

Course design poster

Trainer's notes

Aims	To raise awareness of tailoring courses to suit students' needs To apply knowledge about learner needs and characteristics to a realistic case-study
Syllabus area	Learner characteristics and learner needs
Timetable fit	For use after input sessions on learner characteristics and learner needs
Interaction pattern	Group work
Timing	45 minutes
Materials needed	One copy of a learner profile (1.8A) for each group Poster paper Markers, crayons or paints (If required, fill in the blank card with a learner profile that more closely reflects your trainees' learners.)

Learner needs and characteristics are two separate areas of the TKT syllabus which can best be understood by contrasting and synthesising them. This task integrates both needs and characteristics into a single language-learner profile, and then asks trainees to consider implications for teaching/learning.

Instructions

1. Explain to the class that they are going to design a course for an individual learner. Elicit:
 - what they would need to know about a learner before designing a course for them, and
 - how a teacher could adapt a course to help meet those needs.

Build up a framework similar to the one below on the board:

- What you need to know:
Needs: Personal ~ Future professional ~ Learning
Characteristics: Learning style ~ Learning strategies ~ Age ~ Level ~ Maturity ~ Past learning experience ~ Motivation ~ Personality
- How to meet needs:
Materials ~ Topics ~ Pace ~ Activities ~ Approach
Language ~ Skills ~ Interaction Patterns ~ Level
Feedback ~ Learning Strategies ~ Workload

2. Divide the class into groups of four to six trainees. Hand out one learner profile to each group. (If you have more than three to four groups, give two groups the same profile.)
3. Explain that each group should use the framework on the board to design a course for their learner. Each group will then produce a poster advertising their course.

4. If necessary, check understanding of some of the listed needs, characteristics and other concepts, either before the group begins work or as the groups are working.
5. Monitor while groups brainstorm ideas and work on posters, answering questions and prompting trainees where necessary.
6. Have the groups present their language course to the class (two to three minutes each), explaining any key features in relation to the needs and characteristics discovered, e.g. *Cathy's a group learner so we included lots of social activities.*

Variation

Try this alternative with groups who are very close and uninhibited. Rather than using the profiles provided, have trainees create profiles of each other by interviewing each other about their learning needs and characteristics. Trainees can then use their notes from the interview to design a course and create a course poster.

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Learner profiles

Name: Cathy
Sex: female
Age: 42
Occupation: Primary English teacher
L1: Latin American Spanish



Cathy learnt English at school through the grammar-translation method, but then lived in the USA for several years as a student and became fluent.

Cathy has now been back in her native country for over 15 years. She remembers basic grammar and the vocabulary she's required to teach, but she no longer has the range of phrases and pronunciation she would prefer. She has received a training grant from the school authorities to 'top up' her language so is about to start a new course.

A visual and group learner who likes to help her colleagues as a mentor, Cathy would like to share her new knowledge with the rest of the English teaching team. She is very motivated to improve, and even keen to take a proficiency test, like FCE. She sometimes has difficulty assimilating and retaining new language.

Name: Thomas
Sex: male
Age: 29
Occupation: Designer
L1: German



Thomas studied English extensively at school and reached advanced level (C1). He has practised receptive skills on a regular basis since then through reading technical magazines and listening to international radio and TV.

Thomas now needs to work on his speaking and writing skills ready for a change of job: a promotion to European manager. He has very little time but owns a laptop and can often find pockets of time, when travelling, to work on homework assignments.

Due to work trips and family commitments, Thomas is not keen to schedule regular weekly classes, but would like to progress quickly and sees the need to concentrate on his English over the next few months.

Outgoing and confident, he enjoys chatting to other people, getting ideas and motivation from them. He never sits still!

Name: Manju
Sex: female
Age: 16
Occupation: Student
L1: Hindi



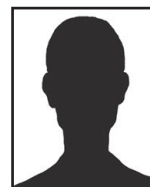
Manju studied English at school from the age of 6. However, her lessons were always at a very basic level because of the language level of her fellow students.

Manju had some friends who spoke English as a first language so she picked up a lot from them. Consequently, her spoken language is very fluent: she can converse comfortably with native speakers, particularly in informal settings. She also has extremely accurate pronunciation – she could almost be mistaken for a native speaker. These advanced speaking skills mask very limited written skills. Manju has little knowledge of the writing conventions and formal register required for academic papers. Her spelling, punctuation and handwriting are also poor.

Manju's ambition is to become a doctor, so she needs to improve her English for university entrance and for her future career.

She is a bright, hard-working student, who is highly opinionated and worldly-wise. She does, however, get bored easily, especially when working alone.

Name:
Sex:
Age:
Occupation:
L1:



YOUR PROFILE