THE 4 KEY POINTS TO MAKE TASK-BASED LEARNING SUCCESSFUL IN A CLASSROOM

Diapo 1: Qu’est-ce qui vous surprend dans le déroulement d’une unité de l’approche actionnelle (Task-based approach)

C’est l’approche recommandée par “The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages”. Vous avez peut-être entendu parler du DELF et DALF?!

1) Phase d’exposition (mini-tâches, prétâches)
2) Phase de la tâche principale
3) Phase du point de langue
4) Phase de la tâche principale à nouveau mais sans commettre de fautes sur le point de langue découvert dans la phase précédente
5) Phase d’évaluation
6) Phase de recyclage (plusieurs semaines plus tard)

Tournez-vous vers une personne à côté de vous et discutez de ce qui vous surprend dans le cadre de l’approche actionnelle! Quelques commentaires de tout le monde?

Diapo 2: Trouver un produit final qui intéresse plus les élèves

What is a task according to Nunan? An activity that

- Has a defined communicative outcome
- Makes meaning paramount
- Makes task completion a priority
- Enables learners to use the target language to negotiate meaning/understanding
- Has some relationship to students’ reality
- Enables students to reflect on their success in terms of the defined outcome

Pour trouver un produit final d’apprentissage qui est significatif pour les élèves, utilisez un des 4 moyens suivants:

- La forme superlative
- L’expression “le/la même que …”
- Le mot “idéal”
- Un produit tangible

Par exemple, au lieu de demander aux élèves de s’interviewer sur leur propre routine journalière l’un après l’autre, le produit final pourrait être de trouver qui a la routine journalière la plus pleine (la forme superlative) dans la classe.

Par exemple, au lieu de demander aux élèves de questionner tout le monde dans la classe pour savoir ce qu’ils ont fait le week-end, le produit final pourrait être de trouver quelqu’un dans la classe qui a fait les trois mêmes activités (les mêmes … que) qu’eux pendant le week-end.
Par exemple, au lieu de demander aux élèves de décrire à quoi ressemble une bonne fête, le produit final pourrait être de décrire ce qu’une fête idéale (le mot “idéal”) serait à leurs yeux et se mettre d’accord sur les critères. Si un élève n’est pas d’accord sur un critère et peut justifier pourquoi, alors le critère ne fait pas partie de la liste finale pour leur fête idéale.

En ce qui concerne un produit tangible, vous pourriez laisser les élèves faire ce qu’ils considèrent être la meilleure recette française, inviter un français à goûter leur plat et voter pour celui qui a le plus de goût. Comme vous voyez dans cet exemple, il est possible d’avoir un produit tangible et utiliser la forme superlative (qui a le plus de goût) aussi.

A votre tour, transformez les produits finals suivants en produits qui intéresseront plus les élèves en utilisant un des 4 moyens! Travaillez en groupe de 3 ou 4! Vous avez 5 mns. Essayez de trouver plus d’un produit par sujet!

1) Quelles phrases peut-on employer en salle de classe?
2) Décrivez l’école
3) Cherchez des informations sur une célébrité
4) Faites le plat du prof
5)Demandez à chaque élève quel est leur numéro de téléphone
6) Renseigne-toi sur les habitudes des élèves
7) Participe comme vendeur ou acheteur dans un marché de vêtements

Rapport devant tout le monde!

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**Diapo 3: Graduer les tâches de la phase d’exposition (priming)**

Mettez les tâches suivantes du moins complexe au niveau cognitif au plus complexe! Écrivez un numéro devant les lettres au crayon de papier! Il n’y a pas de bonnes ou mauvaises réponses mais il faut justifier son classement avec un voisin/une voisine.

a) Faire des priorités/catégoriser/ordonner les séquences/classifier du plus … au moins … et justifier
b) A partir d’un support visuel (images, clip, film, …)/texte, répondre à des choix multiples/vrai ou faux/relier/trouver l’intrus/trouver ce qu’ils ont en commun/compléter quelque chose/remettre des phrases ou paragraphes dans le bon ordre/faire des labels
c) Ecouter/lire quelque chose et écrire quelques mots qu’on a compris/pas compris/ des mots clé/répondre à des questions très courtes et simples/dessiner ce qu’ils ont compris
d) Ecouter quelque chose et écrire une version de ce que les élèves ont entendu en faisant un écrivez seul-comparez à deux-comparez en groupe
e) Trouver des faits (avec ou sans dictionnaire)
f) Prédire des trucs avant d’écouter/de lire quelque chose
g) Faire un remue-ménage (avec ou sans dictionnaire)
h) Faire une liste (avec ou sans dictionnaire)
i) Introduction brève du prof avec répétition lexicale énorme de sa part et des questions très faciles à poser aux élèves
j) Suivre des instructions orales/écrites/visuelles en complétant quelque chose
k) Ecouter/lire quelque chose et compléter des “graphic organisers”
l) Lire quelque chose et trouver des expressions précises
m) Faire une dictée en courant et traduire les phrases écrites
n) Faire une enquête/un questionnaire en interviewant les autres dans la classe
QUAND VOUS PRÉPAREZ LA PHASE D’EXPOSITION, PRÉPAREZ DES TÂCHES ALLANT DU MOINS COMPLEXE AU NIVEAU COGNITIF AU PLUS COMPLEXE! IL FAUT UNE PROGRESSION!!

Diapo 4: Choose 3 cooperative tasks you would use in the main task phase (tâche principale)

There are two cooperative strategies that are very useful at the Main task stage: "Write-pair-share" and "Interact with as many students as possible one after the other."

With “write-pair-share,” let them put down on paper first what they think by themselves. It is a personal processing time and with some structuring in their minds, they’ll be able to then express themselves in the target language.

Next, they test their thinking by interacting with a peer in their group (groups of four are recommended if possible, two desks facing another two desks).

After working in pairs, they practise and compare their findings with the whole group, gaining more confidence and picking up points from others in the process. The aim is to prepare a group report (verbal or written) to present to the whole class.

At this stage, if time’s not an issue or you think they still need more practice, they could get on with the second strategy: interact with as many students as possible. In conversational terms, this means students practise their skills with one student, then go on to another student and so on, until they have gained plenty of fluency in their delivery.

These two cooperative strategies don’t exclude each other.

Other tasks include the following ones:

CHOOSE 3 YOU WOULD BE PREPARED TO TRY WITH YOUR STUDENTS, HIGHLIGHT THEM AND DISCUSS WITH SOMEONE YOU HAVEN’T TALKED TO YET

a) Two stay/two stray: two students from one group stray to another group to gain new ideas about the task, go back to their group and share the new findings.

b) Trade and exchange: one student from one group visits another group, and can only receive a new idea as long as they share one as well.

c) “Corners”: is an excellent way to break down the groups. Usually, at the beginning of a new unit, group members are swapped so they get used to hearing someone different, with different knowledge and set of skills. You give a contentious topic to the students (for example, six posters with different qualities of ‘what a leader can be’ are posted around the classroom walls) and they have to sit by the poster that most represents their beliefs, and therefore, form new groups.

d) Creative controversy: works in the same way as corners’ but this time, there are only restricted groupings, as the topic only allows restricted interpretations and therefore fewer groups getting together to defend their point of view. For instance, ‘the way I do things is the best way to do things’ is a topic that will
create three groups: those in favour, those against, and those undecided.

e) **Round robin:** can be verbal or written. Students sit in a circle and jot down on a piece of paper one idea/opinion they have on the task, and pass the paper to their left on the teacher’s signal. Students read the idea from their classmate and add theirs to the piece of paper and pass it to the left and so on, till they get the piece of paper they started writing on. If their idea has already been mentioned, they try to add another one if they can, or don’t write anything. This activity should give them plenty of ammunition towards the completion of the task.

f) **Timed-talking:** give the students the task and tell them to prepare a talk about it, then they have one minute to talk about it to a classmate. Next, they deliver the same amount of information but in 45 seconds, and then the same information in 30 seconds. This forces them to repeat what they know in a faster delivery.

g) **Three step interview:** interview someone for a specified time, reverse roles for the same time, and then each student, in turn, shares their partner’s information with the other pair in their group.

h) **Beat the barrier:** is a common information gap task in which two students sit back to back, and one student gives instructions to another student who follows them on his piece of paper. It can involve drawing, noting down ideas, giving directions ...

i) **Expert jigsaw:** base groups of four are numbered off. Each member of the base groups is allocated an information sheet (example: description of a mysterious criminal on the loose). He reads it, takes notes and becomes an “expert” Expert members re-group with one member from each of the other groups to share information. They then return to their base groups to explain information they’ve gained from the other three in their new group. As a teacher, you need to spend plenty of time thinking through the information you make available to the students.

j) **Human treasure hunt:** is about finding information from others. Students can only sign someone’s paper once, mustn’t sign without telling them the answer, and when all their questions are signed, they help someone else find people who can answer their questions.

k) **Post and praise:** after the task has been completed by the groups in written form, the product and a praise sheet are displayed around the room and groups give each other feedback.

l) **Doughnut:** students stand in a circle. Half the class are back to back in the middle and the other half of the students face them. Each student must have someone in front of them. The students on the outer ask questions to the students on the inner, who answer. Every 20 or 30 seconds, the teacher signals (by whistling/clapping?) for the students of the outer circle to step to their left to speak to someone else from the inner circle. When they’ve come back to their initial position, those on the inner go to the outer, and those on the outer go to the inner and the asking-answering process starts all over again.

m) **Call my bluff:** students come up with four statements on the task; one is true and three are wrong. They stand up and challenge the other groups to detect the one true and three wrong statements.
n) **Add to the shopping cart:** students are in groups of four. One student starts providing an information/opinion on the task. The next student must repeat that information/opinion and add another one... and so on. The winner is the last one who can recall the most.

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**Diapo 5: Répondre aux questions sur la phase du point de langue (focus on form) à la fin**

While the students are applying coats of paint in the main task phase, you go around the classroom and take notes of an area that needs more painting or touching up. In other words, while the students are using the target language to complete the end product, listen to them or read their piece of writing and spot a pattern of errors that hinders them from delivering a performance of a higher quality!

The focus on form can be grammatical or lexical but it can also be about pronunciation, intonation, body language, communication strategies. The communication strategies referred to here are the three Cs: Clarification request, Comprehension check and Confirmation check. Too often, they are left out in favour of grammatical concepts but as they are essential in any successful communication setting, time needs to be spent on defining them, demonstrating them and getting the students to practise them. Your students’ conversational skills will tremendously improve when you work on the three Cs.

The focus on form can be divided up into **four parts**:

**a) The consciousness-raising stage**

The first part is about raising an error that most students make through an inductive process. The teacher does not explicitly give away the right pattern to pay attention to but the students discover it by themselves. To that end, *use visuals with colours, use graphic clues, use miming where it will become obvious to the students!* Make it so that it becomes an amazing discovery to them! You want to see a buzz from them. In the same way as the priming stage, it is a tricky stage but when it pays off after thorough planning on your part, you will hear it and get a lot of satisfaction from winning them over.

Start the focus on form in a new period so that it gives you time at home to prepare the point of language for the following period.

You can choose the point of language to work on beforehand but be mindful that sometimes, after listening to or reading their target language, the point needed to notice might not be the one you had anticipated! Go along with what *they* need to improve, not what *you* have prepared!

You can do two or three foci when they are not too demanding but do not overload that phase!

The best **five strategies** to me are:

- Draw two columns: one column with their errors highlighted in one colour and the other column with the correct version highlighted in another colour! Draw arrows to the word or words that implicitly explain why the correct version is what it is! Or use numbers to indicate an order! Or use a variety of colours to
explain different things! To guess what the correct pattern is, a one-word answer from the students can be good enough. A “think-pair-share” before they report in class can be an effective tool.

- Write down their errors and for each of them, give them a multiple choice/true or false/odd one out task knowing that one of the answers is the correct one! They have to justify their answer.

- Highlight their errors and indicate what the reason for the error is (for instance, missing articles, word order, gender, verb endings …)! They have to find the answer by themselves. You can do the same task but this time around, only give them the type of error as it is now up to them to find their errors in their utterances because you have not highlighted any.

- Get the students to translate what they said or wrote and correct them by giving them the translation of what they actually said or wrote! Write it all down so that they can see it! Then, ask them what the gap is between their translation and yours and go to the strategy in the first/second or third bullet point!

- If you have any recordings of some students or native speakers, use parts of their speech as a benchmark against the students’ errors! For instance, if your students keep saying “j’ai joué” (which does not make sense in French) instead of “j’ai joué” (with the accent being heard), find recordings where the pronunciation in the target language emphasises that point, play it to the students and get them to spot the difference between their utterances and the recordings’!

\[b) \textbf{The drilling stage}\]

Once the students have implicitly guessed the point of language to improve, it is the drilling stage. You organise competitive games based on:

- clozing exercises
- highlighting/underlining/circling/ticking the point of language in the text
- disappearing information (where information gets gradually removed)
- etc …

and the students rehearse the correct pattern to use.

There are 3 types of competitive settings:

- The one that involves 2 teams and one member of each team to run to the front of the classroom to ring a bell, write on the board, …

- The one that involves a few teams competing against each other sitting in a big circle and jumping on numbers inside the circle, catching a cone on a desk in the middle of the circle, …

- The one that involves a few teams competing against each other but remaining at their desks. For example, the students number themselves off in their group
and the first number to stand on his chair or slam his hand on the target language dictionary will be given the privilege to give an appropriate answer and earn a point for his team.

To sum up, students either run to the front or to the middle of a circle or perform an action at their desks. Vary the settings so they do not get bored with the same one all the time!

Range the drilling tasks to solve from the easiest to the most difficult one! Build up their confidence!

c) The reflecting stage:

You ask the students to reflect on what they have understood in the focus on form so far and they write down their reflection. Points must be made as explicit and detailed as possible so the students are able to recall them at a later stage when needed. The key thing is to let them work on their metalanguage as much as they can. Let them use their words, not yours!

They compare their notes with a peer in the group and then with the whole group. Every time they hear something new from their group mates, they must add it to their notes. A report in class follows and sometimes you may modify their views or stress a point they have missed out.

In some cases, you may prepare a summary of the point on a handout and their job is to highlight the key points and in the margin annotate key words. Then at the bottom of the handout, they write down the most important key word of all and explain why.

They preferably take notes in the target language but that may depend on their level of proficiency.

d) The transferring stage

Get the students to find out about two points:

- Where else has that point of language been seen previously?
- In what other contexts might it be seen later?

This stage will only take a few minutes. It is beneficial to reactivate what was learnt and students will have a feeling of “Oh, yeah, I get it now! That’s why! Now I understand!” It is equally important to get them to predict in what other situations that point of language could be seen so that when that situation arises, they will have predicted it, thus reinforcing their prediction skills and self-esteem.

They go through the notes and text scripts they have kept since the beginning of the year and spot the focus on form and highlight it with a colour code and a word summarizing the point. The students must see that a point of language is always a part of a whole and therefore every piece of the target language makes sense and can be predicted according to the context.

B) Review

- What are the three Cs?
- Name the four stages of the focus on form!
- What strategies did you find more interesting in the consciousness-raising stage? Why?
- Summarise the three types of competitive games that take place in the drilling stage!
- Write down one thing that you like about the reflective stage!
- Name one thing that struck you in the transferring stage!

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<tr>
<th>Diapo 6: Mon livre sur mon interprétation de l’approche actionnelle</th>
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<tr>
<td>• J’ai écrit un livre numérique qui s’appelle “Taking the plunge: The Task-Based Approach to Teaching Languages in Your Classroom (with French resources)”.</td>
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<td>• Mon livre est composé de 2 parties. La première partie explique comment préparer une unité de l’approche actionnelle, donc une première partie plutôt théorique (un peu comme ce que j’ai fait aujourd’hui) et la deuxième partie est une compilation de 6 ressources complètes. Comme ça, vous pourrez voir à quoi ressemble une unité à utiliser en classe. Tout est écrit en anglais dans la première partie et en anglais-français dans la deuxième partie.</td>
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<td>• Il coûte $NZ15.</td>
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<td>• Vous pouvez le commander en epub ou kindle et ensuite si vous n’avez pas de tablette, vous pouvez tout aussi bien le lire sur votre ordinateur portable ou le télécharger en pdf.</td>
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