TBLT or task-based language teaching is a framework for teaching additional languages. Tasks provide a context for learners to use language, with an emphasis on meaning, to achieve their goals. For example, reading a menu with a friend to decide what to order for lunch is a real-world task. We can contrast this with classroom or pedagogic tasks, which are scaled-down versions of real-world tasks intended to promote communication skills. The argument for using tasks has been extended to each stage of curriculum development. These stages include: identifying needs, designing a syllabus, creating materials, teaching, assessing student performance, and evaluating the curriculum, as a whole. In practice, TBLT has been applied in a wide range of settings to teach various languages to both children and adults.

[pause for on-screen text]

TBLT has been researched extensively. Its effects on language development can be attributed to the workplan or the implementation of the task. The task workplan is the designer’s plan for the task prior to its actual use. Here, studies have shown that task designs which are inherently more challenging push learners to use language in ways that benefit their linguistic development. Task mode, whether spoken or written, also influences language production. Task implementation concerns the further contributions of the teacher and students to the task. Here, research indicates that task preparation—for instance, guiding learners when they plan—enhances performance. Interaction with peers during tasks is an important catalyst for learning grammar and vocabulary. Repetition with minor variations, such reducing the amount of time allotted, can build fluency. These dimensions of tasks help to foster language development. And, of course, these benefits are in addition to the fact that students engage in motivating activities which are relevant to their future goals.

[pause for on-screen text]

Fully integrating tasks into language instruction is not necessarily easy. Teachers may face pressure when working within educational systems that prioritize traditional testing. They may need additional training in order to implement TBLT. And they need agency when designing and teaching task-based lessons. In spite of these challenges, TBLT can positively transform language education, in two ways. First, learning an additional language comes from using it. We can design more effective lessons and programs by using tasks. And second, we should combine TBLT with approaches that raise awareness of social issues and encourage students to consider solutions to them. Whether you are already using tasks or you’re just starting out, I hope you’ll read the Element and find it useful. Thank you for listening.