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Behaviors and Attitudes of Effective Foreign Language Teachers: Results of a Questionnaire Study

Teresa R. Bell article, "Behaviors and Attitudes of Effective Foreign Language Teachers: Results of a Questionnaire Study," discusses criteria for assessing effective teaching and which specific behaviors constitute effective teaching. The dimensions that describe effective teaching in general include enthusiasm/expressiveness, clarity of explanation, and rapport/interaction.

According to the article foreign language teaching is a complex, multidimensional process that means different things to different people. The article defines effective foreign language teaching as clear and enthusiastic teaching that provides learners with the grammatical (syntactical and morphological), lexical, phonological, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge and interactive practice they need to communicate successfully in the target language.

The article specifies recent trends in foreign language teaching, and talks about a shift in foreign language teaching from traditional grammar-based approaches to more communicative and interactive approaches. The article presents recent trends in foreign language teaching that reflect these shifts. They include: communicative

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language teaching, computer-assisted language learning, teaching culture, content-based instruction, languages for specific purposes, courses for heritage learners, focus on form in classroom second language acquisition and authentic assessment.

The article points out that the role of grammar in the communicative classroom may be motivated in part by up-to-date research in SLA and teaching theories. According to the grammar-translation method of the late 19th centuries, grammatical analysis and rule learning were the object of foreign language study. The audiolingual method favored habit-forming grammar learning to explicit learning. Krashen's monitor model recognizes the importance of subconscious acquisition of the target language and emphasizes that conscious learning of grammar rules does not lead to successful SLA.

The article indicates that the shift in foreign language teaching from grammar based to communicative and focus-on-form/communicative approaches calls for updated models for evaluating foreign language teaching. The article points out that in order to evaluate effective foreign language teaching, attributes of effective teaching should be agreed upon by foreign language teachers as being worth evaluating, and should be proved worthwhile in many settings.