Effective language learning through a task based approach

Task-based learning is (TBL) based on the principle that language is most efficiently learned through meaningful engagement. This engagement is achieved through a task sequence. Task sequences are linked to texts which provide the raw material for language study, but it is a basic principle of TBL that meaning comes before language focus – the task sequence comes before focus on language form.

In my plenary session we will explore the characteristics of tasks that are likely to be effective for language learning and look at a range of task types. I will demonstrate how task cycles can be built up to give opportunities for interaction, extended monologue and writing activities, and then briefly show how texts related to tasks can subsequently be exploited for the teaching of grammar and lexis.

Jane Willis

Jane Willis worked extensively overseas as a language teacher and trainer before joining Aston University and tutoring on their Masters in TESOL programs. Now semi-retired, she works as an ELT consultant, runs workshops for FL teachers and teaches Tai Chi. Her prize-winning books include English for Primary Teachers (with Mary Slattery) and Teachers Exploring Tasks in English Language Teaching (with Corony Edwards). Her latest books (with OUP) are: Doing Task-based Teaching co-authored with her husband Dave, and English Through Music, for younger learners, co-authored with music specialist Anice Paterson. Jane speaks good French, some Spanish, and has a smattering of German, Italian, Greek and Farsi.
If you are interested in Task-Based Learning, visit http://www.willis-elt.co.uk/ where there are free down-loadable task-based lessons plans.