



Language World 2012

Grammar... *and* communication? Friends - not foes

Martine Pillette

Independent Consultant

mjppillette@aol.com

Since the demise of O level, grammar and communication have often had an uneasy relationship in the classroom:

- Is grammar good or bad?
- Do current statutory requirements make it 'in' or 'out'?
- Is the communicative agenda still on - and what does it mean anyway?
- Are 'grammar' and 'communication' compatible or not?

In my introduction to this session, I first gave a brief account of the rollercoaster ride grammar has experienced in recent decades - and why. I then clarified National Curriculum requirements and the current Ofsted agenda.

What emerged was a strong message about 'grammar for communication' - as opposed to 'grammar or communication'. Grammar in itself is neither good nor bad: what matters is how it is introduced and the nature of the practice opportunities provided by teachers. I therefore devoted the rest of the session to grammar approaches which facilitate the development of communicative competence. My key suggestions revolved around issues of context, multi-skill grammar practice, syntax and how to break down barriers between grammar points.

I have since agreed to write an article based on my session for the spring 2013 edition of ALL's *Francophonie*, in which I shall provide ample exemplification.

Grammar



Communication