

MODULE 1

1.3 - WHAT IS TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

Now that you know about non-formal education and non-formal approaches that can be very beneficial in language learning and teaching, we will look into the main methodology of this MOOC: The Task-Based Language teaching (TLBT). Now Mutindi will tell us more about that.

It is a teaching methodology that uses non-formal education activities in language teaching and can fit very well a non-formal context, making it accessible for non-professional language teachers. In this video, we will go more into the details of TBLT, its origins and its basic characteristics.

Task-Based Language teaching has its origins in communicative language teaching (or otherwise known as CLT). It is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. Task-based language teaching was elaborated in the 1980s by N.S. Prabhu, an English Language Teacher working in Bangalore, South India.

The Task-Based Language teaching (TLBT) methodology tries to replicate a “full immersion” by practicing the language, recreating real life situations and using authentic materials. These are materials that are not made for the classroom but come from “real life” like movies, newspapers or books.

So it is like when you move to a new country and you will be fully immersed in this language because you will have to speak it everywhere.

Yes exactly! and full immersion is the best way to learn a language and that’s exactly what TBLT replicates

The core element of TBLT is that it is implemented through the carrying out of “tasks”. This is an activity of language learning, that involves communicative problems to solve. The main aim is to produce, understand and convey a message rather than use the correct language structures. This “forces” the student to figure out, how to apply the knowledge that they have, and therefore learn the language. A task is considered successfully completed if the message gets through even if the language used was not grammatically correct

For example, a task could be “describe a problem to the doctor” one student could be the doctor and another the patient. It is not important to use the correct sentence structure when speaking, but rather that the “doctor” understands what the “patient”

is trying to say. If the doctor understands the problem, the task can be considered successful.

Any real-life situation can be turned into a “task”, including writing a CV, going to the grocery store, conducting an interview, calling customer service, calling an ambulance, ordering in a restaurant, telling a story, writing a cover letter for a job application, reading an email that requires a follow up action, giving directions to a tourist in the street, and so on.

Throughout this MOOC you will learn more about TBLT, how it exactly works and how you can use it for your language classes. In the next part, you can listen to an interview with a language teacher to understand more about TBLT and how it works in practice.