Early starters: Task-based teacher education in an undergraduate course

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## Task-based pre-service teacher training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duckett (2005)</td>
<td>Survey of 27 student teachers in a S. Korean TESOL certificate program examining effects of classroom observation tasks on attitudes toward TBLT</td>
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<td>Koenrad (2005)</td>
<td>Evaluation of online project aimed at developing network-based teaching competencies for pre-service and in-service teachers in Europe</td>
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<td>Tanaka &amp; Fukuda (2005)</td>
<td>Ethnographic study of undergraduates, graduates, and international volunteers in a task-based teacher training project in Japan</td>
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<td>Ogilvie &amp; Dunn (2007)</td>
<td>Study of student teachers’ dispositions toward TBLT and their use of TBLT in a 5-week practicum in Canada</td>
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</table>
Integrated English Program for 1st and 2nd year English majors

Core skill-based courses & theme-based seminar courses
IE Seminar: Approaches to TESOL
Two 90-minute periods per week
e-jyugyou.com
Moodle CMS
Needs analysis

Context
Information gathered through pre-instruction learner survey on language learning and teaching experiences

Purpose
Established through identification of culturally-relevant target tasks in educational literature

Use
Planned in consultation with program coordinators who gave insight on tasks & technology
“Early starters”
Second year
English majors
“Early starters”
Average age: 21 years
“Early starters”

Years of FL study: 11 years
“Early starters”
Experience studying abroad:
14 out of 15
“Early starters”
Cram school: 1
Tutoring: 5
No experience: 9
“Early starters”

Interest in teaching before instruction: 7
Interest in teaching after instruction: 12
## Approaches to TESOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-based methodology</th>
<th>Group facilitation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching demonstration</strong></td>
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<td>Listening tasks</td>
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<td>Reflection report</td>
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<td>Lectures to contextualize assigned readings</td>
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## Modeling task-based methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching demonstration</th>
<th>Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching demonstration</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer observation</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debriefing &amp; reporting</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>
Modeling task-based methods

- **Target task:** Lesson planning
- **Purpose:** Practice devising plans may help novices handle the greater autonomy afforded by recent MEXT curricular initiatives (Goto Butler & Iino, 2005)
- **Pedagogic tasks:** Review assessment criteria / decide focus & content for an interactive lesson / download plan template / write plans in small groups / upload finished plan to website
Modeling task-based methods
Modeling task-based methods

- **Target task:** Teaching demonstration
- **Purpose:** Lesson study, a form of PD valued by Japanese teachers, can involve peer demonstrations prior to lesson implementation (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999)
- **Pedagogic tasks:** Rehearse lessons / perform lessons for class / participate (as called for) in other lessons
Modeling task-based methods
Modeling task-based methods

- **Target task:** Peer observation
- **Purpose:** Used in teacher education in Japan for more than 100 years for PD (Sato & Asanuma, 2000)
- **Pedagogic tasks:** Read about & discuss peer observation / agree on observation foci in small groups / exchange passwords / observe via Internet & take notes
Modeling task-based methods
Modeling task-based methods

- **Target task:** Debriefing & reporting
- **Purpose:** Videotaped peer-collaborative demonstration classes used to promote critical reflection (Shimahara, 1998)
- **Pedagogic tasks:** Discuss observation notes in a group / exchange views / summarize discussions
Theoretical orientation
Borg (2006, p. 41)

Schooling
Beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, perspectives

Professional coursework
About teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, instruction, self

Contextual factors

Classroom practice

TEACHER COGNITION
Research questions

1. In terms of practical knowledge, what outcomes do participants say they gain through teaching tasks?

2. What do peer debriefings suggest about the practical knowledge of participants?

3. How do participants’ attitudes toward TBLT compare with those of peers not enrolled in the course?
## Methods

Mixed to achieve complementarity (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retrospective accounts</td>
<td>Written comments collected immediately after each task; 53 over 4 weeks; 5 categories of practical knowledge derived and coded by 2 raters (IRR = .91)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom discourse</td>
<td>Debriefing task audio-recorded and transcribed using CLAN; segments identified in which participants shared practical knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>17 items translated by Japanese NS; interviews and piloting to pre-test; given to participants and others in peer group after instruction</td>
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</table>
Retrospective accounts: Classroom technique

Definition: Knowledge related to techniques, practices, or activities used by teachers in a classroom setting.

Example: “Checking questions and confirming how much the students have understood are essential when teaching and holding a class” (peer observation task).
## Retrospective accounts: How to learn from others

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<th>Knowledge related to processes and products of discussing teaching and learning with others</th>
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<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
<td>“[I learned] other point of views that I’ve never had before because by talking with a lot of people about same topic and share some ideas, we get new informations” (debriefing &amp; reporting task)</td>
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</table>
Retrospective accounts: Implementing plans

**Definition**  Knowledge related to making, adapting, or using lesson plans

**Example**  “I’ve learned the importance of preparations in advance and at the same time being flexible” (observation)
Retrospective accounts: 

**Language skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Knowledge related to the availability of one’s language skills for use, especially in a classroom setting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>“I think I’ve achieved some speaking skills or communication skills” (observation)</td>
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Retrospective accounts:  
*The learner’s contribution*

<table>
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<th>Definition</th>
<th>Knowledge related to the learner’s contribution or needs, whether affective, linguistic, or otherwise</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>“proper level of a lesson to proper age--we need to understand the student level and provide for the class” (teaching)</td>
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Retrospective accounts

- Classroom technique: 34.0%
- How to learn from others: 24.5%
- Implementing plans: 24.5%
- Language skills: 11.3%
- Learners: 5.7%
Classroom discourse:

Gesture and communication

S1: I think clapping, well the gesture of clapping is an important, because first of all the students eh the students can get their attention and well they'll wake up if they get bored or something and also as everybody said they pointing gesture is very important as well, because they'll understand better.

S1: what's your important huh what's your favorite?
S2: I think every gesture's important.
S2: I don't know there's no particular one.
S3: mmm.
S2: it depends on what comes naturally.
S1: on the hands.
Classroom discourse: Integrating techniques to achieve balance

S4: well you have to think about making gestures and using whiteboards and and try not to make the students get bored and you need to make the balance between of ttt and stt so there's many tasks to for teachers.

S5: yeah.

S4: but that's the ideal thing for teacher for good teachers they can a make all those stuff bal all balance.

S6: okay.

S4: and check questions have to be have to be included in those parts in those tasks in order to be good teachers.

S5: yeah, that's pretty much all.
Classroom discourse:  
Teacher versus student roles

S7: are ha chotto dame da to omotta. are ha ichiban dame da to omotta. [that was a little bad I think. that was the worst I think]

S8: why?

S7: uh, because you didn't teach anything the students.

S9: the students were told to do something and you were just sitting.

S10: yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah I remember now.

S8: I read with the students.
Classroom discourse:  
Teacher versus student roles  

S9: there was no ttt.  
S11: no ttt.  
S9: student talking time too much.  
S10: stttm [=! laughter].
Classroom discourse:
Teacher versus student roles

S9:  demo saa kou sensei ha isyoukenmei oshiete seito ga kotaenaino to sensei ga tekitou ni oshiete seito ga sugoi gambaru teiuno doushitara ii ka to omou [which do you think is better: to have a teacher work hard and Ss not respond much, or to have the teacher teach without much effort and expect the students to try hard?]

S8:  seito ni gambattemoraitai to omoimasu [I think I want to have the students try their best].
Questionnaire

• Items based on Long & Norris (2001), Doughty & Long (2003), Robinson (2007) but tailored to participants’ experience
• Means comparisons of trainees and non-trainee peers in revealed no significant differences
• Trainee scores were generally high for widely-accepted TBLT principles:
  – Sequencing
  – Negotiation
  – Group and pair work
  – Emphasis on communicative use
  – Focus on learner needs
Questionnaire

• Greatest areas of difference:
  – “Teach lex items before task” (trainees < non-trainees)
  – “Teach language for classroom use” (trainees < non-trainees)
  – “Teach LSP” (trainees > non-trainees)
Summary

Task-based teacher training methods may assist trainees in terms of:

1. Acquiring practical knowledge
2. Sharing knowledge with other trainees
3. Forming positive attitudes toward TBLT
Conclusion

Never too early to start task-based teacher training?

Schooling + professional coursework +
  teaching practice + context =
  factors shaping teacher cognition

Never too late to establish context-sensitive, technology-
  enhanced, task-based undergraduate degree programs
  in language education
References