Decide if the following statements are True or False and WHY

Development of Internal grammar
1. Time is important in Foreign Language Teaching, so the earlier teaching of technical rules and labels seems likely to be far better.

From words to grammar
2. In the beginning stages, learners seem to use words or chunks strung together to get their meaning across with attention paid to grammar.
3. Paying attention to grammatical features of a language is not something that happens automatically.
4. Rote-learned chunks of language provide a valuable resource for developing grammar.

Learning through hypothesis testing
5. Children cannot build hypotheses about how the foreign language works.
6. Errors in young learners’ language cannot be signals of growth.

Influence of the first language
7. When data is limited, learners are likely to use their L1 to fill the gaps.
8. The cross-linguistically different and low profile features of grammar do not need form-focused instruction.

Principles for learning-centered grammar teaching
9. It is appropriate for grammar to be explicitly taught as formal, explicit rules in young learner classrooms.
10. Grammar teaching may destroy motivation and puzzle children rather than enlighten them.
11. Good learning-centered grammar teaching requires active participation.

The need for Grammar
12. Grammatical accuracy and precision matter for meaning
13. Without attention to form, grammar will not be learnt accurately.
Potential conflict between meaning and grammar

14. If learners’ attention is directed to expressing meaning, they may neglect attention to accuracy and precision.

Importance of attention in the learning process

15. Noticing is not an important process for the learner’s internal grammar

Learning grammar as the development of internal grammar

16. Learners can make use of discourse from vocabulary and from learnt chunks to learn grammar.

The role of explicit teaching of grammar rules

17. Children can master metalanguage if it is taught.

Teaching techniques for supporting grammar learning

18. Routines and classroom contexts can serve to introduce new grammar

19. If a child offers a comment about a picture, for example, the teacher can respond with fuller sentences that pick up the child’s interests.

20. Noticing activities is not important for grammar learning.

21. Repetition drills are more grammar structuring than substitution drills.

22. Description needs some grammatical knowledge that has already entered the internal grammar through noticing and structuring.

23. It is not possible to talk about language without using technical terms.

Adapted from
Development of Internal Grammar

Young learners have a long time ahead of them with the language. There is no need to rush into technical rules and labels that will confuse. It seems likely to be far better to give children a sound basis in using the language while encouraging curiosity and talk about patterns and contrasts in and between languages and introducing grammatical metalanguage slowly and meaningfully.

a. From words to grammar

In the beginning stages, learners seem to use words or chunks strung together to get their meaning across with little attention paid to grammar that would fit the words or chunks together in conversational patterns. So how these collections of items turn into something more like a language with patterns of grammar?

If you can get your message through without grammar, then there may be a little impulse to drive grammar learning. Paying attention to grammatical features of a language is not something that happens automatically in communicating and that therefore some artificial methods of pushing attention are needed: teaching.

Rote-learned chunks of language will make up a substantial part of early learning and that learnt chunks also provide a valuable resource for developing grammar as they are broken down and re-constituted. Ways of teaching that help learners notice words inside chunks and how other words can be used in the same places may help with the development of grammar.

b. Learning through hypothesis testing

Children build hypotheses about how the foreign language works from the data they have received from their limited experience with the language. Errors in language use can often act as a window on to the developing internal grammar of the learner and are signals of growth.

c. Influence of the first language

When data is limited, learners are more likely to use their first language to fill the gaps. So the learners may assume that foreign language grammar works like first language grammar. If the foreign language cues are not particular obvious, the probability of them being noticed and used is even smaller. It is precisely these cross-linguistically different and low profile features of grammar that need form-focused instruction.

Principles for learning-centered grammar teaching

It would not be conceptually appropriate for grammar to be explicitly taught as formal, explicit rules in young learner classrooms to children under the age of 8 or 9 years. As children get older, so they are increasingly able to learn from more formal instruction but we should remember that grammar teaching
can often destroy motivation and puzzle children rather than enlighten them. Good learning centered grammar teaching will be meaningful & interesting, require active participation from learners and will work with how children learn and what they are capable of learning. The principles are:

**The need for Grammar:**
- Grammatical accuracy and precision matter for meaning
- Without attention to form, form will not be learnt accurately
- Form-focused instruction is particularly relevant for those features of the foreign language grammar that are different from the first language or are not very noticeable.

**Potential conflict between meaning and grammar**
- If learners’ attention is directed to expressing meaning, they may neglect attention to accuracy and position.

**Importance of attention in the learning process**
- Teaching can help learners notice and attend to features of grammar in the language they hear and read or speak and write.
- Noticing an aspect of form is the first stage of learning it; it then needs to become part of the learner’s internal grammar, and to become part of the learner’s language resources ready for use in a range of situations.

**Learning grammar as the development of internal grammar**
- The learner has to do the learning; just teaching grammar does not make it happen.
- Grammar learning can work outwards from participation in discourse from vocabulary and from learnt chunks.
- Learners’ errors can give teachers useful information about their learning processes and their internal grammar.

**The role of explicit teaching of grammar rules**
- Teaching grammar explicitly requires the learner to think about language in very abstract, formal ways that some enjoy and some find difficult. The younger the learner, the less appropriate it is to teach explicitly.
- Children can master metalanguage if it is well taught.
Teaching techniques for supporting grammar learning

1. Working from classroom discourse: Routines and classroom contexts can serve to introduce new grammar
   a. The language for classroom management: Some very simple phrases for classroom management can be introduced and as time goes by, these can be expanded. Pupils can use some phrases originally used by the teacher when they work in pairs/groups.
   b. Talking with children: If a child offers a comment about a picture, for example, the teacher can respond with fuller sentences that pick up the child’s interests. Talk with children as a class can also offer incidental focusing on form.

2. Guided noticing activities:
   a. Listen and Notice: Filling a grid while listening to a conversation. Noticing the grammatical features is important to fill the grid.
   b. Presentation of new language with puppets: The children listen several times to the story-dialogue: repetition + contrast

3. Language practice activities that offer structuring opportunities
   a. Questionnaires, surveys & quizzes: Preparation and rehearsal of the questions is necessary to ensure accuracy; the activity must be managed so that the questions are asked in full each time. (Do you like …?)
   b. Information gap activities: (Calendar)
   c. Helping hands:
   d. Drills and chants: The dangers of over-using drills occur mostly if the children do not understand the content, and drills are then a mechanical exercise in making a noise, rather than language learning opportunities. Repetition drills can help in familiarizing a new form but substitution drills are the ones that offer more for grammar structuring.

4. Proceduralising activities:
   a. Polar animal description re-visited: Description of the animal they choose the description needs some grammatical knowledge that has already entered the internal grammar through noticing and structuring.
   b. Dictogloss: the teacher reads out a text, students take notes and re-write the text in pairs/groups.

5. Introducing metalanguage:
   a. Explicit teacher talk: Useful and possible to talk about language without using technical terms.
   b. Cloze activities for word class: