

Title: Taking Classes to Task: Issues in Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching
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Like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is not a methodology, but an approach to teaching second languages, which engages students to learn the language by using the language to complete tasks and to overcome information, reasoning, and opinion gaps. In completing a task, learners focus on meaning; their communication is motivated by a purpose (that may be similar to real world purposes), and their communication exchange results in some kind of verbal or non-verbal product or outcome (Ellis, Leaver and Willis, Nunan, Van den Branden).

Although the literature describes the approach and discusses curricular and programmatic issues with the implementation of TBLT, there remains much practical and theoretical work to be done in applying the approach to the teaching of Russian. I will start my presentation by giving my working definition of task, a thorny issue as Van den Branden (2006, 7-8) cites 12 distinct definitions used in major publications over the past 20 years. Then I will present and critique in detail lessons that implement the approach by examining lesson plans and classroom sessions, illustrating my comments with materials and video clips from actual classes. I will discuss issues in training graduate teaching assistants to base their classroom sessions on tasks, and I will address the place of grammar and accuracy in TBLT.

References

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