

## TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

**Nurmuradova Shakhnoz Ibragimovna**

*Associate professor of Bukhara engineering-technological institute*

**Abstract:** *Task-Based Learning (TBL) is also known as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Task-Based Instruction (TBI). Its principal focus is on the completion of meaningful tasks. Such tasks can include creating a poster, producing a newsletter, video, or pamphlet, or designing a map of the school or neighborhood.*

**Key words:** *Task-Based Learning (TBL), TEFL , global language, feedback, collaboration.*

As global language teachers who want to stay up to date with recent developments in education (and also stay competitive when it comes to getting that dream job), we have to constantly evolve as educators and include modern ways of teaching in our lesson planning and our teaching methods. One such method that all ESL teachers should know about is task-based learning (TBL), also referred to as task-based language teaching. What is task-based learning? Read on if you're interested in learning about this rewarding and fun teaching method!

Why is task-based learning important?

- During task-based learning, students solve tasks that are relevant and interesting to them. In order to solve the task, they need to use the target language they're learning to communicate with their peers. They use authentic language instead of answering grammar or vocabulary questions about the language. Students — especially younger learners — don't actually feel that they're studying a language at that moment because they're engrossed in the task they're working on.

- Task-based learning is especially conducive to group learning. Learning a language as a group is also a very important contributor to effective retention. Collaborating with others and becoming confident with the language within a group is a key step in acquiring that language. Also, receiving positive feedback from peers and teachers increases confidence and motivation to learn and to communicate with others.

- Students' understanding of the language also deepens because the realistic context in which they're learning the language is relevant to their personal lives. It's a good idea to ask your students about their hobbies and

preferences at the beginning of a course so that you can include their interests in the tasks you set.

- In addition to the benefits for students, solid knowledge of this method will also increase your job prospects as a teacher. Some job ads specifically ask for task-based language teaching experience!

What is the task-based method?

The task-based teaching approach is one of many modern ESL teaching methods and focuses on setting a goal for students — this could be a report, a video, or a presentation — and then following three main steps to achieve that goal.

#### 1. The pre-task

During this stage, which can take up a whole lesson if needed, the teacher introduces the task to the students and gets them motivated to solve it. Once everyone is engaged, the teacher should explain what is expected for the task.

Verbal explanations can be supported by an example from the teacher or by showing a previous student's work. The teacher can then give further instructions if needed and offer advice on how to approach the task.

#### 2. The task

This is the main stage of task-based learning, where students start working on the task, usually in groups or pairs. This stage is done in the target language so that students feel the need to use the language they want to learn in order to solve the task.

The teacher doesn't usually join in the work process. Instead, he or she will monitor the students and offer hints if students really need support.

#### 3. The review (or post-task)

Once the students have completed the task and have something to present, the review stage, also known as the post-task, starts.

It's a good idea to let students evaluate each other's work and only offer a teacher review of frequently-made errors during the task. Peer correction could be carried out in the form of comments, feedback discussions, or a checklist with additional room for free commentary.

The review stage offers students the opportunity to reflect on their work and analyze it in order to improve their skills for the future.

The following example can be analyzed as a Task-Based Learning Activity

Jane Willis came up with A Framework for Task-Based Learning that includes coming up with tasks that revolve around a certain topic. This can

be very useful for teachers looking for task ideas to engage their students during a lesson.

Topic: Travel

- Listing: List three reasons why people love to travel.
- Ordering, Sorting, and Classifying: Put pictures of different travel destinations in order from the most desired to the least desired destination. Sort travel destinations from the northern to the southern hemisphere. Classify destinations by languages people speak.
  - Comparing or Matching: Compare different countries. Match people to their country of origin.
  - Problem Solving: Think of three low-budget travel destinations.
  - Creative Task: Create a travel poster or find out about different countries and become an expert on a country that you would like to travel to in the future.
  - Share Personal Experiences: Share stories about past travel destinations. Write a poem about your favorite place and share it with the class.

Advantages of Task-Based Learning are the followings:

1. Students are at the center of learning.
2. Students are working on something that is personal and relevant to them.
3. Students gain practice in collaborating with others and making group decisions.
4. Students spend a lot of time communicating.
5. Students take on responsibility for engaged learning.
6. TBL is enjoyable, motivating, and a great place to start for teachers thinking about incorporating more Project Based Learning at their schools or classrooms.

Task-Based Learning has many interpretations and you, the teacher, can adapt and make anything your own. Although TBL was originally developed with language teachers in mind, the core of every Task-Based Learning lesson, as the name suggests, is the task.

A Task-Based approach offers an alternative for teachers who are interested in creating a more student-centered environment in their classroom. In a task-based class, the lesson is based on the completion of a central task and its presentation.

TBL incorporates all 4C's and is a great way to get students used to working on Project Based Learning (PBL) because it includes many of the same skills but, in a smaller, more digestible way.

Whereas PBL requires working on a project for an extended period, TBL can be done in one or two lessons and can be a good starting point for teaching students how to communicate, collaborate and work on presentations with others.

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