

# You Want Me to Do *What?*

Lessons for bridging the gap into university academics



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# What does your bridge look like?



# Task-based language learning offers an opportunity to strengthen the bridge towards university readiness and success.

*Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching*

Mike Long, University of Maryland, 2014



TBLT begins with a “task-based needs analysis to identify the target tasks for a particular group of learners” and after some modifications, the tasks are “**used as the content of a *task syllabus*, which consists of a series of progressively more complex *pedagogic tasks*.**”

# A discipline-specific approach to listening and speaking units of learning fosters critical thinking by focusing on language tasks + authentic experience.

2 major obstacles we continually face:

- Students struggle to push their language and thinking beyond *who, what, where*
- And the bridge isn't often being crossed...

QUESTIONS FOR THE REVISED BLOOM'S TAXONOMY  
 (from Quick Flip Questions for the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy  
 EDUPRESS EP 729 – [www.edupressinc.com](http://www.edupressinc.com))



LEVEL 1 - REMEMBERING		LEVEL 2 - UNDERSTANDING		LEVEL 3 - APPLYING	
Exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers		Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.		Solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way	
Key Words	Questions	Key Words	Questions	Key Words	Questions
choose define find how label list match name omit recall relate select show spell tell what when where which	What is ...? Where is ...? How did ___ happen? Why did ...? When did ...? How would you show ...? Who were the main ...? Which one ...? How is ...? When did ___ happen? How would you explain ...? How would you describe ...? Can you recall ...? Can you select ...? Can you list the three ...? Who was ...?	classify compare contrast demonstrate explain extend illustrate infer interpret outline relate rephrase show summarize translate	How would you classify the type of ...? How would you compare ...? contrast ...? Will you state or interpret in your own words ...? How would you rephrase the meaning ...? What facts or ideas show ...? What is the main idea of ...? Which statements support ...? Can you explain what is happening ...? what is meant ...? What can you say about ...? Which is the best answer ...? How would you summarize ...?	apply build choose construct develop experiment with identify interview make use of model organize plan select solve utilize	How would you use ...? What examples can you find to ...? How would you solve ___ using what you've learned ...? How would you organize ___ to show ...? How would you show your understanding of ...? What approach would you use to ...? How would you apply what you learned to develop ...? What other way would you plan to ...? What would result if ...? Can you make use of the facts to ...? What elements would you choose to change ...? What facts would you select to show ...? What questions would you ask in an interview with ...?

**Situating language tasks in discipline-specific authentic learning materials, coupled with critical-thinking practice, helps students to understand how language is used in a discipline's research, academic lectures, field projects, etc.**

L4: Archaeology,  
History (Egypt), ....

L5: **Neuroscience**,  
Geology, Globalization  
and the Environment

L6: **Sociology, Current  
Events**, Political Science,  
Economics



**Tasks identified:** language for definitions; essential (guiding) question(s) that frame research, lectures, etc.; language signaling conclusions drawn; significance statements / summary and analysis

**Tasks identified:** Language needed to become an expert puzzle detective = repetitive language & synonym strings; tangential language; figurative language; transitional phrases for divergent perspectives; guiding questions

**L5 / Integrating practice and authentic experiences builds a stronger bridge toward university readiness.**



***The Mysterious Workings of the Adolescent Brain***

by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, Neuroscientist

***Origins of Pleasure*** (How beliefs affect pleasure)

by Paul Bloom, Neuroscientist



**Intro to Brain and Behavior** (2000-level course at UNCC)  
with Dr. Jeanette Bennett, Psychology Lecture: “Homunculus Man”  
(sensory imprint of body on brain / how beliefs affect physical pain)

Language tasks

- Discipline-specific vocabulary** (signal language surrounding definitions)
- Listening for essential questions** (signal language surrounding essential questions)
- Listening for significance statements, conclusions being drawn**  
(signal language for significance / conclusions drawn)

**L5 / The learning is carefully scaffolded to lower apprehension of the new discipline while strengthening language / knowledge / skill.**

**Vocabulary defined in the lecture / signal language used by speaker:**

Adolescence (...is defined as)

Cognitive functions (...involve things like decision making, planning, etc.)

Synapses (The connections between cells in the gray matter of the brain, called...)

Social brain (...that is, the network used to understand other people)

**Bloom's Level 1 & 2 Questions are used to gain basic understanding of source:**

During adolescence, what brain region changes dramatically?

What cognitive functions are controlled by this part of the brain? (Bloom's Level 1)

**Build toward Bloom's higher levels of understanding, analysis, discussion and presentation:**

[Drawing conclusions / significance \(discussion post\)](#)

[Attending and responding to a university lecture](#)

[Presenting a summary and analysis of a brain science lecture](#)

**L5** / Offering some mental relief each week increases the desire to engage more with the discipline.

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*** by Mark Haddon

**(audiobook with chapter readings)**

A story about an adolescent with a brain disorder, namely Asperger's Syndrome

Focus on: independent group discussions  
working with Bloom's Taxonomy

5 to 6 students / group

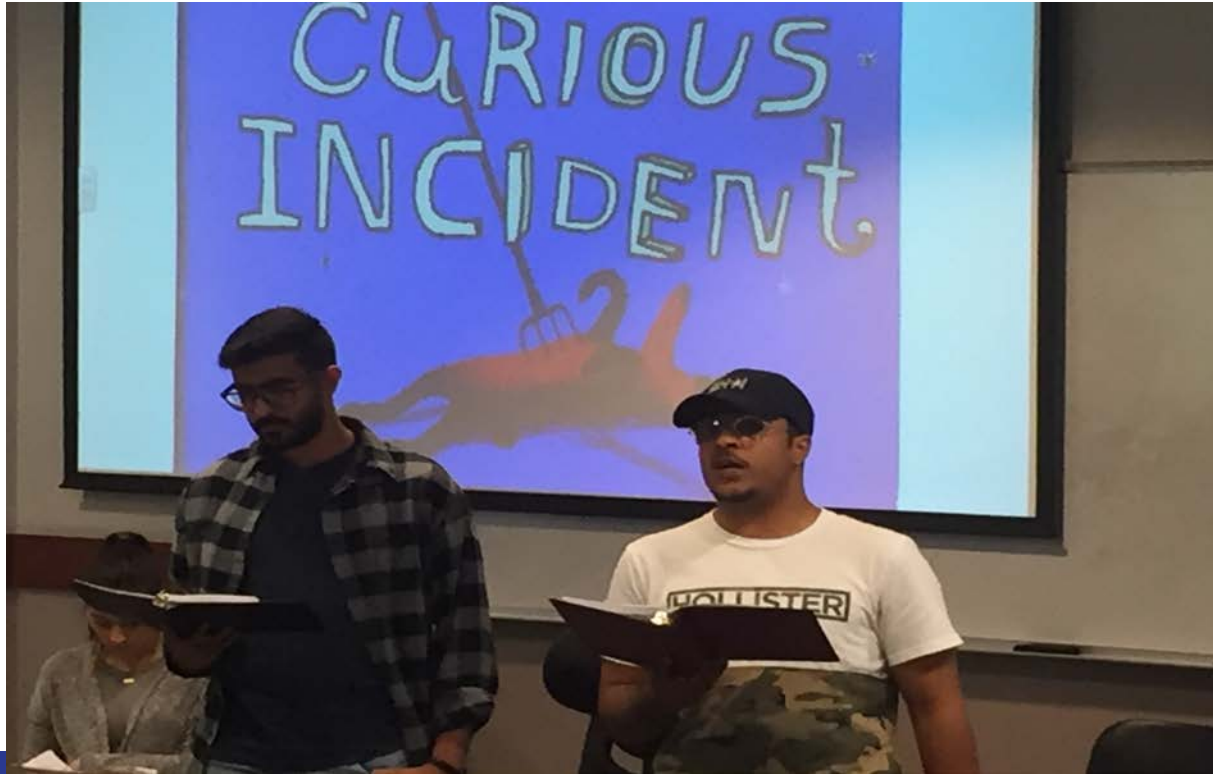
Each member has a weekly job that rotates

Each group discusses about 5 chapters / week





The neuroscience unit culminated with the students performing a readers' theater performance of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*




# L5 / Student responses from the unit of study

This unit showed me how much I miss learning and how ready I am to get back into the sciences and mathematics.     -*Abdulla*

I love the learning of the brain. I can be a brain scientist!     -*Marianna*

At first I did not know why I learn brain science. But I now am know that I can understand a hard major.     -*Abdulwahab*



# L5 / Student responses from the university lecture

Student 1 – Stephanie

Student 2 – Abdulrahman

Student 3 – Won Young

Student 4 - Abdulwahab



## L5 / Student responses from the university lecture

1 - What I understood from her class about Homunculus Man is that sensation and movement of different parts of the body are controlled by medial cortex of the brain.

*-Reem*

2 - When she described her definitions she was saying the definition before the word and sometimes she was saying her definition after the word. She used her language that helps you understand what she tries to show a conclusion is drawn (So, what this means is that..., this is important because)

*-Nana*

3 - It was the first time to be in that big class at UNCC and I learned many things about the brain with her class and I prefer to have classes in the UNCC with American student. This class was helpful to understand more about the brain and how the brain take the informations from our bodies...

*-Mohammed*

# The CURIOUS INCIDENT



**L6 / University workshops & small group trips foster student autonomy & ease students into campus integration.**

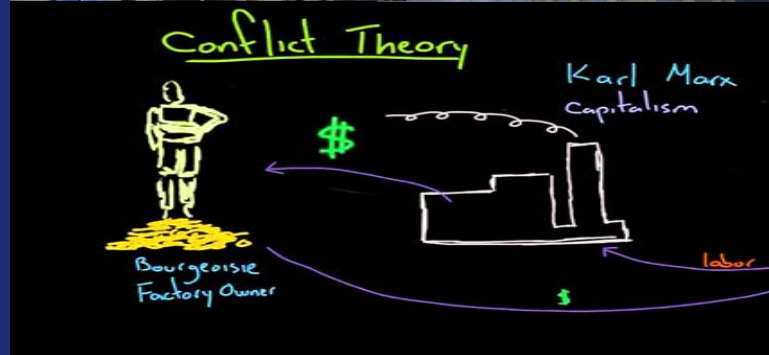
*“and it gives new insight into  
Americans’ thinking...”  
(Japanese student)*



<http://ucae.uncc.edu/>  
[www.venture.uncc.edu](http://www.venture.uncc.edu)



# L6 / Analyzing current events through the lens of different sociological theories stretches students' critical thinking and analytical discussion skills about more abstract concepts.



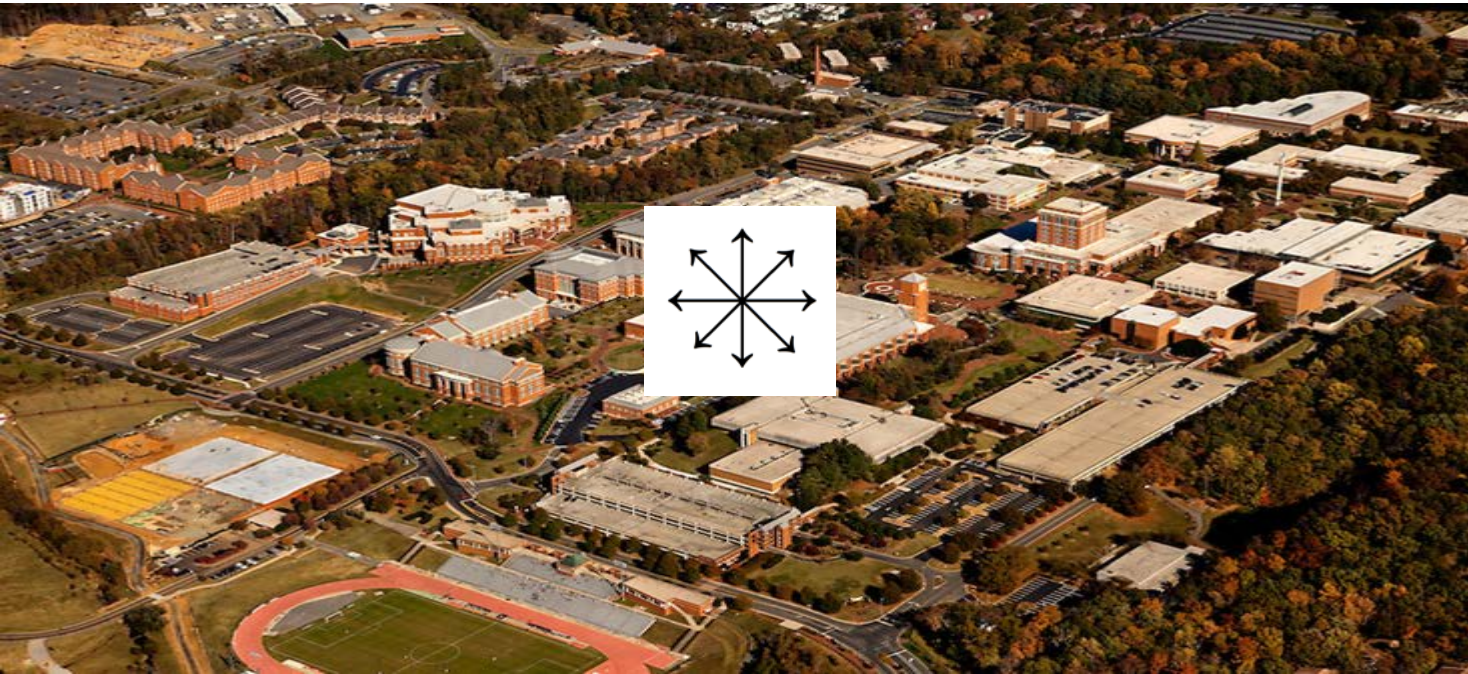
## Discipline-Specific Theories:

- ✓ Social Conflict Theory
- ✓ Symbolic Interactionism
- ✓ Functionalism

## Videos:

[www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/society-and-culture](http://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/society-and-culture)

# L6 / Independent course observation projects allow students to make connections with professors and observe authentic courses in a variety of academic disciplines.



- ★ Differentiated for undergrad & graduate students
- ★ Practice note taking in real time!
- ★ Report findings & discuss Qs w/ Americans
- ★ Compile data!



# L6 / Links

## *Instructions:*

→ Project [criteria](#) & presentation [rubric](#)

## *Student Work:*

→ Example of [student presentation](#) and [notes](#)

## *Compile Data (Tools / Resources)*

→ LS601 class observations [spreadsheet](#)

→ Collection of authentic syllabi



# L6 / End-of-semester resource projects can be a catalyst for employing the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (analyze, evaluate, create).

Students create a final, original product to help inform and/or prepare international students for university coursework in the U.S.

Examples:

→ [Best Practices Manual](#)

→ Video & Resource Youtube Channel & Playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgz9vjUP8JDT3ieWDaO8ByQ>

→ Vocabulary Resource Guide (compilation across majors)



# L6 / Student feedback

Thank You



Inbox x



[Redacted], Zaynab

10:57 PM (16 hours ago) ★



to Josiah, Sarah, Debra ▾

Hellooooo

This is Zaynab [Redacted] your student, I hope that you still remember me =)

I just want to tell you that I finished my first semester at the University of Alabama at Birmingham with straight A's. I got a 4 out of 4 GPA, thanks to you. At the beginning of this semester, I was afraid that I won't be able to do well at the university. But as the days passed by, I noticed that using the strategies that I've learned at ELTI would be so helpful.

Sarah: notes, notes, and notes. Thank you for all the taking notes practices because honestly without them, I couldn't be able to pass my History class.

***One last thing I will say, which is that you have added something to me (the love to learn) that I have always wanted to add. Thank you.***

**How can you make your bridge sturdier?**



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