

**THE EMERGING UNDERSTANDINGS AND PRACTICES OF TASK-BASED  
LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) BY THAI EFL STUDENT TEACHERS**

By

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## ABSTRACT

Despite substantive empirical evidence for the efficacy of task-based language teaching and learning (TBLT), research shows that the classroom implementation of TBLT has often met with mixed success, especially in Asian EFL contexts (Adams & Newton, 2009; Butler, 2011, 2017; Thomas & Reinders, 2015). One of the reasons is teachers' lack of understanding of TBLT (e.g., Carless, 2009) and it is this factor that the research focused on. Although TBLT is not widely known or practised in Thailand, its potential has been noted (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007), and so this is an important topic to address in this context.

The research consisted of a two-phase, exploratory, qualitative study into the introduction of a new module on task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the methodology course in the final year of a pre-service EFL teacher education programme in a Thai university. Data was collected from a class of 31 EFL student teachers (STs) in their final (fourth) year of study in the programme and three STs in a one-year teaching practicum at a secondary school.

Phase one investigated evidence of learning in the stated understandings of the STs and in their ability to design a task-based lesson at the conclusion of the TBLT module. Data consisted of pre-and post-course questionnaires, lesson plans designed by the STs, and focus-group interviews. The findings showed that after the 5-week TBLT module, two third of the class had developed a favourable disposition towards TBLT. At the conclusion of the module all the STs were able to plan a task-based lesson that broadly reflected principles of TBLT although there was evidence of limited understanding of task features and of difficulties with the task design process.

Phase two involved case studies of three of the STs as they undertook a one-year teaching practicum at a secondary school. During the practicum, lesson planning and classroom observation data (video/audio-recordings and observation notes) was collected in three phases: (1) prior to being given any additional lesson planning guidance; (2) during the process of collaborative lesson planning with the researcher; and (3) in subsequent independently planned and taught lessons. In addition, data collection included stimulated recall interviews, semi-structured interviews and group interviews with the teachers and with students from their classes. The data shows how

the STs' understandings and teaching practices developed across these three phases as well as the affordances and constraints that shaped their adoption of TBLT. Learners in the STs' classes actively engaged in the task-based lessons and reported positive attitudes towards the lessons.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the field of TBLT research by providing insights into the processes by which TBLT can be introduced into pre-service teacher education in a context where it has previously not been widely disseminated or understood.

Evidence presented in the study shows that the TBLT innovation was broadly successful in terms of its impact on the understandings and teaching practice by STs, at least as measured over the period of the STs main practicum experience.

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## List of Abbreviations

BEC	Basic Core Curriculum
CEFR	Common European Framework of References for Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
ELTSE	English Language Teaching for Secondary Education
ESL	English as a second language
FL	Foreign languages
OC1	Observation cycle 1
OC2	Observation cycle 2
OC3	Observation cycle 3
LTE	Language teacher education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NEA	The National Education Act
PPP	Presentation-Practice-Production
SL	Second languages
SR	Stimulated recall
ST	Student teacher
TBLT	Task-based language teaching
TQF: HEd	Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education





## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter sets the scene for the study by providing an overview of English language teaching and teacher education in Thailand. This background information provides a rationale for why this study is necessary. It then outlines the purpose of the study, followed by a discussion of the significance of this study. The chapter continues with the research aim and research questions. Finally, the organisation of the thesis is presented.

### 1.2 Background of the study

The formal teaching of English in schools in Thailand began in the mid-20th century but it was the national English curriculum which made English a compulsory subject in schools for the first time in 1996 (Baker, 2008; Foley, 2005). Although one of the key objectives of the 1996 English Curriculum was to foster students' ability to use English to communicate effectively, the teaching method in Thailand has been a teacher-centred grammar translation method. As Watson Todd (2005) comments,

English teaching in Thailand has been dominated by the traditional talk-and-chalk approach where classrooms are teacher-centred and explanations of English grammar given in Thai predominate (p.45).

In such classes, little attention is given to listening or speaking and even in supposedly CLT classrooms, actual communicative practice is rarely provided. Instead, as Saengboon (2004) found in a review of ELT in Thailand, learners are usually given pattern drills and expected to memorize isolated sentences. Consequently, Thai EFL has struggled to deliver significant improvement in students' level of English proficiency. Evidence of the low English proficiency of Thai students reported in the national surveys in 1998 highlighted the need for reform of the curriculum and teaching methodology (Wongsothorn, Hiranburana, & Chinnawongs, 2004). The greatest concern was learners' failure to develop their communication skills, and it was this issue that became the focus for the reform (Jeemjinda, 2003). As Markmee and Taylor (2001) argue, the majority of the students did not achieve the desired competence because the learning condition did not encourage communicative teaching.

Therefore, in keeping with international trends to more learner-centred, communicative pedagogy and in response to the needs of international communication, the National Education Act (NEA) of 1999 was introduced to reform education in Thailand at all levels: school reform, teacher reform, curriculum reform and administrative reform (Darasawang, 2007).

The NEA and the subsequent National Education Curriculum implemented in 2002 placed English and IT “at the forefront of national intellectual development” (Wongsothorn et al., 2004, p. 445). This new English curriculum was based on four strands called the 4Cs; culture, communication, connection, and community (Baker, 2008). These four strands aim to develop learners’ ability to use foreign languages for communicating in various situations in community and society, seeking knowledge and furthering education. This includes the ability to understand cultural diversity of the world community (Ministry of Education, 2008). The NEA included a set of progressive and learner-centred approaches (Watson Todd, 2015). It specified that the school curricula should be developed around learners’ needs, and that ELT should focus on the use of English for oral communication (Tayjanant & Barnard, 2010).

While the NEA is general and abstract, more practical and detailed guidelines for preparation of curriculum for teaching and learning activities at each educational level in local schools is provided in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (BEC) 2008 (Watson Todd, 2015). It specifies the learning standards and indicators that inform teachers in their selection of content needed to achieve the standards (OECD-UNESCO, 2016). Moreover, it enables teachers to clearly see expected learning outcomes throughout the entire course of study. The 2008 Curriculum strongly advocates a learner-centred approach and emphasizes teaching English for communicative purposes. Given that the 2008 Curriculum provides for the decentralisation of curriculum implementation, local schools had the freedom to design their own curriculum based on their own needs. Teachers have to plan their own course materials that align with real-life situations in the community (Dili, 2016). To provide clearer guidance on the content of teaching, the MOE also provides a list of recommended textbooks for schools to choose. However, as Watson and Keyuravong (2004) note,

Most of the books focus on teaching grammar, provide trivial content based largely on British or American culture, and assess proficiency through closed-

ended exercises. Generally, the content of these textbooks does not match the objectives and methodologies of the NEA and the learning standards (p.18).

A comprehensive review of the 2008 Curriculum conducted by UNESCO in 2016 found many loopholes in this curriculum. For example, the 2008 curriculum lacks clarity, consistency and relevance. Education staff need more training and support to implement the curriculum. There is limited capacity to assess how well the curriculum has delivered its intended outcomes. Due to the weaknesses found, the review team provides a number of recommendations for future curriculum reform.

Despite the limitations, the 2008 Curriculum has been using as a framework for Thai schools to frame their own curricular in accordance with the policy for many years. Recently, seeing the needs to prepare Thailand for entry to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, the MOE introduced the latest policy called the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to schools in Thailand. It is expected that following the CEFR, students can make predictable progress along the scale and teachers can have better lesson plans accordingly. The development of English competency among Thais can increase the competitiveness of the country as Thailand entered into the ASEAN.

Overall, the CEFR serves as a key framework for teaching and learning English language in Thailand. This includes curriculum planning, learning and teaching development, exam design, assessment, teacher development, and the setting of learning targets (English Language Institute, 2015, p. 1). It is recommended that English language teaching in Thai schools aligns with this framework and focuses on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, the extent to which the CEFR is adopted by each school depends on the school's readiness. The MOE provides general guidelines for three types of schools categorized by their readiness for the reform (i.e., low, moderate and high level of readiness). In planning language curriculum, the schools are recommended to align the curriculum, teaching and learning goals with the benchmarks stated in the CEFR (Prasongporn, 2016). The MOE has specified levels of English language proficiency in the CEFR targets for school students in order to develop their competence. For example, Grade 6 students are at level A1 (beginners). Therefore, the CEFR level descriptors of A1 will inform the design of language curriculum and assess the language learning outcomes of this group of learners

(Sornkam, Person, & Yordchim, 2018). According to Hiranburana et al. (2017, p. 96), this framework is “powerful in giving the can-do statements of what is needed for language learners to do in the actual context of use.”

However, the CEFR is not without its own problem. Many teachers and schools do not have clear understanding of the CEFR (Sornkam et al., 2018). Teachers’ reactions to the framework appeared passive and indifferent (Franz & Teo, 2017). Support and guidance for teachers has been limited to one-day training sessions attended by representatives from various schools (Maxwell, 2015). Teachers were not given many explanations or guidance by the authorities during the early rollout stages of the framework (Franz & Teo, 2017).

Initiatives to improve ELT in Thai schools at all levels have gone through different curricular changes (Weerawong, 2004). However, the level of English proficiency among Thai students and citizens that has not shown great improvement (Kaur, Young, & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Evidence of the continuing poor standard of English in Thailand has been shown in international English language assessments. For example, the Education First English Proficiency Index reported the English proficiency level in Thailand ranked 64 among 88 countries in 2018, which put it in a very low proficiency group (Education First, 2018).

This increasing focus on learner-centred instruction and communicative teaching requires reform of teacher education. Notably, a new model of a five-year teacher education programme (B.Ed.) was launched in 2004 with the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of teachers and preparing them to implement the new approaches to teaching and learning (Naruemon, 2013). In this new model, modifications were made to the programme’s duration from four to five years, and the length of school placement from one semester to one year (Naruemon, 2013).

Despite considerable investment in these reforms, they have not reached their full potential. There has been little evidence of a change in teaching practices from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches (Naruemon, 2013). Teachers found it difficult to implement communicative approach because of the influence of national examinations (Fitzpatrick, 2011). They still emphasized more on grammar teaching although the policy has been advocating the communicative approach (Nomnian, 2013). Teachers

lack knowledge about the teaching methodologies recommended in the policy reforms (Kitjaroonchai, 2013). An investigation of 40 pre-service teachers' perspectives on their teacher education programme revealed that the teaching methods they were taught did not emphasize learner-centredness (Suporn & Prammanee, 2012). Thus, even in teacher education programmes, pedagogical techniques and methodologies are not employed to serve as good models for student teachers. Similarly, a study on Thai pre-service teachers' understanding about learner-centred classrooms revealed that their understanding was superficial (Naruemon, 2013).

This lack of adoption reflects problems affecting the development of teachers of English in Thailand. Of great concern is the lack of sufficient knowledge and skills about new teaching practices and the lack of local experts to distribute the new knowledge and skills among the teachers. In this respect, language teacher education programmes have an important role in helping early career teachers to meet the ambitious requirements expected of them.

In addressing the issues raised above, we might ask questions such as: is the lack of pedagogical knowledge because student teachers are being taught methodology in their education but are not applying the principles? Does the use of new teaching practices depend on whether the individual universities support and promote them? How can teacher education programmes encourage teachers to adopt new methodologies? How can the rollout of pedagogical innovations be brought about most effectively? These questions have motivated me, as a language teacher educator in Thailand to seek for answers and conduct a study on the experience of pre-service teachers learning to teach with an innovative approach in a teacher education programme.

### **1.3 Personal rationale**

I began my teaching career as a teacher of English as a foreign language at the undergraduate level in two universities at different times and continued for six years. I then started a new job as a teacher trainer in a language teacher education programme in a university in Thailand. During the first year as a teacher trainer, everything went well because my teaching load was manageable and the courses I taught were mostly about English language skills. The student teachers enjoyed my classes, which made me confident about my teaching. However, a turning point was during my fourth year when I started to question my own capacity as the teacher trainer. I doubted that my

knowledge about teaching methodology was as comprehensive as it should be. This feeling occurred after I had been informed I was taking over a methodology course from a teacher who would be taking study leave. Despite being a teacher of English for many years before becoming a teacher trainer, when it came to the course on teaching methodology, I was not confident about what I had known. My understanding at that time was that a teacher trainer should know everything including all teaching techniques and approaches in order to train student teachers. To overcome my fear, I spent a considerable amount of time researching teaching methodology while preparing for the course which would start the next semester.

In my studies, I encountered task-based language teaching (TBLT) and became highly interested in it through reading “A framework for task-based learning” (J. Willis, 1996). The first two chapters provide the rationale for TBLT and highlight the need for an alternative approach that focuses on learners rather than the teacher and traditional classroom routines. In line with J. Willis (1996), I agreed that TBLT could fulfil such a need and was a promising approach that should be promoted in Thai classrooms in addition to “traditional method die-hards” (Shehadeh, 2012, p. 7) such as PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production). Fascinated by the ideas, I looked for the TBLT literature in Thailand and felt disappointed that little had been done so far when compared to other Asian countries. As this methodology course also dealt with topics other than TBLT, I had to leave off and move onto the other topics. When the new semester began, the course went well and I continued teaching it again in the following year.

Two years later, as a part of the teacher education programme, I accompanied my colleagues to visit and observe the classes taught by four of my former student teachers in the practicum. While three of them taught grammar-focused lessons and teacher-centred classroom activities, one used communicative activities that created a lot of noise but were full of interactions. I was excited by the fact that he could create learning conditions similar to what I read in J. Willis’s (1996) book (i.e., exposure, use of language, motivation and instruction). He used a quiz website called ‘Kahoot<sup>1</sup>’, which was very new at that time. In the lesson, the students worked in groups and answered the quiz shown on the screen. This class was very different from many classes I had

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<sup>1</sup> Kahoot is a social learning and a game-based learning platform. There are multiple-choice quizzes that allow user generation and can be accessed via a web browser, phone, or the app itself (Wikipedia, 2019).

observed earlier, especially in terms of classroom dynamics. From my perspective, this kind of class inspires learning, activating the use of language and fosters collaboration. Through a lens of a teacher educator, I asked myself, how can I encourage my student teachers to break the standard of routine teaching and try new practices similar to this student teacher I observed? This incident was a starting point that inspired me to undertake PhD research.

#### **1.4 Educational rationale**

First, TBLT provides a degree of flexibility ranging from more communicative-based tasks to more structure-based ones (Skehan, 2003). It also offers a good environment for teaching communicative skills in a grammar-dominant context such as Thailand because it provides a principled approach to focus on form. According to Spada and Lightbown (2006), “finding the balance [between meaning-based and form-focused activities] helps to overcome the polarisations inherent in CLT [communicative language teaching] and, at the same time, helps to make TBLT a convincing pedagogical model” (pp.177-178). Results from a number of studies on the introduction of TBLT in university EFL programmes in Thailand support this view (Darasawang, 2015; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Watson Todd, 2006). As Ellis (2009) argues:

TBLT offers the opportunity for ‘natural’ learning inside the classroom. It emphasizes meaning over form but can also cater for learning form. It caters to the development of communicative fluency while not neglecting accuracy. It can be used alongside a more traditional approach (p.242).

Secondly, TBLT promotes a collaborative learning environment, which is believed to be compatible with the collectivism preferred by Thai students (Gentner, 2014). Thai students are comfortable working in groups or pairs (Saetang, 2014).

Thirdly, TBLT aligns with the main themes of the new English curriculum (2001) that is a learner-centred approach and communicative competence. This advantage of TBLT has also been acknowledged by the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) in a curriculum document (Jeemjinda, 2003). The MOE has provided a set of guidelines for teachers to achieve the new ELT syllabus issued in 1998: “Communicative tasks are focused on. Task-based learning is suggested for developing English for communication” (Department of National Curriculum, 2000, p. 17).



### **1.5 Aims of the study**

The overall aim of the current study is to investigate whether the student teacher (STs) could translate explicit knowledge about task-based language teaching (TBLT) that they were taught in a teacher education programme (Phase one) into their teaching practice in the subsequent practicum (Phase two). In Phase one, the STs' participation in a taught TBLT module was tracked and their capacity to design a task-based lesson was analysed. In Phase two, three of these STs were observed in three separate observation cycles to investigate how their cognition and teaching practices reflected whether they had learnt in Phase one and then how it evolved during the practicum, and what factors constrained or facilitated their translation of theory into practice.

In simple terms, the study sought to understand the impact of the TBLT module in the Year 4 teacher education programme on the cognition and classroom practices of the STs. Specifically, this study investigated:

- (a) the relationship between the taught and practised components of TBLT and factors which mediated this relationship;
- (b) the readiness with which these novice teachers translated TBLT teaching principles into classroom practice; and
- (c) the extent to which targeted professional support aided the translation of principles to practice.

Overall, the following research questions (RQs) were addressed:

Phase one: Introducing the TBLT module in the Year 4 teacher education programme

RQ1: What impact did the TBLT module have on:

- 1.1 the STs' disposition towards TBLT and;
- 1.2 the lesson design processes and the planned lessons?

Phase two: Applying TBLT in the teaching practicum

RQ2. How did the STs' stated understandings of TBLT and their teaching practices change during their teaching in the practicum?

RQ3. What factors did the STs perceive to have influenced their planning for and/or practice of TBLT?

RQ4. How did learners engage in the task-based lessons in the observation cycle 2?

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study aims to make three important contributions. First, it contributes to the three intersecting fields of language teacher education, teacher cognition and TBLT. It provides insights into the processes by which TBLT can be introduced into pre-service teacher education in a context where it has previously not been widely disseminated or understood. To date, within the field of TBLT, insufficient information has been provided on TBLT in a pre-service EFL teacher education programme in Thailand. Moreover, this study also adds to the understanding of how student teachers' cognition and teaching practice of TBLT evolve over time. Through the empirical investigation, this study provides a deeper understanding of how novice teachers construct and apply their understanding of TBLT which is important for providing more effective training in TBLT teacher education programmes.

Secondly, this study is significant because it is methodologically innovative. The provision of collaborative scaffolding of task-based lesson planning is a novel approach that provides information on the process of supporting teachers adopting TBLT in the practicum. In addition, the study also contributes to the TBLT research methodology in that it proposes an alternative framework for analysing tasks, which was adapted from Erlam's (2015) framework. This coding framework draws on Ellis's (2009) four criteria of tasks, which allows for the possibility that not every activity will fully satisfy the four criteria and some may have features of "taskness" without fulfilling all four criteria (Ellis, 2018). Thinking of an activity in terms of its degree of task-likeness can make the analysis more feasible in reality.

Finally, the findings of this study also add to the understanding of how to improve the quality of language teacher education programmes. The study sheds light on the processes of designing, integrating and managing an innovation in the teacher education programme. Key insights such as the affordances and constraints that shape the uptake of the innovation are important since they help to understand how the innovation is realized and has profound effects on cognition and pedagogical practices of STs.

## **1.7 Organisation of the thesis**

The thesis consists of eleven chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction of the thesis. Chapter 2 reviews the research literature in the three areas of scholarship that underpin the study: language teacher education (LTE), language teacher cognition and task-based

language teaching (TBLT). The thesis continues with Chapter 3 providing an overview of the general principles adopted in the research, followed by Chapter 4 which describes the methodology used to carry out Phase one. Then, Chapter 5 discusses the findings of Phase one in three areas: the impact of the TBLT module on the STs' disposition towards TBLT; the lesson design processes, and the planned lessons by the groups of STs. This chapter ends with my reflection on the affordances and constraints encountered in the process of introducing the TBLT module in a pre-service EFL teacher education programme. After that, Chapter 6 presents the methodology adopted to carry out Phase two. Then Chapters 7, 8 and 9 provide an in-depth account of each of the three student teachers (STs) undertaking a one-year teaching practicum in the secondary school. Chapter 10 discusses these findings across the three STs relating to the following three topics: changes in the STs' stated understandings of TBLT and their teaching practices; the factors the STs perceived to have influenced their implementation of TBLT, and learners engagement in the task-based lessons. Finally, Chapter 11 concludes the study by providing a summary of the key findings from Phases one and two. It also discusses the pedagogical, methodological, and theoretical implications of the findings. Potential limitations and recommendations for future study are also outlined in this final chapter.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research literature in the three areas of scholarship that underpin the study: language teacher education (LTE), language teacher cognition and task-based language teaching (TBLT). To begin with, I provide an overview of recent trends in LTE, followed by the literature on the relationship between theory and practice in teacher education. Then, I discuss the literature on language teacher cognition and its relationship with teacher education. Next, I provide the literature on learner engagement particularly with tasks in language classrooms. Later, I provide the theoretical background of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and research on TBLT in Thailand and internationally that focus on teacher education and/or teacher cognition and TBLT. Finally, I consider the implications of this review for the current study.

### 2.2 Language teacher education

The past four decades have witnessed a considerable change in the field of second/foreign language teacher education (hereafter LTE) due to various influences (e.g., the reconceptualization of the knowledge base of LTE, a paradigm shift and globalization). In his state-of-art review, Wright (2010, p.288) concluded that LTE is “an enterprise in transition, and one which is establishing a new identity as it draws on new knowledge and employs new pedagogic practices.” Early LTE, which was traditional and transmission-oriented, was about teaching and its methods and techniques. Then, the field focused more on how teachers learn to teach, how their professional lives evolve, the social contexts of learning and the importance of teachers’ mental lives. The growing body of theoretical views and research into LTE placed teachers at the centre (Vélez-Rendón, 2002). LTE has been influenced by general education (Crandall, 2000) and research in “feeder fields” (Wright, 2010, p.288), for example, reflective teaching (Farrell, 2013; Schön, 1983); teacher cognition (S. Borg, 2006) and practitioner research (Burns, 2010).

Studies which have investigated the impact of LTE programmes on novice teachers’ development have revealed challenges encountered by beginning teachers and raised questions about the effectiveness of LTE programmes. For example, studies showed that LTE programmes did not adequately prepare novice teachers for the complexities of real classrooms (Farrell, 2008; K. E. Johnson, 1996; Korthagen, 2010; Korthagen &

Kessels, 1999; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Trappes-Lomax & McGrath, 1999; Vélez-Rendón, 2002; Wright, 2010).

In an overview of the literature on the relationship between theory and practice in teacher education, Korthagen (2010) reports several issues including teacher socialisation, the complexity of teaching, the theory–practice divide, resistance from the student teachers and a transfer problem. This last factor has drawn so much attention from researchers because it suggests the limited impact of many teacher education programmes. For example, Macalister (2016) reported limited impact of a trans-national language teacher education programme on Malaysian pre-service teachers' teaching practices. He interviewed and observed student teachers who completed two years of their degree in New Zealand and returned to Malaysia to undertake the practicum. The findings showed that student teachers' pedagogical decisions were influenced by the immediate context such as a set curriculum, peers, supervising and cooperating teachers rather than the teacher education experienced in New Zealand. Similarly, student teachers in Cabaroglu's (2014) study revealed the theory and practice incongruence they faced during the practicum through their journal entries. Some student teachers were frustrated and concluded that the "right techniques" and "theory" did not necessarily "yield fruitful results in reality" (p.138) when dealing with misbehaviours in the class. In the same vein, Richards and Pennington (1998) investigated five ESL teachers in Hong Kong during the first year of their teaching. They found that the teachers abandoned or ignored many of the principles such as communicative language teaching they had developed earlier in the teacher education programmes. These teachers used familiar teaching practices rather than what they had learned in the teacher education programme. There were several contextual factors contributing to this lack of transfer such as large classes, teaching to the test and discipline problems. They proposed that teacher education should "explicitly align itself with local practices or ... work to change those practices" (p. 190).

Such findings also reflect Gebhard's (2009) point that learning to teach is not transferring knowledge, but rather constructing an identity through social practice. He further suggests that LTE programmes should help teachers learn how to develop identities that can guide them while teaching in schools rather than focusing on the ideas of helping learners transfer learning. Farrell (2008) conducted an in-depth study with one first year teacher who reported encountering a number of challenges during

this time. For example, there was a conflict between his desires to use a learner-centred approach he had learned in the teacher education courses and the teacher-centred approach that was firmly adopted by the teachers in the school. This led Farrell to suggest that LTE should move away from a focus on various methods of teaching towards promoting “skills in anticipatory reflection” that will raise teachers’ awareness of what they will encounter during the transition from the teacher education programme to the real classroom.

In line with Farrell (2008), Korthagen (2010) argues that many teacher education programmes themselves create the theory-practice gap because they emphasize transmissive learning about theory without opportunities to participate in experiential practice and reflect on their own actions and experiences. These practices are necessary for developing practical knowledge. Looking at it another way, K. E. Johnson (2016) suggests that teaching practicums in LTE programmes are often disconnected from academic coursework and thus learning become more discovery-based. Therefore, she suggests that LTE programmes should create multiple opportunities for teachers to engage more in “theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices” (p.131) in the contexts where they teach. This includes opportunities for teacher educators to offer expert help that supports teachers during the process of becoming a teacher. This suggestion indicates that LTE should integrate theory and practice in support of teachers’ teaching practice.

Overall, previous research on teacher education reveals the limited impact of pre-service teacher education on teacher practices. Our current knowledge of what actually happens in LTE is continuously expanding. Therefore, we still need more research inside classrooms contexts describing what is really happening in LTE programmes in different countries. In response to this need, this current study investigated the experience of student teachers who attempt to translate TBLT teaching principles into classroom practice during the Year 4 LTE programme and the field experience.

### **2.3 Language teacher cognition**

Teacher cognition concerns the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching (S. Borg, 2003). It highlights the influence of thinking on behaviour and therefore emphasizes the need to understand teachers’ mental lives rather than merely focusing on observable behaviours. Because of a growing realization that “teachers are active thinking decision-

makers who play a central role in shaping classroom events” (S. Borg, 2006, p. 2), the study of language teacher cognition has grown dramatically in recent years (Barnard & Burns, 2012; S. Borg, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012; Woods, 1996; H. Zheng, 2015; Zhu, 2018).

A leading researcher on teacher cognition, S. Borg (2006) defines teacher cognition as “the complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work” (p. 272). He also provided a simple definition of cognition as what teachers “think, know and believe” (S. Borg, 2003, p. 81). Zhu (2018) points out that this simplified definition aligns with the definition of teacher beliefs by Basturkmen, Loewen, and Ellis (2004) that says “statements teachers made about their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what ‘should be done’, ‘should be the case’, and ‘is preferable’” (p. 244). Various terminologies have been used to define the concept of teacher beliefs, which inevitably leads to confusion (S. Borg, 2006; Woods & Çakır, 2011). However, for the purpose of this study, I adopted the term “understanding” as an inclusive term to refer to teachers’ mental lives that involves “the dynamic nature of teacher knowledge” (Woods & Çakır, 2011, p. 383). According to Tarone and Allwright (2005), understanding is,

Something beyond merely having a particular skill or having a certain piece of knowledge. Understanding is whatever helps us to use our skill and knowledge appropriately (p.7).

The above definition is similar to Andon and Eckerth’s (2009, p. 304) definition of understanding, “a self-reflective account of one’s professional beliefs.” Carless (2015, p. 368) specifically used the term “understanding” of TBLT to refer to “the ability to engage with the principles of TBLT and an awareness of classroom applications of these principles.” This study adopted Carless’ s (2015) definition because it closely aligns with the purpose of this study aiming to unfold the naturally occurring processes of how one makes sense of TBLT and how understanding of TBLT evolves.

### **2.3.1 The impact of teacher education on teacher cognition**

One important area of research on teacher cognition involves the development of or change in student teachers' beliefs during their teacher education programme.

Research has been conducted to investigate the impact of teacher education on prior beliefs (Freeman, 1992; Kagan, 1992) developed during their previous years in school as students (Lortie & Clement, 1975) and which become a filter in the development of their learning of the new information taught in the programme (Almarza, 1996; S. Borg, 2006; Farrell, 1999). The impact of teacher education programmes on teacher cognition and practice has been long and widely debated among researchers (S. Borg, 2006). On the one hand, some research found that student teacher's beliefs are inflexible and deeply grounded and so persist as filters on the pre-service teacher education programmes (e.g., M. Borg, 2005; Kagan, 1992; Powell, 1992; Tatto, 1998; Zeichner, Tabachnick, & Densmore, 1987). For example, Kagan (1992) concluded that teacher education had a limited impact on cognitions of pre-service teachers and that there was no significant relationship between them. Similarly, M. Borg (2005) also reported limited impact of teacher education on pre-service teacher beliefs. Other studies have challenged such claims and provided evidence that teacher education has an influence on student teacher beliefs and/or behaviours, especially during the practicum (e.g., S. Borg, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2012; Busch, 2010; Debrel, 2012; Mattheoudakis, 2007; E. B. Nettle, 1998; Phipps, 2007; Tillema, 1998).

In an early survey study of student teachers' beliefs about teaching, E. B. Nettle (1998) found changes in the student teachers' beliefs about teaching during the practicum. In the same year, Tillema (1998) developed a teaching-belief test to investigate the student teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning before and after the course. Although the results showed the seemingly unchanged beliefs, more detailed analysis revealed that there was also some evidence of change which was not in "a unidirectional or intended way and not in the same manner for each student teacher" (p.217). Such a result can be explained by Cabaroglu and Roberts's (2000) argument about the ambiguity of the notion of inflexibility. As they said, "inflexibility could mean a whole group has failed to move unidirectionally towards the beliefs promoted by the course" (p.389). Alternatively, it could also mean an absence of dramatic change, which aligns with S. Borg's (2006) point that impact does not necessarily mean change but can also be viewed as the reinforcement of prior cognitions. Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) tested the inflexibility view of student teachers' beliefs by exploring the nature of belief



development of twenty student teachers during a one-year PGCE programme. They concluded that teachers' belief is flexible and so is "variable, cumulative and evolutionary" (p.398).

Further evidence of the influence of teacher education on teachers is shown in Yuan and Lee's (2014) study. They reported a range of belief change processes occurring among three student teachers during the practicum and concluded that the STs' beliefs are not stable but are open to change and development. They further highlighted the need for more studies on the process of cognitive change in situated sociocultural contexts to enhance our understanding of the complex process of cognitive development among novice teachers. Similarly, Busch (2010), Debreli (2012), and Xiong (2016) also found changes in belief about teaching and learning EFL among teachers during the training programme.

Overall, the studies reviewed above suggested inconsistent conclusions about whether the student teachers' beliefs should be viewed as deeply grounded and so persist as filters or barriers on pre-service teacher education programmes or as flexible and therefore having variable impact on teacher development. A possible explanation for this contrasting result can be explained by S. Borg's (2003, 2006, 2009) arguments. He observed that many studies on the ineffectiveness of teacher education in changing pre-service teacher beliefs tended to primarily focus on the content of teachers' cognition (e.g., what teachers thought) while studies that looked at the processes of cognitive development (e.g., how teachers restructured their thought at different times) found changes in student teacher beliefs during teacher education. Moreover, due to the differences between the nature of each teacher education programme (e.g., a short course or a year programme) and the evidence of change reported in each study (e.g., questionnaires, interviews or classroom practices), the comparison and interpretation of these findings warrant caution and must consider these variables. S. Borg (2003) notes that one reason for this controversy is a lack of consensus on what counts as evidence of cognition and how to measure its change. He proposed more areas for further investigation such as the distinction between cognitive change and behavioural change and the process of change in teachers' cognitions and practices. While work has been done in the last area, in particular, in the past 16 years, we still need more longitudinal research in the contexts of teacher education and teaching practice in schools. And it is this need that the current study intended to address.

In spite of the variations, S. Borg (2006, p.276) concluded that “the impact of teacher education cannot be taken for granted and that teachers make sense of and are affected by training programmes in different and unique ways”. Our understandings of the impact of LTE on teacher cognition and behaviour are emerging. Clearly, this area merits further empirical attention. Despite the growing number of recent studies on language teacher cognition, most focus on the content of cognition (e.g., teacher’s beliefs, knowledge or attitudes) but not on the ways cognition evolves. In response to this gap, this current study, therefore, explores the dynamic processes of how pre-service teachers develop their understandings and practices of TBLT. Insights from the development processes will add to our understanding of how student teachers developed their understanding of TBLT and how these processes can be supported through teacher education programmes. A deeper understanding how teachers construct and apply their understanding of TBLT is important for providing more efficacious training in TBLT teacher education programmes.

#### **2.4 Learner engagement**

Another focus of this study involves learner engagement, which Ellis (2018) refers to as a key construct used to investigate task performance. The term engagement is frequently used to refer broadly to learners’ interest and participation in an activity. In applied linguistics, Philp and Duchesne (2016) describe engagement as “a state of heightened attention and involvement, in which participation is reflected not only in the cognitive dimension, but in social, behavioural, and affective dimensions as well” (p.3). They view engagement as consisting of interacting and overlapping dimensions and so propose that engagement be treated as multidimensional and interconnected (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Task-based researchers are increasingly paying attention to how learner engagement is related to learning. Baralt, Gurzynski-Weiss, and Kim (2016) investigated dimension of engagement in task-based peer interaction under two different conditions: face-to-face and computer chat interaction by two groups of students learning Spanish in an American university. Drawing on Svalberg’s (2012) model of engagement with language, the researchers looked for evidence of engagement (cognitive, social, and affective) from instances of LREs (language-related episodes) in transcripts of group work interaction, chat logs and questionnaires. The result showed that the face-to-face group displayed more evidence of cognitive engagement (e.g., attention to language

forms, critical reflection during the tasks), social engagement (e.g., supportive interaction) and affective engagement (e.g., positive feelings, eagerness) than the online group. All three types of engagement were “diminished or were entirely absent in the online interactions” (p. 209). In the face to face interaction condition, the researchers found that social and effective engagement mediated cognitive engagement. Such that learners were more cognitively engaged when also socially and affectively engaged.

Another study conducted by Lambert, Philp, and Nakamura (2017) investigated learner engagement in two types of tasks (narrative and opinion gap tasks), under different conditions (learner-generated content as opposed to teacher-generated content). They drew on the interaction data from 32 Japanese university students and measured engagement as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, behavioural, and social-emotional components. The researchers found that the task that was based on learner-generated content led to higher levels of all three kinds of engagement compared to the tasks based on teacher-generated content.

In the same vein, Phung (2017) investigated the task preferences of ESL learners at two US universities and how these preferences impacted on learner engagement. After performing two distinct communicative tasks, the students then participated in an interview. The researcher measured engagement in terms of behavioural, cognitive, and social constructs in the interview data and found that the learners preferred the task that allowed them to make their own choices and their own decisions. They had higher cognitive engagement while performing the task they preferred more. These findings led to the conclusion that when learners were allowed to create content for the tasks themselves, they engaged more in task performance.

Similarly, Newton and Bui (2017) investigated learner engagement in three intact classes in PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) lessons compared with task-based lessons. The researchers broadly defined engagement as how the students are “attracted to their work, persist in it despite challenges and obstacles, and take visible delight in accomplishing their work” (p.272). Their qualitative analysis of classroom interaction data and focus group interview with students showed that engagement was consistently high in the TBLT lessons versus the PPP lessons.

Overall, the studies reviewed above have made substantial contribution to our understanding of engagement in relation to TBLT. This understanding offers practical guidance on how teachers can design tasks to promote engagement. Ellis (2018) calls for the research on engagement that theorizes exactly what behaviours are important for successful task performance and learning.

Looking ahead, Philp and Duchesne (2016) propose that future research should continue to look at how engagement influences learning, how engagement manifests itself and how the dimensions of cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioural engagement are evident in various classrooms contexts. This current study sought to follow this proposal by drawing on the framework of dimensions of engagement developed by Philp and Duchesne (2016) and applying it to learner engagement in intact EFL secondary school classes in Thailand.

## **2.5 Task-based language teaching (TBLT)**

The central focus of the current study is task-based language teaching (hereafter TBLT). TBLT evolved from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in response to the criticisms of CLT. It has its origin over three decades ago. Dissatisfied with the traditional teaching method (Structural Situational Method) in his teaching context, Prabhu (1987) developed the first completed account of a task-based course in an EFL project called the Bangalore Project in India. He believed that learners learn more efficiently when they focus more on the task, rather than on the language they are using (Prabhu, 1987). According to East (2012, pp. 22-23), TBLT is “a logical development to the CLT paradigm that might address some of the apparent weakness of CLT.” As Van den Branden (2006a, p. 1) describes it, TBLT is “an approach to language education in which students are given functional tasks that invite them to focus primarily on meaning exchange and use language for real-world, non-linguistic purposes.” TBLT is advocated as an alternative approach to form-focused instruction to second language teaching (Bygate, Norris, & Van den Branden, 2009b).

Since its emergence in the 1980s, it has been the subject of a large body of publications (e.g., Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Crookes & Gass, 1993; Ellis, 2003; Estaire & Zanón, 1994; Nunan, 2004; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Skehan, 1998, 2011; D. Willis & Willis, 2007; J. Willis, 1996). Moreover, TBLT has been supported by a large body of empirical research (Bygate, Norris, & Van den Branden, 2009a; M. Long, 2014;

Shehadeh & Coombe, 2012; Shintani, 2016; Thomas & Reinders, 2015; Van den Branden, 2006a) and aligns with theorizing in instructed SLA (Loewen, 2015).

A core construct of TBLT is a task. It is, therefore, important to understand what constitutes a task. In what follows, I present key conceptual definitions of tasks and the design of a task-based lesson.

## 2.5.1 Conceptual foundation

### 2.5.1.1 Definitions of tasks

Various definitions of tasks are found in the TBLT literature. The following Table 2.1 summarises a number of definitions of a task proposed by different scholars.

Table 2.1 Examples of definition of a task

Authors	Definition
Long (1985, p. 89)	[a task is] a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book...In other words, by task is meant the hundreds of things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between.
Candlin (1987, p. 10)	One of a set of differentiated, sequencable, problem-posting activities involving learners and teachers in some joint selection from a range of varied cognitive and communicative procedures applied to existing and new knowledge in the collective exploration and pursuance of foreseen or emergent goals within a social milieu.
Nunan (1989, p. 10)	A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is primarily focused on meaning rather than form.
J. Willis (1996, p.53)	Activities where the target language is used by the learner for communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome.
Skehan (1998, p. 268)	An activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some communication problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities; task completion has some priority; the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.
Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001, p. 11)	An activity, which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective.
Ellis (2003, p.16)	A workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be

	<p>evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills, and various cognitive processes.</p>
<p>Long (2016, p. 6)</p>	<p>Tasks are the real-world communicative uses to which learners will put the L2 beyond the classroom—the things they will do in and through the L2—and the task syllabus stands alone, not as one strand in a hybrid of some kind. The real-world tasks maybe required for academic purposes, for example, locating a journal in a university library, writing a lab report, or attending a graduate-level economics lecture. They may be for vocational training purposes, for example, in a noisy restaurant kitchen, preparing kitchen utensils and cooking ingredients at the direction of a master chef, attending a class for trainee computer technicians... They may be for occupational purposes, either in the home country, for example, while employed in the tourist industry, welcoming and checking in hotel guests, renting surfboards, or leading a guided tour, or overseas... Whatever their main purpose and whether short or long term (including immigration to a new country), overseas stays will usually also involve a variety of “social survival” tasks, such as following street directions, using public transport, opening a bank account, renting an apartment, taking a driver’s test, visiting a doctor, or registering a child for school.</p>

Common to these definitions is a primary focus on meaning and outcome-evaluated goals. The meaning of tasks has evolved over time. Long’s (1985) early definition of tasks reflects the real-world uses of language beyond the classroom (target tasks) and sometimes involves non-linguistic outcomes (i.e., a painted fence or a borrowed book). As Nunan (2004) notes, some examples in Long’s (1985) list above do not even involve the use of language at all since they can be done without talking (e.g., painting a fence). Recently, Long (2016) has refined the meaning of tasks. His recent definition relates more to pedagogical tasks used in the classroom for academic purposes (e.g., writing a lab report, or attending a graduate-level economics lecture).

Bygate et al. (2001) suggest that the definitions of tasks vary and depend on the purposes for which the task is used. They propose a core definition (see Table 2.1) which can be modified and extended based on whether tasks are used, for example, for research or pedagogic purposes. Ellis (2003), on the other hand, argues that we need a generalized definition that can be used to specify common characteristics of tasks. Similarly, Bygate and Samuda (2008) also see it necessary to establish a widely agreed definition in order to distinguish between tasks and non-tasks. Ellis (2003), therefore, proposed the following six important features of a task, as a way to evaluate the extent to which an instructional activity is a task.

1. A task is a work plan for learner activity.
2. The primary focus is on meaning. To this end, a task will incorporate some kind of gap (i.e., an information, reasoning, or opinion gap) to motivate learners to use language to communicate meanings.
3. A task performance reflects real world processes of language use.
4. A task can involve the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.
5. A task engages cognitive processes (which in turn influence language demands) such as selecting, reasoning, describing, distinguishing etc.
6. A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome.

(Ellis, 2003, p. 9-10)

Ellis's (2003) definition is widely accepted and shares common characteristics with most other definitions. It can be taken as representative of areas of general agreement (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). More recently, Ellis refined these into four definitional criteria as discussed in the next section.

#### **2.4.1.2 Ellis's four definitional criteria of tasks**

Ellis (2009, 2013, 2018) and Ellis and Shintani (2014) proposed the definition based on the criterial properties as presented in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Criterial features of a task

Criteria	Explanation
1. The primary focus should be on meaning.	i.e., learners should be mainly concerned with encoding and decoding messages not with focusing on linguistic form.
2. There should be some kind of gap.	i.e., a need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning.
3. Learners should largely rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.	Learners are not “taught” the language they will need to perform a task, although they may be able to “borrow” from the input the task provides to help them perform it.
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the display of language.	i.e., the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right. Thus, when performing a task, learners are not primarily concerned with using language correctly but rather with achieving the goal stipulated by the task.

Ellis and Shintani (2014) assert that these four criteria help to ensure that a task will provide a context where language is used and treated as a tool to achieve a communicative outcome. The criteria share common characteristics with most other definitions in Table 2.1; a primary focus on meaning; a gap that motivates communication; and the outcomes/goal oriented. However, what is unique in Ellis’s definition is criterion three where learners rely on their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources. In other words, learners are not prescribed specific language they should use to perform a task. Instead, they can make their own decision to use whatever language available for them to complete the tasks (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). Interestingly, this criterion is what most teachers in Erlam’s (2015) study found the most difficult to incorporate in the tasks they designed. Erlam (2015) suggests that this may be because the concept of own resources was not clearly understood by the teachers. At a more general level, she argued that the focus on output-prompting tasks also contributed to this problem since these tasks were too difficult for the beginner students that the teachers taught.

Overall, Ellis (2009, 2018) suggests that these four definitional criteria of tasks are more essential for distinguishing a task from a situational grammar exercise. For an instructional activity to be considered a task, all four of these criteria must be met



(Lambert, 2018). Ellis values each criterion differently in terms of its importance. Earlier, Ellis (2003) paid more attention to the meaning-focused criterion as the key feature that most likely differentiates a task from a situational grammar exercise. He argued that "...some of the criteria are more important for judging whether an activity is a task than others. The key criterion is (2)<sup>2</sup>, the need for a primary focus on meaning" (p.16). Six years later in his article in 2009, he included the criterion (4), a clearly defined outcome, as another key criterion. As he puts it,

On the basis of such criteria, a distinction can be made between a 'task' and 'a situational grammar exercise'. Whereas the latter may satisfy criteria (2) and (3), it does not satisfy (1), as the learners know that the main purpose of the activity is to practice correct language rather than to process messages for meaning, nor does it satisfy (4), as the outcome is simply the use of correct language (p.223).

Recently, Ellis (2018) has shifted his attention to another two criteria, a gap and a learner's own resources by arguing that,

My definition emphasizes the importance of a 'gap' (criterion 2) to motivate the goal of a task and the need for learners to use their own linguistic resources (criterion 3) ...It is these criteria that are important for distinguishing a task from an exercise (p.159).

This study used this set of criteria as a basis to explore taskness and task-likeness in classroom activities. Not every activity will fully satisfy the four criteria and some may have features of taskness without fulfilling all four criteria (Ellis, 2018). Moreover, teachers may not always be able to apply all the four criteria to design tasks (e.g., Erlam, 2015).

#### **2.4.1.3 "A task" versus "an exercise"**

For the purpose of this study, it is necessary to identify tasks and exercises. The distinction makes tasks become apparent among other language work. It then allows us to understand the extent to which tasks are incorporated in the lesson plans designed by the student teachers. Both tasks and exercises have the same purpose of helping learners learn a language. However, they are different in terms of the means by which this purpose is to be achieved (Ellis, 2003).

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<sup>2</sup> This is the second feature from the six features of a task in Ellis (2003, p. 9-10)

The distinction between tasks and exercises is useful for teachers to choose the right pedagogical tool to suit different learning purposes. It also provides a basis for ensuring variety of learning activities. Nunan (2004) sees the differences between tasks and exercises in terms of their outcomes. That is, a task has a non-linguistic outcome while an exercise involves a linguistic one. Widdowson (1998) looks at how linguistic skills are used when distinguishing tasks and exercises. Learners develop linguistic skills while performing communicative tasks. However, exercises require linguistic skills before learners engage in them. Ellis (2003) views the types of language use and role of the learners as key differences between the two. As he says, “Tasks are activities that call for primarily meaning-focused language use. In contrast, exercises are activities that call for primarily form-focused language use” (p.3). While doing tasks, learners take a role of language users using the same kind of communicative processes similar to those in the real world. However, exercises require the learners to function as language learners as they primarily focus on intentional learning. Due to the discrepancy between task-as-workplan and task-as-process (Breen, 1989), Ellis (2003, 2018), therefore, highlights the need to distinguish between a task and an exercise at the workplan level. This is because the actual performance does not necessarily correspond with the workplan, and so make it difficult to differentiate a task and an exercise at the level of task-as-process.

#### **2.4.1.4 The design of a task-based lesson**

There have been various proposals for TBLT (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Estaire & Zanón, 1994; Peter Skehan, 1996; J. Willis, 1996) and they all exhibited three distinct phases in common. A task-based lesson typically consists of three phases: pre-task, during task and post task.

In the pre-task phase, learners are provided with some kind of preparation for task performance (e.g., priming, providing model and pre-task planning and pre-teaching vocabularies). Differences lie among researchers according to their preferred approach. Newton (2001) argues that pre-teaching vocabulary can help learners to deal with linguistic demands of a task and lead to successful performance of a task. He suggests three ways of pre-teaching vocabulary that engaged learners (i.e., predicting, cooperative dictionary search and matching words and their definitions). Ellis (2003) views pre-teaching vocabulary in the pre-task as desirable in task-supported teaching context. D. Willis and Willis (2007) are even stronger advocates of this approach,

arguing that the pre-task phase is ideally suited to a focus on the core vocabulary that learners will need to perform the task. Yet, J. Willis (1996) cautions about direct pre-teaching words or phrases. Learners who already know the words might be bored while others who do not know them might want to spend more time learning new words.

The second phase is the actual performance of the main task. Ellis (2018) views the main-task phase as the only essential phase while the other two phases are optional. Finally, the post-task phase involves opportunities to build on the main task performance for, by example, a repeated performance of the task or explicit study of language forms. D. Willis and Willis (2007) are strong advocates for using this phase to focus on forms. They argue against a focus on form in the pre-task phase. Ellis (2009), on the other hand, argues that attention to form can occur in all three phases, while Long (2006) emphasizes reactive form focus in the main-task phase.

Overall, the framework offers a pedagogic model for teachers to design task-based lessons. Ellis (2018) proposes “an option-based approach” that suggests key options available for each phase for planning a TBLT lesson. This approach allows for some flexibility in the lesson design in the ways that teachers can choose what will best suit their own students and contexts. Such an approach emphasizes the fact that TBLT should not be viewed as “a methodological straight jacket” (p.217).

The current study adopted J. Willis’s (1996) framework in the TBLT module introduced in the methodology course in Phase one as it is a popular model and is widely cited in TBLT practitioner focused research around the world. Moreover, the framework is flexible and can be adapted to suit young learners. When used for young learners, the emphasis can be on exposure to rich input during a longer pre-task phase and a shorter task cycle. In this modified version, the planning and report stages can be omitted or short because the public use of language is not expected. The language focus primarily focuses on words or phrases and gradually progresses towards grammar. D. Willis and Willis (2007) make a distinction between a focus on language and a focus on form in that the former is when learners are thinking about language they should use in a given communicative situation. The latter means learners’ attention focuses on specific grammar forms occurring in the course of a task. The components of the framework, pre-task, task cycle and language focus are presented in the following figure.

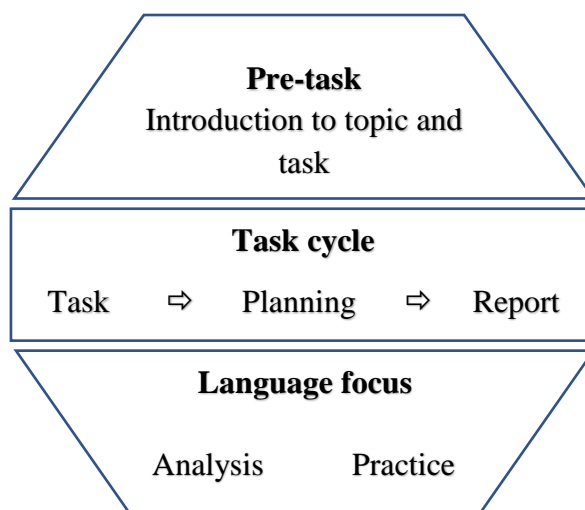


Figure 2.1 J. Willis's (1996) framework

So far, this section has focused on conceptual foundation on TBLT. Research on the application of these conceptual foundations in classroom teaching in Thailand is discussed in the next section.

## 2.6 Research on TBLT in classrooms in Thailand

Research on teachers implementing TBLT in Thailand is scarce. This is because the status of TBLT in Thailand is in its infancy when compared with other contexts where TBLT has been officially advocated and endorsed in the curriculum. Most research on TBLT in Thailand has, to date, been small-scale, conducted mostly by postgraduate students and, with a few exceptions, published in local journals (cf. McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007).

I now review six studies on TBLT conducted at the tertiary level in Thailand. The studies are presented in chronological order so that they track how TBLT research has evolved over time in Thailand.

In 2003, Ieemjinda conducted an eight-month pilot study to develop, implement and evaluate a model for a professional development programme for EFL primary school teachers in Thailand. The study combined two approaches, task-based learning as an innovation and a coaching approach used to facilitate the change process. The results showed that this model programme could lead to changes in the classroom practices towards a learner-centred and communicative teaching approach. Ieemjinda (2003)

concluded that the principles of devising and conducting the professional development programme theorized from another context could be applied to the Thai in-service teacher education and professional learning context. In the same year, Daroon (2003) conducted an action research examining the effectiveness of a task-based approach to EFL teaching with vocational adult learners. The findings revealed that the students gained more motivation, confidence, language performance and competence after engaging in the lessons that promoted meaningful language use.

The most frequently cited research, McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007), investigated the introduction of a task-based course in a university EFL programme in Thailand. The case study was conducted to investigate teachers and students' reactions to the course and to address the problems which might have arisen. Findings showed that although teachers and students worried about the insufficiency and type of grammar instruction in the beginning, their reactions became more positive at the end of the semester. However, both the teachers and the learners reflected their concern over preparedness for the new change as they were not accustomed to the learner-centred task-based instruction. They requested more support and information that could help them to adjust to task-based instruction. In response, the team addressed the concerns through a number of revisions, for example, organizing a workshop for teachers, creating a more detailed teacher handbook, or creating supplementary materials for the learners.

In 2010, Sirisatit investigated how and to what extent a task-based course helped learners in a Thai university business EFL class improve their business English ability. A case study of five participants was conducted to address the question of what activities looked like in task-based instruction. The study found an increase in students' business English ability as evidenced by improved scores on post-test and the delayed post-test compared to a pre-test score. However, there was no control group to check the significance of the findings.

Four year later, an action research study was conducted to investigate the potential of TBLT in a professional communication course. Tachom (2014) carried out a 12-week task-based Professional English course for Thai nursing university students. The results from the pre-and post-listening tests together with the pre-and post-role play tasks showed development of listening comprehension. Moreover, the use of communication

skills, grammatical structures and lexical variety also increased. The students reported that they were more confident when engaging in communicative situations and demonstrated positive opinions towards the implementation of TBLT in ESP settings.

Later in 2015, Darasawang (2015) evaluated a 14 -year- implementation of the task-based curriculum in a university in Thailand. Initially, the implementation was practised as a “strong” form of task-based teaching. Although having reported that students had positive attitudes towards task-based curriculum, the study also revealed problems concerning the management, the lack of enough language preparation including teacher and students’ concern about language accuracy. In response, the task-based curriculum was changed to the task-oriented curriculum with increased emphasis on linguistic input and assessment through exams.

The studies reviewed here mostly adopted an action research or case study methodology and only three have been published. The studies conducted by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) and Ieemjinda (2003) are more noteworthy for having collected longitudinal data. Both showed encouraging results because the participant teachers received support that assisted them to implement the innovation successfully. To date, the implementation of TBLT in pre-service teacher education programme has not been documented.

In what follows, I present the empirical studies of TBLT which have been conducted worldwide in the areas of teacher cognition and language teacher education and teacher professional development.

## **2.7 TBLT and teacher education/cognition**

Empirical studies on TBLT especially in the 1980s were largely driven by SLA theory building (Doughty & Pica, 1986; M. H. Long, 1985). They focused on the effect of manipulating task condition on learning processes without reference to context or the factors that shaped learning in the real classroom. Similarly, the role of the teacher is neglected or entirely absent from much of the TBLT research situated in cognitive and SLA traditions. Research conducted in experimental settings has been questioned about generalisation to the real-world classroom (East, 2017; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Van den Branden, 2016) . Therefore, a more recent strand of TBLT research has turned to look at the implementation of TBLT by real teachers in the real-world classroom (e.g.,

Andon and Eckerth, 2009; East, 2012; Van den Braden, 2006, 2009). There has been a broader range of scopes and topics of TBLT research such as aspects of teacher cognition and teacher professional development (East, 2012; Erlam, 2018). As Samuda, Van den Branden, and Bygate (2018, p. 2) put it, “TBLT is firmly established as a key topic in teacher education programmes and professional development workshops in many regions of the world.” This phenomenon reflects Newton’s (2016, p. 275) comment about TBLT research as “a dynamic and expanding field” with a growing interest in teacher cognition and the impact of professional learning on task-based pedagogy, which I turn to now.

The purpose of this section is to critically review research on teacher cognition and teacher education in relation to TBLT. To this end, I will organize the review by grouping the studies by national/regional contexts to provide a more coherent account of how TBLT is being researched or implemented in and across these settings. The review will first present the studies in Asian English as foreign language (EFL) contexts in particular in China and Vietnam where most of the studies have been carried out. Then, it will compare the EFL research with that conducted in English as a second language (ESL) and second language (SL) contexts such as Canada and foreign language teaching in contexts (FL) such as New Zealand. Finally, I conclude by identifying common themes and evaluating the key findings.

Reflecting growth in teacher cognition research over the past 20 years, there has been growing research interest in teacher cognition and teacher practice in relation to TBLT that is in how teachers understand, react to, and teach using tasks. This research has been carried out in a wide range of national and regional contexts, including those distinguished as either EFL or ESL. Countries that figure prominently in this body of research include China (e.g., Chen & Wright, 2017; X. Zheng & Borg, 2014), Hong Kong (e.g., Carless, 2003), Vietnam (e.g., G. V. Nguyen, Le, & Barnard, 2015; Thi, Jaspert, & Van den Branden, 2018; Tran, 2015), Belgium (Denolf, Devlieger, Goossens, & Labath, 2003; Van den Branden, 2006a), Canada (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010; Plews & Zhao, 2010), Australia (e.g., Oliver & Bogachenko, 2018) and New Zealand (e.g., East, 2018; Erlam, 2015). Typically, the research has been carried out using a combination of interview, survey and observation as the main sources of data.

A summary of the studies being reviewed compared with the elements I included in my study is provided in Table 2.3 and 2.4 below. Table 2.3 presents teacher-related research in EFL contexts while Table 2.4 illustrates ESL, SL, and FL settings.



Table 2.3 Teacher-focused TBLT research in EFL contexts

Country	Vietnam					China							Hong Kong	Korea		Taiwan		Japan	France	Venezuela	Thailand		
Researcher(s) / Research focus	Barnard & Nguyen (2010)	Tran (2015)	Dao (2016)	Pham & Nguyen (2018)	Thi et al (2018)	Jiangqin, Feng & Min (2008)	Xiongyong & Moses (2011)	Cui (2012)	Hu (2013)	Zheng & Borg (2013)	Luo & Xing (2015)	Chen & Wright (2017)	Carless (2004)	Jeon & Hahn (2006)	Yim (2009)	Lin & Wu (2012)	Chien (2014)	Jackson (2012)	McAllister et al. (2012)	Chacón (2012)	Ieemjinda (2003)	The current study	
TBLT Intervention /PD	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	
Teacher cognition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Teacher observed practice	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	
Teacher self-reported practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	
Learners perspectives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Learners observed practice	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Influencing factors to TBLT implementation	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Data sources	Narrative frames	Int/ Obs/ LP/ Document	Qn	Qn/ Int	FGI/Qn	Qn/ Int/ Obs	Qn	Int	Int/ Obs	Int/ Obs	Qn/ Int	Int/ Obs	Int/ Obs	Qn	Int	Qn/Int	Obs/ Participant's projects/ class evaluation/	Written retrospective comment/ class discourse/ Qn	Int	STs' diaries/ FGI	Qn/Obs/ Int	Qn/ LP/ FGI/ Obs/ Int	
Participants	23 ISTs	6 ISTs	55 ISTs	68 ISTs 6 ISTs	62 ISTs 23 ISTs	89 ISTs 2 ISTs	132 ISTs	3 ISTs	30 ISTs	3 ISTs	47 ISTs 5 ISTs	8 ISTs	3 ISTs	228 ISTs	10 ISTs	136 ISTs 4 ISTs	39 PSTs	15 PSTs	14 ISTs	50 PSTs	9 ISTs	31 PSTs 3 PSTs	

Note. ISTs = In-service teachers, PSTs = Pre-service teachers, Int = Interview, Qn = Questionnaire, Obs = Observation, FGI = Focus group interview, LP = Lesson planning

Table 2.4 Teacher-focused TBLT research in ESL, FL and SL contexts

Context	English as a second language				Foreign language				Second language		
Country	Canada		UK	Australia	New Zealand			USA	Canada	Belgium	China
Language	English	English	English	English	FL	FL	FL	French	SL	Dutch	Chinese
Researcher(s) /Research focus	Plews & Zhao (2010)	Douglas & Kim (2014)	Andon and Eckerth (2009)	Oliver & Bogachenko (2018)	East (2014)	East (2018)	Erlam (2015)	Brandl (2009)	Ogilvie & Dunn (2010)	Devlieger et al. (2003)	Zhang & Luo (2018)
TBLT Intervention /PD	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Teacher cognition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teacher observed practice	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Teacher self-reported practice	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Learners perspectives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Learners observed practice	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Influencing factors to TBLT implementation	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data sources	Int/ Obs	Int	Int/ Obs	Qn/Written examples of the tasks	Int	Write-ups of teaching experiences	Teacher's task designs/ Int	Int/ Obs	Written reflection/ Qn/Int	Int/ Obs	Qn/Obs/ Int
Participants	7 ISTs	217 ISTs	4 ISTs	18 ISTs	20 PSTs	7 PSTs	43 ISTs	5 PSTs	12 PSTs	ISTs	35 ISTs

*Note.* ISTs =In-service teachers, PSTs= Pre-service teachers, Int = Interview, Qn= Questionnaire, Obs= Observation

As shown in Tables 2.3 and 2.4, TBLT studies on teacher cognition and TBLT teacher education in EFL contexts were largely conducted in Asia, but also in Venezuela (Chacón, 2012) and one from France (McAllister, Narcy-Combes, & Starkey-Perret, 2012). The rest was conducted with languages other than English in FL or SL settings such as New Zealand, Canada, Belgium and China. Most of this research on TBLT in Asian EFL contexts were conducted with in-service teachers. From a total of 32 studies in this literature review, more than half of them (24 studies) were multi-method in nature. The remaining studies relied on only one method by using either a questionnaire (e.g., Dao, 2016) or an interview (e.g., Cui, 2012). Methodologically speaking, interviews appeared in most of the studies (24 studies) followed by classroom observations (14 studies) and questionnaires (13 studies). Various options for combining the methods were also used to collect the data, for example, interview and observation; questionnaire and interview; questionnaire, observation and interview. Other methods included narrative frame (Barnard & Nguyen, 2010), lesson planning sessions (G. V. Nguyen et al., 2015), written retrospective comment (Jackson, 2012; Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010), and written examples of task design (Erlam, 2015; Oliver & Bogachenko, 2018).

In what follows, I present the studies in detail by national contexts starting with Vietnam. As noted earlier, for the purpose of this study, TBLT research mentioned in this section will only refer to teacher-related research with a particular focus on cognition, practices, and teacher education or professional development.

### **2.7.1 Teacher-focused TBLT research in English as a Foreign Language contexts Vietnam**

TBLT research in Vietnam highlights a common theme of incongruence between beliefs and practices by Vietnamese teachers. Although in most studies teachers reported positive attitudes towards TBLT, their actual practice still largely emphasized form-focused traditional teaching as evidenced in the studies by Barnard and Nguyen (2010), Tran (2015), Nguyen, Le and Barnard (2015), Dao (2016), Thi, Jaspert and Van den Branden (2018) and Pham and Nguyen (2018).

Using narrative frames to elicit twenty-three Vietnamese teachers' attitudes and their recent practices about TBLT, Barnard and Nguyen (2010) found that the teachers still practised more traditional approaches to grammar instruction although they

acknowledged the importance of communicative activities. The researchers argued that this probably stemmed from lack of understanding and inadequate teacher training. In the same vein, Tran (2015) also found that six in-service Vietnamese teachers' cognitions and practices did not reflect to TBLT advocated by the government. Data from interviews, lesson plans, observations, and course documents indicated that teachers' cognition, classroom practices and assessment were largely influenced by a structural approach that emphasized form over meaning. These included the assessment of discrete linguistic items and the traditional form-focused teaching approach. Likewise, the study of eleven Vietnamese teachers' understanding and implementation of tasks by Nguyen, Le and Barnard (2015) also showed similar findings. The researchers employed multi-methods, narrative frames, lesson planning sessions, class observations, stimulated recalls, and focus groups to collect data. The main focus was on how teachers' understanding was reflected in their classroom teaching. They found that the teachers' understandings and practices of TBLT were rather limited and diverged from the TBLT literature. The teachers still relied on traditional teaching approaches that heavily drew on form over meaning despite a curriculum which aimed at communicative outcomes.

More recent survey studies conducted by Dao (2016), Thi, Jaspert and Van den Branden (2018) and Pham and Nguyen (2018) revealed similar findings to each other in that the teachers had positive perceptions of TBLT and its implementation because of a higher level of understanding about TBLT. Dao (2016) surveyed fifty-five Vietnamese university teachers while Thi, Jaspert and Van den Branden (2018) investigated sixty-two EFL Vietnamese university teachers, followed by a focus group. Similarly, Pham and Nguyen (2018) surveyed sixty-eight EFL university teachers, followed by an interview with six teachers. All three studies reported teachers' concerns over the implementation of TBLT. For example, the teachers in Dao's (2016) study raised an issue of exam preparation as a key reason why the teachers avoided using TBLT in their classroom. The teachers in Thi, Jaspert and Van den Branden's (2018) study identified a mismatch between the language teaching policies and the goals proposed in the reform, which impeded the implementation of TBLT. While the educational reform emphasized meaning-focused and learner-centred teaching, the current language educational policy still followed form-based teaching. To mitigate the problem, they, therefore, called for a change or adjustment in the policy and the provision of "a consistent and long-term trajectory of professional development" (p.84). In Pham and

Nguyen's (2018) study, teachers mentioned time constraints, low English proficiency and the content in their textbooks which were difficult to use with TBLT. The last constraint led the researchers to suggest that teachers should be encouraged to design task-oriented materials that were suitable for learners' needs and interests.

### **China**

Research in China has investigated how teacher cognition impacted teaching practice and why (Chen & Wright, 2017; Cui, 2012; Jiangqin, Feng, & Min, 2008; Xiongyong & Moses, 2011; X. Zheng & Borg, 2014) and on teacher attitudes towards the government-mandated TBLT (Hu, 2013; Luo & Xing, 2015).

In a survey study of 89 secondary school teachers in China followed by interviews and classroom observations with two teachers, Jiangqin et al. (2008) found that the teachers had little knowledge of TBLT, which consequently influenced their actual teaching practices that did not really reflect the use of tasks in the classroom. Likewise, Xiongyong and Moses (2011) found similar findings in a survey study of 132 secondary school EFL teachers; the teachers who had a high level of understanding of TBLT tended to develop the positive dispositions towards implementing TBLT. The researchers also highlighted issues such as large class size and the difficulty of assessing learners' performance that the teachers had identified to affect their effective use of TBLT. The researchers proposed ways to achieve the successful implementation of TBLT by calling for adequate teacher training, updating education concepts and adopting effective assessment.

The inconsistency between beliefs and practices was reported by Chen and Wright (2017). They investigated eight Chinese teachers' beliefs and practices of TBLT in a private secondary school. The researchers found that although the context was strongly committed to task-based teaching approaches and teachers demonstrated positive beliefs about TBLT, they still lacked intrinsic confidence in using it. The researchers called for support for development of teachers' intrinsic confidence and teacher autonomy when teaching with tasks.

Studies conducted by Zheng and S. Borg (2013) and Cui (2012) revealed that teachers' understandings and conceptions of TBLT did not fully accord with those in the mainstream literature. Zheng and S. Borg (2013) explored the understandings and

implementation of TBLT by three Chinese secondary school teachers. Through class observation and interviews, it was found that the teachers' understanding of TBLT seemed narrow as they conceptualised tasks as merely speaking activities involving pair or group work. All the teachers reported the factors that influenced the implementation of TBLT such as the curriculum materials, their beliefs about language teaching and learning and contextual constraints. Similar findings were reported in a case study by Cui (2012). Adopting interviews to investigate three teachers' conceptions about TBLT in China, the findings revealed that the teachers' conceptions typically diverged from established models in the literature. These teachers reported various factors that influenced their utilisation of TBLT and that affected the formation of their conceptions, namely the support of peers and mentors, professional development training and school policy. Emphasising the need to bridge the gap between teachers and knowledge of innovative teaching approaches such as TBLT, Cui (2012) called for more qualified teacher educators, courses on teaching methods, and an open teaching environment where teachers feel comfortable to apply different teaching approaches.

Another two studies in China looked at how the teachers viewed TBLT and its challenges. These studies used a combination of interviews and observation or questionnaire and interview. Luo and Xing (2015) used a questionnaire and interview to research forty-seven Chinese teachers' perceptions about the perceived difficulties and challenges related to TBLT implementation. They found that many teachers mentioned the lack of training in TBLT and that the students had a low level of language competence and confidence to engage in tasks as the key challenges. The researchers therefore called for stakeholder collaboration to improve the successful implementation of TBLT in China. Another study was conducted in the context where TBLT was strongly advocated. Hu (2013) interviewed and observed thirty teachers from six public schools in Beijing to see their responses towards the government-mandated TBLT. She found that the teachers had different notions and responses to TBLT, which could be categorised into three groups ranging from "negative denial, passive acceptance and active application" (p.1). A closer observation of the teachers in the third group when selecting and implementing tasks revealed that they used weak forms of TBLT along with traditional ways of teaching in their classrooms. Hu (2013) called for support from curriculum development agencies to provide the teachers with TBLT knowledge that can facilitate the implementation of TBLT in classrooms.

### **Other EFL contexts**

More research was carried out in different national contexts such as in Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. These studies shared a common theme in that although teachers held a positive attitude towards or understanding of TBLT, they still did not use TBLT in their classroom because of several constraints. While most studies in this section investigated in-service teachers, only two studies (i.e., Chien, 2014; Jackson, 2012) looked at teachers' perspectives of TBLT in teacher education context as discussed below.

In Hong Kong, Carless (2004) investigated how three primary school English teachers reinterpreted a task-based innovation in their classrooms. Using classroom observations, interviews and an attitude scale, the study found three main issues arising from implementing tasks: using L1, managing classroom and discipline, and producing the target language. The findings suggested that the teachers reinterpreted the new curriculum according to their own beliefs and contextual challenges. Moreover, their attitudes towards task-based teaching ranged from neutral, quite positive to very positive.

In Korea, Jeon and Hahn (2006) surveyed the perceptions of 228 Korean secondary school teachers at 38 middle and high schools. They found that although the teachers exhibited a high level of understanding of TBLT (evaluated by the questionnaire), many of them avoided adopting TBLT because they lacked confidence and perceived disciplinary problems in the classroom. Similarly, Yim (2009) interviewed ten South Korean teachers to explore their perceptions of and practices with TBLT. It was found that the teachers had positive perceptions of TBLT because of its potential for increasing student engagement in the classroom. They also commented that TBLT was not widely practised in their classroom because of four constraints: incompatibility with exam preparation, teaching time constraints, lack of teacher and student proficiency and lack of professional and institutional support. The researcher called for changes in the examination system and providing professional development to teachers.

Similarly, in Taiwan, Lin and Wu (2012) found that the 136 EFL teachers from thirty junior high schools who they surveyed and interviewed did not fully implement TBLT in their classroom because of insufficient understanding of TBLT. This led the researchers to recommend changes in practice including providing more opportunities to

learn about TBLT in workshops focusing on the flexible national school syllabus, an alternative assessment system and TBLT-related teaching materials in the market. A study conducted by Chien (2014) explored thirty-nine teachers enrolling in a TESOL seminar course in a teacher education program in Taiwan. Drawing on the data such as class observations, participants' projects and open-ended questions on the class evaluation, the findings showed that the teachers exhibited positive attitudes toward the integration of tasks into the course. The teachers also highlighted the important role of a teacher trainer who efficiently modelled how tasks were employed by means of congruent teaching (i.e., what is taught is mirrored by how it is taught). The researcher highlighted important factors that fostered the integration of a task-based approach into teacher education programmes. They were teacher educators' clear instructions and scaffolding, amount of time on tasks and task complexity.

Jackson (2012) adopted a task-based approach as a method of language teacher training in a seminar course on TESOL methods in a teacher education programme in Japan. Mixed sources of data were collected from fifteen students including written retrospective comments, classroom discourse and a questionnaire. The findings showed that the teachers revealed positive attitudes towards TBLT. The study highlighted the effectiveness of task-based teacher training that offered opportunities for novice teachers to gain and share knowledge related to teaching practice through tasks. Jackson further commented that task-based second language teacher education holds potential for supporting curricular innovation proposed by the government such as TBLT in the Japanese EFL context.

Research in non-Asian EFL contexts such as France and Venezuela looked at teachers' perspectives on the use of TBLT in language programmes and teacher education programmes. McAllister, Narcy-Combes, and Starkey-Perret (2012) explored teachers' perceptions of a task-based blended language-learning programme for Business English in a French University. Fourteen teachers were interviewed to see their perceptions and attitudes towards the innovative TBLT programme. The findings showed that most teachers accepted their changing role from a transmission-based approach to multiple roles (e.g., tutor, facilitator and adviser) in the new TBLT programme. The factors that contributed to acceptance of changes were group dynamics and teamwork between teachers. This led the researchers to recommend the inclusion of group discussion, seminars, and teamwork to become part of the programme to support teachers' learning.



A teacher education programme in Venezuela experimented with the implementation of a cooperative TBLT project through film-oriented activities. Chacón (2012) explored the ways to foster oral communication skills of fifty students enrolling in a teacher education programme in Venezuela. Based on the student teachers' diaries, recordings, and focus group interviews, he found that the task-based film project fostered student collaboration, interaction and the fluency in L2. Apart from this, Chacón commented that the pre-service teachers also gained first-hand knowledge of TBLT methodology and practice during the course, which enabled them to implement TBLT in their future teaching. He concluded that the study made a potential contribution to teacher education, especially in the Venezuelan context where TBLT is recommended in teacher education programmes.

Overall, the review above suggests that TBLT literature in EFL contexts to date predominantly looked at teachers' challenges with task implementations and their conceptual understanding of TBLT. A theme which arises in these EFL settings is the inconsistency between teachers' cognition and practices of TBLT and teachers' understandings of TBLT that did not align with the literature. Only a few studies such as those in Japan, France and Venezuela focused on effective TBLT teacher training programmes. As Lai (2015) puts it, the Asian contexts need more research that explores effective TBLT teacher training to strengthen the potential of TBLT and push the field forward.

Now turning to the studies conducted ESL, SL and FL contexts.

### **2.7.2 Teacher-focused TBLT research in English as a second language, second language and foreign language contexts**

The teacher-focused TBLT literature in ESL settings such as Canada, the UK and Australia has investigated teachers' knowledge, understandings, and practices of TBLT.

Plews and Zhao (2010) explored seven Canadian NS (native speaker) ESL teachers' understandings and practice of TBLT using interviews and observations. They concluded that the teachers struggled with implementing TBLT in ways that were congruent with the principles in the literature. For example, the teachers turned tasks into a PPP approach. Douglas and Kim (2014) investigated the perceptions of TBLT by 217 ESL teachers in the Teachers of English as a Second Language Canada Federation

(TESL Canada) by carrying out a large scale survey-based study. The findings showed that teachers viewed TBLT in terms of its perceived benefits (i.e., authenticity, relevance, motivation, confidence, and cognitive skills) and drawbacks (i.e., time consumption and excessive teacher preparation).

In the UK, Andon and Eckerth (2009) investigated the extent to which teachers' pedagogical thinking, planning and decision-making were informed by TBLT. They interviewed and observed four experienced ESL teachers and found that the teachers' practices had four TBLT-related pedagogical principles. The teachers used tasks in their practices as: vehicles for communication and negotiation; contexts of situational and interactional authenticity in L2 use; goal-related and outcome-oriented activities and reference points for form-focused activities and (not) as knowledge-building devices. Moreover, the four teachers did not follow the recommended principles of TBLT in a slavish way as they omitted stages in the task cycle or combined tasks with language-focused activities. This led the researchers to conclude that the teachers treated the TBLT literature as "provisional specifications", not as "scientifically proven final answers" (p.305).

In Australia, Oliver and Bogachenko (2018) studied teachers' perceptions of tasks and the way they designed and assessed tasks. To collect the data, eighteen primary and secondary school ESL teachers in Australia completed an open-ended survey and designed tasks. The findings revealed inconsistency between their understanding and established theoretical TBLT principles. However, there was also a good nucleus of teachers who had a comprehensive understanding of tasks and who the authors argued could be agents in the further development of TBLT. Again, the researchers highlighted the importance of teacher development that supported teachers' understanding of tasks.

Turning to language other than English in FL and SL contexts, the studies in these settings (New Zealand, the USA, Canada and Belgium) focused on teachers adopting tasks in teacher education and professional development programmes.

East (2014) investigated teachers' understandings of TBLT with twenty New Zealand-based Modern Foreign Language pre-service teachers enrolling in a one-year teacher education programme. Engaging in critical reflections about their experiences before and after teaching practice in schools, the teachers revealed positive aspects and

perceived challenges of the implementation of TBLT. They identified factors that supported the successful task utilisation such as the levels of understanding of, and receptivity to innovation. East concluded that teacher education could help mediate the introduction of TBLT effectively and appropriately.

In a more recent publication drawing on the same data above, East (2018) investigated how seven pre-service teachers in the LTE programme conceptualised and enacted tasks during the practicum. The focus was on how the teachers interpreted, implemented and valued tasks. Data were gathered from the participants' write-ups of their experiences in designing and implementing a communicative task with the class they taught. The study found that the teachers had a range of different conceptualisations of tasks. When they were provided with several theoretical definitions of task, they tended to operationalise tasks based on what worked well in their classrooms. This led East (2018) to conclude that theoretical definitions and teachers' understandings of those definitions should be taken into account when we define a task and evaluate its task-likeness. The study also acknowledged the usefulness of reflective practice that enabled the teachers to reflect critically on tasks in light of theory and practice. Given the data used in this study mainly came from teachers' self-reflections and reports, East (2018) called for further studies that include observational data to justify claims to efficacy.

Similarly, Erlam (2015) investigated experienced New Zealand secondary foreign language school teachers' understanding of tasks by looking at how well they were able to design tasks after participating in a one-year professional development programme focused on TBLT. Using a framework based on the four criteria proposed by Ellis (2009) to evaluate her teachers' task designs, she found that more than three quarters of the teachers were able to design activities that were more like language tasks than like language exercises. However, the teachers found the criterion "learners rely on their own resources" the most difficult to incorporate while the easiest one was the requirement of "clearly defined outcome". Erlam suggested two principles from Nunan's (2004) seven principles namely, scaffolding and task dependency for the professional development programme that help teachers design language tasks.

In the USA, Brandl (2009) explored how five novice teachers who enrolled in the French graduate programme implemented tasks in a first-year French language class. The study focused on implementational demands that caused challenges for the teachers

when implementing tasks and how they dealt with these challenges. Data collection was carried out during one academic year using observations and interviews. The findings revealed that the teachers encountered a wide range of challenges such as implementing of task routines, understanding task design and managing task conditions. They coped with these challenges by simplifying the teaching process and reducing or modifying task procedures, which might have caused a low level of learner engagement. The study concluded that implementational demands affect teacher behaviours and student engagement.

In a SL context, Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) investigated the influence of teacher education on the utilisation of TBLT among Canadian pre-service teachers during their practicum. Based on the data from a written reflection, a questionnaire and interviews, the researchers found that student teachers' positive disposition towards TBLT increased after instructions on TBLT. However, the positive disposition did not really translate into actual practice in the practicum as these beginning teachers felt pressure to use more traditional teaching approaches. The researchers argued that although teacher education programmes have potential to promote educational innovation, the effect of cultural norms in the school and the lack of support for student teachers restricted student teachers' implementation of TBLT.

A longitudinal study carried out by Devlieger et al. (2003, cited in Van den Branden, 2006) investigated how in-service training provided by the school counsellors and in-service trainers supported the implementation of task-based syllabuses in Brussels, Belgium. The coaches visited individual teachers participating in coaching sessions and they both reflected upon the lessons observed. The data were collected through the observations of coaching interventions, classroom observations and the interviews with the coaches, the teachers and the principals. The findings revealed that the teachers appreciated individual coaching sessions as they felt they were being taken seriously. It was also found that practical issues and contextual constraints had a big influence on teachers' willingness to implement tasks (Van den Branden, 2006, p. 238). The study highlighted the importance of practice-oriented in-service training that allowed the teachers to try out new ideas, experiment with alternatives and discover their own ways of teaching with tasks.

A study in a context of Chinese as a second language (CSL) should also be noted here. Y. Zhang and Luo (2018) explored 35 CSL university teachers' beliefs and practices about TBLT using a questionnaire, classroom observations and interviews. They found that although CSL teachers were strongly positive about the effectiveness of TBLT, there existed a conflict in their minds about the feasibility of TBLT. Such conflict consequently inhibited CSL teachers' application of TBLT. The teachers also reported contextual and internal factors that impede their implementation of TBLT such as the diversity of learners' cultural backgrounds, teaching schedule, class size, materials, and examination. The researchers suggested that to foster teachers' adoption of TBLT, they should be provided with on-going support and theoretical and practical knowledge. This included supervising them while they are implementing TBLT in classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

The above review has focused on teachers' perceptions and practices of TBLT. Much of the research comes from Asia where governments in countries such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and Vietnam have officially adopted a communicative approach and made reference to TBLT in national curriculum and policy (Adams & Newton, 2009; Butler, 2011, 2017; Lai, 2015; Thomas & Reinders, 2015).

Accounts of teachers' challenges in implementing TBLT in different contexts show consistent trends. First, the classroom implementation of TBLT has often had mixed success with teachers' lack of understanding of TBLT as one of the key reasons (Carless, 2009; Jiangqin et al., 2008; Lin & Wu, 2012; G. V. Nguyen et al., 2015).

The teachers in these studies exhibited limited knowledge and divergent understandings of TBLT and did not fully use TBLT in their classroom even if they reported positive attitudes and acknowledged its efficiency. Their actual practices emphasized form-focused teaching despite imperatives to adopt more communicative approaches. The research has also highlighted a mismatch between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual practices, and factors that caused this mismatch. S. Borg (2009) points out that misalignment between beliefs and practices should not be viewed negatively since teachers do not work in a vacuum but teach in dynamic classroom contexts in which a wide range of factors constrain what they can do regardless of their beliefs.

The accounts of teachers' difficulties in implementing TBLT discussed in the review point to the fact that TBLT has been subject to criticism. Both Ellis (2018) and Long

(2016) have acknowledged the challenges that teachers have faced in implementing TBLT and that such challenges needed to be addressed. For example, Ellis (2018) acknowledged that,

Questions have been raised by Li (1998), Carless (2004), Butler (2005) among others, as to whether TBLT is practical in Asian countries where teachers are likely to adhere to a philosophy of teaching that is radically different to that which underlines TBLT and where they also face practical problems such as students' limited second language proficiency and the washback from test they need to prepare their students for (p. 156).

However, Ellis pushed back against these and other criticisms, arguing that many of the criticisms are derived from misunderstandings and misrepresentation of TBLT. Swan's (2005) criticism that TBLT outlaw grammar is a case in point. As Ellis (2018) argued, although a role for grammar in TBLT might not be central, it does have a clearly articulated role in task-based lessons in the pre-task phase (Skehan, 1998), the post-task phase (Willis, 1996), the main-task phase (Long, 2006) and indeed in all three phases (Ellis, 2003).

Overall, teachers' problems in implementing TBLT suggest the need for more research that focuses on how to help teachers to develop knowledge and strategies for managing the practical difficulties in implementing TBLT. This is confirmed by many researchers in the review above who called for support from stakeholders, especially authorities and policy-makers to provide the teachers with knowledge and practices that facilitate the successful implementation. They also highlighted a need for further studies to explore how TBLT can be supported, sustained and developed through teacher education or teacher training programmes (e.g., Chen & Wright, 2017; Cui, 2012; East, 2018; Xiongyong & Moses, 2011; Yim, 2009). Similarly, Ellis (2018) called for more research into the effectiveness of teacher training programmes and teacher-education for TBLT. Likewise, East (2018) argued that one way to support the implementation of TBLT was through teacher education programmes.

In response to this call for more TBLT research in teacher education programmes, this current study will investigate learning outcomes from a new module on TBLT in a teacher education programme in Thailand. A deeper understanding of how novice

teachers construct and apply their understanding of TBLT is important for providing more effective training in TBLT teacher education programmes. This is particularly true in Thailand because there is little research on TBLT in Thai context and none of which I am aware on pre-service teacher education. This study contributes to the field by investigating how TBLT was adopted in a context where TBLT is not widely practised or mandated in education policy and curriculum initiatives (i.e., Thailand), as is the case in most other Asian countries where TBLT research has been carried out such as Vietnam, Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter began by providing an overview of recent trends in LTE, the relationship between theory and practice in teacher education, and the impact of teacher education on teacher cognition. It then reviewed the key conceptual foundation of TBLT, teacher cognition, and teacher education in relation to TBLT. Finally, it discussed the implication of the review for the field and for situating the contribution of the current study.

The next chapter describes the research design and methods used to collect and analyse the data for this study.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology adopted in the research. I begin with a discussion of the research paradigm followed by my epistemological orientation. I then present a context statement about ELT in Thailand, design and the research objectives and questions. I conclude by addressing the role of the researcher, trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations. Details of research methods for data collection and analysis of Phase one and Phase two will be presented separately in Chapters 4 and 6, respectively.

### 3.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical assumption or worldview that shapes the approach taken to research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 1998). A paradigm is also referred to as philosophical assumptions, epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998), or a theoretical framework (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Martens, 2005). Creswell (2009) argues that a researcher's choice of a research design is often influenced by the types of beliefs they hold. The literature identifies a range of paradigms including positivist (and post-positivist), constructivist, interpretivist, transformative, emancipatory, critical, pragmatic and de-constructivist (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). These categories are not always discrete and there is considerable overlap. In what follows, I provide a brief definition of the paradigm within which my research fits, namely, an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm.

Constructivism (often used interchangeably with interpretivism) seeks to understand “the world of human experience” (L Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 36). Interpretivist/constructivist researchers view reality as multiple and socially co-constructed and knowledge as socially constructed through social interaction. Research in this vein seeks to understand reality in natural settings and to interpret the meanings people have about the world, rather than trying to manipulate it (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). This perspective mostly relies on the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2009). It emphasizes the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the way historical and cultural context shapes perception. The interpretivist/constructivist researcher is most likely to rely on qualitative data collection methods or a combination



of both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods). Quantitative data may be utilised in a way which supports or expands upon qualitative data and effectively deepens the description (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Table 3.1 below displays the characteristics of interpretivist/constructivist compared with two common paradigms in research namely post/positivist and pragmatic paradigm.

Table 3.1 Summary of the three paradigms

<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>Interpretivist/ Constructivist</b>	<b>Post/positivist</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>
Ontology (nature of reality)	Realities are multiple and socially constructed and can be explored through human interactions	One reality; knowable within a specified level of probability	All individuals have their own unique interpretation of reality
Epistemology (nature of knowledge and relationship between inquirer and inquired-into)	Interactive relation between researcher and participants. Knowledge is obtained through mental processes of interpretation	Objectivity is important; the researcher controls and involves in the research in objective manner	Relationships in research depend on what the researcher views as appropriate to that particular study
Methodology (approach to systematic inquiry)	Qualitative (predominate) hermeneutical	Quantitative (predominate)	Mixed- methods (based on research question and purpose)

*Note.* From Merten (2015) and Mackenzie and Knipe (2006)

### 3.3 My epistemology orientation

The primary aim of this research was to understand the emerging understandings and practices of TBLT by Thai pre-service EFL teachers. It thus best aligned with an interpretative research paradigm. At an epistemological level, the subjective stance between the researcher and participants in the interpretative paradigm allows empathetic interactions between them and so results in in-depth data (Pickard, 2013). I subscribed

to an interpretative stance and so I was interested in how knowledge was socially constructed and existed in people's minds. I sought to understand the knowledge and made interpretations of the social world. By involving in an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest, I gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences. Moreover, through interactions with the participations, I established trust with them from my subjection positions as researcher because I believed that reality or knowledge can be explored and constructed by engaging in social interactions and meaningful actions. This is in line with Stake's (1995) point stating that the interpretative or social constructivist approach to case study research supports personal interactions between the researcher and the participants. Similarly, Henning, Van Rensburg, and Smit (2004) identify the keywords associated with this approach as "participation", "collaboration" and "engagement". A key instrument used in interpretative research is the interview because it can reflect interviewees' interpretations of the world in which they live and elicits their expressions about situations from their own point of view (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2001). It is therefore a suitable tool to study the inner perspectives and meanings of actions of those being studied.

### **3.4 Research design**

This research consisted of a two-phase, exploratory, qualitative case study focused on the experience of student teachers (STs) on TBLT in a pre-service teacher education programme in Thailand. The first phase investigated ST learning in the Year 4 teacher education programme and the second phase studied the progress of three STs in the Year 5 practicum. The objective of the two phases was to understand whether the STs could translate explicit knowledge about TBLT that they were taught in a teacher education programme into practice in the subsequent practicum. The study also examined factors that constrained or facilitated their translation of theory into practice. The exploratory approach taken in the research justified when little is known about the context or topic being investigated (Heigham & Croker, 2009). This is true for TBLT in Thailand which has, to date, been under researched and is not widely practiced by teachers, particularly pre-service teachers. The research adopted a multiple case study design because it is best aligned with the research questions and objectives of the research as discussed below.

### 3.4.1 Multiple case study research

A leading case study methodologist, Stake (1995), defines a case study as “a study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). Although the term “case” has been defined in the literature in many ways, all share the same distinctive attribute as being “bounded” or having boundaries. Multiple case study occurs when one study consists of more than a single case as in this research which involved several case studies of STs and their engagement with TBLT. I selected a multiple case study design because I sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of the ways the STs engaged with TBLT. This approach allowed me to observe several cases (STs) in depth in the classroom settings over a period of time and to hopefully shed light on the phenomenon from the STs’ perspectives (Hays, 2004). Furthermore, more than one case provides a fuller picture of the phenomenon in question (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) and enhances the external validity or generalizability of the findings (Merriam, 2009), resulting in more compelling and robust evidence (Stake, 2005). Notably, a case study approach is particularly suitable and is widely used to study language teacher cognition (S. Borg, 2012).

This research drew on strategies from social constructivist researchers such as Stake (1995) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015). As my study focused on making sense of teachers cognition and practices of TBLT, the constructions of meaning and knowledge from the participants’ point of view was central to the research. Stake (1995) views qualitative case study researchers as interpreters, and gatherers of interpretations through their investigation. In the same vein, Merriam (1998) also maintains that what intrigues qualitative researcher is the way people make sense of their world and their experiences in this world. Methodologies underpinned by this paradigm such as interviewing or observation allow a subjective relationship between the researcher and participants. The use of multiple data collection strategies yields an in-depth understanding and better interpretation from multiple perspectives. These advantages enabled me to achieve the goals and objectives of this study, which are presented in the next section.

### 3.5 Research aims and questions

The overall aim of the current study is to investigate the viability of introducing TBLT in pre-service teacher education in Thailand. The study seeks to understand the impact of the TBLT module in the Year 4 teacher education programme on the cognition and classroom practices of the STs. The study seeks to understand: (a) the relationship between the taught and practised components of TBLT in this programme and factors which mediated this relationship; (b) the readiness with which these novice teachers translated TBLT teaching principles into classroom practice; and (c) the extent to which targeted professional support aided the translation of principles to practice.

The study addressed five research questions as presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Research questions and data collection methods

<b>Research areas</b>	<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>
<b>Phase one</b> Introducing the TBLT module in the Year 4 TEP*	RQ1. What impact did the TBLT module have on: 1.1 STs' disposition towards TBLT; 1.2 the lesson design processes and the planned lessons?	-Pre- and -post questionnaire - Lesson plan analysis - Focus group interviews
<b>Phase two</b> Applying TBLT in the teaching practicum	RQ2. How did the STs' stated understandings of TBLT and their teaching practices change during their teaching in the practicum?	- Classroom observations - Stimulated recall interviews
	RQ3. What factors did the STs perceive to have influenced their planning and/or practices of task-based lessons?	- Semi-structured interviews
	RQ4. How did learners engage in the task-based lessons in observation cycle 2?	- Classroom observations - Group interviews

*Note.* TEP = Teacher education programme

The research period is summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 The research periods

Phase one: The TBLT module in Year 4			A 5- month gap (Dec 2016- April 2017)	Phase two: The practicum in Year 5			
October 2016	October – November 2016	End of November 2016		May 2017	June 2017	July 2017	August 2017
Pre-course Survey	The 5 week-TBLT module in the Year 4 TEP	Post-course Survey Focus group interviews		Pilot study	Cycle 1 Pre-collaborative lesson planning (Observations & Interviews)	Cycle 2 Collaborative lesson planning (Observations & Interviews & Students' group interviews)	Cycle 3 Post-collaborative lesson planning (Observations & Interviews)
A class of 31 STs				3 Case studies			

### 3.6 Role of the researcher

Qualitative researchers are often required to clarify their role in the research process (Musante & DeWalt, 2010). To gain an in-depth understanding of the research context, I took an insider role, characterised by much involvement and interaction with participants in both phases. I hoped that by establishing rapport and building trust with the participants, they would feel more comfortable and more open to expressing their opinions freely. Because qualitative research tends to promote closer relationships rather than distanced relationships (McGinn, 2008), a great amount of information can be learned through interactions.

In Phase one, I took the role of the teacher as researcher and taught the TBLT module. In this research context, it is normal for a teacher of a course such as teaching methodology to do co-teaching by inviting a guest speaker to teach particular topics. Therefore, the teacher and I co-taught the course together. However, I acknowledge that my role as a former teacher at the research site might have influenced how the participants expressed their opinions. They might not have been able to express their discomfort or resistance freely (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). This is because teachers in a Thai context, where power distance is large (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000), are highly respected. In this situation, I was sensitive to the effect of the researcher-participant relationship that existed and adopted strategies to minimize any potential threats that might have run the risk of participant bias, as outlined below.

Before the TBLT module, I made clear at the beginning that I took the role of a co-teacher and researcher and would not be involved in any assessment. During the TBLT module in Phase one, when the STs were asked to reflect on criticisms or disagreements on the lessons, a reflective written assignment was employed instead of face-to-face communication. To ensure that they felt secure to provide truthful feedback, their name was not put on the paper. Additionally, I was aware that the disclosure of motives behind the investigation would make the student teachers act in a way they thought I wanted to see or hear. Therefore, I implicitly sought their understandings and perspectives about TBLT. The STs were asked to comment on the lesson plans without being informed about the approach on which the lessons drew (PPP or TBLT). During the focus group interviews which were one week after the TBLT module, I emphasized that the purpose of the focus group interview was to get real perspectives from the STs. Therefore, they did not need to agree or please me with answers. I tried to keep my role to a minimum by asking questions and allowing the groups to discuss them. I also refrained from expressing my personal opinions about TBLT in order not to influence their responses.

In Phase two, I undertook a non-participant role in the classroom observations. However, I was aware of the “observer’s paradox” (Labov, 1972); knowing my interest in TBLT may have resulted in the STs finding an opportunity to use or mention it in the observation cycle 1 (OC1). Thus, I reminded them that the observations were only for research purposes and they should just deliver their lessons as usual. Then, I interviewed them and asked about the experience of having me observe the class. The STs said that they were accustomed to my frequent visits and so tended to forget about my presence in their class. This shows that the observer’s paradox was minimized over time. Moreover, there was collaborative rapport between the three case study participants and me. I was mindful to treat them with regard as human beings rather than subjects under investigation.

During the observation cycle 1 (OC1), I deliberately avoided referring to TBLT in the interviews unless a ST initiated mention of it. This was because the purpose of the OC1 in Phase two was to investigate the impact of the TBLT module in the teacher education programme on the STs’ teaching practices and cognition. More importantly, during every interview, I always declared my stance on TBLT as a researcher who sought to understand and gain real perspectives from the STs. They were frequently reminded that

there were no right or wrong answers and there was no need to agree with me or please me with their answers.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I adopted several strategies as discussed in the next section.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness of the study**

Qualitative validity involves how a qualitative researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings utilizing certain procedures (Creswell, 2009). This study adopted several strategies for achieving trustworthiness for the overall research findings. Credibility involves a correct interpretation of the research findings drawn from the data from participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure credibility, I adopted the strategies of prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation, and member checking. Regarding transferability, which concerns how the research findings can be transferred to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I provided thick description of the case reports. Finally, I carried out inter-coder reliability checking on the analysis of the lesson plans designed by the STs to ensure my coding was reliable. Details of the strategies are presented below.

First, I took prolonged engagement in the field with the research participants. During the process of data collection for both phases, which lasted almost seven months, I developed collaborative rapport with the three case study participants. My frequent visits at the school and our time spent outside of the school helped develop trust and closer relationships. Sometimes, the STs asked for advice about their research projects as a part of the practicum requirement. Furthermore, they received additional support on their performance when working collaboratively with me to develop lesson plans. As the research progressed, they were willing to share their personal lives openly with me which contributed to the validity of the study findings (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, to ensure the strong creditability of the study and the right interpretation of the findings, I carried out triangulation from multiple sources of evidence (Goffman, 1989). The findings were drawn from four main converging data sources: observation notes, classroom observation, post-observation interviews and the STs' lesson plans.

Another important technique used to ensure the authenticity and credibility is member checking (Duff, 2018). During the data collection process in Phase one, I sent emails containing the interview reports to all participants in the focus group interviews. All twenty-eight respondents replied within thirty-six days and verified the reports. Seven of them provided additional comments regarding their views about TBLT. Similarly, the interview transcripts were sent to three case study participants in Phase two. All verified the accuracy of the transcription. Member checking of written findings for young learners or learners with low level of literacy might not be possible (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Therefore, verification of the interview data with the learners in the group interviews was carried out verbally throughout the interview sessions. I constantly checked my understanding by paraphrasing and summarizing what they said. In doing so, enhanced mutual understanding was achieved.

Regarding transferability, I provided a thick description (Geertz, 1973) in the case reports to allow the reader to make “transferability judgement” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122) whether the findings in this study have transferability to their own setting. I reported richly detailed descriptions of the cases and their contexts when observing and interpreting social meaning in the research (Dawson, 2010). I integrated key findings from the analysis (i.e., interviews, observations and focus groups and the data extracts to support the findings) to paint a picture for the readers so they can understand social phenomenon under investigation clearly. Moreover, providing “the web of significance” (Geertz, 1973, p.5) allowed the readers to make their own sense of classroom procedures and incidents occurring during each 50-minute lesson. The findings, then, became richer and this allows readers to see and understand the social phenomenon of TBLT at work in the practices under investigation clearly.

Finally, I carried out inter-coder reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to ensure the reliability of the analysis of the lesson plan designed by the STs. The first inter-coder reliability checking was carried out for five lesson plans designed by groups of the STs in Phase one. The first independent coder (Coder 1), an MA student on a TESOL programme at Victoria University of Wellington, was trained to use the coding framework before trialling it with two examples of a task-based lesson plan. Then, the Coder 1 coded five lesson plans independently and the results were later tested for inter-rater reliability with the analysis conducted by the researcher (Coder 2). The analysis was conducted on the target task in the main task phase (five activities). Each activity



was analysed against the four definitional criteria of tasks (Ellis, 2009). Therefore, there were 20 coding in total (5 x 4=20). The analysis involved answering “yes” (✓) or “no” (✗) to the questions in the coding framework (see Table 4.2). The inter-coder reliability scores were calculated using percentage agreement. By way of illustration, Table 3.4 presents the results of coding. In the agreement columns, if there was no difference between the coders, 0 was entered to show agreement. On the other hand, if the coders had different answers, 1 was entered to indicate disagreement.

Table 3.4 A sample of reliability data for coding five lesson plans

Lesson plan	Meaning		Agreement	Gap		Agreement	Own resources		Agreement	Outcome		Agreement
	C1	C2		C1	C2		C1	C2		C1	C2	
1	✓	✓	0	✗	✓	1	✓	✓	0	✗	✓	1
2	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0
3	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0
4	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✗	✓	1
5	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0

Note. C1= Coder 1, C2= Coder 2, 0= agreement and 1= disagreement

The percentage agreement is calculated by the sums of 0s (17) divided by the total number of coding 20 (i.e., 5 activities x 4 criteria) multiplied by 100. The percentage agreement is therefore  $17 \times 100 / 20 = 85\%$ . According to Miles and Huberman (1994), coders should reach an agreement for a minimum of 80%. This reliability score, therefore, shows satisfactory level of agreement between the two coders. The second inter-coder reliability was carried out for nine lesson plans designed by one ST (Ta) in Phase two. Another independent rater, a PhD student researching in the area of TBLT, coded the nine lesson plans independently. The analysis was conducted in the same manner as the first inter-coder reliability. There are 27 activities in total and so the total number of coding is 108 (27 activities x 4 four criteria). As the sums of 0s is 97, the percentage of agreement is therefore  $97 \times 100 / 108 = 89.8\%$ . Again, this reliability score shows satisfactory level of agreement between the two coders.

### 3.8 Ethical considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Human Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Wellington (see Appendix 1). Approval was

sought and granted from the Human Ethics Committee before collecting the data. I also sought official approval from the university and schools in Thailand for the research to take place including permission from one teacher to conduct a study within her course. The design of the TBLT module was based on the course syllabus analysis. I drew on the nature of the course (e.g., learning objectives, contents and assessment methods) in order to ensure smooth integration of the module into the course. I made clear at the beginning that I would not be involved in any assessment in my researcher role. The participation or nonparticipation of the STs had no effect on their assessment in the course they were taking or would be taking in the future. All ST participants in both phases were provided with information sheets describing the nature of the study, research objectives, the procedures, their rights and obligations. They were then given consent forms to sign. In Phase two, where learners in the three STs' classes were 13-15 years old, their parents or caregivers were also asked to sign the consent form. The case study participants in Phase two were recruited on a voluntary basis through an email invitation. The planned non-participant observations were carried out in a way that minimised disturbance of the classes. Every participant was assured of confidentiality. I preserved the participants' anonymity by using pseudonyms. I clarified that recorded data would be kept for the use of this study only and would not be made available to anyone else without the express permission of the participants.

### **3.9 Summary**

In this chapter, I have outlined the methodology adopted to carry out the research. I described the research paradigm and epistemological orientation which positions this study as interpretative. I then provided a context statement about ELT in Thailand, followed by information about the research design, the research objectives and questions, the role of the researcher, strategies for achieving trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. In the next chapter, I will describe the research methods and the data collection process of Phase one.

## **CHAPTER 4 PHASE ONE: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to carry out Phase one. I begin with an overview of Phase one, then outline key areas, namely, the research setting and research participants, research methods for the data collection process and data analysis.

### **4.2 Overview of Phase one**

Phase one was an exploratory qualitative study. It sought to understand the impact of introducing a TBLT module to a pre-service EFL teacher education programme on the cognition and practices of student teachers (STs) who were in a final semester teaching methodology course in a Thai university. Before the TBLT module, the STs completed a questionnaire adapted from Ogilvie and Dunn (2010). It aimed to assess their pre-existing beliefs about language pedagogy, which reflected their disposition towards TBLT. During the TBLT module, the STs engaged with theoretical and practical elements of TBLT and other TBLT-related areas. In the final week, the STs planned a task-based lesson in groups and handed it in for evaluation. At the end of the TBLT module, the STs completed the same questionnaire to gauge the extent to which the module had influenced the STs' disposition towards TBLT. In the week after that, the STs participated in a focus group interview where they were asked to elaborate on their lesson plans and their experience of the TBLT module.

### **4.3 Research setting**

Phase one was conducted in a higher education institution called the Southern University (pseudonym). Originally called the College of Education, it is one of the first higher education institutions in the south of Thailand. In 2008, the Southern University was developed as an autonomous university by independent managerial administration. The university has twelve faculties and six supporting institutions as follows: Faculty of Education; Humanities and Social Sciences; Science; Fine Arts; Law; Health and Sport Science; Technology and Community Development; Economics and Business Administration; Engineering; Management for Development College; Graduate School; and International College. From the 2019 Thai University Rankings, the Southern University was ranked 41st from 124 Thai universities across the country (uniRank, 2019).

The research site for Phase one was the Department of Western Languages, within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences was. This is one of the seven programmes in the Faculty and employed twenty-one Thai teachers and four foreign teachers, all of whom have obtained a Master of Arts or a Ph.D. in a field related to English language. The department offers two programmes – a Bachelor of Arts (B.A. in English) and a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed. in English). This research focuses on the latter programme as presented below.

#### **4.3.1 Bachelor of Education in English (a five-year program)**

The five-year teacher education programme at the research location was developed within the Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education (TQF: HEd). The framework standardizes the quality of higher education by “ensuring consistency in both standards and award titles for higher education qualifications, and to make clear the equivalence of academic awards with those granted by higher education institutions in other parts of the world” (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2006, p. 2).

The teacher education curriculum undergoes a major revision every five years in response to changing world conditions. The current curriculum where the research was undertaken was in the final year of its five-year rollout (2012-2016). The B.Ed. in English programme is offered in collaboration between the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Faculty of Education is responsible for subjects related to the teaching profession and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences teaches subjects on English skills. In their fifth year, student teachers (STs) who have completed programme requirements undertake a one-year teaching practice in local secondary schools around the regions. During their practicum, they are advised by cooperating teachers in the school and supervised by two assigned supervisors from both faculties. After completion, student teachers are awarded the Professional Teaching License by the Teachers’ Council of Thailand.

The teacher education curriculum is categorized into three areas namely: (i). General education; (ii). Professional teacher training and (iii). Electives. The courses offered at the Western Languages Department are divided into five main categories: Linguistics, Literature, Language skills, English for Career and English for Teacher Profession. The last category was chosen for the research to be conducted because a course within this category-*English Language Teaching for Secondary Education*- was relevant to TBLT.

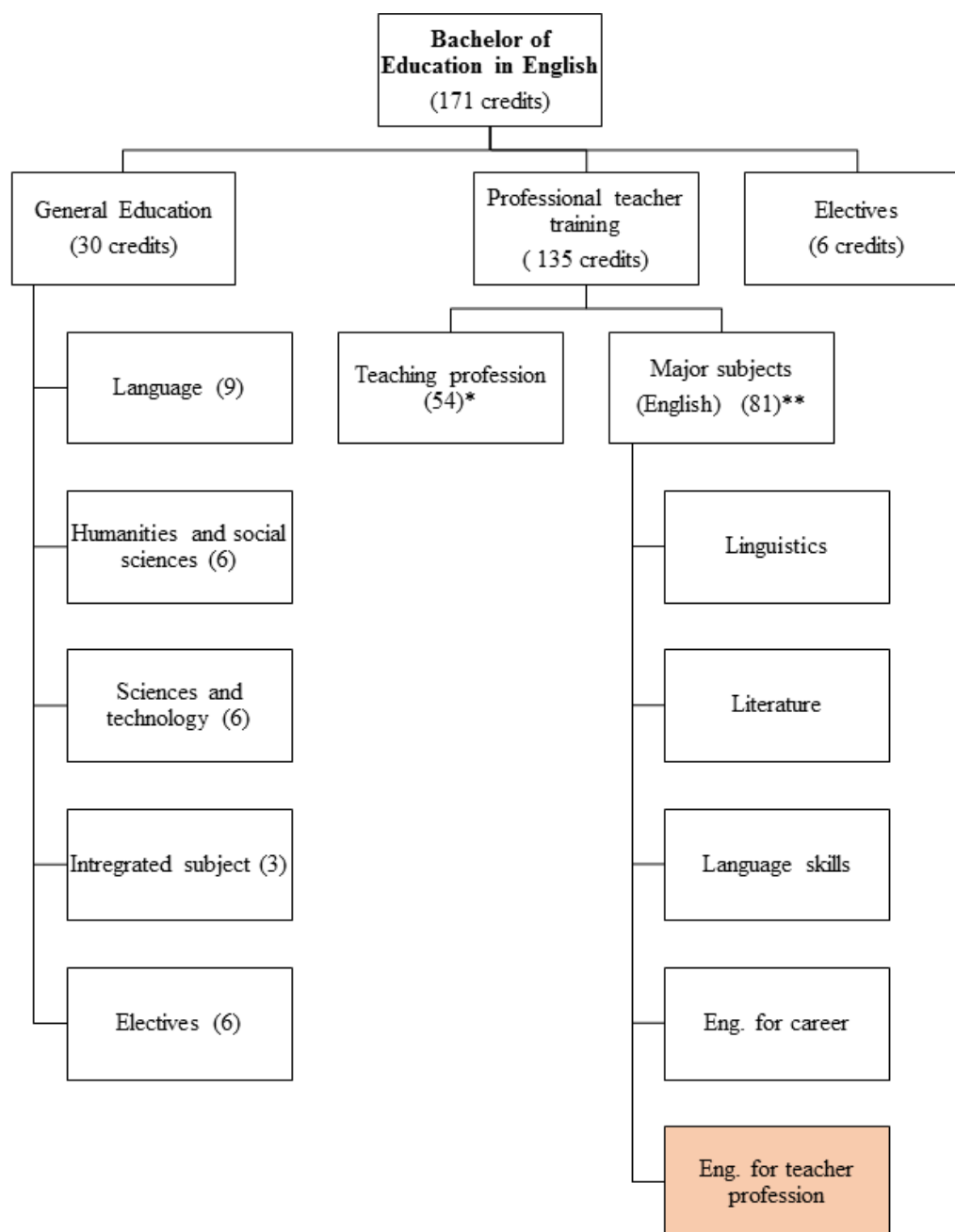


Figure 4.1 A summary of the structure of curriculum

#### 4.3.2 English Language Teaching for Secondary Education (ELTSE)

I obtained permission from the teacher who taught the Year 4 teaching methodology course to conduct a study within the existing course, *English Language Teaching for Secondary Education (ELTSE)*. This 18-week course was compulsory for the Year 4 STs in the English major programme. The ELTSE course aimed to help STs understand, analyse and apply theoretical and practical aspects of ELT for secondary education, especially in Thai contexts. They were provided with opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills learned within simulated classroom situations. Upon completion of this course, STs were expected to be able to:

1. describe different English teaching methodologies;
2. analyse and apply approaches, methods and techniques that are suitable for English teaching to Thai secondary learners and;
3. demonstrate ability to use approaches, methods and techniques of English teaching in simulated classroom situations.

The course content covered different areas of ELT and methodology. This included vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening and speaking, reading and writing, cooperative learning and task-based language teaching (TBLT). The design of the TBLT module will be further discussed in Section 4.5.1.1

#### **4.4 Research participants**

Research participants in Phase one were a class of thirty-one Thai English major STs in the Year 4 of a five-year-teacher education programme at the Southern University. At the time the research was undertaken, they were currently enrolled in the aforementioned methodology course. These STs were to undertake a one-year teaching practice as a part of curriculum requirements in the subsequent year.

I selected the participants by using a non-probabilistic strategy called purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). Given this research sought to gain insights into the participants' understandings of TBLT, the participants had to be those from which the most could be learned (Patton, 2002). Participants were only considered for selection if they:

1. are currently in the teacher education programme
2. studies in English major programme
3. must be collected in the classroom
4. enrolled in a course on methodology, specifically in ELT
5. will be undertaking the practicum in the subsequent year.

The selection is summarised in Figure 4.2 below.

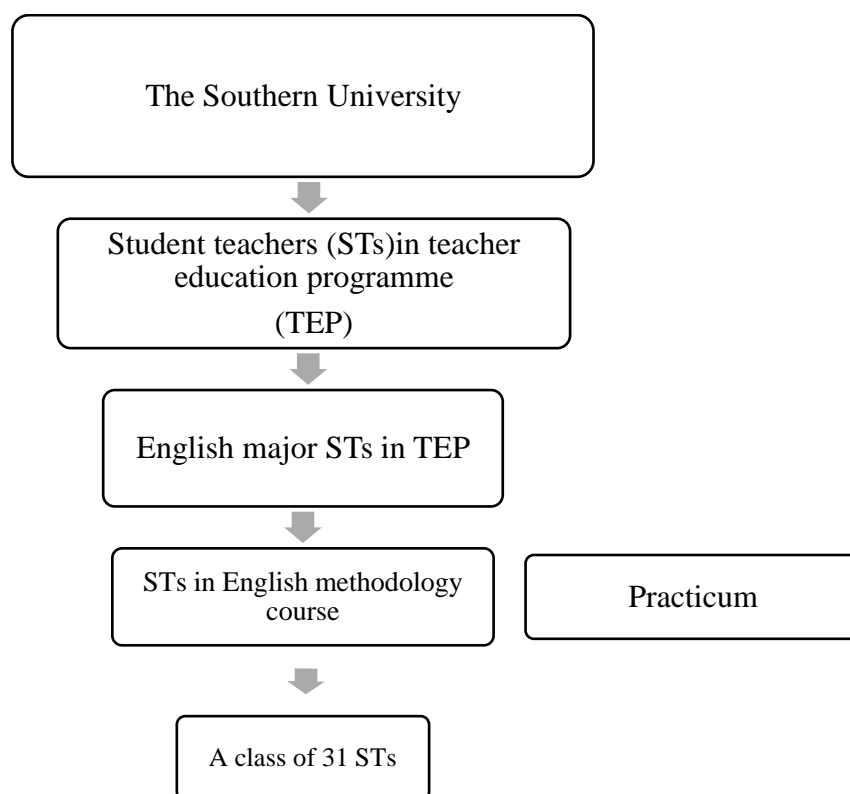


Figure 4.2 Participants selection

It is important to note that although thirty-five students were enrolled in the course, data from four students was not analysed for the following reasons:

1. Two students were frequently absent from the class and they did not participate in the focus group interview.
2. Another two students were absent on the day the post-course questionnaires were administered. As data analysis employed a statistical comparison of the pre-and post-course means scores, only completed dataset were used.

Thus, the total number of participants in Phase one was 31 (N= 31). The STs were aged 20 to 23 and most of them were female. More than three quarters (24 STs) had moderate level of academic achievement. The STs had been learning English from between 10 to 19 years with the majority of them having 16 or 18 years of prior English learning experience. Twenty-three of the STs had at least one year of part-time teaching experience and eight had no teaching experience.

## 4.5 Data collection procedures

### 4.5.1 Research instruments

Three research instruments used to collect data in Phase one were the TBLT module; questionnaires; and focus group interviews. I will discuss each of these in turn.

#### 4.5.1.1 The TBLT module

The term “module” is used to refer to a module on TBLT in the Year 4 teaching methodology course, *English Language Teaching for Secondary Education (ELTSE)*. The TBLT module was introduced to the class of 35 STs in the second half of the semester from weeks 11 to 15 (October – November 2016) as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Timetable of the course

Month	Week	Period	Content
August 2016	1	1-4 (4 hrs.)	English curriculum for the Secondary School and lesson planning
	2	1-4	Communicative language teaching
	3	1-4	Teaching English vocabulary
	4	1-4	Teaching English grammar
September 2016	5	1-4	Teaching reading skills
	6	1-4	Teaching writing skills
	7	1-4	Problem-based learning
	8	1-4	Brain-based learning
October 2016	9	1-4	Organizing English camp activities
	10	Midterm Examination	
	11	1-4	<i>“The TBLT module”</i>
	12	1-4	
November 2016	13	1-4	
	14	1-4	
	15	1-2	
16	1-4	Microteaching	
17-18	Final Examination		

The TBLT module aimed to provide the STs with knowledge about theoretical and practical elements of TBLT and other TBLT-related areas. In addition, it intended to



raise the STs' awareness and understandings of the principles and practices of TBLT. The goals of this module were adapted from five general goals of teacher training workshops by Macalister and Nation (2010). The first goal was to have STs understand and remember the theories and basic principles of TBLT. This goal could be achieved by awareness-raising practices. For example, before learning about TBLT, the STs compared two lesson plans that adopted different approaches, PPP and TBLT. They identified how the two lessons differed, what they thought about them and identified an approach on which these two lessons drew. The second goal involved experiencing and evaluating exercises. The STs reflected on a number of activities and evaluated them from their perspectives. The third goal was to help the STs learn how to make their own materials. This included adapting materials from the resources they had. This goal aligns with Brandl's (2017) suggestion that teachers need to be involved in the development of task materials because it helps to promote a deeper understanding of task concepts and design factors. The fourth goal involved planning lessons by integrating activities into larger units of work such as planning a task-based lesson plan. According to Nation and Macalister (2010), this goal is particularly useful when participants have been introduced to a new idea and now they must decide how the new idea can be used in their own teaching. The last goal was to have the STs engaged in problem-solving activities. This included being aware of and exploring solutions to typical classroom problems, which they would likely encounter in their future teaching practicum.

I analysed the course syllabus to ensure the alignment between the existing course and the module. The analysis showed that five units in the course were compatible with TBLT. They were Unit 1 (communicative language teaching), Unit 4 (teaching listening skills) Unit 5 (teaching speaking skills), Unit 8 (task-based instruction) and Unit 10 (cooperative learning). Then, I informed the teacher of this course that I intended to use these five units in the module so that she could skip them in her teaching plan. However, for practical reasons, the teacher allocated four units (Units 4, 5, 8 and 10) for my TBLT module. As the total class time of these four units was sixteen hours, the module was designed to last sixteen hours. However, towards the end of the module, the teacher offered additional two hours for an extra session. Therefore, the TBLT module consisted of five consecutive sessions for a total of eighteen hours.

To design the contents for the module, I used the four units to frame the overall module structure. It began with Units 4 and 5 as a lead-in. The STs would learn different aspects about how to teach listening and speaking skills such as principles, techniques, and examples of listening and speaking activities. To make a smooth transition to the next unit (Unit 8), which was about TBLT, I pointed out that TBLT could also be used with listening and speaking lessons. Then, I introduced them to theoretical and practical elements of TBLT and other TBLT-related areas. Key topics included the definition of tasks and TBLT, a three-stage framework of TBLT, a task and a non-task lesson, cooperative learning in TBLT, and planning a task-based lesson plan. It is important to note that cooperative learning (Unit 9) was introduced along with the lesson on TBLT because of its relevance. This was because while students were collaboratively working in pairs or groups during tasks, they were also engaged in collaborative learning.

The next step was to plan each lesson by selecting and sequencing activities. The activities and materials were compiled from different sources (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Nation & Newton, 2009; D. Willis & Willis, 2007; J. Willis, 1996). Examples of teaching materials are provided in Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2. The TBLT module followed J. Willis's (1996) procedures for aiding the transition to TBLT. They were;

- (1) find out about learners;
- (2) explain how people learn languages;
- (3) introduce the TBLT framework and;
- (4) show how TBLT works with their course materials.

**Exercise 1** Discuss with your partner. Do the following activities have the criterial of a task or not?

**Activity A**

**Asking for help**

Work in pairs. One student looks at card A. The other looks at card B. Practise the conversation.

<p><b>Card A</b> You are a student. You want your friend to help you with some homework.</p> <p><b>A</b> Check if B is busy. <b>B</b> _____</p> <p><b>A</b> Ask him/her to help you. <b>B</b> _____</p> <p><b>A</b> Try to persuade him/her. <b>B</b> _____</p> <p><b>A</b> Thank him/her.</p>	<p><b>Card B</b> You are a student. Your friend wants you to help him/her with homework. You are not keen.</p> <p><b>A</b> _____</p> <p><b>B</b> Tell him/her you are not doing anything. <b>A</b> _____</p> <p><b>B</b> Refuse. Give a reason. <b>A</b> _____</p> <p><b>B</b> Agree reluctantly. <b>A</b> _____</p>
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From Ellis (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: OUP.

1. Meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
2. Gap	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
3. Learner's own linguistic	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
4. A clearly defined outcome	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

Figure 4.3 An exercise on criteria of tasks

**Lesson Plan 5: My favourite animals and pets (adapted from Willis & Willis, 2007)**

**Pre-task**

- The teacher begins by telling the students about his or her favourite animals. And then write on the board, for example:
  - What is your favourite kind of animal?
  - Have you ever had a pet or do you have one now?
  - How would you describe its character?
  - Do you have an interesting experience or story about a pet?
- Students do unguided planning—writing down their own ideas, checking words in their dictionaries.

**Task cycle**

- Students are divided into groups. They take turns to talk about their favourite pets and they can use the note they have prepared. Each group votes for the student who can give the most interesting story.
- The winner of each group presents his or her story to the whole class.
- The class listens, takes note and votes for the winner of the class.

**Post task**

- Students write a report or draw a picture based on the winner's story.
- The teacher wraps up the lesson by reviewing on vocabulary and assigns homework in the vocabulary worksheet.

Figure 4.4 An example of a task-based lesson plan presented to the STs

After the TBLT module was drafted, I sought feedback from my supervisor and two PhD students whose research centred on TBLT or a TBLT-related area. To examine the practicality of activities and teaching procedures, I piloted some activities in the TBLT module with a class of thirty-four Year 4 students in the Bachelor of Arts programme. Because of time constraints, only three activities were chosen and the pilot lasted one-hour and fifteen-minutes. These activities were individual, pair work, group work, whole class activities and reflective writing. Overall, the pilot provided additional ideas for the lesson plans and confirmed the workability of the teaching procedures.

Finally, the module was introduced to the class of 35 STs in the second half of the semester as mentioned earlier. By that time, the STs had already acquired certain amount of knowledge about ELT methodology. They had also already been familiarized with useful terminology, key concepts about ELT and class procedures. Pedagogical approaches adopted in the module were lectures, group and class discussions, group presentations, and lesson planning.

#### **4.5.1.2 Questionnaires**

A common strategy for evaluating cognitive change in teacher education is to compare questionnaire data at the start and end of a programme (S. Borg, 2006; Kumar, 2010). Thus, the purpose of the questionnaire in this research was to gauge the extent to which the students' disposition towards TBLT had changed as a result of studying TBLT.

The questionnaire had two main sections: demographic information and pedagogical beliefs (see Appendix 2 for full version of the questionnaire). The section on demographic information asked factual questions about characteristics of the STs. The questions included age, gender, academic achievement (GPA.), amount of time in language learning, and language teaching experience. The second section on pedagogical beliefs was designed to assess the students' dispositions towards TBLT. It consisted of twenty closed-ended items adopted from Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) who also investigated change in their participant's disposition towards TBLT. Their questionnaire was a robust instrument in that it has been tested for the reliability coefficient by the split-half method ( $rw = 0.87$ ) which confirmed the high level of internal consistency of the Likert scale. The STs in the current study were asked to express levels of agreement towards each item using a 5-point Likert scale. A strong agreement with the notion of grammatical correctness would suggest a less favourable

disposition towards TBLT. On the other hand, a strong agreement on the statement that says, “The main focus of language programs is to develop students who are able to communicate fluently” (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010, p. 181) would suggest a more favourable disposition.

To ensure that the students were able to respond to the questionnaire completely, I translated it into Thai (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). I took several approaches to validate the translation of the questionnaire. Peer feedback was sought from a Thai instructor specializing in the field of translation and English language teaching. I then revised it on word choice and clarification for intended meaning (see Appendix 6 for more details on the revision). Because the questionnaire had some technical terms, it was also tested by a non-specialist (Gillham, 2008). I sought peer feedback from a non-specialist Thai PhD student from Victoria University of Wellington. After revising, back translation was used to check on the accuracy of the translation. A bilingual translator who had no previous knowledge about this research translated the questionnaire (Thai version) back into the original language (English). Then, I worked together with the translator to solve the ambiguity and clarify the meaning of some sentences (Nunan & Bailey 2009). As back translations will never be 100% similar as the original text, the comparison mainly focused on agreement of intended meaning. Three out of twenty statements were discussed and later modified for clarity and better understanding. After a final revision, the Thai version of a twenty-item questionnaire was ready for the pilot test.

Trying out a questionnaire before the actual data collection can help to identify unclear items or confusing instructions (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). The questionnaire was pilot tested with three groups of people. The first group was two senior student teachers in Year 5 of the teacher education programme. Another group was two instructors in the Department of Western Languages and the third group was eleven English major students who were in Year 4 of the Bachelor of Arts programme. I was physically present while conducting the pilot session to answer questions and take comments from the participants. Revision was made on two aspects: removing overlapping responses, and reducing time allocated for its completion (from 45 minutes to 30 minutes).

#### **4.5.1.3 Focus group interviews**

After the TBLT module, the STs in five groups were invited to participate in a focus group interview aiming to explore how the STs planned a task-based lesson. They were

asked to elaborate on the lesson planning processes and to reflect on their lesson plan. The focus group interview was used because it could elicit responses from more than one ST at the same time and STs were more likely to be comfortable to speak when they were part of a group rather than being a solo “target” in interview. More importantly, they could stimulate each other’s thinking, which results in a richer dataset than an individual interview (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). The composition of the focus group was based on the groups who had worked together in the lesson planning activity. Because of availability, it was not always possible to have every member in the groups to participate in the follow-up interviews. Therefore, the number of participants in each focus group varied from two to six members. The interviews were semi-structured, free flowing and conducted in Thai. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, I tried to keep my role to a minimum by asking questions and allowing the groups to discuss them. In addition, I took a role as a moderator ensuring that the group stayed on track. A set of focus group rules were reviewed with participants before starting. More importantly, I constantly emphasized that the purpose of the focus group interview was to get real perspectives from the STs. Therefore, they did not need to agree or please me with answers.

#### **4.6 Data analysis**

Three types of data analysis were used in Phase one: a coding framework for analysing the lesson plans, a quantitative analysis of the questionnaire, and a qualitative analysis of focus group interviews. A description of the data analysis procedures is as follows.

##### **4.6.1 A coding framework for analysing the lesson plans**

The data from the five lesson plans designed by the STs was analysed by following these steps.

###### *Developing the coding framework*

For the purpose of this study, it was necessary to establish a clear fundamental criterial features of tasks. This was particularly important because they would serve as indicators that identified whether the lesson plans designed by the groups of STs were closer to task-based lessons. The analysis adopted the task-designer’s perspective, or the task-as-workplan, rather than looking at actual delivery of the lesson. I adapted Erlam’s (2015) coding framework because it provided a systematic way of analysing classroom activities. Moreover, Erlam’s (2015) framework also drew on the widely accepted

definition of tasks (Ellis, 2009) to which I frequently referred during the TBLT module. Findings from Erlam's (2015) study suggested that the teachers in her study had unclear concepts and misinterpreted some criteria of tasks. The wordings in Ellis's (2009) criteria possibly gave the impression to the teachers that tasks suggest productive rather receptive language. Therefore, I revised the questions to emphasize that communication can be, either receptive or productive (see more details of the modifications to Erlam's (2015) framework in Appendix 6). Table 4.2 presents the finalized version of the analytical framework.

Table 4.2 A coding framework

Criteria	Questions	Required answer	Examples*	
			Task	Non-task
1. A primary focus is on meaning. (C1)	1.1 Do the learners mainly use the language for a communicative purpose, not just learn the language (e.g., forms and functions) intentionally?  1.2 Is the learner primarily concerned with producing and/or comprehending the messages (semantic and pragmatic meaning), not with focusing on linguistic form?	Yes  Yes	<i>Language user:</i> Learners use the same kind of communicative processes as those involved in real-world activities (listen to, or read a story, fill in a form, explaining, giving instructions etc.)	<i>Language learner:</i> Learners learn the language (e.g. forms and functions) intentionally.
2. There should be some kind of gap. (C2)	2.1 Does the activity have a gap that requires a transfer of given message from one person to another, or one form to another (written to oral) or one place to another (texts to table) in order to close it?  2.2 Is the gap closed as a result of learners' participation in communication (i.e., as either as a speaker/writer or listener/reader)?	Yes  Yes	<i>An activity with a gap activates the need to use language in order to close it, e.g. the need to convey information, infer meaning or express opinion.</i>  e.g., information-gap (an incomplete story), reasoning-gap (what course of action is best), opinion-gap (the discussion of social issue).	<i>There is no gap, and nothing had been found out from the communication.</i>  e.g., grammar teaching, teacher explanation, mechanical repetition,
3. Learners rely on their own resources (C3)	3.1 Are the learners not "taught"* the language they will need to perform the activity?  <i>* Being taught the language does not include the teachers providing some linguistic starting point such as key vocabulary, an input for production tasks (priming)</i>  3.2 Does the activity allow the learners to use the language they already knew to complete the activity?	Yes  Yes	<i>Learners can make their own choice of using whatever language available for them to complete the task.</i>  (Input-based resources: L1, prior knowledge of vocabulary, context, world knowledge)	<i>Learners use pre-teaching specific linguistic item.</i>



Criteria	Questions	Required answer	Examples*	
			Task	Non-task
4. There is a clearly defined communicative outcome. (C4)	4.1 Are the learners primarily concerned with achieving the goal stipulated by the activity, rather than using language forms correctly?	Yes	<i>Communicative outcome</i>	<i>Linguistic outcome</i>
	4.2 Is there an outcome that results from completing an activity that works towards a communicative goal, other than the display of linguistic knowledge?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observable results (e.g., a completed note or table, a route drawn on a map, a list of differences between 2 pictures, a survey, a drawing, a completed reorder of jumbled items, etc.</li> <li>- An abstract idea (e.g., approved decision, a plan for problem solving, a consensus etc.)</li> <li>- Physical reactions (e.g., outcomes from listen-and-do activity.</li> </ul>	e.g., grammar exercises, the display of language taught, reading out loud, mechanical drills

*Note.* Adapted from “I’m still not sure what a task is: Teachers designing language tasks,” by Erlam, 2015, *Language Teaching Research*, p.10. The information in the example is from Deng (2011), Littlewood (2004), Bygate et al. (2009), and J. Willis (1996).

As shown in Table 4.2, the coding framework included ten yes/no questions. The analysis involves an iterative reading and answering of these questions for coding. For each criterion to be coded as fulfilled, the answers to these questions should have been answered correctly (The required answers for all ten questions are “yes”). The extent to which the classroom activities exhibited taskness is determined by evaluating how much they align with the key criteria in Table 4.2. This study gave equal weight to all criteria similar to Erlam’s (2015) study. The analysis would place an activity on a cline of varying levels of taskness, starting from non-task, task-like, and task.

### *Identifying unit of analysis*

The analysis was conducted on the target task in the main task phase. I chose an activity as the unit of analysis. Drawing on the concepts from Gibbons (2006) and Lemke (1990), I operationalized my own definition of a language classroom activity as follow:

A segment of the lesson that explains learning and teaching actions in a classroom. These actions are performed either by learners or by a teacher. In one activity, we will normally see actions are happening under a unifying purpose or function, e.g. pronunciation drill, content explanation, reading aloud, games, discussion etc. There is no definite rule on how long one activity last, but we can distinguish one activity from another by identifying the transitions or boundaries which can be signalled by a change in the content, function or procedure.

There are two reasons for choosing the activity as the unit of analysis. First, individual activities have concise and unifying elements to be coded. Specifying the scope of analysis at the activity level allowed manageable and practical processes for coding. Second, as a lesson is made up of sequences of activities, understanding the whole picture of the lesson can be achieved through investigating its components.

### **4.6.2 Questionnaires**

The data from the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS statistics software (version 22.0). Initially, I coded raw data by assigning a number to nominal variable. For example, responses in the section of demographic information (e.g., gender, male = 1 and female = 2). For the Likert-type questions in section 2, items on the five-point agreement scale that demonstrated a positive disposition towards TBLT were coded as: strongly disagree= 1, disagree=2, neutral= 3, agree=4 and strongly agree= 5.

Conversely, the statements that had a negative disposition were scored in reverse (e.g., strongly disagree= 5, disagree=4, neutral= 3, agree=2 and strongly agree= 1). As a result, disposition scores ranged from a low disposition of 20 to a high disposition of 100. To minimize the miscoding error, I double-checked all coding for accuracy.

Given this study intended to investigate change in the students' disposition towards TBLT over time, their scores obtained before and after the TBLT module were compared. The analysis used a statistical comparison of the pre-and post-lesson means (t-test) or a paired samples t-test to measure responses to two different occasions from the same STs (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2010). However, merely presenting a statistically significant result does not always mean that the result is practically significant (William, 2011). Therefore, I also employed effect size or "the magnitude of intervention's effect" (Pallant, 2010, p. 255) to indicate the strength of the findings. This study adopted a standard measure of effect size called Cohen's *d* (Mackey & Gass, 2005) as it was easy to report the result using only the mean difference and standard deviation. To interpret the effect size, this study adopted a scale proposed by Plonsky and Oswald (2014). The interpretation of the effect size can be classified into three categories, a value 0.4 is small, 0.7 is moderate and 1.0 is a large effect size.

To further investigate which aspect of TBLT contributed to the overall change or no change in disposition scores of each group, an analysis of responses to each item was carried out. The analysis involved adding the responses to each questionnaire item together for each of the three groups. The total scores of each item from the pre-course and the post-course questionnaire were then compared to look for change for each item (see Tables 5.4 and 5.5 in Chapter 5).

#### **4.6.3 Focus group interviews**

Qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the data from focus group interviews and observation notes. The analysis followed an approach called thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6), defined as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data". This approach yields insightful interpretations that are contextually grounded (Lapadat, 2010) and captures the complexities of meaning within a textual dataset (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). The thematic analysis helped emphasize similarities and differences across the dataset.

I transcribed the recorded focus group interviews myself as it allowed me to familiarize and make sense of the dataset. As an interviewer, I remembered what the STs said and was able to guess some unclear words from the contexts. After that I cross-checked the accuracy of all the transcriptions against the original. Then, the interview transcripts were sent to all groups for member checking (Duff, 2008). I sent the emails containing the interview reports to all participants in the focus group interviews. All twenty-eight respondents responded within thirty-six days and verified the reports. Seven of them provided additional comments regarding their views about TBLT and I revised them based on their additional comments. Afterward, I began analysing the data by following these processes:

1. I assigned initial codes to the transcripts. Finding a code involved an iterative process in which I constantly moved back and forth between the dataset searching for repeated key words relating to the research questions.
2. Overall codes were noted down and I searched for themes by sorting the codes that cohered together meaningfully into potential themes. The themes emerged as the data unfolded.
3. Then, these themes were reviewed and refined before being labelled. The analysing processes were repeated for the data from all five groups of STs.

#### **4.7 Summary**

In this chapter, I have described the research methods adopted to carry out Phase one. I first described the research setting and participants. Then, I outlined data collection processes, followed by approaches to data analysis. In the next chapter, I will present and discuss the findings from Phase one.

## CHAPTER 5 PHASE ONE: FINDINGS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses RQ1:

What impact did the TBLT module have on:

- 1.1 the STs' disposition towards TBLT and;
- 1.2 the lesson design processes and the planned lessons?

In response to RQ1.1, the chapter first presents the findings on the impact of the TBLT module on the STs' disposition towards TBLT. Then, to address RQ1.2, the impact of the TBLT module on the lesson design processes and the planned lessons by the groups of STs are discussed. Finally, I conclude by reflecting on the affordances and constraints encountered in the process of introducing the TBLT module in a pre-service EFL teacher education programme.

### 5.2 The impact of the TBLT module

According to S. Borg (2011), "Judgements about the impact of teacher education depend on how impact is operationalized" (p.378). The meaning of impact used in this section is similar to S. Borg (2011) who interprets impact "more broadly to encompass a range of developmental processes" (ibid.). Therefore, to examine the impact of the TBLT module on the STs' cognition, I investigated how the STs' disposition towards TBLT changed at the end of the module. Regarding the impact on their practices, I investigated their ability to develop a task-based lesson plan after learning in the module. The following section first presents findings on the STs' disposition towards TBLT, then discusses the task-based lesson planning by the STs.

#### 5.2.1 The STs' disposition towards TBLT

This section presents findings on the STs' disposition towards TBLT as represented by disposition scores on the questionnaire described in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.6.2). At the beginning of the course, the STs completed this questionnaire, then, again, four weeks later. Table 5.1 below presents the questionnaire scores.

Table 5.1 A comparison of pre-and post-course disposition scores

No.	Student teacher	Pre-course (%)	Post-course (%)	Difference between scores
1	Nan	61	80	19
2	Nok	54	65	11
3	Kwan	68	79	11
4	Ta	61	71	10
5	Jib	62	71	9
6	Tarn	63	70	7
7	Air	60	66	6
8	Ploy	61	67	6
9	Aom	67	71	4
10	Dao	61	65	4
11	Fon	63	67	4
12	Noy	69	73	4
13	Duke	69	73	4
14	Kaew	63	66	3
15	Yui	61	64	3
16	Palm	63	65	2
17	Au	65	67	2
18	Kob	59	60	1
19	Dang	64	65	1
20	Lek	70	70	0
21	Koi	68	68	0
22	Toey	64	64	0
23	Eak	64	63	-1
24	Toon	68	66	-2
25	Jai	72	70	-2
26	Oat	63	59	-4
27	Pim	71	67	-4
28	Lux	72	68	-4
29	Fai	65	61	-4
30	Pang	66	61	-5
31	Pom	72	63	-9
Total N		31	31	31
Mean		64.80	67.25	
Minimum		54.00	59.00	
Maximum		72.00	80.00	
Std. Deviation		4.33912	4.87830	

As shown in Table 5.1, the mean score of pre-course disposition across the class is 64.80. As disposition scores range from low disposition of 20 to high disposition of 100 (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010), the level of disposition toward TBLT (64.80) is moderate (Low= 20-40, Medium = 50-70, High = 80-100). This shows that before learning in the TBLT module, the STs' beliefs about language teaching reflected their disposition towards TBLT to be at a moderate level. At the end of the module, there was an overall

increase in the mean score of 67.25, suggesting that the disposition of the class increased at the end of the module. Because of only a slight increase (2.4 points increase, from 64.80 to 67.25), the STs' disposition towards TBLT at the end of the module remained moderate.

A paired-sample t-test or repeated measures design was used to compare scores obtained at the beginning and the end of the course (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2010) as shown in Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

Table 5.2 Paired samples statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Beginning of course	64.8065	31	4.33912	.77933
	End of course	67.2581	31	4.87830	.87617

Table 5.3 Pair samples test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Beginning of course - End of course	-2.45161	5.78987	1.03989	-4.57535	-.32787	-2.358	30	<b>.025</b>

Note. \* $p < .05$

The analysis shows a statistically significant increase in scores from beginning of the course (M= 64.80, SD= 4.33) to end of the course (M= 67.25, SD= 4.87),  $t(31) = 2.35$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed). The mean increase in disposition scores is 2.45 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 4.58 to 0.33. The p-value in the final column labelled Sig. (2-tailed) of Table 5.3 indicates the probability value (p-value) as 0.025, which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). As the common cut-off point for establishing statistical significance, the p-value, is below 0.05 (Mackey & Gass, 2012), the data suggests that there is a significant result of the STs' disposition before and after the course. The effect size or "the magnitude of intervention's effect" (Pallant, 2010, p.255) was used to indicate the strength of the findings. The Cohen's d effect size (J. Cohen, 1998) is 0.425, which indicates a small effect (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014).

Overall, the analysis suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between the STs' dispositions towards TBLT at the beginning and the end of the course. The TBLT module can therefore be seen to have increased the STs' overall disposition towards TBLT. However, in terms of effect size, it was a small effect.

### 5.2.2 Discussion of RQ1.1

To understand the patterns of changes in the STs' disposition towards TBLT, we need to refer back to Table 5.1. Disposition scores increased for almost two thirds of the STs at the end of the course (19 out of 31 STs) while the scores of nine STs decreased and three STs' scores remained unchanged. Here, we see three patterns of change in the score obtained: positive movement, negative movement and neutral as summarised in Figure 5.1.

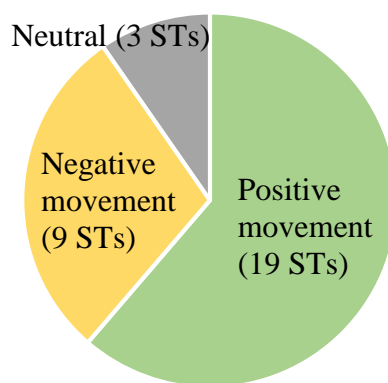


Figure 5.1 Three groups of change in TBLT disposition scores

The following paragraphs analyse the questionnaire data from each group. As previously mentioned in Section 4.6.2, an analysis of responses to each item was carried out to investigate which aspects of TBLT contributed to the overall change or no change in disposition scores of each group. The findings are presented in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 below.

Table 5.4 Aspects of TBLT in the positive movement group

Item no.	Questionnaire topic	Pre-course score	Post-course score	Point increase
20	For most students, language is acquired best when used as a vehicle for doing a task rather than studied in an explicit manner.	74	88	14



5	Explicit grammar instruction is an important element of any foreign language program.	72	82	10
12	Activities are the most effective means to organize a syllabus.	54	64	10

Note. n=19

First, in the positive movement group, the finding indicates that, of 20 items, item number 20 saw the most increase from the pre-course to the post-course scores (14 points increase) followed by items 5 and 12 (10 points increase). The finding suggests that the positive change in disposition scores largely came from changes in views of three aspects: a focus on language use (item 20); syllabus design (item 12); and an explicit grammar instruction (item 5). At the end of the module, this group agreed more strongly that using language was more important than studying in an explicit manner (item 20). They also increasingly saw the importance of using activities in syllabus design (item 12). However, their view of explicit grammar instruction, which was a negative disposition item, also increased (item 5) suggesting that for this group a strong role for explicit grammar teaching still prevailed.

Second, we turn to the negative gain score group of nine STs. The analysis of responses to each item in the pre-and post-course questionnaires rated by 9 STs shows that item numbers 20 and 16 showed the largest decline (-7 points decrease), followed by items 4 and 6 (-6 points decrease). Details of the items are shown in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5 Aspects of TBLT in the negative movement group

Item	Questionnaire topic	Pre-course score	Post-course score	Point decrease
20	For most students, language is acquired best when used as a vehicle for doing a task rather than studied in an explicit manner.	39	32	-7
16	Since each student enters the language classroom with different skills, knowledge and learning abilities, the language	41	34	-7

	teacher must help them develop individual strategies for improving their learning.			
4	The outcome of lessons is unpredictable because every student is unique and will cause the lesson to proceed in a different manner.	38	32	-6
6	Studying grammar promotes knowledge about language rather than the ability to use language. Therefore, explicit grammar instruction should be limited.	28	22	-6

*Note.* n=9, negative value indicates a lower post-course score.

As seen in Table 5.5, the negative change in disposition scores was primarily due to decreases in scores of four aspects: a focus on language use as a tool (item 20); a promotion of learner autonomy (item 16); a focus on language learning as a process rather than a product (item 4); and a limited use of explicit grammar instruction (item 6). This negative movement group was less inclined to advocate a focus on language used for doing a task (item 20). Such negative disposition was more evident when compared with the positive movement group. A big difference (56 points difference) between the post-course scores on this aspect (item 20) by the positive and the negative groups further highlights how these two groups largely differed in terms of their views on language use as a tool. Moreover, the decrease in score of items 6 and 16 shows that the negative movement group was less likely to agree on the limited use of explicit grammar instruction and the promotion of learner autonomy. These shifts indicate the pedagogical beliefs of these STs became less aligned with the principles of TBLT at the end of the TBLT module. This group, therefore, developed less favourable disposition toward TBLT over time.

The third group showed a neutral disposition where the post-course score of three STs (Lek, Koi and Toey) remained stable. A closer observation reveals that two STs (Lek and Koi) did not change most of their responses in the post-course questionnaire. Of 20 items, 15 items (rated by Noon) and 14 items (rated by Koi) remained the same. Regarding Toey's responses, nine items were unchanged while 11 items were different

from the pre-course questionnaire. A closer observation shows that of the 11 items, nine of them involve a matter of movement between degrees. For example, from disagree to strongly disagree (items 2, 9, 10, and 13) or from strongly agree to agree (item 16). Another two items were moving from neutral to strongly agree (item 5) or from disagree to neutral (item 19), which was still not a large difference. None was moving from the opposite disposition (e.g., from “agree” to “disagree” and vice versa). This finding suggests some small differences in Toey’s responses between pre-and post-course scores. Therefore, we can assume that the impact of the TBLT module on this neutral group might not be so evident and so did not change their views at the end of the module.

Overall, although most STs (19) had a positive change in their disposition scores, quite a big group of the STs (12 from the other two groups) did not show positive uptake of TBLT. As discussed above, their pedagogical beliefs were less likely to align with the principles of TBLT. Alternatively, they might have become more sceptical and were less interested in TBLT over time. The points raised by some STs in the focus group interviews can explain this interpretation. In response to a question asking their opinions and experience about TBLT, some STs reflected their concerns with the difficulty of TBLT as in the following extracts.

It is difficult for teachers to plan task-based lessons to be compatible with learning objectives. If students cannot do a task, then, it is a waste of time.

(Group 1)

Planning a task-based lesson is way more difficult than planning PPP. It is because we have to think about the four criteria in the design. TBLT is good but teachers have to do a lot of work to design tasks.

(Group 2)

Learning in task-based teaching is too much work. Some activities are good but some are difficult. Learning contents are too much and sometimes it is a bit boring.

(Group 3)

It is impossible to use a task- based approach in every class. It requires a lot of work and effort. Good but difficult!

(Another ST in Group 3)

It is challenging for teachers because they have to do lot of work. For example, they must think of contents and consider many factors like learners’ level, well -

equipped instructional media, disturbing environment and so on. Apart from preparing teaching contents, if their classes are frequently scheduled, can they handle them using task-based? It is quite tough for them. If they can do it, it will be a very good thing.

(Group 4)

I think [TBLT] is too difficult for Thai students. If they cannot do tasks, they may develop a negative attitude towards studying English and resist.

(Group 5)

However, some positive comments were also reported. For example,

At first, I felt uncomfortable and unfamiliar with TBLT teaching style. After that, I realized that this is an effective way. TBLT can be adapted in many ways.

(Group 1)

I think I may use [TBLT] in the future because it is a new approach and is not boring. It makes the class different from normal classes and so attracts more attendance from learners. Of course, it will give more work to teachers but if it helps learners learn more, why not use it? So, I think I will use this new approach.

(Group 4)

We have been learning about TBLT for four weeks and now we know that TBLT has many advantages. Therefore, we can choose what will work well in our class. For example, if sharing experiences task is too difficult for students, we can try some other tasks such as listing. So, I still want to use TBLT but I will evaluate my students first and then adjust the task accordingly.

(Group 5)

The above comments show that these STs perceived both the drawbacks and benefits of TBLT. Some STs expressed their interest in applying TBLT to their future teaching. However, the extent to which they saw that they could implement tasks depended on the factors such as students' level of proficiency and the readiness of the school context and teachers. This reflects the points made by the STs in Ogilvie and Dunn's (2010) study about problems implementing TBLT. The teachers found it difficult to use TBLT because of factors such as the perceived need to adhere to the school cultural norms that emphasized discrete linguistic items, the need to conform to an approach advocated by a mentor teacher and the need to demonstrate expertise through explicit instruction and controlled activities.

So far, this section has focussed on how the STs' disposition towards TBLT changed because of participating in the TBLT module. It was found that the STs' dispositions changed in three directions. Two third of the class (19 out of 31 STs) had positive change. In contrast, the scores of nine STs decreased while three STs' scores remained unchanged. The following section discusses their practices in relation to TBLT when they planned the task-based lessons as a part of class assignments.

### **5.2.3 Lesson planning by the STs**

RQ1.2 addresses the impact of the TBLT module on the ability of the STs to develop a task-based lesson plan. It explores two aspects, namely the process and the product of the lesson planning. As mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the assignments that the STs were required to complete during the TBLT module was to plan a task-based lesson in groups. As a practice, each group planned the lesson and submitted it to the teacher (myself) for feedback. In the final week, they planned another 50-minute task-based lesson outside of the class time in the same groups. It was this lesson which was evaluated, constituting the main data, and was discussed in the follow-up focus group interview. To investigate the process of the pedagogical planning, I conducted focus group interviews with five groups of STs separately one week after the TBLT module. They were asked to elaborate and reflect on their lesson plans. To investigate the product, I analysed the lesson plans against the four definitional criteria of tasks (Ellis, 2009) by drawing on a coding framework adapted from Erlam's (2015) scheme (see Section 4.6.1). The analysis was conducted on the target task in the main task phase and adopted the task-designer's perspective, or the task-as-workplan, rather than looking at actual delivery of the lesson.

The remainder of this section presents a description and analysis of the five lessons designed by the five groups for a 50-minute lesson for Mattayom 1 (Grade 7) students and of the interview data in which they described the process of planning these lessons. For each lesson plan, I describe the process that the STs reported carrying out to develop the lesson plans in the focus group interviews. This includes their self-evaluation on their lesson plan given in the interviews. I then evaluate these lessons using Erlam's (2015) coding framework and present the analysis in the table for each lesson. The lesson plans are labelled based on the group number assigned during the course (e.g., Group 1 = lesson plan 1). Finally, I discuss broader themes that emerged from this analysis.

### **5.2.3.1 Lesson plan 1 (How to get there)**

Group 1 explained in the focus group interview that they started the lesson planning by searching through textbooks and online sources for a topic that was generally used with Mattayom 1 (Grade 7) students. They settled on the topic of giving directions. Next, they listed a sequence of lesson steps and materials that they thought would be interesting and challenging. As one ST said, “If learners are interested in the content, they will be excited and want to participate in our activities.” They then listed what the learners would do in each phase. In the pre-task phase, they planned to use a video about people asking for directions. The group gave three reasons for this. First, it would help to prime the learners; the learners could draw on the conversation from the video; and it would motivate the learners’ interest. In the task-cycle, the learners would work in groups to create a conversation for a role-play based on the situation they were assigned. Each group had different topics (e.g., How to go to the market, the police station, the school, the restaurant, and the fire station) and they could make a map to use in the role-play. Then, they would act out the role-play in front of the class using the content they had created. Finally, the teacher would provide feedback, explaining more expressions about giving directions and assigning homework. The group did not say what specific homework was assigned. This group said they chose the role-play because it was commonly used in teaching speaking and listening. They concluded that this lesson plan would be useful for learners as it focused on communication skills, which could be applied in real life. They also found designing tasks was the most difficult stage in the lesson planning. They were not confident of the suitability of the designed task for their intended learners. Table 5.6 provides an analysis of Lesson plan 1.



### *Evaluation of Lesson plan 1*

In their self-evaluation in the focus group interview, Group 1 concluded that Lesson plan 1 fulfilled three criteria of tasks, except the *gap* principle. As they explained, while working on the role-play, the learners would interact and communicate with each other. The learners, therefore, would focus on *meaning* and use their *own linguistic resources*. The *outcome* was homework assigned after the lesson. Their description shows that this group had accurate understanding of the criterion of *meaning-focused* and *learners' own resources* while the *gap* and the *outcome* were not correctly described.

Moreover, while their self-evaluation showed only three features, my evaluation against the coding framework found that Lesson plan 1 meets all four criteria of a task and so is a task-based lesson. It consists of a main task at the centre complemented by a pre-task and a post-task phase. The pre-task phase provides language input (e.g., vocabulary and expressions) which the learners can borrow for the main task performance. In the main task, while planning the role-play in groups, the learners engage in meaning-focused communication as they are primarily concerned with constructing meaning and using the language similar to real-world activities (e.g., how to give directions to the market). There is the need to express opinions or to infer meaning. The assigned topic is more open; therefore, students can use any language to complete the role-play. They might borrow some input from the video in the pre-task stage. Moreover, the learners work towards a communicative goal and the clearly defined outcome is a completed script. Although the acting out of a role-play does not really reflect real communication, I coded the overall role-play as a meaning-focused activity because the central task here focuses on the planning process. The post-task phase is a focus on form because the teacher focuses on grammar points and some expressions. Overall, from a theoretical perspective, Lesson plan 1 is a task-based lesson.

#### **5.2.3.2 Lesson plan 2 (My dream job)**

In the focus group interview, Group 2 explained that they began the lesson planning by identifying language skills to be taught. They focused on speaking skills because they perceive that many Thai learners are not confident in speaking English and need to develop their oral ability. Therefore, they designed a lesson that focused on enhancing the students' confidence and ability to communicate in English. After that, they decided on the content by looking for some examples in books. The group chose the topic of *My dream job* because it required the learners to talk about the job they like and why. They



saw this topic as open and allowing for learner discussion. Moreover, there was no right or wrong answer and so the learners would not be overly worried about the answers. After identifying the topic, they started planning teaching steps. In the pre-task phase, the learners would be prepared for task performance. The teacher would activate the learners' pre-existing vocabulary knowledge by showing pictures and asking them to say the job in English. As the group explained, this activity would give the learners some more ideas about the jobs they would like to talk about. The group then explained a sequence of steps in the task cycle as follows. First, the learners would work in groups of five so that everyone had a chance to speak. Then, each group would vote for the person with the best reasons. Later, the winner of each group would present his or her story to the whole class. Finally, the class would vote for the overall winner. The purpose of voting was to motivate the learners. In the post-task phase, the teacher would then teach a grammar point relevant to the main task. For example, how to ask and answer questions which could be applied to the students' daily life. As an assignment, the students would be required to write what they shared with their friends and submit it to the teacher for evaluation. This was for the teacher to see individual performance as observing their participation in groups was not always possible.

It is important to note that the STs thought that what really helped them to plan this lesson were the examples of the lesson plans provided during the TBLT module. As one ST said, "It is easier and takes less time because we just follow the examples you give us. It is good that we have a lot of examples and so we can choose and adapt from them." They further remarked that it would not be easy if they planned the lesson from scratch by themselves. This was because they were more familiar with a PPP approach. As they mentioned, courses on pedagogy and methodology adopted the PPP approach. Therefore, they tended to follow PPP as well. One ST said, "I use PPP because other people also use it."

In what follows, I present a detailed analysis of Lesson plan 2 in Table 5.7



### *Evaluation of Lesson plan 2*

In their self-evaluation, Lesson plan 2 fulfilled all task criteria. The group agreed that there was a clear *outcome*. This was because the activity involved the learners voting for the winner. They mentioned that while sharing stories in groups, the learners would use *their own language*. As one ST said, “It probably has [*a focus on meaning*] because we do not focus much on grammar and the *gap* is probably when the students are communicating with each other and taking turns sharing their story.” Despite a brief description, Group 2 showed that their understanding of task features was quite accurate. Although they did not explain clearly about what the *meaning-focused* criterion was, they could identify the notion of form-focused as opposed to meaning-focused. This suggests that this group were aware of the opposite position between form and meaning.

My evaluation revealed that Lesson plan 2 meets all four criteria of a task and so is a task-based lesson. It comprises three main phases: a pre-task, a main task and a post-task phase. In the pre-task preparation, the teacher performed a task demonstration and an input- providing task (vocabulary priming). The former is similar to what Ellis (2018, p.221) calls “modelling the performance of task”. This involves the teacher performing a similar task with the whole class by asking some learners to talk about the job they like. The main task involves opinion sharing and it fulfils the criteria of being *meaning-focused*, fulfilling a communicative *gap* (new information is shared), using *own linguistic resources* and *a clearly defined outcome* where the learners vote for the most interesting story at the end. The post-task phase has two activities. The first one is a form- focused activity because its primary purpose is to teach a grammar feature relevant to the main task. The second activity is more like a task as it involves language practice where the learners have to write about what they have said in the main task.

According to the focus-group interview data, the written assignment is used as a way to check learners’ individual performances. This reflects the point made by J. Willis (1996) that the post-task phase is the ideal place for a focus on accuracy. As the group expressed it, in this written assignment, students would want to improve their language and pay more attention to the correct language use more than when speaking in groups. Therefore, Lesson plan 2 follows a task-based approach that moves from fluency to accuracy, the principle advocated by TBLT researchers (e.g., D. Willis & Willis, 2007; J. Willis, 1996).

### **5.2.3.3 Lesson plan 3 (Food and drink)**

This group started the lesson planning by searching for ideas on the internet. They specifically looked for a topic that would be easily made into tasks. Thus, they chose the topic of ordering food in a restaurant as it involved all four skills. After settling on the general concept, they started planning each stage by feeding in the activities. In the pre-task, learners would watch a video about people ordering food in a restaurant. Then, the teacher would elicit vocabulary about food from the video. The group explained that because of the feedback received from the teacher (myself) in the TBLT module, in this lesson they would let the learners focus only on the vocabulary in the pre-task phase instead of linguistic forms. After that, the learners would work in a group of three to create a dialogue for a role-play. As the group explained, the learners can use their own ideas to create the scenario. That was why they saw the video in the priming stage as useful. Then, the learners would take turns acting out the role-play using the content they had made up. The teacher would provide feedback and teach common expressions used in ordering food. Reflecting on overall processes, this group found it quite difficult to plan tasks. The pre-task stage was also difficult because it was different from what they used to do. They were not clear about the kind of input that could be provided to learners so as not to start the lesson with a focus on form. Finally, they concluded that this lesson plan was useful as it could be adapted to real life.

For a comprehensive perspective, I analysed Lesson plan 3 as presented in Table 5.8 below.



### *Evaluation of Lesson plan 3*

In their self-evaluation, this group matched the lesson to the four task features.

The *meaning-focused* was when students watched the video and learned some vocabulary in the video. This explanation is rather vague because the group did not provide enough details about how these two activities focused on meaning. Moreover, they misinterpreted the notion of *meaning* as learning meaning of vocabulary. The *gap* and *learners' own linguistic resources* involved students creating sentences for the role-play by using their own language, which are correct. However, they provided an incorrect definition of an *outcome* as involving the students acting out the role-play. Overall, the understanding of task features by Group 3 show mixed results.

My evaluation showed that Lesson plan 3 is a task-based lesson. It consists of three main phases, namely, a pre-task, a main task, and a post-task phase. The lesson starts with a priming stage where learners are prepared for the topic and provided with useful vocabulary for task performance. The main task phase involves the learners creating and acting out a role-play. They would work in groups of three to create a role-play scenario about ordering food in a restaurant. The analysis of the role-play in this lesson is similar to that of Lesson plan 1, which focuses on the planning process. While the learners are planning the role-play together in groups, they engage in meaning-focused communication. The gap creates the need to convey information, to express opinions, or to infer meaning. As the role-play is not strictly prescriptive, the learners can use their own ideas and linguistic resources to create the scenario. They may also borrow the input from the pre-task phase. The clearly defined outcome is a completed script. Finally, the post-task phase involves the teacher providing feedback on the learners' performance and an explicit instruction on expressions used in the restaurant.

#### **5.2.3.4 Lesson plan 4 (On the phone)**

This group explained the lesson planning processes as follows. First, they started with searching for the topic on the internet. This was to get some ideas about what topics were normally used in Mattayom 1 level (Grade 7). After that, they started to narrow down the choices until they settled on the topic of *On the phone*. They gave three reasons for this. First, the topic was similar to a lesson plan used in the course and so they felt it might be easy for them to draw on that lesson plan. Second, the topic would encourage the use of listening and speaking skills. Third, telephone conversation was relevant to the real world. As one ST said, "People use telephone to communicate with

each other in everyday life. So, I think learning how to talk on the phone in English will be very useful.” After setting the objectives for the lesson, they listed a sequence of activities in each stage. In the pre-task stage, the students watched a video about people talking on the phone. Then, in the task cycle, the group explained that they would use an information-gap task along with a role-play (details are presented in Table 5.9 below). The group reflected that it might be difficult for the teacher to monitor every pair because of a large class size. Therefore, after the information-gap task, they decided to combine the pairs who had the same topic into a bigger group. This would make it easier for the teacher to manage the class. In the new group, the students would help each other to check the answers. They would then choose representatives to act out the role-play. The group went on to explain that the content used in the task cycle was adapted from a Hotel Management course they had completed in the previous year. In the final stage of the lesson, the teacher would explain the lesson after the students did the task. As they said, doing it this way helped learners to understand the instructions easily because they had already completed the tasks.

Table 5.9 Analysis of Lesson plan 4 (On the phone)

Function/Role in the lesson	Description and sequences of class activities	Task features											Lesson structure				
		Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness			
		1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2			Fulfilled?		
Orientation	-													→	Non - task	Task-like	Task
Pre-task phase	T writes sentences about talking on the phone on the board (but still did not teach them). For example, May I speak to Somsak, please? Who's speaking? I'm sorry, he is busy now. Would you like to leave a message? Can I take a message? I'll call back later. Then, Ss watch a video about two people talking on the phone.																
Main task phase	Working in pairs, Ss are provided with an incomplete dialogue about talking on the phone. Each student in each pair has different information. They have to complete the whole conversation by exchanging the information with each other.	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes				●
Post-task phase Independent production	After completion, the pairs that work on the same phone situation are put into a bigger group. Therefore, there will be six groups in total. In the new group, Ss compare their answers and choose the representatives to perform the role-play in front of the class by using the conversation they work on.																
Post- task phase A language focus	T reviews the sentences on the board again.																



Interestingly, while the STs were reflecting on their experience in the class, responses from three STs reflected how the TBLT module informed their task design.

Task is about learning by doing. When I'm doing something, it helps me learn and remember better. Before studying in this class, I only know that task-based teaching is a teaching approach that emphasizes using tasks. That's all I know. However, when I studied in this class, you did not tell me right at the beginning what a task was. Instead, you assigned us to do many tasks in pairs or groups. At the end of the class, I, then, realized that what we did today was task-based learning. From that point, I can remember about task-based learning from what I have done in the class. I remembered what I have said or written. I learned unconsciously.

This perspective was shared by another two STs in the same group who stated that:

I agree with [her]. I could remember the procedures of TBLT from the tasks I did in the class. It is like, 'Oh... what I have been doing is called task-based learning'.

When we planned our task-based lesson, we recalled task-based teaching procedures in the class you used. We remembered what you did throughout the lesson planning procedure. We know that the lesson plan we designed is the result of studying in this class. It was acquired naturally.

#### *Evaluation of Lesson plan 4*

In their self-evaluation, the group thought that Lesson plan 4 had all the elements of a task but varied in terms of the degree. All agreed that a *gap* was the most obvious criterion because the activity required students to exchange information. The *outcome* was seen in terms of the acting out of the role-play. It was *meaning-focused* when the students communicated with each other during the information-gap task. Students would use their *own linguistic resources* when they watched the video during the pre-task phase. However, the group questioned the level of linguistic resources of students at Mattayom 1 level (Year 8). They noted that the students might have limited linguistic resources and find it difficult to understand the video. However, they concluded that what made a task-based lesson plan varied depending on which criterion was emphasized. They gave an example that this lesson plan focused more on the gap

principle and so students were encouraged to talk with their friends. Apart from the *outcome*, this group tended to have a good understanding of task features.

The analysis against the coding framework shows that Lesson plan 4 is a task-based lesson because it creates a context where learners must use the language to carry out a task and achieve the goal. The lesson consists of a pre-task, a main task, and a post-task phase. The pre-task is a priming stage where learners are prepared for the topic by watching a topic-related video. Then, in the task cycle, learners engage in an information-gap task. There is a primary focus on meaning when learners communicate and exchange information with each other to fill the incomplete dialogue (gaps). They also rely on their own resources in order to achieve the outcome, a complete dialogue. Therefore, the sequence fulfils the four features of a task. In the post-task phase, there are two activities: acting out a role-play and the teacher explaining language features. Although learners interact in the role-play, they rely on the scripts without any requirement to negotiate meaning and exchange their own meanings. Ellis (2018) regards an activity that requires the students to act out a script of a dialogue as an exercise (e.g., “Dialogue”, p.217). Overall, Lesson plan 4 is closer to a task-based lesson than an exercise because it fulfils the four criteria of tasks.

#### **5.2.3.5 Lesson plan 5 (My last vacation)**

This group started the design process with identifying the skill to be taught. They chose speaking because they wanted to focus on communicative skills. After that, they decided on learning objectives which would help them to frame the lesson more easily. Next, they listed the activities for each stage. In the pre-task, the teachers would give prompts to the students by writing some questions on the board. The students then would prepare to talk about their favourite place individually. This group explained that they allocated a longer time for the pre-task because they thought that Thai students are not good at speaking and so might need more time for the preparation. In the task cycle, the students would be divided into groups and would take turns talking about their favourite place. Each group would vote for the best story to be shared to the whole class. Again, the class would vote for the best two stories. In the post-task stage, the teacher would teach a grammar point about the past simple tense. The group concluded that the lesson planning was difficult because they had to think about the four criteria while planning.

Table 5.10 Analysis of Lesson plan 5 (My last vacation)

Function/Role in the lesson	Description and sequences of class activities	Task features											Lesson structure				
		Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness			
		1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2			Fulfilled?		
Orientation	T begins by telling his or her travelling experiences to the class.													→	Non - task	Task-like	Task
Pre-task Planning	T writes the questions on the board. For example, what is your favourite place? Have you ever been there? How long were you there for? What did you do there? Why do you like this place? Some students answer the questions. T allows time for the students to prepare to talk about their favourite place.																
Main task phase	Ss make a group of five and take turn sharing their own experience about travelling. Each group votes for the best and most interesting story. The winner of each group presents his or her story to the class. The class votes for two winners.	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes				●
Post-task A language focus	T teaches grammar point (past tense) and wraps up.																

### *Evaluation of Lesson plan 5*

In their self-evaluation, by their understanding, their lesson plan fulfilled the criteria of task. As one ST explained, students would be concerned with *meaning* while sharing their story and listening to their friends' stories. Another ST added that students needed to convey messages and so they would focus on the *meaning*. This group had different perspectives about a *gap*. While one ST thought of *gap* as the two winning stories, another ST mentioned that sharing the story was a *gap*. However, they were not certain about the *outcome* and so associated it with something similar to general learning outcome or a product of completing a task. All agreed that the lesson met the criterion of using one's *own linguistic resources* as students had to rely on their own language while sharing the story. Overall, their descriptions show variable understanding of task features.

Evaluating the lesson against the coding framework, Lesson plan 5 adopts a task-based approach. It consists of three phases: a priming stage; a main task and a language focus. The pre-task is a priming stage where learners prepare what they want to say in the main task. The main task involves learners sharing their own experience about travelling. Learners engage in meaning-focused communication and use their own linguistic resources while taking turns sharing the stories to each other. The activity has a communicative gap and a clearly defined outcome (the winner). Therefore, it fulfils the four criteria of a task. In the post-task phase, the teacher focuses on grammatical structure (past tense) that is used to talk about past experience.

Overall, the analysis of the five lessons reveals that the lesson plans designed by the STs consistently displayed qualities of task-based learning that had been introduced in the TBLT module. The findings are summarised in Table 5.11 below.

Table 5.11 The evaluation of Lesson plans 1-5

Lesson plans	Task features				Lesson structure		
	Meaning	Gap	Own resources	Outcome	NTL	TLL	TBL
Lesson plan 1 ( <i>How to get there</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓			●
Lesson plan 2 ( <i>My dream job</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓			●
Lesson plan 3 ( <i>Food and drink</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓			●
Lesson plan 4 ( <i>On the phone</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓			●
Lesson plan 5 ( <i>My last vacation</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓			●

Note. NTL= non-task lesson, TLL= task-like lesson, TBL= task-based lesson

### 5.2.4 Discussion of RQ1.2

The primary purpose of RQ 1.2 was to examine the impact of the TBLT module on the ability of the STs to develop a task-based lesson plan. I now discuss in more depth the analysis of the five lesson plans presented in the previous section.

#### 5.2.4.1 Lesson planning process

The focus-group interview data reported in the previous section showed that the groups of STs had similar design processes in general. Possibly, they followed the guidance provided in the TBLT module. However, the detail written down in the lesson plan varied with individual preferences and experience. The STs started with a broad process of establishing the lesson content by identifying the topic area, which aligns with the procedure Ellis (2018), Estaire and Zanon (1994) and D. Willis and Willis (2007) propose as the first step in task design. They then identified specific steps in the lesson. They framed their lessons into different phases, similar to J. Willis's (1996) model which was taught in the TBLT module. Within the general pattern of the design processes, the groups differed in terms of how they chose the topic areas and the sequencing activities.

The data shows that the TBLT module influenced the ways the STs wrote their lesson plans. During the planning process, the STs drew on their knowledge, past experience, feedback and examples provided in the TBLT module. For example, due to the feedback received from the

teacher (myself) during the practice of writing a lesson plan, Group 3 reported being more cautious about planning the pre-task stage in this lesson. They were more aware that they were not supposed to start with linguistic forms. Therefore, they paid more attention to vocabulary priming, not linguistic form in the pre-task stage. Group 2 mentioned that they followed the examples provided in the TBLT module because “it is easier and takes less time”. Similarly, Group 4 reported drawing on the module by choosing the topic *On the phone* because it was similar to one task-based lesson plan in the module. Thus, it would be easy for them to draw on that lesson plan while planning. They also mentioned recalling “task-based teaching procedures” I used in the class and tried to follow these procedures to plan their lesson. This group further stated that they also adapted the conversation from a Hotel Management course they had completed in the previous year to design the conversation for their task. Although Group 5 did not refer to the TBLT module, it appeared that their lesson plan was similar to one example presented in the module (see Figure 4.4). It was this example on which Group 2 also drew. By drawing on the examples, the STs re-designed the existing materials and made changes to the details of a task (e.g., contents or topics). However, the structure such as the order of steps was still retained. Among the five groups, only Group 1 did not show clear evidence of how the TBLT module informed their lesson plan process. Instead, they talked more about searching through textbooks and online sources for a topic.

We can see that four groups of the STs used the examples provided in the TBLT module to guide the planning process. K. Johnson (2000) views this strategy as repertoire-driven when task designers draw on tasks they have used before. He found that some task designers in his study adopted a short-cut or a ready-made task in their repertoire although they had a clear conceptualisation of the process that needed to be gone through. As he concludes, all designers can be expected to draw on their repertoire at some point in the design process. The STs in this study relied on the TBLT module because the examples in the module helped them plan the lesson easily and quickly. Moreover, they also mentioned that planning a task-based lesson by themselves was difficult. In response to the question asking about their experience of task-based lesson planning, all groups mentioned difficulty with three aspects of the design process: the characteristics of tasks; learners’ level of proficiency; and classroom management as discussed below.

One ST in Group 5 said that the group found it challenging to use the four features of tasks, *a focus on meaning, gap, learners' own linguistic resources* and *outcome* in their design. Group 5 reported spending a lot of time working on the pre-task and post-task phases just to make sure that these phases could motivate students' interest. Another ST in the same group said that he did not understand the concept of tasks clearly and so did not know how to choose activities for the task design. Likewise, one ST in Group 3 also mentioned having a problem in creating and connecting the task criteria with the lesson content. Another ST in Group 3 further noted that planning the pre-task phase was difficult because it was different from what she was used to. According to her understanding, a task-based lesson should not start with pre-teaching of linguistic forms and so her group had to think carefully about types of input that were allowed in the pre-task phase. These comments show that the problems of task design encountered by the STs involve the aspects of task features, task sequence and their unfamiliarity with task-based lesson planning.

However, Groups 1, 2 and 4 did not relate the difficulty of lesson planning to the characteristics of tasks. Instead, they reported having problems creating tasks for learners with different language abilities and that it was difficult to implement the planned tasks in the classroom (e.g., managing tasks in a large class size, or time constraints to carry out tasks in the class). Although these issues appear to be connected to their own pedagogical contexts and fall outside of the task design process, they remain real issues for teachers and consequently do impact on task design.

Although the STs had been introduced to tasks and practised designing task-based lessons, the findings described above on the planning of TBLT lessons shows that the process was somewhat challenging. As Samuda (2005) states, "Task design is a complex, highly recursive and often messy process, requiring the designer to hold in mind a vast range of task variables relating to the design-in-process (p.243)." Because of such complexity, STs were more likely to draw on the tasks they were already familiar with such as those presented in the TBLT module. This finding reflects K. Johnson's (2003) point that non-specialist task designers draw on the materials familiar to them and they adjust these materials to suit their needs and purposes. Similarly, Newton and Bui (2017) found that teachers in their study preferred the ready-made materials to preparing tasks from scratch by themselves. Newton and Bui (2017) further propose that ready-made materials should be available to encourage teachers to adopt

a more task-based approach. The findings from this study and that of Newton and Bui's (2017) study are indicative of how teachers perceived examples useful for task design.

For many pre-service teachers, lesson planning is complicated and challenging (Senior, 2006; Tashevskaja, 2008) and planning a task-based lesson is no exception. It involves a gradual development of design skill and expertise. As East's (2018) study found, beginning teachers lack experience in devising tasks of their own and need support in this process. In the same vein, John (1991) proposes that teacher educators provide good models of planning to student teachers. These models could help them avoid the pitfalls of lesson planning they may encounter during field experiences in a school. Therefore, models or examples can be a good starting point for teachers when they are left to their own devices. After teachers become familiar with tasks and gain expertise in the task design process, it is assumed that their ability to plan tasks will naturally move from routine to less routine or eventually become more creative. To investigate this assumption, longitudinal research is needed to explore how teachers task planning changes over time.

#### **5.2.4.2 The lesson plans designed by the STs**

The analysis of the lesson plans as reported in Section 5.2.3 above shows that all the lesson plans were characterized as task-based. This means that in these five lessons, a task plays a central role in the lesson structure and creates a context where learners use their language to achieve the goal and engage in meaning-focused communication in the classroom. Good examples of task planning are Lesson plan 2 (*My dream job*) and Lesson plan 5 (*My last vacation*). The main tasks in these lesson plans provide optimal conditions for the learners to use language for real communicative purposes. For example, when learners take turns talking about a job they like or sharing their own experience about travelling, they engage in meaningful communication.

The analysis also found that the tasks in each lesson plan was situated in the middle of the lesson reflecting the three-stage design: pre-activity, while-activity and post-activity which they had been taught. The provision of the main task in the middle will be familiar to many teachers because it corresponds to well-established classroom procedures such as PPP (Samuda & Bygate, 2008) and the pre, during, post lesson structure common to reading skill instruction. Sandwiching the task between several activities, such as mini-tasks or non-tasks



like pre-task activities or a language focus in the post-task phase, provides optimal conditions for task performance (Nitta, 2008). Similarly, although Ellis (2003) asserts that the only obligatory phase in task-based teaching is the during-task phase, he also argues that the pre-task and post-task phases are useful to facilitate the task performance and foster learning from the task. But Samuda and Bygate (2008) note, a task can have different pedagogic roles depending on its position in the lesson. When a task is at the beginning of the sequence, it has an initiating or catalysing role (e.g., to introduce a new topic or to stimulate discussion). There is a more reactive role if used in the middle (to draw learner attention to specific content) and an integrative role at the end (e.g., to provide feedback or discussion at the end of the lesson).

In the focus group interviews, the STs themselves also said that they thought their lesson plans were task-based. However, when they were asked to describe how their lessons reflected the features of tasks, their descriptions showed variable levels of understanding. Two criteria that the STs had particular problems with were the *outcome* and the *gap* principles.

For example, Groups 2 and 5 correctly identified the task *outcome* as the voting for the winner of the best story. Others in Group 5 though, were less certain and treated the task *outcome* more broadly as a general learning goal, which does not fit the definition indicated in Ellis's (2009) criteria. This confusion between learning goals and tasks outcome is likely to be a common one. Similarly, Groups 1, 3, and 4 did not provide an accurate definition of the *outcome*. For example, Group 1 thought of an *outcome* as homework. Groups 3 and 4 viewed an *outcome* as involving learners acting out a role-play. They tended to think of any activity that came after the main task as the *outcome*. These examples show that the concept of task outcome was not well understood by the STs. Interestingly, the experienced teachers in Erlam's (2015) study found the outcome principle was the easiest to incorporate in their task design. This was because these teachers planned tasks for young learners. They, thus, selected a task that could motivate the learners by incorporating a goal other than learning the language such as winning a game or completing a picture.

Another problematic criterion was the *gap* principle. According to Ellis (2009), a *gap* creates the need to express an opinion, to convey information or infer meaning. Again, the STs provided mixed responses about this criterion. For example, Group 2 correctly mentioned a

*gap* as learners taking turns sharing their story. Erlam (2015) coded activities designed by her teacher participants as having a *gap* when there was an audience who listened or read for purpose. If we draw on her coding, what Group 2 mentioned as “learners taking turns sharing their story” is therefore a *gap*. The *gap* creates the need to convey information from one learner to other learners. Group 4 had the most accurate understanding of the *gap* when they associated a *gap* with learners negotiating and exchanging information to complete the dialogue. In contrast, Group 3 thought of a *gap* as learners creating sentences for the role-play, which is accurate. This shows that Group 3 thought of a *gap* as something missing. In other words, to fill the *gap*, learners need to create sentences. Group 5 had different interpretations about a *gap*. Similar to Group 2, some explained that sharing a story among the groups was a *gap*, which is correct. Others incorrectly associated a *gap* as the two winning stories. In contrast to all other groups, Group 1 noticed the absence of a *gap* in their lesson plan and so did not talk about this criterion in the focus group interview.

A possible explanation why some STs did not do well on the *outcome* and the *gap* principles was because they might not clearly understand basic concepts that underpin communicative-oriented activities such as the need to convey information, to express opinion or infer meaning. Moreover, the word *outcome* can be misinterpreted by the STs as any end-result of doing tasks or activities. Similarly, the often missing features of the *gap* and the *outcome* is also reported in Peng and Pyper’s (2019) study. Many activities claimed as tasks by teachers in their study often failed to meet these criteria.

The STs had fewer problems with the criteria of *meaning-focused* and *learners’ own linguistic resources*. Their descriptions of these two criteria tended to correspond to Ellis’s (2009) criteria more than *outcome* and the *gap* principles. For example, Groups 1, 4 and 5 explained how the *meaning-focused* criterion was found in their lesson such as: “interacting and communicating to each other [during preparing stage]”, “communicating to each other during the information-gap task” and “sharing their story and listening to friends’ story”. Interestingly, Group 2 viewed *meaning-focused* criterion in terms of its contrasting position to a focus on forms. As they said, “It probably has [a focus on meaning] because we do not focus much on the grammar.” This explanation shows that Group 2 was aware of two important aspects of form-focus and meaning-focus in TBLT. Moreover, all groups had fewer difficulties with the criterion of *learners’ own linguistic resources* which they correctly referred to using phrases such as “using their own language.”

In summary, the findings show that the STs had variable levels of understanding of task features ranging from vague to more accurate accounts of task features. This study supports the findings reported by Peng and Pyper (2019) that teachers found it difficult to clearly understand the criteria of tasks. Although the data shows that STs had limited understanding of task features, their planned lessons aligned well with TBLT. This may be due to a strategy the STs used in the design process. As reported earlier, the STs were provided with examples of task-based lessons during the TBLT module. Many of them found it practical to draw on examples of tasks from this module. By following the examples, their task design aligned with the TBLT principles although they may not have developed a comprehensive understanding of the task components. The STs seem to have used tasks without showing explicit knowledge about them (Oliver & Bogachenko, 2018). Again, this finding raises the issue of the complexity of the task design and shows how important model TBLT lessons are for learning to teach with task. As one ST in Group 2 said, “It is good that we have a lot of examples and so we can choose and adapt from them.”

Overall, this study found that the TBLT module had an impact on the STs’ cognition and practices of task-based learning. At the end of the TBLT module, 19 out of 31 STs had developed a favourable disposition towards TBLT. In their practices of task-based lesson planning, the STs drew on their knowledge, past experience, feedback and particularly on examples provided in the TBLT module to help them plan the task-based lessons despite evidence of limited understanding of TBLT.

### **5.3 Concluding remarks**

In this section, I report the affordances and the constraints encountered in the process of introducing and teaching the TBLT module in a pre-service EFL teacher education programme in a Thai university.

Phase one involved me as a TBLT researcher and teacher educator introducing the TBLT module in the methodology course in a teacher education programme in Thailand.

Introducing the TBLT module into the teacher education programme yielded important insights into how the STs in this current study made sense of TBLT as reported in the previous sections. This included the affordances and constraints that shaped the uptake of TBLT in the existing programme. I first present the affordances then I discuss the constraints that arose during the process of introducing and teaching the TBLT module. The TBLT

module was incorporated into the existing programme and had an impact on the STs' cognitions and practices of TBLT. Three affordances contributing to this incorporation. The first affordance was congruence between TBLT and objectives of curriculum. Due to this alignment, it was not difficult for me to get permission from the Dean of the Faculty and the teacher of the course to conduct TBLT in this course. This alignment supports Van den Branden's (2009) point that an innovation that is compatible with contextual conditions is more likely to be adopted or accepted by teachers. Similarly, Adams and Newton (2009) highlight the importance of an environment that allows for experimentation. The top down policy-makers and school decision-makers can promote such conditions and make innovation feasible.

The second affordance involved collegial and institutional support. Throughout the process of teaching the TBLT module, I received support from colleagues in the programme. For example, during the pilot study, I received peer feedback on the TBLT materials from more experienced colleagues. Another colleague offered her class to participate in the trial of the TBLT materials. Whenever I needed classroom technical help (e.g., using multimedia in the classroom), the faculty staff always assisted me. More importantly, the teacher of the course was an experienced teacher educator who had a strong interest in research and commitment to professional development. She always encouraged her colleagues to try out classroom innovations and conduct research. Her personal interest in classroom-based research enabled me to adopt TBLT in her class. These examples suggest that the collaborative process where a TBLT teacher educator (myself) and the other colleagues were working together could facilitate the uptake of TBLT in the programme. As Van den Branden (2009) observes,

Innovations that are taken up by school teams rather than by individual enthusiasts, and that create ample space for staff development and shared teacher experience, will therefore stand a better chance of success (p.667).

The third affordance was the characteristics of the STs in this study. This group of STs was committed to learning about TBLT and were responsible, hardworking and willing to do all the tasks that were asked of them. This strong commitment to learning fostered the STs' engagement with tasks and created optimal conditions for the TBLT module.

Despite the affordances, integrating the TBLT module into the teacher education programme was not without its challenges. The complexity of TBLT itself inhibited the STs' full

acceptance of TBLT. As reported in Section 5.2.3, working with tasks and planning task-based lessons was challenging for the STs. Although almost two thirds of the class (19 STs) showed a positive change in disposition towards TBLT at the end of the module, quite a large group of STs (12) did not. Although the complexity of TBLT did not directly affect the process of introducing and teaching the TBLT module, it may hinder the STs' decision to take up TBLT of their own initiative. This aspect accords with Van den Branden's (2009, p.664) point that "Innovations that are easy to understand are more likely to be adopted. Teachers should be able to get a conceptual and practical grip on the new ideas or tools easily." Many previous studies have reported that teachers struggled with task complexity and task design (Brandl, 2009, 2017; Carless, 2004; Chien, 2014; Van den Branden, 2006a).

In conclusion, it is assumed that to help teachers develop a deeper understanding of task concepts and task design, teachers need rich opportunities to engage in the development of task materials such as planning a task-based lesson plan. This includes more opportunities to implement tasks they design in a real classroom and evaluate them from their perspectives. Practical experiences with tasks may contribute to the development of teachers' understandings of TBLT. To investigate this assumption, a further study on the experiences of the STs teaching with tasks was conducted with three STs undertaking a teaching practicum in a Thai secondary school in Phase two.

#### **5.4 Summary**

This chapter presented findings on how the TBLT module had an impact on the STs' disposition towards TBLT, the lesson design processes and the planned lessons. The finding revealed three patterns of change in their disposition: positive, negative and neutral. Nineteen out of the thirty-one had a positive change in TBLT disposition. This positive change was largely because of changes in views on items focusing on language use, syllabus design, and explicit grammar instruction. The negative gain score by nine STs was primarily due to decreases in scores on four aspects: a focus on language use as a tool, a promotion of learner autonomy; a focus on language learning as a process rather than a product; and a limited use of explicit grammar instruction. The last group showed a neutral disposition where the post-course score of three STs remained stable, suggesting the little impact of the TBLT module on their disposition. Regarding the STs' ability to develop a task-based lesson plan, I have explained that the TBLT module influenced the ways in which the STs wrote their lesson

plans. To help them plan the lesson, the STs drew on their knowledge, past experience, feedback and examples provided in the TBLT module. All groups were able to plan lessons that reflected the principles of task-based teaching, although there was evidence of limited understanding of task features and difficulty of the task design process. In conclusion, I have explained that the TBLT module was incorporated into the teacher education programme because of three affordances: the congruence between TBLT and the curriculum; collegial and institutional support; and the characteristics of the STs that were committed to learning in the TBLT module. I concluded that TBLT innovation was properly introduced, compatible with contextual conditions and supported by stakeholders in the context.

In the next chapter, I will describe the research methods and data collection process of Phase two.

## **CHAPTER 6 PHASE TWO: METHODOLOGY**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to carry out Phase two. It begins with an overview of Phase two and then outlines key areas namely, research setting and research participants, research methods for data collection, and analysis.

### **6.2 Overview of Phase two**

Phase two was a multiple case study through which the progress of three student teachers (STs) who had participated in Phase one was tracked as they undertook a one-year teaching practicum in a Thai secondary school. The objective was to investigate how the STs' cognition and teaching practices evolved during the practicum. The investigation involved classroom observation followed by stimulated recall and semi-structured interview. Each ST was observed in three separate observation cycles (OC1, OC2 and OC3). However, the stimulated recall interviews was only conducted during OC1. Because of time constraints, all subsequent interviews followed a semi-structured format. The interviews focused on the STs' thinking processes at the time of their teaching and other related or emerging issues. To obtain an additional perspective on the STs' teaching, I also conducted interviews with groups of two to four learners selected from these STs' classes following observation cycle 2 (OC2).

### **6.3 Research setting**

Phase two took place in a Thai secondary school when the three STs were undertaking their one-year teaching practicum in the Year 4 of the programme. The school has approximately 2,000 students ranging from Grade 7 to 12. The school day includes nine periods (50 minutes) starting from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The school has eight departments. The STs worked in the Department of Foreign Languages. Teaching staff comprised thirteen Thai teachers and seven foreign teachers who had obtained a Bachelor's or Master's degree in a field related to English language. In the practicum, the STs worked with one designated cooperating teacher and were supervised by two university supervisors. The STs gradually assumed teaching responsibilities by taking over the cooperating teacher's classes. Prior to teaching, they prepared lesson plans, which were to be approved by the cooperating teacher who would also

sometimes observe and provide them with feedback. The STs were also observed six times by the university supervisors over the period of their practicum.

The classes where the STs taught were Mattayom 1, 2 and 3 (Grades 7 – 9). These classes used the series of commercial textbooks for lower secondary education, *Access 1*, *Access 2* and *Access 3*, respectively. These textbooks are designed to conform to the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 and claim to be task-based. As the teacher' manual states, "Access is a task-based English course based on the Common European Framework of Reference and designed for learners studying English with the category of A1" (Evans & Dooley 2015, p. i).

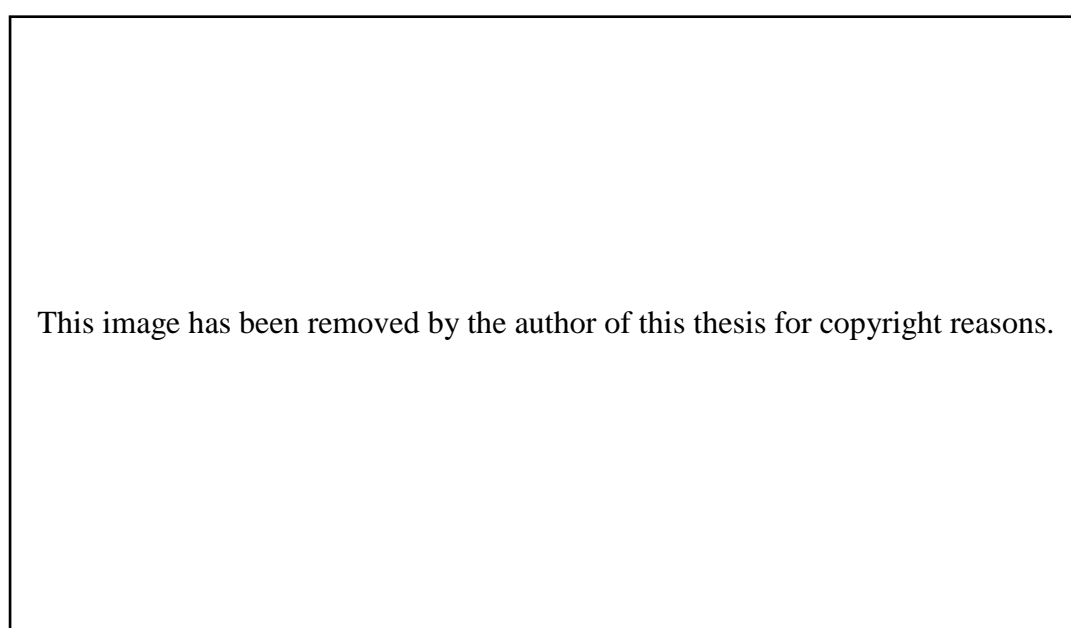


Figure 6.1 An example of a textbook used in Mattayom 1 (Grade 7)

There are ten modules in the textbook. All modules have the same basic structure, consisting of different sections including the four language skills, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, learning to learn, everyday English, and a culture corner section. Each module is based on a single general interest theme such as travel, food and fashion, cartoon characters, people's experiences etc. Although the textbooks claim to be task-based, in fact, a close analysis of the books shows that, at best, they follow a task-supported approach. Form-focused exercises such as grammar exercises and mechanical drills predominate throughout the modules and tasks are only used for practising structured speaking activities or in the creative group project at the end of each unit.



Although a teacher's manual was available to support the student's book, only one of the STs was provided with it by the cooperating teachers and none of the STs used it to design their lessons. In fact, all they explicitly stated that they did not need to use the teacher's manual since they could plan the lessons independently. Furthermore, the STs did not strictly follow every section and procedure in the textbook. They had freedom to select learning content and teaching procedures because the Ministry of Education (MoE) does not prescribe materials and teaching procedures for schools to follow. Instead, the MoE sets the curriculum standards and then each school decides on their own materials and procedure based on their own specific context (Watson Todd & Keyuravong, 2004).

Overall, then, the STs in this study worked against the backdrop of flexibility and independence in lesson planning in contrast to many other contexts where prescribed textbooks must be strictly followed (e.g., Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005; Farrell, 2008; Hayes, 2008; Yuan & Lee, 2014).

#### 6.4 Research participants

Phase two involved two groups of research participants, the STs and the learners in these STs' classes. The three STs had participated in Phase one and volunteered to take part in Phase two. A preliminary survey carried out in Phase one found that eighteen STs were interested in taking part in Phase two. Recruitment was conducted when the teacher-student relationship in the classroom no longer existed. I sent a recruitment email to eighteen potential participants and four of them responded. Fortunately, these four STs taught in the same school, which made it practical for the data collection. Although I observed the classes taught by the four STs, data from one ST was not analysed because her class was often cancelled due to unforeseen school events. Table 6.1 below summarises the STs' characteristics including age, gender, teaching experience, class grade level and number of observations and interviews.

Table 6.1 Characteristics of the STs

Characteristics	Ta	Nan	Ploy
Age	22	20	21
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Teaching experience (year/s)	Less than 1	1	1

Class grade levels	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 8
Number of observations	9	9	9
Number of interviews	9	9	9
Pre-course disposition score	61	61	61
Post-course disposition score	71	80	67

Nan was the first ST who immediately agreed to take part in Phase two during the practicum (from 18 recruitment emails sent to potential participants) and so she was clearly interested in and willing to engage with TBLT. According to the questionnaire data, Nan showed a dramatic increase in scores from 61 to 80. This is the highest score in the post-course questionnaire and the highest difference between pre-and post- course scores (19 points difference). Ta and Ploy also showed positive movement. Ta's post- course score increased 10 points (from 61 to 71) and Ploy's post-course scores increased 6 points (from 61 to 67). Similarly, they also quickly agreed to engage with TBLT in the practicum.

The second group of participants was made up of the learners in the STs' classes. Two to four learners from each of the STs' classes attended group interviews following observation cycle 2 to obtain data on their experience of task-based learning. Because they were between 13 -15 years of age, I asked for the consent form to be signed by their caregivers before the interviews.

## **6.5 Data collection procedures**

Data collection included classroom observations (video/audio-recordings and observation notes), stimulated recall interviews, semi-structured interviews and group interviews as presented below.

### **6.5.1 Classroom observation**

Classroom observation was employed because it yielded in-depth information on teaching and learning activities in the classrooms (Mackey & Gass, 2005). I conducted non-obstructive classroom observations using video-recordings and observation notes in the three STs' classes. Observations were scheduled into three separate cycles during the school year (see Table 6.2). This was done "to minimize the dangers of observer paradox or one-off display lessons, not typical of regular teaching" (Carless, 2003, p.487). The classes taught by the STs

normally occurred three times per week (50 minutes each) totally approximately 60 hours of teaching over the semester. Each ST was observed in three separate cycles (OC1, OC2 and OC3), totalling nine lessons or 7 hours and 30 minutes of observation for each teacher or 22.5 hours in total.

Table 6.2 The observation schedules

Cycle	Month	OC 1						OC 2						OC 3					
Date		June 2017						July 2017						August 2017					
TA	May 2017 School began	5	...	12	13	14	15	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	...	16	17
PLOY		L1		L2			L3	L4		L5	L6		L7		L8	L9			
NAN	Pilot study	L1		L2			L3	L4		L5	L6		L7					L8	L9

*Note.* OC1= Observation cycle 1, L1= Observed lesson 1

The observation process involved three sub-cycles (see Table 6.2). The first cycle (OC1) was intended to investigate how the three STs each planned and taught lessons without guidance. In the second guided cycle (OC2), I collaboratively planned the lessons with each ST. Before OC2 began, I met each ST separately for the lesson planning. Initially, I planned to meet each ST and discuss the lesson plan one at a time. However, because of time constraints and the distance to the school (163.4 km for each trip), this was not always possible. Therefore, the three lessons (4 to 6) were discussed in one meeting one week prior to OC2. The lesson planning proceeded as follows. First, to initially evaluate their understandings of tasks, the STs were asked to plan the three lessons by themselves and submitted the lesson plans for reviewing before the meeting. I then met with each ST separately and discussed the three lesson plans. In the meeting, we discussed whether the plans needed revision or modification to be made task-like. Finally, the final versions were revised to be used in OC2. In the final cycle (OC3) four weeks later, the STs again planned and taught their lessons independently, but this time having had the collaborative experience with the researcher (myself).

### 6.5.2 Stimulated recall interviews and semi-structured interviews

I conducted a stimulated recall interview (SRI) and/or a semi-structured interview with each ST after each observation. The purpose was to investigate their cognition including what thinking lay behind their decisions and actions in the classroom (Ryan & Gass, 2012). SRIs were conducted within the same day to avoid an issue of memory decay (Gass & Mackey, 2000), given that recall is said to be 95% accurate if it is prompted within 48 hours of the

event (Bloom, 1954). However, the SRI was only conducted during OC1. Because of time constraints, all subsequent interviews followed a semi-structured format. As the purpose of OC1 was to investigate the extent to which learning about the TBLT module in the Year 4 teacher education programme influenced the STs' teaching practices and cognition, I deliberately avoided referring to TBLT in the interviews unless mention of it was initiated by a ST. The semi-structured interviews in OC2 and OC3 sought to understand the emerging understanding of TBLT by the STs. This included how STs perceived their experience of task-based teaching and factors they identified as affecting their implementation of TBLT. All interviews took around 20 to 30 minutes depending on the topics being discussed. They were audio recorded and carried out in Thai to avoid misunderstanding and allow the STs to fully express themselves. I then translated the interview extracts, including the group interviews, used in the case reports into English (see Table 6.3 below).

Table 6.3 A sample of the translation to the ST's interview

Thai	(Part ฟัง listening ที่เกี่ยวกับตัวศัพท์ หนูเปิดวิดีโอมา แล้วคิดว่าเปิดเสียงคอมแล้วดังสุดมันจะได้สุดท้ายไม่ได้เพราะเด็กจะไม่ได้ยินว่าพูดอะไร ได้ยินแค่ว่ามีเสียงคนพูด แต่ไม่รู้ว่าจะพูดอะไร เพราะห้องเสียงมันไม่ก้อง เสียงมันออกข้างนอก คอมไม่ได้ต่อลำโพง ข้างนอกเสียงดัง เด็กก็ไม่ได้ยิน เด็กก็คุยอีก เลยเป็นปัญหา ตอนแรกหนูคิดว่าจะให้ฟังแล้วเติมคำ แล้วหนูว่าจะเปลี่ยนให้ทำอะไร สุดท้ายหนูก็เอามาสอบฟังแบบเดิม ซึ่งเด็กไม่ค่อยได้ยิน แล้วเวลาเด็กเต็มอาจจะมีความผิดพลาดกับอุปกรณ์ของเรา การสอบฟังนี้อาจจะยาก แต่หนูอยากทำเพราะว่า อยากให้เด็กได้ฟังจริงๆ จากเจ้าของภาษา ก็คิดอยู่ว่าจะทำอย่างไร ปัญหา 1 คือเสียงก้อง 2 คือวิดีโอไม่ได้เลย เวลามาเข้าบทเรียนคือ บางเรื่องหนูอยากนำเข้าด้วยวิดีโอ ไม่ใช่แค่ถามว่าอาทิตย์ที่แล้วเรียนอะไร)
English translation	For the listening activity, I brought the video to play sound for the class. I thought that by turning to the highest volume, the learners would be able to hear it. But it was not what I had expected because the learners only heard the sound but did not understand what it was about. The quality of the sound was not good and the computer has no speakers. The external sounds and some of the learners were chatting inside. This was problematic. One moment, I thought if I did not continue this listening activity, what else should I do. Still, I carried on because I wanted them to listen to the native speakers. I also wanted to use the video to introduce the lesson, not just asking a question like, "What did you learn from the last time?"

Note. Ta's interview 1.1, 5 June 2017

### 6.5.3 Group interviews

After OC2, two to four learners from each of the STs' classes attended a group interview. The aim of this interview was to investigate the learners' perceptions about task-based learning in OC2. The interviews were semi-structured, conducted in Thai, and lasted around 15 to 20 minutes. Because the participants were secondary-aged learners, a group interview was the

most appropriate method in eliciting their perspectives. As Lewis (1992) and Morgan (1996) point out, group interviews are ideal for young learners because they feel less intimidated than when answering questions individually. Moreover, the learners were not pressed for answers. Consequently, they were open and willing to share ideas because of the safe and supportive environment cultivated in the interview (Pinter, 2017). I took a central role in asking specific questions about their experience of task-based learning.

## **6.6 Data analysis**

The data in Phase two were qualitatively analysed within and across cases.

### **6.6.1 Qualitative data analysis within the case**

The qualitative data analysis involved two types of data: interviews and observations. They were analysed by following a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6), which is “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. This approach yields insightful interpretations that are contextually grounded (Lapadat, 2010) and captures the complexities of meaning within a textual dataset (Guest et al., 2012). Because this study adopted a multiple case study design, the thematic analysis helped emphasize similarities and differences across the dataset.

I transcribed the recorded interviews (including stimulated recall interviews and group interviews) myself as this allowed me to become familiar with the dataset as the interviewer. After that, I cross-checked the accuracy of all the transcriptions against the original recording. Then, the interview transcripts were sent to all STs for member checking and I revised them based on their additional comments. Afterward, I began analysing the data by following these processes:

1. I assigned initial codes to the transcripts and the classroom observation notes. Finding a code involved an iterative process in which I constantly moved back and forth between the dataset while searching for repeated key words relating to the research questions.
2. Overall codes were noted down and I searched for themes by sorting the codes that cohered together meaningfully into potential themes. The themes emerged as the data unfolded from all three cycles of observation.

3. Then, these themes were reviewed and refined before being named. These processes were repeated for the data from all STs. Table 6.4 below present an example of the interview data coding.
4. With reference to the STs' understandings of TBLT, the codes were also compared across different interviews (across three cycles of observation) to discover changes in the understandings of each ST. To understand more fully the development of the STs' beliefs, I further analysed the codes by drawing on Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) framework, which is further discussed in the next section.
5. The last step was to write up a case report as will be described after Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 A sample of the interview data coding

ST	Extracts	Codes	Sub-themes
Ta	The problem is about the seating and the classroom is also small. So, it was difficult for the students to work in groups and move around... (Interview 1.4, 3 July 2017)	Traditional fixed seating arrangement	Classroom-related constraints
Nan	Now, I think what I need more is a computer in the classroom. It helps providing authentic input where the students can learn from... (Interview 3.9, 17 August 2017)	The lack of facilities and technology	
Ta	Actually, I wanted to use a video to introduce this reading lesson, but I changed my mind because I could not bring my laptop computer today. It will be great if we have a computer in the class. I think I can do more creative things... (Interview 1.7, 7 August 2017)		

To present the case reports, I integrated all key findings from the analysis. This included interviews, observations and focus groups and the data extracts to support the findings. This was to paint a picture or to create “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) so that it provided contexts for understanding the social phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, providing “the web of significance” (Geertz, 1973, p.5) would allow the readers to make their own sense of classroom procedures and incidents occurring during each 50-minute lesson. The case reports are presented in a narrative style so as to highlight the changes that took place in the STs’ teaching during the practicum. Presenting the findings in this way allows for a better understanding of the cases because it reflects a holistic view of what was happening in the classroom, rather than fragmented pieces of data deriving from various sources. However, I acknowledge that the data presented is necessarily selective and partial. I chose the STs’ interview extracts, observation notes and classroom incidents that I believed were most representative regarding their thoughts and practices in order to illustrate the nature of inquiry set in my research questions. In doing so, I am aware that the selection of presented data reflects my own perspective. After analysing individual cases, I compared and contrasted the themes across cases.

Another analysis involved the proximity of the lessons to TBLT which was only conducted for Lessons 1 to 9 taught by Ta. At this point, the analysis achieved “theoretical saturation” (Morse, 2004, p. 1123) defined as “when the complete range of constructs that make up the theory is fully represented by the data” (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007, p. 1375). Therefore, further analysis of the remainder of the STs’ lessons was unnecessary.

Nine lesson plans designed by Ta were analysed at two levels: an activity and a whole lesson. At the first level, I analysed each activity using a coding framework drawing on Erlam’s (2015) scheme (see Section 4.6.1). The second level involved whole lesson analysis that provides a holistic perspective on the activities in the structure of the lesson. Richards and Lockhart (1996) defined a language lesson as,

Events that take place in a particular setting (e.g., a school or classroom), they normally involve two kinds of participants (the teacher and students), and they normally consist of recognizable kinds of activities (e.g., the teacher lecturing at the front of the class, the teacher posing questions and calling on students to answer

them). A lesson is, hence, distinguishable from other kinds of speech events, such as meetings, debates, arguments, or trials (p.113).

In the lesson analysis, the activities which have already been characterised in light of task features are now investigated as to the role they played in the overall shape and structure of the lesson. In doing this, we can see how individual activities connect or relate to the cycle of the activities and characterised the lesson as a whole. The analysis treated an activity as a building block of the lesson, not a separate one. The structure of the lesson plan is provided in Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5 The structure of Ta's Lesson plan 2

Lesson	Activity	Description
Lesson 2: Greeting and leave talking	Activity 1: Pronunciation drill	T wrote words and phrases used for greeting ( <i>hello, hi, good morning</i> ) on the board. T demonstrated the pronunciation and Ss repeated the words/phrases in unison.
	Activity 2: Content explanation	T presented a short conversation involving greeting and leaving between two friends. T translated the conversation into L1 and Ss read the dialogues aloud.
	Activity 3: Structured role play	Two volunteers demonstrated the role-play using the structured dialogues taught in the previous stage. T demonstrated the role-play with another selected student. Ss paired up and practised acting out the role-play. They then performed in front of T for a score.

Note. T = Teacher, Ss= Students, L1= First language



### 6.6.2 Cross-case analysis

A cross-case analysis was conducted to increase generalizability and strengthen the understanding of the phenomenon under study by comparing differences and similarities across larger collection of cases (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). I analysed across cases to identify and examine common themes across the three STs, as well as differences between them. This allowed important trends to be identified across the dataset which may not have been so evident when viewing each case separately. I used two analytical frameworks in the cross-case analysis: Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) framework and Philp and Duchesne's (2016) framework. My decision to use these two frameworks to guide the analysis was made post-hoc, that is, after the data had been collected. For this reason, the analysis of learner data in response to RQ4 was broadly interpretative and impressionistic rather than involving a detailed analysis of every classroom episode. Moreover, as the focus of this study was on the STs, it was reasonable that the data from the learners was treated at a class level rather than focusing on individual learners. Therefore, the analysis was conducted on the learners' engagement as a class, and not in relation to each individual learner.

For the purpose of this study and in response to RQ2, I used a modified version of Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) framework developed by Yuan and Lee (2014) to analyse and categorise the evolving STs' understandings of TBLT over the three observation cycles. Cabaroglu and Robert (2000) developed the framework by establishing categories of belief development from the analysis of interview data in their study. Yuan and Lee (2014) used their modified version of the framework to analyse data from classroom observations interviews and weekly journals to investigate the process of student teachers' belief change during the teaching practicum. The framework was well suited to the current study because it helped make sense of the complex and dynamic processes of change that were evident in the STs' understandings as elicited in the interviews. The categories of the belief development in the framework are summarised in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Beliefs change processes

<b>Belief change category</b>	<b>The process of belief change</b>
Awareness/realization	Student teachers become more fully aware of a construct, idea or process so that they accept and understand it better in real teaching contexts.

Consolidation/confirmation	Student teachers perceive a consistency between existing beliefs and newly presented information in the learning process and as a result, their prior beliefs become more established.
Elaboration/polishing	Student teachers refine their existing beliefs by elaborating relevant knowledge and/or connecting with new input.
Addition	Student teachers add new constructs to their existing beliefs. This process usually occurs after they recognize new information as useful in making sense of a learning/teaching issue.
Re-ordering	Student teachers rearrange their beliefs according to importance so that some beliefs might be considered more important or relevant than others in their teaching practice.
Re-labelling	Student teachers perceive no change in the construct or belief but adopt a new term for it.
Linking up	Student teachers make a new connection between two constructs or beliefs.
Disagreement	Student teachers abandon an old belief and embrace a new one in order to revolve a conflict between one's current beliefs and a new learning experience.
Reversal	Student teachers adopt a belief that seems to deny a former one. It is a more extreme form of disagreement.
Pseudo change	Student teachers experience a "false change" in their beliefs, which might take place when they perceive a belief to be important but inappropriate or inapplicable to a current context of use.
No change	Student teachers experience no apparent change or development in their beliefs.
* Integration	Student teachers refine and reorganize the prior and newly acquire beliefs into a comprehensive and integrated system.
** Modification	Student teachers do not reject the original beliefs and replace them with the opposite ones. Instead, they modify and refine the beliefs through field learning activities.

*Note.* From Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000); Yuan and Lee (2014) \*/\*\* the new processes emerged in Yuan and Lee (2014)

The second analytical framework is Philp and Duchesne's (2016) framework for coding levels of engagement. The framework was used to answer RQ4 on the topic of how the learners in the STs' classes engaged in the task-based lessons. The evidence of engagement came from the classroom observation (i.e., video recordings and observation notes) which documented what learners in the STs' classes did in Lessons 4- 6. Philp and Duchesne's (2016) framework includes the four dimensions of engagement (cognitive, social, behavioural, and affective dimension) as intertwining, and treats engagement as a process (Ellis, 2018 p.147). Philp and Duchesne (2016) note that more dimensions of engagement are active at the same time and that these dimensions can mediate or compete with one another. However, this study specifically focused on the mediating effects of dimensions as presented in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Mediating effects of dimensions of engagement

No.	Dimensions of engagement	Mediating effect of dimensions
1.	Behavioural-cognitive	Task itself focuses attention, prompts deep thinking.
2.	Behavioural-emotional	Successful task completion prompts student to want to do more.
3.	Behavioural-social	Cooperative tasks strengthen social links.
4.	Cognitive- behavioural	Students are intent on "solving the puzzle" and keep working until it is done.
5.	Cognitive- emotional	Student's interest is caught by a particular idea or cognitive challenge.
6.	Cognitive- social	Students are prompted to work with or seek help from others by the ideas or challenges of the task.
7.	Emotional- cognitive	High interest in topic or task prompts concentrated thinking.
8.	Emotional- behavioural	Interest and excitement prompt student to keep working on the task in spite of difficulties.

9.	Emotional- social	One peer's excitement about or interest in a task draws others in.
10.	Social- cognitive	Peers working together support each other's thinking (mutuality, reciprocity).
11.	Social- emotional	Student enjoys the task because of the social element.
12.	Social- behavioural	Student spends time on task because of social aspect.

*Note.* From Philp and Duchesne (2016)

### 6.7 Pilot study

To assess the workability of the observations and the post-observation interviews, a pre-observation study (or a baseline observation) was carried out with three research participants two weeks before the main study. The pre-observation helped me to anticipate and detect problems in advance. It also allowed the participants to become accustomed to me as the researcher and the recording equipment. In addition, the stimulated recall interview protocol adapted from Gass and Mackey (2000) was also pilot tested to ensure accurate time estimates and recall procedures. According to Gass and Mackey (2000), an accurate estimate of time can help the researcher to have smooth scheduling and avoid time-consuming problems.

In the pre-observation study, each ST was observed twice in a way that minimised disturbance of the classes. I arrived early to set up a video camera with a standing tripod at the back of the classrooms so that it could capture the STs' teaching and the overall class interactions. It was unavoidable that my presence in the class would attract learners' attention on the first day. Some learners showed interest while I was operating the video camera at the back of the class. They constantly looked at the camera during the first 30 minutes. However, as the class continued, they seemed to forget about my presence. This was confirmed by the group interview data indicating that the learners paid less attention to my presence on the second day of the pre-observation. As the learners said, this was because I did not take any role in the classroom. Furthermore, some learners (Nan's class) did not show much interest in the class observation because they were accustomed to being observed. Previously, they had been in a class taught by other student teachers and had been observed by university supervisors since Grade 7 (They were now in Grade 9). Although the pre-observation procedure did not totally eliminate the influence of the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972), it gradually diminished the influence of my presence on teachers and learners' behaviours as

reported by both of the STs and the learners. Minor adjustment was made to the classroom observations and the recall procedures. For example, a video camera was moved from the centre to the right corner of the classroom so that it gained a better view of an overall classroom dynamic. During the first recall, I provided prompts to the STs when they did not talk about their teaching while viewing their videos. After a while, they became familiar with SRI processes and started to describe their thinking processes while teaching by themselves.

### **6.8 Summary**

In this chapter, I have described the research methods used to carry out Phase two. I first provided a brief overview of Phase two. Then, I outlined the research setting, research participants, data collection procedures, data analysis and the pilot study. The findings obtained from the data collection processes will be presented in the following Chapters 7 to 9.

## CHAPTER 7 CASE STUDY 1: TA

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter and the two chapters that follow provide accounts of three student teachers (STs) whose understandings and teaching practices were investigated while they were undertaking a one-year teaching practicum in a secondary school. These three STs were part of the Phase one cohort. Each case study is presented in a separate chapter. The investigation was guided by the following RQs:

RQ2. How did the STs' stated understandings of TBLT change during the process of teaching in the practicum?

RQ3. What factors did the STs perceive to have influenced their planning and/or practices of task-based lessons?

RQ4. How did learners engage with the task-based lessons in the observation cycle 2?

To begin with, I provide a descriptive account of nine lessons taught by Ta. Then, this is followed by a comprehensive analysis of each lesson in terms of its proximity to TBLT using a coding framework drawing on Erlam's (2015) scheme (see Section 4.6.1).

### 7.2 A profile of Ta

Ta, who was 22 years old at the time of the study, used to be a private tutor of English to young learners. Prior to joining the programme, she had taught for less than a year and therefore had less teaching experience than other STs in this study. In the practicum, Ta taught a class of 40 learners in Mattayom 1 who were between 12 to 13 years of age (Equivalent to Year 8 or Grade 7). This class met three times weekly (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday), for 50 minutes each. In what follows, I present my observations of Lessons 1 to 3 (OC1).

#### 7.2.1 Observation Cycle 1: Independently planned lessons (Lessons 1-3)

In OC1, Ta independently planned her lessons as part of regular teaching. The observed lessons were rescheduled because of a school event so there was a one-week gap between Lessons 1 and 2. Although the lessons were consecutive, they did not relate to each other. The following Table presents an overview of Lessons 1 to 3.

Table 7.1 Overview of Lessons 1 to 3

	<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>Lesson 2</b>	<b>Lesson 3</b>
Date	5 June 2017	12 June 2017	15 June 2017
Time	9.20 – 10.10 a.m.	9.20 – 10.10 a.m.	9.20 -10.10 a.m.
Lesson focus	Capitalization	Conversation	Vocabulary

### **Lesson 1**

Lesson 1 was about capitalization. Ta started the lesson by writing three ungrammatical sentences on the board, “*hello! My name is ketkanok. i’m 23 years old.*” She then asked the whole class to judge if these sentences were right or wrong. After a few minutes, Ta elicited the answers and the correction for each incorrect sentence from the learners and then explained the rules for capitalization. Ta then asked a volunteer to write an incorrect example of capitalization on the board. The whole class was again asked to correct the errors. After that, they started working on the grammar exercises in their workbook individually. This included correcting errors in the use of capital letters and filling the gaps using their own information as shown below.

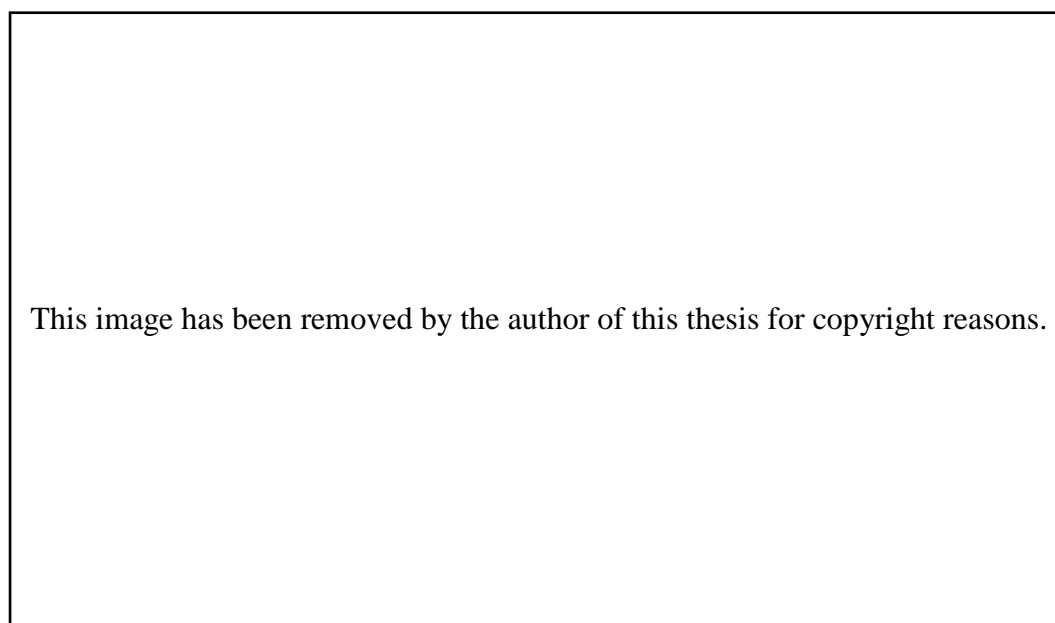


Figure 7.1 An example of a worksheet

To assist the learners’ understanding, Ta showed a real email on her laptop computer (see Figure 7.2) and finished the lesson.



Figure 7.2 Ta showing an example of an email to the class

On the same day as the observation, I conducted a SR interview with Ta. Her comments mainly focused on classroom management. While watching her own teaching in the video, Ta identified the contextual constraints that influenced her instructional decisions. She had intended to let the learners listen to a native speaker's pronunciation and so she had brought her own laptop computer to the class to play the recordings. However, due to background noise and sound quality, the learners could not hear the recording very well and this made them confused. Many learners failed to complete the activity. Ta described this experience as follows.

For the listening activity, I brought the video to play sound for the class. I thought that by turning to the highest volume, the learners would be able to hear it. But it was not what I had expected because the learners only heard the sound but did not understand what it was about. The quality of the sound was not good and the computer has no speakers. The external sounds and some of the learners were chatting inside. This was problematic. One moment, I thought if I did not continue this listening activity, what else I should do. Still, I carried on because I wanted them to listen to the native speakers. I also wanted to use the video to introduce the lesson, not just asking a question like, "What did you learn from the last time?"

(Interview 1.1, 5 June 2017)

I asked Ta's opinion about her teaching on that day. She replied that the lesson was simple and had a low level of interaction because she spent time reviewing the previous lesson, which was quite mechanical and mainly focused on linguistic content.



Last time I taught them about writing an email, a little bit of word order and some translation. In this class, I also reviewed what had been taught last time and I started the new topic about capitalization. So, it seemed like I did not do much teaching and there were only a few activities because the lesson's contents mainly focused on writing skills.

(Interview 1.1, 5 June 2017)

My observation notes reported similar points.

This was a continuation of the previous session. Teaching content largely emphasized practising grammatical knowledge about capitalization. Not all learners engaged in the activities as evidenced by those who sat at the back of the class and did not participate in the activity. Instead, they worked on another subject. This lesson reflected a PPP approach where the teacher explicitly pre-taught the language and the learners practised what they have learned on their own.

(Observation notes, 5 June 2017)

This interview and observation data show that Lesson 1 adopted a PPP approach as confirmed in the detailed analysis in Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.2 Analysis of Lesson 1 (Capitalization)

Lesson 1	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness		
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?	Non-task	Task-like	Task
Orientation	T reviewed the last lesson about 'writing an e-mail' and 'word order.'																
Activity 1	T started the lesson by writing three ungrammatical sentences on the board ( <i>hello! My name is ketganok. i'm 23 years old.</i> ) Ss were asked to judge whether sentences were wrong or not. They then were asked to provide the correction for the incorreced sentences.	Presentation of the topic	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	●		
Activity 2	T explained rules for capitalization. T asked a volunteer to write an example of the misuse of capitalization from the book on the board. The whole class was again asked to correct the mistakes.	Presentation of the target form	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	●		
Activity 3	Ss worked on the grammar exercise in their book individually. They had to correct errors regarding the use of capital letters in four sentences. After completion, T checked the solution with the whole class.	Controlled grammar practice	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	●		
Activity 4	Ss worked on another exercise in the book. They had to complete an email that would be sent to an imaginary pen pal by using the template provided. Ss filled the gaps in the email using their own information.	Independent production of the target form	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>		●	

### **Evaluation of Lesson 1**

As seen in Table 7.4, Lesson 1 followed a PPP structure. Activities 1 and 2 presented the topic and language form to the learners. Then they practised this form in activity 3 in a controlled manner. Finally, activity 4 provided opportunity for the learners to produce the target form independently.

The analysis showed that activities 1 to 3 were all non-task activities. Similarly, their main purpose was to practice the correct use of a specific grammar feature, not to focus on meaning negotiation. They were therefore form-focused exercises having no communicative gap and the outcomes were the display of correct language. In these activities, the learners were limited to using their existing linguistic resources, except in activity 1 where the learners were required to judge and correct the sentences using their own knowledge. Although activity 1 fulfilled one criterion, learners' own linguistic resources (C3), it still constituted a language exercise because the main purpose was to use language correctly, not to communicate. As Ellis (2009) and Ellis and Shintani (2014) noted, criteria C2 (gap) and C3 (own resources) can be found in both a task and an exercise and so are not, by themselves critical distinguishing factors.

Activity 4 was a task-like activity as it fulfilled the two criteria of being meaning-focused (C1) and learners using their own resources (C3). It was meaning-focused when the learners were mainly concerned with producing and using language in the real-world activities (e.g., writing an email). To some extent, the learners used their own information to complete the email message. Although there seemed to be an outcome (e.g., a completing the email message), it was not really a communicative outcome because the learners did not have to actually communicate and nothing was done with the completed email. So, the outcome was restricted to a meaningful language practice.

### **Lesson 2**

In Lesson 2, the learners learned how to greet and leave in English. Ta started the lesson by writing greeting words and phrases "*hello*", "*hi*", and "*good morning*" on the board. She demonstrated the pronunciation and the learners repeated after her. Then, she introduced a short conversation involving greetings between two friends. Ta translated the meaning of the

conversation and asked the learners to practise reading it aloud. Later, two volunteers demonstrated the role-play using this dialogue (see Figure 7.3). In the end, Ta asked the learners to pair up and practise acting out the role-play in front of the class.



Figure 7.3 The learners demonstrating the role-play.

My observation notes recorded that class instructional time was interrupted by classroom noise.

It was so noisy that Ta had to stop the lesson at times to quiet the learners down. She even started shouting to compete with noise, but it did not work. During the first half of the class time, the learners seemed to lose their concentration very easily. They talked and played while Ta was teaching in front of the class. Only some learners sitting in the front row responded to her questions.

(Observation notes, 12 June 2017)

In the post-observation SR interview, Ta also talked about the problem of the noisy classroom, noting that it was noisier than usual for three reasons. First, because it was a Monday, the learners want to share their weekend stories with each other. Second, the lesson content did not attract their attention because it was something they already knew. Third, Ta suggested that a lack of teaching aids meant that the lesson did not attract their attention. Ta identified this last reason as a key weakness. As mentioned by Ta, there were more learner interactions in Lesson 2 from the role-plays; yet when compared to Lesson 1, she still found that she could not attract

learners' attention very well. The lesson plan stated that the lesson followed a PPP procedure. The analysis of Lesson 2 is presented in more detail in Table 7.5 below.

Table 7.3 Analysis of Lesson 2 (Conversation)

Lesson 2	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			→	Degree of taskness		
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?		Non-task	Task-like	Task
Orientation	T announced the topic of the lesson.																	
Activity 1	T wrote words and phrases used for greeting ('hello, hi, good morning') on the board. T demonstrated the pronunciation and Ss repeated the words/phrase in unison.	Presentation the topic and controlled practice	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	●			
Activity 2	T presented a short conversation involving greeting and leaving between two friends. T translated the conversation into the L1 and Ss read the dialogues aloud.	Presentation of the target language and controlled practice	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	●			
Activity 3	Two volunteers demonstrated the role-play using the structured dialogues taught in the previous stage. T demonstrated the role-play with another selected learner. Ss paired up and practised acting out the role-play using the dialogues taught earlier. They then performed in front of T for a score.	Controlled production of the target language	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	x	x	<u>No</u>	●			

## **Evaluation of Lesson 2**

When viewed from a theoretical perspective, Lesson 2 followed a PPP format but having only the two Ps as there is no final production stage. The lesson consisted of a series of controlled practice activities whose goals were to present, practise and produce target structure in a controlled manner.

The analysis shows that none of these three activities in Lesson 2 was tasks because they did not fulfil any task criteria. The purpose of these activities was to teach a conversation. Although the learners interacted in the role-play in activity 3, the primary focus was to practise and display their ability to produce the language forms correctly. The learners relied heavily on the textbook scripts without any requirement to negotiate meaning. Moreover, there was no gap as no new information was shared, and there was no objective apart from practising and displaying the ability to produce the conversation that had been taught. On this basis, activities such acting out dialogues or taking part in role-plays were not regarded as tasks as the learners did not express and exchange their own meanings. Instead, they practised pre-specified language forms (Edwards & Willis, 2005; Skehan, 1998). Drawing on the same four criteria of a task as this study, Ellis (2018) also regards an activity that requires the learners to act out a script of a dialogue as an exercise (e.g., “Dialogue”, p.217).

## **Lesson 3**

In this lesson, the learners learned vocabulary about parts of the body. To begin, Ta primed the learners by having them write topic-related words about body parts within in a time limit. Those who had the most words won. Then, she put a picture of a human body on the board (see Figure 7.4) and taught the vocabulary by attaching a card labelling each body part on the board one by one. The class repeated the vocabulary in unison.



Figure 7.4 Ta teaching vocabulary about parts of the body

In the next activity, the learners played a game similar to a task called “labelling race” by Calvert and Sheen (2015). The class was divided into two big teams. Each team was provided with the same set of flash cards consisting of vocabulary taught previously. When the teacher said a sentence containing a target word (e.g., He broke his **leg**), each team had to find a card corresponding to the teacher’s command and place it on the board in the correct position. The team that could place the card on the board first got a score and those with the highest score won. For the last part of the lesson, the learners individually worked on an exercise in their workbook by labelling the parts of the body using the vocabulary learned in the previous activities.

My observation notes documented changes in Ta’s teaching when compared to the previous ones. In this lesson, my notes outlined that she managed to get the learners involved throughout the lesson as stated in the notes,

I could see an improvement in her teaching when she successfully attracted the learners’ attention and got them involved. In activity 1, after announcing that those who had the longest list won, many learners immediately turned to their paper and started working. Activity 4 was full of high participation because it had a competitive goal. The class became noisy because of the cheering sounds and became chaotic. However, most of the learners were having fun doing this activity.



(Observation notes, 15 June 2017)

In the post-lesson SR interview, Ta talked about her teaching in a way which suggested that she had gained more experience. For example, she was able to make an impromptu decision to add a competitive goal in activity 1. She also reported that this was the first time she had fully employed teaching aids in the teaching practicum and that they had had positive effect on the learners' attention.

Initially, I did not plan that those who got the most words won the prize. But since every learner has to participate, why not make it becomes more competitive? It is easy as the learners had to write vocabulary about parts of the body, things that can be seen in general. Also, since I have been teaching here, I have used teaching aids sparsely. But this time is the first time that I fully used them, so the learners might have felt more interested in the lesson compared with when I only used the book. This might have contributed to attracting their attention.

(Interview 1.3, 15 June 2017)

My interpretation is that Ta fully used teaching aids in this lesson as a result of her reflection from the last interview. She mentioned in Lesson 2 that one of the reasons that made her learners pay less attention to that lesson was because there were no teaching aids to keep them interested. So, this time she came up with a picture board and game, which turned out to be effective as the learners responded more to her teaching. Another reason involved setting up a competitive goal for the learners to achieve. The learners were interested, challenged, and therefore responded enthusiastically to her teaching. Being the winner and receiving the prize appeared to motivate these learners quite well because learners at this age are generally in favour of something that interests and challenges them. In Table 7.6, I present the analysis of Lesson 3 in terms of its proximity to TBLT.

Table 7.4 Analysis of Lesson 3 (Vocabulary)

Lesson 3	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness		
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?	Non-task	Task-like	Task
Orientation	T showed a picture of the human body and announced the topic.																
Activity 1	Ss individually wrote a list of words (parts of the body) noting as many as possible in a given time. Those who had most words won.	Language preparation	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	✓	×	<u>No</u>		●	
Activity 2	T put up a big picture of the human body on the board. Then she taught vocabulary about body parts by attaching a card labelling each body part on the board one by one. Ss repeated the vocabulary in unison.	Presentation of target language	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	●		
Activity 3	The class was divided into two big teams. Each team was provided with the same set of cards consisting of previously taught vocabulary. When T said a sentence containing a target word, each team had to find the card showing the word they heard. The team that could place the card on the board first gained a point and those with the highest score won.	Task performance	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>			●
Activity 4	Ss individually worked on an exercise in a workbook by labelling the part of the body using the vocabulary learned in the previous activities.	Controlled practice of target language	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	●		

### **Evaluation of Lesson 3**

As seen in Table 7.6, Lesson 3 followed a task-based approach. A task was at the centre of the lesson where non-task activities built around it to facilitate task performance. The lesson started with schema building when the teacher elicited topic-related words from the learners. Then, in pre-task language preparation, the learners were provided with linguistic support (i.e., vocabulary) for task performance (a listen-and-do task). Finally, after the main task, the learners individually practised target language by working on a controlled practice exercise using material in the textbook.

The analysis showed that activity 1 met only one feature of a task: the learners used their own knowledge to complete the activity (C3). Meeting only this criterion did not make the activity a task. Although the learners attended to form (code) and meaning (message) while making a list of words, they did not use the language for communicative purposes and so adopted the role of language learner. The outcome was a list of words, not the result of a communicative activity. In addition, this activity rarely stimulated much interaction because there was no gap that required an exchange of information. The learners simply worked individually.

Activities 2 and 4 primarily focused on form because the main purpose of these activities was to learn and practise language rather than to engage in meaning-focused language use. Therefore, they were non-tasks.

In contrast, activity 3 constituted a task. According to Shintani's (2016) description of a listen-and-do task that posits that "learners listen to the teacher's instruction and respond by performing the appropriate action (p.7)", we can describe activity 3 as a listen-and-do task because it required the learners to listen to the teacher's input and respond to it accordingly. Activity 3 fulfilled the four criteria as follows. First, the meaning was primary (C1) because the learners were mainly concerned with comprehending the input from the teacher, which served a real communicative purpose. Second, there was a gap (C2). In this case, it was a one-way communication-gap task (Shintani, 2014) where the teacher held all information to be communicated to the class. The gap was closed as a result of the learners' participation in communication as listeners. Third, the learners made use of their own resources (C3) to process

and respond to the input by performing appropriate actions to show their understanding. In this respect, own resources meant context and world knowledge to process the input to which they were exposed (Shintani, 2014). Finally, the activity had communicative outcomes (C4) that resulted from participating in the communication, placing cards in the correct position and winning the game.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 1**

When viewed from a theoretical perspective, Lessons 1 and 2 reflected the PPP model while Lesson 3 was a little closer to a task-based lesson. However, the extent to which Ta understood TBLT was not always clear as the interview and observation data showed that Ta never talked about tasks or TBLT when explaining these lessons. Rather, she prioritized pressing issues such as how to manage the class, control the lessons and attract the learners' attention. Although Ta did not mention tasks as such, the focus of her attention on the effectiveness of her teaching, is similar to one of three approaches to task evaluation by Ellis (2003, 2015, 2018) called the motivational criterion or learner-based evaluation. In this case, Ta evaluated her teaching in terms of learners' responses and whether they enjoyed doing activities/tasks.

OC1 witnessed some changes in her practices and attitudes. By engaging in reflective practice (Farrell, 2015) in the post-lesson interviews, Ta inquired into her own teaching and demonstrated a willingness to try new practice. After watching and reflecting on her own teaching, Ta adjusted the ways she taught by getting the learners more involved. Moreover, when the class appeared to be noisy in Lesson 3, Ta did not see it negatively. This suggested a shift in her perspective of noise which was contrary to the interview data from Lesson 2 in which she associated noise with disruptive behaviour when the learners made noise during the class time. After the observation of Lesson 3, she reflected that:

Most learners were engaged in the activity. They were not doing other things. It looked chaotic but that was because they were doing activity. It is better when they made noise asking their peers for meaning of the vocabulary than chatting about something else. I'm OK with it.

(Interview 1.3, 15 June 2017)

Thus, Ta was more tolerant of noise when it was from planned interaction in the class. This shift in her perspective aligns with Carless's (2004) argument that teachers should learn to separate the noise from learners performing a task from that of classroom disorder. Overall, from Lessons 1 to 3, Ta's teaching was gradually moving from a teacher-centred towards a learner-centred approach where the learners actively engaged more in the learning process.

### **7.2.2 Observation Cycle 2: Supported lessons (Lessons 4-6)**

#### **Collaborative task-based lesson planning**

As described in Section 6.5.1, each ST planned the lessons with the researcher before OC2 proceeded. First, they planned the three lessons by themselves. I then met with each ST separately and discussed the three lesson plans. Among the three STs, I met Ta first in the lesson-planning meeting. My observation notes documented Ta's original lesson plans as follows.

She (Ta) had one lesson plan that explicitly used teaching procedures named as 'pre-task', 'task cycle' and 'post-task'. It involved a corrupted text that needed to be reordered. When asked why 'task-based', she explained that because the lesson was about reading. She thought it would be better if the learners interacted with the text in groups instead of the teacher simply translating the text for them at the beginning. Apart from gaining knowledge from the text, this activity would attract learners' attention and encourage more interactions between learners. The other two lessons mainly used the PPP model where a preselected linguistic feature 'have got' was taught at the beginning and followed by controlled practice exercises. Because the lesson involved a grammatical point, she asserted that it was unavoidable to use PPP.

(Observation notes, 21 June 2017)

Ta's original plans for the three lessons reflected both a TBLT and PPP approach. Lesson 4 followed J. Willis's (1996) TBLT framework consisting of pre-task, task cycle and post-task while Lesson 5 and 6 employed the PPP model. In Lesson 4, Ta planned to divide a reading text into sections and ask the learners to rearrange the corrupted text back to its original version. Ta gave the following rationale for employing the reading task in the lesson:

I want the learners to do an active reading activity in groups. It will be slow if done individually. However, when the learners work in groups, they will have a chance to interact and get the meaning by themselves. They do not have to translate the reading by themselves sentence by sentence.

(Interview from the lesson planning session, 21 June 2017)

According to Ta, it would be better for the learners to interact with the text in groups instead of using the traditional way where the teacher merely translates the reading to them. When the learners worked in groups, there would be more class interaction than individual work and they could figure out the meaning of the text independently of the teacher.

For Lessons 5 and 6, Ta said that she used the PPP approach wherein she planned to explicitly teach and practise the preselected linguistic feature “have got”. Ta explained that it was unavoidable to use PPP as the lessons involved grammatical points. In Lesson 5, the learners would practise writing the sentences using “have got” while Lesson 6 was less controlled as the learners would bring their own picture to write about by using “have got”. In the end, the learners would present what they had written to the class.

After explaining her teaching plans, we discussed whether these lesson plans needed revision. During our discussion, I commented on some limitations of her task-based lesson (Lesson 4). I noticed that rearranging a corrupted text might not be appropriate as the text she used had no chronological order. Ta appeared to pay so much attention to activating learners’ interaction that she seemed to have overlooked practicality. To guide her, I showed her some examples of reading tasks compiled from sources such as J. Willis (1996) and D. Willis & Willis (2007). She then revised Lesson 4 using an information-gap activity instead (as will be presented in the next section). I also pointed out that Lessons 5 and 6 unnecessarily repeated the same content, “have got”. Having realized that this linguistic content could be merged with the post-task phase of Lesson 4, Ta therefore decided to redesign Lessons 5 and 6. In the new lesson plans, she chose content involving conversation and reading skills. The final versions of Lessons 4 to 6 will be discussed in the following sections. Table 7.7 below presents an overview of Lessons 4 to 6. They were consecutive lessons but none related to each other.

Table 7.5 Overview of Lessons 4 to 6

	<b>Lesson 4</b>	<b>Lesson 5</b>	<b>Lesson 6</b>
Date	3 July 2017	5 July 2017	6 July 2017
Time	9.20 – 10.10 a.m.	12.40 – 13.30 p.m.	9.20 – 10.10 a.m.
Lesson focus	Reading	Conversation	Reading

#### **Lesson 4**

Lesson 4 involved a reading text called “*Amazing Spidey*”. This jigsaw reading activity, sometimes known as “the expert group arrangement” (Newton et al., 2018), required the learners to communicate and exchange information with each other. The class was divided into six groups and each group received a different question based on the reading. They needed to find the answer to their question. After that, new groups were formed consisting of one member from each of the original group. In the new groups, each learner took turns to share his or her answer with the other members until all six questions had been answered. Those who compiled the answers and submitted a completed list of answers to the teacher first won. Finally, the teacher explained the linguistic form of “have got” that occurred in the reading.

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Ta stated that this was the first time she had fully employed tasks and so reported her uncertainty and lack of confidence. This point was clarified by the observation data recording, which highlighted three issues in the lesson. First, she started the lesson without a lead-in or warm-up as the learners were late from attending the previous class. Second, as the activity entailed different steps, she sometimes forgot the order of steps (i.e., she forgot to tell the learners to bring along the book before splitting into groups). Third, she confused herself and the learners by exerting too much control over group forming. During activity 2 (a jigsaw task), Ta closely controlled the learners to form the new groups by directing which learner go to which group (see Figures 7.5 and 7.6 below). Given it was quite complicated as the new groups had to consist of one member from each original group, she got lost and the process was quite chaotic.



Figure 7.5 Ta controlling the group formation (1)



Figure 7.6 Ta controlling the group formation (2)

Finally, Ta decided to step back and explain the activity again in a simple way, and then the learners successfully formed the new groups by themselves. She commented that:

After I told them that they could do whatever to make sure that the new group has one member from each original group, 1-6. It turned out that the learners managed this better and more efficiently than when I helped them. All I need to do is just give them clear instructions. It is easier this way.

(Interview 1.4, 3 July 2017)



I interpreted this incident as a discrepancy between the role perceptions of the teacher and the learners (Nunan, 1989). As Thailand is a country with high “power distance” (Hofstede, 1991) and where the educational process is more teacher-centred (Raktham, 2008; Saetang, 2014), Ta’s teaching is likely to adhere to this teacher-centred orientation where teachers direct all classroom activities and the learners exclusively listen to and follow the teacher’s direction. Thus, when initially using an approach closer to learner-centred where the learners can be actively involved in the learning process, she might have been reluctant to let go of the full control over class activities. This is also true for many Asian teachers who have difficulty in adjusting their teaching style and are reluctant to give up control in the classroom (Shintani, 2016). J. Willis (1996) identified this factor as the biggest challenge for the teacher who is used to the PPP approach and then has to learn to stand back and let the learners carry on their learning. Other research has also shown that teachers viewed task-based activities as a loss of control (Berben, Van den Branden, & Van Gorp, 2007; Van den Branden, 2016). However, Ta’s reflection from the above interview extract indicated that after realising that her learners, to some extent, can be actively involved in the learning process, she appeared to re-examine her role in the classroom. From this experience, Ta also concluded that giving clear task instructions to young learners was indispensable.

From the experience of doing this task-based activity, I noticed that if we are using a task with low-level and young learners, the instructions must be clear enough.

(Interview 1.4, 3 July 2017)

She described her feelings when teaching with a task for the first time as follows:

I was excited and afraid of making mistakes. When I first gave the instructions, I was worried that the learners would not understand because the tasks I used involved many stages, not just the learners working in groups and then finishing. Teaching with tasks is special and different from regular teaching so I need to make teaching aids to help me.

(Interview 1.4, 3 July 2017)

Moreover, Ta also talked about the lesson in the way which suggested that she had changed her understanding about tasks. Before teaching in the practicum, she associated tasks with collaborative group work. However, she now saw a task as allowing learners to learn by doing or

making sense of their learning by themselves before being taught by the teacher. Her reflections are as follows:

Before the practicum, I always thought that a task was group work. Actually, a task, by its concept, is an activity that lets the learners figure out the meaning of the content by themselves before we explicitly teach them. Right?

(Interview 1.4, 3 July 2017)

In the end, Ta pointed out the benefits and constraints that influenced the implementation of the task. Tasks helped her to save energy while teaching. Instead of translating the reading word by word for the learners, the task put responsibility for learning in the hands of the learners with her monitoring and offering help if needed. She also noted that the task stimulated learners' engagement because it required everyone to play a part throughout the lesson. However, Ta found that classroom seating arrangement constrained how the task could be fully employed. The traditional seating arrangement consisting of rows of fixed seating minimized learner-learner interaction. It was inconvenient for 40 learners to move around the classroom. Ta decided to rearrange the seating plan by moving all the tables and chairs to both sides of the classroom and allow for the learners to also sit on the floor as shown below.



Figure 7.7 Learners sitting on the floor while doing the task in groups

In Table 7.8 below, I present the analysis of Lesson 4 in terms of its proximity to TBLT.

Table 7.6 Analysis of Lesson 4 (Reading, “Amazing Spidey”)

Lesson 4	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness			
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?				
Orientation	* No lead-in to the lesson.																	
Activity 1	The class was divided into 6 groups. Each group received a different question based on a reading text. They needed to find the answer to their question. New groups were then formed consisting of one member from each original group (1-6). In the new groups, each learner took turn sharing the answer to other members to complete all of the six questions. Those who submitted a completed list of answers to T first won.	Task performance	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>	✓	✓	<u>Yes</u>				●
Activity 2	T explained the linguistic form of ‘have got’ that occurred in the reading text.	Language focus	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	×	×	<u>No</u>	●			

#### **Evaluation of Lesson 4**

The analysis showed that Lesson 4 was closer to a task-based lesson consisting of two stages, the main-task and the post-task phase. The pre-task phase was omitted because of time constraints. It is possible that not all task-based lessons will include all three phases. As Ellis (2018) argues, the only obligatory phase is the main task. Ellis (2018) proposed “an options-based approach” for doing a TBLT lesson which allows for flexibility in the lesson design in the ways that teachers can choose options in each phase to best suit their own learners and contexts. This approach also emphasizes the fact that TBLT should not be viewed as “a methodological straight jacket” (Ellis, 2018, p. 217).

Activity 1 entailed two parts. The first part required the learners to prepare the information (e.g., read the text and answer the question) that will be exchanged with other learners in the second part. This kind of compound task is normally referred to as a jigsaw task (Ellis, 2003) that “requires putting together different pieces of information to complete a task” (Leeser & White, 2015, p. 22). It satisfies the four criteria of a task. The focus was on meaning (C1) where the learners were working towards the communicative goal by taking turns imparting answers to other members in the new group. A gap (C2) created the need to exchange and pool the information together to achieve the goal. The learners used their own resources (C3) to perform the task without being taught or told to use the language they would need. There was a definite outcome, a complete list of answers, after completing the communication (C4).

In contrast, activity 3 was like an exercise because it principally focused on form when the teacher explained a grammar point that occurred in the reading. Because of its overt language focus, the learners were more likely to treat language as an object to be learned, not as a tool for communication (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). J. Willis (1996) recommends this kind of language-focus exercise in the post-task phase of the lesson.

#### **Lesson 5**

Lesson 5 involved a conversation about buying things. In this lesson, the actual teaching was different from the original plan. Ta clarified in the interview that she had to change the teaching plan because she could not finish making teaching aids in time. In the original plan, she intended

to teach conversation by using flashcards with a dialogue between a shop assistant and a customer (see Figure 7.8). Each flashcard consisted of one line from the conversation and the learners would work in groups to arrange all the flashcards into the right order before listening to the recording. However, the actual teaching was different as she asked the learners to work in groups to translate the conversation from L2 into L1 and submit it to the teacher.

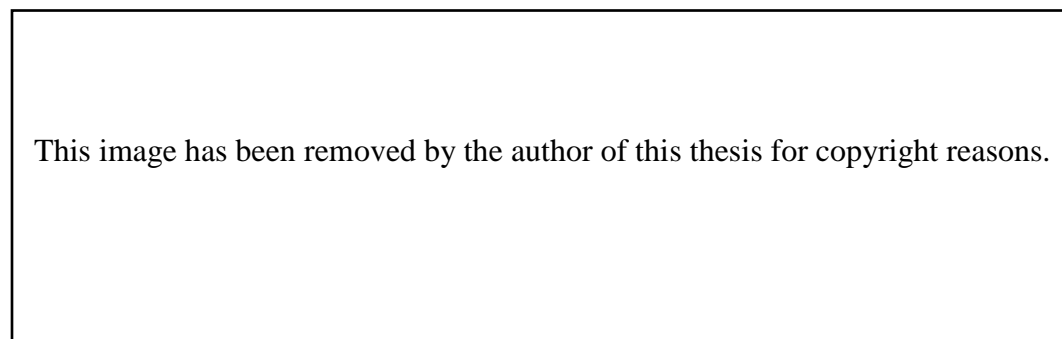


Figure 7.8 A conversation, “Buying things”

It seems that additional preparation on task was a key factor that influenced the change in her teaching plan on that day. Ta fell back to a translation approach, which made her teaching easier and used fewer teaching materials. However, there was the high level of learners’ enthusiasm and engagement in the lesson.

(Do you think the learners like this task?) They might not like it 100% but I can see that every group was collaboratively working together. Some groups even tried to decorate the paper beautifully.

(Interview 1.5, 5 July 2017)

In the same vein, my observation notes also recorded the learners’ engagement (similar to Ta’s perspective):

[Ta] looked more relaxed in this lesson. There is a high level of engagement in this class. The learners are working attentively by asking each other questions, consulting the dictionary and the teacher. Surprisingly, the learners’ attention even continues to the follow up activities when the teacher goes over the answer or asks them to do listening activity. The class is surprisingly quiet and pays more attention to learning than usual. The learners are well-behaved and cooperative.

(Observation note, 5 July 2017)



Figure 7.9 The learners working attentively on the task

During our semi-structured interview, Ta suggested that the issue of extra time needed for task design might have an influence on Thai teachers. According to her, these teachers might not want to use TBLT if it gives them more work. They might feel constrained by the heavy workload if they have to use tasks every day. In her view, teachers are already satisfied with their teaching routine. She used herself as an example by saying that sometimes she easily falls back to traditional teaching or following the commercial textbook when time was scarce. This is similar to Hong Kong language teachers in Carless's (2003) study who reported an additional workload from task-based planning. Because of this issue, Ta expressed the need for feedback from the experts by saying that:

I really want support like what I have now. At least, I get some feedback from you. Once I know what I should do, I can adjust my teaching accordingly. Without guidance, I will just teach in my own way based on what I know, just the basic knowledge of TBLT, which I am not sure about. When I have a chance to watch myself teaching in the videos, I can see my own mistakes and improve them for the next time using the feedback I receive. I believe that we learn from our experience and feedback from others.

(Interview 1.5, 5 July 2017)

To evaluate the lesson in terms of its proximity to TBLT, I will analyse Lesson 5 in Table 7.9.

Table 7.7 Analysis of Lesson 5 (Conversation, “buying things”)

Lesson 5	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			→	Degree of taskness		
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?		Non-task	Task-like	Task
Orientation	T introduced the topic.																	
Activity 1	Ss listened to a short conversation between a shop assistant and a customer. They then practised reading it aloud.	Presentation and practice of language feature	x	x	No	x	x	No	x	x	No	x	x	No	●			
Activity 2	In groups, Ss translated the dialogue in activity1 from L2 into L1. They wrote it on the paper and submitted it to the teacher.	Producing the translation of the target language	✓	✓	Yes	x	x	No	✓	✓	Yes	x	x	No	●			
Activity 3	Ss individually worked on a worksheet where they had to answer the questions based on the conversation (e.g. <i>What is Martha buying?</i> ) and submitted it to T.	Practice of language exercise	✓	✓	Yes	x	x	No	✓	✓	Yes	x	x	No	●			

### **Evaluation of Lesson 5**

As seen in Table 7.9, Lesson 5 was more like a PPP-type lesson because it was organized around three main stages. First, it started with presentation of target language, in this case, the conversation, followed by the controlled practice where the learners practised a mechanical drill of the conversation. Then, the learners worked independently in the production stage by translating the conversation from L2 to L1, followed by a question-answer exercise relating to the conversation.

The analysis showed that all of three activities were language exercises. They did not have the features of a task as the intended primary focus was on practising language, not on communicative-focused language use. Activity 1 focused solely on a controlled practice of reciting the textbook dialogue. It had no real communicative purpose as the learners were told to recite the prescribed dialogue without any requirement to negotiate for meaning. There was no gap and no outcome other than that the learners simply performed reading aloud. Although activity 2 fulfilled some criteria of a task (i.e., meaning-focused as the learners needed to attend to the meaning and use their own resources in the translation), it was more like a meaningful language exercise as the primary goal emphasized accuracy rather than fluency. There was no gap that required the learners to communicate and the successful outcome was evaluated in terms of the accuracy of the translation.

Activity 3 was similar to activity 2 in that it satisfied only two criteria, a meaning-focus and learners' using their own resources. It did not constitute a task because the primary focus was on text comprehension where the learners had to answer the questions based on the conversation. Although it had some meaning potential because the learners attended to meaning, it was not primarily concerned with exchanging meaning or getting the meaning across. The focus was only on comprehension. So, this activity was more exercise-like than task-like.

### **Lesson 6**

Lesson 6 was a reading lesson called, "*I love stuffed animals*", consisting of three separate phases. Ta started pre-teaching vocabulary in the reading by using a dictionary search game. She wrote one word at a time on the board, (e.g., *brighten*, *collection*, *favourite*, *stuffed*). The learners



had to look up these words in the dictionary. The learner who found the definition first raised a hand and read out the definition (see Figure 7.10). He/she would get a point. Those who got the highest scores won.



Figure 7.10 A learner reading out the definition to the class

After completion, Ta moved onto another activity by distributing a card having one colour (pink) on one side, and another (green) on the other (see Figure 7.11). The green colour signified “true” while pink indicated “false”. Then, she let the learners read the text by themselves for ten minutes. When ready, Ta read ten statements based on the text one at a time (e.g., *Ann is 11 years old or Ann comes from Canada*). After listening to the statement each time, the pairs had ten seconds to consult each other or search for the answers in the text and showed their answer using the card provided, true or false. Points were collected and those who got the most won.

The last activity focused on language form occurring in the text. Ta asked the learners to find punctuation marks in the text (e.g., *full stop, exclamation mark, comma and question mark*) and started teaching the meaning and use of these marks. The learners then practised the exercise on punctuation marks in their workbook.



Figure 7.11 The learners playing a true/false reading task

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Ta reported a change in the way she taught reading lessons by using a task:

Generally, when I teach reading, I normally go straight to the text right away. I rarely do a pre-reading activity. I just translated the text and explained the vocabulary and that was it. However, in this reading task, I let the learners play a dictionary search game as preparation. The school has dictionaries for lending and there were enough for my class. It was a fun way of learning vocabulary, and I did not have to prepare many materials.

(Interview 1.6, 6 July 2017)

She went on to explain this reading task, which revealed another understanding of the task, the real-life process of language use:

To teach this reading text, I also had to think about new techniques that are not just about reading aloud and translating. Finally, I came up with a true/false game. I think that the learners can do this activity because all they need to do is simply scan for keywords in the text. This is similar to what we do in real life. We do not need to understand and translate every single word. We only want to know what the question is and then we search for keywords and answer. That is all.

(Interview 1.6, 6 July 2017)

Moreover, Ta revealed more of her understanding about tasks by saying that,

Tasks are more appropriate for those who have some knowledge and proficiency in English. It can be time-consuming if used with less able learners as they may need more time and support when doing tasks or else it will not work for them. This is because task-based teaching involves self-directed learning where the teacher lets the learners work on their own as much as possible. The teacher's role is just to support them. Therefore, the less able learners might find it difficult and we should instruct them.

(Interview 1.6, 6 July 2017)

My interpretation is that Ta associated the aspects of tasks with an activity that, to some extent, makes learning the learners' responsibility. Tasks require learners to make sense of what they learn, figure out the problem or look for the answers by themselves before being taught by the teacher. The teacher's role is to facilitate learning. In order to do tasks, the learners should have some level of knowledge and ability. This explains why Ta stated that a task-based approach was more appropriate for more able learners than the less able ones.

From the above interview excerpt, an emerging area of interest is that Ta had come to realise that her learners could direct their own learning independently of her assistance. In other words, she had started to re-examine her role in the classroom. She had reconceptualised the roles of the teacher in a task-based lesson as a supporter or facilitator. This was different from the interview data in Lesson 4 where she appeared to adopt the traditional teacher role of exerting control over the learners' activities. She was reluctant to let the learners form new sets of partners in the jigsaw task by themselves (see Lesson 4). When asked for her opinion on this lesson, Ta was not so positive. From her perspective, the learners looked bored because this activity did not require any physical movement.

It (Lesson 6) might look boring when compared with the last lesson. Maybe, it was because this true/false game was not very interesting as the learners were just sitting on the seats and there was not much movement. So, the learners looked quite bored.

(Interview 1.6, 6 July 2017)

In contrast to her comments, my observation notes reflected that:

Viewing from the back of the class, I can see high levels of learner engagement, especially during the first two activities (dictionary search and true-false game).

Surprisingly, even the back-row learners who normally do not pay much attention to learning also show their enthusiasm by arguing for answers. This is probably because the learners are working towards competitive goals and the activity had a clearly defined outcome. The mini pre-task is built smoothly towards the main task, which is complemented by a grammar focus in the end. This is the first legitimate task-based reading lesson since I have observed her.

(Observation notes, 6 July 2017)

This suggested that Ta associated the effectiveness of her teaching in terms of learners' physical movement. For a broader perspective of the lesson, I analysed Lesson 6 in terms of its proximity to TBLT in Table 7.10.

Table 7.8 Analysis of Lesson 6 (Reading, “I love stuffed animal”)

Lesson 6	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness					
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?						
Orientation	T briefly asked Ss if they have been collecting anything and then introduced the topic.																→	NT	TL	T
Activity 1	T used a dictionary search game. She wrote one word at a time on the board. Ss had to search for the meaning of the words in their dictionaries. The learner who found the word first raised their hand and reported to the class. They would get a point for each correct answer and the learner who got the highest score won.	Task preparation	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes						●
Activity 2	T read ten statements based on the text one at a time. After listening to each statement, the pairs had ten seconds to find the answers in the text and show their answer using the card provided. Points were collected and those who got the most won.	Task performance	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes						●
Activity 3	Ss read the text again to find punctuation marks occurring in the text. After T had explained form, meaning and use, Ss individually practised the exercise on punctuation marks in their book.	Language focus	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	●					

### **Evaluation of Lesson 6**

The analysis showed that Lesson 6 adopted a task-based approach. It entailed two tasks that created communicative contexts for meaning-focused language use that were followed by an exercise in the post-task phase.

Activities 1 and 2 met the four criteria, and therefore constituted tasks. Activity 1 prepared the learners for the subsequent activity by pre-teaching vocabulary in a communicative context. It had meaning potential (C1) as the learners attended to semantic meaning while searching for or comprehending the definition of the given words. There was some kind of gap (C2) that created the need to convey the information. In this case, the teacher provided input and the learners decoded that input (i.e. searching for the definition) in order to complete the task. In addition, there appeared to be another gap which required the learners to communicate with the whole class (i.e. telling the class about the definitions he or she found). The audiences had a purpose for listening because if the definition reported was not correct, they had the chance to provide theirs. Erlam (2015) coded activities designed by her teacher participants as having a gap when there was an audience who listened or read for a purpose. Drawing on Erlam's (2015) coding, I coded this activity as having a gap because the audience listened for a purpose. In terms of the learners' resources, the learners relied on what was available for them to complete the task, as they were not taught specific language (C3). This activity had different levels of outcome (C4). As noted by Samuda and Bygate (2008, p.68), a task can have more than one outcome signalled in more than one way. I coded this activity as fulfilling this criterion because of the following communicative outcomes - a completed list of the definitions resulting from the teacher-learner communication and a competition to be the winner. This kind of vocabulary pre-teaching encourages learners' involvement in processing new words. This is quite opposite to what is normally found in a traditional style classroom where pre-teaching vocabulary involves too much teacher-led explanation (Newton, 2001).

Activity 2 was similar to a listen-and-do task that required the learners to listen to the teacher's verbal input and show their understanding by performing actions (Ellis, 2003). However, this activity entailed more than just performing physical actions as it also involved cognitive process when the learners manipulated the reading text for true-false answers. It was meaning-focused

(C1) because the learners were predominantly concerned with comprehending meaning of verbal and written information in communicative contexts. There was some kind of a gap (C2) when the information was split and the teacher held all the information to be communicated. The learners were not taught the language they needed. Instead, they used their own existing resources to comprehend the teacher's instructions and the reading text (C3). The outcome of the task was that there appeared to be more than one outcome, namely a physical action, and a winner (C4). On this basis, this activity fulfilled the outcome principle.

Activity 3 was a language focus because it was devised to practise the specific language item, punctuation marks. There was no gap and so no requirement for communication. The learners were restricted to the pre-determined language form in order to complete the activity. The learners worked towards the linguistic outcome, which was the correct use of punctuation marks. Thus, the activity designed for practising language did not constitute a task.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 2**

The analysis of Lessons 4 – 6 shows that the lessons in OC2 exhibited more task implementation than those in OC1. Lessons 4 and 6 were closer to the task-based lessons while Lesson 5 was more like a PPP lesson. One reason for this is that Ta had received my guidance during the lesson planning sessions for all except Lesson 5 where she departed from the original plan (as described earlier.)

In this cycle, Ta seemed nervous at the beginning when employing tasks. She fell back to the translation approach in Lesson 5 because she had not been able to finish making teaching aids for the task. Later in the next lesson, she got back on track and appeared to be more skilful while delivering the lesson. She developed more confidence after seeing that the learners were actively involved in the lesson. Tasks in her lesson involved learner-led discovery where the learners took responsibility for their own learning, an approach which is different from the traditional teacher-centred method that emphasizes direct instruction and lectures. She provided the following reasons in support of her pedagogical choice in this instance:

Although Thai learners are perceived as passive in nature, I think that they are willing to do what we ask them to do. So, teachers need to provide them with tasks/activities that

activate and challenge them. They should be active in learning, not just listening to the teacher and doing nothing.

(Interview 1.5, 5 July 2017)

Overall, there were some changes in Ta's understandings of TBLT and practices in OC2. Before the practicum, she always associated tasks with collaborative group work but came to the broader realization that it was also about allowing learners to learn by doing or making sense of their own learning as complementary to being taught. Later in the interview following Lesson 5, her understanding of tasks became less idealistic and more manageable after realising that tasks did not always require lots of supporting teaching aids. She also revealed another aspect of TBLT as entailing the real-life process of language use. Moreover, she also reported a new way of teaching reading using a task. Another change involved a gradual shift in her understanding of the teacher's role in a task-based classroom. Although Ta did not overtly talk about such change in herself, the interview data in Lessons 4 and 6 reveal how she started to view her teacher role in a less controlling way.

In sum, Ta's teaching in OC2 was moving forward to a more learner-centred teaching than that in OC1. In order to get a comprehensive perspective on Ta's teaching, I conducted an interview with three learners in her class as presented below.

### **Group interview with the learners**

Immediately after OC2, I conducted an interview with a group of three learners selected from the observed classes. I chose this time because their memories were still fresh which made it easier to explore their reactions to supposed task-based teaching in OC2. The participants were recruited on voluntary basis. They were all female and twelve years old. Given these learners did not have an understanding of the concept of tasks or TBLT, it was necessary to clarify the two types of teaching approaches before the interviews in order to obtain their perspectives on TBLT. I used the terms "teaching with activities" to refer to tasks or TBLT and "regular teaching" to signify a traditional teacher-centred method where the teacher gave a lecture, explained and taught the lesson in a controlled way. This process was also conducted with the learners from Nan's and Ploy's class before the group interview.



All learners reacted positively to Ta's teaching in terms of how Ta integrated interactive activities into the lessons. They felt comfortable and tended to be more expressive in the classroom when compared to the class taught by their regular schoolteachers.

S1: The schoolteacher is scary.

S2: We do not dare (speak out).

S1: Learners are all quiet when the schoolteacher is teaching, and we do not express our ideas much. But when she (Ta) teaches, the learners like to speak and sometimes it is so noisy that she must tell them to stop. Those who are attentive in the lesson can't hear the teacher very well.

R: Why don't you speak up in the schoolteacher class?

S3: 'Kraeng-jai'. The way she teaches is serious. So, the learners try not to speak too much.

S1: She emphasizes teaching on contents, not activities. We rarely ask questions.

R: What about Ta? Can you be more expressive in her class?

S1: Yes.

R: Did you participate in class activities?

S1+S2: Yes. We have more courage to do class activities.

(Group interview, 6 July 2017)

This excerpt shows how the learners' reactions have been influenced by Thai culture as evidenced by when one learner reported how she felt "Kraeng-jai" in the class taught by the school teacher (rather than the student teacher). The concept of "Kraeng-jai" is used when a person feels considerate and does not want to cause discomfort or inconvenience to others (Komin, 1990), especially those with higher power. As a result, this learner reported being quiet and obedient in order not to bother the schoolteacher. This perspective is congruent with Raktham (2008) interpreting three reasons for Thai learners' quietness in the classroom: to show respect; to avoid discomfort by avoiding asking questions or challenging the teacher's authority; and to allow the teacher to play their role effectively. This helps explain why Thai learners are perceived as not contributing much to classroom discussions (Prpic & Kanjanapanyakom, 2004).

However, as evidenced in the observation data, such reactions were not really found in Ta's class and the learners reported being more expressive and open in her class. Although the learners did not overtly state why they were more expressive, their responses indicate that there were interrelated factors impacting their learning attitudes and motivation in her class (e.g., the teacher's character, positive classroom atmosphere (using games and activities) and a smaller age gap between the teacher and the learners). These factors seemed to promote rapport between Ta and the learners, which consequently led to a more dynamic classroom.

In terms of Ta's teaching, the learners reported that Ta sometimes switched between teaching with "activities" and regular teaching. They also noted that the "activities" were sometimes difficult because they did not understand, for example, the meaning of the reading text. The learners found the listen-and-do activity and the labelling race game (see Lesson 3) easy and they liked them the most. When asked what they had learned in Ta's lessons, the learners gave limited responses, saying that they had learned quite a lot. However, no further details were provided.

Although the learners expressed their preference for fun and enjoyable games/activities, when asked how they would like to be taught by the student teachers next year, their responses indicated that the traditional approach was still needed and can be supplemented by the alternative approach for creating a positive learning atmosphere. This implies that task-based teaching from the learners' perspectives are games to have fun with while the traditional approach involves learning that is more serious and helps them learn. This is similar to Foster (1998) asserting that the learners who are used to a more traditional approach may look at tasks as fun and enjoyable games. The following extract illustrates this well:

R: How do you want the teacher to teach you?

S1: I want the teacher to switch back and forth between activities and studying so that it will not be too stressful.

S2: I want to play games and study.

S3: When it comes to studying, I just want to study, not play games and stuff.

(Group interview, 6 July 2017)

In the next section, I present the investigation of Ta's lessons in the final cycle.

### 7.2.3 Observation Cycle 3: Self-directed lessons (Lessons 7-9)

The final cycle of observation began four weeks later when I observed Ta in her regular teaching from Lessons 7 to 9. In this cycle, Ta managed her own lessons and did not receive guidance on lesson planning. Although these lessons were consecutive, they did not relate to each other. Before proceeding, I present an overview of Lessons 7 to 9 below.

Table 7.9 Overview of Lessons 7 to 9

	<b>Lesson 7</b>	<b>Lesson 8</b>	<b>Lesson 9</b>
Date	7 August 2017	9 August 2017	10 August 2017
Time	9.20 – 10.10 a.m.	12.40 – 13.30 p.m.	9.20 – 10.10 a.m.
Lesson focus	Reading	Conversation	Grammar

#### Lesson 7

In Lesson 7, Ta divided the class into five groups where each group was given responsibility to read a different section of a reading called, “*At home in England*”. After completion, the spokesperson(s) from each group reported to the class on the paragraph they had read (see Figure 7.12). The learners then worked individually on a follow-up exercise by matching the pictures illustrating types of houses with the paragraphs reported by all the groups followed by a true/false exercise.

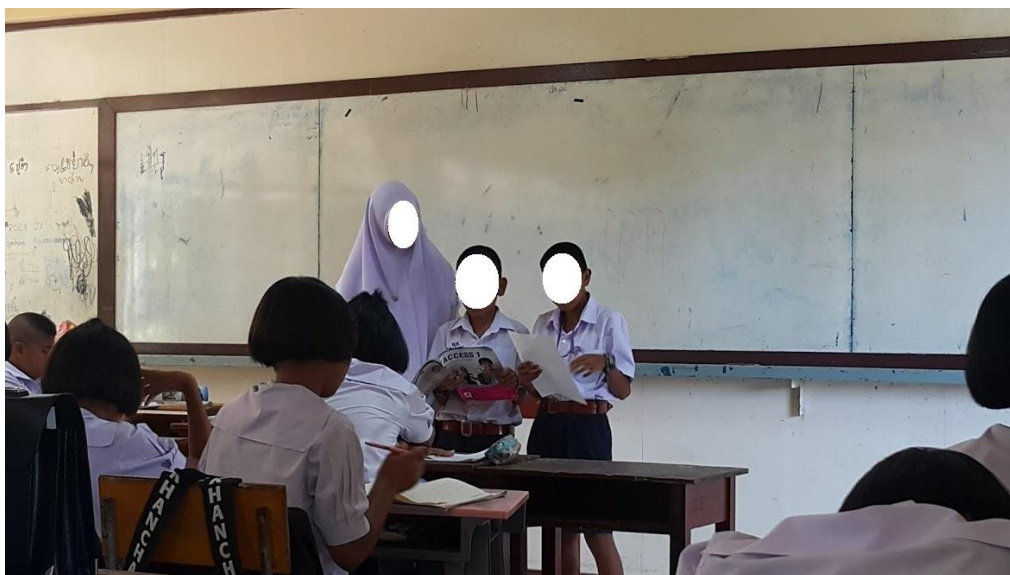


Figure 7.12 The learners reporting to the class

Later on, in the semi-structured interview, Ta reported the limitations that affected her lesson planning and the learners' interest in the lesson. First, due to the lack of facilities, she had to change her plan of using a video to introduce the lesson. Second, she noted that the material and topic in the textbook did not attract the learners' interest. This reflects the situation where many materials attempt to introduce authentic activities in English-speaking countries, but they do not relate to Asian learners' daily lives (Butler, 2011). Ta's reflections shed further light on this:

Actually, I wanted to use a video to introduce this reading lesson, but I changed my mind because I could not bring my laptop computer today. It would be great if we had a computer in the class. I think I could do things that are more creative. So, I just told the learners to translate the text and there seemed not many activities. My intention was to have the learners present what they read to the class. However, it turned out that the learners were not keen on reading. Probably, it was because the topic was far beyond their interest. The learners might not understand the concept of houses in England and the vocabulary was also quite difficult for their level. I don't even know the meaning of some words.

(Interview 1.7, 7 August 2017)

My observation notes also report that the learners showed a low level of involvement in this lesson. The learners looked bored and lethargic especially during the report stage. When asked if this lesson was task-based, Ta replied that it was a task in the sense that the activity required the learners to do their own learning and present what they found to the class. Seemingly, her understanding of tasks in this lesson was still associated with learner-led discovery where the learners took responsibility for their own learning. In what follows, I present the analysis of the proximity of Lesson 7 to TBLT in Table 7.12 below.

Table 7.10 Analysis of Lesson 7 (Reading, “At home in England”)

Lesson 7	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness			
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?		Non-task	Task-like	Task
Orientation	T gave the instructions for the activity.																	
Activity 1	Ss were divided into 5 groups and each group was given responsibility to read a different section of the reading. A spokesperson(s) from each group reported orally to the class about the paragraph they read.	Read and report	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes				●
Activity 2	Ss worked individually on the exercises relevant to the reading. They had to match the pictures of different kinds of houses with the paragraphs reported by all the groups.	Independent practice	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes				●

### **Evaluation of Lesson 7**

The analysis showed that Lesson 7 was closer to a task-based lesson as explained below.

Activity 1 entailed two stages, reading and reporting. It exhibited the four features of a task as follows. First, it is meaning-focused (C1) when the learners engaged in the meaning-making process as they were provided with a purpose for reading and listening. The learners needed to comprehend the reading text before telling the class about what they had read. The audience also had a purpose for listening because the information presented would be necessary for the next activity. Second, there was some kind of gap in the report stage (C2) where the spokespeople conveyed the messages to the audience. Each group was responsible for reporting a different section. They held a different portion of information that would be exchanged among groups. Third, the learners used their own resources (C3) such as prior knowledge of vocabulary or context clues to make sense of the text. Finally, it can be said that the report stage was the outcome of the reading stage (C4) in that the learners reporting their paragraph to the class provided a communicative outcome for the activity.

Activity 2, which involved matching the descriptions to the pictures, met the four criteria of a task. It was meaning-focused (C1) because the learners were mainly concerned with comprehending the messages. The activity had a gap (C2) that required the learners to transfer the information from one place to another (written to visual). The gap was closed as a result of the learners engaging in the communication process, in this case, as a reader. A clearly defined outcome was the paragraph that had been paired with the picture (C4). Thus, activity 2 constituted a task.

### **Lesson 8**

In Lesson 8, the learners were introduced to a conversation called, "*Olga's sister new flat*". Ta started the lesson by building on what the learners already knew. They were asked to talk about their own house and the teacher elicited vocabulary about house furniture. Then, in groups of 4-5 people, each group was provided with a piece of paper containing a jumbled dialogue (see Figure 7.13). They had to rearrange the dialogue into the correct order by themselves first. They then listened to a recording afterwards to check if they had the correct order. After that Ta moved

onto explaining grammar and vocabulary from the text, “*there is*” and “*there are*” (e.g., *there is a chair in the living room. There are sofas in the ...*).

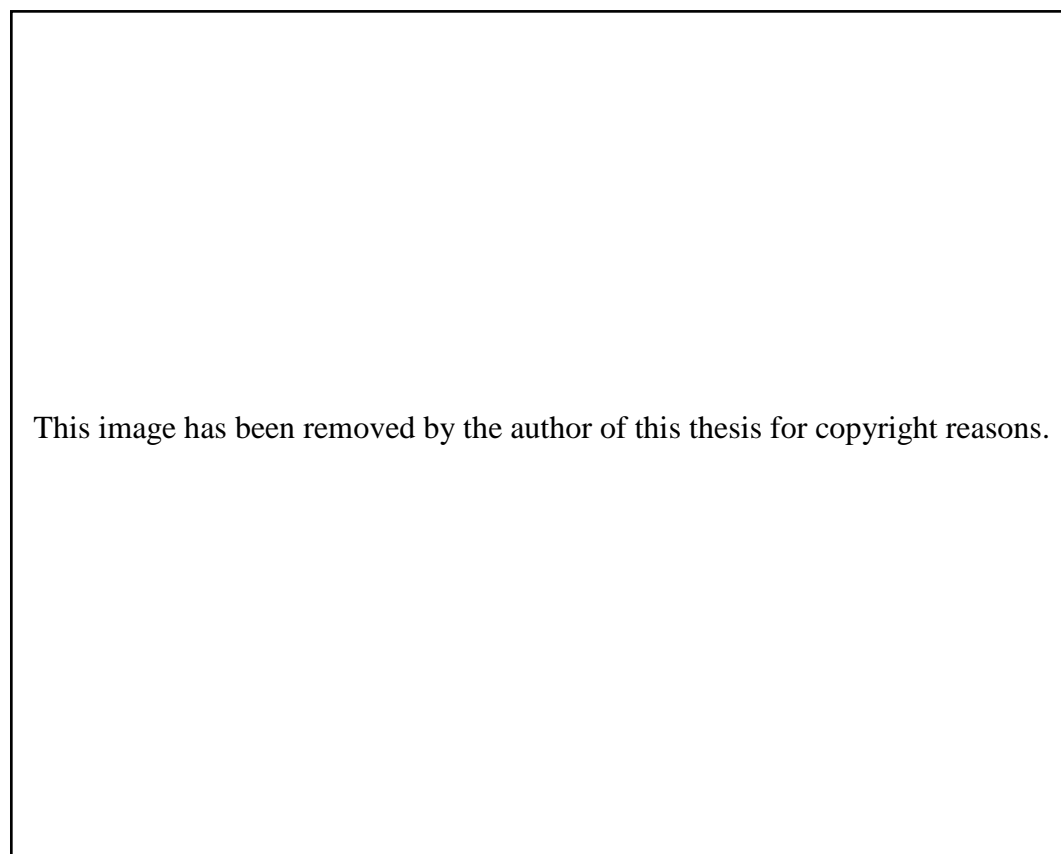


Figure 7.13 An example of a worksheet completed by one group

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Ta talked about the learners’ engagement while doing the task:

I think that the learners’ engagement was about 80%. It was a group activity and before starting, I attracted their attention by stating that they needed to reorder the sentences into the correct order by listening to me or the recording. At this point, the learners seemed very quiet. They listened attentively and took notes. However, when I started giving the answers and translating the meaning to them, they became talkative again and didn’t listen to me. So, I asked the learners to do another activity by searching for words about

furniture and circle them. They got back on track again and helped each other to find the words.

(Interview 1.8, 9 August 2017)

Ta's reflections seem to indicate that she sees a relationship between the learners' attention and type of activity. When the activity involved only teacher talk, the learners would lose their attention easily. In contrast, if the activity included active learner involvement, the learners were likely to sustain their attention throughout. For example, Ta set a goal for listening and so her learners listened attentively.

Ta revealed a further understanding of TBLT as consisting of the three-stage cycle when she justified why lesson 8 was a task-based lesson:

For me, I think it can be seen as a task-based lesson because, according to the concept, there is an introduction of the lesson like what I did. In the main activity, the learners worked on their own by making sense of the conversation by themselves, listening to the recording and rearranging the sentences. Although I translated the conversation for them, the learners arranged the sentences by themselves. After finishing, I taught a grammar focus that occurred in the content. I think this is a task-based lesson.

(Interview 1.8, 9 August 2017)

In this interview, Ta further reflects on her experiences of implementing tasks from the first day until now.

It was quite tiring because task-based teaching sometimes required extra time on preparation of ideas. I had to think about how to design the lesson that is not just spoon-feeding them. But once you do it (a task), the result can be rewarding because the learners learn meaningfully from what you teach, which is better than only using the grammar translation approach. But one drawback is that group work activities can be quite difficult to control, and it can be tiring. When teachers are tired, they might fall back to their regular teaching.

(Interview 1.8, 9 August 2017)



Interestingly, Ta's reflection in the interview on that day showed that she linked her role as a teacher with experiences as a learner. From her own experiences as a language learner, learning should be fun. Ta remembered the times when she enjoyed learning in a class as the teacher made the atmosphere fun and enjoyable with different activities. She began to like that subject although she was not so good at it. To her, "activities" were very important to motivate learning. Ta took the learners in this observed class as an example. Their level of proficiency was not so high when compared to the other classes (learners in this school are grouped into classes based on proficiency). However, whenever she incorporated a kind of game or used something else other than "regular teaching" the learners responded more to the lessons. She went on to say that:

I feel like the learners start paying more attention to me. When I walked to the classroom, they would ask me things like, "Do you have a game today, teacher?" If I had a game, the learners would listen to me and engage more in the lesson. So, I think it is the activity that makes the subject enjoyable and makes learners want to learn in that subject.

(Interview 1.8, 9 August 2017)

To evaluate the lesson in terms of its proximity to TBLT, I analysed Lesson 8 in Table 7.13.

Table 7.11 Analysis of Lesson 8 (Conversation, “Olga’s sister new flat”)

Lesson 8	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			Degree of taskness			
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?		Non-task	Task-like	Task
Orientation	T briefly talked about her house and announced the topic.																	
Activity 1	T started the lesson by asking some Ss to talk about their own house. T elicited vocabulary about house furniture from Ss and wrote down a list of vocabulary on the board.	Pre-task preparation	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes				●
Activity 2	Ss worked in a group of 4-5 people. Each group was provided with a piece of paper with a jumbled dialogue that had been placed in wrong order. Each group was asked to reorder the sentences first. They then listened to an audio recording afterwards to check if they had the correct order.	Task performance	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes				●
Activity 3	After giving the solution, T directed the learners’ attention to the vocabulary about furniture in the text again and moved onto explaining grammar in the text, ‘there is’ and ‘there are’.	A language focus phase	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	●			

### **Evaluation of Lesson 8**

Lesson 8 was more like a task-based lesson that entailed two related tasks followed by a language focus phase in the end. The three activities are described below.

Activity 1 was a “teacher-led brainstorming activity” (J. Willis, 1996, p.43) that was carried out with the whole class to help the learners recall and activate topic-related words. The activity met the four criteria of a task. First, it involved meaning-focused language use (C1) when the learners engaged in genuine communication with the teacher. Given the answers were unpredictable, there was some degree of meaning negotiation and meaningful interaction. Second, there was some kind of gap (C2) that served a real communicative purpose. The gap was closed by learners’ participation in communication as a speaker or a listener. Third, the learners had to use their own resources (C3), such as previous knowledge to talk about their house and furniture in the house. Finally, the outcome (C4) was the list of words resulting from the brainstorming.

Activity 2 was a jumbled task where the learners were provided with a complete dialogue that needed to be restored because it was in the wrong order (J. Willis, 1996). This activity met the four criteria of a task. First, it was meaning-focused (C1) because the learners were mainly concerned with processing the text for meaning as they read and listened. Second, a gap (C2) required the learner to participate in the communication in order to close it. This involved, for example, listening to the recording in order to check their answer against the listening text. Third, the learners relied on their own resources while performing the task (C3). Fourth, the outcome of the task (C4) involved the rearranged text.

Activity 3 was a language-focused activity (J. Willis, 1996) that involved explicit teaching of grammar. It highlighted specific language forms from the written text in the task phase. This activity did not meet any criteria of a task because it primarily emphasized form over meaning. However, this does not imply that a form-focused activity has no pedagogical value. Key principles of TBLT also extend to attending to form to develop linguistic competence. D. Willis and Willis (2007) advocated the post-task phase for a focus on form and emphasized that it should be subordinated to meaning. However, differences lie among researchers according to their preferred approach. Ellis (2009) argues that attention to form can occur in all three phases,

but primarily emphasize an incidental focus on form in the last phase while M. H. Long (2006) focuses the use of form focus in the main-task phase in terms of recasts. In contrast, Estaire and Zanon (1994) suggest some teaching of grammar in the pre-task phase.

### **Lesson 9**

Lesson 9 was the last observed lesson. To begin with, Ta wrote four sentences on the board (see Figure 9) (i.e., *We have some milk in the fridge. There are some books on the shelf. There are not any bird in the tree. Do you have any pens?*). The learners discussed in pairs to discover the grammatical rules of some/any by themselves. After eliciting the answers from the class, Ta then explicitly explained the rules. In the end, the learners worked in pairs to write three sentences using some/any.

Most of the lesson content involved grammar. Ta explained how she planned this grammar lesson to be more task-like which was different from what she used to do before.

To make a task-based grammar lesson, I think, the learners have to work on a task that focuses on that grammar point. They do not just listen to the teacher's explanation and do exercises like I always asked them to do before. So, in this lesson, I let them do an activity that stimulates their own thinking first. The learners were given sentences to discuss in groups and discover the rules by themselves. Then I will give the answer after that. Mostly, they will go like, ah...their understanding becomes easier. During the activity, I noticed that the learners, especially those at the front row, were really discussing and arguing about the use of some and any. They got the meaning before I even taught them. So, when I taught them, they were able to understand more easily.

(Interview 1.9, 10 August 2017)

In the semi-structured interview, she also talked about two interrelated factors that influenced her decision while planning task-based lessons in general. The first was type of task and the second was the learners' ability. From Ta's perspective, a teacher should design a task that does not go beyond the learner's ability to do it.

While planning the task-based lesson, first, I would consider the type of task that should be suitable for the learners' level and manageable for the teacher. The task should not be

too demanding for the learners to carry out and the teacher should be able to manage it. Another factor involves the level of learner proficiency. Although we may think that the task is carefully well-planned, it cannot be successful unless the learners can do and know what to do with it. When it comes to something other than lecturing, the learners can become frustrated and get lost easily.

(Interview 1.9, 10 August 2017)

The observation shows evidence of changes in the way she interacted with the class. She became more “natural” and skilful as she taught. This was probably because Ta gained more experiences and became familiar with the learners over time. Therefore, the way she managed the class was better than before. This accorded with the follow-up interview. As Ta put it:

I am now more fluent in my talking, and I play and mingle with the learners. I monitor each group to see if they can do the work or not. Previously, after giving the instructions, I just watched them from the distance, in front of the class. I did not monitor the groups individually.

(Interview 1.9, 10 August 2017)

In the following table (7.14), I present the analysis of the proximity of Lesson 9 to TBLT.

Table 7.12 Analysis of Lesson 9 (some/any)

Lesson 8	Description and sequences of class activities	Function/Role in the lesson	Meaning (C1)			Gap (C2)			Own resources (C3)			Outcome (C4)			→	Degree of taskness		
			1.1	1.2	Fulfilled?	2.1	2.2	Fulfilled?	3.1	3.2	Fulfilled?	4.1	4.2	Fulfilled?		Non-task	Task-like	Task
Orientation	T reviewed the last lesson and introduced the new topic.																	
Activity 1	T wrote four sentences on the board (e.g., <i>We have <u>some</u> milk in the fridge. There are not <u>any</u> birds in the tree. Do you have <u>any</u> pens?</i> ). Ss were asked to discuss in pairs to discover the rule of some/any by themselves.	Focused task	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes	✓	✓	Yes			●	
Activity 2	T explicitly explained the grammatical rules of some and any.	Presentation of language form	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	●			
Activity 3	Ss worked in pairs to write three sentences using some and any.	Independent practice of language form	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	×	×	No	●			

### **Evaluation of Lesson 9**

The analysis showed that Lesson 9 was a non-task lesson. Although activity 1 was a focused task, the main objective of the lesson was to learn and practise the linguistic feature of some and any. It started with the learners discovering the rules for themselves, before explicitly learning about them and practising using them independently in the end.

Activity 1 was a focused or consciousness-raising (C-R) task (Ellis, 2003) designed to develop awareness of how the pre-selected linguistic feature works. Ellis (2003) regards this type of activity as a task rather than an exercise. He stipulates that:

They (C-R tasks) are in the sense that learners are required to talk meaningfully about a language point using their own linguistic resources. That is, although there is some linguistic feature that is the focus of the task learners are not required to use this feature, only think about it and discuss it (p.163).

He further argues that, “taskness of a C-R task lies not in the linguistic point that is the focus of the task but rather in the talk learners must engage in in order to achieve an outcome to the task” (p.163).

Therefore, based on Ellis’s (2003) perspective, activity 1 was meaning-focused (C1) that the learners were required to talk about the sentences together. It involved a gap (C2) that needed an exchange of information and ideas using the learners’ own linguistic resources such as previous knowledge (C3). The outcome (C4) was an awareness of how the target linguistic feature works.

Activity 2 involved the teacher explanation of the target language form. The primary focus was on the explicit teaching of grammar and therefore it did not meet any criteria of a task. Likewise, activity 3 did not meet the criteria because it was a grammar exercise designed to practise the target language form.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 3**

Although there was a four-week gap between OC2 and OC3, Ta's teaching still reflected some proximity to taskness. The analysis of self-directed Lessons 7 to 9 revealed that two out of three were closer to task-based lessons. However, Ta talked about them in a way which suggested that all lessons adopted task-based teaching. Ta had her own understanding and interpretation of task-based teaching as evidenced by how she referred to tasks in the interviews. The task feature which she mainly mentioned in the interviews involved a kind of experiential or self-regulated learning where the learners performed the tasks by themselves before the teacher taught them. According to Ta, the three lessons exhibited this feature and so they were more like the task-based lessons from her viewpoint.

In this final cycle, Ta revealed another understanding of tasks when describing Lesson 8 in the interview that tasks followed a three-stage TBLT framework, namely, introduction (pre-task phase), main task and a language focus. This implies that her understanding had grown as she was able to articulate the principle of task-based teaching similar to the framework of TBLT in the literature (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Estaire & Zanon, 1994; J. Willis 1996; Skehan, 1996).

Overall, Ta's understanding of TBLT in this cycle was continually developing. More discussion of her overall understanding of TBLT and other related issues will be presented in the next section.

#### **7.2.4 Discussion of Case Study 1: Ta**

From Lessons 1 to 9, five out of nine lessons exhibited features of task-based teaching. Interestingly, all five lessons involved receptive rather than productive skills. Four lessons were reading tasks (Lessons 4, 6, 7 and 8) and one employed an input-based task (Lesson 3). A possible explanation for this might be that Ta took the learners' language proficiency into account when designing the lessons as evidenced by her interview response (i.e., Interview 1.8, 9 August 2017). Ta expressed her preference to use tasks focused on receptive skills such as reading and listening rather than productive skills of speaking and writing. She explained that her learners did not have enough productive ability to carry out communicative tasks.



Ta's understanding of tasks evolved in a particular way through the process of teaching during the practicum. In various interview extracts, her understanding of tasks and TBLT indicated the following features: First, a task involved collaborative learning in a group format in which learners worked together in pairs or groups. Second, TBLT comprised different stages, pre-task, task and post-task. Third, TBLT involved the real-life process of language use. Fourth, a task was an activity that allowed the learners to make sense of what they were going to learn as complementary to being taught by the teacher. The learners engaged in a kind of experiential learning to some extent when they started figuring out the problem and finding the answers by themselves. This last feature was mentioned most in her interview responses. Her definition of TBLT reflects "learning by doing" (Dewey, 1938) or "experiential learning" (Kolb, 1984).

Moreover, tasks in her view had also become less idealistic over time. Initially, she tended to associate a task with an activity that requires elaborated resources. She therefore invested effort and time to craft tasks using teaching aids such as flash cards, picture boards, signs, and realia. Because of this understanding, Ta fell back to the translation approach in Lesson 5 when she could not finish making the flash cards. This incident suggests that her perception of tasks as elaborated resources demotivated her implementation of TBLT. However, over time, as she became familiar with and gained more experience in teaching, tasks became less demanding. She spent less time designing and preparing task-based activities. The following interview extract offers evidence of these emerging understandings:

After using tasks for some time, I start to reconsider that tasks do not always come with a lot of instructional materials. Tasks can provide the learners the opportunity to participate in teaching and learning activities. Later on, I did not really use as many teaching materials as before. I just used a kind of physical movement activities instead.

(Interview 1.9, 10 August 2017)

Ta perceived the experiences of teaching with tasks as follows. At the beginning of the practicum, task-based teaching started with difficulties. She still remembered the feeling of being nervous when she started to use TBLT. Reflecting back on her first TBLT lesson (Lesson 4), she said that:

When I had to change my teaching approach to something else other than the PPP, I felt scared and insecure because it was so new to me and I was being watched while using it. Now, I do not have such feelings. I think maybe because I gained more experiences.

(Interview 1.9, 10 August 2017)

She went on to say that the difficulties were alleviated over time as she gained more teaching experience and confidence. Ta's conceptualisation of tasks became less ambitious, as she describes in the following extract:

Using tasks for the first time was difficult for me because I was not familiar with it. It took longer to make teaching aids, using this and that etc. Moreover, I was not so sure if the activities were tasks or not. When time passed, I started to get used to it and adjusted teaching in my own ways by mixing this and that. Later, lesson planning flowed more and took less time than before. The lesson that I submitted to you was planned only one night before teaching. So, I seem to struggle less with tasks.

(Interview 1.9, 10 August 2017)

Ta focused her attention on the effectiveness of TBLT in terms of learners' responses and related engagement as a performance goal. As evidenced by a number of interview extracts and observation data, Ta tended to pay attention to learners' engagement so much so that she overlooked learners' learning. The extent of actual learning in the task-based lessons was not always clear as Ta did not overtly identify learning goals in the interviews. However, in the final interview, she had become aware of this issue. As she said:

My feeling is that when I used tasks in the lessons, the learner seemed to learn something because they started to listen to me. What is the point of learning if they don't listen? I would say, about 80% of them listened. They started to get involved because they were motivated.

(Interview 1.9, 10 August 2017)

Still, her perspective on the actual learning in the classroom was not clear. Ta did not seem to have a clear understanding of task evaluation as she did not explicitly draw a link between learning outcomes and TBLT. Possibly, the way Ta evaluated her teaching is similar to an

approach to task evaluation by Ellis (2003, 2015, 2018) called the motivational criterion or learner-based evaluation. This is the easiest criterion to carry out among the three criteria because it is practical and does not require any technical skills. It looks at whether learners enjoyed doing the task and found it useful. In contrast, learning-based evaluation or the developmental criterion is the most demanding approach as it needs systematic measurement such as pre-and post-tests in order to investigate learning that takes place as a result of performing the task (Ellis, 2015). As Ellis (2018) puts it, the learner-based criterion is more likely to appeal many teachers, including a novice teacher like Ta.

Although her prime concern was on engagement, Ta also saw tasks as catalysts for learning. Engagement, interest and participation were the starting point that the tasks brought. As she said, once the learners focused on what was in front of them, learning might covertly or overtly take place sooner or later. One learner in Ta's class who participated in a group interview after Lesson 6 confirmed this point. In response to the question of why most learners in her class enjoyed doing games/activities rather than just studying, this learner said that it was fun and not stressful. She further explained that:

Learning through doing activities is better because it is fun. When I'm having fun, it is absorbed into me and I can remember it better. However, if I learn by rote memorization, I will soon forgot what I have learned.

(Group interview, 6 July 2017)

Thus, the learner's perspectives exhibited favourable reactions to task-based learning in the way that it made them feel comfortable and enjoy learning in the class.

Reflecting on her experiences in the practicum, Ta proposed two factors that could facilitate teachers' adoption of TBLT. First, there should be a centre that educates teachers about TBLT. She thought that it was important for teachers to be guided through the processes when starting to use tasks for the first time. This included the availability of the resources that teachers could draw on such as a resource book that includes a wide range of task-based activities or task-based lesson plans. Shintani (2016) who calls for a hands-on resource that provides the essential information needed for task implementation confirms this. Second, Ta saw it as helpful that the new TBLT users be scaffolded by instructional aids during the early stage of task

implementation. She reflected on the fact that her teaching with tasks at the start would not have been easy without teaching aids. The above comments imply that any forms of support (e.g., materials and guidance) are necessary for practitioners of TBLT.

In sum, Ta constructed her understanding and conceptualisation of tasks and TBLT through an accumulation of teaching experiences supported by additional guidance from the researcher. Engaging in reflective practice in the meeting and interviews also influenced how she developed and modified her understanding during the practicum. Initially, she exhibited a lack of confidence and uncertainty when fully employing tasks for the first time because it was a new and different approach from how she used to teach in the past. She associated TBLT with collaborative learning in which the learners worked together in pairs or groups. She also saw tasks as requiring additional preparation of teaching aids such as flashcards or pictures. Later, these ideas changed and tasks became less demanding to her. Also, TBLT engaged the learners in the real-life process of language use. Towards the end, her understanding was reconstructed again when she came to see tasks as activities that, to some extent, encouraged self-regulated learning and the learner's involvement and responsibility for their own learning. It is this last definition that aligns with the theory of learning called, "learning by doing" (Dewey, 1938) or "experiential learning" (Kolb, 1984) that TBLT draws on (Anderson & Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Thus, TBLT in her view was seen as a collaborative and experiential activity.

### **7.3 Summary**

Overall, Ta's experiences of this guided process of learning to teach with tasks revealed that she developed her understanding of TBLT to some extent. She was able to refer to some relevant features of TBLT in her teaching and gained more teaching experience as she taught in the practicum. Table 7.15 below provides a summary of the key findings from Ta's case study.

Table 7.13 A summary of the key research findings from Case Study 1

<b>CASE STUDY 1: TA</b>			
<b>RQs</b>	<b>OC1 Independent planning lessons Lessons 1-3</b>	<b>OC2 Supported lessons Lessons 4-6</b>	<b>OC3 Self-regulated lessons Lessons 7-9</b>
<b>Stated understandings of TBLT:</b>	Not stated	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative group/pair work</li> <li>• A concept of learning by doing</li> <li>• Self-directed learning</li> <li>• Real-life process of language use</li> </ul>	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner-led discovery/self-regulated learning</li> <li>• The three-stage framework</li> </ul>
<b>Changes in stated understandings of TBLT:</b>	Not stated	<b>Changes of understandings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She initially associated tasks with collaborative group work but came to the broader realization that it was also about allowing learners to learn by doing or making sense of their own learning as complementary to being taught.</li> <li>• Over this observation cycle, her understanding of tasks became less idealistic and more manageable after realising that tasks did not always require lots of supporting teaching aids.</li> <li>• She reconceptualised the roles of teachers in the task-based lesson as a supporter or facilitator.</li> </ul> <b>Change of practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the way of teaching the reading lesson using tasks.</li> <li>• Change in the way that she could manage her task-based teaching more effectively and confidently.</li> </ul>	<b>Changes of understandings:</b> Not stated <b>Changes of practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the way of teaching grammar using a task.</li> <li>• Change in the way she interacted with the class.</li> </ul>
<b>Factors that influenced the STs' planning and practices of TBLT:</b>	Not stated	<b>Facilitative factors:</b> Not stated	<b>Facilitative factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable types of tasks for learners' ability</li> </ul>

<b>CASE STUDY 1: TA</b>			
<b>RQs</b>	<b>OC1 Independent planning lessons Lessons 1-3</b>	<b>OC2 Supported lessons Lessons 4-6</b>	<b>OC3 Self-regulated lessons Lessons 7-9</b>
		<b>Hindering factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional seating arrangement</li> <li>• Lack of time to plan tasks</li> <li>• Additional workload from the task-based planning</li> </ul>	<b>Hindering factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra time on preparing ideas</li> <li>• Difficulty in controlling group work activities</li> <li>• Tiring</li> <li>• Lack of classroom facilities</li> <li>• Topic/contents were beyond learners' interest</li> </ul>
<b>STs' perceived needs for TBLT</b>		<b>Recommendations:</b> Teachers need... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to give clear task instructions to young and less able learners.</li> <li>• feedback and guidance when teaching with tasks.</li> </ul>	<b>Recommendations:</b> Teachers need... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a centre for task-based education.</li> <li>• available resources for TBLT teaching aids to scaffold the use of tasks in the beginning.</li> </ul>
<b>Learners' perception of TBLT:</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks were games.</li> <li>• Tasks made them feel comfortable and enjoy learning.</li> <li>• Difficult tasks were reading tasks</li> <li>• Easy tasks were input-based tasks (listen-and- do task/the labelling race game)</li> </ul>	N/A

## CHAPTER 8 CASE STUDY 2: NAN

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter first presents Case study 2, a descriptive account of Lessons 1 to 9 taught by Nan. It then discusses Nan's evolving understandings and practices of TBLT during the three observation cycles.

### 8.2 A profile of Nan

Nan, the youngest ST in this study, was 20 years old at the time of participation. However, the observed class she taught was the highest level among the STs' classes. The class consisted of 34 learners studying in Mattayom 3 (Year 10 or Grade 9) who were between 14 -15 years of age. Nan had one-year teaching experience when she taught as a part-time tutor in a language tutorial centre. In what follows, I present the observations of Lessons 1 to 3 (cycle 1).

#### 8.2.1 Observation Cycle 1: Independently plan lessons (Lessons 1-3)

In this cycle, Nan independently planned the lessons as part of regular teaching. The observed class normally met three times weekly (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday) for 50 minutes each. Similar to Ta's class, the observed lessons taught by Nan were also rescheduled because of a school event so there was a one-week gap between Lessons 1 and 2. All lessons were consecutive and Lessons 1 and 2 related to each other while Lesson 3 did not. The following Table (8.1) presents an overview of Lessons 1 to 3.

Table 8.1 Overview of Lessons 1 to 3

	<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>Lesson 2</b>	<b>Lesson 3</b>
Date	5 June 2017	12 June 2017	15 June 2017
Time	12.40 – 13.30 p.m.	12.40 – 13.30 p.m.	10.10 – 11.00 a.m.
Lesson focus	Vocabulary	Grammar	Reading

#### Lesson 1

Nan divided the class into groups of 5-6 people. Each group was given a crossword worksheet consisting of the boxes and statements that provided clues for the answers (*e.g.*, *People who play*

*sport are...The time of the day when we have breakfast is ...*). The learners were asked to fill in the crossword in the allocated time of 20 minutes. Later, Nan checked the answers with the whole class and those with the highest number of correct answers won. Finally, she directed the learners' attention to relative pronouns (e.g., who, which, where) that appeared in the clues.

In the post-lesson SR interview, Nan described the rationale behind the choice of crossword, explaining that it would prepare the learners for the next lesson on relative clauses. Nan hoped that after seeing relative clauses used in context, the learners might understand the concept more easily when she taught it in the following lesson. The following extract explains further:

I want to use a game to teach relative clauses. The learners have a chance to see the examples such as 'a person who...' when playing a game. There are three relative pronouns- what, who and which. The learners can develop concepts such as who is used with a person. Then in the next class, I will review the lesson again by linking to the game they played previously.

(Interview 2.1, 5 June 2017)

Nan added that she did not follow the textbook. Instead, she used a crossword game from a website because she had realized that when she used a crossword with the learners in another class, they enjoyed it and cooperated well in the lesson.

My observation notes recorded Nan's teaching and the learners' reactions in Lesson 1 as follows:

The teacher (Nan) is trying to encourage collaborative group work because she repeatedly reminds the learners to help each other when seeing the learners start to work alone. She moves around the class to offer help when the learners raise their hands. She sometimes says 'wait a second' or 'hold on' when there are many hands up at the same time. The learners look comfortable and are not afraid of asking questions. They are engaged in this group work and cooperate quite well.

(Observation notes, 5 June 2017)

The observation notes also revealed that Nan put a lot of effort into teaching. She always circulated around the class to monitor the learners and to make sure that they understood the



lesson. She repeatedly gave instructions and guided them through the game. Disruptive behaviour was not seen in this observed lesson. Instead, the class cooperated in the activity very well. This implied that Nan could manage the class and engage the learners quite well. They were keen on asking questions and searching for the answers using a dictionary or a mobile phone.

I observed that the crossword game in her lesson seemed to engage the learners because it was goal oriented. This aligns with J. Willis's (1996) point that "it is the challenge of achieving the outcome that makes TBLT a motivating procedure in the classroom (p.24)".

## **Lesson 2**

Nan reviewed some vocabulary in the crossword game from the last session. After that, she wrote the phrases on the board (i.e., *An insect which makes honey, a place in a house where people watch TV, a person who cooks*) followed by another two sentences (*A man is my cousin. A man who wears a red shirt is my cousin*). She explained the differences between them. Then she showed a large board illustrating the structure of relative clauses and explained the rule. After that the learners worked on the exercises in the book by completing the sentences with relative clauses.

This lesson was relevant to the previous lesson in that the latter was building towards the former. The learners were implicitly exposed to some examples through a game before they were explicitly taught the rules of the target language form in this lesson. My observation notes recorded that the lesson was heavily teacher-centred as most of the class time involved the teacher talking.

The post-observation SR interview revealed that Nan had catered for individual differences in learning. She noticed that some learners needed particular attention in terms of guidance compared to other learners in the classroom.

From my ongoing observation, if I taught in front of the class, this group (a group of male learners) seemed not to follow the lesson and lose concentration easily. However, when I let them work in groups and explained again, they could understand and were able to

explain why they answered this. If their answers were wrong, I showed them the right answers.

(Interview 2.2, 12 June 2017)

Nan also reported having low confidence, especially, in explaining the lesson and giving examples. As a result, after explaining the lesson, Nan constantly checked on the learners closely in groups in order to make sure that they understood her teaching.

### Lesson 3

Nan started Lesson 3 by teaching useful reading techniques using a PowerPoint slide (see Figure 8.1). These techniques included how to look for answers in the reading. After that, she divided the class into four groups. Nan explained that each group had to answer six questions based on the reading text called, “*Being 15*”. Each group was given two answer choices (written on the sticky notes) from which the learners had to choose one and stick it on the board (see Figure 8.2). Nan read the questions one at a time and the groups showed their answers. Those who had the correct answer got a point while the group that got a wrong answer had to draw a lot and follow the instructions written in it (e.g., singing a song, dancing etc.).



Figure 8.1 Nan teaching reading techniques



Figure 8.2 The learners showing their answers on the board

Observation notes provided a positive reflection on the high level of learner engagement as evidenced by how the learners enthusiastically responded to the lesson.

Interestingly, the learners are highly engaged throughout the whole lesson, especially in the last activity (a Question-Answer game). They are keen on helping each other to find the answer from the reading text because they want to win the game. The exciting moments are when the teacher gives solutions. There are a lot of cheering noises and laughter. This lesson seems to be their favourite one because some learners want to continue playing and say ‘more questions please’ when the game finishes.

(Observation notes, 15 June 2017)

In the post-lesson SR interview, Nan reported being surprised when the lesson she designed attracted the learners’ attention and got them involved throughout the lesson. She hoped that the learners would respond well and that the lesson would turn out to be satisfying, as she describes below:

I planned the lesson myself last night. To be honest, I had no idea if it was going to work or not. I was afraid that the learners might not be able to do it and if they couldn’t understand the first activity, they wouldn’t be able to do the next one. However, when I actually taught the lesson, it was opposite to what I thought. The group that was normally

slow found the answers quite fast in this lesson. They came out to show answers on the board very fast.

(Interview 2.3, 15 June 2017)

Moreover, Nan talked about this lesson in a way which suggested that she had started to gain more confidence and motivation in teaching because the learners liked her lesson. Nan said that she would use more interactive activities in teaching, as we see in the following extract:

I am quite happy with the lesson today. When I use an activity such as a crossword game, the learners' reactions are different. They pay more attention and cooperate in the learning. They can be inactive if they do nothing. I should use more activities in the class. When the learners enjoy activities, they might learn well and remember what they have learned. However, this can be tiring because it requires preparation and has some limitations. But, I think I should try to use more activities in the next lessons.

(Interview 2.3, 15 June 2017)

In response to the question of why she explicitly stated the use of pre-task, task cycle and post-task in Lesson 3, Nan replied that,

I think it is a task-based lesson. My understanding is that the pre-task involves preparing the learners for the task. In other words, they should have some ideas about what they are going to learn or do. If it is the new lesson, the teacher will introduce what the lesson entails. A task is an activity that learners work on in pairs or groups and they help each other to do the task. They then present the outcome of the task to the class. If there is a wrong answer, the teacher can correct it during the post-task phase. However, for me, the post-task is quite difficult because I cannot control the time very well and end up with no time for the final post task.

(Interview 2.3, 15 June 2017)

The above interview excerpt suggested that Nan was able to identify key features of TBLT and the three stages of the TBLT framework.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 1**

The interview data revealed that Nan's understanding of tasks included associating tasks with a kind of a collaborative pair or group work. In addition, tasks in her lessons were in a three-stage framework of pre-task, task and post-task. In this phase, Nan revealed positive attitudes towards task implementation because her learners were actively engaged in the lessons, which consequently increased her confidence in teaching as well.

In what follows, I discuss OC2, which was carried out within three consecutive Lessons (4 to 6) in July 2017.

### **8.2.2 Observation Cycle 2: Supported lessons (Lessons 4- 6)**

#### **Collaborative task-based lesson planning**

One week before the observation began, I met with Nan in the school to discuss Lesson plans 4 to 6, which would be used in the observations on July 3, 5 and 6, 2017, respectively. Similar to Ta, Nan planned the three lessons by herself first. I documented Nan's original lesson plans in my observation notes as follows.

In her (Nan's) original Lesson Plans 4 to 6, Nan showed a stronger subscription to task-based lessons than the other STs. Her lesson plans therefore needed little modification because the types of activity she used aligned with key features of tasks. For example, Lesson 4 employed an information-gap or a split-information task in which the learners work in pairs to put the information together. This kind of task promotes negotiation of meaning. In addition, it is real-world relevant as the content involves language used to buy a train ticket. Lessons 5 and 6 used the same dialogue from the textbook about two friends talking about an unusual experience that happened to one of them. In Lesson 5, Nan intended to teach phrases from the dialogue, for example, *'you'll never guess what happened to me'*. So, she will ask the learners to work together and match the meaning of each phrase with the Thai translation. After that in Lesson 6, the learners work in groups to rearrange the jumbled dialogues by listening to the recording.

(Observation notes, 21 June 2017)

During the discussion, I commented on some aspects of the lessons that could be revised. For example, the scripted dialogue provided in the information-gap activity in Lesson 4 could be made less controlled so that the learners could use their own ideas (e.g., *Hello. I would like to buy a ticket to ... (the learners think of the name of the place by themselves)*). This might help to promote their creativity and negotiation of meaning. Moreover, the choice they make will be more relevant to the real world. Instead of providing controlled responses, Nan decided to revise the cue cards to be less controlled (see Figure 8.4 below). As stated in the observation notes above, there were minor revisions made to Nan's lesson plans. Lessons 5 and 6 remained unchanged as we both agreed that they appeared to be task-like. The final version of Lessons 4 – 6 that were used in OC2 are presented below in Table 8.2. While Lessons 5 and 6 related to each other, Lesson 4 was a distinct lesson.

Table 8.2 Overview of Lessons 4 to 6

	<b>Lesson 4</b>	<b>Lesson 5</b>	<b>Lesson 6</b>
Date	3 July 2017	5 July 2017	6 July 2017
Time	12.40 – 13.30 p.m.	10.10 – 11.00 a.m.	10.10 – 11.00 a.m.
Lesson focus	Conversation	Conversation	Conversation

#### **Lesson 4**

Nan began the lesson by eliciting ideas from the learners about travelling (e.g., *how to go to the city centre or how to buy a train ticket in English*). She then wrote phrases and sentences on the board (i.e., *Next, please, Where to? Single or return? Return to Barbican, please. That's £ 6.00, Which line do I take, please? You're welcome*). After explaining the meaning and modelling the pronunciation, she asked them to repeat after her. Then, in the following activity, the learners were provided with an incomplete dialogue between a ticket seller and a passenger (see Figure 8.3). Working in pairs, they needed to fill in the missing information by listening to the recording.

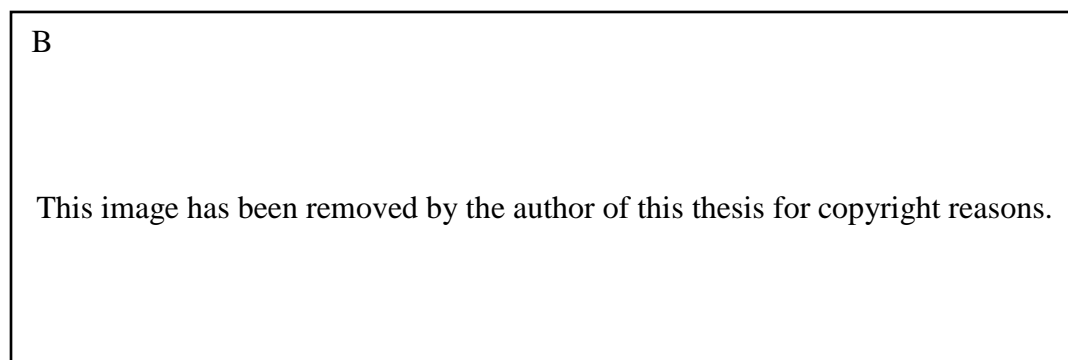
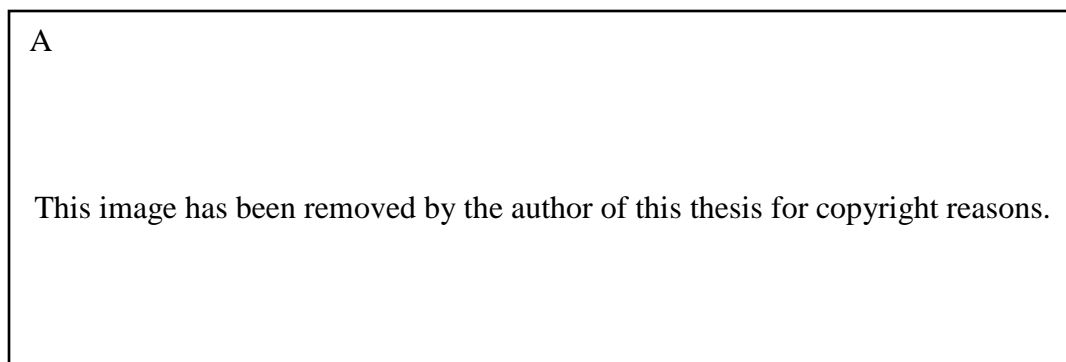


Figure 8.3 An example of the worksheets

In the same pairs, the learners worked on another activity called “*Fill me up*”. Each learner was given a strip of paper containing different parts of a dialogue. Learners needed to communicate with another learner to fill in the gaps and complete the conversation (see Figure 8.4). Later, volunteers acted out a role-play using this dialogue.

**Learner A (Cindy)**

Cindy: Hello. I would like to buy a ticket to..... (เติมสถานที่ที่ต้องการไป)

Ticket Agent: .....

Cindy: I want a ... (single/return) ticket please. (เลือกกว่าจะเป็นตัว single หรือ return )

TA: .....

Cindy: Thank you. Here is my cash.

TA: .....

Cindy: Thank you.

TA: .....

<p><b>Learner B (Ticket Agent)</b></p> <p>Cindy: .....</p> <p>TA: A return ticket or a single ticket?</p> <p>Cindy: .....</p> <p>TA: That will be... Bath for the single/return ticket to ..... (สถานที่)</p> <p>Cindy: .....</p> <p>TA: This is your ticket.</p> <p>Cindy: .....</p>
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Figure 8.4 A “Fill me up” activity

In the semi-structured interview following Lesson 4, Nan had wondered if the learners would understand the information-gap task. As she expected, most of them were confused. Therefore, she decided to approach each group individually and explain again until they understood. Nan believed that what made the learners confused was not the task difficulty, but the novelty of the task as the learners were not familiar with information-gap tasks. However, once they knew what they needed to do, the lesson could continue.

My observation notes also recorded the issue of frustration in the classroom. Not only were the learners confused, but also the teacher. Nan appeared to be frustrated at times.

The learners listened attentively in the first activity in order to fill in the missing information in the dialogue. Later, they started to get confused in the second activity, “Fill me up”. Some learners did not understand clearly and so simply showed the answer to the other learner without communicating. The teacher (Nan) also struggled with explaining the task in front of the class. She often paused and rephrased while speaking. During the lesson, she occasionally checked if the learners were following her.

(Observation notes, 3 July 2017)

This was probably a matter of providing clearer guidance to learners. Moreover, Nan was also struggled with delivering the task. This aspect was clarified in the post-Lesson 4 semi-structured interview when she said that:



I was lost in the last phase. While writing on the board, I was confused if I needed to focus on the language occurring in the pre-task or task phase. So, I ended up mixing the phrases from both activities. I was standing in front of the class and confusing myself.

(Interview 2.4, 3 July 2017)

When asked if the lesson was task-based, Nan briefly replied that it could be a task in that the learners had to do the task by themselves and learn from doing it. This suggests that Nan associated a task with the concept of learning by doing.

### **Lesson 5**

In Lesson 5, Nan asked the learners to look at the sentences in the book. They then practised pronunciation by repeating after the recording.

*You will never guess what happened to me. I had quite a shock. What on earth was it? What is it?  
Oh, my goodness! You look a little upset. What was going on? Oh dear!*

After that, the learners formed a group where each group was given a worksheet consisting of a table with two columns (see Figure 8.5). The left column had the sentences as shown above while the right column presented the L1 translations which were in random order. The learners had to match the sentences in the left column with their L1 translation on the right.



This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 8.5 An example of a matching activity

After completion, each group wrote a similar conversation containing at least two sentences learned in the lesson.

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Nan reflected on the learners' enjoyment during this task. This was quite different from what she had seen in previous lessons using a direct translation method because the learners would become bored and look sleepy whenever it involved grammar. The observation notes similarly stated that the learners cooperated quite well in this lesson, especially in the last activity when they made up a story using the sentences they had learned in the lesson. They were particularly enthusiastic about making up funny stories.

Nan talked about tasks in a way which suggested that her understandings of tasks had become less idealised through engaging in collaborative lesson planning and being encouraged to discuss TBLT.

Initially, I did not know how to start using tasks. When I studied it with you (in Phase one), I still could not incorporate tasks into the lessons. But after talking with you in the interviews and during the lesson planning, I started to realize that TBLT was not as difficult as I thought. A task does not always have to be a big project. It can be something small such as an information-gap task.

(Interview 2.5, 5 July 2017)

## **Lesson 6**

Nan divided the class into groups where each group was provided with 14 strips of paper containing one sentence each. The learners had to arrange the sentences into the correct order by themselves. They then checked the answer by listening to the recording and rearranging the sentences again based on what they heard. Finally, Nan gave the solutions written on separate pieces of paper one at a time (see Figure 8.6).



Figure 8.6 Nan showing an answer

In the semi-structured interview following Lesson 6, Nan reported her disappointment when the lesson did not go as well as planned. For example, she was so busy doing three different things at the same time while giving the answers (i.e., playing and pausing the audio player while showing the pieces of paper as shown in Figure 8.6) that she forgot to explain the meaning of the conversation again. She pointed out that the learners would not learn much from the lesson if they did not know the meaning of what they had done. However, in general, Nan was still positive about the learners' engagement in the activity.

Reflecting on her time planning task-based lessons, Nan said that her understanding of tasks had evolved during this process. While looking for some ideas from the internet, she had been exposed to different examples of task-based lessons and so she noticed that task-based teaching could be used with other language skills. The following are her reflections on this:

While planning, I googled some examples like teaching TBLT and reading activity. Then, I was like, ah..., TBLT can also be used to teach reading, and other language skills. But people just misunderstand. They tend to think that TBLT is only used to teach speaking. So, when the learners cannot speak much in task-based activity, they will say TBLT fails. This is not true.

(Interview 2.6, 6 July 2017)

Moreover, Nan revealed her new perspectives about TBLT:

I understand that task-based teaching is an approach that integrates content into the tasks. It does not have to be only pair or group work of 3 to 4 people. It can be individual work. It is the activity that brings out learners' abilities as much as possible by taking their natures, interests and background knowledge into account.

(Interview 2.6, 6 July 2017)

Nan broadly defined task-based teaching as more like a learner-centred approach that highlights the development of the learners based on their needs, interests and backgrounds. In using the word "content", she refers to the subject matter or topic, for example, reading texts, dialogues or linguistic features. This leads to my interpretation that task-based teaching in Nan's understanding is about teaching the subject matter using tasks that involve collaborative learning in pairs, groups or individuals.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 2**

Nan developed her understanding of tasks in this cycle. In the beginning, she seemed to be frustrated when using task-based teaching. Later, her understanding of tasks became less idealistic as she stated that tasks did have to be a big project after she engaged in reflective practices with the researcher (myself). She saw TBLT as an approach that required the learners to do a task by themselves and which would result in learning from doing. While planning the lessons, she saw different examples of task-based lessons and started to reconceptualise tasks. Toward the end, she developed the new understanding that a task could also be individual work, and not only group or pair work.

### **Group interview with the learners**

Immediately after OC2, I conducted a group interview with three learners selected from the observed classes in order to get a comprehensive perspective on Nan's teaching. The recruitment was on a voluntary basis and the participants were all females and 15 years old. These learners' positive attitudes towards Nan's teaching were similar to those in Ta's class. They said that Nan employed activities in her lessons and so made learning enjoyable. The learners still remembered the activities that Nan used and told me which ones they liked the most. All agreed that Nan's

teaching was fun and helped them learn. They reported being confused when Nan used activities for the first time. However, it did not take them long to understand. As one learner put it, “...because we were enjoying doing the activity, we could understand it easily”.

Moreover, the learners reported differences between the ways in which Nan and their schoolteacher taught. Nan often incorporated activities into the lessons while the schoolteacher only “taught”. I sought clarification on what they meant by “taught”. The learners explained that “The schoolteacher explains (the contents) and we take notes or copy what the teacher says”.

When further asked what they thought about learning English through activities, the learners similarly reflected that it helped them remember what they learned more easily. In the next section, I present the investigation of Nan’s lessons in the final cycle.

### 8.2.3 Observation Cycle 3: Self-directed lessons (Lessons 7-9)

The final observation cycle began four weeks later when I observed Nan in her regular teaching from Lessons 7 to 9. In this cycle, Nan managed and taught the lessons on her own. Table 8.9 below presents an overview of Lessons 7 to 9. They were consecutive and related to each other.

Table 8.3 Overview of Lessons 7 to 9

	<b>Lesson 7</b>	<b>Lesson 8</b>	<b>Lesson 9</b>
Date	7 August 2017	16 August 2017	17 August 2017
Time	12.40 – 13.30 p.m.	10.10 – 11.00 a.m.	10.10 – 11.00 a.m.
Lesson focus	Past simple tense	Past simple tense	Past simple tense

#### **Lesson 7**

The learners were divided into four groups. Each group was provided with a short reading passage called, “*Christmas day*”. They had to answer the questions that followed (*e.g., what did the Jenson family do on Saturday? Where did they go?*). After completion, Nan gave the answers and explained the past simple tense arising from the reading. She showed a large board illustrating the structure and functions of a past simple tense (*e.g., how to form affirmative and negative sentences and question*).

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Nan described her teaching approach in this lesson as being different from what she used to do before. This time Nan taught grammar in context by having the learners read the reading text sourced from a website so that the learners perceived how the grammar structure worked before she explained the rules. She explained that:

The lesson today was about past simple tense. I did not explicitly explain it at the start. Instead, I asked the learners to read the passage written in past simple tense and answer the questions that followed. This reading was from another source; I did not use the textbook. Before that, when I taught them about tenses, they did not like it because the teaching was all about explanation of theory. So, this time I used a reading text to show how the past simple tense was really used in sentences. It was not just a theory.

(Interview 2.7, 7 August 2017)

Interestingly, Nan talked about the moment when one learner questioned her if the word “shopped” was a typo because there were two ‘p’s in it. Nan hypothesised that the learner would have seen its present form, “shop” before, and now he was able to notice the differences between the two forms by himself. Another learner doubted the spelling of “drove”, which was different from “drive”. According to Nan, this was what she expected to happen. This kind of recognition would be useful for the learners when they learned about regular/irregular verbs in the next lesson. Therefore, it seems that Nan’s aim behind this activity has been achieved in that some learners noticed the words as she expected. This resulted in Nan feeling positive about her lesson plan.

It is worth mentioning that during the four-week gap between OC2 and OC3, Nan had a classroom experience that positively enhanced her confidence and attitudes towards TBLT. Nan recounted the moment when she had observed the cooperating teacher teaching in this observed class. It was a one-off lesson where the learners played a kind of vocabulary game aiming to create the longest string of words. The first learner wrote one word on the board and the next learner had to begin the next word using the last letter of the previous one. Observing from the back of the class, Nan was so excited to see that the learners used the words from the tasks she had used with them some time ago. She excitedly said that:

The words they used were all in my tasks (*e.g., event, local, fast and watch*). I am very impressed that they can remember the vocabulary I taught them from doing the tasks/activities. I did not force the learners to learn the words by heart but they can remember them. I felt so happy that I could not stop smiling. It was such an unexpected experience. If I have more chances and time, I want to do more tasks because I am now seeing successful results.

(Interview 2.7, 7 August 2017)

This suggests that Nan experienced attitudinal shifts towards TBLT after seeing successful results. She appeared to overcome self-doubt developed during the early stage of the practicum and gain more self-efficacy in teaching. This was probably because she started to experience a stronger sense of achievement as time passed. Part of this success was related to learner engagement. They cooperated in class activities and responded positively to her teaching, especially when she used tasks.

### **Lesson 8**

Before starting, Nan reviewed the last lesson which was about the past simple tense. Then, she wrote a sentence on the board, “*I went to Thapru floating market last Friday*” and asked the learners to pay attention to its verb form. After that, she explained regular and irregular forms of the past simple. The emphasis was on rules for spelling of verb ending such as -e, -ed or -ied.

In the next activity, the learners played a kind of verb card game. The learners formed a group where each group was provided with 24 verb cards mixed between the base form and the past form of the verb (*e.g., want, wanted, eat, ate etc.*). To play the game, each learner was given verb cards equally and randomly. One person laid down a card with a word (for example, “*jump*”) in the middle. Whoever had the word “*jumped*” would lay down the card followed by another new card to keep the game going (see Figure 8.7). The game continued until a player had no cards left and won the game.

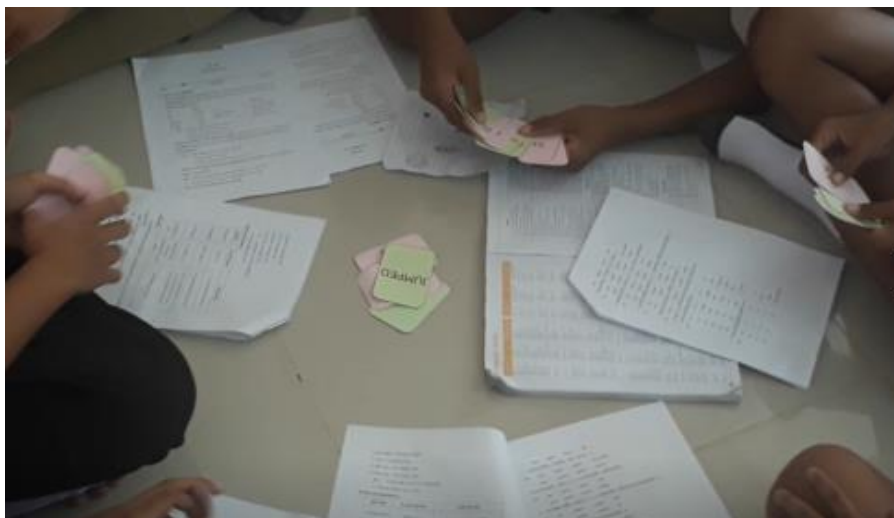


Figure 8.7 The learners laying down verb cards

After completion, the learners worked on an exercise in their book. They had to change the verbs from the base form into the past form and vice versa.

In the semi-structured interview following Lesson 8, Nan explained that she adapted this activity from a card game she used to play with friends at university. She was very positive about this lesson as it went well. This was because the learners were highly engaged and paid attention throughout the activity. This aligned with the observation notes recording a high level of engagement during the activity. There was a lot of cheering and laughter (see Figure 8.8). The groups went wild every time a player got rid of the cards in their hands. Some players consulted the book to check their answers (see Figure 8.9). When the game was about to finish, Nan agreed when the learners asked if they could play it again.





Figure 8.8 A learner winning the game



Figure 8.9 The learners checking their answers

In the interview, Nan talked about tasks in a way which suggested that her interpretation of TBLT was associated with the concept of learning by doing. To her, it was an approach that activated learners' knowledge by having them figure out what they learned by themselves first.

It can be called a task-based lesson because the learners are learning by doing tasks.

When playing a card, they learn that the past verb form of 'drive' is 'drove' or 'do' is 'did'. So, they are not taught by reciting or rote memorization.

(Interview 2.8, 16 August 2017)

Nan also noticed that the learners reacted differently to two grammar lessons taught in different ways. In the previous (baseline observation) grammar lesson, she taught the present simple tense using lecture-based teaching. As the lesson mainly involved teacher talking time, the learners appeared to be bored and lost concentration easily. She, therefore, felt demotivated by the learners' reactions. However, in this lesson, she reported being highly positive when seeing the learners enjoy the lesson and ask for more time to do the activity. This indicates increased levels of engagement and positivity by the learners.

The interview showed that Nan gradually developed a positive attitude towards TBLT over time.

### **Lesson 9**

Nan started Lesson 9 by reviewing the past verb forms learned in the previous lesson. She wrote a sentence on the board, "*I saw you at the police station yesterday*" to show the learners how the past verb form was used in the sentence. She then compared the past simple and present simple sentences.

Later, the learners worked individually on the grammar exercises in their book by converting the sentences from present simple into past simple (*e.g., put the verbs in brackets into past simple*). Then they worked on another exercise in groups. Each group had to write five sentences using any five verbs from the book. These sentences had to be written in the past simple tense using affirmative, negative and question forms. After finishing, Nan called for three volunteers to write the sentences on the board. Each was responsible for a different sentence type as shown in Figure 8.10 below.



Figure 8.10 The third learner writing their sentence on the board

Nan explained in the interview that because this lesson continued from the previous one, its content still revolved around the past simple tense. She was very satisfied with this because the learners could write the sentences by themselves and they seemed to enjoy being creative when composing the sentences.

Nan added that while teaching this lesson, she decided to include a new activity (activity 4) into the plan because of two reasons. First, she wanted to see if the learners really understood and could write the sentences by themselves. Second, she wanted to create a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere. Instead of working separately, she activated the class interaction by having some learners perform in front of the class. Nan particularly focused on the third learner (see Figure 8.10) who was normally shy and lacked confidence. To her surprise, he volunteered to come up front. The observation notes recorded that this last learner contributed to the development of a fun and collaborative learning environment. This was because when he was hesitant to write the sentence, the class tried to help him by shouting and cheering him on, which lightened the mood and resulted in much collaborative laughter. According to the observation notes, “This activity turned out to be collaborative whole-class work”.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 3**

Nan developed a sense of accomplishment in her teaching in this final cycle. She witnessed the positive impact of tasks on learning. Moreover, with the use of tasks, her lessons encouraged a certain degree of learner participation which gradually led to confidence and motivation in her teaching performance. Nan also reported some changes in the way she taught grammar lessons. However, her understanding of TBLT was still associated with the concept of learning by doing.

#### **8.2.4 Discussion of Case Study 2: Nan**

Nan's understandings of TBLT revealed in the interview data exhibited the following features: First, her understandings centred on TBLT as a kind of collaborative pair or group work. Second, there was the conceptualisation of the three-stage framework of pre-task, task and post-task in a task-based lesson. Third, understandings incorporated the concept of learning by doing where the learners were encouraged to figure out what they learned by themselves first. During the process of teaching, her understanding of tasks was therefore reconstructed. For example, she started to realise that a task could be performed individually and need not necessarily involve groups or pairs. Moreover, a task-based lesson could be used with all language skills, not only speaking skills.

Before observations began, I informally met with all three STs. Nan shared her unpleasant teaching experiences as documented in my observation notes below:

To my surprise, one ST (Nan) started to question if she really wanted to become a teacher. She confessed that teaching was probably not her kind of job anymore. Nan was demotivated and discouraged by some disruptive and aggressive learners. This made her feel that the learners did not treat her as a teacher as she was 'just' a trainee teacher.

(Observation notes, 25 May 2017)

According to Nan, her teaching in the practicum started with challenges and frustration. Apart from learning to teach, she also had to handle different things at the same time such as her attitudes towards teaching, the learners, and classroom management. However, as time passed, Nan overcame the challenges and gained more confidence in teaching. Teaching with tasks turned out to be some of her successful experiences.

In terms of her experiences with TBLT, Nan reflected back to the time when she learned about TBLT in the university (Phase 1). She confessed that at that time she thought of TBLT as something so “big” and “brand new” and was not certain about its feasibility in a real classroom. TBLT seemed to be very idealistic and ambitious to her and Thai learners. Later, during the task-based lesson planning in the practicum, she was still doubtful about its feasibility. It was not until the plans were put into practice with real learners that she finally realised that TBLT was “doable”. She mentioned that actual experience, self-learning and guidance from the expert were facilitative factors. Additionally, she recommended that teachers adjust tasks to suit their learners’ proficiency and increase the level as needed.

In the final interview, Nan reported an affordance that fostered the implementation of TBLT in this school. It was the flexibility and freedom afforded by the cooperating teacher. She was given full authority to plan the lessons independently and so was not restricted to follow a particular teaching approach like in other contexts. In terms of the constraints, she pointed out that the school lacked classroom technology that would fully support the design of task-based lessons. In this respect, she called for three kinds of support in order to facilitate the implementation of TBLT. These were, namely, technology such as a computer with internet access in the classroom, feedback or guidance from experienced teachers or a university supervisor, and a resource book on TBLT lessons. She mentioned that the last factor in particular would be useful for beginning teachers like her. From her own experience, she had to visit many websites to research examples of task-based lessons. She believed that if there was a readymade guidebook compiling all kinds of tasks in different skills and topics, teachers would find it useful as it would decrease workload.

Moreover, Nan also noticed that learners with different levels of proficiency reacted to TBLT differently. Employing the same task-based lesson with four different groups of learners, she found that the observed class (the lowest level of language proficiency) responded and engaged in the lesson more than the other three classes who had higher proficiency (unobserved classes). Nan called the class with the highest proficiency “traditional” because the learners focused only on explicit learning. They perceived tasks as games to play and have fun with and not as a way to learn. According to Nan, the learners in this “traditional” class tended to think that Nan used

tasks as a way to take a break, and not to teach them. This indicates a discrepancy between learners' beliefs about language learning and TBLT. When learners hold deeply-rooted beliefs that knowledge must be intentionally learned and transmitted from teachers, they might react negatively to an approach that positions learners as independent learners engaging in cooperative practice, like TBLT.

### **8.3 Summary**

Overall, the findings indicated that Nan's understanding of TBLT had some alignment with the TBLT principles in the literature. Similar to Ta, Nan was able to articulate a number of aspects relevant to TBLT. Moreover, she has grown and changed as a teacher in a number of ways. For example, Nan expressed her willingness to try new teaching practices using tasks. There was a positive change in her attitude towards the teaching profession, which had initially been quite negative. The following Table (8.4) presents a summary of the key findings from Nan:

Table 8.4 A summary of the key research findings from Case Study 2

<b>CASE STUDY 2: NAN</b>			
<b>RQs</b>	<b>OC1 Independent planning lessons Lessons 1-3</b>	<b>OC2 Supported lessons Lessons 4-6</b>	<b>OC3 Self-regulated lessons Lessons 7-9</b>
<b>Stated understandings of TBLT:</b>	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative group/pair work</li> <li>• The three-stage framework</li> </ul>	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners doing the task by themselves.</li> </ul>	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners figuring out what they learned by themselves before being taught.</li> </ul>
<b>Changes in stated understandings and practices of TBLT:</b>	Not stated	<b>Change of understandings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The understanding of tasks become less idealistic. A task did not have to be a big project; it could be a small task like an information-gap.</li> <li>• Tasks did not have to be only group or pair work. It can be individual work.</li> <li>• A task-based lesson could be used with all language skills, not only speaking skills.</li> </ul> <b>Changes of practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the way she could manage tasks more effectively and confidently.</li> </ul>	<b>Change of understandings:</b> Not stated  <b>Changes of practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the way of teaching grammar lessons using tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Factors that influenced the STs' planning and practices of TBLT:</b>	Not stated	Not stated	<b>Facilitative factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and freedom from the cooperating teacher.</li> </ul> <b>Hindering factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of classroom technology</li> </ul>
<b>STs' perceived needs for TBLT</b>	Not stated	Not stated	<b>Recommendations:</b> Teachers need... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to know learners' level of proficiency and so adjust the tasks to suit their level.</li> <li>• technology in classroom.</li> </ul>

<b>CASE STUDY 2: NAN</b>			
<b>RQs</b>	<b>OC1 Independent planning lessons Lessons 1-3</b>	<b>OC2 Supported lessons Lessons 4-6</b>	<b>OC3 Self-regulated lessons Lessons 7-9</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feedback and guidance from experts.</li> <li>• a guidebook for task-based lessons.</li> </ul>
<b>Learners' perception of TBLT:</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learners had positive attitudes towards task-based teaching because it was fun and helped them learn.</li> <li>• Tasks helped them remember what they learned more easily.</li> <li>• They were confused in the beginning but later understood.</li> </ul>	N/A



## CHAPTER 9 CASE STUDY 3: PLOY

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents Case study 3, a descriptive account of Lessons 1 to 9 taught by Ploy. Following this, it discusses Ploy's evolving understandings and practices of TBLT over the three observation cycles.

### 9.2 A profile of Ploy

Ploy was 21 years old at the time of the study. Prior to joining the programme, she had one year of teaching experience as a private tutor teaching English to primary and secondary school learners. In the practicum, she taught a class of 35 learners who were in Mattayom 2 (Equivalent to Year 9 or Grade 8). The learners in her class were between 13-14 years of age. In what follows, I present the observations of Lessons 1 to 3 (cycle 1).

#### 9.2.1 Observation Cycle 1: Independently plan lessons (Lessons 1-3)

Ploy independently planned the lessons as part of regular teaching in this cycle. The observed class normally met three times weekly (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday), for 50 minutes each. Similar to the other STs, her lessons were rescheduled because of a school event so there was a one-week gap between Lessons 1 and 2. The lessons were consecutive and did not relate to each other. The following Table (9.1) presents an overview of Lessons 1 to 3.

Table 9.1 Overview of Lessons 1 to 3

	<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>Lesson 2</b>	<b>Lesson 3</b>
Date	5 June 2017	12 June 2017	15 June 2017
Time	8.30 – 9.20 a.m.	8.30 – 9.20 a.m.	14.20 – 15.10 p.m.
Lesson focus	Vocabulary	Telling time	Conversation

## Lesson 1

Ploy elicited vocabulary about chores from the learners and showed flash cards with pictures of housework (e.g., *mop the floor, wash the dishes, make your bed, and tidy your room*). She then explained each picture to the class. Later, she asked the learners to draw a 3x3-bingo card on paper and write the vocabulary about chores learned previously on the card. She then called out one word at a time and the learners marked the word if it corresponded with what she said. Those who got three words in a row first would yell out “*Bingo*” and win the game.

Ploy explained in the follow-up SR interview that this lesson continued from a previous (unobserved) lesson which was about reading. Thus, the focus was primarily on teaching the vocabulary in that reading text. Ploy mentioned the use of a pre-task activity where she reviewed the vocabulary before the learners performed the main task, a bingo game. Although having mentioned that this bingo game was a task, she was not entirely certain as the following extract demonstrates:

This lesson plan used a bingo game. I made it become a task. I am not sure if it is called a task or not. In the pre-task (phase), I showed the pictures (in the flash cards) and I let the learners guess the words. If they could not guess, I would show them the answers on the other side of the card...then the task is the bingo game.

(Interview 3.1, 5 June 2017)

The observation notes documented that Ploy did not have enough time to do the post-task as the bingo game took most of the class time. This was because the learners spent a lot of time writing on their bingo card and Ploy did not hurry them. As she could not start it if the learners were not ready, there was no time left for her to summarise the lesson.

However, Ploy reported being satisfied with this lesson when seeing that at least the learners showed enthusiasm and asked to play the game again. The learners paid more attention to this lesson when compared to her regular teaching (e.g., lecture-based teaching). She said that when she used an interactive activity or teaching aids, the class was slightly different in terms of their attention in the lesson.

## Lesson 2

Ploy started the lesson by asking the class, “*What time is it?*” and “*From this picture, is time the same in all countries?*” She then briefly explained the topic of time zones and explained how to tell the time in English. In doing so, she used a paper clock face with movable minute and hour hands. She moved the hands on the clock and asked the learners to say the time aloud (e.g., *6.10 = Ten past six or 6.45 = A quarter to seven*). Ploy then divided the class into two big groups. Representatives from each group took turns coming up front to control the clock hands (see Figure 9.1) and the rest of the class would tell the time. The group took turns asking and telling the time until Ploy told them to stop.



Figure 9.1 A learner asking the time

Finally, the learners worked individually on a worksheet responding to the times on the clock. They wrote the answers in the space provided and submitted them to Ploy.

In the follow-up SR interview, Ploy explained that she tried to connect the topic of the lesson to the real world by mentioning how she watched the Football World Cup live on the internet. This was to highlight the concept of different time zones. The observation notes documented that not only the boys were interested in this sport, but that many girls in the class were also football fans, which made it easy for her to gain their attention during the lead-in. However, once she started

teaching the lesson, the learners, especially those at the back, became noisy and did not listen. Ploy stopped talking until they were quiet and asked two learners who did not pay attention to answer her questions. This made the class become quiet for a while.

In the SR interview, Ploy highlighted some key issues in this lesson. For example, she diverted from the original lesson plan. As she came to know more about her learners, Ploy decided to change her teaching plan. Instead of having two learners to perform in front of the class and take turns asking each other questions, she made it a whole class interaction by having some learners come to the front and ask the rest of the class. In this way, she said, the whole class was able to be involved, which was better than just two learners performing and the rest losing attention doing something else.

### **Lesson 3**

In Lesson 3, each learner was provided with a worksheet with a jumbled telephone conversation between two friends making a plan to go to the movies. The learners rearranged the dialogue into the correct order and listened to the recording to check the answers. Next, the learners made a group of three to act out the role-play using the dialogues from the previous activity. Some volunteers performed in front of the class.

In the post-lesson SR interview, I asked Ploy to describe her teaching approach in Lesson 3. Ploy explained that she used a grammar translation for explaining the meaning of the dialogues and a task for teaching vocabulary. She regarded any activities that involved vocabulary teaching such as miming or role-play as tasks. Therefore, this lesson was task-based from her perspective. As she said:

I think when it comes to vocabulary teaching, any activities that activate learners' interactions, even small ones, are all tasks. A miming game or a role-play are all task-based for me.

(Interview 3.3, 15 June 2017)

Ploy expressed her preference to use tasks with vocabulary teaching rather than other skills. When it came to teach reading or grammar lessons, she preferred a grammar translation approach

instead. After teaching this class for some time, Ploy thought that it would be possible to use tasks with them if she could come up with a well-designed and motivating task.

I think it is possible (to use TBLT with this class) but I should make tasks attractive so that these learners will be interested in them. If you want to use a task, it should be perfectly crafted, maybe with the use of teaching aids.

(Interview 3.3, 15 June 2017)

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 1**

In OC1, Ploy revealed her developing understanding of TBLT. Although she reported using some tasks in the lessons, she still expressed her uncertainty as to whether they were tasks or not. Moreover, she tended to associate tasks with a kind of interactive activity such as a bingo, miming games or role-plays, which she preferred to use to teach vocabulary rather than other skills. Ploy also acknowledged the differences between a lesson with and without an activity (task), noting that the learners paid somewhat more attention in the former.

In the next section, I further investigated Ploy's teaching in OC2, which was carried out within three consecutive Lessons (4 to 6) in July 2017.

### **9.2.2 Observation Cycle 2: Supported lessons (Lessons 4 -6)**

#### **Collaborative task-based lesson planning**

Prior to the observation, I met with Ploy to discuss Lesson plans 4 to 6, which would be used in OC2. Ploy's original lesson plans are described in my observation notes below:

Ploy's lesson plans subscribed to TBLT. She explained that because the content of Lessons 4 and 5 involved giving directions such as 'go up/down', 'turn left/right' and the names of places, e.g., 'Chemist's', 'Post office', it would be more interesting to let the learners do the activity rather than only explain the meaning to them. Therefore, she came up with a vocabulary miming and a bingo game, which she believed it was a task.

(Observation notes, 21 June 2017)

Ploy explained that she thought she would not be able to include all the content in one lesson. Therefore, the topic was divided into two separate lessons where Lesson 4 was building towards Lesson 5. In Lesson 4, the learners were provided with vocabulary priming as they played a miming game about words and prepositions of place. Then in Lesson 5, the learners engaged in a kind of input-based task where they followed the teacher's directions on the map. Lesson 6 also involved another set of vocabulary where the learners played a word search game on the topic about the food containers.

During the discussion, Ploy and I paid particular attention to Lessons 4 and 5. In Lesson 4, we both agreed that the learners might find it difficult to mime the words about places, for example, gas station or greengrocer. This vocabulary was not as suitable for miming as action words. For practical reasons, therefore, Ploy decided to change from the miming to a bingo vocabulary game instead as she had previously used it in Lesson 1 and had received positive feedback from the learners. However, based on the problem found in Lesson 1, I suggested she prepare a bingo card for the learners so that they did not have to spend a lot of time making the card themselves. This would leave more time for the other activities. Additionally, I suggested the benefits of providing the learners with more opportunities to focus on meaning and use their own resources to process the input they were exposed to as part of the task. For example, instead of calling out a word or phrase at a time, she could make it into a sentence such as “*My mom takes me to the hospital to see the doctor*” or “*The teacher asks me to go in front of the class.*” I explained that I got this idea from Ta's Lesson 3 when Ta taught vocabulary in the ‘labelling race’ activity. She used the sentences containing a target word in sentences. This helped students to decode the meaning because the words were contextualized for them.

Regarding Lesson 5, I suggested that instead of using the map provided in the book, it would be better to use her own map consisting of real places around the school. In doing so, the learners would see that the activity was relevant to the immediate real world. The final version of Lessons 4 – 6 were used in OC2. Table 9.5 below presents an overview of the consecutive Lessons 4 to 6. Lessons 4 and 5 related to each other but Lesson 6 was a distinct lesson.

Table 9.2 Overview of Lessons 4 to 6

	<b>Lesson 4</b>	<b>Lesson 5</b>	<b>Lesson 6</b>
Date	3 July 2017	5 July 2017	6 July 2017
Time	8.30 – 9.20 a.m.	11.50 a.m. -12.40 p.m.	14.20 – 15.10 p.m.
Lesson focus	Preposition+ vocabulary	Giving directions	Vocabulary

### Lesson 4

To begin with, Ploy wrote some “prepositions of place” on the board (*e.g., in front of, behind, go up/down, opposite*) and asked the learners to look at the vocabulary in the section called, “*Shops and places in neighborhoods*”. Then she showed a flash card illustrating a picture on one side and a word on the other side as shown in Figure 9.2 below (*e.g., greengrocer’s, baker’s, florist’s, mosque, café, temple, bank etc.*). Ploy modelled the pronunciation and the class repeated the vocabulary in unison.



Figure 9.2 Ploy introducing the flashcards to the learners

In pairs, the learners chose the vocabulary learned in the beginning and wrote them on a 4x4-bingo card provided by Ploy. Later, she read out a sentence containing a target word (*e.g., Peter is walking to the school*). Then, the learners marked the word that corresponded with what the teacher said. Those who marked four words in a row yelled “*Bingo*” and won. Finally, the learners individually worked on an exercise about prepositions of place in their workbooks.

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Ploy talked about miming and vocabulary bingo games in a way which suggested that she perceived them as tasks. As she said, the games involved group work and invoked learners' interactions.

I think bingo and miming games are tasks because the learners worked in groups. They performed the actions and interacted with each other. If I follow the lesson plan, it will be a full task-based lesson.

(Interview 3.4, 3 July 2017)

Ploy reported developing a greater understanding of tasks compared to before the practicum. For example, she started to learn more about what she could do in the post-task phase. Initially, she only summarised and finished the lessons. However, after the lesson planning session with the researcher (myself), she learned what she could do in the language focus such as explaining language points occurring in the game or analysing phrases used in the main task. She also mentioned that engaging in real practices such as planning lessons and putting them into practice had broadened her perspectives about TBLT.

Ploy: Now, I started to understand more about TBLT, especially when I planned the lessons and used them right away. It is like I understand more and get broader views

Researcher: Was the meeting on lesson planning helpful?

Ploy: Yes, it was helpful because what I knew before teaching here was like the post-task phase was just briefing the lesson and that was it. But from the meeting I learned that teacher could emphasize more on language focus in the post-task or analysing phrases used in the main task. So, I could revise my lesson plan later. I think the meeting is very helpful.

(Interview 3.4, 3 July 2017)

She further talked about learners' learning in the lesson. She noted that although learners could not be expected to know all the vocabulary, at the very least, they were able to learn and remember the words they chose to write on their bingo card.

I think what the learners got from this lesson was they learned the vocabulary. It is impossible for them to remember all of it; at least, they could remember the words they



wrote on their bingo card. They had to pay attention, for example, how to write or say these words. At least, they got 16 words in this bingo game.

(Interview 3.4, 3 July 2017)

Another important point involved how Ploy started to realise that TBLT helped to diversify her classroom language. She compared a lesson using grammar translation and a task-based approach. In the former, she used limited classroom language such as “*listen to me*” or “*repeat after me*”. However, she saw the TBLT approach as having more variety of language use, such as “*who wrote this word?*” or “*the next word is...*” Ploy felt that, in this way, she could use more classroom language than in traditional teaching. The observation notes also remarked on how the learners were influenced by the expressions she used in the classroom. One male learner sitting at the back of the class talked to his friend nearby by copying Ploy’s utterances, “*Be quiet please*” and “*do your work*”.

Ploy concluded that a successful task implementation depended on how much it motivates the learners. As she said:

I think [this TBLT lesson] worked well. As long as a task can attract the learners, I think, it can be successful. Let’s see what it will be like in the next lesson because it is clearer that the lesson seems to be more task-based when the learners have to come out and perform the task in front of the class.

(Interview 3.4, 3 July 2017)

## **Lesson 5**

Ploy wrote sentences on the board, “*How can I get to the school?*”, “*Go down Sadao Street and the school is on your left.*” She then explained how to ask for and give directions in English (e.g., “*Where is the...? Or “How can I get to...?”*”). She also emphasized the use of prepositions of place (e.g., “*Go down Sadao Street and turn left*”, or “*The pet shop is behind the post office.*” as shown in Figure 9.3 below.

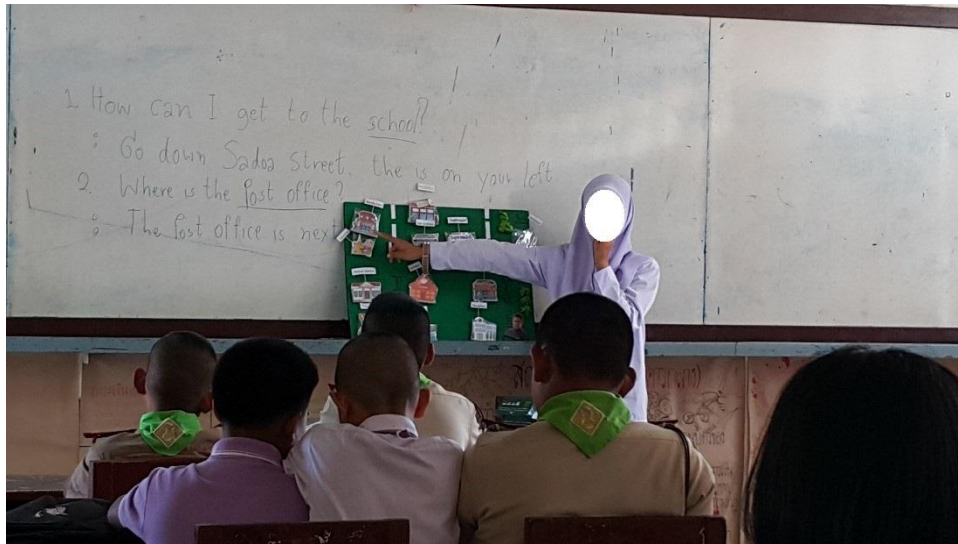


Figure 9.3 Ploy explaining how to give directions in English

Ploy then divided the class into three groups where each group took turns doing the activity, “*Following directions*” in front of the class. Ploy showed a large street map illustrating roads and local landmarks. Then, she asked the group to listen to her directions and follow what she said to locate the place on the map correctly. Each group was given three minutes to play and those who could follow the directions the best won the game (there were ten directions in total).

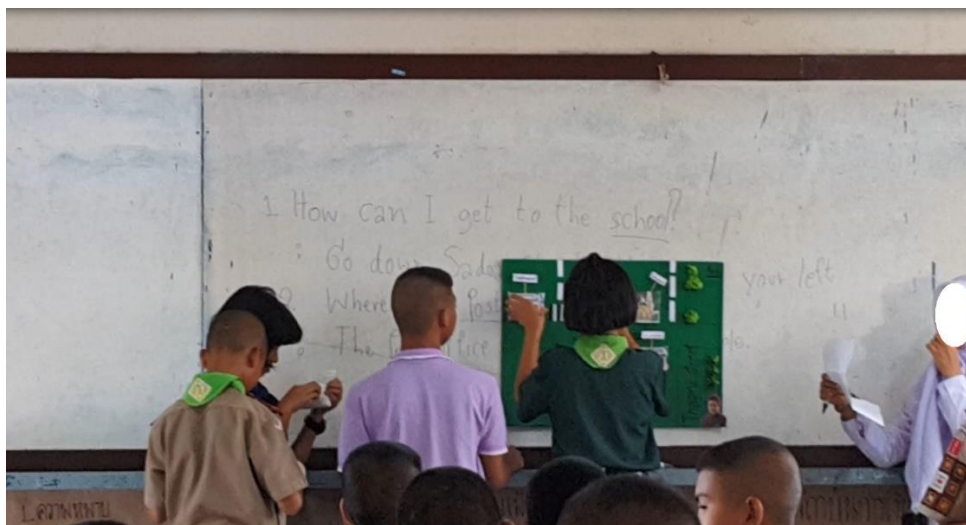


Figure 9.4 The learners doing the task

Finally, the learners worked on a worksheet “*giving directions*” in pairs. They practised writing the directions using the map provided.

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Ploy reported a key problem involving class size. For her, large class meant that managing group participation was problematic. The map was too small for all members in the group to participate. Thus, only some members could do the activity while those who did not participate lost attention and turned to something else. Thus, the lesson did not go as well as she had expected. My observation notes also recorded that two female learners in the second group felt upset as they could not get through the crowd and join the activity. Therefore, they went back to their seat unhappily. Ploy explained later in the interview that she asked every boy in that group to come out because they rarely participated in activities and so she intended to get them involved. However, the girls who always took part in the class activity found the boys doing all the work and then withdrew. Reflecting on this experience, Ploy decided to revise the plan for future use by putting the map on a worksheet and distributing to every learner. They could work as a group, a pair or individually. Doing it this way, every learner would have more chances to participate.

Although there were some problems in the main task as reported above, the observation notes showed that the post-task phase was well conducted. Ploy reviewed the lesson again by asking some learners to give directions to the neighbourhood around the school. The learners demonstrated their ability to use the prepositions correctly with confidence. Ploy speculated that this was probably because it related to the real world. The learners were confident, as they knew the places to which they were giving directions.

I reviewed the lesson in the post-task phase. It was OK because the learners have learned, understood and used what they had learned in the lesson correctly with confidence. I think what made the task worked was because I asked what they have already known. It is in their context relevant to the real world. I also think that they were a bit quiet in this phase.

(Interview 3.5, 5 July 2017)

## **Lesson 6**

Ploy started the lesson by explaining the vocabulary about containers (e.g., *can, bottle, jar, bag, box, carton, packet, loaf, cornflakes, ketchup, sugar, spaghetti*). She then taught the class how to express quantity using a measurement (e.g., *a box of cornflakes, a carton of milk, a bottle of ketchup*). She modelled the pronunciation and the learners repeated the words/phrases in unison.

Next, she asked the learners to pair up and then she distributed a worksheet of a word search puzzle called, “*Word search solution*” (see Figure 9.5). They had to find the words of containers and food hidden in the puzzle. Those who found all 16 words won.

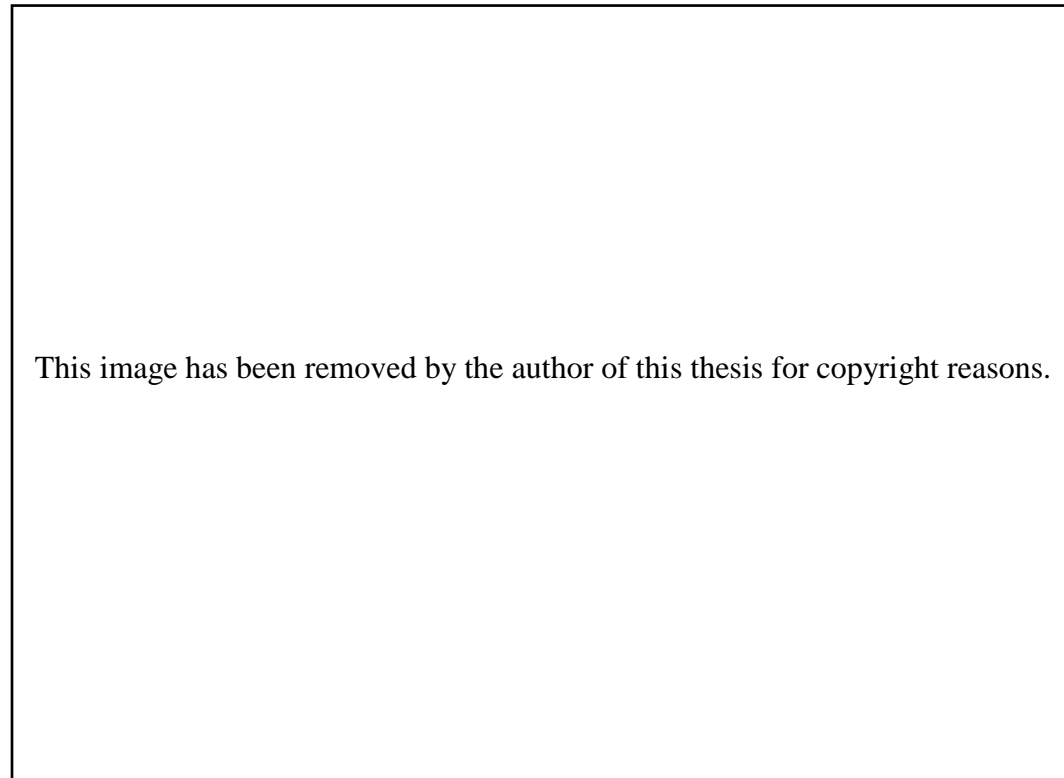


Figure 9.5 The word search puzzle

Finally, Ploy reviewed the vocabulary again by showing the pictures of the food and asked the learners to say the words in English. The observation notes show that the whole class was fully engaged and attentive when they were searching for words in the puzzle. Although some learners were chatting at times, most learners were on task. Ploy noticed that the class appeared to be more quiet than usual so she constantly circulated and encouraged them to help or consult each other.

In her own words, Ploy said, “the class surprisingly became more quiet than usual.” She speculated that this might have had something to do with a prize (some small treats) for the winner and the level of challenge presented by the puzzle. She further reflected that this lesson

could have been more realistic if she had brought real objects to the class. This thought sprang to her mind not long before teaching. Thus, Ploy mentioned that she would do it with another of her classes when she used this lesson plan.

Reflecting on her teaching experience in OC2, Ploy said that she understood more about TBLT after engaging in the process of planning and implementing tasks. She pointed out that what she planned to do in the class might have been better than what actually happened. Moreover, she said tasks should be attractive in order to draw the learners' attention. If not, it could be quite difficult to control the learners. The following extract sheds more light:

I understand more when I actually do it. When planning tasks with you (the researcher), I think I understand them to some extent, but when I actually use them, it is clearer to me and I understand more. Reflecting on my teaching, I think I always planned the lessons better than the actual lesson. If a task-based lesson is not attractive, it will be difficult to control the class. On the contrary, if the task is interesting and has some teaching aids such as a board, things will be opposite. The learners will be more interested.

(Interview 3.6, 6 July 2017)

During the discussion, Ploy talked about one factor that contributed to the implementation of TBLT in her teaching. She was encouraged by her cooperating teacher to try using an innovative approach. Ploy said that:

Ploy: My cooperating teacher gives me 100 % freedom to plan the lessons. She said that I could teach using any new ways. The newer, the better.

R: Do you mean that the cooperating teacher supports innovative teaching?

Ploy: Yes, she even mentioned to teacher A, who constantly posts on Facebook about alternative ways of English language teaching. The cooperating teacher suggested that I could try some of those ideas such as teaching grammar using songs or games.

(Interview 3.6, 6 July 2017)

Moreover, she reflected on the idea that Thai learners need time to adjust to changes. As a result, there might be two possibilities when using a new approach with them. On the one hand, they

might find it exciting and motivating because of its novelty. On the other hand, they might see it as different from what they are accustomed to and resist. Based on her experience, Ploy said that those who were more concerned with explicit grammar instruction would say that they got nothing from doing tasks because grammar was not explicit and so what they actually learned was not so clear. She, therefore, acknowledged the importance of the post-task phase where a language focus would help to cater for those who were more concerned with explicit learning and linguistic features.

When I use TBLT, if I have time, I would place more emphasis on the post-task phase. Without it, the learners might not be clear about what they actually learned. They tend to think that they are playing a game, not learning deliberately. Therefore, the post-task phase is important in that it helps to balance a lesson by making grammar or a language focus explicit.

(Interview 3.6, 6 July 2017)

Finally, Ploy concluded that her understanding of TBLT started developing during the early stages of lesson planning. Later, after using it in class, her understanding became broader and clearer. She started to see what TBLT looked like through planning and implementation.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 2**

In this OC2, Ploy's understanding of TBLT was broadened as a result of engaging in collaborative lesson planning and using tasks in the actual classroom. She associated tasks with group work and games that stimulated learners' interactions such as a bingo or miming. In addition, her understanding of the TBLT framework was broadened when she learned more about the language focus in the post-task phase. She started to see the importance of the language focus phase because it concluded what the learners learned during the tasks by giving explicit attention to language or linguistic features. Although Ploy reported having more understanding of TBLT, she still thought that she needed guidance and feedback while trying to implement TBLT.

To gain a comprehensive perspective on Ploy's teaching, I conducted a group interview with four learners from the observed classes. They volunteered to attend the interview conducted following the observation of Lesson 6.

### **Group interview with the learners**

In the group interview, there were two male and two female learners who were between 13-14 years of age. When asked what they thought about Ploy's lessons during this week (OC2), the learners answered that she mostly used games and activities. The learners could remember the activities well and they talked about them in a way that was similar to Ploy's previous explanation. They also reported the differences between Ploy's teaching and that of their schoolteacher. While Ploy was less strict and tended to use more activities in her teaching, the schoolteacher was stricter and used lecture-based teaching.

R: Were there any differences between the ways the schoolteacher and the student teacher (Ploy) taught?

Ss: Yes.

R: How different

S3: The student teacher is less strict and always uses games. It helps the learners to understand more, but the schoolteacher...

S4: ...always teaches, teaches and teaches.

R: What do you mean by teaching?

S4: The teacher teaches; we listen and take notes.

S2: The schoolteacher is stricter. I feel bored and sometimes sleepy.

Ss: Yeah. Me too.

R: What kind of activity do you like in Ploy's class?

S2 + S3: Speaking activity like a conversation.

Ss: Conversation

R: What language do you use?

Ss: English

R: How was it? Could you do it?

S2: Yes. I could do it.

(Group interview, 7 July 2017)

The interview data shows that there seems to be a discrepancy between the learners' preference and their beliefs about language learning. Although these learners expressed positive attitudes towards activities/tasks as “fun”, “enjoyable” and “easy to understand”, they still believed that the traditional approach such as rote memorization helped them learn. This suggests that despite encountering new learning experiences, their pre-existing beliefs about language learning and familiarity with teaching approaches still prevailed. At this point, these learners viewed tasks as having a supplementary role in learning as shown in the extracts below.

R: Do you have any suggestions for the student teacher in next's year practicum?

S1: I want a teacher who teaches in an enjoyable way and is easy to understand.

S2: Not too strict.

S3: Teaching in a fun way.

S4: I like it in the middle between playing games and studying.

R: Which way helps you learn more? For example, learning through games or activities or using rote learning etc.?

S4: By writing it down and memorising it.

S1: Studying and memorising.

S2: The same. By memorising.

S3: I'm not good at remembering. I'm not really sure.

(Group interview, 7 July 2017)

To further investigate her teaching, I observed the final cycle of Lessons 7 to 9 as will be discussed in the next section.

### **9.2.3 Observation Cycle 3: Self-directed lessons (Lessons 7-9)**

The final cycle of observation began four weeks later when I observed Ploy in her regular teaching from Lessons 7 to 9. In this cycle, Ploy managed and taught the lessons on her own.

Table 9.9 below presents an overview of consecutive Lessons 7 to 9. Lessons 7 and 8 related to each other while Lesson 9 was a distinct lesson.



Table 9.3 Overview of Lessons 7 to 9

	<b>Lesson 7</b>	<b>Lesson 8</b>	<b>Lesson 9</b>
Date	7 August 2017	9 August 2017	10 August 2017
Time	8.30 – 9.20 a.m.	11.50 a.m. – 12.40 p.m.	14.20 – 15.10 p.m.
Lesson focus	Vocabulary	Reading	Vocabulary

### **Lesson 7**

This lesson was about special abilities of superheroes. Ploy began the lesson by explaining the meaning of the vocabulary (*e.g., spin webs, stretch very far, climb walls, see through walls, and fight very well*). She then modelled the pronunciation and the learners repeated the vocabulary in unison. After that, she put the pictures of four superheroes on the board (*Daredevil, Superman, Spider-Man and The Fantastic Four*). Then the learners were divided into four groups to brainstorm special abilities of the superhero they were assigned to work on. The learners could use the phrases taught previously or their own choices. After completion, each group reported their answers by writing them on the board next to the picture of their superhero. Then, Ploy played the audio recording which described the abilities of the characters. The class checked the answers of each group together. Finally, Ploy randomly chose some abilities learned in the beginning and elicited the answers from the class (*e.g., “which superhero had these abilities?”*). She also asked the learners if they knew of any more superheroes and what their abilities were. Many learners called out names of their favourite characters such as *the Incredibles, Wonder Woman and Ironman*.

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Ploy stated that this lesson reflected the TBLT framework. She also pointed out that the learners would remember the words when engaging in the task (where they had to find out about the abilities of their superhero and reported them on the board). From her perspective, learning was realized through the process of engaging in the task itself. In other words, the essence of tasks is learners’ physically performing tasks. This is reflected in the following extract:

I think [this lesson] reflected a task framework. For example, the learners had to do the task by finding out and reporting the ability of the superhero. Engaging with the task helped the learners to learn and remember the language, especially those who wrote on

the board because they had to remember what to write based on a picture such as spider man spinning a web. Then, in the post-task phase, they were able to answer me using the phrases they remembered from their report, such as this character “has a superpower”.

(Interview 3.7, 7 August 2017)

My observations attested to high levels of classroom interaction and noise. This seemed to be partly the result of planned interaction in the task and partly due to chatty learners. Ploy admitted that at this stage, she still could not get some learners to pay attention because they just would not stop talking to each other. However, she was satisfied with those who highly engaged in the task while trying to compete with the other groups. They demonstrated the ability to use the phrases learned in the lesson when she elicited the answers in the post-task phase. To her surprise, the learners used more English during the elicitation and come up with new ideas apart from what she taught them.

During the post-task phase, I elicited some answers from the class. I did not expect that they would use English much but it turned out that they said something like ‘He fights very well and has superpower’. Some even added the new idea such as ‘the ironman has super strength’, which is quite good.

(Interview 3.7, 7 August 2017)

## **Lesson 8**

To begin, Ploy explained the vocabulary from the reading passage called, “*Superheroes*”. She then modelled the pronunciation and the learners repeated the vocabulary in unison. Later, she divided the class into groups where each group had to read the text and answer true-false statements based on the reading. If the statement was wrong, they had to correct it. Each group then shared their answers with the class by writing them on the board. She gave the solutions to the learners and summarised the lesson.

In the post-lesson semi-structured interview, Ploy expressed her lack of confidence in teaching reading using tasks when compared to other skills. This aligned with what she previously said in the interview after Lesson 3 about her tendency to use a translation-based approach with reading lessons. Moreover, the observation notes recorded that there was only one reading lesson among

nine observed lessons. According to Ploy, it was quite difficult to get the learners to read and focus on the text. Consequently, she merely translated the reading to them despite knowing that it was not good teaching practice. However, in this lesson, she reported changes in the way she taught reading by using a task. Refraining from translating the text for the learners in the beginning, Ploy only explained some key vocabulary and asked the learners to work in groups and look for the answers in the passage by themselves first. What they needed to do was track for clues that could help them to answer true or false. She also reported diverting from the original plan:

Originally, I intended to ask some groups to stand up and answer true or false. However, in the actual teaching, I changed to writing the answers on the board instead. So, I drew two columns on the board, one was for true and another was for false. In this way, every group had to be involved.

(Interview 3.8, 9 August 2017)

This change was because Ploy noticed that whenever she asked the learners to report to the class orally, the class would not listen. Therefore, in this lesson, she tried another way.

I used to let them read or answer the question orally but the other learners did not listen. Therefore, when I reflected on what I'd done before, I thought I should try other ways. If every group had to report the answers, they would at least have to focus on their own work.

(Interview 3.8, 9 August 2017)

This lesson revealed a change in Ploy's perspective about factors that influenced successful implementation of TBLT. As stated in Lesson 4, she thought that well-designed tasks were the most important factor. However, after the actual teaching, Ploy now believed that the learners' level of language proficiency had more effect on task implementation. As she explained:

Previously, I used to think that if tasks were interesting and good enough, no matter what, learners would be motivated and want to participate. However, it is not necessarily true because many times when I used the same task with different groups of learners who have different language proficiency, the results were different. When I used a task with class B who has lower proficiency, it turned out that they were not interested, as they could not do it. In this respect, task implementation was not really successful. On the

contrary, when I used a task with learners who were ready for it, the results were much better.

(Interview 3.8, 9 August 2017)

Ploy found that different levels of learner proficiency yielded different levels of participation. Therefore, learners became the first and foremost factor. She further explained two reasons for such change in her perspective. From her perspective, if learners had language proficiency, they would be able to perform the tasks. Similarly, Lai (2015) has also noted that “learners of different proficiency levels demonstrated unbalanced involvement and contributions” (p.14). The second factor then became task design. The extent to which tasks attracted learners’ attention and interest influenced their motivation and participation. Ploy describes this further in the extract below:

When I used a task with class A (an unobserved class whose learners had a high level of proficiency), it worked quite well because they could do the task. I think the most important factor in the success of TBLT is the learner. Another factor is the task. If a task is interesting enough, learners would like to participate in it. When these factors support each other, they can make an ideal task-based classroom.

(Interview 3.8, 9 August 2017)

Therefore, Ploy’s perspective on the two factors has been changed after engaging with tasks in her real teaching practice.

## Lesson 9

Ploy started the lesson by explaining vocabulary about weather and showing flash cards. Each card had a picture on one side and a word on the other side (*e.g., cold, rainy, windy, snowy, cloudy, sunny, hot, warm, dry, wet, foggy, stormy*). She then modelled the pronunciation and the learners repeated the vocabulary in unison. Next, she divided the class into four groups to play a miming game called “guess the word game”. Representatives from each group came to the front of the class to mime the vocabulary learned in the beginning of the lesson (see Figure 9.6). After acting it out, he or she would ask the class, “*How is the weather?*” The other teams would guess what kind of weather s/he implied. Each team was given two minutes for miming. The team who could provide the correct answer first was given a point and those with most points at the end of the game won.



Figure 9.6 The learners miming words

Finally, Ploy showed the cards one more time and the class repeated the vocabulary in unison. She then randomly called on some learners to pronounce the words.

Ploy explained in the follow-up semi-structured interview that this lesson adopted the three-stage framework of pre-task, task cycle and post-task phase. The pre-task phase involved priming key

vocabulary and useful expressions. She reported using pictures and real objects (e.g., an umbrella, a jacket or a sun hat) in the task cycle. As she said, this would help the learners to remember the vocabulary by visualising the words and associating them with real objects. She went on to explain that:

In the task-cycle phase, I think when the learners were miming the words and asking each other, it helped them to remember the words. Apart from seeing the pictures one time, they also got see the real objects. Supposing that we have 100% of memory, seeing the pictures might help the learner gain 15% and possibly up to 20% when they used the real objects. After doing the actions, there might be an additional 80% of memory. This is what I think, but in reality, it might be different.

(Interview 3.9, 10 August 2017)

During the discussion, Ploy reported noticing the learners' ability to relate what they learned in the previous task-based lesson to the new lesson.

I have seen that the learners reused the phrases I taught them in the previous task-based lesson. For example, some learners used phrases from the lesson about chores such as 'walk the dog', 'go shopping' and 'go to the supermarket' in another lesson. I also overheard them used classroom language with their friends such as 'be quiet', 'listen to me' or 'stop talking'.

(Interview 3.9, 10 August 2017)

She therefore concluded that when the learners performed a task, they could remember what they learned through the engagement this entailed.

I think the learners who engaged in the task could remember the vocabulary better than those who did not. It is because they are learning from what they are doing. They might still remember what they did when recalling the task some time later. Although they will not be able to remember every word, some words might be stored in the long-term memory.

(Interview 3.9, 10 August 2017)

Finally, Ploy mentioned that in the future, she would use TBLT to teach particular skills such as vocabulary and conversation because they were easier than reading and grammar.

### **Summary of Observation Cycle 3**

In the final cycle of observation, Ploy talked about TBLT in a way which suggested that her understanding of TBLT had further developed. She reported using the three-stage framework in her lessons. The emphasis was on the main task where the learners were actually engaging and performing tasks. From her perspective, learning was developed through the process of engaging in the task. Moreover, she also reported changes in her practice when she used tasks to teach a reading lesson.

#### **9.2.4 Discussion of Case Study 3: Ploy**

Ploy gradually developed her understanding of TBLT during the process of teaching in the practicum. Although she reported using tasks in the first cycle of observation, she was still uncertain whether the lessons were actually task-based or not. Later, after engaging in the processes of planning and implementing tasks for some time, she reported more understanding of TBLT as evidenced in various interview extracts. Her understanding of tasks and TBLT indicated two key features. First, TBLT comprised the three-stage framework of pre-task, main task and post-task. This feature was mentioned mainly in the interview responses, but also included in her lesson plans. Second, a task involved group work and interactive games or activities that created active participatory learning such as bingo, role-play and miming.

As time passed, Ploy developed her understanding of tasks and TBLT through direct experiences and practices. After engaging in the process of lesson planning and using the lesson plans in the real class, she gradually developed her own understanding of TBLT. As she said, she understood TBLT to some extent while planning a task-based lesson. However, after implementing it in the real class, her understanding was broadened. For example, she reported learning more about the post-task phase, especially the language focus phase. She saw this phase as an opportunity for the learners to attend to language features and so learning would be more explicit, at least to the learners who were more concerned with explicit learning and declarative knowledge. Therefore, a focus on language helped to address a concern over the lack of explicit grammar instruction in

TBLT. In this respect, form-focused instruction helped to make TBLT “a convincing pedagogical model” (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 178), especially in the context where learners are accustomed to explicit grammar instruction and associated such instruction to their learning. As Ploy said in the interview following Lesson 6, without a focus on form in the post-task phase, her learners would feel that she let them play games instead of teaching them. This aligns with McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) in that learners in their study complained about the insufficiency of explicit grammar instruction in the TBLT course they developed. The researchers, therefore, revised the course by making grammar instruction apparent in the introductory unit to help learners and teachers understand and adapt to TBLT.

One result of Ploy’s developed understanding of TBLT was that she found a discrepancy between a task-based lesson plan and actual teaching. Ploy acknowledged that her lesson plans were always better than what actually happened in the classroom. Thus, her reflection suggested that tasks at the level of workplan do not necessarily translate into actual practices (Breen, 1989). Based on the interview and observational data, there were possible factors relating to this mismatch such as time constraints, a large class size and learners’ language proficiency. For example, in Ploy’s case, the class time was sometimes spent on classroom management or other phases at the expense of the post-task phase (e.g., Lesson 1). Therefore, carrying out the post-task phase was not always possible because time did not allow for this. The issue of limited class time to complete all stages in the TBLT cycle has also been found in many studies (e.g., Carless, 2004, 2007; Carless & Gordon, 1997; Lopes, 2004; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Yim, 2009). Moreover, having a large class also challenged task implementation. Given a large group composition, not every member could participate in the task (e.g., “*following directions*” in Lesson 5). Therefore, the expected participation during task performance did not go according to plan. Much research echoes this challenge as a constraint to the adoption of tasks in the classroom (e.g., Carless, 2002, 2007; Chacón, 2012; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Xiongyong & Moses, 2011; Y. E. Zhang, 2007). However, Adams and Newton (2009) pointed out that the issue relating to large class sizes may primarily affect interactive speaking group work as opposed to tasks used with listening, reading or writing skills.



Another related issue involved learners' language proficiency. Ploy regarded learners' language proficiency as the most significant factor that influenced the successful implementation of TBLT. According to Ploy, learners with lower levels of proficiency may have less capacity for doing tasks when compared to the more able ones. They may need more time for task presentation, task performance and language practice, which therefore leaves less time to do other tasks in the lesson plan. No matter how well a task is planned, if learners fail to do it, task implementation will not be successful. Again, this is consistent with other studies that highlight the importance of learners' proficiency in TBLT (Carless, 2002, 2003; Tseng, 2006; Yim, 2009).

Reflecting on her own teaching experiences with TBLT in the practicum, Ploy suggested that a teacher education programme could also emphasize practice-based learning, in addition to learning about theory in teaching methodology courses. This includes providing the learners with practical techniques or resources as a recipe that is ready to be tried out in classrooms. This was similar to Ta's and Nan's perceived needs for hands-on resources. Ploy's suggestions for a teacher education programme therefore related to two key elements: practice-oriented learning and the availability of teaching resources on TBLT. She explained that:

As the programme is already good, I will only talk about what should be added. Apart from learning about teaching theory, which is good, it would be better if we had more chance to put this into practice. I remembered that the teacher in one methodology course showed me a book about how to teach reading or listening. It suggested different games and activities where I can choose. I found it practical for the practicum. Sometimes I had to google in the internet and search on different websites which took quite a lot of time. Moreover, if possible, I also want a course that emphasises teaching specific language skills. For example, a course about teaching vocabulary using a communicative approach such as TBLT. It should introduce different kinds of tasks used to teach vocabulary. Then student teachers plan the lesson and use it to teach real learners something like that. Doing it this way, I feel it is more practical and relevant to the practicum.

(Interview 3.9, 10 August 2017)

Although she reported having more understanding of TBLT, it was not thorough and deep enough from her perspective. This led her to highlight the importance of feedback and guidance.

Without them, she would not know what was missing or what was needed. Therefore, having someone to provide her with feedback was very crucial during the stage of gaining teaching experience and trying to implement TBLT, as the extract below highlights:

I really think that it is always beneficial to have someone to guide me through while teaching with TBLT, like giving feedback. When I am teaching in front of the class, I do not see the whole picture (of my teaching). It is better to receive some feedback and suggestions so that my ideas and understandings will be developed. At this point, my understanding are still not thorough.

(Interview 3.6, 6 July 2017)

### **9.3 Summary**

Overall, Ploy's understanding of TBLT was developed through the guided process of learning to teach and her direct teaching experiences. Apart from developing an understanding of TBLT, she also gained more teaching experience as she taught in the practicum. Table 9.4 below provides a summary of the key findings from Ploy which will be used again in the next chapter to compare with the findings from Ta and Nan.

Table 9.4 A summary of the key research findings from Case Study 3

<b>CASE STUDY 3: PLOY</b>			
<b>RQs</b>	<b>OC1</b> <b>Independent planning lessons</b> <b>Lessons 1-3</b>	<b>OC2</b> <b>Supported lessons</b> <b>Lessons 4-6</b>	<b>OC3</b> <b>Self-regulated lessons</b> <b>Lessons 7-9</b>
<b>Stated understandings of TBLT:</b>	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The three-stage framework.</li> <li>• Interactive games/activities (e.g., miming or a role-play).</li> </ul>	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work and interactive activities (e.g. bingo and miming).</li> </ul>	<b>TBLT involved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The three-stage framework.</li> </ul>
<b>Changes in stated understandings of TBLT:</b>	Not stated	<b>Change of understandings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She developed more understanding of the TBLT framework when learning more about the language focus in the post-task phase.</li> </ul> <b>Changes of practices:</b> Not found	<b>Change of understandings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in perspective about factors that influenced the successful implementation of TBLT.</li> </ul> <b>Changes of practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the way of teaching a reading lesson by using a task.</li> </ul>
<b>Factors that influenced the STs' planning and practices of TBLT:</b>	<b>Facilitative factors:</b> Not stated  <b>Hindering factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time constraints in carrying out all phases.</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitative factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and freedom from the cooperating teacher.</li> <li>• The post-task phase helped to cater for those who were more concerned with explicit learning and linguistic features.</li> </ul> <b>Hindering factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large class size</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitative and hindering factors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner' language proficiency</li> <li>• The design of a task</li> </ul>
<b>STs' perceived needs for TBLT</b>	<b>Recommendations:</b> Teachers need... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to plan tasks that were attractive.</li> </ul>	<b>Recommendations:</b> Teachers need... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tasks that were attractive.</li> </ul>	<b>Recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTE programme should emphasise practice-based learning and provide the learners with more practical techniques.</li> </ul>

<b>CASE STUDY 3: PLOY</b>			
<b>RQs</b>	<b>OC1 Independent planning lessons Lessons 1-3</b>	<b>OC2 Supported lessons Lessons 4-6</b>	<b>OC3 Self-regulated lessons Lessons 7-9</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to allow some time for the learners to adjust to tasks.</li> <li>• guidance and feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teaching resources on TBLT.</li> </ul>
<b>Learners' perception of TBLT:</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners expressed positive attitudes towards activities/tasks as “fun”, “enjoyable” and “easy to understand”.</li> </ul>	N/A

## CHAPTER 10 CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

### 10.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the three case studies reported in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. The purpose of this analysis is to identify and examine common themes across the three cases, as well as differences between them. Cross-case analysis allows important trends to be identified across the dataset, which may not be evident when viewing each case separately. The chapter addresses RQs 2-4:

RQ2. How did the STs' stated understandings of TBLT and their teaching practices change during their teaching in the practicum?

RQ3. What factors did the STs perceive to have influenced their planning for and/or practice of TBLT?

RQ4. How did learners engage in the task-based lessons in the observation cycle 2?

In response to RQ2, the chapter begins by describing the main trends in the way the STs' understandings and practices evolved over the three observation cycles. In order to theoretically frame the complex and dynamic processes of change identified in the data, I draw on Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) framework for understanding the development of learner teachers' cognition, as well as modified version of the framework developed by Yuan and Lee (2014) (see Chapter 6). To provide a comprehensive perspective of their experiences with TBLT, changes in the STs' classroom practices during each observation cycle are also discussed. Secondly, to address RQ3, I examine the factors that the STs perceived to have influenced their implementation of TBLT. Finally, in response to RQ4, I report on the learners' engagement and their perception of the task-based lessons.

Before discussing each research question, it is necessary to determine how the STs employed the textbook in their teaching by analysing the STs's implementation of textbook activities. This finding helps to better understand whether the lesson plans were primarily influenced by the textbooks or were independently planned by the STs. To this end, I analysed the STs's implementation of textbook activities using the three categories proposed by B. T. Nguyen, Newton, and Crabbe (2018). It was found that the STs *retained* the textbook activities unchanged, *adapted* the activity and *created* a new

activity unrelated to the textbook. Table 10.1 summarises their implementation of textbook activities.

Table 10.1 The STs's implementation of textbook activities

STs	Retained	Adapted	Created	Total activities
Ta	16	11	-	27
Nan	7	12	3	22
Ploy	8	12	-	20
Total activities	31	35	3	

All STs, especially Nan and Ploy, adapted the textbook for learner-centred interactive activities. Adapting means, the STs drew on the textbook's content but delivered it in their own ways (see Table 10.2 below). Only one ST (Nan) *created* new activities unrelated to the textbook (see Section 8.2.3, Nan's Lesson 8). Despite a high number of the *retained* activities (31), these activities were used for introducing vocabulary, explaining grammatical structure, and for the learners practising pronunciation drills and doing grammar exercises.

The finding shows that the STs did not strictly follow every section and teaching procedures as prescribed in the textbook. They also adapted the activities and some considered other materials for the classroom. In the interviews, this point was confirmed. For example, Ta reported being told by her cooperating teacher that although the learner's book was the main component of the course, she could also use materials from other sources as long as they met the criteria of the school curriculum standards and grade level indicators. She sometimes used materials from the internet such as the British Council website. Similarly, Ploy mentioned that the textbook sometimes did not align with the objectives of the school curriculum. Thus, when planning the lessons, she supplemented the textbook with ideas from the internet or friends. In the same vein, teaching procedures in Nan's lessons showed a high degree of originality and independence from the prescribed textbook.

Table 10.2 A comparison between a textbook activity and an adapted activity

Textbook's activity	Adapted activity
<p>This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.</p>	<p>Ploy's Lesson plan 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each learner was provided with a worksheet with a jumbled telephone conversation between two friends making a plan to go to the movies. The learners rearranged the dialogue into the correct order and listened to the recording to check the answers.</li> <li>2. The learners made a group of three to act out the role-play using the dialogues from the previous activity. Some volunteers performed in front of the class.</li> </ol>

I now turn to the discussion of research question 2.

### 10.2 Change in the stated understandings and practices of TBLT

This section addresses RQ2:

*How did the STs' stated understandings of TBLT and their teaching practices change during their teaching in the practicum?*

The STs' stated understandings and practices of TBLT were investigated through observations of their teaching followed by stimulated recall interviews and then semi-structured interviews. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the stimulated recall interviews were only conducted during the first cycle of observation. Because of time constraints, all subsequent interviews followed a semi-structured format. Observations and interviews took place during the three-month period from June to August 2017 in three observation cycles (OC1, OC2 and OC3). This longitudinal dataset provided information on how the STs' understandings and practices of TBLT changed over these three months.

In what follows, I summarise and discuss the evolving STs' understandings and practices over the three cycles. Overall, this study found that the STs' understanding and their teaching practices were growing and positively changed during their teaching practicum.

The findings show that all three STs went through a developmental process of belief development and teaching practices. OC1 witnessed limited uptake of TBLT in the Year 4 teacher education programme as evidenced by their teaching practices that had few interactive activities and were often teacher-centred (six out of twelve lessons). Moreover, there was little reference to tasks or TBLT in their explanation of their Lessons 1 to 3. These limited understandings and practices in the beginning developed during the collaborative lesson planning in OC2. All STs showed evidence of broader understandings of TBLT as evidenced by a number of main aspects of their explanation of their lessons that reflect TBLT. Moreover, there were positive changes in their teaching practices in terms of their adaptation to TBLT. There were, however, differences between the STs. While Ploy managed task implementation with ease, Ta and Nan, even with expert guidance, still struggled with successfully implementing task-based lessons until the last lesson. In the independent lesson planning in OC3, all nine lessons taught by three STs involved interactive learner-centred activities. This was the evidence of potential for developing more task-based practices in OC3. Their understanding that had been developed in the previous cycles was confirmed and strengthened in the final cycle.

### **10.2.1 Observation cycle 1 (Baseline observation and Lessons 1-3)**

#### **The STs' understandings and practices of TBLT in OC1**

The STs' understandings and classroom practices of TBLT in the baseline observation were treated as the starting point for identifying emerging understandings and practices. These initial understandings and practices of TBLT were gained from classroom observations carried out two weeks before OC1. This baseline data showed that all STs adopted a strongly teacher-centred approach that involved many teacher-controlled activities such as the teacher explaining and writing grammatical rules on the board and the learners taking notes; teacher demonstration of pronunciation and learners' choral repetition; and teacher translating and writing vocabulary on the board for the learners to copy. Much emphasis was on grammar exercises in workbooks. Moreover, when



explaining their lessons in the interviews, none of the STs referred to tasks or TBLT. Therefore, there was little evidence that principles of TBLT in the TBLT module of the Year 4 programme informed their classroom practice. Notably, there was an almost complete absence of authentic meaningful communication in the classes in English. This result was understandable in a sense because these STs had only just begun their practicum and their prime concerns were on classroom management and discipline. Kagan (1992) calls this process “progression in attention” (p.144). She argues that initially, novice teachers tends to focus on classroom management and organisation. Once these priorities have been established or became automated, teachers’ attention expands to include a focus on specific aspects of teaching and learner learning outcomes.

Before turning to the OC1 findings, it is worth mentioning that the post-observation SR interviews focused on having the STs describe the lesson they had taught on that day, and so whatever understandings of TBLT were evident in the interviews were directly related to reflections on actual classroom teaching events. Importantly, because the purpose of OC1 was to investigate the extent to which the TBLT module in the Year 4 programme influenced the STs’ teaching practices and cognition, I deliberately avoided referring to TBLT in the SR interviews unless it was initiated by a ST.

Turning now to OC1, the interview data revealed that the STs’ understanding of TBLT was rather superficial as evidenced by their limited reference to TBLT. The observation data showed that six out of twelve lessons in this cycle had no interactive activities and were mostly teacher-centred. Another six lessons showed some potential for developing more task-based practices in the form of group-based or interactive activities. In keeping with this, later interviews showed some “addition” (Cabaroglu & Robert, 2000) in the belief development process when the STs’ understanding of TBLT was evident as they reflected on their teaching practices. These modest shifts in practice and cognition are summarised in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3 The emerging understandings and practices of TBLT in three consecutive lessons and post-lesson interviews in OC1

OC1		Baseline observation	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
Ta	Understanding	NEF	NEF	NEF	NEF
	Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Explicit grammar instruction</li> <li>•Individual grammar exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Explicit grammar instruction</li> <li>•Individual grammar exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners repeating words/sentences in unison</li> <li>•Scripted role-play in pairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interactive group work (labelling race) **</li> <li>•Individual exercise</li> </ul>
Nan	Understanding	NEF	NEF	NEF	•TBLT involves three stages and a pair or group work format ( <b>Addition</b> )
	Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Explicit grammar instruction</li> <li>•Grammar exercise</li> </ul>	•Group-based crosswords **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Explicit grammar instruction</li> <li>•Grammar exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher's explanation</li> <li>•Interactive groupwork (A question-answer game) **</li> </ul>
Ploy	Understanding	NEF	•TBLT involves three stages ( <b>Addition</b> )	NEF	•TBLT involves interactive games or activities ( <b>Addition</b> )
	Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher's modelling of pronunciation</li> <li>• Learners repeating sentences in unison</li> </ul>	•Teacher-whole class interactive activity (Bingo)**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher's explanation</li> <li>•Learner-class interaction (Telling time) **</li> <li>•Individual exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interactive pair work (Rearranging jumbled telephone conversation) **</li> <li>•Scripted role-play in groups</li> </ul>

Note. \* NEF = No evidence forthcoming, \*\* the proximity to TBLT

Overall, Ellis's (2009) four key criteria introduced on the TBLT module in the Year 4 programme were never mentioned in the OC1 interviews by any of the STs. Nan and Ploy did refer to three aspects of TBLT when explaining their lessons but Ta did not talk about tasks or TBLT at all. The three aspects involves the three- stage framework, pair or group works and interactive games or activities.

Nan referred to TBLT in the last observed lesson of this cycle (Lesson 3) because her lesson plan used the three-stage design of TBLT. She reflected on TBLT involving the three-stage framework and a pair or group work format. Similarly, in planning her first lesson, Ploy also referred to the three-stage framework but only mentioned the pre-task and the main task phase. Observation data showed that class time was mostly spent on

the main task stage and left no time for her to complete the post-task. This explained why Ploy did not refer to the post-task phase during the follow-up interview. In Lesson 3, Ploy said that interactive games or activities such as role-plays or miming games were tasks. Apart from associating tasks with interaction, she did not provide further explanation. Although Ploy referred to TBLT early in the interview after the first lesson and then again in the interview after the last lesson, both references were rather limited. Ploy was also aware of her shallow understanding of TBLT when she said that she was still uncertain about TBLT at this point. This indicates that the STs' understandings of TBLT in OC1 were rather limited, especially Ta who showed no evidence of TBLT in her reflections during the interviews. Also, the emerging understandings of Nan and Ploy in this cycle may need to be interpreted with caution because of the "observer's paradox" (Labov, 1972); knowing of my interest in TBLT may have caused them to find an opportunity to mention it.

The OC1 observation data showed that six out of twelve observed lessons taught by the STs were traditionally teacher-centred focusing on linguistic features and accuracy (e.g., explicit grammar instruction, grammar exercises, learners repeating words/sentences in unison and teacher's modelling of pronunciation). However, another six lessons included some interactive activities. More positively, when compared to the baseline observation, these six lessons showed a move towards a more learner-centred approach involving group-based and interactive activities in order to improve learner engagement. However, these changes had no consistent pattern. For example, while Ta adopted a more learner-focused approach in the last lesson of OC1, Nan, on the other hand, shifted back and forth between learner- and teacher-centredness over the three consecutive lessons. Ploy showed some elements of learner-centredness in all three lessons.

Two key factors were identified that appeared to account for these changes. The first was the nature of the lesson sequence (e.g., how a lesson was building toward a subsequent one or arising out of a previous lesson) and the second factor involved reflective practices that triggered change in the STs' awareness during the follow-up interviews. They became aware of aspects of their practice as a result of talking about it. While changes in Ploy's and Nan's classroom practices appeared to be impacted by both factors, Ta's teaching was mainly influenced by the latter.

For Ploy, the observed lessons were consecutive and unrelated to each other, and yet all showed elements of learner-centredness. They included interactive games or activities that entailed a variety of types of classroom participation such as teacher-class, learner-class, small group, pair work and individual work. As Lesson 1 functioned as a language practice stage of the previous (unobserved) reading lesson, Ploy used a bingo game for vocabulary practice. As indicated in the post-Lesson 1 interview, she became aware of how the learners reacted positively to this change compared to her regular lecture-based teaching. They showed more enthusiasm and paid attention to learning. Thus, she continued using interactive practices in the subsequent lesson. In Lesson 2, she diverted from her original plan and used learner-class interaction in the “telling time” activity. Instead of having two learners take turns asking each other questions, she asked some learners to come to the front and asked the whole class. In this way, the whole class became more involved in the activity. Ploy again adopted an interactive activity in Lesson 3 because the lesson content involved telephone conversations which required interactive pair work. Among the three STs, her understandings and classroom practices most reflected a learner-centred approach, and as such, showed some alignment to TBLT.

The observation data also showed evidence of changes in Nan’s practices when she used a collaborative crossword game in Lesson 1 to prepare the learners for a grammar point in Lesson 2. She reflected on the enjoyment and cooperation that had occurred when she used a crossword with learners in another class, and therefore made the decision not to use the textbook and use the crossword instead. This positive experience led Nan, in Lesson 3, to again use interactive group work in a question-and-answer game.

For Ta, the process of change was a little slower. It was only in the last lesson of OC1, after becoming aware of the learners’ lack of attention in the previous lessons that she moved to a more interactive type of lesson. In Lessons 1 and 2, Ta’s teaching had predominantly focused on accuracy and had involved grammar work and mechanical drilling. Most of the activities were teacher-initiated, focusing more on transmitting knowledge with the learners passively engaged in learning. Although there were some learner interactions in a role-play, they were highly controlled, as the learners only practised pre-specified language forms. However, after reflecting on the learners’ lack

of attention, Ta adopted a less teacher-fronted approach in Lesson 3 and used teaching aids in an interactive “labelling race” activity.

Overall, the analysis of the OC1 data showed little uptake of TBLT from the Year 4 teacher education programme informing their understandings and teaching practices. This is evidenced by half of the observed lessons in OC1 being traditionally teacher-centred focusing on grammar and accuracy. There was also little reference to tasks or TBLT in the explanation of their lessons. However, such limited understandings and practices must be interpreted with caution because “the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence” (Bryan, 1995). These novice teachers were teaching with a particular set of priorities, notably, focusing on completing day-to-day teaching, maintaining discipline and thinking about what worked well in the classroom. They were still in the initial stage of adjusting and readjusting themselves to classroom realities. For example, Ta appeared to prioritize other pressing issues such as maintaining discipline and motivating the learners in the class. Similarly, one of Ploy’s prime concerns was keeping the learners attentive and learning due to the disorderly nature of this class. This reflects East’s (2018) statement about teachers’ concerns with practical teaching matters rather than applying theory they are taught about.

...debates may rage among theorists and researchers about what exactly constitutes and what does not constitute a task. Teachers are more likely to be concerned about what works in their classrooms (p.43).

Overall, although these STs made limited reference to TBLT in the interviews, some of their practices showed proximity to TBLT. These included characteristics of learner-centred teaching practices such as cooperative learning, and active roles played by the learners. A crucial factor that may have helped to shift these STs’ practices was the awareness engendered by having to reflect on their teaching during the post-lesson interviews. Not surprisingly, perhaps, opportunities for structured reflection can change a teacher’s cognition and practice (e.g., S. Borg, 2011; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Woods & Çakır, 2011; Yuan & Lee, 2014). For example, Phipps and Borg (2009) found that post-lesson discussion helped raise teacher’s awareness of the tension between beliefs and practices and consequently led to change in her classroom practices. In the same vein, teachers in Yuan and Lee’s (2014) study actively examined their classroom practices in reflective practices with mentors. They critically reflected on their teaching problems

and became “agentive and reflective users and producers of theory in their own practice” (p.10).

Notwithstanding the limited understandings and practices of TBLT in OC1, changes in the STs’ practices showed some potential for developing more task-based practices, notably through an awareness that learner-centred activities led to better engagement in lessons. The understandings and practices that emerged in this cycle were also a useful basis for comparison with the subsequent observation cycles 2 and 3 as presented below.

### 10.2.2 Observation cycle 2 (Lessons 4-6)

#### The STs’ understandings and practices of TBLT in OC2

OC2 involved me working collaboratively with the STs on lesson planning. As summarised in Table 10.4 below, the OC2 data revealed evidence of broader understandings of TBLT emerging through this collaborative lesson planning process. The STs’ classroom practices allowed them to be more confident in using tasks over the three consecutive lessons.

Table 10.4 The emerging understandings and practices of TBLT in three consecutive lessons and post-lesson interviews in OC2

OC2		Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
Ta	Understanding	TBLT involves: •A pair or group work format. <b>(Addition)</b> •A concept of learning by doing. <b>(Addition)</b>	NEF	•Teacher’ roles in a task-based lesson is facilitator. <b>(Modification)</b>  TBLT involves: •Self-directed learning. <b>(Addition)</b> •A concept of learning by doing. <b>(Confirmation)</b> •Real-life process of language use. <b>(Addition)</b>
	Practice	Ta was nervous when employing tasks. She forgot the order of teaching sequences and got confused while giving instructions.	Ta fell back to the translation approach because she had not been able to finish making flashcards for a task. She was more relaxed when teaching.	Ta gained more confidence and improvement and appeared to be more skilful while delivering the lesson.
Nan	Understanding	•TBLT involves a concept of learning by doing. <b>(Addition)</b>	•Tasks do not need to be a big project; just a small information-gap can also be a task.	•Task also involves individual work, not always necessarily group or pair work. <b>(Elaboration)</b>

OC2		Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
			(Elaboration)	•TBLT can be used to teach all language skills, not only speaking skills. (Elaboration)
	Practice	Nan was frustrated and struggled with explaining an information-gap task.	Nan looked more comfortable because the activity was simpler (matching sentences).	Nan became highly positive and confident in her teaching because of a high level of learner cooperation and engagement.
Ploy	Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•TBLT involves group work and interactive activities.</li> </ul> <b>(Addition +confirmation)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•More understanding about a language focus in the post-task phase (i.e. explaining linguistics points or analysing phrases).</li> </ul> <b>(Elaboration)</b>	NEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Post-task phase makes grammar/linguistic forms explicit.</li> </ul> <b>(Confirmation)</b>
	Practice	Throughout OC2, Ploy continued to teach interactively and learner centred. She appeared familiar with and well adapted to task-based teaching in this cycle.		

Note. \* NEF = No evidence forthcoming

The purpose of this cycle was different from the other two cycles in that it intended to investigate the STs' experiences when they were guided to teach with tasks. This included how they developed their understandings and taught in the task-based lessons. During the collaborative lesson planning, the STs showed their commitment and acceptance of teaching with tasks and were generally open to my suggestions. They were willing to try new practices and revise their lesson plans accordingly, no doubt because they lacked experience and had limited understanding of TBLT and so welcomed any help with their teaching. The interview data supported this claim as the STs said that the main thing they wanted during the early stage of the practicum was guidance on lesson planning.

It was observed that Ta and Nan similarly started their first task-based lesson in OC2 with nervousness and frustration. For example, in Lesson 4, Ta seemed nervous when employing tasks for the very first time. She forgot the order of teaching sequences and became confused while giving instructions and helping the learners to form groups, which turned the class into chaos. The follow-up interview clarified this issue when she admitted that she was excited and afraid of making mistakes. She also reported being worried if the learners would understand the instructions because the tasks she used

involved many stages. Clearly, teaching this first task-based lesson was not easy for Ta. In Lesson 5, Ta changed her lesson plan the night before teaching as she had not been able to finish making flashcards (see Ta's Lesson 5). Consequently, she fell back on the translation approach. Ta's reflection in the post-Lesson 5 interview suggests that her perception that tasks involving elaborated resources demotivated her implementation of the task-based lesson. However, after the feedback session in the post-Lesson 5 interview, Ta's confidence and improvement were noticeable in Lesson 6. Here, she was well-prepared and worked through the teaching steps accurately and smoothly. Moreover, she managed to complete all three phases within the class time. Possibly, this change in her teaching might stem from how she had the opportunity to reflect on her practices and then receive moral support and encouragement from me, which could contribute to the development of her awareness and confidence. Over the three lessons, Ta was becoming more confident and competent in delivering a task-based lesson until the last lesson.

Nan was also frustrated in the first task-based lesson (Lesson 4) in OC2, especially during the information-gap task. My observation notes recorded that Nan struggled with explaining the task in front of the class. She often paused and rephrased while speaking. In Lesson 5, Nan looked more comfortable in the class, perhaps because the activity was simpler than the previous one (matching sentences). In Lesson 6, which involved a listen-and-do task which included a competitive element, there was a high level of learner cooperation and engagement. The observation and interview data, therefore, suggest that Nan become much more positive and confident in and about her teaching at this point. The findings from Ta and Nan's teaching practices suggest that even with expert guidance on the lesson planning, they still struggled with successfully implementing task-based lessons for the first time. Clearly, the task-based lesson plans did not automatically lead to successful implementation.

In contrast to the other two STs, the observation data showed that Ploy managed task implementation with ease although there was some issue with a large class size. She did not report or was not observed being nervous when adopting tasks in OC2. Overall, she appeared familiar with and well adapted to task-based teaching. As mentioned in Chapter 8, apart from my collaborative lesson planning support, she also reported being encouraged by her cooperating teacher to try out new means of teaching. This condition



positively enhanced Ploy's confidence and willingness to make the effort to use new practices with her learners.

Overall, across the three STs, the understandings of TBLT that emerged in OC1 were added to and enlarged in OC2. This is, of course, not surprising, as in OC2, I collaborated with them to design task-based lessons. The process of change in their understandings included addition, modification, elaboration, and confirmation. All three STs underwent the same belief change process of "addition" (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). For example, Ta reported that before the practicum, she always associated tasks with a form of collaborative learning where the learners were put into pairs or groups. However, in OC2 (Lesson 4), she developed a new understanding that a task was also about allowing learners to "learn by doing" or "make sense of their own learning" as complementary to being taught. Although Ta did not explicitly explain the source of this shifting understanding, it is likely that it resulted from the professional support she received in OC2 and the post-lesson interviews where she had opportunities to reflect on her lessons.

Another important process of change found in both Ta and Nan was "modification" (Yuan & Lee, 2014). For example, the observation and interview data revealed a shift in Ta's perspective and practice concerning the teacher's role in lessons over OC2. In lesson 4, Ta tended to exert too much control over forming groups in a jigsaw task. Later, in the interview following Lesson 4, she re-examined her role after reflecting on her learners' ability to direct their own learning independent of her assistance. This perspective became evident when she reported in relation to Lesson 6 that "task-based teaching involves self-directed learning where the teacher lets the learners work on their own as much as possible. The teacher's role is just to support them." We can see that her understanding of a teacher's roles had enlarged to include facilitator or supporter roles that involved less control. Later, the interview following Lesson 9 confirmed this point when she talked about change in her practice:

I monitor each group to see if they can do the work or not. Previously, after giving the instructions, I just watched them from the distance, in front of the class. I did not monitor the groups individually.

It is likely that this realization was influenced by her direct teaching experience in the class together with reflective practices during the post-lesson interviews.

Another important change process found in this cycle was “elaboration”. This process took place when the STs “refined their existing beliefs so that they elaborate relevant knowledge and connect with new input” (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000, p.395). Nan and Ploy both experienced this change. Nan’s understanding of TBLT expanded in the last two observed lessons of this cycle. In Lesson 5, she redefined the concept of a task from being a big language project to something simple and small such as an information-gap task. She reported that this shift happened through being encouraged to discuss and talk about TBLT in these planning sessions. She started to get some ideas that TBLT was not as difficult as she had thought. Similarly, in Lesson 6, she also reported realizing that a task could also be performed individually and did not always have to involve group or pair work. She also realized that a task-based lesson could be used with all language skills, not only speaking (see Nan’s Lesson 6).

As she reported, these new understandings emerged during the lesson planning and as a result of self-discovery when she was exposed to examples of task-based lessons on the internet. This self-learning helped her to modify and reconstruct her conceptualisation of TBLT.

Ploy went through a similar change process starting with addition in cycle 1 and then elaboration and confirmation in this cycle. In Ploy’s case, the process of elaboration and confirmation were focused on a broader understanding of the post-task phase after learning more about a language focus in Lesson 4 (elaboration). This understanding was then strengthened through her personal experience (confirmation). In Lesson 6, she reported realizing the importance of the language focus that could be used to cater for the learners who were not familiar with TBLT and more concerned with explicit learning and linguistic features.

Taken together, the findings showed how the STs’ understanding of TBLT that had emerged in OC1 were added to and enlarged in OC2. All STs showed evidence of broader understandings of TBLT in OC2 although these understandings were of quite different aspects of TBLT for each ST. This, of course, is hardly surprising since in OC2, I played a hands-on role in guiding them and scaffolding task-based lesson planning including providing opportunity for reflective practices in the follow-up interviews. These practices provided rich opportunities for the STs to articulate their thoughts, which contributed to the development of their understandings and new

practices. Furthermore, the guided processes also fostered the STs' confidence while they were implementing tasks in the real classroom. As Ta said, "I really want support like what I have now... without guidance, I will just teach in my own way based on what I know, just the basic knowledge of TBLT, which I am not sure about." Similarly, Ploy mentioned that, "It is always beneficial to have someone to guide me through while using TBLT, like giving feedback... It is better to receive some reflections and suggestions so that my ideas and understandings will be developed." The guided processes mentioned here align with what Van den Branden (2016) advocated because it is "the kind of coaching that takes place on the work floor (p. 175)" where teachers' interests and questions are taken into account and alternate between action and reflection.

In sum, the development of STs' understandings and practices in this cycle suggest their progression and a positive uptake of TBLT. Through accumulated experiences and guidance over three consecutive lessons, the STs, especially Ta and Nan, became less worried and showed more confidence in their teaching. New understandings emerged and grew. The next issue concerns whether these positive changes were able to be sustained when I was not helping with the lesson planning process. A further investigation was therefore conducted in the final observation cycle four weeks later where the STs taught without my guidance.

### **10.2.3 Observation cycle 3 (Lessons 7-9)**

#### **The STs' understandings and practices of TBLT in OC3**

The data analysis in this cycle focused on how the STs' understandings and practices in OC3 changed when compared to OC1 and OC2. Overall, the data showed that when they independently planned and delivered their lessons in OC3, a few new understandings of TBLT emerged along with some changes in their classroom practice that reflected a growing comfort with more learner-centred teaching. The OC3 data is summarised in Table 10.5 below.

Table 10.5 The emerging understandings and practices of TBLT in three consecutive lessons and post-lesson interviews in OC3

OC3		Lesson 7	Lesson 8	Lesson 9
Ta	Understanding	NEF	•TBLT involves three-stage framework <b>(Addition)</b>	TBLT involves: •Learner-led discovery (as in a focused task) <b>(Confirmation)</b> •Tasks do not always need many teaching aids. <b>(Confirmation)</b>
	Practice	•Group-based reading and reporting ** •Individual reading exercise **	•Vocabulary elicitation** •Interactive group work ** •Explicit grammar instruction	•Consciousness-raising (focused task) ** •Explicit grammar instruction •Grammar exercise
Nan	Understanding	NEF	•TBLT involves learner-led discovery <b>(Addition)</b>	NEF
	Practice	•Group-based reading comprehension ** •Explicit grammar instruction	•Explicit grammar instruction •Verb tense card game** •Grammar exercise	•Explicit grammar instruction •Individual grammar practice •Group-based grammar practice •Learner- class interaction grammar practice
Ploy	Understanding	•TBLT involves three-stage framework <b>(Confirmation)</b>	NEF	•TBLT involves three-stage framework <b>(Confirmation)</b>
	Practice	• repeating the words in unison •Interactive group work (brainstorming) ** • Teacher-class elicitation **	• repeating the words in unison •Interactive group work (answering true-false statements) **	• repeating the words in unison •Interactive group work (miming game) **

Note. \* NEF = No evidence forthcoming, \*\* The proximity to TBLT

I will begin by summarising the belief development process for the three teachers across OC3, and then summarizing trends in their teaching practices.

As shown in Table 10.3, the belief development process revealed in this cycle was mostly “confirmation” (Cabaroğlu & Roberts, 2000) as some of the understandings reported in the previous cycles were also found here. For example, Ploy’s understanding about the three-stage framework emerged in OC1 and continued through OC2 and OC3. Given that more than half of the belief change processes in this cycle were confirmation, it suggests that when the STs planned their own task-based lessons independently, they drew on the understanding that had been developed in the previous cycles. Their existing understandings were, therefore, confirmed and strengthened.

However, evidence of growing understanding (i.e., addition) was found in Ta's and Nan's belief change process. This implied that their understanding of TBLT still had potential to grow in this final cycle.

I now turn to the STs' practices. All nine lessons taught by the three STs involved interactive learner-centred activities. Of the three teachers, Ploy was unique in that her lessons from the beginning were consistently learner-centred and interactive. In OC3, she started all three lessons by explaining target vocabulary and the learners repeated the vocabulary in unison. Then, the learners got to do different types of interactive group work that involved, for example, brainstorming special abilities of the superhero in Lesson 7, collaboratively answering true-false questions in Lesson 8 and miming vocabulary about weather in Lesson 9. This pattern was carried over from OC1. As discussed in Section 10.2.1, two factors that may account for Ploy's interactive learner-centred teaching practices involve the nature of the lesson sequence (e.g., how a lesson was building toward a subsequent one or arising out of a previous lesson) and reflective practices. In addition to these was the support from her cooperating teacher to innovate in her teaching. These factors may account for her interactively oriented teaching practices.

In contrast, Ta and Nan who had adopted a less strongly learner-centred approach in OC1 showed some evidence of changes in their practices in OC3. These changes were more aligned to task-based practice. For example, Ta's teaching reflected the principle of TBLT that advocated for a focus on form at the end of a teaching sequence (e.g., D. Willis & Willis, 2007). For example, in Lesson 8, Ta explained grammar points after the learners had finished rearranging the dialogue. In Lesson 9, she let the learners do the focused task at the beginning before explaining the grammar rules to the learners. In addition, her teaching started using more interactive activities which were different from OC1 where the activities were mostly teacher-initiated and the learners passively listened to her.

In the same vein, the observation data also showed that Nan developed alternative approaches to grammar teaching which were different from the grammar lessons in OC1 that had mainly involved the transmission of content. In this cycle, grammar was taught in more creative and meaningful ways such as in Lesson 7 when Nan asked the groups to read the text and answer the questions that followed before she drew their attention to

the target grammar in the reading. Also, in Lesson 8 she adapted a card game to teach verb tenses in the simple past. In Lesson 9, she used different patterns of participatory structure for the grammar practices starting from the learners working individually on the grammar exercise, then in groups and finally working together as the whole class. All lessons engaged the learners in active, collaborative learning.

Overall, findings from OC3 indicated that some teaching practices aligned with more learner-centred teaching and suggested potential for developing more task-based practices. It was also found that when the STs directed their own lesson planning, fewer new understandings of TBLT emerged. Instead, the prior understandings were affirmed and strengthened. This is not surprising as all three STs were still at the novice stage of learning to teach with TBLT. They engaged in the processes of fine-tuning and trying out new practices, which required time and effort. Literature on teacher professional development indicates that novice teachers develop knowledge and expertise through years of experiences (Berliner, 1988; Kagan, 1992). The findings in OC3, therefore, reflect a point made by Van den Branden (2016) that implementing TBLT is a complex skill, and that, “[A] teacher cannot be expected to [implement TBLT] independently, automatically, and immediately” (p.175). As he put it:

...for teachers, the implementation of TBLT is a gradual process of learning, which needs to go through repeated cycles of trying out, reflecting, revising, and trying out again, to allow the teachers to gain confidence and develop the professional expertise that is needed to raise the learning potential of task-based work (p.175).

Based on empirical research, he further suggests that teacher training programmes should also allow teacher enough time to develop the required professional expertise.

To conclude, the STs’ understandings and practices of TBLT across the three observation cycles are summarised in Table 10.6 below.

Table 10.6 A summary of the STs' understandings and practices of TBLT in OC1 – OC3

	<b>OC1</b>	<b>OC2</b>	<b>OC3</b>
Understandings	Limited identification of the principles of TBLT informing their understandings.	A wide range of understanding emerged. All showed the evidence of broader understandings of TBLT.	Fewer new understanding of TBLT. Their understanding developed in a gradual process.
Practices	Little evidence of the implementation of authentic and meaningful communication.  However, there was some evidence of practices suggesting proximity to task-based practices.	Positive changes in their teaching practices in terms of their adaptation to TBLT.	The STs' teaching practices were more open to new practices and focused on the learners' engagement.  One ST's practice remained consistently learner-centred and interactive from OC1 to OC3.

In response to RQ3, this study found that the STs' understandings and their teaching practices grew and changed positively during their teaching practicum. Their understandings started as limited, then became broader and deeper when they were professionally supported. Four weeks later, after the STs were left to their own devices, the existing understandings were confirmed and strengthened. This reflects Freeman's (1989, p. 38) notion which posits that "change is not necessarily immediate or complete. Indeed, some changes occur over time, with the collaborator serving only to initiate the process." Furthermore, their classroom practices also changed from little alignment with the principles of TBLT in the beginning to new practices that reflected a greater proximity to task-based practices in the subsequent cycles.

Another important aspect of change involved shifting from an idealistic to a more practical perspective on TBLT. This is an important issue for novice teachers when they are introduced to TBLT as an innovation. Because of the novelty of TBLT and a lack of

task familiarity, STs tended to overestimate the difficulty of using tasks and underestimate their ability to adopt them (Calvert & Sheen, 2015; Carless, 2002; Chen & Wright, 2017; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Luo & Xing, 2015). Addressing this issue, this study found that when the STs had opportunities to actively engage in using TBLT in their classrooms, they no longer saw it as an unrealistic approach. During the processes of learning to implement TBLT (e.g., experimenting, reflecting and adapting tasks), the STs in this study moved away from their former assumptions and began to embrace a new idea that TBLT was practical in their teaching context. This finding accords with Van den Branden's (2016) point that repeated practice along with interactional support and guidance can help teachers to overcome the doubts and concerns during the first stage of TBLT implementation. To promote teachers' commitment to an educational innovation, teacher should perceive it as practically doable (Lortie, 1975; Van den Branden, 2009) and actively engage in using it in their classrooms (D. P. Crandall, 1983).

In conclusion, the trajectory of learning to teach with TBLT by the STs is a gradual and ongoing developmental process. The findings from the three cycles suggest that the TBLT module in the teacher education programme had an impact on the development of understandings and teaching practices of TBLT by the STs, at least as measured over the period of the STs' main practicum experience. This study therefore supports earlier research reporting the impact of teacher education on teacher cognition (e.g., S. Borg, 1999, 2006, 2009, 2011; Debreli, 2012; Mattheoudakis, 2007; D. Nettle, 1996; Phipps, 2007; Tillema, 1998).

Across the three STs and the three observation cycles, two important aspects emerged from the findings which will be discussed in the following section.

#### **10.2.4 Processes contributing to changes in understandings and practices of TBLT**

During the three observation cycles, all STs went through different processes that contributed to the development of their understandings and practices of TBLT. These included classroom teaching experiences, the guided processes of learning to teach with tasks and self-directed learning. Each of these aspects are discussed in turn below.

First, the STs engaged in the actual classroom experience that influenced changes in the STs' understandings and practices. Experience in the classroom is believed to shape



teachers' beliefs and practical knowledge (Richardson, 1996). Ta was a good example of how practical experiences in the classroom influenced change in her understanding of a teacher's role in task-based lessons. Her understanding expanded to include facilitator or supporter roles. This also led to change in her practice when she gradually adjusted her role in the class to a less controlling and more supportive one. Similarly, Nan's beliefs about the efficacy of TBLT were strengthened after witnessing successful learner learning outcomes (see Nan's Lesson 7) which led her to say that "If I have more chances and time, I want to do more tasks because I am now seeing successful results." This sense of achievement made her feel more confident and committed to using tasks in the future. The result confirms the model of teacher change (Guskey, 2002) that highlights evidence of successful implementation and improvement in learner learning as the key element of change in teachers' beliefs. According to Guskey (2002, p.383), "it is not the professional development per se, but the experience of successful implementation that changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs." The result also corroborates Zhang and Luo's (2018) finding that teachers' beliefs in TBLT might be strengthened through practical experiences when they witness successful results.

Second, the STs engaged in the guided processes of learning to teach with TBLT. In this process, they received guidance and feedback through collaborative lesson planning. In addition, during the post-lesson interviews, they had opportunities to reflect on their performance. This provided rich opportunities for the STs to reflect on their teaching, examine and articulate their thoughts, which contributed to the development of their understandings of TBLT. The data from observations and interviews in OC1 and OC2, in particular, suggested that the reflections and feedback sessions during the interviews had an impact on changes in the STs' understandings and practices of TBLT. For instance, in OC1, after reflecting on the learners' behaviours in the post-lesson interviews, all STs used a more learner-centred approach to improve the learners' engagement. Alternatively, Nan reported a shift in her understanding about the concept of a task through her reflection on the lesson planning session. This indicates that awareness-raising activities can inform better practices.

These guided processes supported the development of the STs' understandings and commitment to TBLT. The STs expressed their willingness to try out new teaching practices because they were being supported and guided through the collaborative and reflective practices in lesson planning and implementation. This is parallel to Richards,

Gallo and Renandya's (2001) finding that collaboration offers the support, ideas and encouragement that are beneficial for inducing positive change in teachers' teaching. Furthermore, reflection allows teachers to explore their beliefs, which leads to greater self-awareness and a starting point for later adaptation (Clark & Peterson, 1986). According to East (2018, p.26), reflecting on teachers' own practices can help them "to come to their own theory- and practice-informed conclusions and learn how TBLT might work in their own local contexts." Moreover, this study supports Devlieger et al.'s (2003, as cited in Van den Branden, 2006) finding that practice-oriented training helps teachers try out new ideas, experiment and discover their own ways of teaching with tasks and that teacher education and practiced-based support can facilitate the implementation of TBLT (Van den Branden, 2006b, 2009a). In addition, the study also found that apart from being guided by the researcher, the STs also directed their own learning. This was best illustrated by Nan who took the initiative to search for information about TBLT independently.

The processes contributing to the development of their understandings and practices of TBLT in this study are similar to previous studies. A longitudinal case study of four in-service teachers conducted by Levin (2003) investigated how teachers' pedagogical understandings changed over 15 years. She found that there were three important factors that promoted such development. They were support systems, ongoing professional development, and opportunities for reflection and metacognitive thinking. In the same vein, drawing on sociocultural perspectives, Yuan and Lee (2014) also found three factors that influenced the processes of learner teachers' belief change during the practicum: the school community with sound professional culture, the mentors and, the role of agency in cognitive development (e.g., reflective practices).

Overall, among the aforementioned processes, the guided processes of learning to teach with TBLT, in particular, revealed three key elements: collaboration, support and reflection that aligned with the principles of effective teacher professional development proposed by Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017). They reviewed 35 studies on teacher professional learning over the last three decades and found seven characteristics of professional development that positively relate to changes in teachers' practices and learner outcomes. Most or all of these elements have been incorporated in various ways to support teachers' professional learning. Of the seven principles, three that are consistent with the key findings in this study are "collaboration; coaching and

expert support; and opportunities for feedback and reflection” (p.23). Based on empirical evidence, Darling-Hammond et al.’s (2017) review confirms that the three elements reported in this study can create the conditions for professional development and facilitate the processes involved in changing teachers’ practices. Therefore, a teacher education or professional development programme that engages teachers in collaborative practices (e.g., sharing ideas or collaborating in learning) with a focus on feedback, reflection and continuous support can be the ideal kind of professional development for teachers. The elements found in this study are also consistent with some of Ellis’s (2018, p. 272) suggestions for effective TBLT training. They are:

1. Training needs to be accompanied with actual tasks that teachers can use in their classrooms,
2. Teachers also need to be actively involved in designing and performing tasks as part of their training.
3. Training in the form of observation of actual teaching followed by feedback provide a means for encouraging reflection by teachers and of addressing practical issues that concern teachers.

### **10.2.5 The relationship between the TBLT principles in the TBLT module and the principles that emerged in the practicum**

Another important aspect emerging from the findings was a mismatch between the principles emphasized in the TBLT module and the principles reflected in the STs’ understandings and practices during the field experiences. It is interesting to note that in the practicum none of the STs referred to Ellis’s (2009) four definitional criteria of tasks that they had been introduced to in the TBLT module. Instead, understandings that emerged in the practicum reflected broader principles of collaborative learning and learner-centred pedagogy that are not unique to TBLT. In addition, although the analysis of Ta’s lessons reflected some of Ellis’s (2009) criteria of tasks (e.g., Table 7.12 Analysis of Lesson 7 taught by Ta), it is not entirely clear whether this alignment was the result of consciously applying Ellis’s (2009) criteria or from another aspect of their training or exposure to language teaching methods. This question highlights the persistent dilemma faced in teacher education programmes of how to turn taught content into practical application.

From a theoretical perspective, the STs’ understandings of TBLT that emerged in the practicum reflected the broader principles similar to Long’s (2015) methodological

principles (i.e., MP2: Promote learning by doing and MP9: Promote cooperative/collaborative learning), which are not unique to TBLT (except the three-stage TBLT framework). These understandings also accord with the methodological principles of CLT proposed by Brandl (2008). Interestingly, although Ellis's (2009) four criteria were much more emphasized in the course, the STs' understandings in the practicum reflected more of the general conceptual basis that underpins TBLT. Their understandings did not specifically subscribe to the principles unique to TBLT (e.g., meaning-focused, communicative-oriented, or outcome-evaluated) as they did not refer to Ellis's (2009) four criteria of tasks in the practicum.

This finding suggested a gap between the TBLT principles emphasized in the TBLT module in the teacher education programme and the principles reflected in their understandings and practices during the practicum. To obtain further insights into this issue, I sought additional clarification from the STs through a chat programme (LINE) which I conducted informally and separately a year after the observations had been completed (December 2018). Ta admitted that she barely remembered the four criteria of tasks. The only criteria she could remember a year earlier during the practicum was the outcome principle. Thus, in her teaching, she related the outcome to what the learners would get from completing an activity. Although having said that she drew on this criterion, Ta was still not very clear about it. Therefore, when talking about tasks in the interviews, she simply referred to the general concept of learning by doing tasks. She added that these principles were barely at the forefront of her mind during the interviews. Similarly, Nan said that she had forgotten about the principles because she focused more on how to teach well and how to use tasks to motivate the learners, rather than worrying about whether her task-based lessons really followed the standard criteria of TBLT or not. Moreover, she said that she found it difficult to draw on the four criteria to teach the set lesson content, especially when time was limited. Therefore, instead of strictly following these criteria, she simply taught in her own ways based on her own understanding. In the same vein, Ploy explained that her prime concern during the observation was specifically on classroom management. As the observed class was quite noisy, she needed to keep the learners focused and motivated to learn English. That was why she did not pay attention to the four task criteria.

The data above suggests that disciplinary knowledge acquired from university-based learning did not necessarily inform classroom teaching practices. A key factor that

caused this gap in these STs' understandings and practices involved the classroom realities faced by the STs. Although the STs learned and developed formal knowledge during the previous year in the TBLT programme, what really influenced and shaped their understandings and practices was the realities they faced. This is confirmed by S. Borg's (2006) conclusion that a major influence on the development of teachers' cognitions are practice teaching and early classroom experiences which may also outweigh input from coursework. When these STs began their field experience, they had to cope with various dilemmas such as managing misbehaviour, completing day-to-day teaching and thinking about what worked well in the classroom. Teachers tend to draw on the strategies that most readily come to mind (Calderhead & Shorrock, 2003) prompt or concrete answers (Eraut, 1995) when there is limited time for them to think.

The decision as to what approach the novice teachers employed in their teaching was largely influenced by the real classroom situations rather than the methods and techniques promoted in the teacher education programme (Farrell, 2008; Macalister, 2016; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Urmston & Pennington, 2008). Another explanation about this mismatch involved "knowledge depreciation" (Jaber, 2006, p. 12) when the STs reported forgetting about the key criteria of tasks they learned in the course. After completing the module on TBLT in the Year 4 teacher education programme, their understanding of task criteria became diluted nine months later in the practicum. Furthermore, since the amount of time spent on learning material can influence how well people learn or acquire knowledge (Hancock, 1967), this raised the question whether the learning period in the programme (18 hours) was long enough for them to internalize this newly acquired knowledge. Moreover, the difficulty of the four criteria was another issue influencing Nan's instructional decisions. This reflects Samuda's (2005) point that, "Task design is a complex, highly recursive and often messy process, requiring the designer to hold in mind a vast range of task variables relating to the design-in- process" (p.243).

The theory-practice gap reported in this study is probably best reflected in Wood and Cakir's (2011) statement:

[Teachers] personal beliefs played a role in their choice of which aspects of communicativeness to emphasize. That is, when discussing the characteristics of communicative teaching, the emphasis they chose was not by referring

exclusively to the theory that they had learned throughout their schooling but drawing from their own experiences and stories” (p.387).

Benson (2015) comments further on this issue by saying that it could be misleading if we interpret a list of criteria as a set of rules for good teaching. What is more important are the tasks that learners engage in, and what and how they learn. He emphasizes a shift in attention away from what the teacher is doing to what the learners are doing. As he puts it:

[Teachers] should teach in the way they feel most comfortable, without worrying too much whether their teaching is consistent with TBLT or not. But as a first step toward TBLT, they might stop and think about their classrooms from the angle of what their learners are doing while they are teaching in this way. What tasks are they engaged in and what can they, as teachers, do to make this engagement productive? (p.66).

In light of this comment, this study found evidence of positive changes in the STs’ practices over the three data collection phases, moving away from traditional teacher-fronted grammar teaching and towards a learner-centred approach. Furthermore, the evidence of the theory-practice gap of TBLT in teacher education programmes has raised awareness and emphasized the need to pay more attention to finding ways to bridge the gap and mediate this relationship. For example, this may be achieved by providing sustained professional support that aids the translation of principles to practice in a local classroom or embracing the learner teaching experience and teacher education coursework (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010). Samuda et al. (2018) call for attention to this gap:

We are very much aware that the challenges involved in putting TBLT principles into practice are considerably more intricate than appears to be recognized in much of the SLA-based TBLT literature, and that there is a gap here that needs to be addressed (p.7).

So far, this section has presented changes in the STs’ understandings and practices of TBLT. In the next section, I will discuss RQ3 and factors influencing the implementation of TBLT.

### 10.3 Factors perceived to have influenced the uptake of TBLT

This section addresses RQ3:

*What factors did the STs perceive to have influenced their planning and/or practices of task-based lessons?*

In response to RQ3, I examined the factors that the STs perceived to have facilitated or hindered their implementation of TBLT across the three STs and the three observation cycles. As seen in Table 10.6, there were more hindering factors than facilitative ones. This is not surprising. TBLT is not well known in this context and is at odds with the teacher-centred approach which is so widely practiced in Thai EFL classrooms. Table 10.7 below summarises the themes and factors the STs perceived to have influenced their planning and/or practices of task-based lessons.

Table 10.7 Themes and factors affecting the STs' implementation of TBLT

Themes	Sub-themes	Factors	Reported by
A. Facilitative	Support system	Guided processes of learning to teach with TBLT	All STs
		Open and flexible institutional culture	All STs
B. Hindering	Classroom-related constraints	Traditional fixed seating arrangement	Ta
		Lack of classroom facilities and technology	Ta and Nan
		Open plan classroom	Ta
		Large class size	Ploy
	Time and workload constraints	Problems from planning and implementing tasks (e.g. time/effort)	All STs
	Learner-related constraints	Level of learners' language proficiency	All STs

#### 10.3.1 Facilitative factors

The STs identified two key factors which supported the adoption of TBLT: the guided processes of learning to teach with TBLT and the open and flexible institutional culture.

First, the study found that the process of collaborative lesson planning played a strong role in supporting the STs' adoption of TBLT in their classroom. After planning and teaching the lessons, they then discussed and reflected on these lessons with the researcher. The processes here are similar to what Mitchell, Reilly, and Logue (2009) refer to as collaborative action research (CAR). Through a supportive network of CAR, beginning teachers can cope with dilemmas, solve teaching problems and commit to educational improvement. As already mentioned in Section 10.2.4, the potential value of these guided processes was confirmed by the STs when they reported having broader understanding of and more confidence in using TBLT. The result corroborates other studies reporting a positive uptake of TBLT after teachers engaged in collaborative practices through a CAR project (Calvert & Sheen, 2015) or a collaborative task design project using computer-mediated communication (Fuchs, 2009). Reflecting on their experience of participating in this research project, the STs in this study suggested that beginning teachers who start using a teaching innovation such as TBLT be guided and supported throughout the implementation process. This reflects a point made by Van den Branden (2009) that "[Teachers need to be] supported throughout all the following phases of the innovation-decision process, especially when they introduce the innovation into the classroom" (p.665).

Given the initial stages of implementation of an innovation are the most important, teachers need regular feedback on their performance. Support on teachers' practices on TBLT was discussed in early research (e.g., Devlieger et al., 2003; Ieemjinda, 2003; Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010; McDonald & Chaikitmongkol, 2007). For example, a coaching model for a professional development programme in Ieemjinda's (2003) study led to changes in teachers' practices towards a learner-centred and communicative teaching approach. Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) found that the absence of support, such as mentors' assistance and resources, during the field experience made it difficult for the learner teachers to adopt TBLT. Without support, the student teachers in their study resorted to familiar teaching practices. This study showed that when the STs were professionally supported during the early stages of TBLT implementation, they were willing to try out TBLT. Without this support, data from OC1 suggests that little if any of the input they received on TBLT in their course work would have found its way into their teaching. The successful implementation of TBLT can only occur when sustained support is provided (Lai, 2015; Van den Branden, 2006b).



The second factor involved is “trialability” (Van den Branden, 2009, p. 664) or “the extent to which the teacher is allowed time and space to try out the innovation and give personal meaning to it.” The study found that what supported the STs’ decision to adopt TBLT was the open and flexible institutional culture. All STs mentioned in the interviews that they were working in an educational context that provided them with full authority to teach. Notably, Ploy in personal conversation and in the post-lesson interviews, reported being encouraged by her cooperating teacher to try out new ideas. Nan also reported the flexibility and freedom when designing her own lessons. In the same vein, Ta talked about how the school curriculum did not strictly prescribe materials and procedures for the teachers to follow. This contrasts with other contexts where prescribed textbooks must be strictly followed and where cooperating teachers exerted considerable control over learner teachers’ teaching (e.g., Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005; Farrell, 2008; Hayes, 2008; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Thi et al., 2018; Yuan & Lee, 2014). The evidence, therefore, suggests that when the STs were able to choose learning content independently, there were more opportunities for them to integrate tasks into the lessons. This claim is supported by Daloz’s (2000, p.18) argument about the optimal conditions for teacher development. One of the conditions is opportunities for committed action or having chances to try out new practices in the classroom. This condition offers a fertile starting point for introducing TBLT into educational institutions. As Adams and Newton (2009) put it, institutional cultures of individual schools may foster or inhibit the adoption of TBLT.

### **10.3.2 Hindering factors**

Apart from affordances, the STs also reported three main constraints they perceived to have affected their planning and practices of TBLT which I now discuss.

#### **10.3.2.1 Classroom-related constraints**

The STs reported challenges related to physical classroom conditions. Although these challenges were not major impediments to TBLT, they might inhibit a task from reaching its full potential. The first constraint involved the traditional fixed seating arrangement which minimized learner interactions, especially when they had to interact in groups. Space for movement in the class can restrict teaching possibilities (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). According to Ta, classroom seating constrained how tasks could be fully employed as there was not much room for the learners to move around. The observation data showed that Ta and Nan dealt with this problem by moving all the

tables and chairs to both sides of the classroom so the learners could sit on the floor and do the tasks in groups (see Figures 7.7 and 8.1).

Another limitation involved a lack of facilities and technology in the classroom. As documented in the observation notes, all observed classrooms were equipped with only a whiteboard, desks and chairs. Nan reported that the lack of facilities and technology in her classroom constrained the lessons from reaching their full potential, especially when she adopted tasks that involved listening. For example, it was difficult for the STs to manage listening tasks efficiently (e.g., filling an incomplete dialogue in Nan's Lesson 4) without a device such as an audio player or a computer to play listening tracks. Similarly, Ta also commented that sometimes she wanted to introduce the lessons using a video instead of lead-in questions. Nevertheless, because of the lack of classroom facilities, she was constrained and fell back into a more traditional style. For the STs, classroom facilities and technology were important factors for effective task-based teaching and for promoting a rich learning environment. Although Ploy did not raise this issue in the interview (unlike the other two STs), the observation data suggests that she also experienced the same problem because she brought her own computer to the class (see Figures 7.2 and 8.1). Furthermore, the STs used their own money to buy a portable speaker and microphone to assist their teaching. This finding confirms Adams and Newton's (2009) claim that classroom conditions in many English classrooms in Asia are not conducive for adopting tasks. Other associated challenges at the classroom level included the open plan classroom that allowed noise from outside as reported by Ta, and a large class size as raised by Ploy when she encountered the problem of managing group participation during a listen-and-do task. Large class sizes have frequently been noted as a challenge to TBLT implementation (Carless, 2002, 2007; Chacón, 2012; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Li, 1998; Littlewood, 2007; Y. E. Zhang, 2007).

#### **10.3.2.2 Time and workload constraints**

A second constraining factor identified by the STs was time and workload issues. Ta and Nan, voiced concerns over problems arising from planning and implementing tasks. This included a lack of time to plan tasks, the additional workload and time spent on lesson planning required to teach with tasks, and tiredness from planning, implementing and controlling tasks in the class. Ploy similarly reported on the issue of time, but specifically about limited class time to complete all three phases in the TBLT framework. Teachers in previous research also reported the challenges of time and

preparation on tasks (e.g., Carless, 2003; Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010; Pham & Nguyen, 2018; Thi et al., 2018; Van den Branden, 2006b; R. Watson Todd, 2006; Yim, 2009; Y. Zhang & Hu, 2010). For example, a learner teacher in Ogilvie and Dunn's (2010) study commented that the adoption of TBLT was not feasible when time was scarce. The time investment needed for developing TBLT materials made her revert to available non-task materials. Similar findings were reported by Carless (2003) when Hong Kong English teachers identified the additional preparation time and workload involved in task-based teaching which resulted in them reverting to the textbook and traditional non-communicative teaching.

This issue led the STs to call for support in the form of TBLT resources. They suggested that, to facilitate teachers adopting TBLT, there needed to be TBLT resources available for them to choose from and adapt for their own contexts. Carless (2003) reports on the similar experience of Hong Kong teachers who were required to implement a new task-based curriculum, and who called for more TBLT materials in order to mitigate the problem of having to prepare additional materials. Recently, more attention has been paid to the dissemination of TBLT teaching materials (Y. Zhang, 2015). Shintani (2016) calls for more hands-on TBLT resources that provide the essential information needed for task implementation. Similarly, Newton and Bui (2017) emphasize that teachers with little experience in TBLT needed task-based textbooks as models for them to start teaching with tasks. Ellis (2018) also highlights the importance of materials development for TBLT. Voices from the STs in this study further support the key point that TBLT resources are much-needed form of support for the adoption of TBLT. As Newton and Bui (2017) propose, "if teachers are to be encouraged to take a more task-based approach to teaching, ready-made materials will need to be available to alleviate this concern" (p.273).

### **10.3.2.3 Learner-related constraints**

Another inhibiting factor involved learners' language proficiency although it is worth noting that this factor was perceived as both facilitative and a hindrance by the STs. That is, when learners' proficiency fosters successful implementation, it becomes facilitative. On the other hand, it can be a hindrance if low learner proficiency impedes the successful implementation of a task-based lesson.

The STs held contrasting views about the interplay between learners' language proficiency and successful adoption of TBLT. Ta and Ploy shared the view that the learners with higher levels of language proficiency responded positively to TBLT and were more able to do tasks which consequently led to successful implementation. According to Ta, less able learners may need more time and support. Therefore, tasks are more suitable for learners who have already acquired some knowledge and English proficiency. Similarly, Ploy regarded learners' language proficiency as the most significant factors that influenced the successful implementation of TBLT. She expressed that learners with lower proficiency may have less capacity to perform tasks and may need more time for task presentation, task performance and language practice. On the other hand, Nan noticed that among the four classes she taught, the class with the lowest level of proficiency responded positively and engaged more in task-based lessons than the other three classes who had higher levels of proficiency. While such views from Ta and Ploy were in line with teachers in other studies (Carless, 2002; Li, 1998; Tseng, 2006; Yim, 2009), Nan's perspective shows that the more able learners (in her unobserved classes) were not so much in favour of TBLT and resisted.

In summary, the STs identified a number of factors that supported and inhibited their acceptance and implementation of TBLT. Notably, this study has identified favourable conditions that contributed to the uptake of TBLT by the STs. They were the conditions that allowed for experimentation with innovation whilst being supported and guided. They also reported the constraints that affected their planning and TBLT practices. These constraints related to the classroom, time and workload, and the learner factors. It was found that while some challenges (e.g., traditional fixed seating arrangement) could be addressed by the STs themselves, some were beyond the STs' ability to solve and so required expert help in the form of, for example, materials, resources on TBLT and support from the teacher educator. As their teacher educator, I took an active role in helping them during the practicum. I often encouraged the STs to try out new teaching practices and provided encouragement and support in the post-lesson interview sessions. Moreover, they received additional support on their performance when working collaboratively with me to develop lesson plans. As Ta said, "I really want support like what I have now... without guidance, I will just teach in my own way based on what I know, just the basic knowledge of TBLT, which I am not sure about" (see p. 150). Similarly, Ploy mentioned that, "It is always beneficial to have someone to guide me through while using TBLT, like giving feedback... It is better to receive some

reflections and suggestions so that my ideas and understandings will be developed” (see p.234). As already discussed in Section 10.2.4, this kind of support contributed to improvements in the learners’ understandings and practices of TBLT.

So far, this section and the previous ones have investigated TBLT from the STs’ viewpoints. To gain a comprehensive perspective of TBLT in this context, I also explored perceptions and engagement of the learners in the STs’ classes. These findings are presented in the next section.

#### **10.4 The learners’ engagement in the task-based lessons**

This section addresses RQ4:

*How did learners engage in the task-based lessons in observation cycle 2?*

The purpose of RQ4 is to investigate how the learners in the STs’ classes engaged in the task-based lessons. As reported in the previous chapters, the STs viewed engagement and participation as the main goal of task-based lessons. They evaluated teaching success in terms of how engaged learners were. However, the STs did not provide much detail about how such engagement manifested itself. This section, therefore, addresses this gap by reporting on the learners’ engagement and their perception of the task-based lessons.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the evidence of engagement came from the classroom observation (i.e., video recordings and observation notes) documenting what most learners in the STs’ classes did in Lessons 4 - 6. This included the group interview conducted with two to four learners from each STs’ class following OC2. The observation data was analysed to understand specific behaviours and I drew on the framework proposed by Philp and Duchesne (2016). The group interview data was analysed using a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) (see Chapter 6) to identify key themes in relation to the learners’ perceptions of the task-based lessons. My decision to use Philp and Duchesne’s (2016) framework to guide the analysis of learner data was made post-hoc, that is, after the data had been collected. For this reason, the analysis is broadly interpretative and impressionistic rather than involving a detailed analysis of every classroom episode. I first present how the three STs’ classes as a whole engaged with the task-based lessons in OC2 based on my observation notes. Philp and Duchesne’s (2016) framework reflected three key dimensions of engagement

in the STs' classes: behavioural, cognitive-social, and emotional-behavioural. I discuss each of these dimensions in turn before reflecting holistically on the nature of engagement in their classes. Then, I describe how the learners in the STs' classes perceived task-based learning as reported by them in group interviews.

The first dimension is behavioural engagement. As the analysis of this section mainly drew on the observation data, behavioural engagement is by definition more observable and is therefore the most clearly evident in the data. As seen in Table 10.7, many activities such as pronunciation drills, problem solving or listen-and-do activities required the learners to get actively involved. For example, Nan's learners listened to a recording in order to complete the dialogue. The learners in Ploy's class made a continuous effort to find words hidden in a puzzle and Ta's learners looked up words in the dictionary search game. Most signs of behavioural engagement were teacher-initiated although some which were prompted by the learners. For example, some learners in Ta's class decorated their work (e.g., by drawing pictures) before submitting although this was not requested by the teacher. During the bingo game, some learners in Ploy's class asked the teacher to repeat the sentences because they could not hear them well. One learner approached Ploy and asked questions about making a bingo card. Evidence of seeking clarification was also found in Nan's class when some learners asked her to explain the activity again. The evidence of behavioural engagement in three task-based lessons (Lessons 4-6) taught by the STs is summarised below.

Table 10.8 Behavioural engagement in the STs' classes

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Evidence of engagement</b>	<b>STs' class</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
<b>Behavioural</b>  On-task behaviours that involve effort, persistence, active involvement in tasks.	Ss... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>consulted a dictionary.</li></ul>	Ta	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>listened to the recording and practised reading it aloud.</li></ul>	Ta	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>consulted a dictionary.</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(some groups) decorated their work (e.g. drawing pictures) before submitting.</li></ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>repeated the vocabulary in unison.</li></ul>	Nan	4

Dimension	Evidence of engagement	STs' class	Lesson
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listened to the recording so that they could fill the gaps.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>practised pronunciation by repeating after the recording.</li> </ul>	Nan	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(some learners) asked the teacher to explain the activity again.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wrote their answers on the board.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listened to the recording to check their answers.</li> </ul>	Nan	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>repeated words/sentences in unison.</li> </ul>	Ploy	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(one learner) walked to the teacher and asked questions.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listened to the teacher read out the sentences and marked the words on a bingo card.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>asked the teacher to repeat the words because they could not hear them (Bingo).</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>repeated words/sentences in unison.</li> </ul>	Ploy	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>searched for words hidden in the puzzle individually.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answered the teacher's questions in vocabulary elicitation.</li> </ul>		

Another dimension of engagement is cognitive-social (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Cognitive engagement is a covert mental process that is not easily observable. An indicator of cognitive engagement was observable thinking processes such as the learners solving the problems in groups or pairs (Gibbs & Poskitt, 2010). While solving the tasks together, they were socially engaged in learning. Again, this multidimension of cognitive-social can be expected because all three STs used many collaborative activities in which the learners sought help or worked with others in order to complete the tasks. For example, a jigsaw reading task prompted the learners in Ta's classes to

communicate and exchange the information they had with the other learners in order to complete the task. In a listen-and-do task, Ploy's learners discussed the answers in groups after listening to the teachers' directions. The learners in Nan's class worked together in groups to rearrange the sentences into the correct order. In these examples, cognitive engagement occurred interdependently with social engagement. More evidence of cognitive-social engagement is summarised in Table 10.9 below.

Table 10.9 Cognitive-social engagement in the STs' classes

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>The evidence of engagement</b>	<b>STs' class</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
<b>Cognitive-Social</b>  Ss are prompted to work with or seek help from others by the ideas or challenges of the tasks.	Ss... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• worked together to find the answers in the reading text.</li> </ul>	Ta	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exchanged answers in the new group although some groups simply copied the answers, not communicating.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussed the sentences' meanings in groups.</li> </ul>	Ta	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• took turns communicating to each other to complete the missing information.</li> </ul>	Nan	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and matched sentences together in groups.</li> </ul>	Nan	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arranged the sentences together in groups.</li> </ul>	Nan	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussed with his/her partner and wrote words on the bingo card.</li> </ul>	Ploy	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (the learners who performed the activity in front of the class) listened to, followed the teachers' directions and argued for correct answers with other members.</li> </ul>	Ploy	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (some) asked for help from the other learners.</li> </ul>	Ploy	6



The last dimension, emotional-behavioural engagement, involves learners expressing positive emotions such as interest, excitement, enthusiasm, and enjoyment in tasks that motivate them to persist in their efforts to complete the tasks (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). It was observed that the learners showed their willingness to engage in learning because of interest, excitement or enjoyment and that this was prompted by the competitive goals in the tasks. Examples of the positive emotions mentioned above can be seen in Ta's class in which the learners exhibited their excitement, enthusiasm and enjoyment in the dictionary search and true-false game. As soon as the teacher wrote each word on the board, they immediately looked it up in the dictionary, displaying real eagerness. Some learners at the back stood up so that they could see the board clearly. They also continuously searched for the answers within a time limit in the true-false game. Similarly, the learners in Nan's and Ploy's classes were also emotionally engaged in the lessons. Nan's learners enthusiastically made up a funny story using the target language. The learners in Ploy's class were excited to play the bingo game and asked the teacher to start it over again after the game had finished. This evidence suggests that when the learners were emotionally engaged, they put effort into the tasks. The evidence of emotional-behavioural engagement is presented below.

Table 10.10 Emotional-behavioural engagement in the STs' classes

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>The evidence of engagement</b>	<b>STs' class</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
<b>Emotional-Behavioural</b>  Interest and excitement in tasks prompt Ss to keep working on the task in spite of difficulties. Successful task completion prompts Ss want to do more.	Ss... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enthusiastically waited for the teacher to write the words on the board. Some Ss at the back stood up so that they could see the board clearly.</li> </ul>	Ta	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• competed with each other to find the words' meaning in the dictionary. They were highly excited.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excitedly looked for answers in the reading text within a specified time (a true-false game).</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showed enjoyment each time they got the correct answer.</li> </ul>	Ta	6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>were enthusiastic to make up a funny story using the target language together.</li> </ul>	Nan	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clapped and cheered when they had correct answer.</li> </ul>	Nan	5 and 6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wanted to play more bingo after they finished the bingo game.</li> </ul>	Ploy	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>showed excitement and made cheering noises when their words corresponded with what the teacher said.</li> </ul>	Ploy	4

Overall, the findings above suggest that the learners in the STs' classes engaged in task-based learning in a similar manner. Their engagement manifested as multidimensional constructs comprising cognitive, behavioural, and emotional dimensions. It was observed that among these constructs, emotional engagement tended to have a greater effect on the learners' willingness to participate and collaborate with one another. This was because when they were emotionally engaged (e.g., excitement, interest and enjoyment) there was a high level of participation and commitment to learning. According to the observation data, the lessons that incorporated competitive elements or goal orientation (e.g., a dictionary search and a true-false game in Ta's class; a bingo game in Ploy's class) enhanced the learners' interests and influenced their willingness to engage. This is consistent with the findings in Lambert, Philp and Nakamura's (2017) study reporting that the learners exhibited their willingness to participate when they were emotionally engaged in a task. Similarly, in their synthesis of research findings on engagement, Gibbs and Poskitt (2010) reported that motivation and interest in learning and goal orientation are some of the strongest factors that influence learner engagement and learning outcomes. In the same vein, Svalberg (2009) found that a competitive element seemed to contribute to both affective and cognitive engagement. They further mentioned several factors such as the teacher's approach, task design and the topic and type of text that influenced the learners' willingness to engage. In this respect, teachers have a key role in motivating learners by creating learning conditions or task designs that are conducive to engagement. When the learners were provided with the opportunity to explore and find answers for themselves, they were more engaged and

became more active in learning rather than passively sitting and listening to the teachers.

I now turn to the learners' perceptions about the task-based lessons. Immediately after OC2, I conducted a group interview with two to four learners from each of the STs' classes. As mentioned in Chapter 7, these learners had no prior knowledge or experience with TBLT. Therefore, to obtain their perspectives on TBLT, I established a conceptual understanding of two teaching approaches before the interviews. I used the terms "teaching with activities" to refer to tasks or TBLT and "regular teaching" to signify traditional teacher-centred classes that involved the teacher giving lectures or explaining a lesson in an explicit way. In the baseline interview for each group, learners were asked to explain what they had been learning in the class during the week (where Lessons 4 to 6 were taught). Then, I asked what they thought about those lessons and asked follow-up questions related to tasks. These included, for example, how does the teacher teach the lesson? What do you think about the activity? What activity do you like? Why?

The group interview reflected that the learners from all three classes viewed the task-based lessons in the same ways. On the one hand, they viewed "teaching with activities" as fun and enjoyable. For example, the learners from Ta's class mentioned that they preferred the task-based lessons as they created a positive learning atmosphere in the class. Similarly, those in Nan's class were also positive about tasks and expressed their preference for the teacher to include more "games" (tasks) in the lessons. They further mentioned that when Nan employed tasks in the lessons, learning became less stressful. They all agreed that Nan's teaching was fun and helped them remember what they learned in an enjoyable way. In the same vein, the learners in Ploy's class also expressed positive attitudes by using words such as "fun", "enjoyable" and "easy to understand" when referring to tasks. They expressed their preferences for the provision of tasks in the lessons. The evidence above suggests that the learners in the STs' class were motivated to learn and had positive attitudes towards "teaching with activities" because, in their view, tasks reflected the elements of "enjoyment" and "game". This was because many tasks in the STs' lessons involved interactions, engagement and competition. These features invited the learners to be actively involved in learning and kept them challenged and enthusiastic. For example, listen-and-do tasks (e.g., the labelling race, following directions and bingo) in Ta's and Ploy's classes activated

interactions among the learners. Moreover, in Nan's class, the learners needed to collaborate in groups to rearrange the dialogue or find the correct answers. Such tasks integrated competitive elements where the learners were challenged and motivated so it is not surprising to find that the learners were positive about the lessons.

Interestingly, although these learners were positive in their views of "teaching with activities", they also valued a traditional teacher-fronted approach such as rote memorization and lecturing as ways to help them learn and acquire knowledge. For example, the learners from Ploy's class said that they learned better in the traditional way which included listening, taking notes and memorising. Many learners in the group interviews perceived the pedagogical value of tasks as supplementary activities rather than instructional ones.

One possible explanation for this preference is that these learners were accustomed to teacher-fronted and explicit instruction and so viewed other new forms of teaching as having subordinate roles. As Foster (1998) argues, learners who are used to a more traditional approach might look at tasks as fun and games. This issue was also noted by Ploy in the interview following Lesson 6 (6 July 2017). She emphasised the importance of a language focus in the post-task phase because it catered for those who are not familiar with TBLT and are more concerned with explicit grammar learning. As Lai (2015) points out, learners in many TBLT studies have been found to value accuracy over fluency and explicit instruction that precedes performance. This view challenges the implementation of TBLT in an Asian context. In this respect, a teacher needs to reassure learners of the rationale for doing tasks differently. The learners should also be reminded that when using tasks "the teacher is not simply taking a break" (Carless, 2002, p.391) or that "they need to treat [tasks] seriously, not just as fun" (Ellis, 2003, p. 277). Moreover, it will also be helpful to point out to them that language learning can take a variety of forms such as learning through interaction or "the co-construction of new knowledge and skills that occur in the interaction" (Van den Branden, 2012, p.136).

Overall, the findings suggest that the learners in three STs' classes engaged in a similar manner with task-based lessons in OC2. There were similar patterns of engagement that involved both discrete and multidimensional constructs, namely, behavioural, cognitive-social, and emotional-behavioural. They also perceived tasks—or "teaching with

activities”— positively as being fun and enjoyable. However, they also still valued a traditional teacher-fronted approach as a way to help them learn and acquire knowledge. As pointed out at the start of this section, the STs evaluated success of their task-based teaching in terms of the learners’ engagement. Therefore, the findings regarding the learners’ engagement reported above help to provide a snapshot of how engagement manifested in the STs’ task-based lessons. Again, this reflects Ellis’s (2018) point about how teachers measure success of their teaching. According to Ellis, teachers are more likely to focus on whether a particular task engaged a learner rather than on a “technicist approach” (Ellis, 2018, p. 259) such as complexity, accuracy and fluency. While these have more appeal to researchers, teachers are more likely to relate to engagement as a performance goal.

In conclusion, the learners’ engagement in the task-based lessons reflected that TBLT was positively viewed by the learners in this study. Regardless of some learners’ preference for traditional learning, their positive orientation towards TBLT suggests their openness and receptivity to such an approach. This supports Lai’s (2015, p.19) argument that, “Asian learners are not inherently resistant to TBLT by culture.”

### **10.5 Summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed the findings of the three RQs in Phase two. Regarding RQ2, I have found that the STs went through a process of belief development. This started with limited understandings in the beginning which developed substantially during the collaborative lesson planning in OC2, followed by the emergence of additional understandings in the independent lesson planning in OC3. They all went through the similar, broad processes of addition, modification, elaboration and confirmation. In addition, their teaching practices also changed from little evidence of TBLT in OC1 to new teaching practices that reflected a greater proximity to task-based practices in the subsequent cycles. With reference to RQ3, I have discussed that the STs identified a number of factors that supported and inhibited their acceptance and implementation of TBLT. Facilitative factors were the guided processes of learning to teach with TBLT and the open and flexible institutional culture. They also reported the constraints that affected their planning and TBLT practices. These constraints were classroom-related, time and workload, and learner-related constraints. In the final RQ4, the learners in these STs’ classes positively viewed and actively engaged in the task-based lessons. Regardless of being accustomed to learning in a traditional way, their

positive orientation towards TBLT suggests their openness and receptivity to such an approach.

In the next chapter, I will summarise the key findings of the study from both phases. I will also discuss the implications of the study, followed by the limitations and recommendations for future study.

## **CHAPTER 11 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **11.1 Introduction**

In the concluding chapter, I present a summary of the key findings from Phase one and Phase two. I then discuss the implications of these findings in three areas: pedagogy, research and theory. I also assess the limitations of this study before ending this chapter with directions for future research.

### **11.2 Summary of key findings**

The primary objective of this study was to explore the feasibility and the impact of introducing TBLT in a pre-service EFL teacher education programme in a Thai university. The key findings of Phase one and Phase two are summarised below.

#### **11.2.1 Phase one: Introducing the TBLT module in the Year 4 teacher education programme**

Phase one sought to understand the impact of introducing the TBLT module in the Year 4 teacher education programme on the cognition and practices of the STs. Before the TBLT module was introduced, the STs completed a questionnaire assessing their disposition towards TBLT. During the TBLT module, the STs engaged with theoretical and practical elements of TBLT and other TBLT-related areas. In the final week, the STs planned a task-based lesson in groups and handed it in for evaluation. After the TBLT module, the STs completed the same questionnaire and participated in a focus group interview.

The findings showed that the TBLT module had an impact on the STs' cognition and their practices of TBLT. The meaning of impact here is a broad interpretation that "encompasses a range of developmental processes" (S. Borg, 2011, p.378). During the 5-week TBLT module, the STs developed their understanding and practices of the principles of TBLT through the taught and practised components of TBLT. An analysis of the post-instruction questionnaire responses showed that 19 out of the 31 STs had developed a favourable disposition towards TBLT. Responses from a further nine STs showed they had become less favourable towards TBLT, and three displayed no change. All groups were able to plan a task-based lesson that reflected the principles of TBLT

although there was evidence of limited understanding of task features and the difficulties designing tasks.

### **11.2.2 Phase two: Applying TBLT in the teaching practicum**

Phase two followed three STs who were part of the Phase one cohort while they were undertaking a one-year teaching practicum in a secondary school. Each ST was observed in three separate observation cycles (OC1, OC2, and OC3). The stimulated recall interviews were only conducted during OC1 and all subsequent interviews followed a semi-structured format.

The findings showed that the STs' understanding and their teaching practices were growing and changing positively during their teaching practicum. They started with limited understanding in OC1, then their understanding became broader and deeper when they were professionally supported in OC2. After the STs were left to their own devices four weeks later in OC3, the existing understandings were confirmed and became strengthened. Furthermore, their classroom practices also changed from little alignment with the principles of TBLT in the beginning (OC1) to new practices that reflected a greater proximity to task-based practices in the subsequent cycles (OC2, and OC3). More importantly, the STs developed "their own theory- and practice-informed conclusions and learned how TBLT might work in their own local contexts" (East, 2018, p.26). Their understanding and practice of TBLT in the practicum was influenced by classroom realities they faced, their accumulated classroom teaching experiences and reflections on their own practices.

During the process of teaching with tasks, the STs identified a number of affordances and constraints to their adoption of TBLT. The affordances were the process of being guided by the researcher to teach with tasks and the open and flexible institutional culture. These conditions allowed for experimentation and innovation under support and guidance. However, they also reported three main constraints that affected their planning and practices of TBLT. Classroom-related constraints were physical classroom conditions that inhibited tasks from reaching their full potential. These included the traditional fixed seating arrangement; lack of classroom facilities and technology; open plan classroom and large class size. Another constraint involved time and workload from planning and implementing tasks. The third constraint related to the level of learners' language proficiency. While some of these challenges could be addressed by



the STs themselves, some were beyond the STs' ability to resolve and so led them to call for the provision of help in the form of materials and resources on TBLT.

Regarding the learners in these STs' classes, they positively viewed, and actively engaged in, the task-based lessons. Regardless of the fact that these learners were still accustomed to learning in a traditional way, their positive orientation towards TBLT—or “teaching with activities”—suggested their openness and receptivity to such an approach.

### **11.2.3 Conclusion**

This study has provided empirical and longitudinal evidence showing that TBLT is feasible and practicable in the pre-service EFL teacher education programme in Thailand. Evidence presented in the study shows that the TBLT innovation was broadly successful in terms of its impact on the understandings and teaching practice of STs, at least as measured over the period of the STs main practicum experience. The STs were committed to learning to teach with TBLT and the learners in their classes positively engaged in task-based learning. This study found a number of interrelated elements contributed to the successful introduction of TBLT. These included the congruence between TBLT and the curriculum, the TBLT innovation being properly introduced and implemented with ongoing support and TBLT being welcomed by stakeholders (researcher, teacher educators, colleagues, authorities, student teachers, cooperating teachers, learners). Another important factor was having an open and flexible institutional culture that allowed for innovation and experimentation (the university and the school). Without these elements, few of the TBLT principles would have found their way into these STs' teaching practice.

### **11.3 Implications**

The findings of this study suggest the implications in three areas: pedagogy, research and theory as discussed below.

#### **11.3.1 Implications for pedagogy**

This study can make a significant contribution to pre-service EFL teacher education in Thailand, regarding introducing TBLT innovation into the programme. A number of pedagogical implications point to recommendations for future practice, particularly for

stakeholders playing a key role in language teacher education: curriculum developers, teacher educators and teachers.

The first implication is recommended for curriculum developers. At the level of curriculum design, teacher education programmes could provide continuous support and guided processes to novice teachers, who often struggle during their initial years of teaching in the practicum. Evidence from previous studies suggests that novice teachers often encounter challenges when they make the transition from the teacher education institution to real classrooms in their first year of teaching practices (K. E. Johnson, 1996; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986). The findings from this study clearly show that three STs were willing to adopt innovative practices such as TBLT in the practicum because they were guided and supported throughout the process. This kind of support is what Van den Branden (2009) advocates. As he said, “teachers should be supported throughout all the following phases of the innovation-decision process especially when they introduce the innovation into the classroom” (p.665). The implication here has also been echoed by other studies (e.g., Lai, 2015; Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010; Van den Branden, 2016; Y. Zhang & Luo, 2018; Zhu, 2018). Clearly, the guided process of learning to teach can encourage teachers to use innovative practices such as TBLT. This study, therefore, proposes that this guided process be integrated as a part of teacher education or future professional development. Moreover, the promotion of collaboration between university and school will also be of value. As K. E. Johnson (2016, p. 131) puts it, LTE programmes should create multiple opportunities for teachers to engage more in “theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices” in the contexts where they teach. In doing so, the programmes should allow the opportunities for teacher educators to offer expert help to teachers in the practicum. This includes providing a further opportunity for university course instructors to involve in STs’ teaching practices in the school. Of course, such conditions might not be feasible in the contexts where enrolments are large and teacher educators are limited. Therefore, it is necessary that this issue be addressed at the macro-level by policy makers (e.g., allocating financial support for an investment in staff development or external experts).

The second implication concerns resources. At the level of task design, for practical reasons, teacher educators can scaffold teachers learning with many good examples of tasks or task-based lessons. This is because exposure to good resources can expand

teachers' repertoire of TBLT. Moreover, busy or inexperienced teachers may find it more practical to draw on ready-made tasks than devising tasks from scratch. The findings from Phase one suggest that many STs followed the examples of task-based lessons provided in the module because these examples facilitated the design process. Additionally, the three STs in Phase two also reflected that TBLT resources are a much-needed form of support for the adoption of TBLT. Voices from many teachers and researchers from early studies (Carless, 2003; Ellis, 2018; Newton & Bui, 2017; Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010; Shintani, 2016; Y. Zhang, 2015) confirm an urgent need for TBLT resources for teachers. This issue further suggests that teacher educators should consider initiating material development projects for TBLT as Ellis (2018) recommends.

At the level of task implementation, teacher educators need to not only provide STs with many opportunities to actively engage in using TBLT in classroom contexts, but also help them develop a sense of achievement. This study found that during the processes of teaching with tasks, the STs moved away from their former assumptions that TBLT was idealistic and began to embrace a new idea that TBLT was practicable in their teaching context. Nan, in particular, developed a sense of achievement in using tasks which made her gain more confidence and committed to using tasks in the future. This is an important issue for novice teachers when they are introduced to an innovation. To promote teachers' commitment to an innovation, they should perceive it as practically doable and have a chance to witness successful results. This can be achieved by repeated practice and accumulated experience. As Guskey argues (2002, p.383), "it is not the professional development per se, but the experience of successful implementation that changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs." Moreover, this study found that reflective practices are of significance for change in classroom practices. In support of educational innovation, a reflective approach to teacher education is therefore recommended.

The third implication targets teachers who can make use of the findings from this study to structure their learning tasks more appropriately. For example, the finding about learners' engagement suggests that teachers should design tasks that enhance learners' interests and influence their willingness to engage. This can be achieved by integrating competitive elements or goal orientation. This study found that when the learners were provided with the opportunity to explore and find answers for themselves, they were more engaged and became more active in learning rather than passively sitting and

listening to the teachers. Therefore, creating learning conditions or task designs that are conducive to engagement can support positive learning.

### **11.3.2 Implications for research**

The key implication for research of this study is the provision of collaborative scaffolding of task-based lesson planning. As already discussed in Section 6.5.1, there are three sub-cycles in this collaborative lesson planning. In the first cycle, the three STs each planned and taught lessons without guidance. In the second guided cycle, they planned the lessons collaboratively with the researcher (myself), and in the final cycle, they again planned and taught the lessons on their own, but this time having had the collaborative experience with me. This approach has allowed the researcher to explore the STs' experiences with TBLT in different conditions. It also provides empirical evidence of the trajectory of the STs's development as they engaged in task-based teaching. The three distinct cycles offered a point for comparison between three conditions: when the STs started to plan the lessons independently; when they were later guided and collaboratively worked with the researcher and; finally, when they again managed their own lesson plans. This model shed light on the extent to which performance differed when the STs received stronger support during the practicum. The model demonstrates the implications when they were not supported, including the factors which constrained or afforded their development. The collaborative scaffolding of task-based lesson planning could also provide rich information on the whole process of supporting teachers adopting TBLT in the practicum. To the best of my knowledge, this is a novel approach not yet reported in the TBLT literature (apart from G. V. Nguyen, 2013, who adopted group lesson planning sessions as a data collection instrument to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices). However, this study used collaborative lesson planning in the wider purpose of teacher development and the approach for gathering the empirical evidence of the STs' learning trajectory.

This study also contributes to the TBLT research methodology in that it has employed an innovative method of analysing tasks using a coding framework which I further developed from Erlam's (2015) framework (see Section 4.6.1). This coding framework drew on Ellis's (2009) four criteria of tasks. These criteria are based on the notion that not every activity will fully satisfy the four criteria and some may have features of "taskness" without fulfilling all four criteria (Ellis, 2018). Therefore, we can see different kinds of instructional activities as a task, task-like or a non-task when drawing

on the four criteria. This approach will make the way we think about tasks more feasible in reality (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Shintani, 2014). Although this coding framework provides a systematic way of distinguishing tasks from exercises, it was not without its problem. This issue will be further discussed in the next section.

### 11.3.3 Implications for theory

This section discusses the implication of using the four criteria of task as a basic analytical instrument. It was found that Ellis's (2009) four definitional criteria of tasks are useful in distinguishing a task from other instructional activities and that the coding framework provides a systematic procedure for analysing tasks. However, in practice, the analytical process is not without its challenges. At the level of decision-making, it is not always easy to answer the coding questions as the analysis required a higher level of decision, interpretation and judgement. This supports Nunan's (1989, p.11) point that "making decisions [about the distinction between tasks and exercises] will always be partly intuitive and judgemental." There are many challenges, which suggests that using the framework to analyse tasks is not necessarily straightforward. Regarding task criteria, challenges come from the degree of ambiguity of some criterion. For example, the notion of *meaning*. There are different levels and types of meanings (e.g., propositional, semantic and pragmatic meaning). We learn that a task should be meaning-focused. However, when actually confronted with different types of meaning such as comprehending the messages in a reading text, writing an email message or listening to a conversation, decision-making can be difficult. It is neither a straightforward nor easy undertaking to decide whether these activities are meaning-focused tasks or meaningful language practices (e.g., has meaning potential but are not communication-oriented). Therefore, analysing a task against *meaning* criterion that is gradient, complex and multi-layered can be challenging. Another issue involves the feasibility of the coding framework that used yes/no decisions about categories of tasks. As Ellis (2003) argues, some activities cannot easily be classified as a task or an exercise because they have features of both. Therefore, the framework becomes problematic especially when analysing these activities. When such activities manifest degree of tasks or exercises as variable, using categorical analysis can be difficult. A more appropriate approach for this kind of activity can be conducted in terms of degree that would allow for nuance. Erlam (2015) also calls for the refinement of this yes/no option by using a continuum, as in Littlewood (2004).

#### **11.4 Limitations of the study**

This study has a number of limitations which should be acknowledged. The first limitation is the use of case studies from which it is not possible to generalise the findings outside this bounded context. However, partial generalisations to similar contexts are possible (Myers, 2000). Replication studies using a similar design in different institutional contexts could be of great value.

The second limitation involves the choice to analyse in depth only lessons taught by Ta. Originally, the plan was to analyse all three cases. It was only when I was well into the detailed analysis of Ta's lessons that I realized that this level of analysis if applied to all three STs would create an overwhelming amount of work and too much data to include in the thesis. At this point, I decided to proceed with this longitudinal analysis of Ta's nine lessons (and associated interviews) and leave an analysis of the three sets of data to follow-up after the thesis was completed.

Third, the number of participants in focus group interviews in Phase one. Due to availability, it was not always possible to have every member in the group participate in the follow-up focus group interviews (20 of out of 31 STs). Therefore, the findings, particularly about the STs' understanding of task features obtained from their descriptions during the focus group interviews, represented only those who presented in the interviews. Future research could address this issue by incorporating a written reflective assignment along with the lesson plan project. This assignment could ask each ST to reflect on their experience planning tasks, their pedagogical thinking process and how the lesson plan they designed reflects the features of tasks.

Fourth, this was the first time I had taught the TBLT module and the module itself had not been trialled apart from a short pilot session of three activities. Thus, it would have been better to try out the module so that it allows me to assess the likely success and to identify problems which might occur during the delivery of the lessons.

Fifth, the study faced the challenge of the observers' paradox (Labov, 1972). That is, it is possible that the emerging understanding of TBLT by Nan and Ploy in OC1 was influenced not just by the TBLT module but also by knowing of my interest in TBLT. One way to address this issue, at the end of the data collection would simply be to ask them if they made any changes to the lessons knowing that the researcher would be

present. Another way is to have a second person interview them so that the STs are not being influenced by the presence of the researcher.

A sixth limitation involved the learners' ability to think critically and fully express their ideas in the group interviews in Phase two. Some learners were timid and shy and despite using probing interview questions, their responses were rather limited and lacked variation as the timid learners tended to follow the more talkative ones. Therefore, no major contrasting perspectives were found in their answers within the group or across the groups. However, bearing in mind that young learners should never be pressed for answers (Pinter, 2006), I, therefore, used the observation data and the STs' reflections on their learners to complement the group interview data. Moreover, when the learners were asked about their opinions about task-based learning, it was difficult to distinguish between their views on TBLT and on the teachers. This was because there was a change in the teacher and the approach at the same time during the practicum. Any observations from the learners about TBLT were also about the teacher.

The last limitation concerns the capacity of a video camera to capture data on learners' engagement in the observation in Phase two. Due to logistical and ethical concerns, the video camera was placed at the back of the classes. Thus, capturing in-depth data on engagement from every learner was not possible. Also, it should be noted that the focus of this study was on the STs. Therefore, this study presented findings on the learners' engagement as a class, and not in relation to each individual learner. However, the fact that I was there and took notes during the observations complemented the data on how these learners engaged with TBLT.

### **11.5 Directions for future research**

According to Ellis (2018), more evaluation studies that examine the effectiveness of a programme on TBLT and attempts to introduce TBLT in specific educational contexts are needed. Such studies are of practical value as they advance the practice of TBLT. Moreover, they provide insights into the factors that support or constrain the successful diffusion of TBLT as an innovation. In line with Ellis's (2018) argument, the current study suggests directions for future research as follows.

There are four ideas for future research which could adopt the research design of the current study. First, a further avenue would be to explore learning outcomes of the

students in the STs' class in addition to investigating teacher cognition and their teaching practices, which the current study investigated. This research would be of value because it could provide comprehensive insight into how teacher education for TBLT has the impact on both teaching practices of the STs and improvements in their students' proficiency.

Second, future research might also include observational evidence in the Phase one study by investigating how the STs translate theory into practice during the teacher education course (e.g., microteaching) and then in the practicum. This longitudinal investigation would be beneficial for understanding the extent to which task design and task implementation by the STs in the course change in the practicum. The research could suggest implications for training teachers and add to our developing understanding about TBLT in practice over time.

Another avenue highlighting the similar design could also be conducted in another context such as in-service teacher education. Such an investigation would be useful for understanding how experienced teachers engage in collaborative task-based lesson planning and under what conditions in-service teacher training could contribute to successful implementation of TBLT.

Finally, more detailed studies on effective teacher training practices and how teacher trainers attempt to introduce TBLT to teacher education would be of greater value. These investigations will help to advance the practice of TBLT and contribute to the TBLT research literature.

### **11.6 Concluding remarks**

The process of designing and integrating TBLT into the teacher education programme was a valuable learning experience for me. Becoming a TBLT researcher and a teacher educator venturing into TBLT enhanced my own professional development as well as helping my STs. By teaching the TBLT module, my theoretical and practical knowledge of TBLT was expanded. When observing the STs engaging with tasks and task design, I gained a better understanding of how TBLT was conceptualised by the STs. Learning about their cognition and practice of TBLT has heightened my awareness of the challenge these STs encountered when working with TBLT. Introducing TBLT into the teacher education programme was challenging and required dedication and



commitment. However, from my first-hand experience, introducing task-based teacher education in this research context is feasible and rewarding.

### **11.7 Summary**

In this chapter, I have presented a summary of the key findings of the study. I, then discussed the contributions of the study in three areas namely, pedagogy, research and theory. Finally, I acknowledged the limitations that arose during the process and concluded the chapter by recommending directions for future study.

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## Appendix 1 Approval of Human Ethics Committee



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### MEMORANDUM

TO	Paweena Jaruteerapan
COPY TO	Dr Jonathan Newton
FROM	AProf Susan Corbett, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	1 September 2016
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	<b>Ethics Approval: 23098</b> The emerging understandings and task-based practices of novice Thai EFL student teachers

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 30 September 2018. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards

Susan Corbett  
Convener, Victoria University Human Ethics Committee



## Appendix 2 Pre-and post-questionnaire (Phase one)

(This the questionnaire was translated by the researcher into Thai)



### Survey Questionnaire

#### Instructions:

1. This questionnaire comprises two sections and it is expected that you will complete this survey approximately within 30 minutes.

Section 1: Demographic information

Section 2: Pedagogical beliefs

2. The purpose of this survey is to identify your background knowledge, understandings of and beliefs about language teaching.
3. There are minimal cautions to your participation in this study.
  - There will be no penalty for not participating in this study.
  - Responses provided in this survey will have no effect on your grade.
  - After you complete this survey, it will be assigned a unique identification and your name will be removed from the survey.
  - Your name will not be used during and after the study.
  - Any personal information you provide will remain confidential and known only to the researcher and her supervisors.
  - Your answer will be used only for the purposes of this study.
  - If you have questions regarding this survey, please feel free to contact me at...

**Thank you for your cooperation.**



### Section 1: Demographic information

---

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions by writing an answer or marking “✓” in front of the appropriate option that best fit your answers. N/A stands for Not Applicable.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Gender:     male             female             others

4. GPA.

lower than 2.00             2.01-2.50             2.51-3.00

3.01-3.50             3.51-4.00

5. How long have you been learning English? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you had teaching experience?

No, I have never taught before.

Yes, I have been an individual tutor.

Yes, I have taught in a tutor centre.

Yes, I have taught **both** as an individual tutor and in a tutor centre.

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

6.1 How long have you been teaching?

less than 1 year             1-2 years             2-3 years

3-4 years             more than 4 years

6.2 What is/are the level of student(s)? You can select more than one answer.

Kindergarten             Primary Level: Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Level: Grade \_\_\_\_\_             Tertiary

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Pedagogical Beliefs

The statements below are beliefs that some people have about learning a foreign language, English in particular. After reading each statement, mark “✓” under the column (1, 2, 3, 4, 5,) which indicates your opinion about the statement. The number on the top of each column means the following:

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral/Slightly agree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

	Statements	Opinion				
		SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
1.	Student errors must be regularly corrected in order to avoid bad habits.					
2.	Errors are a natural part of language learning (interlanguage development). Therefore, a large amount of correction is a waste of time.					
3.	Activities used in a language classroom ought to have a clear focus with predetermined outcomes.					
4.	The outcome of lessons is unpredictable because every student is unique and will cause the lesson to proceed in a different manner.					
5.	Explicit grammar instruction is an important element of any foreign language program.					
6.	Studying grammar promotes knowledge about language rather than the ability to use language. Therefore, explicit grammar instruction should be limited.					
7.	Group work activities are important for creating a cooperative environment in which students feel comfortable interacting with their peers. The genuine interaction created through group work activities is crucial in developing communicative competence.					
8.	Group work activities should be used sparingly because students learn each other's errors and spend more time goofing around and talking in the mother tongue, than productively completing tasks.					
9.	Drills are important for developing accuracy by promoting the formation of positive habits.					
10.	Exercises/drills are useless because they do not develop skills/knowledge that can be transferred to real-life situations.					
11.	Courses should be organized around progressively more difficult forms (grammatical concepts) or functions (greetings, requests, etc.).					
12.	Activities are the most effective means to organize a syllabus.					
13.	Since learners enter into the classroom with little or no knowledge about the target language, they are not in a position to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for their learning.					
14.	Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than exclusively determined by the teacher.					
15.	Training students to take responsibility for their own learning is					



### Appendix 3 Translation and validation of the questionnaire (Phase one)

#### Peer feedback

Areas	English version	Translated version	Revised version after peer feedback
<b>Rewording</b>	Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than exclusively determined by the teacher.	ควรมีการปรับภาระงานหรือกิจกรรมให้เหมาะสมต่อความต้องการของผู้เรียนมากกว่าผู้สอนเป็นผู้กำหนด	ภาระงานหรือกิจกรรมควรปรับให้เหมาะสมกับความต้องการของผู้เรียนมากกว่าให้ผู้สอนเป็นผู้กำหนด
<b>Word choice</b>	Since each student enters the language classroom with different skills, knowledge and learning abilities, the language teacher must help them develop individual strategies for improving their learning.	เนื่องจากผู้เรียนแต่ละคนมีทักษะ ความรู้ และความสามารถในการเรียนภาษาที่แตกต่างกัน ผู้สอนจึงควรช่วยพัฒนาพวกเขาให้ใช้ยุทธวิธี ของแต่ละคนในการพัฒนาการเรียนรู้ของตนเอง	เนื่องจากผู้เรียนแต่ละคนมีทักษะความรู้ และความสามารถในการเรียนภาษาที่แตกต่างกัน ผู้สอนจึงควรช่วยพัฒนาพวกเขาให้ใช้กลยุทธ์ ของแต่ละคนในการพัฒนาการเรียนรู้ของตนเอง
<b>Clarification for intended meaning</b>	TBLT is based on the teacher-centred teaching approach instead of learner-centred teaching approach.	การจัดการเรียนการสอนภาษาที่ใช้ภาระงานเป็นหลัก (TBLT) คือ แนวคิดเกี่ยวกับการสอนที่ยึดผู้สอนเป็นศูนย์กลาง	การจัดการเรียนการสอนภาษาที่ใช้ภาระงานเป็นหลัก (TBLT) เป็นแนวคิดที่เอื้อต่อรูปแบบการสอนที่ยึดผู้สอนเป็นศูนย์กลางมากกว่ารูปแบบการสอนโดยใช้ผู้เรียนเป็นศูนย์กลาง

#### Back translation

Original version (English)	Back translation version (English)	Revised version after the back translation (Thai)
Since each student enters the language classroom with different skills, knowledge and learning abilities, the language teacher must help them develop individual strategies for improving their learning.	Because each student has different skills and abilities about learning language. Instructors should develop themselves by using different strategies to improve self – learning method.	ผู้เรียนแต่ละคนมีทักษะ ความรู้ และความสามารถในการเรียนภาษาที่แตกต่างกัน ผู้สอนควรช่วยส่งเสริมพัฒนาผู้เรียนให้ได้ใช้กลยุทธ์การเรียนเพื่อพัฒนาการเรียนรู้ของตนเอง
Drills are important for developing accuracy by promoting the formation of positive habits.	Learner can develop their positive behaviour by practicing from <u>speaking and listening</u> . It plays an important part in developing the accuracy.	การสร้างพฤติกรรมเชิงบวกด้วยการฝึกฟังและพูดตาม (drill) มีส่วนสำคัญในการพัฒนาการใช้ภาษาที่ถูกต้อง (accuracy)
Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than exclusively determined by the teacher.	Tasks and activities should be adjusted according to the needs of learner rather than those of the <u>instructor</u> .	ภาระงานหรือกิจกรรมควรปรับให้เหมาะสมกับความต้องการของผู้เรียนมากกว่าให้ผู้สอนเป็นผู้กำหนด

## Appendix 4 Focus group interviews (Phase one)

### Focus group interview schedule (Phase 1)

A set of focus group rules were reviewed with participants before the focus group discussion began. I also asked if they had anything to add and ensured that everyone agreed to the rules. The following is the set of ground rules:

1. My role as moderator will be to guide the discussion. I might move you along in conversation. Since we have limited time, I will ask that questions or comments off the topic be answered after the focus group session.
2. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions.
3. You do not need to agree with others. It is okay to have different opinions.
4. The group is audio recording so one person speaks at a time.
5. I will not identify anyone by name in the report. You will remain anonymous.

The group will be structured around a set of predetermined topics for discussion (i.e., the process of designing a task-based lesson plan). The following questions were used to guide the focus group discussions:

1. Can you briefly describe what your lesson plan is about?
2. Can you explain the design processes? For example, how you decided on the topic, how you sequenced the activities or any processes of decision-making that led to your lesson plan?
3. Why did you use (the technique/methods/activities) in your teaching?
4. Do you think your lesson plan is task-based?
5. Do you think your lesson plan has the four Ellis' criteria of tasks? If yes, can you tell me what are they?
6. Which criteria do you find most difficult to satisfy?
7. Which criteria do you find easiest to satisfy?
8. Do you have any difficulties during the design processes? If yes, what are they?
9. From your opinion, what do you think about task-based language teaching?
10. Any additional comment?



## Appendix 5 An example of lesson plan for the TBLT module (Phase one)

### Lesson Plan 2 (Task-based language teaching: TBLT)

Time: 2 hours

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, STs will able to:

- talk about criteria for identifying tasks for TBLT;
- describe principles of TBLT;
- classify types of tasks.

Topic	Tasks	Time
Task-based language teaching (TBLT)	<p><b>Warm-up</b></p> <p>T creates transition from the previous lesson by announcing that that the STs are going to learn about an approach called TBLT, which can be used to teach any of four language skills. However, oral communication (listening and speaking) will be emphasized in this lesson because it relates to the previous lesson.</p>	5 minutes
	<p>T distributes a questionnaire of 10 statements regarding beliefs about language learning (J. Willis, 1996, p.2). STs rate the statements according to how far they agree with each of them. They then compare the answers with a partner and try to reach agreement. T picks four or five pairs to share their answers with the class. The class listens and finds what they have in common with the other pairs. T goes over the answers quickly. The whole class discusses some statements in which they are particularly interested.</p>	30 minutes
	<p>STs are presented with examples of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a task and non-task;</li> <li>- a task-based and non-task-based lesson.</li> </ul> <p>They have to compare the differences between them. T elicits the answers randomly before providing the definition and criteria of tasks and task-based language teaching for them to compare against their answers. T also provides types of task that are commonly used in a task-based lesson for later use in a follow-up assignment) (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Erlam, 2015; Van den Branden, 2010; D. Willis &amp; Willis, 2007; J. Willis, 1996).</p>	55 minutes
	<p>T shows a video demonstration about teaching speaking with task-based learning and asks STs to do an exercise in pairs based on the video. For example, STs write a short paragraph explaining or discussing what they find interesting or new to them. They may talk about issues or aspects that may arise from the video. They may also identify types of tasks used in the class. STs takes turn sharing their writing with their partner.</p>	25 minutes
	<p><b>Closure</b></p> <p>STs write a one-minute paper in response to two questions            What was the most important thing you learned during this class today?            What important question remains unanswered?</p> <p>STs write their responses on half-sheets of scrap paper and hand them in. T assigns homework (Classifying types of task: Willis (1996, p.22).</p>	5 minutes

## Appendix 6 Modification to Erlam's framework

Ellis (2009) criteria	Original questions in Erlam (2015)	Modified questions in this study	Explanation of modifications
1. The primary focus should be on meaning.	1.1 Does the learner function as a language user and not a language learner?	1.1 Do the learners <u>mainly</u> use the language for a communicative purpose, not just learn the language (e.g., forms and functions) intentionally?	The original question is kept. The word 'mainly' is added for clarity. In reality, when learners perform tasks, they do not <i>always</i> focus on meaning and act as language users. Sometimes their attention may temporarily switch to forms when they want to know what forms to use and then adopt the role of language learners (Widdowson, 1998).
	1.2 Is the learner primarily concerned with encoding and decoding messages, not with focusing on linguistic form?	1.2 Is the learner primarily concerned with producing and/or comprehending the messages (semantic and pragmatic meaning), not with focusing on linguistic form?	The original question is paraphrased for clearer meaning of 'encoding' and 'decoding'.
2. There should be some kind of gap.	2.1 Is this gap closed as a result of the communication that takes place?	2.1 Does the activity have a gap that requires a transfer of given message from one person to another, or one form to another (written to oral) or one place to another (texts to table) in order to close it?	A new question is used to introduce the notion of a gap that involves a transfer of given message.
	2.2 As a result of the communication, does the learner find out something they did not know?	2.2 Is the gap closed as a result of learners' participation in communication (i.e., as either as a speaker/writer or listener/reader)?	This question is Erlam's original question 2.1. It also includes the examples specifying that communication can be, either/or receptive and productive.



### Modification to Erlam's framework

Ellis (2009) criteria	Original questions in Erlam (2015)	Modified questions in this study	Explanation of modifications
3. Learners should largely rely on 'their own resources' (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.	3.1 Are the learners 'taught' the language they will need to complete the task?	3.1 Are the learners <u>not</u> 'taught'* the language they will need to perform the activity?  <i>* Being taught the language does not include the teachers providing some linguistic starting point such as key vocabulary, an input for production tasks (priming).</i>	The original question is kept. However, the meaning of 'taught' is clarified and noted aside. Priming is what Ellis and Shintani (2014) allow and does not violate their specification that learners not be taught the language (Erlam, 2015). Moreover, the word 'not' is added so that the required answer is consistent with the rest of the answers.
	3.2 Does the task allow learners to automatize/use language they have already been taught on a previous occasion?	3.2 Does the activity allow the learners to use the language they had already known to complete the activity?	A new question is used to avoid confusion which may arise from the word 'taught' in the original question. Instead, 'learners use the language they had already known' is used to signify learners' existing resources.
4. There is 'a clearly defined outcome' other than the display of language.	4.1 Does the language serve as a means for achieving the outcome rather than as an end in its own right?	4.1 Are the learners primarily concerned with achieving the goal stipulated by the tasks, rather than using language forms correctly?	Two new questions are used to highlight two contrasting concepts: 'a clearly defined outcome' and 'the display of language'.
	4.2 Does achieving the outcome determine when the task is completed?	4.2 Is there an outcome that results from completing an activity that works towards a communicative goal, other than the display of linguistic knowledge?	

## Appendix 7 An example of the lesson plan designed by the STs (Phase one)

### *Lesson plan 2*

Topic/Title: My dream jobs

Skills: Speaking and vocabulary

Procedures:

Stages	Procedures
<b>Pre-task</b> (10 minutes)	1. T introduces herself “Good morning everyone. My name is ...I am a teacher. What do you do?” Students replies. “I am a student.” T write the sentences on the board again. “What do you do? I am a teacher.” 2. T asks Ss, “What kind of job do you want to do?” Ss share their opinions. 3. T shows pictures and asks them to relate the pictures with the jobs.
<b>Task cycle</b> (20 minutes)	4. T work in a group of five. They take turn talking about the job they like and give the reasons why. 5. During the activity, T circulates to offer help. 6. Each group votes for the student who can tell the best reason and those Ss report to the class. 7. During the presentation, the audiences take notes and vote for the winner of the class.
<b>Post task</b> (20 minutes)	8. T explains grammar about asking and answering question (i.e. what do you do? I am a (...job...)) and vocabulary (e.g. nurse, farmer, and teacher). 9. Ss were assigned a writing assignment about the job they like and why. 10. T give feedback.

## Appendix 8 Stimulated recall and semi-structured interviews questions (Phase two)

### Stimulated recall interview protocol (OC1)

1. The researcher gives instructions to the participant.

*“What we are going to do now is watching the video. I can see what you were doing by looking at and listening to the video, but I do not know what you were thinking. Therefore, what I would like you to do is **tell me what you were thinking, what was in your mind at that time while you were teaching.**”*

*While watching, you can pause the video any time that you want. If you want to tell me something about what you were thinking, you can push pause. If I have a question about what you were thinking, then I will pause the video and ask you to talk about that part of the video.”*

2. The researcher demonstrates stopping the video and asking a question for them.
3. The researcher plays the video during the stimulated recall session. If the STs stop the video, listen to what they say. If the researcher stops the video, asked general questions such as:
  - Can you tell me what you were thinking at that point (e.g., about students’ reactions to your instructions or activities)?
  - I see you are (e.g., looking confused), what were you thinking then?
  - Do you remember thinking anything (e.g., when you were using this activity)?
  - Can you remember what you were thinking (e.g., when the students said that/those word)?
  - Can you tell me what you thought (e.g., after the students asked you to...)?
4. When the participants have finished the recall, the researcher may ask additional explicit questions that may elicit useful data (e.g., In general, what do you think about your teaching today? or were you satisfied with your teaching today?). The researcher asks if the participants have any questions or comments and concludes the SR interview.

### Semi-structure interview questions (OC2 and OC3)

#### Examples of baseline questions

1. Can you briefly describe what did you teach today?
2. What activities and methods did you use in your lesson?
3. Why did you use the technique/methods/activities in this lesson?
4. Did you have any problems with the lesson? If yes, what are they?
5. Did you depart from your lesson plan? If so, why?
6. How did you decide what you would teach?
7. What difficulties do you find when designing your own lesson plans?
8. Do you think the lesson you have taught today reflect the principles of TBLT?
9. Can you explain your experience teaching with tasks from the first day until now?
10. Do you have any comments about your teaching today?

**Group interviews with students**

## Examples of baseline questions

1. Can anyone tell me about what have you learned in the English class today?
2. What do you think about the activities in the lesson?
3. Which activity do you like and dislike? Why or why not?
4. Are you satisfied with the current classroom activities? Why or why not?
5. Were there any differences between the ways the schoolteacher and the student teacher taught?
6. To what extent do you like this way of learning English?
7. What do you get from today's lesson? (e.g., knowledge of vocabulary or grammar /strategies for communication)
8. Would you like to continue learning with this approach for your English subject in the next semester? Why or why not?
9. Do you have any comments or suggestions for the student teacher in next's year practicum?

## Appendix 9 An example of observation notes (Phase two)

### Ta: Lesson 1

5 June 2017 9.20-10.10 a.m.

- T took attendance.
- T reviewed previous lesson about Patricia's email and grammar point of word order (subject+ verb).
- T wrote sentences about herself on the board, *"hello! My name is Ketganok i'm 23 years old."*
- Students were asked to find mistakes in the sentences.
- T said that today the students would learn about capital letters.
- ST taught grammatical rules about how to use capital letters.
- Students worked on the exercise in the book by themselves (correct the mistakes in sentences 1-4).
- To give answers to the exercise, ST asked for volunteers to write the mistaken sentences from the book on the whiteboard. The whole class helped eliciting answers.
- T distributed worksheet and explained how to do the exercise (The students replied an email by filling their information in the box).
- At the end of the class, the ST showed how a real email look like through her own laptop computer.

### My reflection:

This was a continuation of previous session. Therefore, teaching contents were mainly about practicing on grammatical knowledge about capital letters. Not all students engaged in the activities as evidenced by those who sat at the back of the class diverted their attention to work on other subjects. This seemed like a PPP class where the ST explicitly pre-taught the language and then the students practiced what they have learned on their own. Moreover, T clearly stated three stages of PPP in her lesson plan.