A TBLT course- proposal.

# INTRODUCTION

**The purpose of this document is to analyse and explain the specific benefits of using a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach to develop the curriculum for the** XXXX **course.**

**Target demographic**: Nurses at the B1 level requiring a 7.5 band score on the IELTS to qualify to work overseas.

Since the learners in this group are going to be living and working in a foreign country, it is imperative that we provide them with the specific socio-pragmatic skills that they will need to do this successfully, rather than use a generic structural syllabus that may not provide the learners with what they actually need. A Task based approach will therefore serve us best.

# BACKGROUND

There are many variations of task based language teaching. Ranging from a rigorous approach where task accomplishment takes precedence over linguistic targets, to one where task performance merely supports production of a particular, pre-chosen target language. Task Based Language Teaching, (henceforth **TBLT)**- as distinguished by Long (2015, location 449/e-reader), from **tblt-** in the lower case used for the less rigorous varieties of the approach (Skehan, 2003, Pg.1), specifically addresses issues with grammar- focussed, skills acquisition approaches. Such approaches follow structural syllabi purporting to help students by converting their declarative grammar into procedural grammar i.e. moving them from learning about the language to using the language through a series of language- focussed lessons. This is an approach we have been following heretofore. These syllabi, however, have little to do with the developmental stage of the sequence of internal grammar that learners are at (Corder, 1967 as quoted in CARLA)

Research into SLA highlights the benefits of unrehearsed interaction rather than a more structured interaction whose sole purpose is to practise particular linguistic forms. Such interaction encourages pushed output and the development of a dynamic *interlanguage*. (Long, 2017, pg. 3), key to learning an L2.

# COURSE STRUCTURE

If we do go with the TBLT approach, here is the process to be followed. The advantages of the approach are highlighted in the following section.

The first step is to carry out a detailed needs analysis. The NA should focus on three specific areas

* aspects of their life and work where they will need to interact in English.
* cultural aspects of life in the country they are moving to, so they can be prepared for what they will encounter.
* aspects of international travel and airport regulations to ensure they know what to expect (the nurses come from small towns and may have little or no experience of travelling overseas)

The course curriculum will be based on the results of the needs analysis which is used to identify target tasks. This is followed by an identification of features of discourse required to carry out the target tasks effectively and collection of such samples if possible. The target tasks are broken down into pedagogic tasks sequenced in increasing levels of difficulty. Assessments included will focus on pre-defined achievement criteria focussed on successful negotiation of language to achieve task outcome.

SAMPLE TARGET TASK AND ASSOCIATED PEDAGOGIC TASKS

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Target task | Discourse | Pedagogic task |
| Navigating airport routines (1.5h) | Negotiating   * check- in * immigration (at destination)   + completing immigration forms  + asking/ answering questions politely | * Listening- a model conversation at a check in counter * Vocabulary- at the airport * Sequencing a jumbled conversation – At the check in desk * Anticipating/ Analysing problems- troubleshooting * Task- prep * Task- performance * Language analysis (discourse analysis and pronunciation features) |

# ADVANTAGES OF TBLT

Listed below are some of the advantages of this approach. TBLT

* identifies learner needs and targets what is both relevant to them and of immediate real-time use
* ensures motivation is high as learners contribute to the curriculum through the needs analysis and are clearly aware of the outcomes of the course.
* focuses on communicative outcome and not language units
* prioritises real-life communicative needs
* respects the internal developmental stage of grammar that the learner is at by through Focus on Form as opposed to Focus on FormS
* encourages pushed output when learners try to bridge the information nt through meaningful communication
* allows for unrehearsed interaction which enhances second language acquisition

It is true that proponents of synthetic syllabi and structural approaches will have an equally impressive body of research proving the efficacy of explicit Focus on FormS and the usefulness of input followed by practise in developing L2 proficiency.

However, there is one undeniable advantage that TBLT has over other methods and that is to do with lowering affective filters and helping learners take risks with the language especially in an Indian context. Even Elementary learners come to the classroom with a certain vocabulary base which they use freely to code switch between their L1 and English.

The final advantage this approach holds for us as an institution, is to upskill our teacher cohort to use a methodology that is undeniably learner-centred. I have no doubt that the approach will enhance our reputation in the market. It will give us the experience required to ensure we provide learners with the language they need to do what they want to do, when they want to do it as opposed to a generic one-size fits all approach.

Of course, this requires an outlay of time in the run up to the course. However, once the course is up and running it will require considerably less effort to run the programme. Furthermore, as we get adept at the using the methodology, we will be able to reduce the time taken to generate the various components.

# Requirements to successfully implement the approach

* Devise and administer a needs analysis.
* Design the curriculum based on it.
* Train teachers to work with the needs analysis to design appropriate pedagogic task cycles.
* Ensure access to a subject matter expert – nursing.
* Have a student counsellor speak to learners to explain the approach adopted and its benefits to learners.
* Build in Monitoring & Evaluation at regular intervals.

References

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