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Chapter 10: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) - Expanded Explanation

Overview of Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach where tasks are the central unit of instruction rather than grammar or vocabulary lists. The main principles are:

- **Focus on communication:** Learners use language to complete meaningful tasks.
- **Language is learned through use,** not just explanation.
- **Tasks simulate real-life situations,** making learning practical and contextualized.

Definition of a Task

A task in TBLT is an activity that:

1. Has a clear outcome.
2. Engages meaningfully; learners must understand and produce language.
3. Reflects real-world use.

4. Requires cognitive effort; thinking and problem-solving are involved.

Components of a Task

1. **Pre-task:** Introduction of topic, key vocabulary, and context.
2. **Task cycle:** Learners perform the task individually, in pairs, or in groups.
3. **Post-task:** Review and feedback, focusing on language form after meaning has been negotiated.

Types of Tasks

- **Information-gap tasks:** One learner has information another doesn't; communication is required.
- **Opinion-gap tasks:** Discuss personal preferences or opinions.
- **Problem-solving tasks:** Solve a puzzle or make a decision together.
- **Role-plays:** Act out real-life scenarios.
- **Experiential tasks:** Based on learners' personal experiences.

Principles of Task-Based Teaching

1. Meaning comes first: Communication is primary.
2. Tasks are authentic: Use real-world scenarios.
3. Learner-centered: Active language production and negotiation.
4. Focus on form comes after meaning.
5. Interaction drives learning.

Advantages of TBLT

- Encourages fluency over accuracy initially.
- Motivates learners with real-life relevance.
- Promotes autonomous learning.
- Integrates skills naturally: speaking, listening, reading, writing.

Challenges of TBLT

- Some learners may struggle without explicit grammar instruction.
- Careful task design is required to suit proficiency levels.
- Classroom management can be difficult with group/pair tasks.
- Assessment is tricky; traditional exams may not capture communicative competence fully.

Assessment in TBLT

- Focus on task completion and communication effectiveness.
- Tools: performance-based tasks, portfolios, peer feedback, self-assessment.

Practical Tips for Teachers

- Start with simple, familiar tasks.
- Provide scaffolding: vocabulary lists, sentence starters, visual aids.
- Encourage collaboration while monitoring off-task behavior.
- Provide feedback after the task; communication first, form later.

Summary

Chapter 10 emphasizes that language learning is most effective when learners actively use it in meaningful tasks. TBLT shifts the classroom from teacher-led instruction to learner-centered communication, making the language real, engaging, and functional.