

11:30 ~ PLENARY SPEAKER ~ ROOM A

David Barker



Getting Back to Basics in ELT

Teachers of English as a foreign language are an inquisitive, creative bunch. One positive effect of this is that there is never a shortage of new ideas about how languages should be taught and learnt. The downside, however, is that our profession tends to be characterized by fashions, trends, and bandwagons, many of which promise the world while claiming to negate all that has gone before them. Since the 1980s, many highly effective learning and teaching techniques have been abandoned because they are considered to be old-fashioned and not sufficiently 'communicative'.

In this presentation, I will argue that there are a number of incontrovertible truths about the learning of foreign languages, and that not all of these are compatible with taking a purely 'communicative' approach. I will make a case for getting back to basics in language education and discuss the implications of this for teachers and learners.

David Barker was born in North Wales in 1967. He has been teaching English since 1992, and he has taught in England, Singapore, New Zealand, and Japan. He has published four Japanese language books for learners of English, which have now sold more than 100,000 copies. He has also written four textbooks designed specifically for Japanese high school and university students. He is currently working to complete his PhD on the role of unstructured learner interaction in the study of a foreign language. Email: info@btbpress.com