

SOME PROBLEMS ON TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Many theoretical and practical works on teaching grammar have been written by prominent grammarians and methodologists; still no clear methodology on teaching grammar have been proposed. Each person has an opinion. Likewise different styles of teaching equate to the varying opinions on how it should be taught, if indeed it should or can be taught.

People sometimes describe grammar as the *rules* of a language; but in fact no language has rules. If we use the word rules, we suggest that somebody created the rules first and then spoke the language. But languages did not start like that. Languages started by people making sounds which evolved into words, phrases and sentences. No commonly spoken language is fixed: all languages change over time. What we call "grammar" is simply a reflection of a language at a particular time.

Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach well. That is why it is very significant for a grammar teacher to be competent in this field of science, so in this paper we would like to dwell upon certain qualities and characteristics that a good grammar instructor should possess.

Let's try to work out some of the characteristics that good teachers exhibit. It is not meant to be all encompassing or definitive; many excellent grammar instructors may possess only some of these traits, and consider others not mentioned to be just as valuable. The characteristics detailed here may be viewed simply as a selection of tools that allow the instructors to create and sustain connectivity in their classrooms.

Good grammar instructors should:

- have a sense of purpose;

You can't be good in a generic sense; you have to be good for something. As a teacher, this means that you know what your students expect, and you make plans to meet those expectations. You, too, have expectations about what happens in your classroom, based on the goals you're trying to achieve.

- **have expectations of success for all students;**

This is the great paradox of teaching. If we base our self-evaluation purely on the success of our students, we'll be disappointed. At all levels, but especially in adult education, there are simply too many factors in students' lives for a teacher to be able to guarantee success to all.

- demonstrate a willingness to adapt and change to meet student needs;

Can we really claim to have taught a grammar class if no one learned any of the concepts in the lesson from our presentation? If none of our students ever pick up a book outside of the classroom, have we really taught them to be better readers? We don't always think about these issues, but they are at the heart of effective teaching. A great lesson plan and a great lesson are two entirely different things; it's nice when one follows the other, but we all know that it doesn't always work out that way.

- reflect on their work;

Good grammar instructors routinely think about and reflect on their classes, their students, their methods, and their materials. They compare and contrast, draw parallels and distinctions, review, remove and restore. Failing to observe what happens in our classes on a daily basis disconnects us from the teaching and learning process, because it's impossible to create connectivity if you've disconnected yourself.

- learn from a variety of models

Think back again to your three best teachers. How has your own teaching been shaped by their practices, consciously or unconsciously? Think also of the worst teacher you ever had. Are there things you absolutely will not do because you remember how devastating they were to you or your classmates? We learn to

teach gradually, and absorb ideas and practices from a variety of sources. We are not always aware of the influences on our teaching, good and bad; reflecting on the different models of teaching we've acquired, and looking at how we acquired them, makes us better able to adapt and change to suit new challenges.

- enjoy their work and their students.

This may seem obvious, but it's easy to lose sight of its importance. Instructors who enjoy their work and their students are motivated, energized, and creative. The opposite of enjoyment is burnout-the state where no one and nothing can spark any interest. Notice, too, that enjoying your work and enjoying your students may be two different things. Focusing too much on content may make students feel extraneous, misunderstood, or left out. Focusing exclusively on students, without an eye to content, may make students feel understood and appreciated, but may not help them achieve their educational goals as quickly as they'd like. Achieving a balance between the two extremes takes time and attention; it demands that we observe closely, evaluate carefully, and act on our findings.

Saying in conclusion, teachers are responsible for the students, for their level of knowledge in the field of teaching language.

Resources:

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