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Turning the unit on its head: applying TBL to GE coursebooks


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Accuracy First e.g. PPP



• **Present** Language Point




• **Practise** Language Point



• **Produce** Language Point

Fluency First e.g. TBL / TBLT



- **Pre-task** (preparation / support)

- **Task**

- **Focus on Language** (relevant to task...relevant to *learners*)

- **Repeat Task...?**

TBL:

- ▶ Prioritises **meaningful communication**: the task is central
- ▶ Does not assume **immediate mastery** i.e. that learners learn what we teach
- ▶ Casts its net wide: room for **emergent** and **incidental** language

What is a task?

- ▶ primary focus on **meaning** not form
- ▶ students' **own linguistic resources**
- ▶ **goal** or **outcome**
- ▶ ...a **gap**: need or desire to share information (e.g. share experiences / opinions, solve problems)

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Some sample tasks:

- Domestic Robot (listing / ranking)
- Fake News (problem solving)
- Crime and Punishment (opinion gap)
- Nostalgia Story (sharing experiences)



But...I use a coursebook with a
grammatical syllabus

I need to cover the grammar in
the unit



A few ways to 'taskify' your
coursebook:



1.

Ignore the grammar (for now) -
find the freer practice



2.

Make the freer practice task-like -
give it a goal / outcome e.g.:

- find similarities / differences
- agree / disagree
- find out more – follow-up questions
- be prepared to report back



3.

Turn the unit on its head –
start with this new “task”



4.

Do the language focus **after** this task but...



5.

...cast your net wide e.g.:

- feed in language while sts prepare task
- listen and note language during the task
- focus on this **emergent language** after
- examine texts / tapescripts from the unit
- If lacking, give a teacher model

6.

Repeat the task, with variables
e.g.:

- new partners
- new goal / outcome
- tweaked content
- different demands e.g. time limit



Now apply these principles to this material:

- 1) find the freer practice
- 2) give goal / outcome
- 3) identify other relevant language
- 4) repeat the task: how to vary?

Activities for Task-Based Learning by Neil Anderson and Neil McCutcheon

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