# Unit 3: Communicative Language Teaching

By the end of this unit, you will have:

- A comprehensive understanding of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its core principles, and its impact on language learning.
- The ability to analyse and compare two key sub-methods within CLT, identifying their strengths and applications in different teaching contexts.
- Skills to create an engaging classroom activity that fosters interaction and communicative competence among learners.
- A practical framework for integrating teaching theories and methods into your own teaching practice, enhancing both language learning and content understanding.
- Practical experience in designing a CLT-based lesson plan that incorporates meaningful communication and real-world language use.

## Learn
### Task 1

You are now familiar with TJ Taylor's timeline. Below is a closer look at communicative language teaching, which is our key focus in this unit.
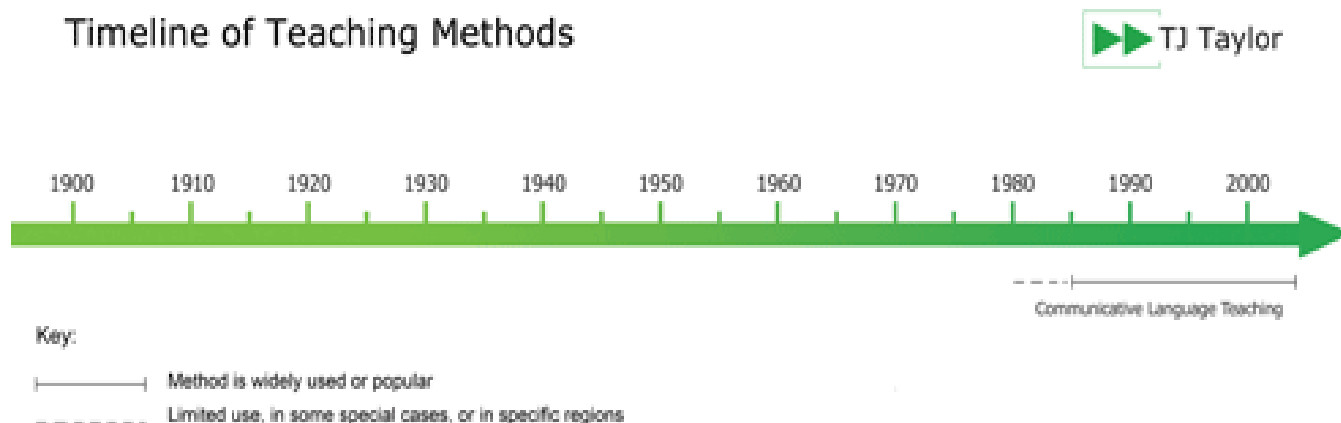


Carefully read the information about CLT: https://blog.tjtaylor.net/method-communicative/

Do not forget that the key misconception of CLT is that learning a second language involves just "conversation".

Also, watch the following video by Professor Richards (do not forget to take notes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYdUB_e8_Zc

**Task 2**

A. Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) are approaches that fall under the broader umbrella of CLT. Let's take a look at one more comparative table.

| Aspect | Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) | Content-Based Instruction (CBI) |
|---|---|---|
| **Focus** | Completion of meaningful, real-world tasks | Learning language through engaging with subject content |
| **Primary Goal** | Developing language skills by achieving task outcomes | Acquiring language while understanding specific content |
| **Role of Language** | Language is a tool to accomplish tasks | Language is a medium to explore and understand content |
| **Interaction Type** | Collaborative, task-oriented communication | Content-driven interaction, often with contextualised input |
| **Assessment** | Based on task performance and communication effectiveness | Based on content comprehension and language development |
| **Strengths** | - Promotes real-world language use <br> - Encourages collaboration and problem-solving | - Integrates language with academic or professional skills providing meaningful context for language learning |
| **Challenges** | - Requires carefully designed tasks <br> - May overlook explicit grammar teaching | - Requires subject matter expertise by teachers <br> - Language practice might take a backseat to content understanding |
| **Learner-Centeredness** | High: Learners are active participants in completing tasks | High: Learners engage deeply with meaningful content |
| **Teacher's Role** | Facilitator of task completion and interaction | Content expert and language facilitator |
| **Typical Classroom Context** | Real-life simulations, project-based learning | CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), EAP (English for Academic Purposes) |

B. Now, that you know the core differences and similarities, let's watch the videos:

TBLT https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2yrhgCZa3I

CBI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PvZwEh793I

After watching these videos, can you add any points to the table above?

## Apply

### Activity 1

Do not read below before you come up with the answer to the following:

**Question**: Which approach (TBLT or CBI) would you use to teach a lesson on the topic of "Healthy Eating," and why?

**Answer**: It depends on what the focus is.

**CBI** teaches language through subject content, such as "Healthy Eating." Students learn nutrition-related vocabulary, food choices, and health concepts while exploring the topic. This approach helps them acquire both language skills and a deeper understanding of healthy eating, including the benefits of a balanced diet and food groups.

**TBLT** can be used with "Healthy Eating" by having students plan a week's meals, ensuring a balanced diet. They discuss and choose foods, use relevant vocabulary, and present their plan and shopping list to the class, explaining the health benefits of their choices.

### Activity 2- Create an activity

Choose one of the methods (TBLT or CBI) and adapt it to a lesson on the topic of "Healthy Eating". Come up with one simple classroom activity based on your adaptation (e.g., a short exercise or teaching strategy). For clarity, check the example below.

Take notes considering the following:

**Technology**: Could you use apps, videos, or online tools?

_____
_____
_____
_____

**Student-Centered Activities**: How can students actively participate?

_____
_____
_____
_____

**Classroom Diversity**: How would the method work with learners' various learning styles?

_____
_____
_____
_____

**Example:** Activity: Planning a Healthy Meal using TBLT

**Technology**: Use Google Docs or Padlet for collaborative meal planning. Show videos on healthy eating from YouTube or use MyFitnessPal to explore nutrition.

**Student-Centred Activities**: Students work in groups to research, discuss, and create a meal plan, using language to explain food choices and justify their selections.

**Classroom Diversity:** Visual learners can engage with videos and visuals. Auditory learners benefit from group discussions. Kinesthetic learners can interact with apps or create physical posters. This allows all learners to actively participate.

## Learn
### Task 3
**Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP)** is the model that is very commonly used to develop lesson plans following the CLT method. Watch the video to learn more about it:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF19Rp2GDgM
1P: The teacher presents a language item in context (e.g., through a text, dialogue, or situation).

2P: Students then engage in controlled practice, such as repetition or gap-filling exercises, to reinforce correct usage.

3P: Finally, in the production stage, students complete a communication task (e.g., role play), using the target language and any other relevant language they've learned.

To see how PPP can be applied in practice, watch the following demo lessons:
1) A lesson demo on "Teaching grammar using the PPP (presentation-production-practice) model" by Diane Dowejko (Wits Language School, Johannesburg): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Re-FWcA03I&t=1306s
2) A lesson taught from the lexical set 'jobs'. These items are practised in three subsequent stages. The video does not have a full extent of the practice activities; just enough to give the idea: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbRxBPY1vsc

## Apply

### Activity 3- A Schematic Lesson Plan

Recall the **TBLT** or **CBI** task you designed earlier (Activity 2) on the topic of "Healthy Eating". Adapt Your Task Using the PPP Structure:

**Presentation**

How can you introduce the target language (related to healthy eating) in your task? Consider presenting key vocabulary or phrases (e.g., food groups, balanced diet, nutrition) using a context such as a video, text, or dialogue that connects to your task.

**Practice**

What controlled practice activities can help students internalise the language before they perform the task? Think of activities that focus on the use of the vocabulary and structures necessary for the task.

**Production**

In the production stage, students should now be ready to use the language more freely in a communicative task. How can they apply the language they've practised in a real-world context? Link this stage to the task you created earlier (meal planning, role-playing, or a similar activity).

## Suggested Reading:

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1(1),* 1–47. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/I.1.1

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching.* Oxford University Press.

Hiep, P. H. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Unity within diversity. *ELT Journal, 61*, 193–201.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod.* Routledge.

Lam, W., & Wong, J. (2000). The effects of strategy training on developing discussion skills in an ESL classroom. *ELT Journal, 54*, 245–255.

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching: An introduction.* Cambridge University Press.

Pica, T. (2008). Task-based instruction. In N. Van Deusen-Scholl & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (2nd ed.), *Volume 4: Second and Foreign Language Education* (pp. 71–82). New York, NY: Springer.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today.* Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from https://www.professorjackrichards.com/wp-content/uploads/Richards-Communicative-Language.pdf

**Online lectures on CLT:**

Communicative Language Teaching: Jeremy Harmer and Scott Thornbury
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoUx036IN9Q

Communicative Language Teaching: 40 Years On: A Public Presentation by Scott Thornbury
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qf4lfEbxF4s