

# TAKING IT TO TASK

*The newsletter of the JALT task-based language teaching SIG. Volume 1 Issue 1 – July 2016*

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## SIG INFORMATION

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## EDITORIAL

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Welcome to our first issue of *Taking it to Task*! From 2016 we have decided to change our regular publication to a digital newsletter format. We hope to be able to accept a greater variety of submissions than we did with OnTask, which will still include theoretical articles and practical lesson plans that were the heart of OnTask, but also opinion pieces, book reviews and TBLT-related news.

In this first issue, we are pleased to include articles from Rod Ellis and Craig Lambert as well as a lesson plan from Osaze Cuomo. We begin with Rod Ellis who provides an overview of his talk at TBLT in Asia 2016 in which he outlines a number of issues facing TBLT and how they can be addressed within an Asian teaching context. Next, Craig Lambert's article serves as a practical guideline for teachers interested in gaining the maximum benefits from task repetition. The lesson plan involves students creating their own Instructional YouTube videos that cover a variety of topics.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue, and if any of you have a TBLT related article, lesson plan, book review or opinion piece that you would like to submit for consideration in a future issue of *Taking it to Task*, please contact us at [tbltinasia@gmail.com](mailto:tbltinasia@gmail.com)

Colin Thompson, Publications Chair

Justin Harris, Coordinator

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### CONFERENCE

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The biggest event for the JALT TBL SIG, the biennial "TBLT in Asia 2016" conference has just finished as this issue goes out. This conference series has gone from strength to strength and this year we had over 60 paper presentations, workshops and poster presentations from speakers representing about 14 different countries. Planning for 2018 starts now. If you'd like to be involved, let us know.

### NEW BOOKS

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Jane Willis tells us that her late husband Dave Willis' last book (written with Jane) is now available for purchase. Our members will surely be aware of Dave's influence on both the theoretical and practical aspects of TBLT. While this book "Winning the Grammar Wars – what grammar really is and how we use it", is not directly concerned with TBLT, it will be of interest to anyone involved in language teaching. The first part of the Kindle version is available for free.

# ARTICLES

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## **Aunt Sallies and Real Issues: Moving Task-based Language Teaching Forward**

*Rod Ellis – The University of Auckland*

### INTRODUCTION

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Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has many of the characteristics of a ‘movement’ and, unsurprisingly, as such it has attracted considerable criticism. These criticisms, however, are often based on misconceptions of what TBLT consists of and of its theoretical underpinnings – the ‘aunt sallies’ of my talk. Ellis (2009) and Long (2016) addressed these misconceptions in their defence of TBLT. The main focus of my talk, however, is not the misconceptions but a number of ‘real issues’ that need to be addressed if TBLT is to move forward. In this preview of my talk I comment briefly on each of these issues.

#### *1. The definition of a ‘task’*

The key question here is whether ‘task’ should be defined narrowly in terms of the activities that learners carry out in the real world or in terms of activities that are purely pedagogic in nature. Long (1985; 2015; 2016) has consistently argued that the tasks to be included in a course should be needs-based. He defines tasks as ‘target tasks’ and proposes that the starting point for establishing the content of a task-based syllabus should be the identification of those target tasks that a specific group of learners need in order to “function adequately in a particular target domain” (Long, 1985; 91). I have taken a different view on the grounds that for learners in state schools in a country like Japan it is spurious to attempt to identify the ‘target tasks’ that they might need to perform in the future and that a more realistic approach is to make use of ‘pedagogic tasks’ that will motivate learners to communicate.

#### *2. Types of tasks*

Various typologies of task types have been proposed. These often consist of lists of the pedagogic tasks that figure in task-based teaching (e.g. information/ opinion gap, role-playing, personal, problem-solving, story-completion) – see, for example, Bruton (2002) and Willis (1996). What is lacking is a principled way of classifying such tasks. I will suggest that tasks can be usefully classified in terms of two intersecting dimensions – input-based versus output-based and unfocused versus focused.

	Unfocused	Focused
Input-based	Written instructions about how to make a model airplane. Learners are required to read the instructions and assemble the model.	Oral descriptions of the location of animals in a zoo. The instructions are designed so that learners have to distinguish between singular and plural nouns. Learners place pictures of the animals in the correct locations (Shintani, 2016)
Output-based	Learners act as judges to decide what punishment to give to a number of offenders when given information about the crimes they had committed (Foster and Skehan, 1996)	Things-in-pocket task (Samuda, 2001). Learners shown the contexts of a person's pocket and are asked to speculate who the person might be (target = epistemological models).

I argue that more attention needs to be paid to input-based tasks – researchers have in general only been interested in output-based tasks. I will also argue – contrary to Long (2016) and Skehan (1998) – that focused tasks also have an important place in TBLT and in researching TBLT.

### 3. *Task complexity and the sequencing of tasks*

The issue of task complexity is important for syllabus design if one accepts the basic premise that the content of any syllabus needs to be organized in terms of a progression from 'simple' to 'complex'. The problem is how to define 'task complexity'. Long (2016) saw this as a 'real issue'. He noted that while "much good work has been published on task complexity ... the overall yield has been disappointing" (p. 27). He saw the solution as more research to "help make findings cumulative, encourage replication studies, increase productivity, and generally speed up progress on this issue". To my mind, however, little progress can be made until some fundamental issues have been addressed. I will argue that determining the complexity of a task is problematic given that tasks are holistic involving clusters of features and that that complexity cannot be considered purely in terms of the design features of tasks, as how a task is implemented also affects its complexity – perhaps even more so than design features. I thus challenge the validity of a growing body of research aimed at identifying how the design of a task affects complexity and propose that until a well-rounded theory of task complexity is available it will be necessary for course designers to rely mainly on experience and intuition about how to sequence tasks.

#### 4. *The role of explicit instruction*

In 'pure' TBLT – the kind that Long (2015) promotes – there is no room for explicit instruction preceding the performance of a task, as this constitutes a return to 'focus on forms'. I will argue that it is premature to dismiss 'focus on forms' as there is clear evidence that it can result in, at least, automatized explicit knowledge. However, I will also suggest that there is a need to investigate what effect explicit instruction has on the performance of a task and point to evidence that it can have deleterious effects on fluency and global accuracy and complexity. Thus, even if focused tasks do result in the learning of a target feature, they may not promote the 'balanced development' that Skehan sees as the goal of TBLT.

#### 5. *Pre-emptive versus reactive focus on form*

Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) distinguished the form-focused episodes that occurred in teacher-class task-based interaction in terms of whether they were pre-emptive, in which case either a student or the teacher initiated a focus on a specific linguistic feature, or reactive when a classroom participant (normally the teacher) drew attention to a particular linguistic form that was the source of a problem. Long (2015) is adamant that focus-on-form should be entirely reactive. I will argue that this is neither practical – as teachers will always feel the need to address questions about form raised by their students – nor theoretically desirable as pre-emptive focus on form can usefully draw learners' attention to form.

#### 6. *Types of corrective feedback*

There is of course plenty of evidence that reactive focus-on-form (i.e. corrective feedback) is beneficial. The research to date has focused on the relative effectiveness of different types of corrective feedback (i.e. input-providing versus output-prompting and implicit versus explicit) leading to differences in opinion and considerable debate. This research, however, has only investigated the effects of corrective feedback on the acquisition of specific grammatical structures targeted in focused tasks. I will argue that teachers should employ a variety of corrective feedback strategies and that what is missing is longitudinal studies of unfocused corrective feedback.

#### 7. *Timing of feedback*

The issue here is whether reactive focus on form needs to occur during the performance of a task or can be delayed until after the task has been completed. There is little discussion of this in TBLT circles although it would seem that immediate, online focus on form is considered preferable given the psycholinguistic importance attached to

learning-through-interaction and the fact that the research that informs TBLT has investigated this.

The question of the timing of feedback is an important issue because a common position in the advice given out to teachers is that immediate feedback is needed in accuracy work but feedback should be delayed in fluency work (Hedge, 2000; Scrivener, 2005). In TBLT, however, the distinction between accuracy and fluency work does not apply, as the goal is to develop accuracy and fluency, along with complexity, contiguously. I report on two studies that have investigated immediate and delayed feedback but conclude that, at this point, it is not possible to adjudicate on this issue.

8. *Participatory structure – group work versus whole task*

A common misconception about TBLT is that it inevitably involves small group work. This misconception may again have arisen because so much of the research has investigated how learners perform tasks in pairs or groups. But tasks can be performed in a variety of participatory structures, including teacher-class – as is necessary with input-based tasks – and individually when learners work by themselves - as in Prabhu's (1987) Communicational Language Teaching Project. Teachers have a choice of participatory structure in TBLT. What is lacking in accounts of TBLT, however, is discussion about what constitutes an appropriate participatory structure for different groups of students.

9. *Transferability of task-based abilities*

Experimental studies have frequently used tasks as pre- and post-tests to measure the learning of specific linguistic forms that results from performing the treatment tasks. In cases where the performance of the treatment task involves some kind of intervention (for example, corrective feedback) there is clear evidence of learning. However, in cases where there is no such intervention, transferability to a new task may not be found (see Ellis, 2009) as in a number of task-repetition studies. This is clearly a key issue for TBLT but has been little researched. To establish transferability, longitudinal studies are needed.

10. *Teacher education for TBLT*

TBLT, with its emphasis on holistic teaching and learning-through-doing, constitutes a major innovation for teachers accustomed to a structural approach. Teachers may lack confidence in their L2 proficiency and thus feel that they cannot use tasks (Butler, 2011). Students may be unconvinced that the incidental learning that TBLT caters to is the most efficient way of learning an L2. State educational systems may require teachers to teach to a syllabus that specifies what is to be learned in terms of lists of words and grammatical structures. A particular problem is that teachers sometimes lack a clear

understanding of what a 'task' is. These problems can only be addressed in state educational systems if a clear commitment is made to abandoning structural specifications and discrete-point assessment or, at least, complementing such assessment with performance-based tests. The problems associated with implementing TBLT, when such a commitment has been made, require carefully-designed initial and in-service teacher training/ education programmes as occurred when TBLT was introduced into state schools in Belgium (see Van den Branden, 2006). Without such programmes TBLT has little chance of success.

In the conclusion to my talk I will suggest that the best way forward for countries like Japan might be a modular curriculum – with a strong task-based component but with some task-supported instruction when it becomes clear that learners could benefit from explicit instruction.

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# Task Integrity and Task Frequency in the L2 Classroom

*Craig Lambert, Curtin University*

## ABSTRACT

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This article provides a practical introduction to gaining maximum benefits from the repetition of tasks in the language classroom. The article is intended to complement Lambert, Kormos and Minn (2016) with a practitioner's guide to tasks in language teaching. It begins with a discussion of the essential characteristics of tasks as pedagogic tools and the role that they play in L2 learning. This is followed by a discussion of the importance of task frequency in the learning process and how task repetition in the classroom might pose threats to the integrity of tasks as L2 learning tools. Finally, the last section discusses implementation strategies to ensure adequate task frequency while at the same time preserving task integrity, promoting optimum transfer of practice across tasks, and minimizing learner fatigue in repeating the same task multiple times. This section also discusses optional modifications to the basic approach to implementing tasks which can be used to optimize different aspects of learners' performance across a task sequence. The article thus provides a practical basis for teachers to experiment with task-based language teaching in their own classrooms in order to determine what works best for their learners and in their educational contexts.

## TASKS AS L2 LEARNING TOOLS

Tasks have been variously defined in the literature on L2 instructional planning. At one level, any activity which requires effort on the part of a learner inside or outside of the classroom could be referred to colloquially as a task. However, in the more technical sense of task as a unit of analysis in task-based instructional design, tasks have been conceptualized in two primary ways. One of these focuses on situational authenticity (e.g., Long, 2015; Robinson, 2011) and the other on interactional authenticity (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Yule, 1997). In the former case, it is essential that tasks reflect real life events that learners need to complete outside of the classroom, and the focus in instructional design is to create progressively more demanding versions of these tasks in order to allow learners a graduated means of perfecting their skill at completing them (Long, 2015). In the latter case, there is no constraint on tasks to mimic something learners do outside of the classroom, but tasks do need to provide the opportunity to use language in ways for authentic communication in the classroom and be enjoyable enough to engage learners and to generate the effort required to perform them well.

In both approaches, however, tasks are argued to promote language acquisition in a way that is distinct from the other types of activities that are typically used in language classrooms. It is generally agreed that language knowledge, as it relates to the ability to speak a language fluently, is ultimately implicit knowledge (N. Ellis, 2002). Implicit language knowledge is the

comprehensive and relatively effortless knowledge that allows proficient speakers of a language to communicate in real time while focused on the meaning of what they are saying, often without being able to explain why they say the things they say. By contrast, explicit language knowledge is the less complete and conscious rule-based knowledge characteristic of speakers who have learned a language formally. Although these learners can usually explain why their utterances are correctly formed, the application of this knowledge tends to be slow and requires considerable conscious effort on the part of the speaker.

There is considerable evidence for a distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge. Paradis (2004) argues that implicit and explicit knowledge are likely to be stored in different parts of the brain. The basic argument is that explicit language knowledge is stored in the tertiary cortex and makes use of the limbic system like other forms of declarative memory, whereas implicit language knowledge is stored in connections between the cortical processors by which it is acquired and does not involve the limbic system. However, traditional approaches to language instruction are based on the assumption that explicit knowledge can become implicit knowledge through practice. Learners memorize rules, practice manipulating sentences exemplifying these rules, and then attempt to use these rules in communication during situated grammar activities in which they apply these rules. If implicit and explicit knowledge are distinct, however, as recent evidence seems to indicate, it is unlikely that explicit knowledge ever becomes implicit knowledge through practice and that they will be accessed and developed through different processes based on distinct cognitive mechanisms (R. Ellis, 2011). The uniqueness of tasks as learning tools is that they are able to tap into and develop learners' implicit language knowledge (Lambert, 2016).

At a practical level, the question for L2 teachers and materials designs is what essential features define tasks as learning tools and differentiate them from the range of other learning activities that are used in L2 instruction. R. Ellis (2009) argues that to preserve the integrity of tasks as learning tools, they must be designed and implemented to create four key constraints on learners' performance:

- (1) They should focus learners on the meaning of what is being said rather than on the language used to say it.
- (2) They should involve a gap in information, opinion or inference that creates the need for communication.
- (3) Learners should not be provided with language to use while performing the task nor should they be directed to use specific language while completing it. Rather they should be required to access the full range of their own resources in order to arrive at their own means of completing it.
- (4) The aim of a task should be to arrive at a communicative outcome beyond the use of language for its own sake.

If even one of these characteristics is absent, the integrity of the task as a learning activity will be compromised, and the resulting activity is likely to become a situated grammar activity in which learners draw on and develop explicit knowledge of the language. Although such

exercises may serve important functions in adult L2 acquisition, these functions are distinct from the function served by tasks. When all four of these characteristics are met, however, tasks often allow teachers and researchers to tap into and develop implicit rather than explicit knowledge.

### TASK FREQUENCY IN THE L2 LEARNING PROCESS

It has been argued that a large part of mastering an additional language consists of the progressive and ongoing mapping of language forms to specific communicative functions (N. Ellis, 2002). This process involves learners in structuring and restructuring their resources into expedient linguistic strategies by which they can achieve their communicative needs (Verspoor, de Bot & Lowie, 2011). Verspoor and Behrens (2011), for example, describe the process as follows:

If language learning is a bottom-up process, where language is nothing more than a set of conventions, learners have to find their own strategies to express their intentions. They will pick up those conventions that they have heard most frequently, but in trying to express them, they may also try a set of varying strategies, from more simple ones to more complex ones, correct or incorrect, and often in juxtaposition. Eventually, however, they discard the least effective ones and use a combination of the more effective ones (Verspoor & Behrens, 2011, p. 38).

Crucial to this process is what MacWhinney (2001) refers to as the development of cue strength. As it relates to linguistic processing, cue strength refers to the degree of mapping between linguistic forms and functions or the likelihood that specific forms (morphological, lexical and syntactic) will be used to mark a given function. In order to successfully associate effective language forms to specific functional needs, L2 learners must accomplish tasks supporting this connection frequently. According to MacWhinney, task frequency can become a barrier to effective L2 acquisition. He argues that “because most basic linguistic tasks [in first language acquisition] are well above threshold frequency, the dimension of task frequency is seldom an important determinant of relative cue strength. However, in the case of a L2 ... task frequency could become a factor determining a general slow-down in acquisition” (MacWhinney, 2001, p. 71).

In other words, many essential task functions may not occur frequently enough in naturally occurring situations to result in the acquisition of a full range of linguistic resources in L2 learners. Thus, while one primary function of task-based L2 instruction is to provide learners with tasks that challenge their linguistic resources and push them to develop more precise and effective means of reaching specific communicative ends, a second primary function of task-based instruction is to provide them with intensive practice in performing these tasks so that they have adequate exposure to effectively internalize the new linguistic resources that they bring to bear in meeting task demands.

Intensive repetition of tasks can also facilitate the learning process by priming effective linguistic strategies brought to bear on tasks. N. Ellis (2002), for example, argues that learners tend to reuse utterances which have been recently primed in memory rather than constructing novel utterances. He claims that lexical items, thematic roles and word sequences prime themselves in memory over stretches of discourse approximately ten sentences in length or time intervals of up to 20 minutes. The probability of learners reusing forms increases as a function of how recently they have been used. Thus, task sequences planned to provide L2 learners with intensive task repetition can provide for threshold levels of task frequency as well as improve the practice opportunities that tasks provide by increasing the probability of specific task-relevant structures that learners have brought to bear in completing them being recycled throughout their performances.

## PUTTING TASKS TO WORK IN THE L2 CLASSROOM

A key question for implementing task-based language teaching is thus how to ensure adequate task frequency while at the same time preserving task integrity and promoting optimum priming effects and transfer of new language across the tasks in a sequence. Bygate (2001) discusses two pedagogic options for providing learners with opportunities to repeat tasks: same task repetition and parallel task repetition. In the first case, learners repeat the exact same task, whereas in the second case, they repeat similar tasks with slightly different content (e.g., describe a different, but similar shirt each time). However, both forms of task repetition pose potential threats to task integrity and to learner motivation. It will be remembered that in order to preserve the integrity of tasks they must be designed and implemented to focus learners on meaning (R. Ellis, 2009). If learners have already completed a task, it becomes less likely that they will remain focused on achieving the same end when asked to do it again. Furthermore, even the most motivated learners are likely to have a point at which they become bored with repeating the same or similar tasks (Bygate, 2001).

Parallel task repetition has the advantage of preserving the integrity of tasks in terms of a focus on meaning as well as possibly prolonging learners interest in completing the task and delaying the onset of fatigue. The drawback is that it may reduce the transferability of primed language and consequently compromise the practice opportunities that tasks provide. Lambert (2014), for example, in a large-scale study of task-related language variation in both native and non-native speakers of English found that even on closely parallel clothing descriptions tasks, lexical selection and specific syntactic structures were partially dependent on the item being described. In other words, when the lexical items required for the task changed, the likelihood of novel linguistic strategies increased, and the likelihood that learners would be able to recycle the linguistic strategies that were used on previous versions decreased. Same task repetition avoids this reduction in transferability between tasks, but it can also compromise task integrity and increase the onset of boredom and fatigue. When two learners have established the communicative outcome of a given task, it is not realistic to expect that they will remain

focus on meaning in reaching this same outcome again. They are more likely to see the task as a means to practice language and focus more on the language they use than the communicative outcome they achieve in subsequent repetitions.

It is interesting to note, however, that people do often repeat the exact same task in naturally occurring communication outside of the classroom (e.g. reclaiming a piece of clothing from a cloak room, explaining how to install something, telling an interesting story, expressing an opinion about a book or movie). The difference is that they tend to do so with different interlocutors each time. Furthermore, they do not only perform these tasks themselves but hear others perform them as well. In a recent study of the effects of same task repetition on immediate gains in L2 fluency, Lambert, Kormos and Minn (2016) propose what they refer to as *Aural-Oral Task Repetition*. This involves learners repeating tasks in pairs, alternating the role of speaker and listener on each performance and working with a different interlocutor each time. This approach maintains the ecological validity of task repetition and preserves the integrity of tasks as learning tools by creating conditions in which learners can remain focused on meaning, address a genuine communication gap based on their own linguistic resources, and arrive at a communicative outcome for each repetition of the task.

Furthermore, the authors found that even after six repetitions of the exact same three tasks (instruction, narration, and opinion) as both speaker and as listener (36 performances total) over a period of 90 minutes, feelings of boredom or fatigue were quite rare among the 32 Japanese learners of English who participated in the study. Following the treatment, learners completed an open-ended questionnaire which asked about (1) the value they perceived in repeating the tasks, (2) the number of repetitions they felt were optimal, and (3) the value that they perceived in working with different partners. Almost all of the participants reported that repeating the tasks was useful for them. The two main reasons provided were that it helped them improve their fluency and that it helped them to incorporate new language into their performances either from memory or from their partners. Furthermore, they reported the optimal number of repetitions for solidifying these gains in the short term was between three and four depending on the task. Interestingly, these results corroborated the findings on the fluency of their speech. Same task repetition had the most pronounced effect on speech rate across the first three performances with smaller gains continuing through the fifth performance. Furthermore, gains between the first two performances were primarily associated with reduction in clause-final pausing, which the authors argue is connected with conceptualizing the content, whereas gains between the second, third and fourth performances were primarily associated with reduction in mid-clause pausing, which the authors argue is connected with refining the lexical items and syntactic structures used. Thus, three to four repetitions of the same L2 learning tasks seem to have been needed for learners to optimize the different aspects of their L2 fluency in the short-term regardless of the task being completed or the proficiency level of the speakers.

Asking learners to change partners after each performance of a task, however, can be time consuming. One possibility is to set up the classroom for groups of four. Learners should be seated so that two learners sit side-by-side to each other and face-to-face with the other two.

For the first task performance, they work with the learner in front of them. For the second, they quickly rotate 90 degrees and work with the learner beside them. For the third, they quickly switch seats with the person beside them and work with the learner who was previously sitting diagonal to them. These repetitions can also be timed and the time gradually reduced. This is known as 4-3-2 technique. Originally proposed by Maurice (1983), it has subsequently been researched in several studies beginning with Nation (1989) and Arevart (1989). Using this technique effectively, however, requires piloting the task with similar groups to understand how much time an unpressured performance requires and to determine appropriate reduction intervals to promote fluency while still allowing learners to successfully complete the task. Furthermore, when time permits and the teacher feels that a task is challenging enough for the group to benefit from more than three repetitions, learners can be shuffled into new groups by giving each member a number from one to four and asking them to form new groups based on these numbers (i.e., the four students with the number one form group one, twos group two, etc.). Lambert (2004) provides concrete lesson plans based on this principle. The task can then be repeated three more times following the same procedures outlined above.

Another useful device to bring learners' performances in line with teacher's expectations across a repetition sequence is to ask learners to self-evaluate after each performance. For example, suppose that the teacher's expectations are that learners are to complete a task, (1) using only English, (2) without showing their partner their paper, and (3) by finding the correct answer. One possibility is to create a self-evaluation sheet for learners to complete after each performance. They might be instructed to give themselves 3 points on Criterion 1, if they used all English, 2 points if they used no more than two words of their L1, and no points if they used more than two words. If similar scales are then created for the other two criteria to total of 10 points for each performance that meets all of the teacher's expectations, it puts learners in control of their progress and may result in more of them reaching criterion levels of performance by the end of each sequence (see, Stroud, 2016, for the effects of a similar technique using point cards over the course of an entire semester rather than a single task sequence).

However, it is important to remember that the ideas in this article, based on Lambert et al. (2016), are provided as an empirical basis for teachers to experiment with task repetition effectively in the classroom and to determine what works best with their own learners and in their own educational context. These ideas are not meant to be applied uncritically. Teachers should remain sensitive to their learners' responses to tasks and make adjustments accordingly. It is hoped that the present article will provide a basis for such experimentation and result in more effective task-based language teaching in Japan and elsewhere.

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## LESSON PLAN:

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### **Creating an Instructional YouTube Video**

*Osaze Cuomo, Osaka University of Tourism*

This is a multi-week series of tasks aimed at intermediate to advanced learners leading into the creation of a YouTube-style instructional cooking video. The tasks will be spread out over several weeks.

## GOALS

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- Understanding the YouTube ecosystem as a place for learning and sharing ideas
- Creating an explanatory cooking video
- Sending video files as attachments
- Familiarizing students with vocabulary and concepts related to modern technology
- Promoting autonomous learning and problem solving using online resources

## MATERIALS

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- Screen connected to a computer for watching videos as a class
- Classroom internet connection or means to download videos to watch in class
- Smartphone (if most or all students in the class do not have a smartphone this lesson plan will be much more difficult to implement)

### PREPARATION WEEK 1

Select 2-3 short (2-5 minutes) instructional cooking videos on YouTube (Appendix A). Videos should be of varying production value to give students a realistic image of what can be done with basic equipment. The instructor can also create an original video in place of one of the YouTube videos. This helps students to become comfortable in all the steps that they will be required to complete and helps generate class interest. Write a list of ingredients and

equipment used in each video (Appendix B). Print out a list of instructions from the video (Appendix C), with one instruction per page. Lastly, pictures of each recipe will be needed. Write four to five statements about the production and structure of the videos (Appendix D).

## PRE-TASK

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Gather the class around the screen. Ask students to think about their favorite food, how is it made? Can they make it? If they don't know how, would they learn? Do they ever watch cooking videos on YouTube?

### STAGE 1

Put students into groups, show a picture of the dish in the first video and ask students to predict the ingredients that will be used in the dish. Watch the video and have them check their predictions by circling the ingredients and equipment they hear (Appendix A).

After confirming the ingredients and equipment used in the recipe, distribute the instruction cards (Appendix B) to each group and ask them to put them in order. Watch the videos and students check their predictions.

Make note of the cooking verbs (prep, flip, spritz), and the language used for signposting (first, next, after that, etc.). Repeat the process for each video.

After watching the videos ask the class which they liked best and why. Draw attention to the presenter, any signposting language used, and about production aspects of the videos. Encourage the students to think about what makes a good video.

### STAGE 2

Distribute the previously prepared statements (Appendix D) regarding the production and structure of the videos to each group. Students should be encouraged to look up unknown words and phrases. Watch the videos a third time and have students decide which statements apply to each video. Review any video production terms (take, cut, shot, angle, lighting) using examples from the videos if there is any confusion on the part of the students.

Ask the students if they have ever made a video and give time for any students with experience to share, then give students an outline of their productive task.

# TASK

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Create a YouTube-styled video explaining and demonstrating how to cook their favorite food

Video can be made with one person or in a group of 2 or 3 people

Video should be 3 to 5 minutes in length

Video should have some production values (title cards, music, cuts)

Video must be uploaded to YouTube (either public or private) and sent to the teacher

Conclude the class by asking how many cooking verbs the students can remember? How many video production words can they remember? Review the keys talked about earlier for creating an interesting video. For many students this will likely be their first time editing a video and they may be somewhat unsure how to go about it. YouTube has its own editing software that is free and easy to use but students are free to put the video together however they see fit.

## WEEK 2 / WEEK 3

Check in with students each week to see how they are progressing. I found many of my first year students needed a bit of instruction on the basics of sending email so in the 3rd week a mini-lesson on what to include in an email may be beneficial. Additional areas to cover would be how to create a YouTube account, how to upload a video, how to change privacy settings, and how to send a link. Depending on how much time is available these actions could be turned into tasks, alternatively if time is short these actions could be given as research tasks outside of class.

Due to the size of most video files it is likely that students will not be able to send them as attachments. This point should be emphasized so students are aware they must send the link to the instructor before the class meets for the video presentations.

## POST-TASK WEEK 4 OR WEEK 5

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### BEFORE FINAL VIEWING

The instructor should download the videos from the links sent by the student or have a reliable internet connection for in-class viewing. The instructor prescreens the students' videos, making note where language usage could be more clear, with a focus on language related to signposting and giving instructions. Send the time-codes of each segment back to the students (for example 'please check 1:15 - 1:20'). Give the students a deadline by which they must transcribe and rewrite segments.

## IN CLASS

Watch each student video, recycle language used in Stage 1 as much as possible. Give the statements used in Stage 2 (Appendix D) to groups of students and again ask them to decide which statements apply to each video. Make a list of awards (best presenter, best cinematography, best intro, etc.) and give the students secret ballots. The winners in each category could give an acceptance speech to talk about their production process.

## NOTES

The length of time given to students can be modified to suit the class calendar. If possible give the assignment over a long break or even a 3-day weekend to allow students more production time.

Rather than a cooking video, the theme for the videos could be 'giving a guided tour' or 'reviewing a new product' with a corresponding language emphasis.

## APPENDIX A

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**1.1.1.1** *Alton Brown - Grilled Grilled Cheese*

**1.1.1.2** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIIWJUvrxEY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIIWJUvrxEY)

## APPENDIX B

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Alton Brown - Grilled Cheese Sandwiches

Circle the equipment he uses to make the grilled cheese sandwiches

Spatulas

Pan

charcoal grill

Oven

Tongs

aluminum foil

Circle the ingredients he uses to make the grilled cheese sandwiches

Spices

Lemon

cheese

mustard

Butter

olive oil

salt

bread

## APPENDIX C (DELETE THE NUMBERS AND ENLARGE TO PRINT ONE PER PAGE)

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1. mix the spices and the cheese together
2. put the cheese on the spatulas
3. put the cheese on indirect heat
4. prep the bread
5. spritz the olive oil on
6. put the bread on direct heat
7. flip the bread
8. move the cheese over
9. slide the cheese onto the sandwich
10. put the bread and the cheese back on indirect heat

## APPENDIX D (ENLARGE AND PRINT ONE PER PAGE)

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**1.1.1.3** *The video was shot in one take*

**1.1.1.4** *The presenter used a sign off*

**1.1.1.5** *The presenter read from a script*

**1.1.1.6** *The presenter clearly moved from one part of the explanation to the next*

**1.1.1.7** *The presenter was serious*