

Course Topic: Teaching Grammar**Course Instructor:**

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Course Synopsis:

In his book, *How to Teach Grammar*, Scott Thornbury presents two criteria for evaluating grammar exercises and lessons: the E-factor and the A-factor. The E-factor refers to efficiency and the A-factor refers to appropriacy. In this interactive course we will work with these two factors to evaluate sample grammar activities for use in our language classrooms. For activities that don't satisfy the E-factor and the A-factor, we will discuss how to make adaptations. At the end of this course you will be able to use the E-factor and the A-factor to make good decisions when selecting grammar activities for your students.

Course Agenda:

1. The E-Factor
2. Applying the E-Factor
3. The A-Factor
4. Applying the A-Factor

1. The E-Factor

'E' stands for **Efficiency**. **Efficiency** is performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort. (www.dictionary.com)

Why is efficiency important in teaching grammar?

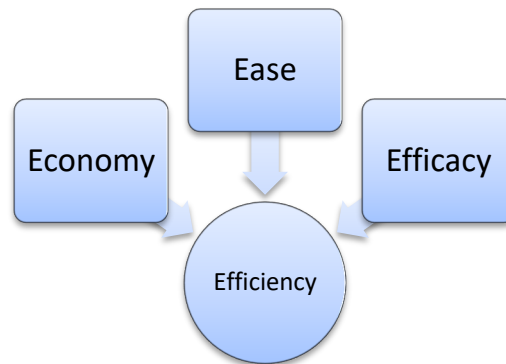
- Grammar is only one aspect of language that we need to teach our students. We also need to teach the other language systems (pronunciation, vocabulary, discourse), and the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking).
- Our time with our students is limited.
- Our time to plan our activities and lessons is also limited.

There are three other 'E' words that we can use to define Efficiency.

Economy = The shorter the time spent on getting the activity in motion, the better. Don't have too many instructions. Provide only what is needed and no more. Don't spend too much time planning the activity. Don't use too many resources on the activity.

Ease = The easier an activity is to set up in terms of effort, the better it is.

Efficacy = The activity should give the students the opportunity to learn and/or practice the target language. It should capture their attention. It should lead to understanding and retention of the concept.



2. Applying the E-Factor

Evaluate the following grammar activities. Determine whether the E-factor is weak, moderate or strong for each activity. If the E-factor is weak, why is this the case and what can you change about the activity to strengthen the E-factor?

<p>A. Paragraph Editing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students work in pairs to find 10 grammatical mistakes in a paragraph. They must identify the type of error (verb form or verb use) and fix the mistake. The teacher takes the answers up as a class. 	
<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>
<p>B. Sort the Sentences</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make a list of about 30 sentences that use three different language structures that have been studied recently. Make one copy of the list of sentences for each pair of students. Cut the lists of sentences into strips so that there is only one sentence per strip. Give one complete set of sentences to each pair of students, making sure the sentences are all mixed up. Students work with their partners to sort the sentences into three groups. For higher level students, don't tell them what the three groups are. For lower level students you can tell them what the three groups are. Students work with their partners to write three more sentences that go into each group. Students select three of the sentences to use in a dialogue. They must write additional sentences to go in the dialogue. 	
<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>
<p>C. Individual Workbook Exercises</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students work individually to complete a series of written exercises in their workbook. For each of the exercises students fill in the blank with the appropriate tense of the verb given in brackets. At the end of the class students hand in their workbooks to be marked by the teacher. 	

<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>
<p>D. Fly Game</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw two giant flies on the whiteboard, side by side. 2. Above one fly write 'Regular' and above the other write 'Irregular'. 3. Divide the class into two teams. Give one student on each team a rolled up newspaper. 4. The teacher says a verb, from a list of both regular and irregular verbs. 5. The students with the rolled up newspaper have to kill the fly that corresponds with the verb. For example, if the teacher says 'dance' the students should kill the 'regular' fly. 6. The student to kill the right fly first, wins a point for his or her team. 7. Another student from each team takes over as fly killer or fly swatter. 8. Continue this for 10 minutes. The team with the most points wins. 	
<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>
<p>E. Grammar from a Reading Text</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find or write a short text (one to two paragraphs) that contains many examples of the language target you are studying. 2. Students work in pairs to identify all examples of the language target in the text. 3. Students discuss with their partner why the language target is used in each example. 4. Students then work individually to write a similar text that uses the same language target. 	
<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>
<p>F. Error Correction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over the span of one or two weeks the teacher makes note of student errors in spoken and/or written communication. 2. The teacher puts the incorrect sentences in a list on a worksheet. 	

<p>3. The teacher hands out the worksheet to students. Students work in pairs to correct the sentences. The teacher confirms the answers as a class.</p>	
<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>
<p>G. Sentence Pictionary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher prepares a list of correct sentences that use one or more language targets that the class has studied recently. 2. The teacher divides the students into two teams. 3. One member from each team comes to the front of the room and stands in front of the board. 4. The teacher shows these two students one of the sentences. 5. The students have to draw on the board in order to get their team members to guess the sentence. The sentence must be exactly what the teacher provided. 6. The first team to guess the sentence gets a point. 7. Another member of each team comes up to the front to draw. 8. Continue this until each team member has had an opportunity to draw. 	
<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>
<p>H. Student Grammar Quizzes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students work in pairs to write a 10-question grammar quiz for another pair. 2. When all pairs are finished, pairs exchange their grammar quizzes and complete them. 3. Pairs return the completed quizzes to the original pair for marking. 	
<p>E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Changes:</p>

I. Word Order

1. The teacher creates 10 sentences that use the same target language.
2. The teacher creates a set of word cards with each word from each sentence on a separate card.
3. The teacher makes one complete set of word cards (with all of the words from all 10-sentences) for each student.
4. Students work individually to make 10-sentences using the word cards. They cannot have any word cards left over.
5. The teacher confirms the answers as a class.

E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong	Changes:
Why?	

J. Which Side?

1. Students all stand in the middle of the classroom.
2. The teacher indicates that the left side of the classroom is the simple past side and that the right side of the classroom is the present perfect side.
3. Students have to move to the side of the room that matches the sentence the teacher says. So if the teacher says "I went to the park yesterday", students move to the left side. If the teacher says "I have been to the park many times", students move to the right side.
4. Once all of the students have moved to their selected side of the room the teacher confirms the answer.
5. Repeat this between 20 and 25 times.

E-Factor Rating: Weak / Moderate / Strong	Changes:
Why?	

3. The A-Factor

‘A’ stands for **Appropriacy**. **Appropriacy** means it is the right activity for that particular group of learners.

You need to consider the following about your learners and your classes:

- Learner age
- Language level
- Size of class
- Monolingual versus multi-lingual
- Learner needs—to pass an exam, to improve career options
- Available materials and resources
- Learners’ previous life experiences
- Learners’ previous experiences learning English
- Cultural factors
- Educational context

4. Applying the A-Factor

Based on the descriptions of each of the classes below, select two grammar activities from section 2 that have a strong A-factor and one activity that has a weak A-factor for each class.

<p>Class A</p> <p>The students are beginner students aged 14-17. There are 12 students in the class. The class is monolingual, Spanish. The students are in Canada for 2 weeks as part of a teen summer English camp experience. They are attending the camp to improve their listening and speaking skills as well as to experience Canadian culture.</p>	
<p>Activities with a strong A-Factor:</p>	<p>Activities with a weak A-Factor:</p>
<p>Class B</p> <p>The students are a high intermediate level in their 30s and 40s. There are 8 students in the class. The students are all highly educated professionals. The students are from different language backgrounds. The students are immigrants to Canada and have been in the country from between 2 months and 3 years. The students are attending language classes to improve their English for licensing in their profession.</p>	
<p>Activities with a strong A-Factor:</p>	<p>Activities with a weak A-Factor:</p>

<p>Class C</p> <p>The students are in their early to mid-twenties. They are an intermediate level. There are 18 students in the class. The students are learning English in order to study for an undergraduate degree at an English-speaking university. The students are from two different language backgrounds.</p>	
<p>Activities with a strong A-Factor:</p>	<p>Activities with a weak A-Factor:</p>
<p>Class D</p> <p>The students are all adults, with an age range of early twenties to late forties. The language abilities range from intermediate to advanced. There are 15 students in the class. The students are preparing for the IELTS exam. The students are from different language backgrounds.</p>	
<p>Activities with a strong A-Factor:</p>	<p>Activities with a weak A-Factor:</p>
<p>Class E</p> <p>The students range in age from 19 to 30 years old. They are high beginner. There are 10 students in the class. They are from all different language backgrounds. The students are studying English in Canada for a short time (2 weeks to 2 months) to improve their English communication.</p>	
<p>Activities with a strong A-Factor:</p>	<p>Activities with a weak A-Factor:</p>

Remember: As you're planning your grammar lessons and selecting your grammar activities, take a few minutes to evaluate these activities using the E-factor and the A-factor. Are your activities efficient and are your activities appropriate for that group of students?

Thanks for participating!

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