

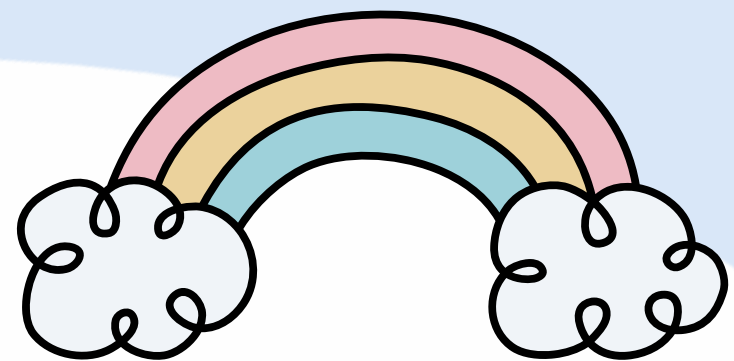
The Good Practices of Teaching English in Special Schools for Students with Special Needs



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資助研究項目



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資助研究項目

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EMPIRICAL FEATURE ARTICLE

WILEY

Ideating task-based designs for special education learners

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Abstract

The task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach has long drawn data from general learners and developed theories on the basis of those data. In this article, the author explores how to adapt TBLT materials for learners with special educational needs (LwSENs) who have difficulty learning, thinking, and communicating. TBLT

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

WILEY

Adapting the task-based methodology for learners with intellectual disabilities: Five key facets for consideration

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Abstract

Conceived within an input-output metaphor of language processing, many traditional assumptions regarding the task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach are finding the teaching of English to learners with special education needs (SENs) difficult. In this concept-based article, I

Objectives



Analyze TBLT Adaptation Stories:

Explore the experiences of teachers (e.g., Ms Meng, Ms Leung, Mr Fu, Ms Bell, Ms Wang, Ms May) adapting Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in SEN contexts, using the **5-dimensional framework** to evaluate their lessons and reflections.















Identify Effective Teaching Practices:










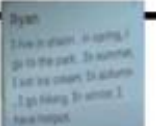


Examine good practices in TBLT that enhance English learning for students with special needs, focusing on real-life contexts, scaffolding, and the 5 aspects observed (lesson planning, students' output, teachers' thoughts).



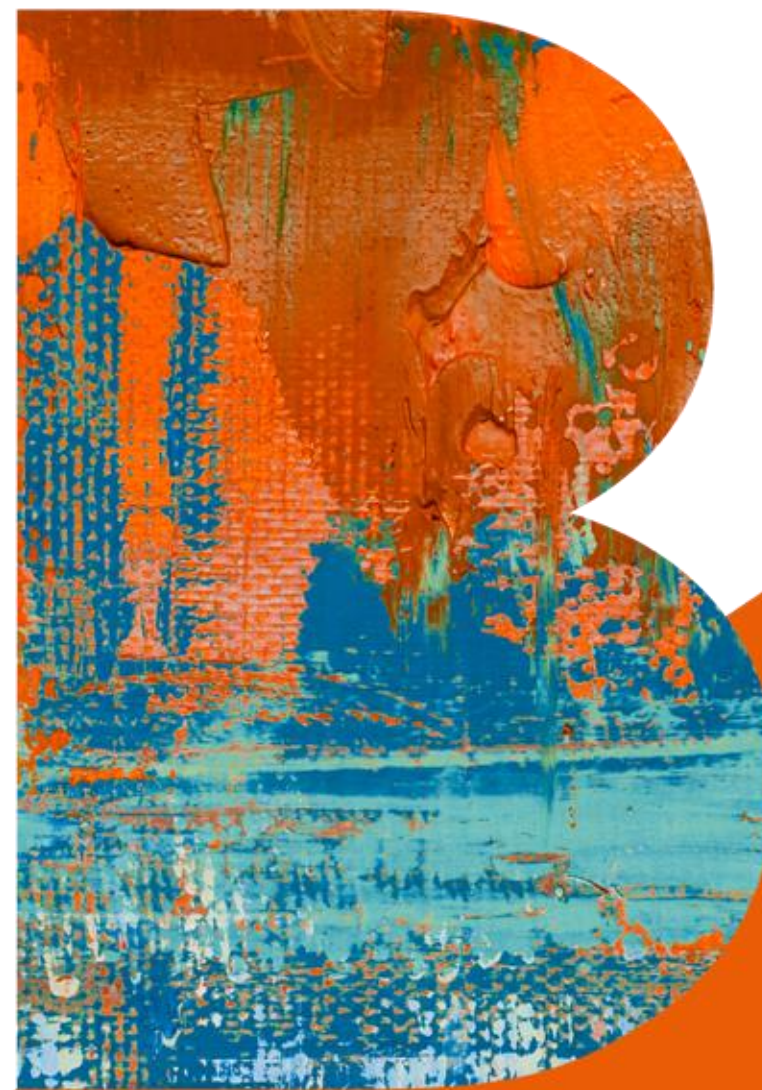
Promote Reflective Teaching:

Encourage participants to reflect on their own practices by analyzing teachers' strengths, challenges, and wishlist for TBLT, guided by the **5-dimensional framework**.


School 1: TWGHs Chi-Li Pao School (Mong Kok)		School 2: Hong Chi Morninghill School (Tseung Kwan O)		School 3: Choi Jun School (Tai Wai)	
					
Students	Primary (KS2)	Primary (KS2)	Primary (KS2)	Junior Secondary (KS3)	Junior Secondary (KS3)
Unit	Let's go shopping (9 lessons)	Taste (4 lessons) 5 Senses (2 lessons)	Emotions and expressions (4 lessons)	We can be better (12 lessons)	Get Well Soon (10 lessons)
Related to the real world	Mr Bean goes shopping; Going shopping in Mong Kok	Cook with 'chefs'; run a school café by choosing the best ingredients to make dishes; design a menu	Play the roles of radio broadcaster, audience member (phone-in), and film-critic.	Ss reflect on their problems (sleeping habits, fitness, tidiness, etc.) and find out appropriate solutions	Ss identify different health problems of schoolteachers and students, suggest some remedies for those in need, and spread the message and messages of how to be healthy
Reasoning Experiential Interpersonal Imagination skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Bean has funny shopping experiences. Why? Listen and learn about places for shopping Read the Principal's diary and riddles; guess the shopping items Find out where can they buy the shopping items 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Oh, the chef has lost his taste for food. How do we make food tasty? Design a menu for a Café and write down the tastes and the related ingredients Describe the taste of the cooked food Choose the best ingredients for cooking in the wet market; relate them to the 5 senses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The broadcaster listens to the audience's emotional status. The audience member phones to express one's emotion. I am happy. The film-critics learns to distinguish male or female character (He/She) and identify each movie character's feeling. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine there was a Lazy Town infested with bugs. Identify problems in the story's main character. Solve problems with appropriate solutions. Make self-evaluations for further improvement. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify different symptoms and sickness of schoolteachers and students Give suggestions to the patients for keeping healthy. Design a poster of health precaution.
Listening 	Listen and learn about places for shopping and what they can buy.	Listen and find out which 5 senses the children have used	Listen and understand how this person feels and the reasons behind.	Listen to the characters in the story and identify their problems	Listen to the schoolteachers and identify their health problems
Speaking 	Role-plays between the school principal and students	Respond to the chef's questions (<i>How should I make the dish tasty?</i>)	Role play between the teacher and student.	Interview the main character through Zoom Ss present their reflections in front of the class	Interview the schoolteacher through zoom Role play among students
Writing 	Complete the dialogue <i>Principal, can I buy _____ for the party?</i> Because it is _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the blanks It is _____. (e.g. spicy) I can _____ with my _____. (e.g. I can taste it with my tongue.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the blanks I am _____. (e.g. happy) He is _____. (e.g. tired) She is _____. (e.g. scared) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a to-do-list for tidying up the room Write a list of advice for keeping fit Use the connective 'so' or 'therefore' to form sentences 	Complete the dialogue I am having a _____. You should _____. You should not _____. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use contractions to form sentences.
Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read riddles to figure out the shopping items Word decoding and word puzzle activities on the board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the words for describing tastes and senses; match them with pictures Word and sentence decoding activities on the board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the words for describing emotions (feelings); match them with pictures Word and sentence decoding activities on the board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word decoding activities Read someone's speech and find out their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word decoding activities Read someone's speech and find out their health problems.
Other skills	Developing online shopping skills	Problem-solving skills	Social skills (emotion recognition and expression)	Problem-solving skills; IT skills	Oral presentation (public speaking)
Task outcome	Shopping done 	A meal is cooked; menu designed 	I can express my own and others' feelings. 	Lazy bugs removed 	Health suggestion is given; poster designed 

School 4: Rotary Club Hong Chi Morninghope School (Chai Wan)		School 5: SAHK Ko Fook Lu Memorial School (Shatin)		School 5: SAHK Ko Fook Lu Memorial School (Shatin)		School 6: Hong Kong Red Cross Princess Alexandra School (Lam Tin)			
									
Students	Primary (KS2)	Primary (KS2)		Primary (KS2)		Senior Secondary (KS3)			
Unit	Road Safety (6 lessons)	Four Seasons (5 lessons)		Opposite Adjective and Tense (4 lessons)		The First Day in Google (3 lessons)			
Related to the real world		Ss travel from school in Hong Kong side to Fung Tak Park in Wong Tai Sin and go sightseeing inside the park.		Make a new friend 'Aunt Lucy', introducing her the four seasons of Hong Kong and one's leisure activity by writing her an email.		Share photo album with 'Aunt Lucy', describing the difference of oneself by using the opposite adjectives (e.g. weak/strong).		Start the first day of new job, going through the office reception and the Human Resources Department to sign up the contract.	
Reasoning Experiential Interpersonal Imagination skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Follow the correct direction to take the transportationsComply the road safety regulation to safely arrive the destinationFollow the maps and park signs during sightseeingFind out the hidden treasures in the park	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Get to know a new friend 'Aunt Lucy' from Japan, including the weathers and clothing there.Describe the seasons, clothing, and corresponding leisure activities in Hong KongRead the email from Aunt Lucy, knowing her favorite leisure activities in the Hong Kong four seasons.Write an email to Aunt Lucy, sharing her one's favourite leisure activities in the Hong Kong four seasons.		<ol style="list-style-type: none">Learn the concept of past and present tense.Learn the serval opposite adjectives.Read the photo album and listen Aunt Lucy's message.Describe one's differences between present and past with proper opposite adjectives.		<ol style="list-style-type: none">Imagine you are hired as a trainee by Google in Hong Kong.Introduce yourself at the receptionistLearn the duties of Human Resource Department.Understand your job and sign up the contract.			
Listening	 Listen and learn about the road safety regulation and the park signs.	Listen to Aunt Lucy's audio messages.		Listen to Aunt Lucy's audio messages.		Listen to the characters in the story and follow the instructions.			
Speaking	 Interact between the teachers and students	Interact between the teachers and students		Introduce one's past and present Hello, my name is _____, Now, I am _____ (e.g. fat). Many years ago, I was _____ (e.g. thin).		Interact between the teachers and students			
Writing	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fill in the blank Do not _____ (e.g. play) No _____ (e.g. running) You (e.g. should/ should not) bring a dog to the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The self-introduction I live in _____. In spring, I _____. In summer, I _____. In autumn, I _____. In winter, I _____.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fill in the blank Now, I _____ tall (e.g. am). Many years ago, I _____ (e.g. short).Write a caption for one's photo (e.g. I was fat; I was small; I am tall etc.).		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fill in the blank What does Human Resources Department handle? Handle _____ (e.g. probation) Handle _____ (e.g. salary) Handle _____ (e.g. contract)			
Reading	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reading different road signs and park signs to figure out the regulations.Word decoding and word puzzle activities on the board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read the words for describing seasons clothing and leisure activities; match them with picturesRead the emailSentence decoding activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read the words for describing opposite adjectives; match them with picturesWord decoding activities on the board		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read the self-introduction contentRead the duties of Human Resource Dept.Read the contractWord decoding activities			
Other skills	Sense of Road Safety; Moral reasoning	Social skills		Social skills		Job skills			
Task outcome	Journey completed	A new friend made; email written		Photo caption written		Contract signed			
									

Learning From Ms Meng



Ms Meng's Lesson




Google Hong Kong

1

preparation


1. HR department
2. I am a **trainee**.
3. please wait.
4. This way, please.

2



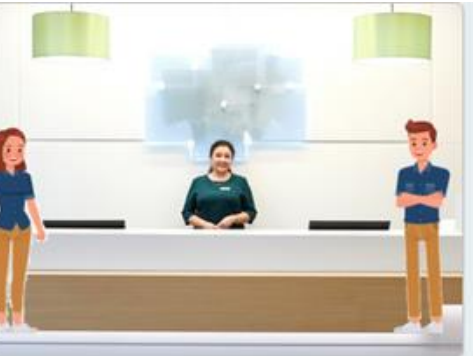
I am a **new trainee**.
I am on a probation period.

3




you are here... Hong Kong

4

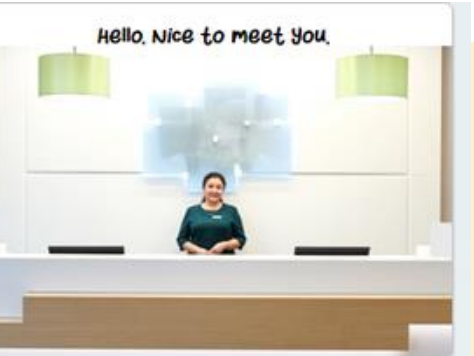


5



☐ You are Chris Wong.
☐ You are just hired by **Google Hong Kong**, an IT company.
☐ Today is your first day of work!
☐ You have just arrived. Guess where you are now?

6



Hello. Nice to meet you.

7

How would you introduce yourself to the RECEPTIONIST?

1. Good morning / Good afternoon!
2. I'm Chris, a new trainee.
3. I'm 22 years old.
4. I live in Lam Tin.
5. I'm looking forward to getting to know you guys!
6. I graduated from HK Red Cross Princess Alexandra School.


8

Great! You have arrived at Google HK.

Great! You have arrived at Google Hong Kong.

You have introduced yourself!


9



please go to human resources department

receptionist

10



HUMAN RESOURCES

11

Human Resources Department

Welcome **new trainees** (me).
Handles **salaries**.
Handles **contracts**.
Handles **probations**.

12

What does Human Resources handle?

Handle p _ _ _ b _ _ t _ _ _
3 months

Handle s _ _ _ l _ _ r _ _ : \$8000
5%

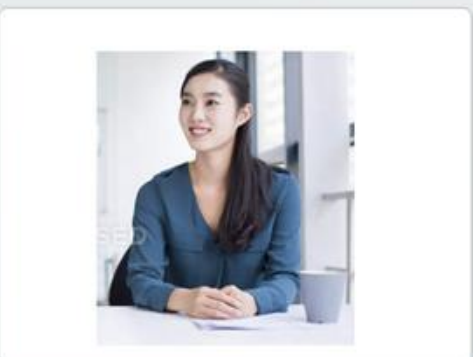
Handle w _ _ _ k _ _ _
H o _ _ _ s :
10 am - 6 pm

13

LISTENING

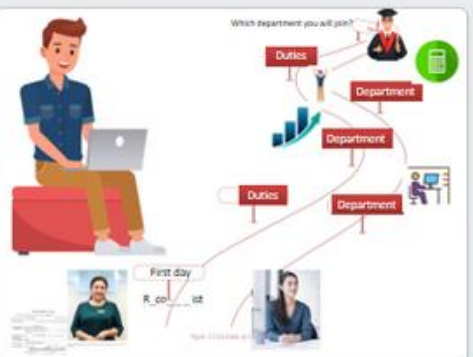
Why do you need to talk to her?
Do you have any questions to ask?

14



receptionist

15



Which department you will join?

Duties

Department

First day

16


You have completed your first day!

You have...

1. met the **receptionist**.
2. learnt about **human resources department**.
3. learnt about your **probation**.


Now Sign the contract!

17




CONTRACT

18

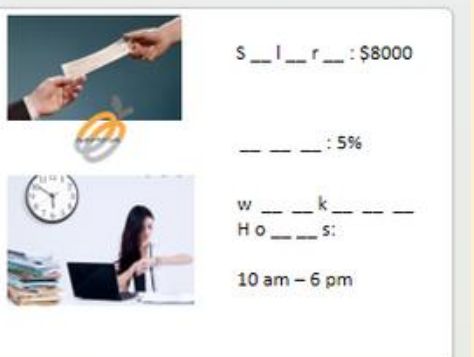


19



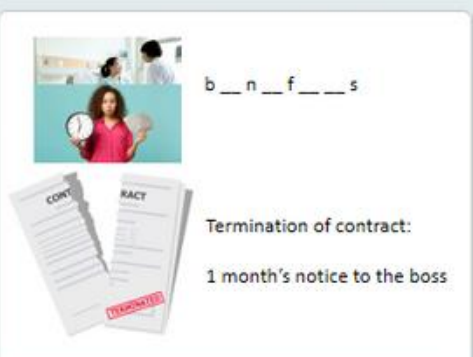
Position: t _ _ _ e _ _
Place of work: C _ _ _ w _ _ B _ _

20



S _ _ l _ _ r _ _ : \$8000
_ _ _ : 5%
w _ _ _ k _ _ _
H o _ _ _ s :
10 am - 6 pm

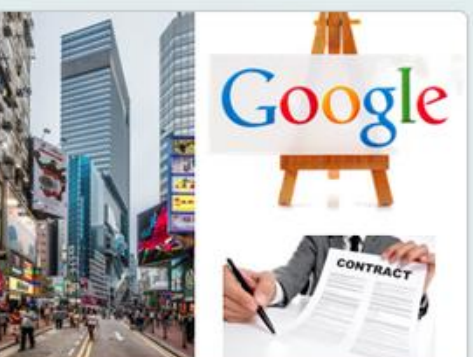
21



b _ _ n _ f _ _ s

Termination of contract:
1 month's notice to the boss

22



Google

CONTRACT

23

Ms. Meng's Lesson: Practices that need improvement

Aspect	Nature of the Problem	Example from Lessons	Times it Happened	% Done Well	% Missed
Not Enough Excitement	Lesson lacks emotional spark to engage	(33:47, student frustration ignored, no response)	2	50	50
Not Feeling Like a Real Story	Teaches safety/navigation skills	"Could you try to fill in the blanks now?" (17:44, shifts to task) - "Could you open OneNote?" (17:44, technical detour) - "Is that okay about using OneNote?" (19:26, focus on tool, not story) - "Play the match-up game" (35:19, game breaks narrative flow)	12	75	25
Weak Questions for Problem-Solving	Questions don't push thinking or solving	- "Should we turn left or turn right?" (11:25, answered fast) - "Can you see my screen?" (30:27, yes/no, no depth) - "What can you see on the desk?" (13:15, simple recall, no follow-up) - "Do you have any questions?" (33:47, vague, unguided)	7	57	43

Story-telling Issue

25% of the time, Ms. Meng stopped the Google story with side tasks.

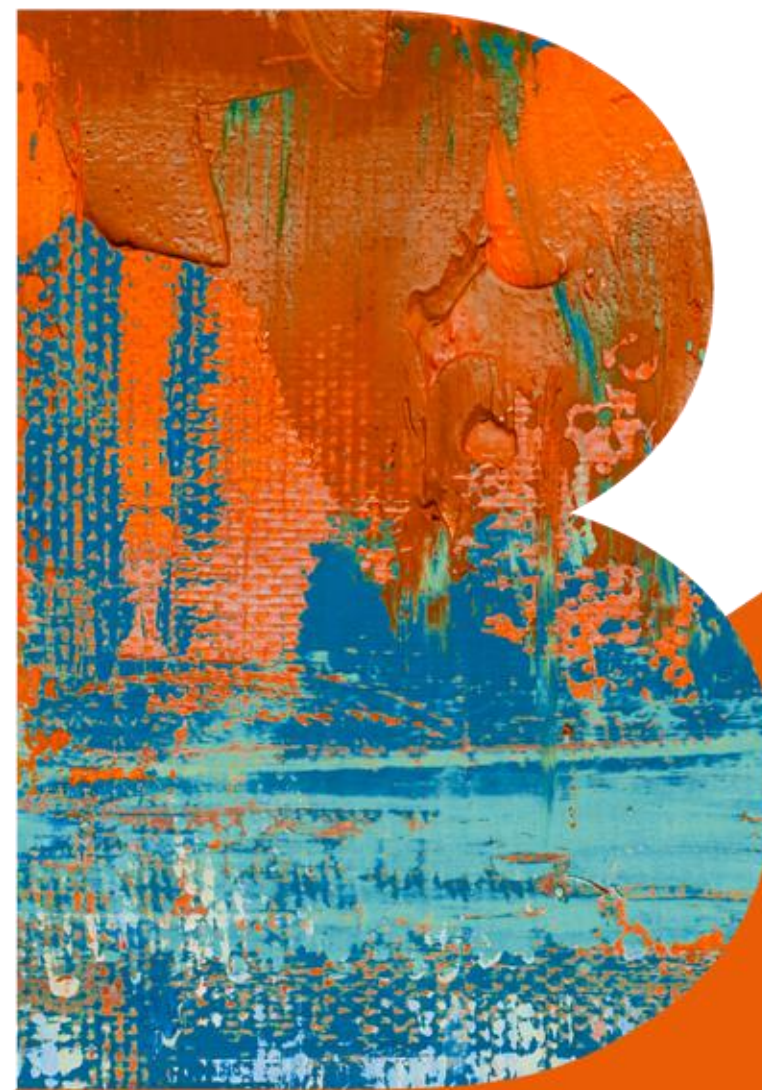
Questioning issue

43% of Ms. Meng's questions didn't push students to solve problems or think deeply.

Ms. Meng's Good and Poor Practices

Aspect	Pre-Interview	Post-Interview	Good Practices	Poor Practices
Task Design	"Like a new colleague... entered the company" (47:06); "There is a purpose... should be able to learn" (19:18) – Journey and goal-focused.	"Not exactly task-based... took them to the next step" (4:27-45:49) – Doubts journey, focuses on steps.	Pre: Strong narrative and goal intent starts lesson well (00:06:38: "arrived at Google").	Post: Doubts TBLT fit, misses goal checks (25% story breaks, e.g., 17:44: "open OneNote"; 45:49: no pauses).
Exploratory Talk	Teaches safety/navigation skills	"Use exploratory talk... 'What do you think you will see?'" (12:50-23:11) – Suggests engaging students.	Post: Grows to value interactive talk, enhancing TBLT (e.g., suggested "What do you see?" 12:50).	Pre/Lesson: Lacks exploration, weak questions (43% poor, e.g., 11:25: "turn left?" answered fast).
Use of Visuals/Pictures	Questions don't push thinking or solving	Put the pictures on the orange board... get meaning from visual cue" (50:31-56:35) – Prioritises visuals.	Post: Shifts to visuals-first for storytelling (e.g., plans images before words, 50:31).	Pre/Lesson: Text-heavy, delays visuals (e.g., no pictures until 35:19 Wordwall, reduces immersion).

Learning From Ms Leung and Mr Fu



Ms Leung's definition of task-based learning can be summarised as

// A teaching approach where students engage in practical, **problem-solving activities** within a meaningful, often **game-like context or storyline**, using language to address **real-life challenges and achieve specific outcomes**, such as upgraded skills or self-awareness //



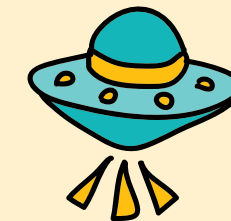
Lesson Characteristics

Focus on Real-Life Tasks (TBLT Principle):

- Emphasizes solving problem-based missions that mirror everyday scenarios.
- Uses critical thinking tasks to engage students in meaningful contexts.

Gamification and Role-Playing:

- Incorporates scenario-based learning and storytelling to personalize learning.
- Believes gamified, character-based tasks enhance engagement.



Storytelling and Clear Structures:

- Advocates for storytelling to increase student motivation.
- Prioritises clear task introductions to ensure comprehension.

Vision for Special Schools:

- Advocates for critical thinking tasks for students with special needs, emphasising conceptual development and higher-order thinking.
- Aligns tasks with her students' relatively high abilities.



Comparing Strong TBLT vs. Weak TBLT Approaches

Question Type	Strong TBLT (e.g., 2022-03-01)	Form-Focused (e.g., 2022-04-28)	Good Practice Target (%)
Open-ended	13.4% (9/67)	12.7% (7/55)	20–30%
Closed-ended	20.9% (14/67)	16.4% (9/55)	15–25%
Answer-checking	14.9% (10/67)	25.5% (14/55)	10–20%
Interpersonal Knowledge	28.4% (19/67)	14.5% (8/55)	25–35%
Low-Level (Subset)	19.4% (13/67)	29.1% (16/55)	15–25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Key Insight: Strong TBLT lessons (e.g., 2022-03-01) emphasize interpersonal questions (28.4%) to engage students, while form-focused lessons (e.g., 2022-04-28) rely more on answer-checking (25.5%).			

Good Practice:
Aim for 20–30% open-ended questions to foster critical thinking and 25–35% interpersonal questions to personalise learning for special needs students.

Comparison of TBLT Features Across Lessons

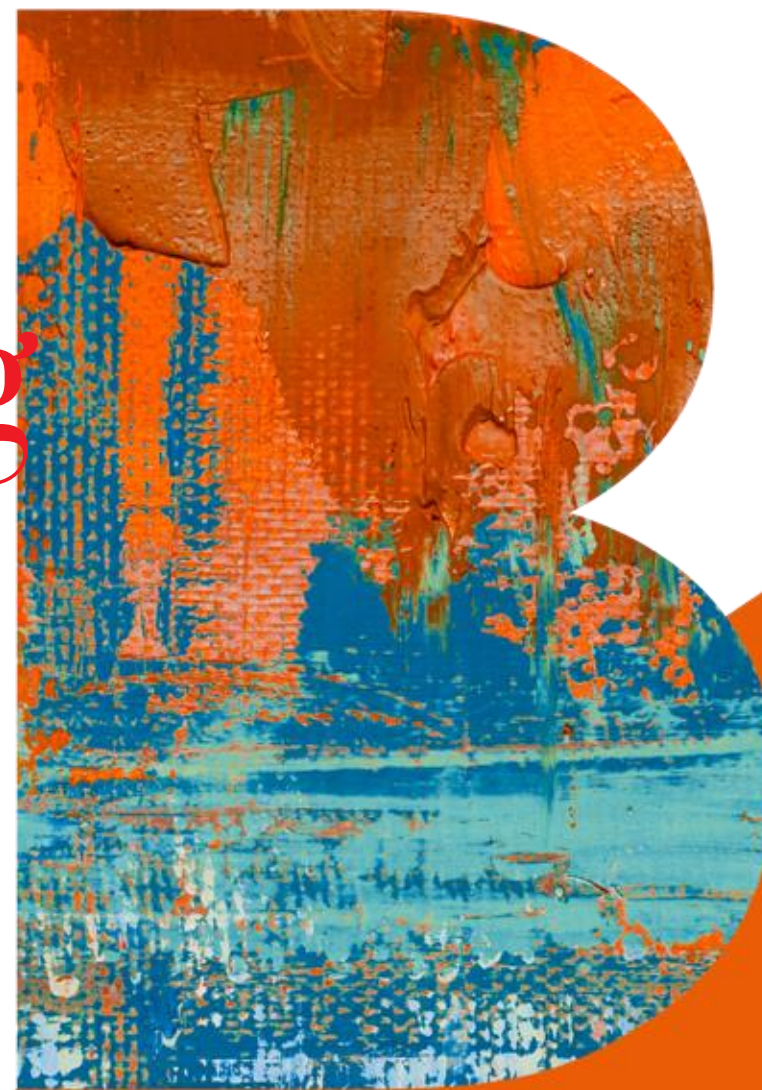
Lesson feature	Strong TBLT (2022-03-01) (26.45 min)	Moderate TBLT (2022- 02-24) (25.83 min)	Form-Focused (2022-04-28) (30.83 min)	Good Practice Indicator (%)	Poor Practice Indicator (%)
1. References to Coherent Context (CCS Score)	Count: 23 (CCS: 20.5) Avg: 8.70/10 mins	Count: 22 (CCS: 20) Avg: 8.52	Count: 18 (CCS: 15) Avg: 5.84	75–90% (CCS > 80% of refs)	<60% (CCS < 70% of refs)
2. Defines Objectives/Outcomes	Count: 3 Avg: 1.13	Count: 3 Avg: 1.16	Count: 2 Avg: 0.65	10–15%	<5%
3. Engages in Problem-Solving/Creative Thinking	Count: 12 Avg: 4.54	Count: 12 Avg: 4.65	Count: 8 Avg: 2.59	15–25%	<10%
4. Provides Linguistic Input	Count: 17 Avg: 6.43	Count: 16 Avg: 6.20	Count: 12 Avg: 3.89	20–30%	<15%
7. Relates to Everyday Knowledge	Count: 8 Avg: 3.02	Count: 8 Avg: 3.10	Count: 5 Avg: 1.62	15–20%	<10%
8. Evokes Affective Meanings	Count: 5 Avg: 1.89	Count: 5 Avg: 1.94	Count: 3 Avg: 0.97	5–15%	<5%

Good Practice (75–90%): High CCS (>80% of references) ensures a coherent narrative, keeping students focused on the task.

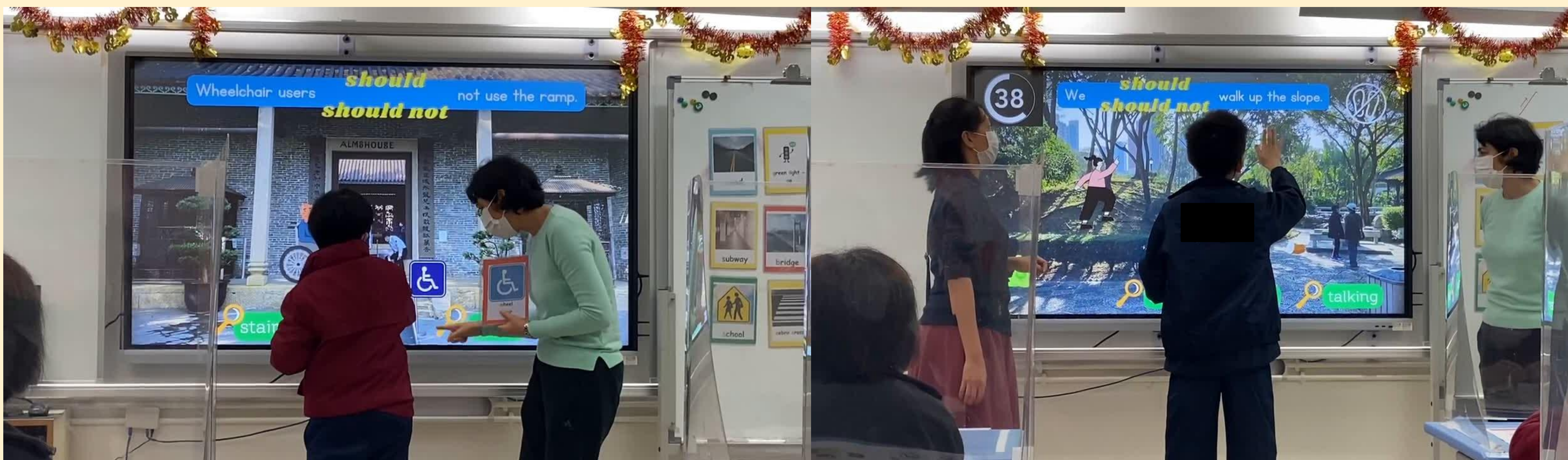
Engages in Problem-Solving/Creative Thinking

Good Practice (15–25%): Frequent engagement fosters critical thinking, vital for TBLT’s student-centered

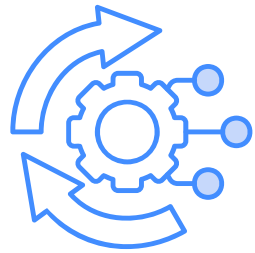
Learning From Ms Bell and Ms Wang



Ms Bell and Ms Wang's Lessons



Good Practices



Transformation

Shifted from rigid, tool-driven teaching to a dynamic, student-centered TBLT approach.



Flexibility

Flexibility over fixed plans fosters independence in SEN students.



Discovery

Find out methods (e.g., plan a problem) reveals what engages SEN learners.



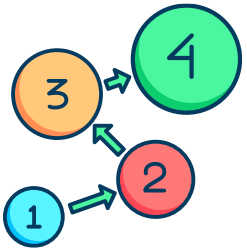
Balance

Managing cognitive load balances stimulation and clarity.



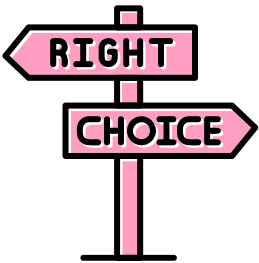
Role

Teacher's central role adapts to SEN interaction limits.



Structure

Sequencing tasks (e.g., Lesson 13's treasure hunt) breaks goals into digestible steps.



Engagement

Process focus (e.g., Lesson 11's ongoing choices) sustains student engagement.

What Are Good Lesson Features?

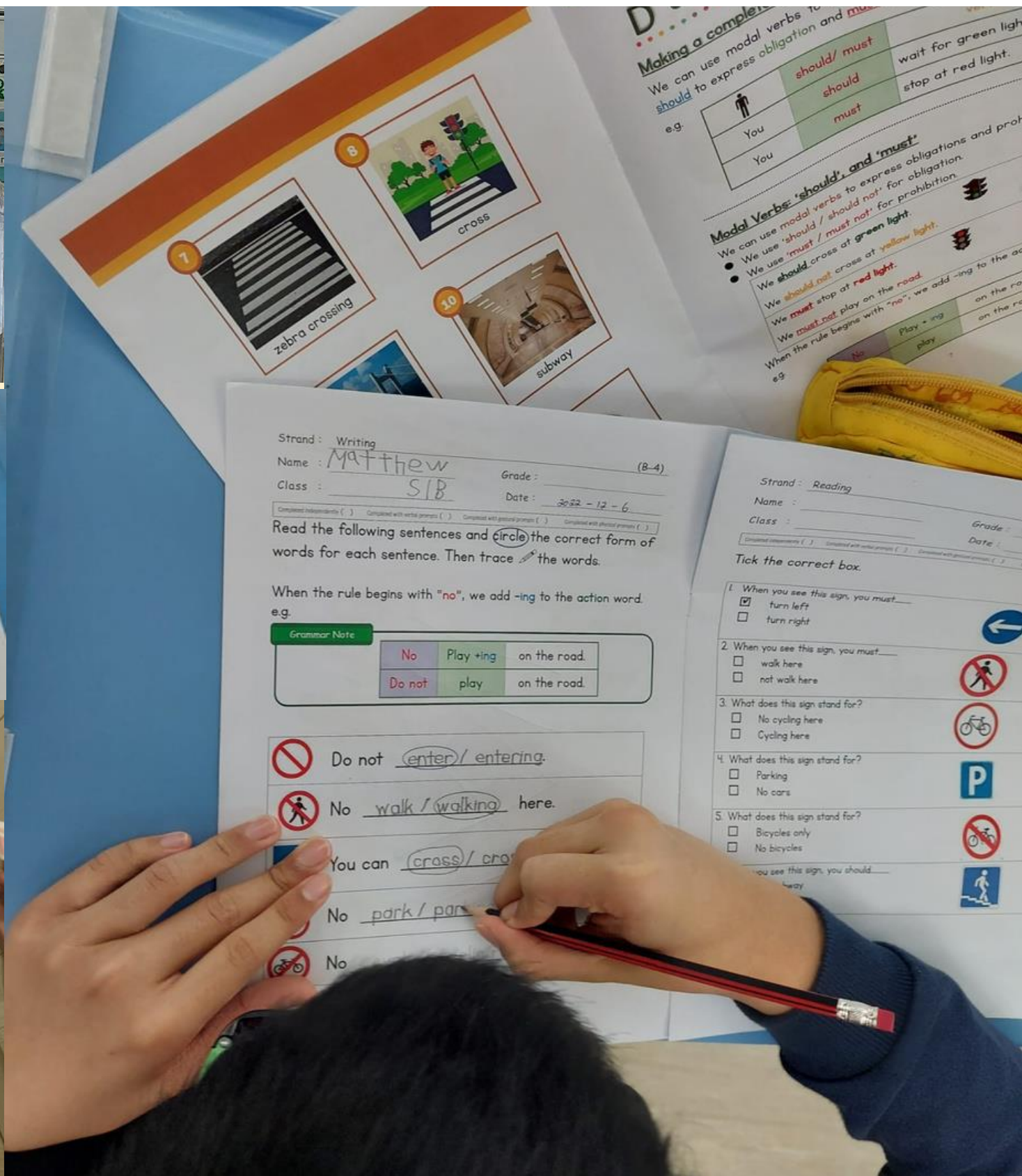
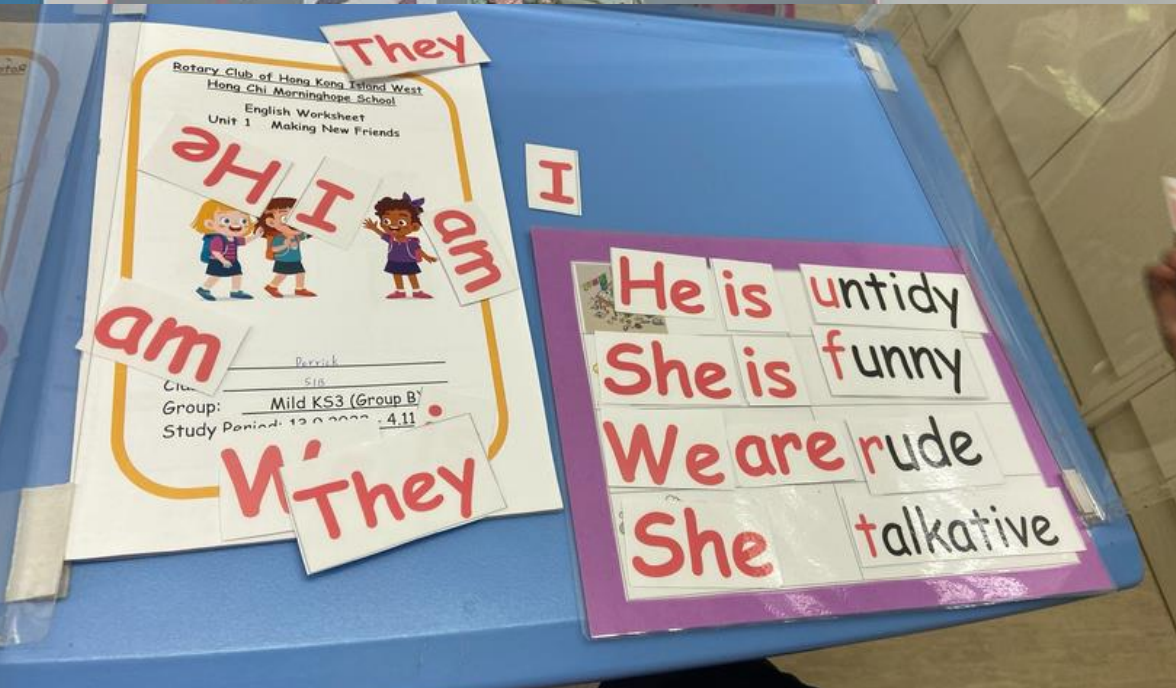
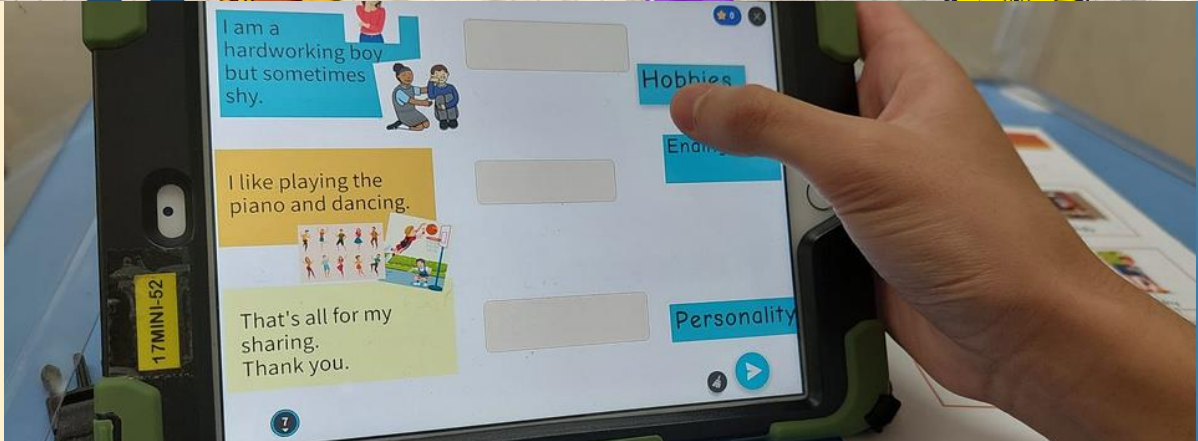
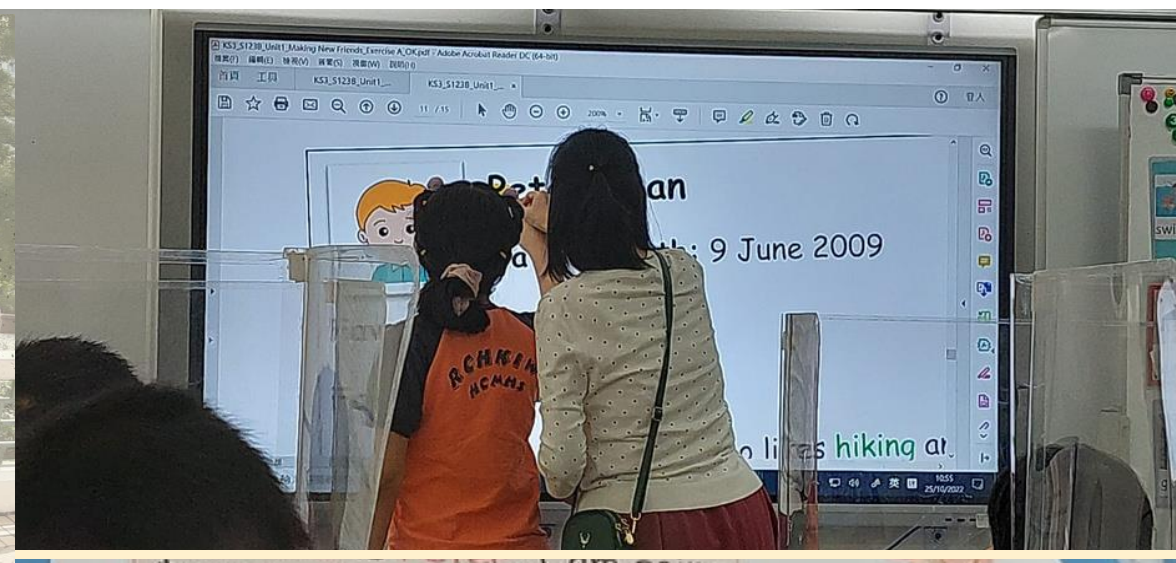
Aspect	Average per 10 mins	Example from Lessons
Coherent Context Score	8 times (CCS 80% at 1 pt)	Fung Tak Park journey 鳳德公園 (Lesson 7)
Linguistic Support	6.5 times	Look left and right (Lesson 11)
Diverse Activities	2 times	Role-play (Lesson 9: 1.7), word wall (Lesson 11: 2.0)
Remind Objectives	0.3 time	Focus on should/should not" (Lesson 11: 1)

Insights

Good features like high coherence (e.g., Lesson 7's CCS 22) and rich input (e.g., Lesson 13's grammar focus) drive engagement.

However, the not-so-good feature of infrequent objective statements (e.g., only 3 times across lessons) suggests room to enhance clarity.

Ms Bell and Ms Wang's Gallery



Ms Bell and Ms Wang's reflections

Pre-Study Belief

Post-Study Realisation

Extended Curriculum: 20 lessons/unit, 4 units/year

Exploratory Approach: Experimenting with TBLT revealed flexibility is more important than fixed lesson counts, letting teachers adapt to what engages students.

Practical Integration: English in daily life

Task Sequencing: Strategically ordering tasks (e.g., describe symptoms → learn clinic operations → write doctor's letter) structures practical learning into manageable steps.

Visual Vocabulary (PowerPoint, images -ask students to pair vocabulary with images)

Process-Oriented Tasks: Ongoing tasks, unlike one-off outputs, methodically build language through varied experiences (e.g., signs, navigation), enhancing retention.

Role-Playing: Dynamic for language, problem-solving

Teacher as Interlocutor: SEN students' reliance on teacher negotiation (not peers) shifts role-playing to guided dialogues, tailoring support to their needs.

Interactive Tools: [Rainbow One](#), Wordwall

Cognitive Load Management: Gradual introduction of tools and vocabulary prevents overwhelm, ensuring steady comprehension over rapid exposure.



Good Practices for TBLT in SEN Contexts

2

Create Meaningful Connections (Deep Dive)

Link your lessons to students' real-world experiences, like shopping (Ms Leung) or navigation (Ms Bell & Ms Wang), to engage SEN students and address memory or processing issues.



Combine engaging stories, like Mr. Bean (Ms May), with clear goals to ensure outputs

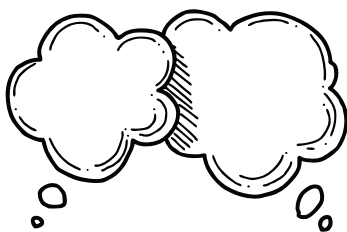
Guide with Clear, Active-Thinking Tasks (Input)

Design structured activities, like role-plays (Mr Fu) or step-by-step mapping (Ms Wang), to spark learning.



Encourage Talking Together (Thinking-Together)

Use 20–30% open-ended and 25–35% personal questions (Ms Leung's style) to foster dialogue, helping students process emotions and negotiate through interaction - *even though students may immediately respond*.



Support with Tools and Steps (Assistive Techniques)

Break tasks into small, visual-supported steps (Ms Bell) and revisit material (Ms May's lesson) to manage cognitive load.

