Critical Language Pedagogy and Task-Based Language Teaching: Reciprocal Relationship and Mutual Benefit

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Abstract: Curriculum development and empirical research in the field of second language acquisition could benefit the field of critical language pedagogy (CLP) and its practitioners. This article reviews central concepts in the organization of curriculum in CLP and compares them with another major curricular initiative in second language teaching, namely task-based or task-supported approaches, with particular emphasis on task-based language teaching. Content itself (as in activities or materials) and the role of metacognitive instruction are considered. A real-world example of a task-based or task-supported short-term program is reviewed as exemplifying some areas of contact or benefit.

Keywords: task-based; critical pedagogy; needs analysis; themes; tasks

1. Introduction
1.1. Background and Questions

What connections can be made between critical language pedagogy (CLP) and task-based language teaching (TBLT)—and why ask this question? In this paper we pose this question (consistent with the theme of this Special Issue) mostly from the CLP side [1], with the thought that the development of CLP (as an important but minority perspective in L2 pedagogy) would benefit from considering the extent to which it interacts with, draws on, benefits from, takes for granted, or in some cases dismisses this important mainstream perspective on L2 teaching, curriculum, learning, and use. TBLT, a development of communicative language teaching (CLT), is one of the most well-established approaches to L2 pedagogy and thus is conceptually important. Proponents of CLP may wish to be clear concerning their pedagogical and curricular positions and practices with respect to established language teaching perspectives if they are seeking to explain their work or attract those who might use it. In a classic initial manifestation of critical language pedagogy, Wallerstein [2] referred mostly positively to existing L2 pedagogical techniques that were available at the time, seeing them as useful resources that CLP teachers and their students could draw from. (However, she spent a chapter in her 1983 book denouncing the “situational method”.) Early CLP did not hesitate to take advantage of existing L2 pedagogical positions and techniques (as well as occasionally critiquing them). The present paper continues this stance.

The range of techniques, methods, and approaches, etc., that could be examined or referred to by CLP was originally quite broad, indeed, eclectic. As this is relevant background, let us mention it now before moving forward. Chapter 3 of Wallerstein’s early work [2] is entitled “Teaching Techniques”. It prioritizes “group techniques, such as dialogues, pair work, and conversation circles” (p. 27) and the use of the more explicitly CLP-related “codes” (in short, physical representations of an issue). It briefly describes a “grammar lesson” (p. 33); it also considers the acting out of “written dialogues” and “freer...
role-plays” (p. 28). Even the special use of puppets and flannel-boards is explained as useful when students need to distance themselves from emotionally-sensitive topics that should still be brought up. In the context of a detailed account of CLP’s specialized use of dialogue and conversation circles, reference is made to “brief structural drills” (p. 32). Wallerstein commented that “grammar must be taught systematically” (p. 33) but presented a teacher’s effort to draw attention to syntactic forms as following on after or arising from a “problem-posing discussion”. “Reading comprehension skills” are treated. It was suggested (p. 33) that “writing exercises” be developed from dialogue tasks “or from the suggested grammar practice”. Finally, “active techniques” are advocated: “simple methods which work particularly well with beginners—flashcards, total physical response [3], live action English [4], jazz chants [5], or singing songs” (p. 34).

The range of techniques, methods, and approaches, etc., that could be examined or referred to by CLP is wider now (and includes sets of principles, in an era of post-method pedagogy, e.g., [6]). TBLT has come to present itself as, in particular, an evidence-based approach to L2 teaching, one that fully takes into account second language acquisition (SLA) theory and research as a central scientific base for second language teaching practices, and thus SLA (particularly as used by TBLT) is centrally important to be considered in such a discussion. Empirical and synthetic research has provided robust evidence for the efficacy of TBLT for facilitating L2 learning outcomes and performance (e.g., [7]); thus, TBLT should be considered (critically) as a framework supporting and providing input to CLP.

If generally-validated aspects of instructed second language learning exist, CLP should consider, evaluate, and draw from them, unless there is a reason why CLP should be considered to be thought of as inherently separate or conceptually distinct. While CLP has grown as a field, it has done so without specifying any single clearly defined methodology to support learners’ L2 development, though it places considerable conceptual emphasis on codes, dialogue, and discussion. It is only recently that CLP writings and case studies have focused on the impact of instruction in terms of skills or performance-based effects (see Parba, this issue; Cannizzo, this issue). The lack of follow-up to, for example, Wallerstein’s [2] positive comments about the need to teach grammar in a CLP context might lead some to think of CLP as an exclusively “strong” communicative approach [8] that dogmatically avoids focusing on forms, even though in actuality this is not the case. Rather, CLP seeks to deepen L2 learners’ understanding of social action, support learners’ identity development in terms of critical consciousness, and considers the content of instruction primarily with regard to particular issues, topics, and themes, and its studies have been, as a result, not particularly interested in how instruction might support L2 learners’ general improvement in, say, vocabulary or grammar. Its early advocates clearly assumed that this was a natural part of CLP courses and classes. Auerbach and Wallerstein’s [9] textbook has brief, subsidiary grammar exercises in most units, and it lists structures focused on in its Appendix A. See Parba, 2021, following Freire [10]) on specific vocabulary needed for CLP.) It could be the case that because TBLT ideas have implications in the levels of materials design, classroom practice, or overall aims—different from those often emphasized by CLP—they can be integrated with CLP to the benefit of CLP. Conversely, it may also be the case that taking TBLT as an established body of theory and practice, practitioners who see themselves as TBLT specialists could take some input from CLP, particularly with regard to overall goals or values of programs perhaps, or with regard also to the extension of TBLT’s needs analyses practices. Put slightly differently, intersections or lacunae can prompt development.

At the same time, it could be argued that mainstream perspectives in L2 teaching, such as TBLT (drawing, as it does, on mainstream conceptions of L2 learning), depend on conceptions of the language learning person, that is, on how the learner is theorized or conceptualized; such conceptions are logically inconsistent with those of CLP, since (historically at least) those of TBLT are the same as those of general cognitive learning theory. In other words, they do not orient to the learner as a person located in society with race,
class, and gender being relevant to learning; in this case, perhaps there may be some points at which CLP will not pursue the relationship.

1.2. Structure of the Paper

We first discuss the main construction elements of syllabuses in CLP and TBLT. These are themes and tasks, respectively. The question here is, can CLP benefit from the use of tasks? The answer is “yes” because tasks in TBLT reflect insights from SLA that should be drawn upon, not ignored. (A related question that is not space and time to take up is whether TBLT should use “theme” as a way to group tasks.) We then consider the connection between needs analysis and syllabus design. CLP is conceptually committed to critical needs analysis. We argue that there is no reason why TBLT cannot take this up as well. Next, we consider whether TBLT’s use of SLA is helpful to CLP. Drawing on recent developments in instructed SLA, such as the role of metacognitive instruction for supporting learners’ use of interactional feedback [11], we discuss how a task-based framework that goes beyond the original conception of the learner in early SLA may be conducive to the active learner conceptualized in CLP. Finally, we consider two implementations of TBLT ideas in practice, where critical conceptions of the learner and of their sociopolitical contexts, as understood through critical social theory ideas, can positively affect the structure and delivery of these courses; this illustrates TBLT taking up broadly critical understandings, at a global level. Our conclusion (to disclose no surprise) summarizes that more work in this area is needed to enhance the potential benefits of a synergistic relationship between CLP and TBLT.

2. Units of Analysis—Themes and/or Tasks as the Base for Courses in TBLT and CLP

2.1. Units of Analysis and Tasks

The term “unit of analysis” can be applied to the elements that make up an entity. We can apply it, for example, to second language classrooms and syllabus. The most general term, or unit of analysis, applied to what is done in classrooms is “activity”. For some applied linguists (e.g., [12], summarized in [13]), this is a maximally-inclusive term; for many second language teachers, it also is one which they use more or less interchangeably with “task”. Obviously a range of other terms are in use: topics, situations, grammatical structures, and vocabulary being well known examples. CLP proponents Auerbach and Wallerstein [9,14] referred to “competencies” as their foci and as construction units of their CLP course of study, but also, a major term in the CLP repertoire is “theme”.

Defining an L2 unit of analysis is of course important if we are using it to organize our research (or practice, for that matter). Defining “task” has been the focus of many publications (following [15]). Over time, specialists have arrived at the view that a task (1) is communicative and primarily focused on meaning, (2) is goal-directed, (3) requires learners to draw on their own linguistic resources, and (4) is representative of a real-world activity or task (e.g., [16–18]). For the present paper it is important to consider what “units of analysis” CLP proponents identify as components of a typical CLP syllabus, and how (or whether) tasks may readily be adapted and implemented as part of this. By contrast, tasks form the unit of analysis within a task-based curriculum, as it was found that through engagement in tasks, learners have opportunities for interaction and subsequent L2 development. Grounded in empirical SLA research, TBLT suggests that L2s are acquired, holistically, in respect of the real-world tasks that learners wish to be able to do using the L2. In other words, as learners perform pedagogical tasks, which can be described as simpler approximations of real-world or target tasks and serve as the tasks that teachers and students do in the classroom [16], they are presented with opportunities to develop communicative as well as grammatical or linguistic competencies.

This position arose partially through a critique of early needs analysis procedures. The argument was made that, although providing learners with opportunities to develop L2 skills that would serve them both within and beyond the language learning classroom
supports learners’ motivation and efficiency, there was a gap between how learners’ needs were specified or identified (in questionnaires, interviews with stakeholders, or observational studies, for example) and how they were then implemented in the syllabus and materials design. When relevant informants (often potential students, or their managers, or other stakeholders) were asked, “What do prospective students need to do with the language?”, the answer was typically in the form of “they need to perform such and such a task”. Then, if these findings were handed over to curriculum or materials designers, these specialists interpreted them in terms of language forms and functions that are needed, in their judgment, to perform such a task. However, it may well be the case that language forms are relatively unpredictable from tasks, that is, in the real world, the communicative goals of tasks could be realized through the deployment by speakers (and writers) of a wide variety of language forms and functions. The foregoing leads TBLT to wish to stay with “task” as both a unit of analysis and a unit of planning.

(Before moving on, let us distinguish between TBLT and other task-supported perspectives here. The key distinction made by TBLT between a real-world task and simple approximations to it that could be used for instructional purposes, “pedagogical tasks”, is not made by task-supported language teaching. Both intend to design the classroom tasks in ways that are informed by and can benefit from findings from SLA, although task-supported language teaching—or task-based approaches (TBA)—is less driven by or is not focused solely on external needs, and it is capable of accommodating itself to more conventional curricula as they are found around the world, particularly in K–12 grades, that is, across elementary, middle, and high school, where there is often no obvious or easily identifiable need for the target language. The more traditional emphasis in such curricula on structures and vocabulary also fits more comfortably with the orientations of TBA as opposed to TBLT.)

All of the above leads to the questions, “How does this ‘task as a unit of instructional design’ position compare with CLP (and is this a useful comparison)?” and “Is CLP sufficiently engaged with the real-world tasks students need?” In other words, to what extent might CLP benefit from adopting a more task-based approach to supporting language learning and development, while still maintaining a critical focus? Seeking to address these questions, we next consider how critical content and tasks might synergistically function in the L2 classroom. The following section delves into the matter of whether TBLT considers SLA research when it develops the forms such tasks might take in the classroom.

2.2. Themes

CLP specialists do not settle on any one language-related “unit of analysis” with respect to needs, syllabi, and instruction, although they do have a major emphasis on or interest in themes. Early CLP starts with the view—one which is established in critical pedagogy [10]—that instruction is primarily to be organized in terms of themes. Freire used the term “theme” extensively. In his most well-known [19] book, he referred to themes as both broad and narrow, the broadest of which could be seen as characterizing a historical epoch: “Generative themes can be located in concentric circles, moving from the general to the particular. The broadest epochal unit, which includes a diversified range of units and sub-units—continental, regional, national, and so forth—contains themes of a universal character. I consider the fundamental theme of our epoch to be that of domination—which implies its opposite, the theme of liberation, as the objective to be achieved” (p. 82). A similar thought was conveyed in another portion [10] (p. 131): “From the extension of peasant vocabulary to the analysis of the ‘pragmatic’ content of the terms, to the study of its ‘associative field of meaning’, one arrives at possible significant ‘themes’, referred to in the ‘associative field of meaning’ of those terms.” In that case, narrower themes might emerge from a consideration of what a group of peasants particularly wanted to, or needed, to talk and write about. Elsewhere [20] (p. 8) he commented, “the organization of the curriculum requires the investigation of the thematic universe of the
educatees”. At the same point, he noted that “the educator no longer has the right to establish the curriculum-content of education” and stated that the curriculum must be a “knowable object” by both teacher and students (p. 8). (Freire used the corresponding Portuguese word *tarefa*. At the same location, “Freire even says in the sequence that tasks we engage with may work so as to either maintain social structures or challenge/change them”; de Freitas, personal communication). His stance was summarized in early critical language pedagogy work as follows: “For Freire, a theme is a concrete representation of an idea, concept, hope, doubt, value, challenge, or obstacle in interaction with its opposite and implying a *task* to be performed. For example, Freire considered liberation/domination to be the predominant theme of the present epoch. Second languages and cultures teachers may select communication/noncommunication as the basic theme of their programs. Each theme calls for action to resolve its inherent contradiction” [21] (p. 262; our emphasis). Although some of these themes (such as those mentioned by Freire) are extremely broad, he also emphasized that they emerge from the life-worlds of the students (and are visible and identified by the teachers and curriculum developers through various means, e.g., the analysis of peasants’ vocabulary). As mentioned, in this literature these are called “generative themes”. In Shor’s much later discussion of this same topic, he commented,

Even though Freire’s literacy work was built around generative themes taken from the daily lives and words of students, in practice Freire’s literacy teams began with an important topical theme: all people have knowledge and make culture. Freire called this theme “the anthropological notion of culture.” It was not an idea students brought to class. It was not a situation they talked about in everyday life. It was, rather, a democratic principle and a scientific assertion structured into the curriculum by the educators. [22] (p. 58)

Shor’s work in L1 university or community college literacy has been documented in books and articles over several decades, and it contains perhaps the most thorough and extensive discussion of this topic. His 1992 book devotes an entire chapter to it. Taking the idea of generative themes as well established (his work came 25 years after Freire’s first publications in English), he divided the area into three parts (generative themes being the first) and goes on to topical and academic themes. (He justifies this development by commenting, “Freire developed the problem-posing approach in nonformal, community-based adult literacy programs in a poor Third World country, not in schools and colleges where academic subjects are required for each grade or level. In formal institutions and in the developed northern hemisphere, the pedagogy needs to be reinvented” [22] (p. 60).

According to Shor, “the topical theme is a social question of key importance locally, nationally, or globally that is not generated directly from the students’ conversation. It is raised in class by the teacher” (p. 55). Later, Shor explained at length the academic theme:

Another thematic option for the empowering teacher can be called the academic theme. The academic theme represents a scholastic, professional, or technical body of knowledge which the teacher wants to introduce or has to introduce as a requirement. Drawn from specific disciplines — history, nursing, computer science, accounting, biology, engineering, literature, physics — this academic material is not generated from student culture. Neither is it a political issue or topic in society. The academic theme is structured knowledge in a teacher’s field. (pp. 73–74)

This notable difference between CLP and TBLT is identified by TBLT exponent Long [16] (p. 73), who briefly observed that Auerbach’s approach, while sharing a social orientation with TBLT, is not task-based. In Wallerstein [2] and again in Auerbach and Wallerstein [9,14,23], we can see published textbook CLP exemplar materials organized topically and thematically. However, in these materials, which were written on the basis of the authors’ engagement with successive groups of ESL immigrants and their understanding of
their students’ actual and likely needs, we can also see specific tasks or activities embedded in the thematically-organized units. The Appendix A presents a list of Auerbach and Wallerstein’s [9,14] “competencies”, some of which might be taken to be identical to functions (a term they do not use) and some of which might be taken to be tasks.

Finally here, let it be noted that these important authors were concerned to emphasize that these materials were only an example: “In one sense, a published text is antithetical to genuine problem-posing; lessons are best generated from student stories and issues from that particular class. Teacher time constraints and similar workplace issues, however, make a text an appropriate starting place for classroom interaction and student-produced materials. In this spirit of inspiring student ‘ownership’ of their learning, we offer this text as a model of problem-posing to support teachers and to stimulate curriculum-writing by students” [9] (p. v).

2.3. Needs Analyses, Critical or not, and What They Lead to

The point has already been made that the relationship between needs analyses and syllabus design is of particular significance for TBLT. This is also true for CLP, but for CLP the important point of conceptual congruence is in regard to the social theory context for the connection, rather than the linguistic theory.

As CLP developed in the US, it came into contact with English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Benesch [24] discussed the needs of her community college EAP students related to taking a psychology course mostly delivered in a large lecture format. The content of the course was to be used by students to complete an associated EAP writing course. Benesch referred to the “multiple-choice exams” that students had to complete and the “university-wide argumentative essay” that students had to do and “pass”. The primary overarching focus within which needs are to be identified is the “target situation” (p. 736), which is understood or perceived differently according to the needs analyst’s sociopolitical understanding, or “ideology” (p. 736). A target situation can apparently be further analyzed or specified in terms of activities (which is a term she uses). As part of her description of how she responded to the demands placed on her students, Benesch wrote:

The activities I assigned to deal with the existing structures were typical of adjunct instruction, including having students compare and review their lecture notes, asking students to write their own multiple-choice test questions and to take each others’ tests, and assigning each student a topic from the textbook to present orally to the class. These activities, which neither ignored nor disturbed existing conditions, responded to students’ need to process the lecture and textbook material and prepare for tests. [24] (p. 733)

From this, we can see that these activities approximate, or build up to and support work on those to be found in the target situation. A key point of her article, however, is to explain the difference between a conventional needs analysis and a critical needs analysis, and this occurs through identifying the target situation as having “contradictory demands” [24] (p. 732) that reflect concentrations of power—that is to say, the social context for the needs is inspected with a critical social theory lens. Benesch wrote of an initial listing she arrived at, which includes taking an essay test, understanding lectures (through what task is not clear), taking multiple-choice tests, showing understanding of large amounts of reading material (again, presumably showing this through completing some classroom tasks), and applying concepts from the psychology class to their own lives. However, she resisted (critically) the idea of these being specified as needs tout court:

The above list consists of requirements to be fulfilled by students and conditions they were expected to live with. I do not call them learner needs because this term confuses institutional demands and learners’ desires and because it valorizes features of the target situation that may not be conducive to learning. My students did not need large lectures or multiple-choice tests. These forms of
teaching and testing resulted from political and fiscal considerations (defunding of public higher education and administrative decisions about where to save money), not pedagogical ones. [24] (p. 732)

At one level, we can say that Benesch designed pedagogical activities, including “lecture notes review”, “test question design and practice”, and “textbook topic oral presentation”. However, as she pointed out, central to her discussion, she also analyzed what students would have to do to modify the unsatisfactory situation. For example, students could not understand the lectures because the professor spoke too fast and did not entertain many questions. Benesch prepared the students to sit at the front of the lecture hall and ask questions. She also arranged for the psychology lecturer to visit the students’ ESL class and respond to questions jointly developed by the students.

Benesch referred to the activities she instigated as being of three kinds: “those which helped students deal with the requirements, those which challenged the requirements, and those which worked outside the requirements to create possibilities for social awareness and action.” We think that Benesch would say that only the first of these would have emerged from a conventional needs analysis. Insofar as TBLT depends on a needs analysis, which in turn reflects what people say when they are asked what they need to do (or are observed doing, perhaps), it remains questionable whether any of the second, let alone the third kind of activities, would have emerged in a conventional TBLT class designed for this group of EAP students. An additional suggestion from a critically-minded colleague is, “A [more up to date] critical needs analysis… might also take into account the learners as racialized, gendered, (real) people, with both educational and other real world needs for English—maybe expanding or updating Benesch’s critical needs analysis” (Gordon West, personal communication).

Let us put some of this in a perspective that might be shared by CLP and TBLT. Benesch did not go into detail concerning how activities such as textbook topic oral presentation were taught, and did not report what linguistic items were learned. One could be fairly sure that, influenced by general ideas of communicative approaches, the primary emphasis would have been on getting meaning across, extracting meaning, and so on. Modeling of the target real-world task (by the teacher), followed by students engaging in approximations to it, would certainly have been possible, even though it could have been attempted only through explanations, didactically. It may even be possible that, going perhaps where TBLT is less likely to go, the students themselves could have investigated the features of language and activities (or tasks) needed. However, on the other hand, a critical needs analysis could be implemented in ways that are consistent with TBLT. For example, Jasso-Aguilar [25] conducted a needs analysis of Honolulu hotel workers’ ESL needs using a critical perspective. Findings demonstrated that there were substantial differences in terms of what the supervisors and other participants in positions of power believe the needs and duties of the housekeepers (who were mainly immigrants of low socio-economic status) to be. Jasso-Aguilar [25] highlighted the “unbalanced distribution of power” and the need for future research to take a more critical approach to such investigations, demonstrating how TBLT, if informed by a critical needs analysis, might be conceptualized, at least on one level, as critical TBLT.

3. Curriculum, SLA Theory, and Instructional Practices

3.1. Levels of Curriculum

In writing that CLP seems to operate in areas of curriculum development and delivery on a different level than TBLT, we are drawing attention to CLP’s concerns with a range of matters, such as (1) the content of instruction with regard to particular (often sociopolitical) issues, (2) concern about teacher imposition on students (e.g., West, this issue), (3) classroom interaction in terms of equity of participation (Cannizzo, this issue) (4) teacher and student values, (5) development of identity (in terms of critical conscious-
ness; cf. Leal, (this issue), and (6) the outcomes of instruction in terms of social action. Almost none of these concerns have shown up in the research examining task-based or task-supported learning environments (although see da Silva and Farias, this issue), highlighting the need for further exploration in this area.

The absence of critical or social-justice oriented task-based perspectives may derive, originally, from an instrumental understanding of language learning (as driven by practical real-world needs understood to be neutral) and an impersonal learning theory in which an unconscious acquisition system, cognitive in nature, not located or influenced by social context or identity, is thought to do the main work of learning, as a result of exposure to comprehensible input (with or without focus on form). Students (in pairs and groups) and exemplar materials (e.g., videos of real-world tasks) are potential sources of linguistic input; the teacher is just one of a number of sources of negative input or feedback; and the socio-educational context of a course, or class, or students, is irrelevant (or at least, not theorized explicitly). In a late addition, made 30 years after the initial developments of TBLT, Long [16] suggested that TBLT could be consistent with a teacher’s values (and positions in radical education, as distinct from critical pedagogy; cf. [26]), but these would be matters at the discretion of the teacher, rather than directly implied by the theory of learning upon which TBLT is based. (It will be recalled that theories of learning can be located at multiple levels, from neurological through, cognitive, individual, group social psychological, educational social psychological, sociocultural, and social, at least.)

Perhaps another way of putting this requires reference to “curriculum theory” (cf. [27,28]). CLP and critical pedagogy have been criticized for being too theoretical. Such criticism, even when sympathetic, e.g., Akbari [29], simply overlooks practical contributions such as those of Auerbach and Wallerstein, Janks, or Shor. However, insofar as there is any truth in the matter, it is because these bodies of literature have needed to engage with—indeed have been prompted by—matters of values and the role of education in society. This is the domain of curriculum theory. According to MacDonald [27], “one central concern of [curriculum] theorists is identifying the fundamental unit of curriculum with which to build conceptual systems”. This can be compared to the term “unit of analysis” used in this paper. TBLT, on the other hand, as a manifestation of the applied linguistics of the 1970s and 1980s, emerged out of international second language teaching, heavily influenced by the flows of international students to the English-speaking world and the intensive English programs that arose from this, the private language schools, the expatriate teachers, and the Jet-In-Jet-Out expert [30] (p. 25). In the same period, applied linguistics as a discipline was not primarily driven by the K–12 public sector and rarely engaged with the values concerns of national educational systems. This enabled it to concern itself with “syllabus design” independent of curriculum theory.

However, is it necessary to keep these separate, or indeed, is it desirable to do so? In fact, clearly CLP does not and indeed would not advocate this. At the level of materials, CLP is operating with an interest in materials as sources for interpretation and exploration of student views first (“codes” as projective devices). Thus, materials and how students interact with them must be informed by values—if we are to avoid the charge of imposition. Moreover, fundamentally, with social action one of the goals of CLP, it expects that having an activist classroom, that is, choosing a particular kind of syllabus (a negotiated one), will serve that goal.

Perhaps it is a politically-advantageous strategic move, at a time of increased government surveillance of education around the world, for TBLT to present itself as neutral, with the level of curriculum theory to be an add on, solely determined by teachers’ decisions based on their personal philosophy of teaching. However, if there is not much engagement between CLP and TBLT, how will a TBLT teacher know when and how, and to what extent, to bring their (perhaps critical) values to bear? In addition, educators may lack guidance on how features of language (vocabulary, phrases, syntax, genres) may emerge from these matters. Further, there is little information or guidance relating to how
critically informed tasks might best be sequenced to promote L2 development and performance, as well as deepen learners’ understanding of critical themes.

3.2. The Relationship to SLA/Theories of Learning

Despite the recent growing interest in critical approaches to research and teaching (e.g., [31–34]), there is thus far scant research regarding how TBLT might be used to promote or support more socially and culturally sensitive views of language learning and instruction (although see [16] for a discussion on the philosophical foundations and principles of TBLT, including “l'education integrale and learning by doing”, as well as “individual freedom, rationality, emancipation, learner-centeredness, egalitarian teacher-student relationships, participatory democracy, mutual aid, and cooperation.” p. 66). Although TBLT is largely grounded in an early “interactionist” theory of SLA, in which the learner is theorized as a cognitive information processing system operating unconsciously on comprehensible language input, recent scholars have highlighted the contributions of other SLA theories, including sociocultural theory (SCT). For example, Feryok [34] indicated how SCT has contributed to TBLT by drawing on seminal works, such as Foster and Ohta [35] and Swain and Lapkin [36], that have incorporated SCT methods and concepts. Feryok argued that SCT stands to make valuable contributions to a cognitively-oriented view of tasks through a shared theoretical interest in praxis; she suggested that SCT research related to social and self-mediation, learners’ interpretation of goals, concept-based instruction, and dynamic assessment aligns with and contributes to a cognitive interactionist task-based framework. Similarly, Bao and Du [37] highlighted that although task-based approaches have found much success in the classroom, SCT perspectives can and do contribute additional and relevant knowledge to our understanding of the efficacy of tasks for L2 performance and development. For example, their examination of L1 use in the L2 classroom demonstrated that learners mainly used the L1 as a form of mediation to task completion—a perspective that may have been obscured by a purely cognitive approach. Despite these recent studies exploring the cross-theoretical contributions in TBLT, however, there appears to be little work engaging with issues of power in the task-based literature, regardless of the theoretical orientation of the work.

Early critical pedagogy had no particular connection to the existing mainstream psychological theory of learning that was prevalent at the time it was developed (i.e., behaviorism). Freire preferred the humanistic psychology of Fromm (e.g., [38] which he cites in Pedagogy of the Oppressed). Learning was seen primarily as a matter of personal growth, and in the earlier Freirean models, stages of personal growth were related to the overall mentality of a country or cultural region (e.g., Brazil). There have been some small attempts to develop and present what might be called critical theories of learning (summarized in [39]), but one sees no evidence that the early versions of these were known to Freire or the US developers of CLP (or in similar work elsewhere, such as Janks’s work in South Africa [40]) or any evidence that later CLP is directly interested in building instructional tasks on them.

Thus, can CLP get anything from TBLT in regard to the design of learning activities based on whatever forms of SLA? At one level there would appear to be some theoretical incompatibility between the two if the learner in TBLT is primarily seen as an “unconscious” learner, while the learner in CLP is striving for social agency. On the other hand, if learners cannot learn from language without using it, and group work is needed for the efficient use of time in a classroom, that point should be taken on board explicitly by CLP, even though it hardly derives directly from SLA, as opposed to the application of sociologically-informed early L1 classroom research, e.g., Barnes [41] and his followers (cf. [42]). Moreover, if within TBLT’s typical group or pair tasks, it is valuable to construct them with an information gap so as to foster negotiation of input. CLP should not be cavalier about the tasks that it has its learners engage with; instead, the instructor should intervene to set things up accordingly.
3.3. Instructional Practices Founded on SLA Ideas and Evidence: Grammar, Focus on Form, and Learning Through Use

If TBLT (or task-based approaches in general) has established efficient practices for L2 learning and instruction, CLP should certainly know about and consider using them. As it stands at present, CLP seems to take for granted some of the mechanics of L2 instruction while concerning itself more with matters of a higher level. Thus, it has little to say about the best way for a teacher to correct learners’ errors, not whether it is better to focus on form or forms, or whether there should be direct grammar instruction and if so when. It does not particularly stray into areas distinct from TBLT either, such as vocabulary instruction in general, as opposed to an interest in “critical vocabulary”, nor has it anything to say particularly about the four skills, while nevertheless being interested in “critical literacy”.

Apart from a strong conceptual interest in themes as an organizing principle, and no particular commitment to one or more types of activity, CLP is either (initially) ignorant of the issues that TBLT concerns itself with or is quite capable of taking up and perhaps benefiting from them. To our knowledge, there is little research investigating how thematic or critical content might be enhanced or supported through a task-based approach. Obviously the two perspectives share an interest in needs-driven syllabi, though CLP emphasizes critical needs analysis not just needs analysis. Existing CLP materials and case reports suggest much learning through use, and CLP’s opposition to “banking education” means that it is indeed opposed to learning as arising through the teacher telling students things, which means it is in favor of learning through use. This characterizes it as learning through dialogue, between teacher and student and among students, which in turns suggests pair and group work, at least. Although CLP initially orients to the matters students need to talk about in terms of themes, it has a pragmatic outlook which clearly recognizes that there are things students need to do with language, such as engage in job applications, write letters (e.g., to a landlord), complain to a job supervisor in a factory, and many other things that sound like real-world tasks to us.

3.4. From CLP to the TBLT Side: Content in Tasks

Defining tasks remains a somewhat debated topic within the field of TBLT, as tasks and task-based language teaching are interpreted differently by different scholars [43], with Ellis [44] recently highlighting that the operationalization of “task” remains a “real issue” (p. 2). However, some pedagogical tasks have been discussed and investigated, or they have been the site of investigations for some time, so we can consider what an interface between TBLT and CLP might look like with them in mind.

For example, “spot the difference” tasks, an outgrowth of communicative language teaching materials writing, have been discussed. They may be considered by some scholars to be a pedagogic task, though one with interactional rather than situational authenticity. As Ellis [45] pointed out, it is unlikely that adult learners would engage in such an activity outside of the classroom in their real-world interactions. Rather, by encouraging turn taking, questions, and (potentially) negotiation to repair and resolve misunderstandings, a spot the difference task offers learners practice in interactional behavior that they would need and encounter beyond their language classroom, thereby providing interactional authenticity.

Depending on the particular approach to TBLT, whether it was a “strong” or “weak” approach, task designers, educators, and researchers may find varying degrees of flexibility in what might be considered a task and thus whether the task parameters would allow for the integration of socially inspired materials. There is no particular reason why spot the difference tasks cannot be designed using, for example, a picture of a rich family and its possessions on one side, and a poor family and its few possessions on the other side.
Task designers may be encouraged to consider critical perspectives as a feature to be considered and integrated, much like other task conditions or features of task-based frameworks, such as the cognition hypothesis [46].

3.5. From CLP to the TBLT Side: Student and Teacher Practices with Regard to Pedagogical Tasks

Given its emphasis on participation, presumably in a CLP class a teacher should consult learners on how they would like their errors to be corrected (even though this has not been discussed in its literature). CLP does not shrink from the teacher as having authority and expertise, so that in a discussion or negotiation about how errors should be handled, the expert language teacher (as the applied linguist) would not abdicate a responsibility to urge a particular technique for error treatment that TBLT (or SLA) thinks is best. However, as the older TBLT literature saw the learner as learning unconsciously and viewed the teacher as the expert applied linguist, it would not have drawn any implications from the active role of the learner espoused by CLP.

Of course, the field of instructed SLA continues to develop and has a greater (if still cognitive) role for the learner in newer work. Studies of metacognitive instruction (MI) suggest that learners can benefit from being provided with information on the benefits of interaction and corrective feedback, such as scholars (e.g., 11, 47, 48) have done in terms of introducing meta-cognitive instruction into the classroom. A growing body of research suggests that providing learners with information on how to give and receive feedback has positive effects on learners’ production of interactional features, including corrective feedback and language related episodes (LRES, e.g., [47–50]). This is because MI encourages learners to be more aware of giving and receiving feedback during interaction, thereby potentially supporting noticing and encouraging the internalization of L2 features into learners’ interlanguage (e.g., [51,52]). In addition, MI is designed to provide learners with a deeper understanding of how to exploit the language learning opportunities available to them, thereby promoting learner autonomy and agency [11,47]. In other words, by providing learners with MI on the available developmental benefits of negotiation, feedback, and noticing, and potentially expanding this to include other topics relevant to a CLP-based classroom, instructors are able to offer learners additional tools to use to take a more active role in peer interaction, thus potentially increasing their opportunities for learning beyond the traditional classroom.

4. Looking Forward

Despite recent interest in issues of social justice and critical approaches in SLA and CALL [31,32], as well as articles proposing future TBLT research agendas [43,44,53,54], as previously mentioned little attention has turned to how a critical lens might be adopted in the task-based or task-supported classroom (although see [16,55–57]). Building on this work, we suggest that there are a number of ways that a more critical approach might be integrated into a task-based classroom, including through the potential expansion and elaboration of conceptualizations such as needs analysis, pedagogical task content, and a focus on an L2/FL, as well as the use of technology.

If we believe that a task-based approach should start by evaluating learners’ needs, and indeed CLP also suggests that learners’ needs be taken into account, then is there not space for an expansion of what these needs might include? For example, TBLT focuses clearly on learners’ needs in terms of real-world tasks. However, for some instructional contexts, such as elementary aged classrooms or exam preparation courses, the needs may either be non-specified or so highly specific that a needs analysis may yield little usable data on learners’ real world needs beyond the classroom, as defined by linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic skills. There may be space to expand the operationalization to include socially and critically oriented needs that are not (necessarily) restricted to the use of the L2. In other words, learners might be consulted in terms of what they feel are important, socially-located, value-laden topics, posed as problems or matters needing action,
relevant to their lives both within and beyond their language classroom, such as what Konoeda and Watanabe [58] did. In their study exploring the potential of critically-informed TBLT materials in the secondary classroom, Japanese high school learners were asked to provide input via a survey on social issues that were important to them, and these responses then formed the basis for designing a classroom task on the topic of bullying that sought to explore potential resolutions. Bullying in this context is not limited to their language classroom, as it is a phenomenon that can occur throughout their school environment. However, learners’ use of the L2 offers opportunities with which to engage with this challenging topic. The authors propose that learners’ L2 identities may provide them more freedom to explore these issues by offering space to step outside their socially constructed roles and patterns.

Thus, for contexts seeking to include a CLP perspective, we suggest that issues of social importance be included as part of needs analyses, particularly in terms of surveying stakeholders, including students, teachers, and administrators. Curriculum designers and instructors may wish to integrate these identified issues into the task-based course through content selection, including readings, prompts, and interactive tasks. A range of pedagogic tasks could be drawn upon to provide a task-based or task-supported framework that still allows for the exploration of these issues. For example, following the taxonomy in Pica et al. [59], decision-making tasks and opinion sharing tasks might be used, as well as spot the difference tasks with more socially-oriented content. Such a needs analysis might identify real-world tasks viewed with a critical orientation. At one level, this implies dealing with tasks, such as a job interview, in which there is the possibility of discriminatory language or behavior on the part of the more powerful interviewer. At another, this could approach various aspects of being an engaged citizen, such as student involvement in political action, whether providing testimony at a public meeting or engaging in (second language-mediated) activism or even protests. For a given issue, one might include target tasks such as applying for permits for rallies and protests, inviting speakers, writing letters to political representatives, or interviewing activists. Decision making and opinion-sharing tasks might then draw on critical content of import that impacts learners’ lives outside of the classroom, such as climate change or immigration policy. Research suggests that learners who are engaged in activities that are “worthwhile for their own sake” (Dewey, as cited by Norris [60]) are most likely to benefit in terms of language learning. This principle of focusing on real-world, non-linguistic objectives might then be extended to include those of justice and equality.

Hints of how TBLT could approach CLP might be found in the recent Al Quds University Skills for the Workplace Program (SWP), a collaborative curriculum development project by U.S.-based applied linguists and language teachers, including the authors, in partnership with faculty at AQU (See Acknowledgments at end of article). Funded by the U.S. Department of State, this curriculum nominally focused on real-world skills while also supporting language development through interactional tasks. The program was presented to funding authorities as urgently needed support for the development of workplace skills for Palestinian learners of English (A. Ayyad, personal communication, February 2020).

Designed to provide learners with opportunities to improve their linguistic and communicative competence in English, as well as develop their critical thinking, team-work, and research skills (A. Ayyad, personal communication, February 2020), this curriculum was cooperatively developed by faculty at AQU and the Department of Second Language Studies (SLS) and the Hawai’i English Language Program (HELP) at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa (UHM).

Although this program was not directly conceptualized or designed to be an immediately explicit manifestation of CLP principles, the provision of expert support in terms of curriculum design to an under-resourced and marginalized population reflects a critical analysis of socio-economic and social opportunities. Despite the mundane nature of
the project as thus characterized, arguably, supporting a Palestinian university that is itself a site of resistance to Israeli occupation might already be seen as reflecting an anti-oppression theme. At the initial stage of this project, Palestinian instructors who would subsequently work in this project participated in a series of workshops designed to provide support for materials and curriculum development; one such workshop focused on CLP and how this might be applied to the L2 classroom (e.g., critically informed materials development).

Part of the project was a needs analysis conducted by an independent third party, the results of which identified the target linguistic and nonlinguistic skills instrumentally needed by Palestinian students for different careers within the private sector, such as in banking (A. Ayyad, personal communication, April 2021). Drawing on these findings, the UHM advisory panel and AQU Project Management collaboratively designed a curriculum to provide English language learners with opportunities to practice critical thinking and communication skills that support the development of their abilities in problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork. Given the ambiguity of the term critical thinking, it is important to state what was meant by it in this context. In this case, “critical thinking” was understood as including the intellectual capacities to engage creatively with the following. Instructors participated in a decision-consensus task in which visas had to be allocated to a diverse selection of immigrants. The content in the priming material touched on age, gender, ethnicity, language competence, ability, marginalized status, and socio-economic aspects of identity. Following discussion of this task, Palestinian instructors were intrigued and surprised, remarking on the potential that controversial topics and current events could be used for supporting second language development.

Seeking to support the development of the cognitive and communicative skills identified in the initial needs analysis, the educators from AQU were then provided with training in how to implement this evidence-based curriculum. This training, which was developed in partnership with the UHM advisory group following the third party needs analysis, integrated core concepts from TBLT and SLA to inform the development and implementation of the curriculum. Although the concept of tasks was new to the instructors in this program, target tasks identified in the needs analysis, such as participating in a job interview or presenting a research proposal, were used to inform the syllabus and pedagogic tasks in the classroom. Instructors were then encouraged to select content and tasks that they felt were relevant and would resonate with their students. For example, instructors selected themes and content and then worked with the second author to design appropriate pedagogic tasks. In this manner, instructors maintained autonomy and remained in control of the content in their classroom but were provided with the theoretical and practical frameworks of TBLT and CLP as means to support and facilitate learners’ performance and development.

During training workshops and classroom observations of the program in action in February and March 2020, AQU instructors regularly used tasks that integrated real-world examples and topics relevant to learners, potentially supporting learners’ interest and motivation [61,62]. For example, prompts, as well as warmup activities and short lectures used in the classroom, were informed by topics related to learners’ experiences, such as the recent changes in tuition policies (negatively affecting Palestinian students) and ensuing protests at AQU, or the differential Palestinian and Israeli responses to the initial outbreaks of COVID-19. Learners were asked to work together in small groups to discuss a problem and possible solutions, such as how to respond to rising cases of COVID-19 in their communities. Following a short discussion, each group then collaboratively prepared a brief presentation for the class. Prior to breaking into these small groups, learners were encouraged to share their knowledge of these issues as a way to activate and tap into their background knowledge, with some learners highlighting the potential disparity in terms of available resources for the Israeli and Palestinian responses. In one such information-gap decision consensus task, in which learners had different information from their interlocutors, pairs were asked to imagine they were either representatives of the
Palestinian government or of the World Health Organization (WHO). Their task instructions were as follows:

- You are in charge of how Palestine will handle the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. One of you represents the Palestinian government and one of you represents the World Health Organization (W.H.O.).
- You must come up with five policies that will best protect the Palestinian people.
- You and your partner have lists with different information.
- Describe your recommendations and concerns to your partner. Keep in mind that you may disagree as you have different interests—ask each other questions and support your suggestions with evidence (as best you can). Use your own knowledge and be creative!
- Work together to make five policies.
- Finally, explain the motives for your decision.

Learners assigned as representatives of the Palestinian government were “concerned with the impact that quarantines and isolation protocols may have on the economy, as well as the political considerations to restricting travel. You want to avoid panic and to keep people calm”, while learners acting as WHO representatives were “concerned with preventing the transmission of the novel coronavirus as well as caring for those most at risk and already infected”. By centering on a topic such as the newly spreading coronavirus, and how it might affect students’ lives, this course content was able to go beyond the career or market related topics identified in the needs analysis, instead turning focus to learners’ lives and the important issues that they faced outside of the classroom. Within the context of the SWP, this intentional decision by instructors to focus on social and world issues of interest and relevance to their students may have facilitated learners’ task engagement and motivation [6]. In other words, tasks that learners perceive as personally relevant, or tasks that support learners’ sense of ownership, have been demonstrated to support learners’ motivation (e.g., [63,64]). Through their consistent use of relevant course content, SWP instructors sought to create an environment supportive of learners’ motivation and engagement, thereby fostering learners’ critical approach to their interactions within and beyond the classroom.

In addition to providing learners with opportunities to critically approach important issues, these types of tasks—known as “decision-making tasks” [59], a term that reflects the long-standing category in the task literature—provided learners with opportunities for interaction and negotiation for meaning, processes demonstrated to be supportive of L2 learning and development (see [65,66]). Observations of SWP classes indicated that learners also engaged in language related episodes (LREs), defined as “any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others” [36] (p. 326). For example, a lexical LRE was observed during an earlier version of the decision-making task on the coronavirus pandemic described above. During a discussion addressing prospective policies for visitors or returning citizens who may be contagious, learners encountered difficulties identifying the target L2 word, quarantine, in their shared vocabularies (for further discussion on critical vocabulary, see Parba, this issue). Instead, learners continued the discussion in their L1, allowing them to confirm their understanding of the concept and subsequently seek the equivalent L2 lexical item from their instructor. By drawing on their L1 to clarify the target concept of a quarantine, learners were able to juxtapose the L1 form with the L2 form, potentially enhancing the salience of this particular lexical item. In addition, this comparison may have increased learners’ opportunities for noticing of the target word as well as supporting learners’ knowledge of a highly relevant word related to world events. Taken together, these observations provide examples of how critical content might potentially be integrated into the task-based classroom.

Overall, this program provides a potential case study in how a more critical approach might be applied to TBLT. Because this course was designed to provide (marginalized)
learners with communication and critical thinking skills for personal development and professional workplace success, as well as support their English language skills, it is an ideal environment in which to address issues important for learners’ lives. By providing learners with relevance and rationale in the content of the tasks with which they are asked to engage, learners may demonstrate greater task engagement and motivation than in tasks without perceived relevance (e.g., [61,63]). In addition, learners may perceive tasks that contain personally relevant content to be more intrinsically motivating than tasks centered on more general or abstract content [67]. By integrating more socially-sensitive materials into task-based programs, such as AQU’s SWP, instructors might foster heightened engagement with and motivation for not only L2 learning, but also with issues more broadly existential to learners’ lives.

Recent research (e.g., [56,57]) exploring TBLT for language revitalization (in Zapotec communities in Mexico, with child learners, and a TBLT training workshop for instructors in a Salish Qlips immersion school) has highlighted how approaches to language teaching have rarely been explored for indigenous language contexts, which have markedly different goals and needs than second or foreign language learning settings. Riestenberg and Sherris [57] suggested that the learner-centered [16] (p. 325) nature of TBLT allows for the “decolonizing of research practices in marginalized communities... in rejection of rote, frontal teacher-centered practices adopted from the colonialist conceptions of schooling” (p. 435). TBLT’s focus on learner needs may also promote learners’ investment in the indigenous language, although Riestenberg and Sherris [57] highlight that teachers and the community must also be committed to such an approach if it is to be successful in promoting language revitalization. Importantly, they also draw attention to the necessary modifications to the goals of the needs analysis, as there are relatively few real world tasks in which learners need the indigenous language. In fact, they are implicitly responding to the linguistic rights of their young Zapotec and Salish students. This puts this part of their curricular work fully in line with Benesch’s [68] term “rights analysis”, which when brought together with conventional understanding of needs, manifests in a “critical needs analysis”. For example, in Riestenberg’s [56] Zapotec setting, the goals of the needs analysis turned to facilitating learners’ use of Zapotec for real-world tasks, such as salutations, small-talk, and making purchases, for which they were currently interacting in Spanish with Zapotec speakers. In promoting language learning through communicative, hands-on tasks, Riestenberg and Sherris suggested that this “makes explicit the social and cultural capital that knowledge of the language affords” [57] (p. 443), demonstrating learners’ abilities to use the language effectively and promoting positive perceptions regarding language revitalization.

Additionally, technology-mediated TBLT (TMTBLT) might provide learners with further opportunities to explore and engage with critical or otherwise challenging topics. For example, findings indicate that learner participation may be more equitable in text-based synchronous computer mediated communication (SCMC), in which learners are interacting at the same time in a computer-mediated context, when compared to face-to-face interaction (e.g., [69,70]). Research also suggests that SCMC may reduce learners’ anxiety (e.g. [71]), potentially supporting increased production and participation by less active students (e.g., [72–74]). Gonzalez-Lloret and Ortega [75] also pointed out that technology-mediated language learning tasks can “minimize students’ fear of failure, embarrassment, or losing face; they can raise students’ motivation to take risks and be creative while using language to make meaning; and they can enable students to meet other speakers of the language in remote locations, opening up transformative exposure to authentic language environments and cultural enactments” (p. 4). These opportunities facilitated through technology-mediated tasks might support learners’ empowerment as an L2 user as well as deepening their cultural awareness and understanding, goals that we in
traditional face-to-face classrooms, challenging topics may encounter more interaction than they might otherwise.

Recently, however, Gleason and Suvorov [31] drew attention to how the affordances and resources associated with computer-assisted language learning (CALL) can exacerbate as well as mitigate issues of power, ideology, and justice. In other words, access to technology is inequitable, and as Gonzalez-Lloret and Ortega [75] highlighted, technology itself is not neutral. This inequity was highlighted by the recent global pandemic of COVID-19, in which learners in many areas lacked the internet access and technology to participate in the sudden shift to distance learning and were thus excluded from learning opportunities and the associated linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural benefits. Thus, although TMTBLT may offer unique affordances for critical learning opportunities, the use of technology should also be critically approached so as not to inadvertently exacerbate the very issues it seeks to address.

5. Conclusions

In this article we showed how CLP and TBLT can draw together beneficially. As indicated, CLP has engaged with only some of the details of its preferred activities, particularly when viewed from the SLA-research informed view of L2 pedagogy that is often called TBLT. Similarly, TBLT has engaged with only some of the aspects of its preferred activities, when seen from a socioculturally, critically-informed viewpoint. It may benefit from integrating a more critical perspective into task design and content and/or curriculum development. Although it may not be possible to have a fully task-based perspective in many courses, Samuda and Bygate [76] highlighted that “the use of tasks does not of itself entail the adoption of one particular type of approach to language teaching and learning. Rather, tasks can be seen as a pedagogic tool that can be used flexibly in different ways depending on purpose, setting, and context…” (p. 60). In other words, tasks are a beneficial and adaptable tool that can provide educators with opportunities to integrate critical approaches in a manner that aligns with their unique classroom context. Likewise, because the design demands of tasks in TBLT may not always be able to be taken up under the conditions that critical language teaching must operate under, some attention to SLA-based perspectives (perhaps particularly those that provide an active role for the learners) are surely desirable.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Chapter Headings and Subheading from Auerbach and Wallerstein (1987)

| Headings          |
|-------------------|
| Introductions     |
| Getting a job     |
Starting work
Making money
Getting through the day
Acting for health and safety
Moving toward equality
Participating in a union
Subheadings
Asking for help with names, polite ways to keep your name
Asking for repetition in class, asking for feedback and correction
Stating experience, skills, education, job preference
Reading ads, finding jobs through friends, answering interview questions, answering difficult questions, asking questions about a job
Learning workplace vocabulary
Asking for help with a problem, asking for help with English, handling problems with coworkers
Understanding directions, asking for help with directions, giving feedback about directions
Reporting a problem [at work]
Reading pay stubs, calculating pay, reporting a pay problem, asking for a raise, figuring out overtime pay
Refusing overtime, calling in sick
Responding to discipline or reprimands, responding to unfair discipline
Requesting advice
Filing a grievance, asking for a lawyer
Requesting breaks, suggesting changes
Reducing stress outside work
Identifying hazards
Asking for help or information
Giving warnings, reporting a safety problem, insisting on safety, refusing unsafe work, reporting an accident, filling out accident and illness forms, requesting job changes
Insisting on rights
Identifying discrimination
Requesting a promotion
Acting for equality at work
Giving advice
Requesting time off
Responding to sexual harassment
Talking to a harasser, keeping records of harassment
Getting a copy of the contract, finding out about the contract
Requesting union representation, requesting translations of union materials, stating opinions about union matters
Getting information about job actions
Overcoming differences
Working together
Planning for change
Keep writing this book

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