Transcript

Slide 1

Hello! Welcome to the sub-section Task-based learning of the ENRICH course. Task-based learning is part of the section on methods and approaches since it is one of the most used teaching approaches in foreign language teaching.

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Before we start, let's use Activity 1 to explore together what the word TASK is usually associated with, for example let's look at what dictionaries say about 'task'. Dictionaries define a **task** as:
 "a usually assigned piece of work often to be finished within a certain time"
"something hard or unpleasant that has to be done"
"duty, function"
Now, up to you, do these definitions sound familiar to you? Can you think of another possible meaning? If you wish to share with your colleagues your ideas, remember to click the link under the video.

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But if we think of our encounters with the word 'task', we often find that its most frequent collocates, that is the words frequently associated with task, are:

Verbs like *assign*, *take on*, *undertake*, *carry out*, *accomplish*, *complete*... or
Adjectives like *challenging*, *demanding*, *difficult*, *easy*, *repetitive*, *impossible*, *major*...
Can you think of other verbs and adjectives that could be used together with the word task? Jot them down and share them with your colleagues on the Forum.

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As teachers of English, we have come across the word TASK usually associated with the terms: 'communicative tasks', 'language tasks', 'learning tasks', 'study tasks', 'routine tasks', 'pedagogic tasks, 'isolated tasks', 'real life tasks'...

Can you think of a '**communicative task**' or a '**real life task'** in an English language classroom? Can you make one or two examples and share them on the Forum?

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Let's now listen to Professor Rod Ellis providing a brief introduction to Task-based language teaching & Learning, where he extends the notion of task to the approach. Click on **https://youtu.be/5OLySXzZY-4**

Does Rod Ellis mention any examples similar to the ones you had thought of? Which ones?

Rod Ellis highlights the value of TBL "as one approach to language teaching that is compatible with what we know about language learning. TBLL has a **primary focus on meaning**, the learner is predominantly concerned to try to communicate meaningfully; a task is different from an exercise because an exercise provides learners with the language they need, while a task requires the learners to try to use **their own language**, offers the opportunity for natural learning inside the classroom, and it is compatible with learner centeredness."

If you wish to share your comments on the Forum, remember to click on the link.

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Now. What Rod Ellis has said about task-based learning shows its relevance for **language learning**. Tasks have become central in syllabus design, in classroom teaching and for learner assessment. The fact that the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome represents a significant shift in language learning.

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The **CEFR** adopts the notion of task as any action necessary to achieve a given result – a problem to be solved, for example. The number of and types of tasks are numerous and diverse in most contexts where language is used for a purpose, to do something and not to show how language is used.

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The action-oriented approach adopted by the CEFR considers language learners as social agents who use language to achieve a purpose, a result; they act as social agents using their specific competences.

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In second language teaching, tasks - as defined so far – are '**pedagogical tasks**' – since they are the result of processing or understanding language, as for example when learners draw a map while listening to a tape, and they make

language teaching more communicative. The successful completion of a task does not consist of language use only, but of successful communication.

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Tasks are not meant to have language learners practise language, rather they require learners to use language in order to achieve successful communication. Learners thus carry out activities focussing on meaningful communication.

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But what makes an activity an effective task? Activities that have the potential to become effective tasks maybe those that ask learners to brainstorm or list actions, issues or events as when learners are asked to agree on a list of people who for example contributed to improve human life and to provide a reason for including them.

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Or when learners are asked to rank or classify events or to reorder pictures to make a story.

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In short, we could use 6 questions as criteria to decide whether an activity that we may find in a coursebook could be considered a task.
1. Will the activity engage learners' interest?
2. Is there a primary focus on meaning?
3. Is there a goal or an outcome?
4. Is success judged in terms of outcome?
5. Is completion a priority?
6. Does the activity relate to real world activities?'

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Let's try and use these 6 questions to decide whether the activity described in this slide is or is not a task. What are your conclusions? Try and justify your conclusions. What are learners asked to do? How are they asked to do? What's the outcome?
As usual, if you wish to share your comments on the Forum, remember to click on the link.

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So far we have looked at TASK as a central notion for language learning and in the approach to language teaching, TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING is closely

connected to communicative language teaching, it focuses on learners' needs and on making learners interact through authentic tasks in the target language, in our case English as used among non native speakers as it's the case of ELF.

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The issue of authenticity is pivotal in TBL because learners' personal experience in the classroom should be closely connected with what happens outside the classroom, in the real world, where they are often being exposed to and use varieties of English and ELF. The notion of authenticity has been explored and discussed in diverse contexts mostly in terms of constructed vs. authentic language samples as used in course-books, and it is now once more brought under the magnifying glass of recent research on English as a Lingua Franca, an area that challenges the very nature of authenticity and highlights the relevance of social context and the notion of localized language use.

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Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) is based upon **7 principles** defined by David Nunan in 2007, specifically:
1. "Scaffolding"
2. "Task dependency"
3. "Recycling"
4. "Active learning"
5. "Integration"
6. "Reproduction to creation"
7. "Reflection"

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Most of these principles highlight the central role of language in learning, as the first one, **Scaffolding**, that is meant to ensure that learning takes place, that students are exposed to and use the language to complete the tasks, authentic language inclusive also of non-native speakers', as for English is the case of ELF.

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The fifth principle, that of **integration**, implies that task-based language teaching should ensure that linguistic form, communicative function and semantic meaning are integrated into the learning process but native speaker language is not the only authentic model, while we English language teachers should value the contexts our learners are exposed to or use when they are exposed to non-standard forms, that is ELF.

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TBLT can thus be used in an **ELF-aware perspective**, but how? Because if, in adopting a TBL approach, we aim at including all diverse instantiations of English as ELF, we need to look at learners' successful use of English in completing tasks with an "acceptable" language use regardless of grammatical errors. Are we ready for that?

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In an ELF aware perspective TBLT emerges as one of the most appropriate approaches in foreign language learning, mainly because of the emphasis laid upon:
- learning to communicate through interaction,
- the use of authentic texts,
- the learning process,
- learners' own personal experiences,
- linking classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom,
- learners' involvement in authentic language search and use outside the traditional coursebook language input,
- the need to take the outside world into the classroom in order to involve learners in real life interactions.

Spoken language is central in the learning process activated by TBLT in an ELF aware perspective!

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The activity presented now is linked spoken language use and asks you to watch the video "Teaching speaking with Task-Based Learning" where there is an example of conversation development in a multilingual classroom.

Observe what takes place in the classroom. Can you identify elements in this lesson that you may use in a TBL approach?
If so, take a note and share it with your colleagues, but remember…

If you wish to share your comments on the FORUM, remember to click on the link.

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Let's conclude this section with some activities to elicit your reflections on TBLT and what you have learnt so far.
Go through the **sample pedagogical activities in the following slide** and decide if they are:

- **Not TBL tasks** (no communication, no real life)
- **Traditional TBL tasks** (real-life outcome, focus on meaning and on NS norms)
- **ELF aware TBL tasks** (real-life outcome, focus on meaning and on interaction with NNS)

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The sample activities are:
Sample 1: Read the conversation between a bus driver and a tourist, then rehearse the same conversation with your partner.
Sample 2: A partner class from another country will visit yours; together with a school-mate prepare an interview to be carried out on Skype with the visiting students. You want to find out more about their habits, preferences etc.
Sample 3: Listen to a telephone conversation between a client and a clerk in a Lost & Found office. Complete the dialogue script filling in the blanks with verbs and politeness formulas.
Sample 4: Try to find out three things that your grandparents' and your partner's grandparents' lives had in common. What was the biggest difference between them?
Explain what made you provide your answer
If you wish to share your comments on the Forum, remember to click on the link.

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To conclude, based on your own knowledge and experience, as well as what has been discussed in this and other sections you have gone through:
- To what extent do you think that integrating TBL from an **ELF-aware** perspective would be **appropriate** in your own teaching context? **Why**?
- If it is appropriate, what kind of **ELF-aware tasks** could you employ? Provide one or two brief examples. And discuss them on the forum, but remember..
If you wish to share your comments on the Forum, remember to click on the link.

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To sum up what we have done so far includes several aspects of TBLT
- What *Task-based Learning* is
- What a *pedagogical task* is
- The *Difference between TBLT and other types of approaches*
- The *6 categories* used to identify a *real task*
- The *7 principles* of TBLT
- The TBLT *advantages*
- TBL *suitability* in an *ELF-aware* perspective and in activities...ELF aware...Should you have any doubts...do not hesitate...
In view of your future language teaching, I do hope that you have been enriched by TBLT, so good bye as long as it goes.