From rules to reasons and other little little tweaks

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The ideal scenario

Giving the learners what they need at their point of need
Potential blocks on this scenario

- Comprehension questions
- Rule discovery activities
- Controlled practice activities
Potential blocks on this scenario

**JADE'S STORY**

When I first met Sam, I really liked him. He was good-looking and kind but quite shy. He used to play computer games — or one in particular — quite a lot. I'd visit him at his home and he'd be sitting at the computer. Sometimes he didn't even turn round, and I thought that was strange but I soon got used to talking to his back. Anyway, three years ago we got married.

Now when he comes home from work, or one of our cooks dinner, while the other looks after our son Joe. Then instead of sitting down and chatting about the day, Sam usually goes straight to his computer to play Battle Galaxy 2026. Whenever I try to get him to watch a movie on TV or something, he either completely ignores me or he agrees and then gets bored because he wants to go back to his game. I'm not used to that type of behaviour. It's very different from my family. I feel ignored and often ask myself why I stay with this guy. It wouldn't be so bad if it was just with me. But whenever his parents come round he carries on playing and ignores them. Sometimes he turns round to say something but he often doesn't even know what we're been talking about. So I have to talk to them and pretend that everything's normal.

I remember once I got really annoyed and unplugged his computer. He was furious — he said I'd 'killed' some of his friends.

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**READING**

3A Work in pairs. Student A turn to page 159. Student B read the article above. Underline two words/phrases in the box that best describe how Jade sees herself. Circle two words that describe how she sees Sam.

- selfish
- potent
- talkative
- good parent
- neglected
- rude
- good friend

B Work with a student who reads the same article and compare your answers.

4A What can you remember? Answer the questions. Then read your article again and check.

1. Why did Sam and Jade like each other at first?
2. Why does Sam love the game so much?
3. Why are Sam and Jade both irritated when Sam's parents visit?
4. Why did Jade unplug Sam's computer? Why were they both angry afterwards?
5. How do they both feel about Joe playing on the computer?

B Work with a student who reads the other article and compare your answers to Exercises 3A and 4A.

C Work in pairs and discuss. How do you think Jade and Sam can resolve the problem? Who do you think needs to change the most?
Comprehension questions

• Questions that test comprehension are not particularly cognitively demanding
  Mishan, F (2014)

• Comprehension questions often only focus on parts of the text chosen by the writer
  Roberts, R (2014)
Comprehension questions

4A What can you remember? Answer the questions. Then read your article again and check.

1. Why did Sam and Jade like each other at first?
2. Does Sam spend enough time with Jade and Joe?
3. Why does Sam like the game so much?
4. Why are Sam and Jade both irritated when Sam’s parents visit?
5. Why did Jade unplug Sam’s computer? Why were they both angry afterwards?
6. How do they both feel about Joe playing on the computer?
Rule discovery

“Knowledge which is gained by one’s own efforts is much more likely to stick and to be used than knowledge which is handed over on a plate”

Willis, D (2000:8)
Rule discovery

Rules:

a) Use *used to* to talk about activities and states which *happen regularly in the present/happened in the past but not usually now.*

b) Use *would* to talk about *activities/states* in the past which no longer happen now.

c) Use *be used to* to talk about things that are *familiar/strange* to us.

d) Use *get used to* to talk about things that *are familiar/become familiar to us over a period of time.*

e) After *used to* and *would*, use the *infinitive/the -ing form or a noun.*

f) After *be used to* and *get used to*, use the *infinitive/the -ing form or a noun.*
Controlled practice

- repetition should be meaningful and relevant to the learners ..... and not merely (or entirely) a mechanical parroting of structures


- Using language productively means going beyond the kind of language display required by many controlled practice activities

  Willis, J. (1996)
Controlled practice

6A Correct the mistake in each sentence.

1. When I was a kid, I'd often quarrelled with my parents.
2. As a child, I used to eating too many sweets.
3. I'm not used to get up early, so when I have to be somewhere in the morning, I'm often late.
4. I used to saying what I think, and sometimes I upset people.
5. I get used to my mother cooking for me when I lived at home, and now I can't cook for myself.
6. I come from a big family and I don't think I'll ever get used to live on my own.
7. I didn't used to be much help around the house.
8. I would be quite a lazy student when I was younger, and I often put off finishing my homework.
Controlled practice

B  Work in groups and discuss. Which of the bad habits and behaviour above do/did you share? Do/Did you have any other bad habits?
The role of our participants

The writer chooses the answers

The learners find the answers

The teacher validates the answers
3 ways of tweaking our practice

- Using evaluative reading/listening tasks
- Exploring reasons, not rules
- Using replication or transposition activities
Evaluative reading/listening tasks

• What should Jade do?

• Who do you think needs to change the most?

• What do you think will happen?

• Why on earth did she marry him?
it's overwhelmed her

he's just 'there' he's disappeared
She should threaten to leave him

he should see a psychologist

the problem was bigger than she thought
She thought she could change him.
She thought it was a phase
might be
he'd grow out of it
"If I marry him, he'll change"
From reasons to rules

• Why is Jade using ‘used to’?

• Why is Jade using ‘got used to’?
From reasons to rules

a) Use *used to* to talk about activities and states which *happen regularly in the present*/*happened in the past but not usually now.*

- Jade is using ‘*used to*’ to describe his habits before they married
From rules to reasons

d) Use get used to to talk about things that are familiar/become familiar to us over a period of time.

• Jade is using ‘got used to’ to describe strange before but now it’s normal for Jade
From rules to reasons

• At first it was strange but she became accustomed.

Al principio fue extraño pero ella se acostumbró.
Feedback and language input

Jade is using "used to" to describe his habits before they got married.

Would

Jade is using "got used to" to describe something that was strange before but now it's normal.

be used to

Jade is using "be used to" to say Joe thinks it's normal.

getting used to

now

I want to do it.

I got to do it.

I'm used to it.
A replication task

• When I first met Jade.....
Examples from learners

• “I used to play computer games before we got married so I don’t know what her problem is”

• “She used to call me everyday so I got a lot of stress”

• “She would come to my home and she’d be sitting behind me when I was playing games”

• “I soon got used to her strange behaviour”

• “Unfortunately we got married”
Examples from learners

**TAKE MY TIME.**

When I first met Jade, she reminded me of Lara Croft, the protagonist of the game “Tomb Raider.” During the time we were dating, I used to play every day at this game to remember her. Sometimes she came to my house while I was playing and she used to sit down behind me, it seemed that Lara Croft was talking to me, that was great and I got used to talk to her in this way.

After three years we were married.

Now, we have a son named Joe, when he has a few more years, I will show him to play “Battle Galaxy 2525.” Married life is very boring, I have no time to myself, I need to enjoy my own time, with my wife that is not possible, always she wants to be with me, when I was single I used to enjoy my time, I think she is jealous of my friends, she said I’m used to spend more time with them than with her. But my friends are funnier and I can get out thought the galaxy with them in search of new adventures.

Once she disconnected my computer and she killed my friends, it was horrible.
Transposition

• Interview Jade
Language emerging in preparation

• Why do you still stay with him?

• Didn’t you realise that it was a big problem at the beginning?

• What about your friends? Did they tell you anything when you decided to marry him?

• Have you ever thought to hide his computer?

• Did you suggest he sees a phy?
Emerging needs

• Have you tried to suggesting to help something?

• Have you thought to hide his computer?

• Have you joined playing videos together?

• you should threatening to leave him
“contextualised practice is still controlled, but it involves an attempt to encourage learners to relate form to meaning by showing how structures are used in real life situations”

Ellis, R. (2002:68)
The role of our participants

😊 The writer chooses the answer

The writer supplies the raw materials

😊 The learners find the answer

The learners develop ideas, definitions, opinions and questions

😊 The teacher validates the answer

The teacher works with what emerges
# A working template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive skill level and processes</th>
<th>Text prompts</th>
<th>Rules to reasons</th>
<th>Replication tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Creating                           | • Predict what will happen to their relationship  
  • Suggest solutions to their problem  
  • Journalists interview Jade and Sam about facts in the text  
  • Speculate on why Jade married Sam  | • Learners devise or formulate new descriptions of language  
  • Learners extend knowledge of language items  
  • Learners build links between rules and reasons  | • Rewrite the text from Sam (or Joe’s) perspective  
  • Tell the story 1 year later/create an ending  
  • Journalists interview Jade and Sam with new questions  
  • Transpose the text to another medium, e.g. a newspaper article  
  • Learners write their own problem article  |
| Evaluating                         | • What would you do?  
  • What should Jade do?  
  • Defend Sam’s behaviour  
  • Split class so they argue for each side  
  • Make a set of rules for Jade and Sam  
  • Discuss ‘traditional’ gender roles  | • Learners justify/defend their descriptions  
  • Learners critique or review pedagogic rules  | • Role play Sam & Jade defending their actions  |
| Analysing                          | • Separate facts from opinions  
  • Identify problems and the causes of problems  
  • Design a survey based on the content  
  • Look for causes of the problem/learners discuss causes  
  • Learners rank/order Sam’s behaviour and habits  
  • Learners analyse why Jade is writing/what response she is likely to get  | • Learners identify relations between rules and reasons  |  |
| Applying                           | • Learners describe what could happen if Sam and Jade make changes  
  • Learners discuss if this could happen in their country or life?  |  | • Transpose the text to another medium, e.g. a newspaper article  |
| Understanding                      | • Retell or summarise the text (jigsaw reading)  
  • Adding Information to timelines  |  | • Reconstruct the text from prompts, i.e. dictogloss  |
| Remembering                        | • Use of comprehension questions with what, when etc.  
  • Locating facts  |  |  |

Cognitive processes, revised Bloom’s taxonomy and table adapted from Mishan & Timms 2015
Your turn

The place is perfect, the weather is wonderful, but if you’re with the wrong person, a holiday can be a disaster...

Joe 28, a flight attendant

Last October I went on holiday to Thailand for two weeks with my girlfriend, Mia. The holiday began well. We spent two days in Bangkok and saw the Floating Market and the Royal Palace. But things went wrong when we left Bangkok. I wanted to stay in hostels, which were basic but clean, but Mia said they were too uncomfortable and so we stayed in quite expensive hotels. I wanted to experience the local atmosphere but Mia just wanted to go shopping. I thought I knew Mia very well, but you don’t know a person until you travel with them. It was awful! We argued about everything.

For our last four days we went to Ko Chang, a beautiful island. It was like being in paradise. The weather was lovely and the beaches were wonderful, but we just sunbathed without speaking. We spent our last night back in Bangkok and we went for a drink with some Australians. They were really friendly and Mia started flirting with one of the boys. That was the end.

‘you don’t know a person until you travel with them’

When we arrived at Heathrow airport the next day we decided to break up.

I took hundreds of photos, but when I got home I didn’t show them to anyone.
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‘Teaching Grammar: from rules to reasons’ Pavilion Publishing 2015
Bibliography


