

# THE GRAMMAR IS INCIDENTAL

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# WHO AM I?

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**Now:**

**Lecturer in English for Academic Purposes**

**International Foundation Certificate Programme Co-ordinator**

**Previously:**

**London Metropolitan University**

**University of the Arts London**

**Language schools in the UK and Italy**

# WHY HAVE I CHOSEN THIS TOPIC?

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The focus in my teaching has changed

Grammar is no longer a core part of my teaching

The grammar is incidental

# MY HISTORY OF TEACHING GRAMMAR

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Different time, different place, different focus

English as a Foreign Language in private language schools

Course book driven

Grammar a core part of many, if not all, of my lessons

# LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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**Pre-sessional course:**

**Grammar periodically 'dropped into' the materials**

**Decontextualised**

**Use of metalanguage – to what end? No future linguistics students**

**Grammar test at the end of each unit**

**Foundation programme:**

**Grammar systematically programmed into the syllabus**

**Presentation – Practice - Production**

# UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

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**Commercial Programme/English Language and Arts**

**The return to the course book**

**More of the 'PPP' approach to grammar**

**A checklist to enable students to 'pass' the monthly tests and move up a level**

**The students can 'work that grammar' in isolation**

# UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

## IN-SESSIONAL

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**“The essential elements of grammar instruction can be designed to be flexible within the curriculum structure, and the amount of effort and time devoted to each can be adjusted depending on learners’ needs.”  
(Hinkel, E. 2013 p4)**

**Schemes of work devised by tutors (no syllabus as such)**

**When, where and how grammar was needed in academic circumstances**

**Incidental starts to become more prevalent in my teaching**

# UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS PRE-SESSIONAL

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**We want grammar and we want it now!**

**Materials were content focussed – grammar was incidental (read ‘randomly dropped in here and there as the course progressed’)**

**Rewriting of the materials and a further rewrite – driven to a certain extent by research by myself and a colleague on the type of language used in art and design**

**Introduction of Grammar Booklets**

**Revision of Grammar Booklets**



# GOLDSMITHS IFC

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**On the Academic Reading and Writing Module, I work with what the students produce – I don't teach grammar (or I do, but incidentally)**

**Currently students with IELTS 6.0 or below take a Language Development class which is non-credit bearing**

**Those students with 6.5 and above do not have this class but in the assessment criteria we still apply the criteria relating to grammar**

**Are we saying they are grammar perfect? Or at least okayish?**

# WHAT SHOULD I FOCUS ON?

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What grammar a B1 student is expected to know

<https://test-english.com/grammar-points/b1/contents-b1/>

What grammar are we most likely to see in academic work (Hinkel 2013)

[https://issuu.com/tonyhartman/docs/tesol\\_presentation\\_summary\\_eli\\_hinkel](https://issuu.com/tonyhartman/docs/tesol_presentation_summary_eli_hinkel)

# LEXIS!

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**Teaching grammar for writing cannot take place in isolation from the lexical and discourse features of text: e.g., the verb tenses in academic prose are determined by the type of context in which they are used (Conrad, 2010; O’Keefe, McCarthy, & Carter, 2007; Zhou, 2009).**

**Schmitt, N. and D. Schmitt (2014) mid-frequency (K8-9)vocabulary knowledge**

**Vocabulary profiling**

# **GOLDSMITHS IFC CHANGES**

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**Considering a change to how we implement the 'Language Development' class on Goldsmith's IFC**

**ALL students take the Language Development class but it is rebranded as a writing class and takes a workshop format**

**Content is driven more by the student needs and what they are producing in response to the writing classes**

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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Grammar is still there – we haven't dropped it completely

But what are we looking for when we assess the use of grammar?

'A range of grammar' – what range? Do we know? Do we tell the students?

# THE GRAMMAR IS INCIDENTAL

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I haven't yet said if I think this is a good thing.....or not!

In a university/English for Academic Purposes context, I think this can be a good thing

In other contexts, for example teaching absolute beginners in a language school context, for me it's a definite NO

# QUESTIONS AND CONTACT DETAILS

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Thank you for listening and does anyone have any questions?

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# REFERENCES

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Hinkel, E. (2013). Research findings on teaching grammar for academic writing. *English Teaching*, 68(4), 3-21.

King, D.C. & Hickey, H. (2017) Creating and using corpora: A principled approach to identifying key language within art & design *Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal*, 2(3), pp.207-216 Available at:  
<https://sparkjournal.arts.ac.uk/index.php/spark/article/view/71>

O'Keeffe, A., McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2007). *From corpus to classroom: Language use and language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmitt, N. and Schmitt, D. (2014) A reassessment of frequency and vocabulary size in L2 vocabulary teaching, *Language Teaching* Cambridge University Press, 47(4), pp. 484-503. Doi: 10.1017/S0261444812000018.

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# WEBSITES

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<https://www.lex tutor.ca/>

<https://www.vocabkitchen.com/home>