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978-0-521-86927-0 - Task-Based Language Education: From Theory to Practice

Edited by Kris Van den Branden

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*The Editor and all contributors are from the Centre for
Language and Education, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*



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Kris Van den Branden (editor)

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Series Editors' Preface

While an important and immensely costly undertaking worldwide, relatively little language teaching occurs in coherently designed programmes grounded in theory and research; in most cases, what goes on in classrooms is largely determined by whichever textbook happens to have been adopted or imposed. *Task-Based Language Education: From Theory to Practice* provides an example of what is possible when coherent design is achieved, implemented and evaluated, and not just in a few atypical classrooms. As one of the external reviewers of the original manuscript wrote, ‘the scale and scope of this work is astonishing – this is not a small-scale, idiosyncratic, hyper-specialized “language pedagogy for the select few” that is being described; rather it is massive, mainstream, large-scale language education.’

Led by Professor Kris Van den Branden and his research team at the Centre for Language and Education at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has now been employed for roughly a decade in approximately 1,200 state schools and other educational settings throughout the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium. The settings include college-level Dutch/Flemish as a second language and international Dutch as a foreign language courses, adult vocational training, classes for immigrant children, and primary and secondary mainstream education. The Belgian achievement is especially notable because educational innovations of any sort are notoriously difficult to accomplish, and especially so when the new programme entails a radical departure from the status quo, as is the case with TBLT.

This latest volume in the *Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series* describes the multifaceted project and reports the findings. The book includes coverage of TBLT's principles, needs analysis, programme design, pedagogic task design, TBLT with young learners, extensions of TBLT into other (non-language) fields, computer-assisted TBLT, task-based classroom lessons, task-based assessment, and implications for teaching and teacher education. It should be of interest to a wide range of readers interested in modern second and foreign language teaching, programme design, the diffusion of innovation in education, and, of course, in TBLT, itself.

Michael H. Long
Jack C. Richards