

Revisiting the TBLT versus P-P-P Debate: Voices from Hong Kong

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Whilst there is a body of research evidence on task-based language teaching (TBLT) with adults, less is known about its suitability for implementation in secondary schools, particularly in Asian contexts. This study uses interview data from a purposive sample of 12 secondary school teachers and 10 teacher educators based in the Hong Kong context, a setting in which task-based approaches have been adopted since the 1990s. The focus of the paper is to explore informants' perceptions of the pros and cons of TBLT as opposed to long-standing presentation-practice-production (P-P-P) approaches and discuss issues arising. Four main sub-themes are addressed: the extent of reported implementation of TBLT and/or P-P-P in Hong Kong secondary schools; the reasons for preferences for task-based teaching or P-P-P; how well teachers are perceived to understand TBLT and P-P-P; and calls for further evidence on the effectiveness of TBLT for schooling. Following from this, the paper discusses implications for teacher education and suggests some avenues for further research.

Introduction

Task-based approaches continue to stimulate considerable research interest, yet their attractiveness to school teachers is still open to question (Carless, 2007). While Van den Branden (2006a) reports generally successful examples of task-based teaching of Dutch as a second language in schools in Flanders, the feasibility of task-based language teaching (TBLT) for schooling in Asian and other international settings has not yet been convincingly demonstrated. This issue is particularly worth further exploration in that TBLT is increasingly widely promoted within the region (Nunan, 2003), yet many Asian school teachers appear