

Invited Colloquium
Teacher education and TBLT

Convener: Eva Kartchava (Carleton University, Canada)

Presenters: Martin East, Constanza Tolosa, Meredith Hall D'Arienzo, YouJin Kim, Laura Gurzynski-Weiss, Eva Kartchava

In his 2012 volume on teachers' perspectives about task-based language teaching (TBLT), East claimed that language teachers often find the idea of TBLT confusing, difficult to realise in the classroom, and befuddling to reconcile in terms of their existing beliefs and practices. To overcome these challenges, East (2012), along with other scholars (e.g., Ellis, 2017; Erlam & Tolosa, 2022; Van den Branden, 2009), has called for focused professional development opportunities that would allow teachers not only to develop a theoretically informed rationale for the use of TBLT in their practice but also help them reconcile the meaning of tasks and ways to implement them effectively.

The aim of this colloquium is to explore teacher development ideas and implementations for TBLT. It includes five papers that examine TBLT-focused teacher education with pre- and in-service teachers and graduate students in the second/additional language (L2) and study abroad contexts. The first two papers consider pre- and in-service TBLT-oriented teacher education and its impact on teachers' development in New Zealand. To this end, East (Paper 1) and Tolosa (Paper 2) reflect on their extensive experiences preparing practitioners to teach L2 using TBLT. Hall D'Arienzo and Kim (Paper 3) report on a study that investigated the impact of TBLT pre-departure training on the study abroad teaching practice of two pre-service teachers. With the focus on graduate students, the next two papers explore the role of TBLT in their preparation. While Gurzynski-Weiss (Paper 4) shares her use of TBLT as a framework to develop and collaborate on various research projects with her graduate students, Kartchava (Paper 5) outlines a task-based project used in a graduate seminar on corrective feedback. Together, these papers offer insights into how TBLT may be used to enact teacher and researcher development as well as consider possible implications for these.

Colloquium structure:

5'	Introduction
20'	Paper 1: <i>Teacher education and TBLT in New Zealand: a pre-service initiative</i> – Martin East
20'	Paper 2: <i>Teacher education and TBLT in New Zealand: an in-service initiative</i> – Constanza Tolosa
20'	Paper 3: <i>“I’m a believer in the power of TBLT”</i> : <i>Two pre-service teachers’ experience with TBLT in a study abroad teacher development course</i> - Meredith Hall D'Arienzo and YouJin Kim
20'	Paper 4: <i>TBLT training in graduate courses: Training the next generation of TBLT researchers in task-based ways</i> - Laura Gurzynski-Weiss
20'	Paper 5: <i>Podcasting as a task for research and learning</i> - Eva Kartchava
15'	Discussion and Q&A

Paper 1: TBLT in a pre-service teacher education programme in New Zealand

Martin East (University of Auckland, New Zealand)

For the decade between 2008 and 2017, I played a significant role in the teacher education of those preparing to become teachers of additional languages in New Zealand's high schools. In the last six years of that time (from 2012 to 2017), the course I led had a dedicated focus on TBLT. This focus precipitated a longitudinal research project that investigated the efficacy of the course with regard to understanding and implementing TBLT from which several papers have been published. In this presentation, I outline the ways in which the course was structured during these years to support beginning teachers with introducing TBLT as innovation, and I reflect on the course's strengths, limitations and adaptations as part of teacher preparation and support for TBLT.

Paper 2: TBLT in an in-service teacher education programme in New Zealand

Constanza Tolosa (University of Auckland, New Zealand)

Using the lens of professional learning, this presentation examines data from an investigation into teachers' learning about and understanding of TBLT during a year-long in-service programme, and how those understandings are evident in their practice in the year following the completion of the programme (Erlam & Tolosa, 2022). Data include analysis of coursework and self-reported reflections from 14 volunteer participants. To establish how learning from the programme was evident in the teachers' practices a year later, three of the teachers were interviewed and observed in the classroom. Implications for teacher education are drawn as a way of contributing to the growth of TBLT as a researched pedagogy.

Paper 3: "I'm a believer in the power of TBLT": Two pre-service teachers' experience with TBLT in a study abroad teacher development course

Meredith Hall D'Arienzo and YouJin Kim (Georgia State University, USA)

Despite teachers' important role in implementing TBLT, teacher education for TBLT remains under-researched (Ellis, 2017). Previous studies highlight teachers' need for numerous opportunities to learn about and engage with TBLT (e.g., Zheng & Borg, 2014). One way to provide these opportunities is through teaching practice in a study abroad setting. This comparative case study investigated the developing cognitions about TBLT and use of tasks of two focal participants who completed a university TEFL course involving predeparture coursework and two weeks of daily teaching practice in Mexico. Data were collected over three months and include six interviews and numerous written documents; these were analyzed thematically to evaluate teachers' cognition development. Observation field notes and teaching videos were analyzed to evaluate changes in teachers' task design and implementation. Findings indicate that predeparture coursework and teaching on study abroad had a strong and lasting impact on teachers' understanding of tasks and beliefs about TBLT.

Paper 4: *TBLT training in graduate courses: Training the next generation of TBLT researchers in task-based ways*

Laura Gurzynski-Weiss (Indiana University, USA)

Rather than separate my research and teaching responsibilities, I teach task-based research techniques and pedagogical methods by using TBLT as the framework for all of my classes, including my graduate-level seminars. In my talk, I will share several examples of recent collaborative projects that have begun within my classes and how, through a task-based classroom, I guide my students in hands-on collaborative work and prepare them well for the target tasks they will need to accomplish outside of the classroom as L2 researchers and teachers. Projects to be discussed include: (1) needs analyses that serves one of our communities (home department, local elementary-level schools, or regional high school students), (2) a service-to-the profession component such as working on the Task Bank or IATBLT website or collaborating with area language teachers and admin to make classes more task-based, and (3) collaborative peer-review with others teaching TBLT seminars.

Paper 5: *Podcasting as a task for research and learning*

Eva Kartchava (Carleton University, Canada)

While podcasting has quickly become an alternative medium for scholars to share knowledge with audiences beyond academia, its use for teaching and learning in higher education has received less attention (Salmon & Nie, 2008). Nevertheless, podcasting has been shown to promote collaborative learning as well as improve communication and problem-solving skills of students who engage in podcast creation. From the perspective of TBLT, podcasting, when defined according to Ellis (2003), can be construed as a task since it involves primary focus on meaning, contains a “gap”, requires the use of linguistic and non-linguistic resources for completion, and has a clearly defined communicative outcome. This paper reports on a podcast project completed by graduate students attending a special topics seminar on corrective feedback (CF). Working in pairs, the students researched the work of a CF scholar, interviewed him/her for a teacher development podcast, and reflected on the process as a group and individually. Analysis of the reflections revealed important takeaways, challenges, and implications of such projects in the training of TBLT-minded graduate students.

References:

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