

Designing and using communicative tasks

TESOL Spain 2007

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Aim: to design a sequence of different types of task that will generate free language use and lead to an outcome that can be shared with others.

Your topic:

Seven types of task:

1. Listing: brainstorming and/or fact finding

e.g. things, qualities, people, places, features, things to do, reasons.

2. Ordering and sorting: sequencing, ranking, classifying

e.g. sequencing story pictures, ranking according to cost, popularity etc.

3. Matching e.g. Listen and identify, listen and do (TPR), match phrases/descriptions to pictures, match directions to maps,

4. Comparing: finding similarities or differences

e.g. comparing ways of greetings or local systems, playing ‘Spot the Difference’, contrasting two seasons.

5. Problem-solving: logic puzzles, real-life problems, case studies, incomplete texts e.g. logic problems, giving advice, proposing and evaluating solutions, predicting a story ending.

6. Projects and creative tasks e.g. doing and reporting a survey, producing a class newspaper, planning a radio show.

7. Sharing personal experiences: story-telling, anecdotes, reminiscences, opinions, reactions e.g. early schooldays, terrible journeys, embarrassing moments, soap opera scenes, personality quizzes.

Planning a task-based lesson

Try out your task(s) with someone else. Refine your task instructions and write them down.

If possible, record two fluent speakers doing the task(s) (1-2 minutes each), and select and transcribe extracts to use in class.

Following the TBL framework below, plan each phase. Decide at what point(s) to use the recording(s).

Pre-task priming activities/mini-tasks

Task

Planning a report

Reporting back

Form Focus

Identify useful words, phrases and patterns from the texts / recordings

Systematise them (classify into semantic, functional, notional or structural categories)

Devise Analysis and Practice activities

Repeat task and / or Evaluation