

ATC Language & Travel
Certificate in English Language Teaching
Task-based Learning: Handout 5

Guidelines for teachers during the Planning stage of a task-based lesson

Although the teacher's main role during the planning stage is as a Language Advisor, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration:

- Go round quickly at the beginning to check all students know what they are supposed to be doing, and why.
- Unless one group is doing nothing, it is a good general rule to wait until you are asked before you offer help. Then you know you are responding to the learners' needs rather than your own interpretation of them. It is always worth bearing in mind that learners will learn best if they work things out for themselves, rather than simply being told. The planning stage is a good opportunity to encourage learner independence
 - Comment on good points and creative use of language
 - If you are asked for advice, suggest positive ways learners could improve their work at a general level.
 - If learners ask to be corrected, point out errors selectively – most important are those that obscure the meaning... Other errors you may want to point out are obvious ones that you feel other students may notice at the report stage
 - For other errors of form, try to get the students to correct themselves
 - Make sure learners know how to use dictionaries for encoding i.e. not just to check spellings and find words and meanings, but to look closely at the examples of how to use the new word, notice the verbs or nouns it collocates with and the grammar it goes with
 - Encourage students to help each other and to 'edit' drafts of each other's work or to listen to each other rehearsing
 - Make sure they know who is to be the spokesperson or final draft writer for the group well before the end of planning time
 - Remind them occasionally how much time they have left. If, at your original time limit, most students are still working well and fruitfully, you could consider postponing the report stage until the beginning of the next lesson
 - Stop the planning stage once most pairs or groups have more or less finished, then get students ready to give their presentations. This is the report stage.