

RESEARCHING OUR TEACHING TO FIND WAYS TO BREATHE LIFE INTO DEAD GRAMMAR

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Abstract

Professors of teacher education examine their teaching, their students' experiences, and the elementary school curricula in their university's service area to determine appropriate pedagogy for the teaching of grammar. Combined with a review of the extant literature in the field of grammar instruction, brain research, multiple intelligences, and learning styles, their findings describe a new pedagogy for preparing their undergraduate elementary education students to teach grammar. This pedagogy is transferable to other content areas that have traditionally been taught by lecture and practice exercises only.

KEY WORDS: Teacher-research, grammar, teacher education, pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

As staunch proponents of teacher-research for many years, we have argued consistently that only those who teach in a particular situation can understand its context and the appropriate actions within it [Hoffman and Topping, 1999, 2000; Topping and Hoffman, 2003, 2006; Topping and McManus, 2002a, 2002b]. This applies no less to ourselves as university professors who prepare teachers-to-be than it does to those teaching in the K-12 schools. Simply put, we must research our own practice to learn what is best for our students.

We teach undergraduate students in a methods block that immediately precedes their student teaching. The culmination of our semester's work with them is a three-week field experience in which they are expected to teach all subjects under the supervision of a cooperating teacher. Our most recent investigation into how and what we teach to these students has been in the area of grammar. Educational pendulum swings in the field of literacy education are legendary, with movements toward and away from direct teaching of various aspects of literacy occurring cyclically. Direct instruction in grammar is one such aspect. After many years of rarely having our students be asked to teach grammar in their field placements, the past five years have brought forth an upswing in the regularity with which they are being asked to teach it. Within the same semester, four students spoke to us about their concerns:

Please, oh please, don't let my co-op make me teach a unit on grammar.

- Katie, Senior Elementary Education major on the eve of her sixth grade field experience placement.

I sat in front of my computer staring at the screen as I attempted to write out a unit plan. HOW, I thought, am I going to make this interesting and real to these third graders?

- Brian, Senior Elementary Education major, having been asked to teach a unit on verbs in his field experience placement.

My worst fears have come true. My cooperating teacher has asked me to teach my first lesson on grammar. She wants me to teach the difference between "good" and "well". What should I do?

- Amy, Senior Elementary Education major, on the third day in her field experience placement.

So many of the kids in my class don't speak English well, so they just can't get grammar.

- Kristi, Senior Elementary Education major student teaching in an urban placement.

Our students' concerns led us to an investigation. It seemed that they were being asked to teach grammar more often than in previous years, and they were expressing more uneasiness about teaching it than any other subject. Why was there a "disconnect"? We began by identifying questions that we needed to answer: *What is the consensus in the professional literature about the teaching of grammar? How prevalent was the direct teaching of grammar in the elementary schools within our university's service area? How did our students recall being taught grammar? How does the grammar of English Language Learners' (ELLs') first language compare with the grammar of English? And, most importantly, how could we better prepare our students to teach grammar well?*

LACK OF CONSENSUS IN THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

We turned to the professional literature to ascertain the consensus in the field about teaching grammar. Instead, we found a *lack* of consensus. Like many aspects of literacy instruction, educators have disagreed over the years about the importance of direct instruction in grammar. Even the foremost professional organization for English teachers, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), lacks consensus. Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, NCTE established a position that the formal teaching of grammar should be discouraged due to its lack of positive impact on students' writing [Fries,1952; Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer,1963]. This position, officially supported as recently as 1991 has begun to erode with the formation of the Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar (ATEG), a special interest group within the NCTE. As pendulum swings in education are wont to do, a movement back toward the teaching of grammar seems to be underway.

A recent spate of articles in the professional literature presents some arguments supporting the anti-grammar stance, but an increasing number in support of formal grammar instruction. The works of Brown [1996], Invernizzi, Abouzeid, and Bloodgood [1997], Martinsen [2000], Weaver [1996], Mulroy [2003], and Sams [2003], for example, present compelling cases for the incorporation of grammar into the school curriculum. Their treatments of grammar tend to reflect a more moderate point of view, that it "should be neither abandoned nor worshipped but appropriately placed within the discipline of English [Martinsen, 2000, 142]."

PREVALENCE OF GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN THE ELEMENTARY CURRICULA

While debates and polarization about the teaching of grammar continue in the theoretical world, the world of practice operates differently. What teachers teach often is guided by externally imposed curricula, state and national standards, or trends such as the new Scholastic Aptitude Test. For whatever reason, it appeared to us that grammar, which had lain out of favor for many years, was staging a comeback in the schools in our university's service area. We decided to investigate how pervasive this was.

We designed a survey and sent it to the Supervisors of Reading/Language Arts in the nineteen school districts in our university's service area. In return, we received eleven completed surveys for a return rate of 58 percent. In addition, we contacted three non-responders after we had analyzed the survey results and asked them to respond to the accuracy of the data. Survey results confirmed what we had been sensing. We found that direct teaching of grammar instruction is required throughout the neighboring school districts. Most of the districts follow a standard scope and sequence chart so that each aspect of grammar is covered throughout the K-12 school experience. Interestingly, a good deal of this content is covered by the end of sixth grade, indicating that our elementary education teacher-candidates will be required to teach it. Figure 1 delineates the commonalities among the K-8 grammar curricula:

and sentence diagramming. Sentence diagramming, itself, brought forth mixed reviews, with a slight tendency toward the negative.

Students' unsolicited comments expressing their discomfort with grammar led us into this study, and their survey responses confirmed this. Seventy-one percent of those who were taught grammar indicated that they either "somewhat disliked" or "really disliked" the experience. Their level of confidence in their own understandings was disturbing. Over fifty-two percent reported that they felt "somewhat" to "very" unconfident in their knowledge. One student wrote poignantly,

I remember that we had grammar instruction but I don't remember anything about it. We had it and it did not help me. I still don't get it. I hated it. I still hate it. I hope that I don't have to teach it.

Given the influence of the apprenticeships of experience and observation on how teachers teach, this survey spoke strongly to our teacher-candidates' need for a positive intervention in the teaching of grammar. Their responses indicated that they either didn't observe anyone teaching it, or they observed it being taught in rote, isolated ways.

FIGURE 2
STUDENTS' RECOLLECTIONS OF GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

Tell us what you remember about grammar instruction.	<i>n</i> =242
When were you taught grammar? (Check all that apply.)	
Elementary School	213
Middle School	177
High School	111
College	92
I was not taught grammar	29
If you were taught grammar, how was it taught? (Check all that apply.)	
Direct instruction	213
English or Language Arts textbook practice exercises	200
English or Language Arts workbook	168
Worksheets with practice exercises	208
Sentence diagramming	128
Through my own writing	64
Through pieces of literature or informational text	46
Through music activities	2
Through art activities	4
Through games	16
Through creative dramatics	6
If you were taught grammar, how did you feel about it? (Check only one statement.)	
I really liked studying grammar.	18
I somewhat liked studying grammar.	44
I somewhat disliked studying grammar.	121
I really disliked studying grammar.	30
If you were taught sentence diagramming, complete the next three questions:	
How much did you enjoy sentence diagramming? (Check only one.)	
I liked it.	16
I neither liked it nor disliked it.	68
I disliked it.	44
How much did sentence diagramming help you understand grammar? (Check only one.)	
It helped me understand grammar better.	45
It didn't affect my understanding one way or the other.	31
It confused me somewhat.	37
It didn't make any sense at all.	15
Would you be likely to teach sentence diagramming to your students? (Check only one.)	

I definitely would.	5
I probably would.	46
I probably would not.	72
I definitely would not.	5
Did you study foreign language? (Check only one.)	
Yes	228
No	14
If you studied a foreign language, how did it affect your understanding of English grammar? (Check only one.)	
It helped my understanding.	83
It did not affect my understanding one way or the other.	141
It made it harder to understand.	4
How confident do you feel about your own understanding of grammar? (Check only one.)	
I feel very confident.	36
I feel somewhat confident.	79
I feel somewhat unconfident.	87
I feel very unconfident.	40

GRAMMAR AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Our student who stated as an assumed fact that “So many of the kids in my class don’t speak English well, so they just can’t get grammar” raised another concern. In an increasingly more global society, our students will be teaching in classrooms where English is not the primary language for many of their students. Having spent many years in the public schools, we recognized that our student’s de facto assessment of her field experience students is far too typical. English Language Learners (ELLs) are overly represented in special education classes and “written off” in many classes by their English-speaking teachers. Our own background in the study of linguistics reminded us that every language, indeed, has its own grammar although it may not work in the same way that English grammar does. We felt a strong need to do a better job in preparing our own teacher-candidates to be facile in working with ELL youngsters.

We turned to the professional literature, once again, to investigate the linguistic underpinnings of the world’s languages. Initially, we were overwhelmed by the number of languages in existence. How could we possibly prepare our students to understand the diverse grammatical structures of all of the languages with which they might have to interact? Fortunately, Haussamen (2003, 55) provided a useful summary:

- The nouns might take gender.
- Other languages may use articles differently, or no articles at all.
- Plurals may be formed by adding words or syllables to the sentence, or by giving context clues in the sentence to indicate that there is more than one.
- The word order may not follow the familiar subject-verb-object pattern.
- The pronoun may not have to agree in gender or number with its antecedent.
- Other languages may have fewer prepositions, making it confusing for the novice to know which preposition to use in English. Also, the preposition may not precede its object.
- There are differences in inflection and pacing.
- There are differences in written conventions, such as punctuation and capitalization.
- Nonverbal communications, such as gesture, eye contact, silences, and what people do to indicate that they understand, differ from culture to culture.

With this overview in mind, we prepared a set of charts to guide our students in examining grammatical differences among languages, based upon Swan and Smith’s (2001) work. Figure 3 is an example. Certainly, our goal could not be to parse every existing language. Instead, we purported to heighten our students’ awareness of three major ideas. First, we wanted them to recognize that every language is governed by a *grammar*. Second, we wanted to equip them with examples. And, third, we wanted to encourage them to develop ways of bridging instruction by using ELLs’ first language understandings to compare them to English.

FIGURE 3
SAMPLE CHART ILLUSTRATING DIFFERENCES AMONG
LANGUAGES IN SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

In...	Therefore, your ELL writers may write...
... <i>Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, Greek and Polish</i> , word order is much freer than in English.	... <i>Arrived Sharon an hour later</i> instead of <i>Sharon arrived an hour later.</i>
... <i>Spanish</i> , there is no set word order for questions, and auxiliaries play no part in them.	... <i>Allyson brought the treats?</i> instead of <i>Has Allyson brought the treats?</i>
... <i>Russian</i> , there is no fixed word order in sentences.	...sentences in what appears to be totally random word order.
... <i>Portuguese</i> , questions often are formed by adding a questioning word to a declarative sentence, or simply by changing intonation. A non-subject word often appears at the beginning of a sentence. ... Exclamatory sentences use the word order of declarative sentences, with the word <i>como</i> (which means <i>how</i>) added in the beginning.	... <i>Brad is working now. Yes?</i> or simply <i>Brad is working now</i> , assuming that the reader will assume a questioning intonation ... <i>Girls I like</i> instead of <i>I like girls.</i> ... <i>How Alisa is beautiful!</i> instead of <i>Alisa is so beautiful!</i>
... <i>Korean and Japanese</i> , the typical word order is subject-object-verb, unlike English which is subject-verb-object.	... <i>David the ball hit.</i>
... <i>Korean, Japanese, and Turkish</i> , negative questions are answered with <i>yes</i> if the responder agrees with the speaker, and <i>no</i> if he disagrees.	... dialogue such as [question] <i>Don't you like football?</i> [answer] <i>Yes, I really hate it.</i>
... <i>Japanese</i> , the topic often is placed at the beginning of a declarative sentence.	... <i>Fighting---I do not like at all</i> instead of <i>I do not like fighting at all.</i>
... <i>Farsi</i> , adjectives follow nouns, verbs are at the end of the sentence, and pronouns are omitted if they are understood. ... the response to a negative question can be a special retort that translates loosely to <i>Why not?</i> This retort often strikes English speakers as flip or abrasive, but it is not meant to be.	... <i>Yesterday airplane big [I] flew.</i> ... <i>Why not?</i> In response to the question, <i>Don't you want to get an A?</i>
... <i>Thai</i> , sentences are written left-to-right with no spaces between words, and there is not distinction between upper and lower case.	... <i>sheandhewenthome.</i>
... <i>Malay-Indonesian</i> , writers often do not write in complex sentences. Their language does not lend itself to the use of dependent and independent clauses in the same way English does.	... <i>Broccoli although bitter but is good for your bones</i> instead of <i>Although it is bitter, broccoli is good for your bones.</i>

[Topping and Hoffman, 2006]

CHANGES IN OUR TEACHING

Our investigations led us to realize that the schools are, indeed, teaching grammar, and our students are woefully under-prepared for the task. As a result, our charge became twofold: first, to shore up their understandings and, second, to model a way to teach grammar that is more exciting than what they remember. Recent research on teaching and learning has brought forth new visions that have challenged the traditional frontal teaching or transmission model – the model that our teacher-candidates clearly remember. The past two decades have sounded the call for new forms of pedagogy. Research on learning styles [Gregorc, 1985] outlined a typology that suggests that people innately exhibit preferences for learning that fall into these categories: Concrete Sequential (CS), Abstract Random (AR), Abstract Sequential (AS), and Concrete Random (CR). Of these four styles, only the CS prefers to learn in ways that are didactic and solitary --- the way in which grammar has traditionally been taught. However, there are three other style preferences that learn best when engaged in groups, in problem-solving, and through multi-sensory involvement. Gardner's work on multiple intelligences [1993] further casts doubt on the singular use of the transmission model, claiming that that intelligence is much more than linguistic and mathematical ---the way in which grammar has traditionally been taught. Other aspects of human intelligence include spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal that must be drawn upon. Jensen's conclusions from his study of brain research [2001] further supports alternative ways of teaching and learning by foregrounding the importance of authentic language, motor activity, music, and the arts on the brain when it is learning. As each of these bodies of research has overlain the others, a basic premise has emerged. No two people learn in exactly the same way. More importantly, people learn actively, not passively. Recognizing that grammar has most often been taught through lecture and practice exercises, we set out to bring it to life through inclusion of pedagogy reflective of a more active and inclusive stance.

In their comments about teaching strategies that had helped them learn grammar, a number of our students had mentioned *Daily Oral Language* [1993], a daily drill on grammatical and usage correctness used in many schools. We rechristened this drill as *Help! Editor Needed!* and began each class by displaying a sentence containing grammatical errors on a transparency. We led them in identifying the kinds of sentences, the parts of speech, and the errors that occurred in each of these sentences. This relatively painless drill became a highlight of the class. Further, we invited them to become acute observers of environmental print on signs and other public documents and to bring examples of errors on them to our classes. Their enthusiasm for these activities was matched only by their disgust at the misuse of language so publicly displayed in their communities. They took pictures of these examples and displayed them on a bulletin board entitled "*Help! Editor Needed!*" in the hallway outside of our classrooms.

While these activities helped to ground our students' own grammatical understandings, we continued to be concerned that they lacked a full repertoire of strategies for teaching grammar to their students. We held the findings from learning styles, multiple intelligences, and brain research in our minds and began to develop a set of teaching strategies that reflected these understandings. Figure 4 contains a sampling of such activities that we share with our teacher-candidates.

FIGURE 4
A NEW PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

Modality	Grammar element	Activity
Authentic texts	Compound and complex sentences, dependent and independent clauses	<p>Reconnect</p> <p>Lift complex and compound-complex sentences from the book you are reading aloud to the class. Break them into their dependent and independent clauses and write these clauses on sentence strips. Give a sentence strip to each student, then have students walk around the room until they find the rest of their sentence. Don't be surprised if there are some <i>reconnects</i> that are not the way the sentences originally were written, but that make sense nonetheless!</p> <p>Materials needed: current read-aloud book, sentence strips, markers.</p>

Students' own writing	Nouns	<p>Numbered nouns</p> <p>Numbered Nouns is a variation of the childhood favorite, <i>MadLibs</i>. Students number the nouns in their latest piece of writing, then copy them onto a separate piece of paper (e.g. "I gave my dog a bath last night and got water all over the floor" would yield the list: #1. dog, #2. bath, #3. night, #4. water, #5. floor...) Next, they exchange lists with a partner and read their pieces aloud substituting their partner's numbered nouns for their own. Hilarity ensues when one student's sentence "Seven <i>people</i> came to my <i>party</i> last <i>Saturday</i> and we ate a lot of <i>pizza</i> and <i>cupcakes</i>" becomes "Seven <i>dog[s]</i> came to my <i>bath</i> last night and we ate a lot of <i>water</i> and <i>floor[s]</i>!"</p> <p>Materials needed: students' writing, blank paper and pencils.</p>
Speaking	Interjections	<p>Interjecting storytelling</p> <p>Storytelling can be an exciting collaborative activity, especially when the tellers have some help with their ideas. Assemble assorted small props, enough for every child to have one. (Most of us can do this with a quick sweep of our desks and come up with paper clips, a pen, a picture, a bell, a plant, and so forth. There is no right or wrong set of objects.) In addition, write enough interjections on 3X5 cards so that each student receives one. Have students sit in groups of four and assign each a number, one to four. Beginning with number one, that child begins to tell a story that includes both his prop and his interjection. Upon a signal from you, child number two picks up the story and incorporates both his prop and his interjection. This continues until all four students in each group have had a turn. Ask for groups to volunteer to share their storytelling with the entire class.</p> <p>Materials needed: box of props, 3X5 cards.</p>
Music	Prepositions	<p>Prep-a-doodle</p> <p>One of our students found a copy of this song, contributed by Corrie Napier on <www.lessonplanspage.com/LAMusic/PrepositionSongBriefIdea46.htm>, and shared it with us. Sing the following list of prepositions to the tune of <i>Yankee Doodle</i> and you just might find, as we did, that your class wants to challenge the class next door to a <i>Prep-a-Doodle Sing-Off!</i></p> <p>About, above, across, after, Along, among, around, at, Before, beside, between, against, Within, without, beneath, through. During, under, in, into, Over, of, off, to, toward, Up, on, near, for, from, except, By, with, behind, below, down.</p>
Art	Verb Tenses	<p>Verb tenses, Mother Goose, and art</p> <p>Take present and future verb tenses, add Mother Goose and art and you've got (pardon the colloquialism) a great activity. Match this up with a genre study you are doing in realistic fiction or science fiction and you will be triple-dipping into the old curriculum pot! We all know that Little Miss Muffet <i>sat</i> on her tuffet, eating her curds and whey, when along <i>came</i> a spider and <i>sat</i> down beside her and <i>frightened</i></p>

		<p>Miss Muffet away. What if Ma Goose was writing today? Little Miss Muffet just might encounter not only present tense, but also a bean bag chair, tofu and sprouts, and a West Nile Virus mosquito. <i>Little Miss Muffet is sitting on her bean bag chair, eating her tofu and sprouts, when along comes a West Nile Virus mosquito and sits down beside her and frightens Miss Muffet away.</i> Your literature curriculum focuses on science fiction? Well, Miss Muffet <i>will sit</i> in her <i>space craft</i>...and so on. Take a familiar nursery rhyme, have your students write and illustrate it in present or future tense and see what understandings develop about tense, genre, and art.</p> <p>Materials needed: paper and pencils, markers.</p>
Movement	Adjectives	<p>That [blank] noun Write a sentence such as <i>The _____ chocolate cookies fell on the floor</i> and draw a line under the sentence, placing a minus sign (-) on the left end, a zero (0) in the middle, and a plus sign (+) on the right end. Give students 3X5 cards on which they write an adjective that would fit in this sentence. Have them place their adjectives along a continuum from negative—to neutral—to positive connotation. Interesting discussion will ensue over such things as whether <i>three</i> is neutral in connotation or not. Or is it more negative than <i>big</i>? Obviously, <i>disgusting</i> goes to the left end. But how about <i>stale</i>? More negative or neutral than <i>disgusting</i>? Students will make many trips to the board to move their adjectives around as they argue and resolve the placements.</p> <p>Materials needed: 3X5 cards, tape, current texts, students' writing.</p>
Dramatics	Adverbs	<p>Pick up the trash how? Scatter some crumpled pieces of paper next to a trash can and tell students that you are going to have them perform a very simple task--picking up the trash. The catch is this: they must pick up the trash in very special ways. Assign one adverb to every two students. Their task is to look up the definition and brainstorm ideas for how they would pick up the trash in the way their adverb indicates. Think of the possibilities, for example, with the following adverbs and their definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defiantly---in an openly bold and resistant manner Deferentially---in a courteous and respectful manner Determinedly---in a resolved and decided manner Discourteously---in a rude and impolite manner <p>Without dramatics, this is just a boring look-up-the-definition-of-these-adverbs exercise from the D section of the dictionary. With dramatics, you will find you students poring over a dictionary for a purpose and remembering new adverbs long enough to use them in their writing and speaking. Pair your shyer or less dramatic students with those for whom <i>the world is a stage</i>, and get ready for a lot of laughter—and learning.</p> <p>Materials needed: trashcan, crumpled paper, list of adverbs.</p>
Games	All parts of speech	<p>Pick a card This activity borrows from a review activity developed by Roberta McManus' (Topping and McManus 2002). Using index cards, prepare the playing cards for this game according to the directions below. You will notice that parts of speech are written in red, definitions in green,</p>

	<p>and example words in blue. (The definition on the back of each card does not match the part of speech on the front, but don't worry. That is intentional, and it enables you to play the game.)</p> <p>Card #1---(Front, in red marker) <i>Noun</i>; (back is blank).</p> <p>Card #2---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word used to name something – a person, place or thing</i>; (back, in red marker) <i>Interjection</i>.</p> <p>Card #3---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word or phrase used to express strong emotion, and set off by , or !</i>; (back, in red marker) <i>Verb</i>.</p> <p>Card #4---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word that shows action or being</i>; (back, in red marker) <i>Preposition</i>.</p> <p>Card #5---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word that shows the relationship between an object and other words in the sentence</i>; (back, in red marker) <i>Adjective</i>.</p> <p>Card #6---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word that describes a noun or pronoun</i>; (back, in red marker) <i>Pronoun</i>.</p> <p>Card #7---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word used in place of a noun</i>; (back, in red marker) <i>Conjunction</i>.</p> <p>Card #8---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word used to connect words and groups of words</i>; (back, in red marker) <i>Adverb</i>.</p> <p>Card #9---(Front, in green marker) <i>a word that modifies a verb, and tells how, when, where, why, how often, or how much</i>; (back is blank).</p> <p>In addition to the green and red definitions and parts of speech, you will need thirty to forty cards on which you write, in blue marker, words that exhibit each part of speech. This activity works best when students are able to talk among themselves and problem-solve, so randomly pass out all of the cards to pairs or small groups. Ask for someone to bring the red <i>Noun</i> card to the front of the room. Ask students to look at their green cards to see if they have the definition of a noun. A student brings the noun definition forward. Having thus defined what a noun is, ask students to look at their blue cards and decide which, if any, of them fits the definition of a noun and to bring those words forward. As a class, cross-check each example card with the definition to see if it is a match. Encourage best guesses and trial attempts. When the noun discussion is complete, have the holders of the word <i>Noun</i> and the noun examples sit down. The holder of the noun definition turns his card over to reveal the next part of speech <i>Interjection</i>. Have the holder of the definition card come forward, then the holders of examples. Play continues in this manner through the rest of the parts of speech.</p> <p>The beauty of this game is in its conversation about words. For example, the holder of <i>Italian</i> (as in <i>I am an Italian</i>) might come forward as an example of a noun. You then can say to her, "Oh! You are going to be busy today. I think you will decide to come forward again!", knowing that <i>Italian</i> also can function as an adjective. <i>Pilot</i> (as in <i>airplane pilot, pilot a plane, and pilot light</i>) is a similarly interesting word. When students make an incorrect suggestion, such as bringing forward <i>outdoor</i> as an example of a noun (saying, for example, <i>We play outdoors</i>), simply add another blue word card with the correct form. ("Oh, I see what you are thinking. You are thinking of the word outdoors [with an s]. Great! That would be the noun form of that word. Let me make that card for you. Hold on to outdoor without the -s, though, because I think you'll be bringing it up here again later on".)</p> <p>Materials needed: prepared cards, colored markers.</p>
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SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

We take teacher-research seriously. Not only must we prepare our undergraduate and graduate teachers to research their practices in order to know what they should do, but we also must research our own practices to determine how to best prepare them. Our most recent research into the teaching of grammar has led us to understand that the schools into which our teacher-candidates will go are, indeed, teaching grammar. Furthermore, our research has told us that our students lack confidence in, and sometimes background knowledge about, teaching basic grammar. After a review of the literature about teaching grammar, and about teaching writ-large, we have developed a reconceived pedagogy for teaching grammar that we share with our teachers-to-be.

Our work to date suggests a direction for future research into our own practices. We need to continue to assess our entering students' past experiences and confidence levels in their own understandings of grammar and the ways in which they can teach it. As they participate in our Teaching of Literacy classes, we need to determine if and how their confidence levels change. We must continue to maintain open dialogue with teachers in our university's service area in order to understand the curricular challenges that they (and our students) face. Furthermore, we need to develop a way of assessing our students' field performances to determine the extent of their successes in teaching grammar in ways that are active and inclusive of all learners. In short, by "walking in the way we talk", we will continue to view our teaching as an ever-emerging work-in-progress.

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