concepts are something students will use for the rests of their lives, so establishing the foundations at an early age is beneficial to them in the long. Because I want to teach in the younger grades, I chose grammatical concepts introduced in grades third through fifth, such as prepositional phrases, Dialect and language variation and modal auxiliaries.

**Prepositional Phrase**

**Description of Concept**

The first concept to discuss is prepositional phrases. These phrases begin with a preposition, (explain preposition). Some prepositions used often are; across, over, in, for, during and many more. Then the phrase will end with the object of the preposition, so could any noun. An example if this is “Betty did her homework in the library,” with “in the library” being the prepositional phrase. They can be either adjectival, where they describe the noun, or they can be adverbial, where they describe the verb in the sentence. For an example of a prepositional phrase as a adjectival could be, “the boys across the street were playing soccer.” The prepositional phrase “across the street” described “the boys” which were the noun of the sentence. An example of a prepositional phrase being adverbial could be “Mom cheered during my basketball game.” In this example, the prepositional phrase “during my basketball game” described what the moms’ action of cheering. The location of the prepositional phrase doesn’t matter either, if it still follows the noun or verb stick to its format of beginning with a preposition and ending with the object of the preposition. There can also be two or more prepositional phrase in a sentence, such as “the girls across the street played during the rainstorm inside.”

**Why It’s Important to Good Writing**

Prepositional phrases are important to good writing because they add extra detail to the sentence and provide more understanding of what is happening in the story. Writers will use prepositional phrase to add some extra background to the scene. In the sentence stated above where “mom cheered during my basketball game” the prepositional phrase gives readers information to where the mom is cheering at. Without having the prepositional phrase there it would just be “mom cheered” which doesn’t give much detail or tell where she was. Though it still would have been a sentence with just” mom cheered” and made sense, it leaves a lot of questions for readers when they read that sentence, such as where is she? and why was she cheering? If writers didn’t use prepositional phrases at all, most stories would be vague and not give readers enough detail to keep them interested. Even though sentences still make sense and can function as a sentence without using a prepositional phrase, they are welcomed in writing to keep things interesting and exciting.

**How I Would Teach It**

First off, I would start the lesson by introducing what a prepositional phrase is with fun games and creating charts. After a couple days or a week, depending on their mastery level of a prepositional phrase, we will do an activity either with partners or individually. They will be allowed to bring their favorite book from home or use one in the class and skim through their books until they find at least ten examples of prepositional phrase. Once the students have found their examples they would write them down on a piece of paper and divide it in half. Across from each sentence rewrite it without using the prepositional phrase. Then have them share with their partner or we shall do it as a group, to discuss which sentence sound better and their importance to their book. Another activity I would do is give students a simple prompt, such as “a baseball game,” or “going to the movies,” and have them write out a paragraph without using any prepositional phrases based on that prompt. Once they are done, the students will read aloud their paragraphs to a partner or the whole class. Then have them add in prepositional phrases to their paragraphs and read them aloud again. Afterwards we will discuss which story was their favorite and why.

**Why I Would Teach It This Way**

I would use these two activities because it demonstrates to my students how a prepositional phrase helps add detail to a sentence when writing. In the first activity by them picking examples out of a book, it shows how much a prepositional phrase can affect the story. Prepositional phrase can help answer the questions that students might have and give them an explanation of what’s going on. Pulling them out of their examples and reading them over he students can see for themselves how bland a book can be without any prepositional phrase. When I let them write their own stories my students can put to use their knowledge of the importance of prepositional phrase and how using them can make your story more creative and exciting

**Dialect and Language variation**

**Description of Concept**

Dialect refers to the “the shared linguistics features of a group of people, often one from a particular region or of a particular ethnic or social background” (Kollon & Funk, 353.) Just like there are many variations of the same tool there are many variations of dialect around the world featuring different terminology, formation of words and sentence structure. Even in the same country can there be major variations in what words people use or how they pronouns certain words. For example, the pural of you all is “y’all” in primarily the southern part of United states. However, in Philadelphia people will say “youse” and in the Midwest they will say “you’uns” or y’uns.” Each of these different words originate from the plural form of you, but as stated are pronounced differently depending on geographical location. Language varies too based on the occasion we are in, what words we use and how we say them (Kollon & Funk, 10). When people are with their friends they might say “what’s up?’ as an informal hello while they are speaking to a teacher they might say “how are you today?” Because teachers are older and above you, using a formal greeting is the preferred choice when speaking to them, but for your friends you are usually the same age and you are close to, an informal greeting is appropriate. Depending on a character’s background and personality a writer can choose how they want them to sound like, which gives readers more information and enthusiasm in the story.

**Why It’s Important to Good Writing**

Dialect and Language variation is important to writing because it helps distinguish characters from one another and give some information about their backgrounds and personalities. For example, if a book is about a six-year-old, they aren’t going to talk like an adult, who speak in very formal manners and have a greater vocabulary. Or if the main character is Hispanic and growing up in Mexico, they won’t use English phrases, expressions, or terminology. Though a story can function without any dialect or language, it won’t hold a reader’s attention as much nor give reader any information about the characters, which could leave them with questions. It helps writers describe their characters without giving readers straightforward answers, making them use prior knowledge to make context clues about the characters.

**How I Would Teach It**

To introduce my students to dialect and language variation, I will explain what dialect and language mean and give examples by reading aloud a book to my students. As I am reading I will have students raise their hands to point out example of different types of dialect that stick out to them and I’ll write on the board what information it gives the student about the characters Then for a time they will take turns reading it aloud to a partner or by themselves. We will do this for a couple of days, then the students will pick out a book and for about 10 minutes write down a few sentences or a paragraph containing some of their favorite examples of dialect and language variation. Once it’s completed, they will remove all dialect from the examples and replace it with formal tone. Afterwards I will conduct a group discussion where some students can read their fixed examples and talk about which version is better and why they think the author might have used dialect in that scenario. The next activity I will do is have them come up with a character and write a scene using what dialect and language variation they think their character would use. For example, if a student was writing about a little girl who is a superhero, they would write about her without a directly saying she is one. Then they’ll share with a partner and see if their partner can guess what their character is like.

**Why I Would Teach It This Way**

I would teach it this way because when examples of dialect and language variation from stories are read aloud it helps students retain the information better by seeing and hearing, instead of trying to memorize a definition. When they remove the examples of dialect and replace them with more formal language it shows students the importance dialect has to writing. Not only does it keep them interested in what is going on but gives them information about the characters backgrounds and personalities. Creating their own characters using dialect and no straight forward facts also highlights the importance of dialect by exercising their knowledge. It demonstrates how authors can give details about different characters without directly tell readers who they are.

**Modal Auxiliaries**

**Description of Concept**

Modal Auxiliaries come from the six modals in the English language: will, shall, can, may, must, ought to. As well as the first four past forms: would, should, could, might. They are used to convey certain conditions, such as “probability, possibility, obligation, or necessity” (Kollon & Funk, 75). Modal Auxiliaries can precede the auxiliaries, forms of “have” and “be” that go before the main verb, in a sentence. For example, “the third graders should be behaving for the substitute teacher” with “should” being the modal auxiliary of the sentence. They don’t always have to precede an auxiliary if there is a verb after them. In the sentence “Sherry will attend the party tonight” “will” is the modal auxiliary followed by the verb “attend.” Modal auxiliaries can’t fill the role of the main verb, but they can predict the mood of a verb (Kollon & Funk, 71). For example, if someone says “they will wash the car” it means they are going too, but if they say “they might wash the car” it questions whether they will wash the car or not.

**Why It’s Important to Good Writing**

Because modal auxiliaries influence the mood of the sentence, they are highly important to writing. They help writers give meaning to their stories and describe situations correctly. If an author was writing about a little boy picking out a gift for his mother, the author would use a modal auxiliary to write the boys thought process. “She might like this shirt, but She would love these flowers. I will get the flowers for her and not the shirt,” could be sentences the author writes, showing that the little boy knew is mom would like the flowers over the shirt and he was definitely going to get them. Writers must be careful when using modal auxiliaries because if they aren’t the whole meaning of the sentence is changed. The sentence “She must do her homework” has a different meaning than “she might do her homework.” The sense of urgency and importance is changed in each sentence, going from her homework needs to be done soon to she doesn’t really have to do it.

**How I Would Teach It**

I would start my lesson on model auxiliaries by explaining to my students what a model auxiliary is and giving them some examples. I would read a quick book to the students and have them write down all the modal auxiliaries they hear. Once I finished reading we will go through the modal auxiliaries they picked out and talk about what they meant in the story, or what the author wanted to say. Afterwards I would write down the same sentence several times over but leave a blank spot to put in a model auxiliary. Students will take turn writing a different modal auxiliary in the blank spot and tell me how it changes what the sentence says. The next day or two, I will have the students write about four or five sentences containing a different modal auxiliary in each. With a partner for several minutes they will read each of their sentences to each other and figure out how the meaning of each. Then switch with their partner to allow the other person to change the modal auxiliaries in their sentences. As a class we will discuss the meaning of the original sentence and how that meaning changed when their partner changed the modal auxiliary.

**Why I Would Teach It This Way**

When I read the book to them and point out examples of modal auxiliaries helps them understand the importance of modal auxiliaries first and how necessary they are to a story. When as a class we write a different modal auxiliary in the same sentence that demonstrates how the mood of the sentence can change. Once they understand how the modal auxiliary can change the meaning, then they will put their knowledge to practice and I can see if they are really understanding the concept or not. Plus, they can use their creativity to come up with new ideas to change the mood of their sentence.

**Conclusion**

Prepositional phrases, Dialect and language variation, and modal auxiliaries are just some of the grammar concepts that are highly important for children to learn for good writing. Understanding grammar and its purpose is highly important in society because its used everywhere, not just in writing. As a teacher I must make sure my students full comprehend what grammar is and the many concepts in grammar because it’ll build the foundation for them in writing effectively. Just like you must build the foundation of a house first and make sure its sturdy enough, teachers need to work with student to establish the understanding of grammar.

**Works cited**

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