



ENGLISH TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK-BASED LEARNING: GROUNDWORK FOR A SEMINAR-WORKSHOP

RICHEN L. LINDRES

Teacher I

Caninguan National High School

richen.lindres@deped.gov.ph

ABSTRACT

This study determined the challenges and coping strategies in implementing task-based learning as groundwork for a seminar workshop at Caninguan National High School for the school year 2023 - 2024. The participants in the study were thirteen (13) purposively chosen English teachers who were implementing task-based learning. An in-depth interview guide duly validated by expert jurors was used to gather data. Thematic analyses were used to analyze and interpret the responses. The results revealed that teachers implement task-based learning as: a collaborative learners' activity, aligning authentic materials with objectives, and differentiating tasks for learning. The results also showed that the challenges in implementing task-based learning were time-consuming/time constraints, the need for assessment methods, and student engagement issues. The coping strategies employed by the teachers to overcome the challenges were prioritizing the tasks and giving Learners the freedom to choose their tasks.

Keywords: *English teachers, Task-Based Learning, Groundwork, Seminar Workshop*

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INTRODUCTION

The English language is one of two official languages in the Philippines. The nation is acknowledged worldwide as one of the largest English-speaking countries, with most of its citizens possessing at least a basic level of fluency in the language. English has been established as the primary language of instruction throughout all educational stages – from elementary to secondary and tertiary levels- and it is included as a subject within the nation's Fundamental Education Curriculum.

While the circumstances appear favorable regarding the application of English in practical scenarios, the actual situation of English within the teaching-learning environment reveals a noticeable decrease in learners' proficiency in the classroom. This decline in English proficiency can be traced from the teachers' approach to teaching and students' approach to learning. The traditional way of teaching English, including simply giving lectures and examples followed by a task assessing the students' learning, is one of the factors affecting the slump of students' English language proficiency.

Teachers usually utilize lecture-based and form-based exercises in their English instruction, which are usually decontextualized and meaningless. With this, learners could not find the importance of or reason for learning the components of language, thus leading them to disengage themselves in the teaching-learning process. This also allows the learners to be passive in the classroom. The declining curve of learners in terms of their knowledge of the English language is affected by their dependence on memorization since acquisition did not involve them in the learning process.

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As stated by Nasiba (2022), human beings learn well when they are involved in the tasks or activities they are interested in. Students do not learn by attending classes where teachers fill their minds with information while they are taking notes, but by becoming involved in the content to be learned.

Teachers utilize task-based learning, a key component of delivering quality instruction, to help learners develop language proficiency and adapt to the demands of the modern world. By tailoring learning objectives to specific tasks, discussions, and performance assessments, teachers create engaging and relevant lessons that cater to individual students' motivations, thus fostering deep learning and effective delivery.

Through task-based learning, the learners explore activities that help them develop the tasks assigned to them, either individually or in groups. Through collaborative efforts among the members of the group, they discuss, read, plan, experiment, and use authentic materials to achieve the task.

Task-based learning makes the learners develop not only language skills but also socialization with other learners through group work. It also develops self-confidence, independent thinking, a sense of responsibility, creativity, and self-fulfillment when the learners accomplish their tasks with success.

By setting authentic and relevant goals and objectives, teachers can design instructional practices that connect tasks to learners' needs and interests, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of the context by which the learners should achieve.

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The researcher, a teacher with seven years of experience, can attest that task-based learning has significantly transformed the approach to instruction. By providing students with real-world tasks that require them to use language in a meaningful way, the researcher has witnessed a notable improvement in their ability to communicate effectively.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants in the study, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analyses. The purpose of this study was to determine the challenges and coping strategies in implementing task-based learning as groundwork for a seminar-workshop at Caninguan National High School for the school year 2023 - 2024.

Research Method

The study employed a descriptive-qualitative research approach and utilized in-depth interviews to gather data. It was to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of task-based learning in English teaching at Caninguan National High School, Lambunao, Iloilo.

Data were acquired by asking open-ended questions and describing observations in words. The study collected data through a descriptive-qualitative exploration approach and in-depth interviews. It sought to gain a better understanding of the use of task-based literacy in English tutoring at Caninguan National High School in Lambunao, Iloilo. Data were gathered by asking open-ended questions and specifying compliance in words.

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Qualitative research is characterized as the study of the nature of phenomena and is particularly effective for addressing questions about why something is (or is not) seen, evaluating complicated multi-component interventions, and focusing on intervention improvement (Busetto et al., 2020).

Research Design

The study used a qualitative research approach with thematic analysis to identify emerging themes, and categorize, and classify Task-Based Learning implementations. The study employed a qualitative research design with in-depth interview guide written material. The interviewer enabled participants to freely answer the questions to acquire the necessary information.

Creswell and Poth (2017) present an in-depth survey of qualitative research approaches, highlighting the significance of context and participant viewpoints in social science. The writers discuss various qualitative methodologies, including narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies, highlighting how each approach aids in understanding complex social phenomena.

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative method that involves gathering participant responses, narrating their experiences, and merging the researcher's and participants' perspectives to form a collaborative narrative (Creswell, 2023).

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Participants of the Study

The participants in the study were a total population of thirteen (13) English teachers who implemented task-based learning in their classes and at the same time taught in Caninguan National High School, Caninguan, Lambunao, Iloilo.

Research Instrument

To gather information from the chosen participants, the researcher utilized a specially designed Interview Guide. The questions in the interview guide centered around the difficulties faced by English teachers and their coping strategies in implementing Task-based Learning. The experiences were carefully noted and documented, especially the implementation of Task-based Learning in the classes. To ensure the instrument's reliability, it was evaluated by a panel of experts, which included two English professors, the researcher's adviser, and additional panel members.

The tool featuring the guiding questions on the application of Task-based Learning for English teachers in language education was segmented into two parts. The first part contained the demographic information of the respondents, while the second part comprised the guiding questions regarding the use of Task-based Learning by English teachers.

Validity of the Research Instrument

The research tool used in the study was validated by experienced professionals in English and research to guarantee its precision and reliability. The instrument's face and content validity were comprehensively evaluated.

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To validate the study, the researcher evaluated the instrument for both face and content validity. Face validity was assessed to confirm that the questions were comprehensible and accurate, and to verify that the respondents grasped the inquiries being made.

Additionally, content validity was performed to verify that the research instrument truly captured all the relevant aspects of the topic that this study aimed to measure or achieve.

Data Gathering Procedures

In gathering data, the researcher followed the necessary procedures. An in-depth interview guide checked and validated by a set of accomplished validators in English and research, was prepared by the researcher. After the instrument was found valid, a letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted and signed by the Dean of PHINMA Graduate School, the thesis adviser, and the researcher.

Letters asking to conduct a study were submitted to the principal's office of Canning National High School. They are assured by the researcher that the ethical standards were observed, and the data gathered would be confidential.

Once permission was granted, the researcher set an appointment with each of the participants to ensure that the interview would be done at their most convenient time. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to refuse to participate in or withdraw from the study if ever they wanted to. They were assured that all the information provided would be kept confidential. The consent of each participant was

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sought, and each one was encouraged to participate by answering the interview questions as honestly as possible.

The set of questions was carefully phrased for them to understand the intent of the interview and their responses were also legibly written. The interviews ended with the assurance that their responses would be held confidential.

Data Analyses

Thematic analysis was used in the data gathered. Emergent themes were identified. They were made as comprehensive and objective views of implementing Task-based Learning in teaching English.

This technique includes familiarization, coding, theme creation, theme evaluation, and write-up. This strategy can aid the researcher in avoiding confirmation bias when producing his or her analysis.

The researcher prepared matrices for the content analysis of the narrative data for the individual case of each participant based on a structure that is predetermined by the researcher and for the summary and synthesis. The narrative data were taken from the interview and observation for each of the cases was entered in appropriate cell categories. These were presented in the summary matrix.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the study was to find out the challenges and coping strategies in the implementation of Task-based Learning by the English teachers at Canning National High School, Lambunao, Iloilo.

The participants in the study were the thirteen (13) English teachers teaching at Canning National High School who, at the time of the study were implementing Task-based Learning in their classes. They were chosen through purposive sampling.

The study used in-depth interviews to gather responses from the participants.

The instrument used was subjected to face-and-content validity and was found by the validators valid and appropriate to use.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

The teachers implemented Task-based Learning as (1) A collaborative learners' activity, (2) To align authentic materials with objectives, and (3) a differentiated task for learning.

The challenges encountered in the implementation of Task-based Learning were: (1) Time-Consuming/Time Constraints, (2) the Need for Assessment Methods, and (3) the Problem of Student Engagement.

On the other hand, the coping strategies used by the teachers were the following:(1) Prioritizing the task;(2) Learners' freedom to choose.

To enrich the strategy of English teachers in implementing Task-based Learning in their classes, a three-day training workshop on Task-based Learning was proposed.

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The implementation of Task-based Learning (TBL) can be challenging due to its emphasis on authentic communication and real-life tasks, which may require significant changes in traditional teaching practices and English language curriculum.

One of the major challenges is creating tasks that are relevant, engaging, and measurable, which can be time-consuming and require a deep understanding of learners' needs and levels.

Task-based Learning requires teachers to adopt a more facilitative role, encouraging learners to take ownership of their learning and to make decisions about their tasks and activities, which can be difficult for some teachers to adjust to.

Teachers may employ strategies such as collaboratively planning with colleagues, using technology to facilitate task-based interactions, and providing scaffolding and feedback to support learners' development.

CONCLUSION

Considering the findings and insights that have emerged in this study, the following recommendations are advanced:

Teachers should be provided with ongoing professional development opportunities, including seminar training workshops, to enhance their knowledge and skills in implementing Task-based Learning (TBL) and using authentic materials.

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The English curriculum should be reviewed and revised to ensure that it is aligned with the needs and abilities of all learners to provide a more suitable and effective learning environment.

Instructional reading materials, resources, and other necessary tools should always be available to teachers to support their implementation of TBL.

Implement remediation programs and differentiated tasks should be undertaken to cater to learners' needs, abilities, and interests, thereby promoting learner autonomy and language proficiency.

Teachers should be encouraged to work collaboratively with one another by sharing experiences and ideas to ensure optimum results and promote a sense of community among learners.

The proposed seminar workshop may be implemented not only at Caninguan National High School but also throughout the entire district of Lambunao West Cluster I, including both secondary and elementary schools.

Parents should be encouraged to work hand in hand with teachers to help struggling learners practice reading, thus promoting a collaborative approach to learning.

There should be regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of TBL implementation, through feedback from teachers and students to inform future improvements and adjustments.

Future researchers may conduct similar or related studies using other variables and settings and focus on the effectiveness and impact of TBL in other subject areas.

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