

WORKSHOP AT TBLT 2019

Task development: Discussing task examples that illustrate task principles

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a learner-centred and experiential approach to language pedagogy that claims significant support from experimental research studies that have aimed to demonstrate how, and in what respects, tasks can and do promote SLA. However, favourable research findings are not necessarily finding their way into classrooms, and TBLT remains in practice a contested endeavour. As Long (2016, p. 28) put it, TBLT is “still a relatively recent innovation – one whose adoption requires expertise.” Most particularly, to many teachers the notion of task is still “somewhat fuzzy” (Richards, 2006, p. 31), and there remain “numerous interpretations and orientations to the concept” of TBLT (Nunan, 2004, p. 14).

This workshop has the following aims which will balance theory with practice: First I will consider what a ‘task’ might look like, in theory and in practice. Then, participants will look at a range of tasks that have been developed for the instructed foreign language classroom in New Zealand, and evaluate them for their task-likeness. They will then be asked to come up with some task-based ideas for a selected typical language learning topic. It is hoped that, by the end of this workshop, participants will have a clearer theory-informed idea of what a task is for the task-based language classroom alongside deeper understanding of the challenges of creating valid language use tasks.

Short summary:

This workshop considers what a ‘task’ might look like, in theory and practice. Participants will look at a range of tasks developed for the instructed foreign language classroom in New Zealand, and evaluate them for their task-likeness. They will then consider some task-based ideas for a selected language learning topic.

Biodata

Martin East is Professor of Language Education in the School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. He is currently President of the International Association for Task-Based Language Teaching. His research sits at the intersection between second language acquisition, language pedagogy and teacher education, and he publishes widely in areas related to stakeholders’ reception of innovative practices. His books have included *Task-Based Language Teaching from the Teachers’ Perspective* (John Benjamins, 2012). He currently teaches a range of courses, including a specialist course in Task-Based Language Teaching within the University’s M TESOL qualification.