

**No. 42**

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**Task-based language learning**

**Content-based language learning activities developed by student teachers in Ticino during a trilingual workshop on task-based language learning and “Pédagogie du projet”.**

**At a glance**

**Objectives:** The principle of task-based language learning is that students learn a foreign language best by carrying out task-based language learning activities. The task is the main objective. More in particular the objectives of these lessons are:

- Creating new school rules, based on an analysis of existing school rules to be found on the internet (English example)
- Creating a homepage of the class (German example)
- Choosing a cosmetic product that is environmentally friendly (French example)

By doing these tasks several other objectives are involved:

- To give students practice at using information on the internet
- To allow students to be involved in the choice of contents of the lessons
- To develop presentation techniques
- To learn to carry out a project in a small group and to negotiate the work with fellow-classmates
- To develop intercultural awareness with respect to codes of conduct in schools
- To develop an awareness of ecological aspects of the use of cosmetic products

**Level:** The activity for English was originally written for students in vocational schools, but is also suitable for younger students with approximately three years of English. The activities for German and French were developed for students at the scuola media in Ticino. The German activity can be done with beginners, for the French activity about three years of French are probably needed.

**Bibliography:** WILLIS, J. (1996): *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*, Longman.  
WILLIS, J.: *Task-based Learning, what kind of adventure* at <http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/pub/ltl/98/jul/willis.html>  
Babylonia 3/2001: *Pédagogie du projet* ([www.babylonia-ti.ch](http://www.babylonia-ti.ch))

**Context**

At the Teacher Training College (ASP) in Locarno and the Swiss Institute for Vocational Training (ISPPF) in Lugano student teachers have produced materials along the princi-

ples of content-based and task-based language learning. In these didactic Pages we present some projects developed by the student teachers. The examples are in English, French and German.

The projects are based on the follow model developed by Jane Willis:

## Components of a TBL Framework

### 1. Pre-task phase

#### Introduction to topic and task

Teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases, and helps learners understand task instructions and prepare. Learners may hear a recording of others doing a similar task, or read part of a text as a lead in to a task.

### 2. Task cycle

#### Task

Students do the task, in pairs or small groups. Teacher monitors from a distance, encouraging all attempts at communication, not correcting. Since this situation has a “private” feel, students feel free to experiment. Mistakes don’t matter.

#### Planning

Students prepare to report to the whole class (orally or in writing) how they did the task, what they decided or discovered. Since the report stage is public, students will naturally want to be accurate, so the teacher stands by to give language advice.

#### Report

Some groups present their reports to the class, or exchange written reports, and compare results. Teacher acts as a chairperson, and then comments on the content of the reports.

Learners may now hear a recording of others doing a similar task and compare how they all did it. Or they may read a text similar in some way to the one they have written themselves, or related in topic to the task they have done.

### 3. Language focus

#### Analysis

Students examine and then discuss specific features of the text or transcript of the recording. They can enter new words, phrases and patterns in vocabulary books.

#### Practice

Teacher conducts practice of new words, phrases, and patterns occurring in the data, either during or after the Analysis.

Sometime after completing this sequence, learners may benefit from doing a similar task with a different partner.

## A new set of school rules

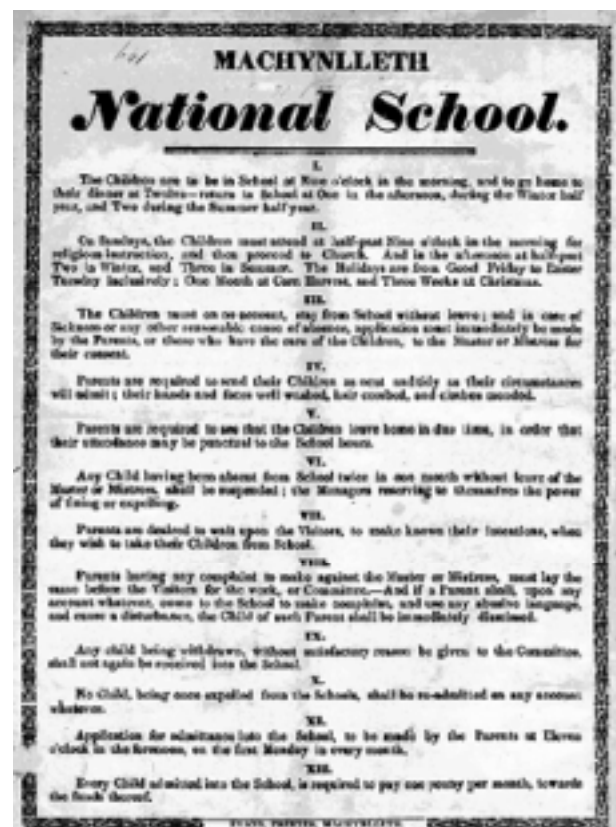
At the pre-task stage the students get the necessary input materials to perform the task; at this stage the teacher can also present an example of the task. The students then carry out the task in small groups, using all the language resources they have. They then plan a presentation for their classmates at the planning stage. The teacher asks all or some students to present the outcome of their task. The classmates may be asked to judge the presentations and finally there is the focus on language phenomena.

#### Example: creating school rules

1. T. introduces the concept of school rules or codes of conduct and reminds SS of the rules applying to their school.
2. The task is to define a new set of school rules in English.
3. SS search the internet for codes of conduct in British and American schools, download these, compare them and define a new set of rules.
4. SS prepare the presentation of the new set of rules.
5. SS are asked to present the rules, classmates make notes
6. SS vote on the best set of rules.

#### Resources

Examples of school rules or codes of conduct can easily be found by typing “school rules” when using a search engine like [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).





Here is an example from Warwick Academy:

1. Students are expected to behave responsibly and respectfully to each other, their teachers and to members of the public both in and out of school.
  2. School property is to be kept clean and not vandalised or defaced in any way.
  3. All personal belongings, including books, must be clearly marked with the student's name.
  4. Strict adherence to the Dress Code and Regulations is required during the School day and when travelling to and from School. These rules are printed in the Student Handbook.
  5. Students are expected to be punctual to registrations, class and all other school activities. If a student enters the premises after 8.25 a.m. he/she must report first to the School Office. Students who are late twice in one week **or** more than 10 minutes late on any single occasion will attend a Head Of Year detention on a Wednesday afternoon from 3.35pm to 4.30pm.
- <http://www.warwickacad.bm/info/inforules.html>

#### Language focus

T. draws the students' attention to the way school rules are formulated and asks them to rank them in order of strictness (*must be, are expected to, is to be*).

## Unsere Homepage

In der Vorphase erhalten die SchülerInnen (S.) das erforderliche Inputmaterial, damit sie die Aufgabe ausführen können. Die Lehrkraft (L.) kann auch selber ein Beispiel der Aufgabe zeigen. Die S. erarbeiten die Aufgabe in Kleingruppen und benutzen dabei alle sprachlichen Mittel, die sie zur Verfügung haben. Nachher bereiten sie während der Planungsphase eine Präsentation für die Klassenkameraden vor. Die L. fordert einige SchülerInnen auf, das Ergebnis der Aufgabe vorzuführen. Die Klassenkameraden können die Präsentationen beurteilen. Zum Schluss gibt es eine Reflexion zu den sprachlichen Mitteln, die verwendet wurden.

#### Beispiel: Lernparcours für die Entwicklung einer Webseite

1. Die L. führt das Thema ein und fragt die S., was sie über eine Webseite (Homepage) wissen.
2. Die Klasse sammelt die Materialien für eine Webseite, die auf die Homepage des virtuellen Klassenzimmers im Educanet ([www.educanet.ch](http://www.educanet.ch)) heraufgeladen werden soll.
3. Die S. suchen Informationen im Internet und entscheiden in ihren Kleingruppen, welche Informationen sie gerne auf die Webseite heraufladen möchten.
4. Die S. bereiten eine Präsentation ihrer Wünsche vor.
5. Die S. werden aufgefordert, ihre Wünsche zu präsentieren, während die Klassenkameraden Notizen machen.
6. Es wird abgestimmt, welche Informationen heraufgeladen werden..

#### Quellen

Ein virtuelles Klassenzimmer, mit u.a. einem Chat, einem Forum, der Möglichkeit, Dateien hoch und herunterzuladen und eine Homepage zu erstellen, kann jede Lehr-

kraft, die in der Schweiz unterrichtet, ohne Kosten einrichten. Es reicht sich auf der Webseite [www.educanet.ch](http://www.educanet.ch) anzumelden und die Hinweise zu folgen. Educanet ist ein abgeschirmter Teil des Internets und ein sicherer Platz, Schüler in der Schule oder zu Hause miteinander arbeiten zu lassen.

#### Reflexion über die Sprache

Wenn die S. die Informationen gesammelt haben, können die wichtigen sprachlichen Elemente (z.B. Wortschatz) reflektiert werden, bevor sie auf die Homepage heraufgeladen werden.



## Choisir un produit cosmétique respectueux de l'environnement

### Objectifs de l'activité (task)

Connaître un matériel réclamisant des produits de beauté.  
Choisir un produit adapté aux besoins de chaque élève.

1. Qu'est-ce que le maquillage? Le professeur invite les élèves à comparer et à décrire des images de visages maquillés, du passé et d'aujourd'hui. Les élèves travaillent par groupes.
2. L'objectif est de comprendre et discuter le maquillage. Objectif social: les élèves apprennent à se rapporter entre eux (écoute, collaboration).
3. Le professeur reprend au TN le lexique spécifique.
4. Les élèves lisent deux ensembles de textes publicitaires authentiques, et répondent à deux questionnaires (compréhension globale et compréhension détaillée). Travail individuel.
5. Le professeur vérifie les réponses aux questionnaires.
6. Les élèves par groupes présentent aux autres les qualités des différents produits.
7. Les élèves (deux "intervieweurs" et un/e "client/e") remplissent un questionnaire sur les caractéristiques et les goûts personnels de leur camarade.
8. Les binômes choisissent des produits en fonction des caractéristiques des camarades interviewés. Chaque groupe conseille à un/une élève le produit le plus adapté.
9. La discussion finale aborde aussi le problème du commerce équitable, et de la lutte contre les tests sur les animaux (problématique explicite dans le matériel The Body Shop).



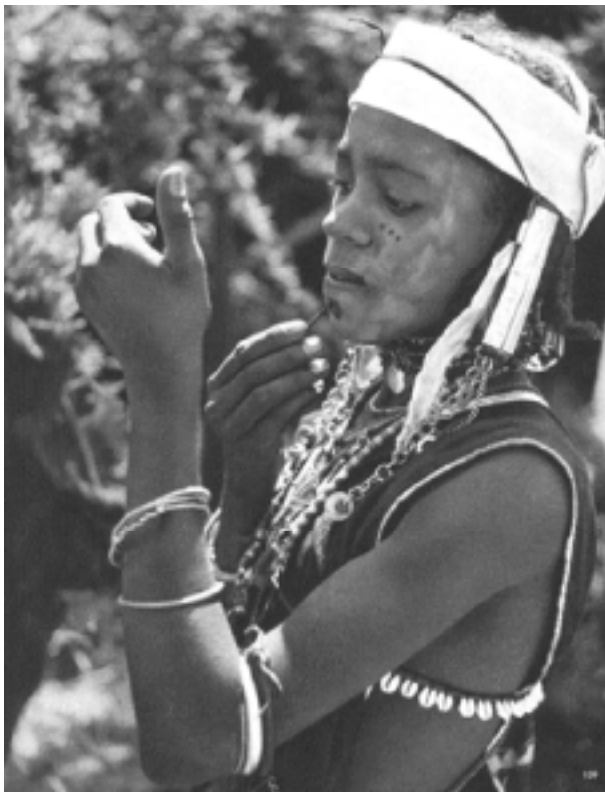
*Le maquillage chez les Indiens d'Amérique.*

### Contenus linguistiques

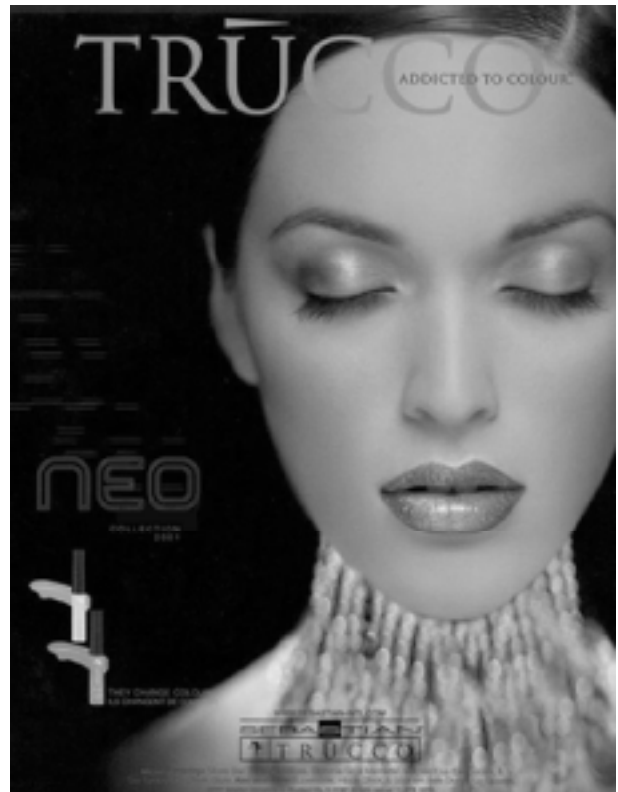
Le lexique de l'aspect et des soins du corps. Le langage de l'interview. Être capable de conseiller à qn un produit, accepter/refuser un conseil.

### Sources

Matériaux sur Le Body Shop, sites internet des produits Clarins et de Body Shop Canada ([www.thebodyshop.ca](http://www.thebodyshop.ca))



*Le maquillage chez les Africains.*



*Le maquillage dans le monde occidental.*