

On the Value of Systematic Grammar Study

Background:

1. The IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts—especially Standards 3,6, and 9—require significant attention to the nature and structure of language.
2. The recently approved NCTE guidelines on Content Knowledge for Effective ELA Teachers state that teacher candidates should be able to “define various approaches to language analysis and explain their implications for practice; articulate and describe the major developments in the history of English.; explain the importance of their commanding knowledge of the major semantic, syntactical and auditory systems of language...; describe the significance of various grammar systems including prescriptive and descriptive grammars that offer different insights into the timely production of language...”
3. Current lack of knowledge about language has fostered such regressive pedagogies as drill, emphasis on surface errors, and prescriptive rules that limit rather than encourage informed language choices.
4. However, there are other pedagogies that acknowledge grammar as a dynamic, evolving system that is responsive to local culture, acquired over a lifetime in varying contexts, and highly functional within those contexts.

Resolution:

Therefore, be it resolved that the The Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar (ATEG) recognize the value of systematic grammar study for teachers and students through pedagogies that promote not only the conscious knowledge of language structure but also an awareness of how language works.

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