The problem of my paper is how to instruct the interested students in the best way in a functional grammar of English and “to induce learning”.

I have worked out a compact course of about twenty lectures given to university undergraduates at BA level. This paper is about problems in approaches to English grammar, false and true, and my experience in creating the course.

Modern technology has opened possibilities to many teachers to discuss their problems online with their colleagues, whom they cannot meet face-to-face, to hear other teachers’ opinions on unclassified questions and to find solutions. While this advantage has its merits, it also keeps mere talk rolling rather than focusing on the problems. I have noted only one problem in online discussions: the problem is how to teach grammar (Mokhtar Aftat, EFL/ESL Instructor, Saudi Arabia, 28 & 29 March 2013, Linkedin.com) rather than to make noise about the question whether grammar has to be taught.

Reference sources explaining why grammar is necessary and how to teach it are not very many but very reliable.

I have drawn my knowledge from Henry G. Widdowson (1991) who treats grammar as the resource of the knowledge of sentence formation and of the combination of conceptual and lexical meaning “that need to be engaged to realize meaning”. He finds that instruction in grammar is sufficient even when it based on contrived examples in the classroom context and explains the credibility of this idea.
I have appreciated George Yule (2009) who thinks grammar is necessary to enable the student to communicate accurately and competently in any medium and especially in writing.

I have resorted to Michael McCarthy (2012) for his concept of the grammar of written English and the grammar of spoken English and of the necessity to base instruction on the examples selected by the frequency criterion and on features “consistent across a wide range of users”.

I have refreshed my familiarity with one century’s authors who influenced academic grammar as I followed the 7 Ways of Looking at Grammar reviewed by Scott Thornbury (2014a).

4
Creating a practical course of a descriptive grammar of English (in 2009) for university students based on The Cambridge Grammar of English (Carter, McCarthy, 2007) was an immense job. This volume being a research grammar, a mere selection of the problems, topics and illustrative examples required much time and effort. The twenty lectures in total in my course divide into three parts:

Part 1: An Overview of Units Current in Spoken English, of the Word and the Phrase.

Part 2: The English Sentence.


5
I have made use of all experience in teaching English Grammar from known publications. While attempting to instruct comprehensively and with precision, I resorted to the rule of the repetition of typical illustrative examples
in my talk, in Lecture Notes and their Summaries, in exercises and even in semi-standardised tests. This had an obvious effect.

One law which backed the rule of repetitio was the philosophical concept of interrelatedness of all things.

So I did not shun any useful heritage - elements of pattern practice, graphically magnified illustrations serving like visual aids, elements of translation and a simplified theoretical truth of grammar as meaning featured regularly in my lectures. My responsibility for the quality of input and output was uppermost in my mind while writing Lecture Notes and delivering the lectures.

6 Results of my teaching of a descriptive course of English Grammar with a practical bias show in

what I have taught,
what they have learned
and in
what I have learned.

I have outlined what I have taught. I can say that about 50% of the students internalised the basic concepts in the course taught and were able to illustrate consciously and comprehensively grammatical features of spoken and written English. They learned that grammar is meaningful but that its meaning is more general than that of the vocabulary. I have learned that the given knowledge of the students can be quite uneven; the teacher is therefore obliged to be very accurate in instruction and to help the students internalise the basic facts and features of English grammar by her own performance.
References


Thornbury, Scott, 2014a – *7 Ways of Looking at Grammar* (Video) – [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p8QSGqSOQ1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p8QSGqSOQ1) – 18 February 2014


References for Classroom teaching


