

Newsletter No. 9

Workshop in January

Date: January 13, 2018, 10:30-14:30

Venue: NSC College, Room 31

Presenter: Curtis Kelly (Kansai University)

Title: “Task-Based Learning: Theories and Methods”

Abstract: In the first session we will look at theories supporting the use

of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach and some principles for TBLT design. These are principles that the presenter has developed himself by writing textbooks for Cambridge, Pearson, National Geographic Learning, and MacMillan. The principles include methods for engaging students, integrating language targets, and solving typical class management problems, such as keeping learners in the target language. Sample activities will also be offered. In the second session, participants will design their own TBLT activities, which will certainly be fun, and we will try them out.



The number of participants: 31

1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?

- Detective Story – It might be difficult to adapt it for JH students. But I got an idea behind that. This is something new to me. I’d like to try this out.
- I really enjoyed the mystery solving game. I think I can arrange it so that students shouldn’t get too carried away in the task of solving the mystery. I also enjoyed the discussion of introducing TBLT that each participant came up with. I can actually utilize some of the tasks to my low-motivated students.
- Today’s workshop was really helpful. It’s important to get the students more involved and speaking with task-based learning.
- I found most activities today very interesting. The information gap activity for the Murder at Lord Easton’s Party, as well as the activities that my group members created are all valuable and, if adapted to my class context, would be very useful to my students.
- Design Principles are useful when making my own activities.
- ‘Using a picture to talk in pair’ Students have smart phone and have many pictures. This activity encourages them to talk about the picture in details.

2. What you learned from today’s workshop

- TBLT principles. I’ve tried to make many kinds of activities based on TBLT, but sometimes I forget paying



attention to the basic principles.

- I wasn't sure about what 'task' refers to, but now I'm certain that it's not an exercise or practice you do in class for every unit. I would like to create more tasks that are related to the real world being useful in daily life.
- Emotional values are necessary for learning. Students won't learn from compulsory practices.
- 'Emotion is the drive, motor.' 'Emotion steers us through life'. 'No emotion, no learning'. These are true! I want to create activities which promote students' emotional development.
- We, teachers must lead students to use language to do some tasks. Therefore, learning should be applied to various things.
- I didn't have much knowledge about TBLT. I had been applying the method without knowing, so everything was new knowledge to me.
- When I have them use the target languages, the goal of the activity is decided but what words or grammar they will use are not decided. In that case, students feel hard to check their language form. I learned it is also important to narrow down language area in a task.



2. Questions and Answers

Q (1): Is there an area of study that combines emotion (brain-science) and English teaching? If there are theories and books, please recommend me.

A: Some people are writing about this topic, but there is no exact area of study defined yet. In JALT, we have the Mind, Brain, and Education Special Interest Group, but there is no similar group in TESOL or KoTESOL. Robert Murphy, Marc Helgesen, myself and others are working to change that. Emotion is researched by neuroscientists, Damasio and Immordino-Yang. They have YouTube videos. Another researcher is Lisa Barret, who just came out with a fascinating book. Watch her TED Talk at: https://www.ted.com/talks/lisa_feldman_barrett_you_aren_t_at_the_mercy_of_your_emotions_your_brain_creates_them

Q (2): I appreciate the wonderful workshop. I learned a lot of techniques and ideas for TBLT. However I have a feeling that creating one task is time consuming. For JHS teachers who are very busy with other things, it may not be plausible to provide a task each lesson. What should we do?

A: You have brought up a really big problem. I cannot give you a very good answer, but I think you are limited to very short activities. One could be What's in the Bag? That you could shape by restricting questions to the verb tense, or certain forms you are studying. (In class, put students in groups and have them generate 5 questions before starting. Then give each group a turn, but they have to produce a question in 5 seconds or be skipped.

Another activity is a Thank-you Chain. Put students in groups of six or more, with a paper wadded up like a ball. They are all standing. The first person says "I want to thank (name of person in group) for/because (reason, like always smiling, helping me, being on time, whatever) The speaking student throws the ball to the thanked student and sits down. The thanked student does his or her own thanking and so on. It is powerful! You can do a similar activity for almost any utterance.

Q (3): When we design TBLT, should we think about a goal/object?

A: You should have a goal, but it does not necessarily have to be just a grammar form or vocabulary set. These things are also included in goals: a) giving real interaction practice, b) giving practice in negotiating meaning, c) building fluency by giving language processing, d) making students active after being passive too long, e) empowering them, f) having fun to make them like English. The best TBLT has all of these goals in it.



Q (4): I'm having problems with a huge class. There are 48 students in a class and making them do a task is very tiresome. Is there any task that is effective for a huge group?

A: My problem too. And the answer is yes. I have four Business English classes a year with over 60 students each. My colleagues do mainly study-oriented listening/writing in class. I do TBLT. I find the dyadic lines (partner changes) amazingly useful. In every class, at some point, there will be 3 lines of pairs, ten long, doing some verbal exchange, and every couple minutes I yell out CHANGE and one member in each pair shifts one or two partners to the front. I usually do this four times, with the book and model dialog open the first time, but book closed the last. The exchanges are always business related and personalized, such as *Ask your partner the last time he went to a fast food restaurant, what he/she ordered, etc.*

They love it because they want to meet other students. A lot of them break into Japanese. Don't be over concerned if they do, just structure the activities ,so they get some English in. For example, have them write responses in a chart, in English only, or write you a report later comparing partners.

Q (5): I find it difficult to do task-based learning with the textbook. I can try 'Snoop Detective School' in my class maybe once in a month or less. I wonder how I make TBLT based on the textbook attractive and emotional to the students.

A: It's not that hard. The key is to let them talk about themselves, and with a variety of people. That is what language is for in the first place. Just giving them lists of questions to ask each other, and sample answers does wonders.

Q (6): I liked the murder A/B activity. I found it takes time to create a task. How can we put ideas into 'shape/ form', cards, sheet or a game?

A: I'm not sure how to respond, but if I can do it, so can you. I, personally, have about a dozen info gaps like the Murder one I don't mind sharing. Two are in "Active Skills for Communication" Book Intro and Book One. And the Have You Ever and dozens of other great tasks are in their too. (One of my favorites is making a Class Album in class #1) Just say ask National Geographic Learning Cengage for free inspection copies and say Curtis sent you!

ayako.nakashima@cengage.com or david.a.white@cengage.com

Also, as I said, I'll make my Snoop materials available to you. If you hurry, you can download the book here:

<https://free.mailbigfile.com/0da2b0c2a2bb019a782735e48aed4bcb/listFiles.php>

audio here:

<https://free.mailbigfile.com/a7565ba8c1a1ba762c850e6b267000e4/listFiles.php>

teachers manual here:

<https://free.mailbigfile.com/e2a02e4010d03c4f9c5b7fa63d1935c2/listFiles.php>

In fact, let me paste in the Class Album Project I just mentioned. It's in black and white. Everyone interviews a partner. You collect the sheets and photocopy up a class album for everyone. (or just make one for everyone to share)

Challenge

from Active Skills for Communication 1, Cengage Learning

Interview a partner, complete the worksheet and make a class album.



Critical Thinking

Look at the question prompts on the worksheet. When should you use "May I ask . . . ?"

A Write. Look at the worksheet on the next page. Then prepare questions for items 2 to 6. Use the example below to help you.

1. *What's your name?* _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

B Write. Look at the worksheet again. Then prepare questions for items 7 to 15, using your own ideas.

7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

C Speak. Interview a partner and complete your worksheet.

Example:

A: What's your name?

B: Jill Barr.

A: How do you spell "Barr?"

B: B-A-R-R.

Reflection Time

Write useful words and ideas you learned in this unit.

CLASS ALBUM

1. NAME:

2. NICKNAME:

3. PHONE:

4. EMAIL:

5. HOME:

6. BIRTHDAY:

PICTURE OF YOUR PARTNER
(DRAW IT)

7. FAVORITE: _____

8. FAVORITE: _____

9. FAVORITE: _____

10. INTERESTS
& HOBBIES:

11. SPECIAL
TALENTS:

12. FUTURE:

13 - 15. OTHER INTERESTING POINTS:

Optional Activity: Photocopy the completed worksheets and make a class album.
Make copies for everyone in the class.

Action Research Session

Date: January 13, 2018, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College, Room 32, Room 41, Room 51

Advisers: Kazuyoshi Sato, Duane Kindt, Juanita Heigham (NUFS)

The number of participants: 15



Next Workshop (scheduled)

Date: February 24, 2018, 10:30-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College, Room 31

Presenter: Lem Maurisio (Teikyo-kani Elementary School)

Title: “Cooperative Learning: How can You Make it Happen?”