

**Getting things right:
how much does it matter?**

Michael Swan

“I’m no longer sure that what’s important
is more important than what’s not.”

Wisława Szymborska

How much does correct language matter?

Are there right answers in methodology?

Right answers in general education?

How much do these mistakes matter? Give each one a mark from 1 (doesn't matter at all) to 5 (the end of civilisation as we know it).

- A. Yesterday **I have seen** an English film.
- B. I like **the** most music, but not **the** jazz.
- C. By next June **I have been studying** English for five years.
- D. He always **talk** a lot.
- E. I **helped cook my wife** on Saturday.
- F. Excuse me. **Please tell me the time.**
- G. 'How long are you here for?' '**Since March.**'

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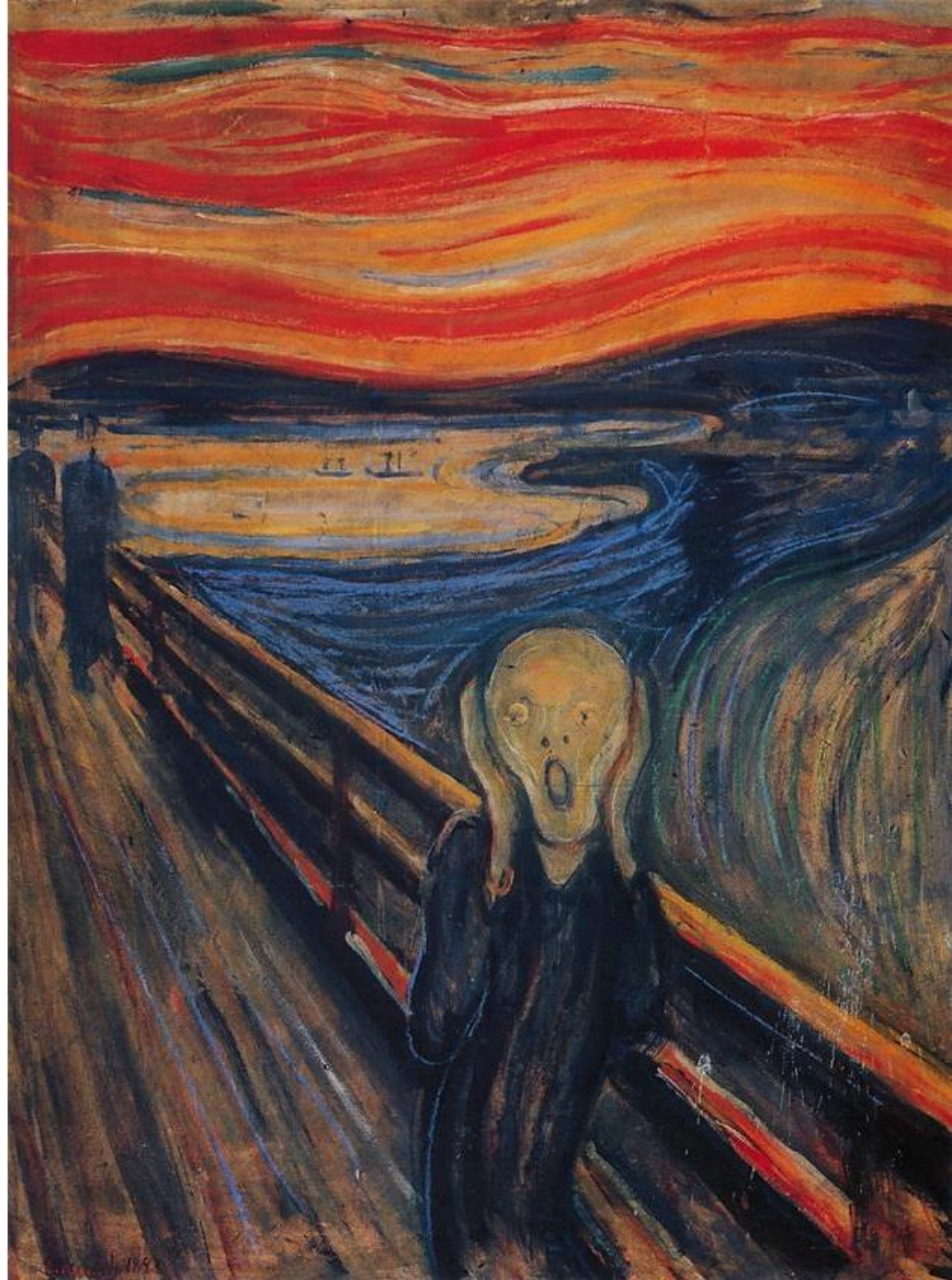
Test results

100%	😊
90%	
80%	😊
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“A good enough parent is good enough.”

Bruno Bettelheim





a personal belief

Try to teach for success, not failure.

It's better to get two things mostly right
than ten things mostly wrong.

“Seven bad reasons for teaching grammar –
and two good reasons for teaching some.”

On my website: mikeswan.net

Are there right answers in methodology?

GRAMMAR TRANSLATION

THE AUDIOLINGUAL APPROACH

THE FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUS

THE STRUCTURAL SYLLABUS

THE CONTRASTIVE SYLLABUS

THE LEXICAL SYLLABUS

THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

FOCUS ON SKILLS

LEARNER AUTONOMY

FOCUS ON STRATEGIES

CORPUS-BASED WORK

TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

the method ???

the approach ???

the theory ???

the hypothesis ???



"GOOD"

learner-centred

meaning-based

holistic

discourse level

discovery

process

interaction

negotiation

strategy

"BAD"

teacher-dominated

form-based

discrete

sentence-level

transmission model

product

memorisation

repetition

drill

another personal belief

Mostly, you can't get out
what you don't put in.

- Turning lead...



...into GOLD!



IN

translation
reading
grammar rules
testing



OUT

speech?
accuracy?
fluency?
encouragement?

“We do need methods.”

and

“Some things I believe
about language teaching”

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Right answers in general education?

Some right answers

Novels and poems. Not comics.

Dickens Austen Hardy Hemingway Orwell

Milton Keats Shelley Wordsworth Eliot

But are these the right questions?

What should I read?

Novels and poems. Not comics.

What are some good novelists to read?

Dickens Austen Hardy Hemingway Orwell

What are some good poets to read?

Milton Keats Shelley Wordsworth Eliot

A better kind of question?

Why do you like comics?

Have you read a novel that you like or dislike? Tell us about it.

Do you like poetry? Can you say why (not)?

Here's a poem by Keats. How do you feel about it? Love it? Like it? Bored? Dislike it? Hate it?

another personal belief

If you listen to them,
they'll listen to you.

“I would rather have questions that can't be answered
than answers that can't be questioned.”

Richard Feynman

"SPELLING IS VERY IMPORTANT"

"Spelling is very important,"
the speaker explained.

I could not agree more.

Necessary is correct.
So are *separate*,
mortgage,
polite,
work,
obey
and *holiday at the seaside*.

Haert is not correct.
Lov is wrong.
Dispair, *weap*, *hugg*,
the majik of a kis –
these get no marks.

Thank you for listening.

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