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Mastering the Art of Teaching: Transforming Tasks into Triumphs in the Classroom

تسلط بر هنر تدریس: تبدیل فعالیت ها به پیروزی‌ها در کلاس درس

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Abstract

Teaching is both an art and a science, requiring educators to skillfully transform tasks into meaningful learning experiences that inspire and engage students. This study explores the dynamic interplay between teaching experience and task design, emphasizing how effective educators influence their expertise to create impactful classroom environments. Drawing on research and practical insights, it highlights the importance of tailoring tasks to meet diverse student needs, foster critical thinking, and promote active participation. Experienced teachers understand that tasks are not merely assignments but opportunities to ignite curiosity, build confidence, and drive academic success. Educators can turn routine tasks into transformative learning moments by incorporating collaborative activities, integrating real-world applications, and adopting adaptive teaching methods. This study also examines the role of reflection and adaptability in refining teaching practices, ensuring that tasks remain relevant and challenging. Ultimately, the ability to craft and execute well-designed tasks is a hallmark of exceptional teaching, enabling educators to cultivate a culture of achievement and lifelong learning. Through a blend of theory and practice, this study underscores how teaching experience empowers educators to turn everyday tasks into triumphs, shaping the future of their students.

Keywords: ***Tasks, teaching experience, collaboration, real-world applications, adaptability***

Introduction

In traditional teacher-centered instruction, students' interests and preferences are often overlooked. Relying solely on textbook-based foreign language lessons can lead to a decline in student engagement over time, particularly for today's learners, ultimately diminishing their motivation. A student who loses motivation and interest may eventually abandon language learning altogether. To maintain students' enthusiasm and drive in foreign language education, it is essential to design

a learning environment that engages all their senses (Bazimaziki, 2020; Ramadhona et al., 2022). Moreover, the conventional and direct teaching approach employed by teachers fails to account for the unique differences among students. It centers the learning process on the content and the teacher, neglecting students' perceptual abilities. Frequently, before students have fully understood and processed the material from the previous lesson, the teacher moves on to the next topic, placing students in a passive and disadvantaged position (Adair, et al., 2017; Li, 2022).

In task-based teaching, syllabi, curricula, and lessons are structured around "tasks" rather than isolated linguistic forms. These tasks are designed based on the real-world needs of learners in the target language (Long, 2015; Long & Crookes, 1992). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained significant prominence in modern language education due to its strong foundation in second language acquisition (SLA) theories and pedagogical principles, as well as the substantial empirical evidence supporting interaction-driven learning through tasks (Keck et al., 2006; Mackey & Goo, 2007). Significant research has focused on examining the impact of specific task-related variables on various second language (L2) outcomes (Plonsky & Kim, 2016). In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on exploring the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) at the programmatic level across educational settings globally (Byrnes, et.al, 2010; Samuda, et al., 2018), as well as with more diverse learner groups, including younger students (Shintani, 2016). However, despite claims that TBLT is a versatile pedagogical approach suitable for a wide range of contexts, the majority of TBLT research remains concentrated in economically developed regions.

This reflects a broader issue within applied linguistics research, as highlighted by (Andringa & Godfroid,2020). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) focuses on using tasks—what learners need to accomplish in the target language—as the core of instruction, contrasting with traditional methods that prioritize grammatical forms (Long, 2015; Long & Crookes, 1992). While TBLT emphasizes student-centered interaction and learning, some critics argue that it reduces the teacher's role to merely managing or overseeing activities (Swan, 2005). However, proponents of TBLT counter that the teacher’s role is not diminished but rather demands greater expertise and creativity compared to traditional "focus on forms" approaches. This perspective highlights the teacher’s critical role in designing, guiding, and supporting task-based learning (Samuda, 2001; Branden, 2016).

As Long (2016) highlights in addressing common critiques of TBLT, teachers adopting a task-based approach must utilize greater creativity and decision-making skills to customize input and corrective feedback to meet the unique needs of each learner. Richards (1998) observed that inexperienced teachers were less inclined to improvise during classroom challenges compared to their more experienced counterparts. Similarly, (Mackey et al.,2004) discovered that experienced ESL teachers employed more incidental focus-on-form techniques—commonly linked to TBLT pedagogy—than novice teachers. This difference may stem from experienced teachers' ability to concentrate on implementing new teaching methods, such as TBLT, as they have already mastered

foundational teaching practices like classroom management and grade-level content knowledge. In contrast, novice teachers are often more preoccupied with developing these basic skills.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach to language instruction that focuses on completing particular tasks and describes tasks as activities with clear goals that require learners to utilize their language skills to engage in meaningful communication. (Nunan, 2004). The key aspect of TBLT is its focus on the practical application and functionality of language, structuring teaching tasks to mirror real-life situations. This method promotes "learning by doing," encouraging student engagement, interaction, independent learning, and creative thinking. TBLT typically involves three stages—pre-task, task cycle, and language focus—aiming to facilitate natural language acquisition through authentic and meaningful communication activities (Lochana,2006)

Strategies for Effective Task Design

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning involves activities where a group of individuals work together, drawing from their distinct levels of knowledge within their respective institutions. Through this cooperative process, participants can benefit from specific collaborative strategies (Mende et al., 2020). This fact holds significant importance because students who have previously engaged in collaborative learning at any stage of their lives tend to demonstrate superior performance, enhanced expressive abilities, and more advanced critical analysis skills compared to those who have relied solely on individual learning (Gokhale, 1995). This approach to learning often emerges as a beneficial outcome for participants, fostering interdependent systems among peers when tackling group tasks. Through such interactions, individuals in groups tend to enhance their learning more effectively than through solitary efforts.

This approach promotes greater efficiency in collaboration, idea exchange, and overall improvement in both action and thought processes, leading to a deeper understanding (Wiersema, 2000). Group learning strategies foster the development of essential communication skills, which are key to successful interpersonal interactions. In these environments, students engage in lively discussions, express their ideas, and thoughtfully consider the viewpoints of their peers (Salma, 2020). learning strategies of this approach are instrumental in fostering personality development by cultivating positive traits like self-confidence, resilience, and interpersonal skills. Through collaborative activities, students can assume various roles, discover their strengths, and develop greater confidence in their capabilities (Cheng et al., 2021). Cooperation with peers to tackle challenges and solve problems helps build resilience and adaptability, which are crucial for overcoming difficulties and succeeding in different aspects of life. In general, learning together

supports students' overall development, enhancing not just their academic progress but also their personal and social well-being (Xu et al., 2023).

The five key characteristics of cooperative learning are: first, positive interdependence, second, individual accountability, third, face-to-face interaction, fourth, interpersonal and small group skills, and fifth, group processing (Roger & Johnson, 1994). Each student is encouraged to demonstrate independence and take responsibility for supporting their peers, mastering the material, and engaging in positive interactions by offering input, assistance, or sharing information. These activities help foster effective communication skills among students. Implementing collaborative learning in the classroom offers numerous advantages, such as enhancing academic performance, fostering deeper comprehension, creating an engaging learning environment, nurturing leadership skills, promoting positive behavior and self-esteem, and strengthening students' sense of belonging (Hill,1996). Collaborative learning not only focuses on cognitive development but also positively influences affective and motivational aspects, contributing to a more enjoyable and supportive classroom atmosphere for students.

When students feel secure and at ease expressing themselves in a foreign language among their peers, they also become more receptive and open to receiving feedback or corrections from their classmates (Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Harfitt, 2012). Classroom activity involves working in small groups, allowing students to practice a foreign language in a relaxed environment. This helps boost their confidence, reducing feelings of embarrassment or nervousness when speaking in front of the class. In a comfortable setting, students can engage in practice more actively and with greater enthusiasm.

Real-World Applications

One of the popular teaching methods in CLT is task-based language teaching (TBLT). In English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction, technologies such as internet resources, live online meetings, and learning management systems can be utilized to provide learners with extensive language input, improving their receptive language skills through diverse online materials. These tools also support learners in effectively developing their productive language skills (Alizadeh, 2018; Anwar & Arifani, 2016; Mulyadi et al., 2020). This TBLT has promoted learner-centered language instruction to improve ESP learners' communicative competence (Wu, Liao, & DeBacker, 2016) and boost their motivation to practice their language (Tan, 2016; Aliasin, et al., 2019).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) should be integrated into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction to encourage learners to actively apply the language they have acquired (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Shariq, 2020). The adoption of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been recognized as an effective method to support ESP learners by emphasizing meaningful activities and task performance, which strengthens their communicative skills in various real-world contexts (Wu et al., 2016; Bao & Du, 2015). Additionally, TBLT has proven valuable in increasing language students' motivation and engagement, as it involves them in

authentic, real-world communication tasks (Page & Mede, 2018; Wu et al., 2016; Ji & Pham, 2020; Widodo, 2017). The combination of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and online learning technologies has been regarded as a valuable instructional framework capable of unlocking numerous benefits and maximizing potential (Lai & Li, 2014; Ziegler, 2016).

Technology Integration

In the context of foreign language teaching, some students struggle with weaker learning abilities, making it difficult for them to keep up with the teacher's pace. As a result, these students are more prone to losing confidence and motivation in their language-learning journey. They may develop a fear of attending foreign language classes and face significant challenges in improving their skills (Chen, Zoga & Vaccaro, 2017; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Thrall et al., 2018).

Technological progress, marked by the widespread adoption of online learning and digital tools, has emerged as a major trend in achieving language learning objectives. This evolution has significantly shaped language teaching methods, including computer-assisted language learning (CALL), mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and online courses delivered through learning management systems. These approaches are widely regarded as effective, as they enable the transfer of materials, instructional processes, and assessments to become more flexible, accessible, up-to-date, and adaptable to the needs of diverse language learners (Anwar & Arifani, 2016). Integrating technology into language instruction enables learners to study independently (Tananuraksakul,2016), increases their engagement in the learning process (Mulyono, 2016), and expands their opportunities for learning (Kiliçkaya et al ., 2014).

A positive outlook on learning a second or foreign language, particularly in the context of vocabulary acquisition, boosts learners' motivation and facilitates the successful completion of their language learning objectives (Ellis, 2008; Cheung and Hew, 2009; Nation and Webb, 2011; Burston, 2015; Chen et al., 2020; Soyoof et al., 2021, 2022). Moreover, the idea of self-regulation (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008), which involves learners initiating and maintaining self-directed thoughts, emotions, and actions to reach their learning objectives (Zimmerman, 2000, 2008), has gained significant attention in the context of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). This is particularly evident in studies such as (García Botero et al.,2021, Rassaei,2020, Rahimi & Fathi,2021), where students engage in collaborative activities to exchange both explicit and implicit forms of mediation.

In these collaborative activities, students tend to offer more explicit guidance to their peers only when the peers are unable to resolve their language-related challenges through more subtle or implicit forms of assistance. (Azevedo & Cromley ,2004) suggest that learners who possess strong self-regulation skills tend to perform better than those with weaker self-regulation skills in technology-enhanced learning environments. Conversely, technology-enhanced learning tools support the development of self-regulation skills, such as setting goals, employing task-based

strategies, managing time effectively, engaging in collaborative learning, and conducting self-assessments (Carneiro et al., 2007; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; Lai & Gu, 2011; Fathi et al., 2018; Zheng et al., 2018). According to (Chen et al,2008, &Sha et al2012,), self-regulated learning skills and mobile-based technologies are deeply interconnected, and enhancing one can significantly impact the development of the other.

(Rachels & Rockinson-Szapkiw (2018) implemented a Duolingo-based instructional game course to enhance second language (L2) learners' vocabulary skills within a gamified learning setting. Compared to traditional teaching methods, Duolingo-based instruction significantly boosted learners' motivation, though its impact on vocabulary acquisition was more modest. Similarly, (Loewen et al.,2019) found that language learners showed noticeable progress on Duolingo by the end of a term. Additionally, a positive correlation was observed between the time invested in using Duolingo and the learners' academic progress. The participants also expressed favorable views regarding the flexibility and gamified features of Duolingo.

AI-Based Instruction

Research has shown that digital tools enhance language learning by offering learners abundant, real-time, relevant, and contextually rich opportunities both inside and outside the classroom (Kukulska-Hulme & Shiel, 2008; Hsu et al., 2013). Stockwell (2010) observed that learners are more inclined to engage in language-related activities when using digital tools (Hsu et al., 2013). These tools combine the age-old tradition of listening and storytelling, a fundamental human practice, with modern digital media and technology. They can be described as tools that process content related to a specific topic, created with a particular purpose and perspective, through multimedia (Robin, 2006; Susanty et al., 2021). Beyond enhancing emotional depth, experiences, and diverse methods, the integration of information technologies also boosts motivation in teaching language skills.

Additionally, technological advancements have transformed the perception of text, introducing innovation and variety. This shift has moved the traditional text structure from written formats to digitized texts that engage multiple senses (Kimova et al., 2023; Liton, 2015; Yee & Hargis, 2012). Digital learning and teaching tools offer dynamic and interactive methods for students to engage with and, crucially, absorb course content. These tools consist of digital programs designed to help students create, share, and collaborate on projects and assignments. They serve as versatile, user-friendly platforms that foster both group collaboration and the creation of individual work. Additionally, these tools promote teamwork and interaction among students, enhancing the learning experience (Donohue, 2014; Greener & Wakefield, 2015).

AI technology influences knowledge-based teaching platforms to develop intelligent classroom models and learning libraries. This framework combines various features, including diagnosing learning progress, student-centered activities, teacher oversight of assignments, and systems for

feedback, correction, and evaluation (Opeifa et al., 2022; Long & Lin, 2022). It fosters a smart learning environment that merges individualized and personalized teaching approaches, making the learning process engaging, intelligent, and aesthetically appealing. Additionally, it contributes to the professional growth of educators (Huang et al., 2021; Zeng, 2021; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019), to effectively utilize artificial intelligence tools in the teaching environment, several principles must be followed. First, it is essential to integrate the teaching environment with the teaching content. This involves using multimedia videos, tools, and courseware demonstrations in AI-based instruction.

Different media formats are employed in various teaching contexts to achieve specific educational goals, Second, the teaching environment should align with the teaching objectives. Teaching tools are utilized to ensure effective instruction, enabling educators to meet their goals and complete teaching tasks. Third, the teaching environment should match students' cognitive characteristics and learning needs. It is not necessary to opt for overly complex teaching tools (Duisembekova, 2021; Koenig et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). Artificial intelligence inherently possesses numerous features, including handling large volumes of data, diverse data types, real-time information, and rapid processing speeds (Bin & Mandal, 2019; Wang, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to thoroughly examine the application methods of AI technology in foreign language teaching and to enhance the seamless integration of these advanced technologies into the language learning process (Pengju, 2022).

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Maintaining students' motivation and engagement can be one of the most significant challenges for EFL teachers, especially for those who have few opportunities to practice their language skills outside the classroom, as they reside in countries where English is not the primary language (Vaca-Torres, A.M.; Gómez Rodriguez, L.F.,2017). Teachers' motivation and determination are essential in addressing these challenges, as implementing innovative approaches can enable students to explore their interests within the curriculum while fostering deep learning and supporting teachers' autonomy in using English. For instance, mobile devices in the flipped classroom model allow students to access course materials anytime and anywhere. This enhances their involvement in project-based tasks, aiding their English learning and helping them utilize technology to meet their personal needs, thereby empowering them to become independent learners (Andujar, et .al,2020).

Aldabbus (2018) emphasizes that without extra technical and logistical assistance to introduce and execute a project, teachers are likely to encounter numerous challenges that may deter them from adopting the methodology in the future. In light of these obstacles, (Aldabbus,2018) discovered in his research that only seven out of twenty-four preservice teachers managed to apply the approach during their teaching practice. With the freedom to choose a topic that captures their interest, students are tasked with researching relevant information, comparing and analyzing their findings, creating a summary, and ultimately presenting their final work to their peers or in a public setting.

(Andriyani, S.; Anam, S., 2022). When students share what they have learned, they reinforce their existing knowledge while also discovering gaps in their understanding. Since the project process is built around an open-ended question initiated by the students, it sparks their curiosity, holds their attention, and motivates them to complete it (Umar, M.; Ko, I,2022).

Bell (2010) highlights that EFL students can develop and manage their projects, while teachers are responsible for monitoring their progress. In this learning framework, combined with problem-solving activities, students are encouraged to become fluent communicators, and critical thinkers, and take responsibility for their learning (Aldabbus,2018 & Cosgun, Atay,2021). Project-Based Learning (PBL) offers a promising solution to these challenges. As a student-centered approach, PBL enables learners to gain knowledge, skills, and competencies by independently exploring real-life problems or creating tangible products. Existing research has demonstrated the positive effects of PBL on critical thinking skills (CTSs) and language skills (LSs) among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. (Affandi & Sukyadi,2016) found that PBL significantly enhanced the writing abilities of Indonesian EFL students. Similarly, (Yimwilai,2020) highlighted PBL's effectiveness in fostering critical reading and 21st-century skills among Thai EFL learners. Additionally, qualitative studies have shown that learners generally hold favorable perceptions and attitudes toward the use of PBL in EFL classrooms (Kartika, 2020; Sultan & Javaid, 2018; Wongdaeng & Hajihama, 2018). (Schneider et al.,2021) have shown that using CPBL can help students enhance their collaboration skills.

Adaptability

Recently, addressing individual student needs has regained prominence as a critical focus in theoretical, empirical, and practice-driven studies, particularly in environments with growing student diversity, such as inclusive educational settings. In educational research, tailoring teaching to students' developmental levels has consistently been identified as a fundamental aspect of effective instruction (Parsons et al., 2018). These adaptations can occur at the macro level, involving structured programs for similar student groups, differentiated materials, and tasks (Corno,2008), Alternatively, they can take place at the micro level, including continuous assessment, tailored support, and instructional adjustments. (Parsons et al.,2018) describe adaptive teaching as a socially constructed approach in which teachers reflect metacognition on students' needs before, during, and after instruction.

Implemented adaptive teaching involves classroom episodes where students engage with teacher-planned activities, ensuring alignment between instructional intent and practice. Over time, effective adaptive teaching fosters students' self-regulated learning (Corno, 2008). Teacher decisions in instructional design, such as selecting tasks, materials, and teaching methods, are considered intended adaptive teaching when they are grounded in the diagnosis of individual student needs and learning states, whether formally or informally assessed (Parsons, 2008). The mixed-ability classroom is one of the most significant challenges language teachers often

encounter. Even though students are typically placed in classes based on their language proficiency levels, a classroom inevitably comprises diverse groups of individuals in various ways.

As defined by (Valentin,2005), a mixed-ability classroom is one where students exhibit significant differences in their levels of engagement, academic achievements, and readiness to learn a new language. (Brenner,2008) further refines this definition, emphasizing that students not only possess varying abilities but also differ in their learning styles and preferences. Defining the role of teachers solely as deliverers of standard subject matter overlooks the varying levels of interest, readiness, and learning performance among students who may not yet master the content, as well as those who have already learned it before the class begins (Tomlinson,2001). It is neither justifiable nor fair to focus entirely on teaching a standardized curriculum without considering individual differences (Robinson,2003). As a result, differentiated instruction is seen as a practical, appealing, and effective approach to accommodate students with diverse levels of readiness and interests (Tomlinson, 2001).

Students differ in academic readiness, cultural background, language skills, learning styles, motivation, social abilities, methodology, and self-regulation (Hardy, et al., 2019). This stage presents numerous challenges that require support from parents, educators, business professionals, and government agencies (Rose C. & Nicholl, M.J., 1997). Education tailored to students' diverse abilities is now being emphasized in the field, significantly contributing to improving educational quality and student learning outcomes. Instead of requiring all students to learn in the same way and complete identical tasks, teachers should provide flexibility by allowing them to engage in different activities. One of the key responsibilities of educators is to create an environment where all learners can successfully master the standard curriculum.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teaching transcends the mere delivery of content, emerging as a delicate balance of artistry and scientific precision. The interplay between teaching experience and task design is fundamental in creating meaningful and transformative learning experiences. Effective educators provide their expertise to craft tasks that inspire curiosity, foster critical thinking, and adapt to the diverse needs of students. By integrating collaborative activities, real-world applications, and adaptive strategies, teachers can elevate routine assignments into opportunities for growth and engagement. Reflection and adaptability further refine these practices, ensuring tasks remain relevant and impactful. Ultimately, the ability to design and execute well-considered tasks is a testament to exceptional teaching, enabling educators to nurture a culture of achievement and instill a passion for lifelong learning. Through this synergy of theory and practice, educators not only shape the present but also empower the future of their students.

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