KEY CONCEPTS in TESOL DIDACTICS

Task-Based Learning

o   A needs-based approach to content selection,

o   An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language,

o   The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation,

o   The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself (strategies),

o   An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning,

o   The linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

'[A] workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically (give primary attention to meaning, make use of their own linguistic resources) in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed.'
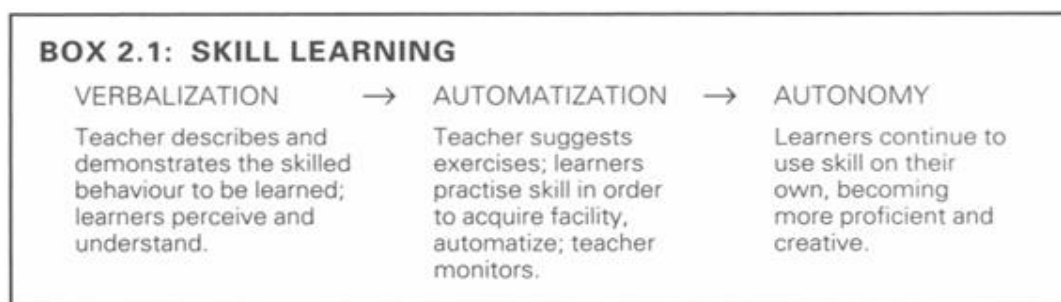
SMART lesson objectives

The learning goals and/or lesson objectives you communicate should be SMART: **Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Realistic - Timely**. They should be manageable and attainable: 'by the end of this lesson (series), you will be able to…' Ideally you (at least) refer back to them at the end of the lesson (series) so that students can see for themselves what they have accomplished so far.

Building blocks

Engage – Study – Activate: 3 elements that foster effective learning (cf Harmer 1999: 25-26)
*   **Engage** = to 'arouse students' interest, involving their emotions' to get them 'amused, moved, stimulated or challenged.'
e.g.   game, music, discussion, picture, story, anecdote
*   **Study** = to 'focus in on language (or information) and how it is constructed.' e.g. deductive approach (presenting and explaining rules), inductive approach (discovering rules), self-tuition
*   **Activate** = to 'get students using language as freely and "communicatively" as they can' by means of real-life (or at least realistic) exercises and activities
e.g.   role-play, debate, writing, designing

Teaching communicative skills

BOX 2.1: SKILL LEARNING

VERBALIZATION	→	AUTOMATIZATION	→	AUTONOMY
Teacher describes and demonstrates the skilled behaviour to be learned; learners perceive and understand.		Teacher suggests exercises; learners practise skill in order to acquire facility, automatize; teacher monitors.		Learners continue to use skill on their own, becoming more proficient and creative.

(Ur 1996: 20)

Pre – while – post

Before teaching the skill, **engage, familiarize and prepare** your students for what is to come. Also, give them a **goal**, a motivation to do what you want them to do.

While students are engaged with a particular skill, focus on **communication strategies** students need to complete exercises, in different 'rounds'. Ask students to explain **how** they came up with their answers. Repetition is key.

After skills practice, students **reflect** on or **summarise** what they have been doing, provide/receive **feedback** or do **follow-up** activities.

Teaching functional skills

- Frequency, use, motivation, relevance, memorable context
- Practice, learn, store, use and recycle
- Variation
- Accuracy – fluency
- Be clear and concise, provide visual support

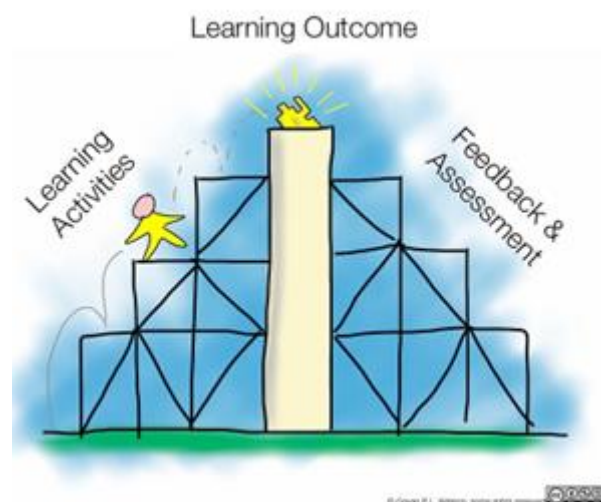## Participation and motivation

Clear learning goals – choice of materials / teaching methods – personalization – movement

Safe learning environment – collaboration – 'a challenge is fun'- positivity – meaningful feedback on progress (growth mindset)

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a didactic concept that builds on a number of insights regarding students' learning processes: (1) interaction adds value to the learning process, (2) new learning content is better understood and sticks better if it links up with previously existing knowledge, (3) language supports thinking and learning, (4) high expectations of students pay off, and (5) students need a variety of (language) learning strategies. (Hayer & Meestringa, 2015: 45-46)

• stepwise instructions • modelling strategies • making strategies explicit • feedback • feedforward • using rubrics for evaluation • allowing the use of helpful tools during skills practice	• designing and following clear learning trajectories • activating prior knowledge • giving learners time to talk and process their learning • pre-teaching vocabulary • using peer feedback • cooperative learning	• offering visual input • giving plenty of examples • explaining something in different ways • formative evaluation • revision and repetition • offering linguistic support • …

Visual – contextual – textual – emotional – social – practical scaffolding