



MODULE 3

3.4 LEARNER'S NEEDS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES

Now let's look at some basic tools for identifying your students' needs and interests.

Your language lesson needs to be aligned with your students' goals. What tasks do your students need? Why do they attend your class? What are their interests?

On the first day of the course, but also throughout the course, you can try to find out some information about your students with specific tasks: this work is called **task-based needs analysis**.

If you decide to do it early in the course, it can help you better organize your curriculum with learning experiences that motivate students. However, this is a procedure that can be present throughout the course.

Task-based needs analysis can be done using a variety of methods, and combining a few of them may provide a more reliable picture of the situation:

1. Observe the students and what they can do.
2. Conduct an interview with students or discuss various tasks with them and see where they show interest or what tasks they can do more easily than others. For example, going to the dentist, taking the bus, or watching movies.
3. Assess students to determine their true needs. You can do this before the course begins with a Google Form, or in class, you can provide a chart and ask students to enter the tasks they would like to learn, their reasons for learning this language, and their interests and hobbies. This can be kept in their personal portfolios so that students can have access to it and self-assess their performance or keep track of their process, which we'll talk about again in Module 5.

Here is an example of such a form:



What tasks/activities do I want to learn to be able to do in (language)?	Why do I learn (language)?	My interests / hobbies

Is needs analysis useful? How? Let's check practically on one example. Let's imagine you have these results from all your learners:

What tasks/activities do I want to learn to be able to do in (language)?	Why do I learn (language)?	My interests / hobbies
Take a bus, watch movies, write reports	To work	Dancing, football
Read novels and watch movies	To understand the culture	Reading, cinema
Talk when at the supermarket	To make friends	Walking, cinema
Write a diary	To have fun	Cinema, music
Read books and visit a bookshop	I love languages	Reading, creative writing, cinema
Watch movies, talk with my football team players	To work	Football
Talk with my neighbours and colleagues	To travel in the country	Cooking, dancing

What does this evidence show for your class?

1. Your learners are here for various reasons that you can try to accomplish by adapting your tasks (for example, the ones that need the language to work or communicate with their colleagues, maybe they will need work-related tasks such as attending an interview, writing a curriculum, going-out with colleagues).



Task – Applying for a job

Work in groups. One of you is applying for a job. This person describes the job she would like to the other.

Look at online portals of job advertisements and find some possible jobs that suits the description.

Write a letter applying for the job.

2. Also, as you have various learners who like cinema or movies, it might be a great idea to include cinema-related tasks. We will analyse the use of the different materials and see a specific example in module 4.

3. As there are various learners that have interest in kinaesthetic activities (such as walking, dancing, or playing football), this might be a clue for adapting your methodology (for example, when doing a task, you can put learners to move, to do something active).

Other things to remember:

When designing your TBLT curriculum, you should consider the age of the participants and any special requirements they have; their reasons for learning the language; their different social realities; how the participants are used to learning; and their previous language learning experiences. In particular, when teaching your language to adult learners, it is important that you think about the following 5 elements:

- Use their language experience
- Motivate them
- Remember that some learners need to use the language immediately.
- Adult curricula focus on problems
- Adult learners need to be able to learn at their own pace and have the opportunity to assess their own learning.

Remember: the more you take your students into account, the better your chances are that they will stay engaged!