

Task-Teaching ESOL Students Through Language Functions

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"Task-based teaching provides learners with opportunities for learner-to-learner interactions that encourage authentic use of language and meaningful communication. The goal of a task is to "exchange meaning rather than to learn the second language" (Ellis, 1999, p. 193)

From ESL GLOSSARY:

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/functionalsyllabus.htm>

Functional Syllabus: Language programs with functions being the primary organizing feature. The course content is based on functions not grammatical structures. A typical unit might be Giving Advice. The content of the unit would include: I think you should . . . Why don't you . . . If I were you, I would . . . You'd better . . .

Task-Based Learning: Teaching/learning a language by using language to accomplish open-ended tasks. Learners are given a problem or objective to accomplish, but are left with some freedom in approaching this problem or objective.

DEFINITIONS FOR THIS PRESENTATION:

Language Function: A specific reason to use language to meet a specific need or desire

Ex: Request, State preferences, Complain, Invite etc.

Task: (Process Task) The accomplishing an undertaking that requires a number of coordinated linguistic functions. **Ex:** Going shopping, Going to the doctor, Moving into a new home, Traveling somewhere on vacation, Contacting emergency services etc.

SAMPLE LIST OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS:

(note: many can be ASK FOR... as well as STATE or GIVE etc...)

identify
describe
(people, places, things, experiences)
ask for information
give information
clarify
apologize
greet
make introductions
correct information
request
attract attention
agree
disagree
invite
accept
refuse

imagine
state intentions
discuss probability
offer to do something
ask for permission
give reasons
give opinions
instruct how to do something
check understanding
talk about similarities
talk about differences
state preferences
make suggestions
give advice
express enthusiasm
express disappointment
express happiness

express sadness
express + other moods
encourage
persuade
complain
give and accept or refuse
compliments
warn
others

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Example:

TASK: GOING TO A RESTAURANT WITH A FRIEND

Function – Invite friend
Function – Request a reservation
Function – State preferences in reservation
Function – Ask for directions
Function – Greet friend ->(arrive) Greet Restaurant staff
Function - Order food
Function – State preferences when ordering
Function – Compliment / complain / thank
Function – Request bill (leave)
Function – Say goodbye/goodnight to friend (dismiss)

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TASK: GOING TO THE DOCTOR FOR A HEALTH PROBLEM.

FUNCTIONS?:

1 Call the doctor's office and REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT:

Functional Language

May I have an appointment for ___? Can I schedule an appointment about ___?
Can you give me an appointment to see a doctor? Can I set-up an appointment for ___?
Can you help me with an appointment? (etc.)

2 GIVE PERSONAL INFORMATION to the receptionist by phone

Functional Language

My name is ___ I live at ___ My address is ___ My ___ number is ___ My nationality is ___
I am ___ years old. I have ___ My problem is ___ I am available at ___ I work at ___ (etc.)

3

Functional Language

4

Functional Language

5

Functional Language

6

Functional Language

7

As 'you' leave, REQUEST A FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT

Functional Language

May I have another appointment? Can I schedule another appointment? I'd like to schedule a follow-up appointment. When can I see the doctor again? Do I need another appointment? When should I come back here?

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TASK: APPLYING FOR A JOB

FUNCTIONS?:

1

Functional Language

2

Functional Language

3

Functional Language

4

Functional Language

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Functional Language

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