Recent Advances in Task-Based Language Teaching Towards a Researched Pedagogy

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Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an educational framework for the theory and practice of teaching second or foreign languages. It draws on ideas from philosophy of education, theories of second language acquisition, empirical findings on effective instructional techniques, and the demands of language learning in contemporary society. Fundamentally, TBLT starts from the assumption that learners learn languages best through the use of the language to engage with and accomplish relevant, interesting, and meaningful communication tasks. Since its origins, TBLT has evolved from a handful of pedagogic principles and 'methods' to a broad-based foundation for the implementation of full-scale language programs. However, though there is broad interest in the potential value of TBLT to foster worthwhile language teaching and learning, there is also considerable diversity in the theoretical scope, applied practice, and research that corresponds with the TBLT name. In this talk, I will clarify some fundamental concepts in task-based education and consider current advances in task-based practice, with particular emphasis on its pedagogic implications. The talk will include numerous examples of TBLT in use in educational settings around the globe, and will conclude by highlighting needed research, development, and evaluation.

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John Norris is Principal Research Scientist and Senior Research Director at the Educational Testing Service, situated in Princeton, USA. He holds a PhD in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. His dissertation focused on "Validity evaluation in foreign language assessment". He worked as an Assistant/Associate Professor at the University of Hawai'i before moving to Georgetown University, Washington D.C., where he held the position of Associate Professor at the Department of Linguistics. He has authored numerous books, book chapters, and journal articles especially on SLA, Language Testing, Research Methods, and Task-Based Language Teaching. John Norris is member of the executive board of the International Association of Task-Based Language Teaching and Guest Professor at Innsbruck University's Department for Subject Education.