2.2. The Level of Design

2.2.1. The general and specific objectives of the method

We can distinguish between two kinds of objectives when describing the TA: general objectives of TA based teaching as a part of curriculum and concrete objectives relevant to specific context. The latter ones will vary from context to context, therefore we will stop here on what we see as general objectives of TA.

The main objective of TA is the development of problem solving competence. Let us clarify what we mean here. Chomsky defined linguistic competence as the knowledge of formal linguistic properties (Chomsky, 1965). At the same time, linguistic "competence can be more broadly conceived so as to include knowing how to act on this knowledge in actual language use." (Widdowson, 2003:78) However this will not be enough without a desire and an inclination to apply this knowledge, something we refer to as disposition. Thus, within TA we understand competence as including all three elements: knowing what, knowing how and having a disposition to act on the first two.

In addition to linguistic competence, the importance of other competences has lately been highlighted. The Common European Framework of Reference (2001) also lists sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, practically everyone recognises the importance of intercultural competence, human rights are becoming another competence language teachers should take into account, etc. This abundance of competences to be taken care of is obviously in conflict with the amount of time that can be afforded to teach languages in most contexts. A possible resolution to this problem, in our view, could be a focus on a meta-competence which will provide the basis for further development of all other necessary competences. We call this meta competence a problem solving competence and define it as an ability and disposition to solve communicative (linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, etc) and other kinds of problems when no typical solution[19] is available.

[19] In this research we understand *typical solution* as it is conceptualised in the context of TRIZ and OTSM research, i.e. a well-known standard solution to a given type of problem. A typical problem is a problem to which a typical solution is known, thus it can be described as IF (description of a problem) THEN (description of solution).

The development of the problem solving competence is realized through the four main vectors of TA. Table 2.2.1 below summarises the main objectives of each of the vector.

Table 2.2.1. Objectives of the Four Vectors of TA.

Vector of TA	**Objective**
1. Language as the object of study	• To be able to develop and apply a system of models for a systematic representation of a given language.
2. Communication as the object of study	• To be able to fully realise the meaning potential of a given language.
3. Problem solving as the object of study	• To be able to apply various problem solving models in a system.
4. Learning as the object of study	• To become a mediator in all aspects of one's learning.

2.2.2. A syllabus model

According to Richard and Rogers (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:230) conventional syllabus specifies the content of the course from the following categories: language structures, functions, topics and themes, macro-skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), competencies, text types and vocabulary targets. In this respect, TA syllabus is largely non-conventional as it is based on none of the above categories.

One of the main contradictions underlying syllabus design is that it has to be universal in order to meet the needs of publishers of commercial materials and it has to be specific in order to meet the needs coming from particular learning contexts. In our view, this contradiction is not really resolved in the case of international course books. Although most course book authors invite teachers to supplement the book with their own materials, to the best of our knowledge no course book offers the principles of this integration. As a result, in many cases supplementing is either fragmentary or is absent altogether.

How is the contradiction between flexible and rigid syllabus resolved in TA? Each teacher working with TA is offered general principles to syllabus design (see below) and a version of proposed syllabus for the current age / level group. Then, the teacher is free to change / add on to specific materials. This done, the proposed syllabus is brought to students who are invited to make their choices on

the basis of needs and personal preferences at the beginning of learning. As a result, both the teacher and students have the actual syllabus (see Appendix 2.1 for examples of both proposed and finalised syllabi).

Let us turn to a more specific description of a TA syllabus. There are five axes according to which the syllabus is organised: technology and materials, type of work, outcome, inventive thinking skills and the number of lessons[20]. Specific descriptions of all these axes is given in other parts of this paper, here we will provide a brief summary and focus on syllabus context.

2.2.2.1. Technologies and materials

The TA comprises five technologies: the Text Technology (TT), the Film Technology (FT), the Creative Grammar Technology (CGT), the Self-Study Technology (SST) and the Research Technology (RT) (see part 2.3.1. for a specific description of each technology). Within each technology, specific themes and / or materials are chosen. According to the choice, technologies can be divided into two groups: (1) materials and / or themes initially proposed by the teacher and then finalised by students (TT, FT, CGT) and (2) materials and / or themes fully chosen by students (SST, RT). Table 2.2. below summarises what is chosen under each technology.

Table 2.2.2. Object of Choice with Technologies of TA.

Technology	**Object of Choice**
Text Technology	• Authors and specific texts
Film Technology	• Directors and specific films
Creative Grammar Technology	• Grammar themes[21]
Self-Study Technology	• Themes and materials for individual work on both language and OTSM
Research Technology	• Field and themes for individual research project

[20] Neither specific language content nor the order of learning is pre-defined in TA syllabus. Language content is planned only within Creative Grammar Technology (dealing with language as the object of study). When working with other technologies, the teacher is expected to be ready to focus on any language point which appears essential as students are working on the task. As to the order, it is believed that it is largely a function of specific context and it is for a teacher to decide what will be best in her content. The proposed syllabus may give certain suggestions on this issue, though.

[21] Only those grammar themes that refer to what Lewis (Lewis 1986) calls “grammar-as-choice” are planned in TA syllabus.

In addition to technologies, planning according to this axis also includes progress tests in language and thinking which are normally written three times during an academic year (for details on language and thinking tests, see Chapter 3 of this paper).

2.2.2.2. Type of work

When discussing the type of work, TA technologies can again be subdivided into two groups: (1) TT, FT, CGT and (2) SST and RT. In both groups the main item of content planning is a system of tasks. However, in the first group different specific systems of tasks are offered by the teacher depending on the material in the finalised syllabus (a text in TT, a film in FT or a grammar theme in CGT) while in the second group the teacher offers a general system of tasks which is then applied by students to specific themes and materials they have chosen for these technologies. Thus, when looking at the TA syllabus, one will see a number of different systems of tasks planned under TT, CGT and FT and usually one system of tasks, or even a description of specific tasks under the system, in the case of SST and RT.

2.2.2.3. Outcome

Outcomes are products of learning. Some outcomes can be pre-defined by the teacher when planning the syllabus (e.g. pre- and post- grammar tests), however most choices are made by students. It is students who choose specific tasks in systems of tasks offered to them when we speak about TT, FT and CGT. A number of different possibilities may exist for implementing this approach. For example, the teacher may define a number of tasks to be done in each part of the system (usually one task in Parts 3, 5 and 6 and two tasks in Parts 4 and 8 in the system offered to TT and FT) or simply point out that it is the purpose of each part of the system that is to be reached and the actual number of tasks that need to be done for it can be fully decided by students themselves (this would be usual for work with a system of tasks in CGT).

In the case of SST and RT expected outcomes are identified by the teacher (in terms of general requirements) but it is the student who decides what exactly is to be done. Thus, the teacher may ask students to produce a plan for learning by a certain time, however the actual content of the plan will be defined by learners.

2.2.2.4. Inventive thinking skills and dispositions

Inventive thinking skills and dispositions can be presented as a system which consists of five groups (see Appendix 1.1). Planning of work with inventive thinking can be conducted either at the level of specific skills (e.g. describing elements by defining parameters and their values is essential for work with CGT) or a group of skills (e.g. skills for transformation of models of problem situation are essential when working with complex problems and problem networks such as writing films on the basis of a book). TA teachers with better OTSM background often plan this line through models for effective thinking, such as Element - Name of Feature – Value of Feature (ENV) or the multi-screen model. Such an approach is also possible as all models can be decomposed to a group of skills required for their successful application. Awareness of thinking potential of this or that task, ie possibility to apply this or that model or master this or that skill, is essential for successful implementation of a TA course, that is why it is recommended that the teacher pay due attention to this line of the syllabus, especially if he/she is still not confident enough when working with the TA.

2.2.2.5. Number of lessons

As well as in all other types of syllabi, both the teacher and the students should keep in mind the number of hours they have planned to allocate for this or that part of the syllabus. It is important to note though that TA teacher is allowed to be very flexible with time and re-organise the distribution of hours in the course of learning. A TA course is always about reaching the objectives set at the beginning and modified in the course of learning rather than “covering the syllabus”.

2.2.2.6. Syllabus – Summary

It is necessary to stress that planning along these five axes is done simultaneously in TA. This means that a traditional linear organisation of the syllabus is an impossibility here as a TA syllabus includes at least four lines[22] according to which planning is done. An alternative to it is a non-linear organisation of the syllabus based on the ideas of Khomenko (N. N. Khomenko, 1998). We call it a network syllabus. An analogy with learning to drive may be useful here. Imagine a syllabus for a course of practical driving. One will hardly ever present it as a line where some skills have to be acquired first (e.g. shifting

[22] The time axis can be excluded.

the gear or changing the lane) and some other skills will be acquired later (e.g. turning left or parking). Actual driving will always be in the centre of a driving syllabus and specific skills will be acquired in the process of driving where a need arises. All these skills are connected in a network and focusing on one of the nodes we inevitably come in contact with other nodes of the network. It is exactly this way how the syllabus is conceptualised in the TA – tasks aimed at the development of problem solving competence are always in the centre of the syllabus and when working upon them the teacher is able to focus on any of the nodes of a network of other skills as the need arises. However, as learning progresses, learners are expected to develop a better vision of the network. It is no longer only the teacher who sees the network and makes a decision as to what needs to be highlighted. Decisions become more and more a matter of negotiations and finally learners are expected to make all their decisions themselves, i.e. become their own mediators.

2.2.3. Types of learning and teaching activities

The best way to describe learning and teaching activities offered in a TA classroom is through consideration of technologies. In this section we will consider each technology in turn and then focus on some general questions related to forms of work offered in TA.

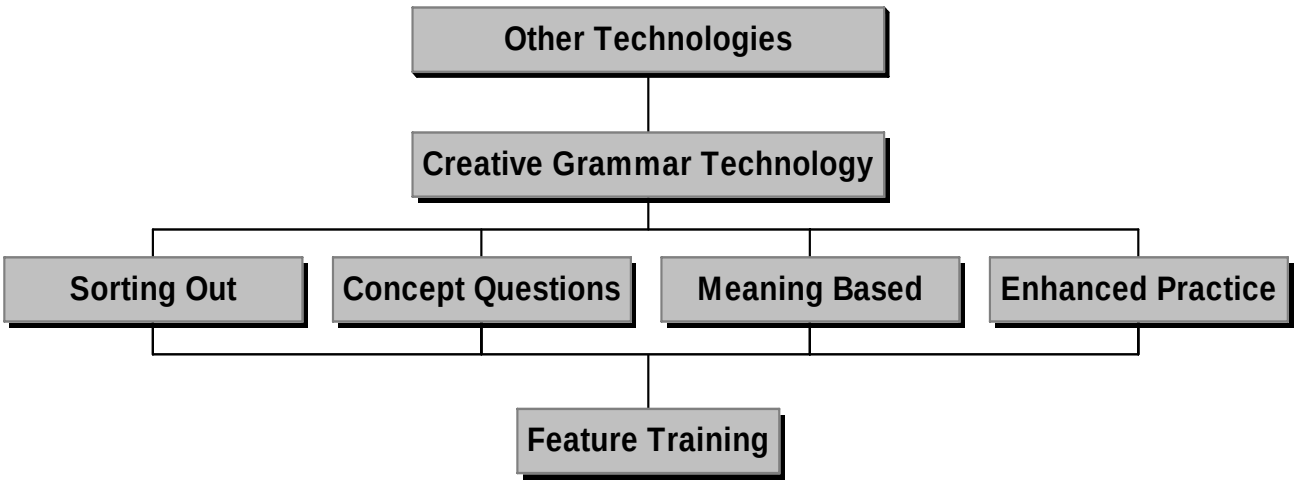
2.2.3.1. The Creative Grammar Technology

The Creative Grammar Technology (CGT) is the only technology within TA where students work with language as an object of study. This fact determines the main aim for the technology: *to help learners see language as a system*. Such a vision will include the following features: understanding of a hierarchic nature of language, awareness of various functions of language elements, conceptualisation of various language elements as a network, perception of the role of context in using language, and seeing language as constantly evolving in time[23].

The main element of the CGT is a system of grammar tasks. Let us stress it – a system rather than a collection of separate tasks. We will first look at elements of the CGT and then will proceed with a description of how they work together. Figure 2.3 below lists types of tasks offered under CGT.

[23] Our aim here is not to provide a comprehensive list but rather demonstrate the essence of how systematic vision of language is understood within TA.

Fig.2.2.1. Types of Tasks in Creative Grammar Technology



2.2.3.1.1. TYPES OF TASKS IN CREATIVE GRAMMAR TECHNOLOGY

2.2.3.1.1.1. Sorting out

Sorting out is a well-known type of grammar task. Examples of this practice can now be found in a number of course books used for teaching English. Examples of sorting out tasks can also be found in books by Michael Lewis – see (Lewis, 1986) for grammar tasks and (Lewis, 1993, 1997) for lexical tasks. Below you can see an example of a sorting out task[24].

Table 2.2.3. Example of A Sorting Out Task.

Task 2.2.[25]
Sort the following utterances into two groups.

1. I'm having lunch with Lynne tomorrow.
2. What are you doing on Saturday evening?
3. Look at that boat. It's going to sink.
4. She is not going to be there.
5. Sarah is taking an exam on Monday.
6. I'm going to have a shower.
7. We are visiting some friends in Scotland next weekend.
8. The neighbours are coming in to watch television.
9. Hurry up! It's getting late. You are going to miss your train.
10. I'm flying to Rome next week.

[24] Here and further on examples of grammar tasks will be taken from a system of tasks "Speaking about Future" developed together with I.Buchinska, E.Lasevich, T.Savicka and D.Pabrika-Jansone in the framework of "New Learners in the New Europe" project supported by the British Council Latvia. This and other TA teaching materials are available at the project website (www.thinking-approach.org). A system of tasks "Speaking about Future" is also available in Appendix 2.2. of the given paper.

[25] Task numbers here and further on in the text are the same as the numbers in the system of task presented in the Appendix.

11. He is being met at the station tonight.
12. Our new piano is being delivered this afternoon.

Group 1	**Group 2**
(put down sentence numbers)	(put down sentence numbers)
Criteria:	**Criteria:**

Other possible groups (fill as many as you can):

Group 1	**Group 2**
(put down sentence numbers)	(put down sentence numbers)
Criteria:	**Criteria:**

Group 1	**Group 2**
(put down sentence numbers)	(put down sentence numbers)
Criteria:	**Criteria:**

The example above illustrates one of the most widely used functions of sorting out tasks, i.e. to present a form. In this function, sorting out may be seen as an alternative to a presentation of a form by the teacher. Instead of being passive recipients of new information, working with sorting out students take an active position and a new form appears as a result of their work on the task. In the example above, the new form is probably Present Progressive as used to refer to future[26]. Thus, a possible result of working with the task can be a division of utterances into two groups: one including utterances with "going to" (No. 3,4,6,9) and another including utterances with "be + verb + ing" where verb + ing does not equal "going" (the rest of the utterances).

It is necessary to note that no matter how useful the above mentioned function may be for the teacher, students should be allowed to sort the utterances in other ways as well if they can motivate their choice. On the one hand, it will give them a

[26] We say "probably" due to several reasons. Firstly, in different contexts a task may perform different purposes. In the case of this task, for example, the teacher may be interested to focus on "be + verb + -ing" not necessarily being a progressive form but also a "going to" form. Secondly, as we mentioned above, the process of learning and acquisition is not a linear one, thus it's never possible to say which form is "new" and which one is "old", especially when we speak about a group of learners.

possibility to be practising in building different models (Group 1 of OTSM-TRIZ skills – see Chapter 1 and Appendix 1.1) and finding different parameters for classification (Group 2 of OTSM-TRIZ skills), on the other hand, such an approach will make the task much more student-centred. For example, the following alternative ways to sort the utterances could be proposed: according to the number of the verb "be" (singular or plural), according to specific time of action (mentioned or not mentioned), according to the person of the pronoun used (me and us vs. you and them), etc.[27] It is for this purpose that each sorting out task is TA is always followed by a table where several variants of an answer can be given.

Apart from introducing a new form, sorting out tasks can perform two more functions. One of them is introducing a new meaning of a form rather than a form itself. For example, learners can be offered a task comprising 12 utterances with "going to". Some of them will include "going to" in the lexical meaning (eg *Look, Julia and Mark are going to the swimming pool*) while others will include "going to" in the grammatical meaning (e.g. *There are two languages Mark is exposed to. He is going to be bilingual*). The third function of sorting out tasks is what we refer to as "shifting stereotypes about a form". As a result of learning "simplistic" grammars, especially at earlier levels, learners' head are often full of so-called "half-truths" about grammar (Lewis, 1986). As an example, we can mention such widely learnt rules as "some in affirmative sentences, any in interrogative and negative sentences", "Present Progressive is used to speak about now", "such verbs as see, hear, love, etc are not used in Progressive forms"[28], etc. A possible sorting out tasks aimed at shifting learners' stereotypes about such a rule as "Present Progressive is used to speak about now" may include either a list of utterances about Now some of which are in Present Progressive and some in some other forms (e.g. *Yes, I see them*; *I wanted to ask for your opinion on this*, etc) or a list of utterances in Present Progressive some of which are about Now and some of which are not (e.g. *I am teaching a lot this month*). Stereotypes may

[27] Learners often come up with ideas of division the teacher has not anticipated before. This should be encouraged as it gives an additional context for learning (see section … about procedures below). The main idea is that learners can motivate their ideas.

[28] It is interesting that "communicative" courses keep on teaching this rule even after the appearance of McDonald's slogan "I'm lovin' it" which is well-known to most learners (and teachers) and obviously contradicts the "rule".

also be connected with the difference between the forms rather than a single form (e.g. such a rule as using Past Simple with expressions of time and using Present Perfect when there is no time expression).

Sorting out tasks can be at a different level of difficulty. In addition to an obvious lexical complexity, a number of other ways to increase the difficulty can be mentioned:

(a) students are asked to produce several classifications – e.g. utterances can be divided into Present Perfect and Past Simple and also into affirmative and interrogative ones;
(b) after students have produced one classification (e.g. divided utterances into Active and Passive), they are asked to divide the same utterances again, this time into a different number of groups though (e.g. upon a tense form);
(c) students are asked to make a classification when the obvious parameter does not help (e.g. three utterances in Present Simple and five utterances in Present Progressive are given, the task to divide into two groups of four utterances in each. A possible answer can be those referring or not referring to future);
(d) students are asked to produce a classification with a number of groups being larger than two (the more groups are required and the higher is the number of initial utterances, the more difficult is usually the exercise);
(e) students are asked to divide the utterances into groups when the basis for division is a combination of parameters rather than just one parameter (e.g. active utterances referring to past, active utterances referring to future, passive utterances referring to past, passive utterances referring to future).

As we well as with other types of tasks in CGT, it is extremely important to see sorting out practice as just an element of the Creative Grammar Technology. When choosing to work with this type of task, the teacher should formulate realistic goals. A typical mistake would be to believe that a sorting out practice can perform

the function of the whole system of tasks. For instance, some teachers may say that after doing a sorting exercise, they expect the students to understand the differences between, say, Present Perfect and Past Simple. This is an example of a false expectation, as a much more realistic goal would be one connected with functions of sorting out (see above), for instance to present (or revise) the structural difference between the forms.

2.2.3.1.1.2. Concept questions

Concept questions (CQ) is another example of a fairly well-known type of grammar task. Although one may come across it in course and grammar books not as often as sorting out tasks, by no means can CQ be called unknown in the field of language teaching. Traditionally, the function of CQ tasks is to get students to see the semantic meaning of a form. In TA, CQ tasks have a more specific function and as a result demand to actual CQ tasks are different form the traditional ones. Let us start with an example.

Table 2.2.4. Example of a Concept Question Task

Task 4.1.
Answer the questions below. Be ready to justify your answer. Put a tick next to the question if you are not sure.

1. Peter has just called – he is going to come later.
   Q: Have we agreed before that Peter will be late?
   Q: How do I know that Peter is going to be late?
   Q: Do you know my opinion about Peter's coming late?
   Q: Am I speaking about specific time when Peter comes?
   Q: Do I emphasize a future action?

2. Brendan is taking his driving test next Thursday.
   Q: Has Brendan informed me about it?
   Q: Do you know my opinion about Brendan's taking a test?
   Q: Am I speaking about a specific time when Brendan takes the driving test?
   Q: Do I emphasize a future action?

3. He will be back soon.
   Q: Has he told me when he will come?
   Q: Am I speaking about a specific time when he returns?
   Q: Do you know what I think about his coming back?
   Q: Is it a fact that he will be back soon?

4. I am going to start my own business.
   Q: Have I already done anything for my future business? If yes, what?
   Q: Do you know when I will start my business?
   Q: Do you know if I will start my business?
   Q: Do I emphasize a future action?

5. They are taking the children to the theatre this evening.
   Q: Have they already bought the tickets?

Q: Do you know when they will go the theatre?
Q: Do you know what I think about their taking children to the theatre?

6. It's hot in here. I will open the window.
   Q: Have I been planning to open the window for some time already?
   Q: Do I express my opinion about the situation?
   Q: Do I emphasize a future action?

7. I am going to read my new book next weekend.
   Q: Have I just decided to do it?
   Q: Do you know what I think about reading a book?
   Q: Do I emphasize a future action?

8. There's nothing to discuss. We leave at 5 p.m. tomorrow.
   Q: Are we going by car?
   Q: Can we decide to leave at 5.30 instead?
   Q: Is it a fact that we will leave at 5 p.m. tomorrow?
   Q: Do I emphasize a future action?

The example above may look similar to what is traditionally known as CQ task. While the main differences referring to how CQ tasks are employed in the classroom will be outlined in section 2.3.2., certain things can be mentioned now. Although TA and traditional view of CQ will agree on "getting students to see semantic meaning of a form" as the main function of this type of task, the interpretation of this function will be quite different. Traditionally, concept questions are used at the end of a teaching cycle (when main aspects of meaning have already been presented to students) with the purpose to check understanding and, probably, reinforce it. Thus, CQ are seen as a kind of summarising activity in the block of working with meaning. In TA however, CQ tasks are the first ones students confront when they start dealing with the meaning of a form. Their role here is not "to summarise, check and reinforce" but to draw attention and highlight. CQ are seen in TA as one of the main tools in helping learners develop *their* models of the difference in meaning between the forms under question.

This major difference is the reason for additional demands to CQ tasks to be employed in the TA classroom. These demands are summarised in Table 2.2.5 below.

Table 2.2.5. Demands to Concept Question Tasks in the TA Classroom

Level	Demand
Question	• Draws students' attention to a specific feature of a form under discussion;

	• Contains questions answers to which differ according to the form used; • Contains no unnecessary terminology; • Contains no value of feature under discussion in the wording; • Complete (i.e. contains all necessary information)[29].
Task	• Contains at least three questions on one value of feature in different utterances; • Contains preferably authentic sentences at an appropriate level of difficulty; • Contains not more than four questions to one utterance; • Contains not fewer than eight utterances in one task; • Sequence of utterances and questions is planned according to the function of the task[30]

Let us see how the above demands are manifested in the example task. We will start with the level of question. Future is a complex theme and there are at least four features involved when opting for the most appropriate form to refer to future: Time of Action, Vision of Action, Attitude to Action and Factuality of Action. Each of these features or parameters can be characterised by a number of values. The actual choice of a form depends on the meaning we want to render which in its turn can be described as a system of parameters and values. An approach to pedagogical English grammar via parameters is not completely new. We can mention (Close, 1993) (Lewis, 1986) and (Yule, 1998) as prototypes of the approach described in this paper.

Table 2.2.6 below summarises parameters and values involved in the description of meaning when referring to future.

Table 2.2.6. Parameters and Values when Referring to Future in English

Name of Feature (Parameter)	**Value of Feature**
Time of Action	General Future Post-present Pre-future Post-future Present Limited (two points) Limited (one point) Unlimited
Vision of Action	Point

[29] One more difference is that CQ in TA should not necessarily be yes-no questions.
[30] For example, if students are supposed to compose a preliminary model after working on a task, it will not be a good idea to draw their attention to four different features in the first four questions.

	Sequence of points[31] Period Finished Unfinished Under speaker's control[32] Beyond speaker's control
Factuality of Action	Factual Non-factual Possible (different degrees) Hypothetical
Attitude to Action	Null[33] Inevitable …[34]

Thus, we can see, for example, that the first question after each utterance (except from No. 8) draws students' attention to Time of Action while the last question (except for utterances 3 and 5) focuses on Vision of Action by the speaker. When comparing answers to the first question, learners usually[35] see that the answer is "yes" in utterances 2, 4 and 5 and "no" in utterances 1,3, 6 and 7. As a result, they may come up with a hypothesis that some arrangement about the action was made in the past in the case of "be + ing" form and was not made in the case of "will + infinitive" form. Some of them may also notice that it can be either or in the case of "going to" form. The same procedure is followed with other questions.

We have demonstrated how the sample task meets the first two demands at the level of question. By avoiding terminology we mean absence of grammatical meta language as much as possible, i.e. avoiding such words as "result" or "experience" when dealing with Present Perfect or "prohibition" and "obligation" when dealing with modals. In other words, the simpler is the vocabulary used in concept questions, the better. Practically all tasks can be improved following this criterion, however the sample task is in our opinion an example of meeting a minimum requirement.

[31] This is a feature of a "going to" form used to denote extrapolated periods.
[32] Progressive forms are usually used to refer to actions conceptualised as being under speaker's control, eg *We are writing a test next week*.
[33] When no judgement is made, factual forms are used as they are unmarked in terms of expression of attitude.
[34] Various features according to a modal used, eg willingness, obligation, freedom, etc.
[35] It may happen that some questions remain without an answer after working with a task – for details see section 3 below.

The fourth demand – the one about not containing values of features under discussion – is in fact a variety of the previous one. We single it out as it is a typical mistake of teachers who start working with TA and begin to design their own materials to include questions where an expected answer is already a part. As a result, students do not need to build their model of grammar forms but adopt the one offered by the teacher. Such questions as "Is the Time of Action finished?" will belong to this group.

Completeness of the question means that students are able to give an answer on the basis of information contained in an utterance. It may sometimes happen with beginners in materials design that the only answer one can give to a concept question is "we don't know". Unless it is exactly this answer that is anticipated, such questions should be avoided.

Requirements at the level of task are not so much a consequence of some methodological principles but rather a result of empirical work with TA. This is how a CQ task appears most effective in our present vision which is a result of five years of teaching grammar with CGT. We admit however that this vision may change, therefore each teacher should adjust these requirements taking the account of her own context.

As we have stated above, as a result of working with CQ tasks students are expected to build their own model of a grammar form. Further on we will clarify what is meant under this model.

In order to make a rule which will help learners distinguish between various forms used to refer to future in English, they need to be able to describe forms and see what makes them different. Any problem solving process also starts with a description of a situation, that is why it is not surprising that OTSM offers a model for description. This model is called ENV which stands for Element – Name of Feature and Value of Feature. It is claimed that description of a problem situation by means of the ENV model is more suitable for the purposes of problem solving. As in the case of working with CGT, learners are also involved in a kind of problem solving, we believe that they can benefit from employing the ENV model for the

purposes of grammar descriptions. Moreover, grammar is not the only aspect of TA where students work with the ENV model, thus its application does not require additional time spent on acquiring the model as such. In other words, as a result of working with a CQ task, learners are expected to produce a model or a rule which demonstrates the difference between the forms under question on the basis of the ENV model. Apparently, this rule cannot and should not be a perfect or even a good rule. The purpose is different. Learners should be able to produce at least the first draft of their future rule which they will be able to improve on when continuing working with CGT.

2.2.3.1.1.3. Enhanced Practice

At first glance, Enhanced Practice (EP) appears almost like one of the most traditional type of grammar tasks, i.e. fill-in-the-gap practice. Although EP can really be made with a slight change to many of fill-in-the-gap tasks, its purpose in TA is quite different from traditional uses. Let us again start with a sample task.

Table 2.2.7. Example of an Enhanced Practice Grammar Task

Task 5.1.
Fill in the gaps in the utterances below. Use the template below the sentence to explain your choice by using those features you have in your draft model. In case you cannot explain your choice using the draft model, transfer the sentence into the grammar bank.
(adapted from (Swan & Walter, 1997))

1. There are no clouds in the sky. It ……(be) a nice day.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

2. Don't count on James. He …… (leave) tomorrow for a week.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

3. Let's stay at home tonight. There …… (be) a hockey game on TV.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

4. Come with me. I …… (have) a lunch.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

5. Don't send me letters to this address. We …… (move) next month.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

6. The plane ……(be) late, I'm afraid.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

7. The last lecture…… (end) at 15.30.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

8. Call me at eight. I …… (give) you my phone number.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

9. I'm hungry. I …… (buy) some pizza.

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

10. What …… (you do) with these flowers?

Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:	Name of Feature: Value(s) of Feature:

There are several things that are essential when working with the EP task. First, learners should provide an explanation for the form they use for filling in the gap. The task is considered incomplete till an explanation for the choice is provided. Learners should be helped to understand that the purpose of doing the EP task is not to fill in the gaps, but to check their draft model / rule. And here we come to the second requirement when working on the task. When providing an explanation, learners are only allowed to make it on the basis of the draft rule / model they developed after working on CQ tasks. In case it appears impossible or learners have made a mistake in one of the items, the given utterance must travel to the student's grammar bank (see section 2.3.1.2.) .

2.2.3.1.1.4. Meaning Based

Meaning Based (MB) tasks focus on the meaning of a structure. Unlike the other types of tasks, the form of the MB task can be quite different. One can occasionally come across MB tasks in various teaching materials. The best source of MB tasks for teaching English Grammar in our opinion is *Discover English* (Bolitho & Tomlinson, 1995). An example of a sample MB task is given below.

Table 2.2.8. Example of a Meaning Based Task

Task 6.1.
How does the use of a tense form change the meaning of the following utterances? Demonstrate this by providing a possible context for each of the utterances.

1. Who is cooking lunch?
   Who is going to cook lunch?
   Who will cook lunch?

2. I'm getting a new job.
   I'm going to get a new job.

3. I'm seeing Phil tonight.
   I'm going to see Phil tonight.

4. I'm visiting my doctor.
   I will visit my doctor.

5. I am going to study French.
   I will study French.
   I'm studying French starting from next Monday.

6. Wait up! I'll help you with the bags.
   Let's meet in an hour. I'm taking my friend to the airport. I'm helping him with the bags.

7. Don't worry. I'll write this essay.
   Believe me. I'll have written it by Monday.

There are two functions of MB tasks in CGT. First, they continue the line of the draft model improvement started by EP tasks. The major difference here is that MB provide for a more productive grammar practice. Here students are involved not only in the choice of form in a largely pre-defined context, but they are asked to construct contexts themselves as well, as for example, in the sample task. Another function which may sometimes be performed by the same task (a sample task is an example here again) is to introduce an additional structure. The reason why a new structure is introduced at a later stage is very simple. In case of complex grammar themes, an overall number of structures is quite big[36]. At the same time, some of the structures are used much less frequently than the other[37]

[36] In the case of "Speaking about Future" the list of active forms will include at least seven items (the verb do is used for presentation of the form): do, be + doing, going to do, will do, will be doing, will have done, be + to do, excluding other modal verbs that can be used to refer to future in addition to the verb "will".
[37] For example, such as "be + to do" or "will have done" when referring to future.

and their meaning can be quite straight-forward[38]. In such cases it appears reasonable not to complicate the initial stage when students develop their draft models and introduce a structure later when the core model has already been composed.

2.2.3.1.1.5. Feature Training

Feature Training (FeT) is the only type of task which is unique to TA not only in terms of functions and procedures but also the form of the task. The task brings the line of the draft model development to its climax – learners should be able to produce accurate utterances on the basis of their models. FeT tasks are very easy to make – it is a list of parameters and values on the basis of which a learner is expected to produce an utterance. Usually, tasks are developed in a lesson by learners working in pairs and writing tasks for each other. In addition to practising in applying their own models for a fully productive practice, learners once again have an opportunity to check the model and also get acquainted with each others' models. A sample task below provides an example of a FeT task that could be made to the model in section 2.3.1.1.2.

Table 2.2.9. Example of a Feature Training Task

Task 6.7.
Write utterances that express the following meanings.

1.
Time of Action: general ; Vision of Action: point

2.
Time of Action: future ; Attitude to Action: inevitable

3.
Time of Action: pre-future ; Vision of Action: finished

4.
Factuality of Action: factual ; Time of Action: general

5.
Time of Action: limited (two points) ; Vision of Action: under speaker's control

…

[38] As, for example, in the case of "will have done" which normally presents no difficulties if models of other Perfect forms have been developed (and they usually have been for Present and Past Perfect forms).

2.2.3.1.2 OTHER ELEMENTS OF CREATIVE GRAMMAR TECHNOLOGY

Before we look at the system of grammar tasks as offered in CGT, it is necessary to consider three more elements of this system. These are grammar banks, reflective tasks and progress tests. Let us look at them in turn.

2.2.3.1.2.1. Grammar banks

Grammar banks are essential for working with CGT. We distinguish between two types of banks learners collect. They can be referred to as Bank 1 and Bank 2.

Bank 1 includes utterances which exemplify the use of grammar forms under question. For example, when working with a theme “Speaking about Future” such a bank will include examples of all possible utterances to refer to the future. The main function of such a bank is to bring a learner to a list of structures used in a given theme. As you can see, the function of Bank 1 is very similar to one of the functions of Sorting Out tasks. This is not surprising as Sorting Out tasks is a minimum requirement for input necessary for Bank 1 if a theme is dealt with for the first time. Another option – which is often preferable - would be a collection of Bank 1 by learners themselves. This could be either a collection from pre-defined sources, e.g. certain texts or cartoons in the case of younger learners or any other source a learner would prefer. The only requirement is that the source is authentic. If the theme is not new however, there is often no necessity for Bank 1 as learners are already aware of the structures used in a given theme. In this case, they may at once start collecting Bank 2.

The purpose of Bank 2 is to help learners improve their grammar model / rule. Work with this bank can be divided into two stages. The first stage takes place while learners are working with a given theme, i.e. they are working with a system of grammar tasks dealing with a theme. During this time each student is expected to actively work with Bank 2. On the average, about twenty utterances go through the bank and as a result the preliminary model may change two-three times before a learner is satisfied with it. When learners have finished working with a system of tasks, the second stage begins. This stage continues for the whole life of a learner as no perfect model could exist according to the first axiom of OTSM (N. Khomenko, 2004). Thus, new utterances could be added to Bank 2 at any

moment. Learners should always be ready to add an utterance to their bank as it is a pre-condition for further learning[39].

If Bank 1 is usually just a list of utterances which are later on subdivided according to form, the structure of Bank 2 is a bit more complex. Figure 2.3 demonstrates a structure we usually propose to our learners.

Fig.2.2.2. Grammar Bank 2. Possible Structure

Feature / Explanatory element	Utterances which contain the grammar form under question	Description by means of the ENV model
…	… … …	…
Comments (from teacher and peers):		

It is necessary to note that the above table is not necessarily filled in a linear fashion. Most learners will probably start with examples of actual utterances and the ENV descriptions will appear much later, depending on how inclined a learner is to think in terms of traditional grammar. More experienced TA learners may start with the explanatory element which is missing in their preliminary model (e.g. "near future") and then collect examples and see if this element is really important. Even more experienced TA learners may at once try to formulate the explanatory element on the basis of ENV, e.g. Name of Feature: Time of Action, Values of Feature: near and far and then collect examples and see of these distinctions are important[40]. At the same time, all above divisions may be considered artificial, as in real life the processes may be taking place simultaneously, the question is often what we write first.

It is also important to note that the teacher may have control and influence over input into learners' banks. This can be done both by pre-selecting particular tasks in the system for either individual learners or the whole group and / or providing

[39] Collection of Bank 2 is useful at any level of language knowledge. We usually recommend that teachers also collect such a bank. For example, McDonald's motto "I'm lovin' it" which we have already mentioned would make a wonderful entry on the theme "Speaking about Present" for Banks 2 of many language teachers.

[40] As it can be seen from our model of the future forms, we believe that such distinctions are not important in the English grammar.

spontaneous input in a lesson which focuses on problematic areas. The latter may be different in various contexts. For example, one of the problematic areas we often come across is that it is difficult for many learners to conceptualise the difference between the Present Progressive when it is used to show that:

(a) we see the action as limited in time
I'm not eating meat today.
(Time of Action: limited; Vision of Action: period)

(b) we see the action in progress
I've just seen him downstairs. He's chatting with Natalie.
(Time of Action: present; Vision of Action: in progress).

These are basically two meanings of Present Progressive. Awareness of this comes when students start noticing this difference. The teacher may provide students with a sorting out task which will draw their attention to this difference.

2.2.3.1.2.2. Reflective tasks

There are four groups of reflective tasks offered in the CGT. These tasks can be seen as a kind of connecting chains in the system of tasks – the system will merely not work if these tasks are taken out[41]. Specific purposes of each group are presented in the table below.

Table 2.2.10. Groups of reflective tasks in CGT and their purposes.

Name of Group	Purpose in the System of Task	Numbers of tasks in the system
1. Goal formulation tasks	Help learners analyse Bank 1 and formulate the learning goal(s) connected with further work with the system of grammar tasks.	Part 3. Tasks 3.1 – 3.7
2. Model development tasks	Help learners summarise the results of their work with CQ tasks and build a preliminary model / rule of a grammar structure(s) as a result of this analysis.	4.4 and 4.5
3. Model improvement tasks.	Remind learners of the necessity to collect Bank 2, help them analyse entries in Bank 2 and improve on their preliminary model / rule as a result of this analysis.	5.6, 5.9, 5.10, 6.8
4. Tasks connected with evaluation and development of plans for further learning.	Help learners analyse the process and products of their work with the system of tasks and as a result develop plans for further learning.	Part 7, tasks 7.1 – 7.4

[41] It is essential that teachers who plan to adopt CGT understand this as asking learners to stop and reflect is essential for learning and by no means should be seen as a waste of time.

2.2.3.1.2.3. Progress tests

Progress tests are administered two times: before learners start working with the system and after they finish Part 6 of the system. The initial test helps both learners and the teacher to decide how much attention should be paid to further work with the system and also points to some potentially problematic areas of knowledge, thus helping learners formulate their learning goals in Part 3. The final test, which must be in the same format as the initial one in order to make the comparison of results possible, serves as both a monitoring tool showing the state of present knowledge and its difference from the initial stage and also helps learners decide what else needs to be done with a given theme in the future.

2.2.3.1.3. ELEMENTS TOGETHER – A SYSTEM OF TASKS IN CREATIVE GRAMMAR TECHNOLOGY

As we have mentioned above, all tasks in CGT are connected in a system. It is only at this level that the aim of the technology – help learners see language as a system - can be reached.

Any system of tasks offered in CGT consists of seven parts. Table 2.2.11. presents names of parts and their functions in the context of CGT.

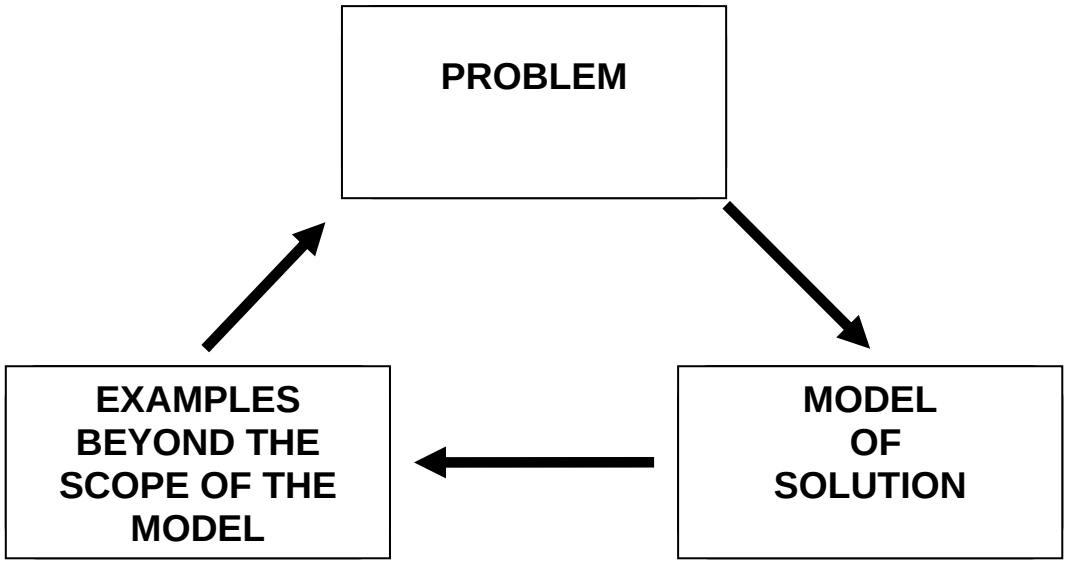
Table 2.2.11. Parts of system of tasks in Creative Grammar Technology

Name of Part	**Function of Part**
1. Defining present knowledge.	• Help learners see how much they already know in a given theme and thus make a decision about necessity of further learning.
2. Clarifying structures.	• Help learners come up with a list of structures used in a given theme.
3. Formulating the learning goals.	• Help learners analyse examples of using structures found in Part 2 (Bank 1) and formulate the learning goal(s) connected with further work with the system of grammar tasks.
4. Developing a draft model.	• Help learners develop a draft model connected with goals formulated in Part 3.
5. Testing and improving the model.	• Help learners transform their preliminary grammar model to a working model that is sufficient enough to cope with current goals formulated in Part 3.
6. Putting the model to practice.	• Provide learners with contexts for language production practice based on their working models.
7. Evaluation and plans for further learning	• Help learners analyse the process and products of their work with the system of tasks and as a result develop plans for further learning.

Thus, it becomes clear that, depending on a specific context, work with a system may look different. Working from Part 1 to Part 7 is an ideal case and may occur when a group of learners deals with a theme for the first time and initial test results point to the necessity of further learning. A real classroom situation may look different, though. Learners may have already dealt with the theme before and thus they will be aware of most (or even all) structures and have draft models developed to this or that extent. In this case, they will probably start working with Part 3 and then will move on to Part 4 or Part 5. It is also necessary to note that learners are allowed (and should be encouraged) to choose tasks they are going to do. It is assumed that this choice is essential for learning to be autonomous in the educational process.

Whatever sequence is chosen for working with a system of tasks, it is important that learners follow the general line of working with a model. This line starts with Bank 1 which is a collection of utterances illustrating how structures are used. Then, learners are expected to formulate problems they face in connection with distinguishing between structures in language communication. These problems become the basis for learning goals. When learning goals have been defined, a preliminary model for solution of the previously formulated problems is being built – this model should eventually lead to reaching learning goals. After that learners spend time on improving their models: first they transform a preliminary model into a working one and then they are involved in productive practice on the basis of their working model. Finally, learners put their working model to test, compare the results to the initial situation (before they developed a model) and make conclusions about further learning. The cycle of working with a model in CGT is presented in Figure 2.2.3. below.

Fig.2.2.3. Cycle of working with Creative Grammar Technology.



Such a model has one important syllabus implication. As repetitions within the cycle are eternal – it is never possible to make a perfect model, so any model can be improved – one can no longer speak about the time when learning a theme is finished. The syllabus can only mention when learners start working with a theme.

2.2.3.1.4. SUMMARY

Let us summarise the main principles of working with CGT (adapted from (Sokol, 2005).

- Explicit grammar teaching (explaining grammar) is avoided as much as possible.
- Learners are always presented with a situation where the solution is not known to them, i.e. they are offered tasks dealing with themes they have NOT studied before or have forgotten (they do not need to make models if they already have some).
- Learners compose their own models of grammar by applying problem solving tools studied in the course.
- The teacher does not evaluate the quality of the proposed models by dividing them into 'right' and 'wrong', his/her main role is to provide samples of

language (either in the form of tasks or just by giving examples on the spot) which can help learners test their hypotheses (models) about grammar.

- Learners reconsider their models by collecting and analysing samples of languages where the model doesn't work. Thus, learning takes place in a realistic poly-model framework, and students are learning to see the Applicability Limits of their models.
- As learning is a non-linear process, both students and teachers are ready to deal with any grammar phenomenon in any lesson.
- It is the learner who defines the learning goals for working with a grammar theme and finalises the content of such work.
- Each learner works at their own pace and receives personal feedback from the teacher and peers.

2.2.3.2. The Text and the Film Technologies

If Creative Grammar Technology has language as a specific object of study and the tasks it offers are aimed at working with language as such, Text Technology (TT) and Film Technology (FT) cannot be said to be centred around one specific object. Although both of them use texts[42] as a source material, actual tasks may go far beyond text as such. It would probably be best to say that TT and FT deal with communication as a problem solving activity in the sense of problem solving as defined in Chapter 1. TT and FT are very similar technologies with a different type of source material being the major difference. Therefore we decided to describe them together[43]. It is necessary to note though that these technologies are still less developed in comparison with CGT, that is why descriptions may occasionally look more fragmented and less technological.

2.2.3.2.1. TYPES OF TASKS

There are six types of tasks offered in the TT. They can be divided into two groups. The first group comprises tasks which are specific to TT. These include content generation, co-authoring and transformation tasks. The second group consists of tasks that link TT with other technologies of TA: language tasks which

[42] We understand text in a wide meaning of this word, thus film is seen as a kind of text.
[43] For convenience purposes, further on in this section we will use the acronym TT for both Text and Film Technologies unless mentioned otherwise.

connect it with CGT, project tasks which connect it with RT and reflection tasks which connect it with SST. Let us consider all these tasks in turn formulating the function of each type of task, providing an example of a task and demonstrating how inventive thinking skills could be developed when working on a task[44].

2.2.3.2.1.1. Content generation tasks

As their name suggests, content generation tasks deal with the content of the text. There are three main functions of the tasks:

(a) help learners see what the text does not say;
(b) help learners understand the reader's response to text ;
(c) help learners bring the reality of the text to contact with other realities and thus obtain a better interpretation.

Let us explain what we mean under the above. Apparently an ability to understand and interpret a text is connected not only with seeing what is said but also an ability to see what is not said. Here we mean not only what is implied but also those choices that have not been made which echoes in a sense the notion of "The Other" in a lacanian sense. An example of this kind of task is given in table 2.2.12. below[45].

Table 2.2.12. Content generation task helping learners to see what the text does not say.

4.1. The narrator makes a number of statements when describing things in Old Ernie's. For instance, people in the club are jerks, etc.
Try to make a list of the statements the narrator makes in the texts. (in the note form)
Do you think the narrator is *objective* in all his statements. Can you mention several *objective* and *subjective* factors that could influence his statements in the text.
E.g.,

Statement	Possible objective factors	Possible subjective factors
people in the club are jerks	• behaviour of the people (e.g., giving a feel and telling about a boy who committed suicide at the same time); • the audience are not able to notice even if a song is	• the narrator is envious because he is alone in the club; • the narrator doesn't accept anybody's tastes but his own; • …

[44] Here we will be mainly concerned with establishing connections between tasks and certain groups of OTSM skills – see Appendix … for a full list. For more detailed information, as well as language skills practised in this or that task, see Section 3 on procedures.
[45] This and other examples in section 2.3.2 come from the system of tasks to the text "It Kills Me" by J D Salinger written together with M.Dobrovolska. An example of a full system is given in Appendix 3.

	• spoiled; • …	

Apart from requiring a multi-screen description of a situation, in this task learners are involved into distinguishing objective and subjective factors in description of a situation (Group 3 of OTSM skills) – an essential skills for working with contradictions which is seen as the core of a problem solving approach in OTSM.

Another important element in the process of meaning production is the reader. We follow a constructive tradition and believe that meaning appears only as a result of interaction between the text and the reader, thus it is essential that learners understand how one's or somebody else's views and background may affect text interpretation. A sample task below illustrates this idea.

Table 2.2.13. Content generation task helping learners' understand the reader's response to the text.

4.2. What *features* of relationships between dates are more important for you? What should be their *values*? Will you have the same answer for all situations?

Choose three different types relationships (e.g., casual acquaintance, permanent friend, lover, etc.) and mention the *features* and *values* you find more important in these situations.

Context or type of relationships (describe briefly)	Most important features	Preferable values

Think of a person (a group of people) who would see relationships in a very different light, i.e. their preferable values would be a direct opposite to yours.

This task is connected with practising the ENV model for description of situations. Learners are asked to analyse own views by presenting them in the form required by the ENV model, i.e. a description suitable for problem solving purposes. A second part of the task deals with one aspect of the advanced use of the ENV model, namely work with anti-systems (Group 2, sub-group 4).

Reading a text effectively is also an ability to see how this text is connected with many other texts one comes across, something referred to as intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980). Thus, we believe learners should be able to bring themes of the text to different realities and make meaning by juxtaposing these different realities. The following sample task will exemplify this idea.

Table 2.2.14. Content generation task helping learners bring the reality of the text to contact with other realities.

4.3. 'People always clap for the wrong things' – this is one of the narrator's statements in the text.
What examples does the narrator give to support his point? (make a list)
What other examples can be given to support this point?
What examples can be given to contradict this point?

This task is a preparatory practice for work with the model of contradiction. Learners are asked to look at the situation from opposite points of view and collect evidence for such a view. This is seen as a preparatory practice for further more complex work with contradictions as often required in transformation tasks.

The purpose of the task may also be a combination of the above – e.g. certain elements of the text are brought to a different reality and own vision of this new reality is questioned.

In a system of tasks, content generation tasks may have two additional purposes. When being used before a text is read, they also perform a function of a pre-reading task, i.e. prepare learners for reading a text. However, this is also done by following one of the purposes described above, usually helping learners understand their own perception of certain issues and phenomena the text deals with.

Content generation tasks may also be presented to learners as speaking task, i.e. those tasks where communication between learners becomes a focus. The functions of the tasks remain the same though – it is the level of procedures where differences occur (see Section 2.3. for details).

At the same time, no matter what kind of specific purpose content generation tasks play in the system, their thinking potential as a rule is centred around a limited number of certain skills. Unlike co-authoring or transformation tasks, they are relatively simple in the sense that less efforts are required in terms of thinking.

2.2.3.2.1.2. Co-authoring tasks

In co-authoring tasks learners are asked to identify themselves with the author of the text (director of the film) and are invited to comment on their text or its part

from the author's point of view. The main function of the task is to help learners see a text as a solution to a group of problems. For example, after watching the film "Psycho" by Alfred Hitchcock, learners may be asked to make a speech to a group of film students or write an article commenting on the problems resolved by making a famous shower sequence. A sample co-authoring task from J D Salinger's excerpt is presented below.

Table 2.2.15. An Example of Co-authoring Task.

3.1.	You have chosen the first person narrative when writing this text. What would be different if you had chosen the third person? Explain it as you would do it in a radio programme dedicated to your novel. Re-write one paragraph in the third person to illustrate the things you are speaking about.

As well as other co-authoring tasks, this one is quite complex. First, learners have to look at the type of narrative as a tool in the process of writing fiction. It is assumed that this aspect of literature has not been studied before as in this case this task will merely become a reproductive one[46]. In order to clarify the functions of the type of narrative, learners will not only have to describe them thus practising basic application of the ENV model (Group 2, sub-group 1 of OTSM-TRIZ skills), but also see and analyse narrative in the context of other elements of a text (an advanced use of the ENV model – Group 2, sub-group 2, 4 and also Group 3) and see problems posed and resolved by this or that choice (Groups 3,4 and 5).

At the same time, before performing the task, learners have to evaluate the context and decide what requirements it sets on the task. Thus, learners have to think about a genre of a radio programme (Group 2), and a personality of J D Salinger (Group 2). Learners may also make the next step and think of possible problems arising as a result of a clash between interests of a programme and those of J D Salinger (application of a variety of models Groups 1,2, 3 and 4).

Apparently, hardly any learner will be applying all of the above skills, nor is it an expectation of this task. In our opinion, the task should give an opportunity to learners, room for learning. What we have described above is learning potential of

[46] We believe that in order to have room for the development of inventive thinking skills and dispositions, learners should be given challenging tasks that require knowledge they have not been given before. Thus, the function of the task is seen as creation of this knowledge.

this particular task. It is also necessary to note that the task does not demand that learners apply any of the above mentioned groups of skills, thus it becomes possible to see if learners have developed OTSM dispositions required for approaching such tasks.

2.2.3.2.1.3. Transformation tasks

Transformation tasks are aimed at the development of learners' abilities to solve problems connected with transformation of various features of the text. Learners may be asked to change one or several of the following features: medium, language, attitude, purpose, narrator, author, reader, etc. Thus, the actual tasks in this type may look quite different from each other ranging from changing a literary text to a film in case the medium is changed or writing a story from another point of view if the narrator is substituted to translation assessment and adaptation if we focus on language and the reader. The variety of possible tasks is presented in the example below.

Table 2.2.16. Examples of Transformation Tasks.

6.1. The first paragraph of the text gives us the narrator's vision of what is going on in Old Ernie's.

Try to make a description of what is going on from another *point of view*. You may choose from the following list: old Ernie, a person from the audience, someone from the club's stuff.

Choose one of the above standpoints and think what might be different in their vision of the situation. Do not add your opinion.

6.2. Translation assessment (see appendix)

6.3. Translation adaptation (see appendix).

6.4. Imagine that it is decided to make this text into a film. You are both the director and the script writer. Prepare your proposal to producers.

6.5. You are working for a glamorous magazine (choose one you know) and are supposed to produce a praising article about Old Ernie's place. The thing is, you don't have any time to go there. The only source of information you have for your article is this text. You understand it is quite subjective and not exactly praising – but you have no choice this time. Try to peel the facts from the narration and transform them into positive features of the place.

Transformation task is normally the biggest one learners deal with when working on the system of tasks[47]. This is easy to explain as this task requires a complex application of skills rather than focuses on a specific group of skills. In order to help learners cope with such complex tasks, they are usually offered algorithms that can help them[48]. Let us look at how the development of skills is seen when working with such an algorithm dealing with a point of view task.

Table 2.2.17. Inventive thinking skills mastered when working with Point of View tasks. Adapted from (Sokol, Galpern, & Lasevich, 2002)

Step of the algorithm	**Comment on the step**	**OTSM skills mastered**
Step 1. Find potential facts in the given text.	1.1. All elements of the story that comprise it (characters, setting, plot, etc) can be referred to as potential facts. We speak here of potential facts, as all of them are anyway our perception of facts rather than a part of objective reality. 1.2. It is important to distinguish between a fact and a characteristic of fact added by the original narrator of the story. For instance, in the Little Red Riding Hood, 'wolf' as one of the characters is a fact while 'an angry wolf' is already the original narrator's opinion. 1.3. It is necessary to note that facts cannot be taken out of the story until there is a sufficient reason for this (see step 9) If facts are just omitted from the story, as a result we have a new story rather than the original story told from a new point of view.	Ability to single out various groups of features of an element *(characters, setting, plot, etc are features of the text here)* and trace the change of their values depending on the vantage point of the observer. Ability to trace changes in the system if one of its elements is changed or missing (*here omission of a fact from a story can make it a new story).*
Step 2. Choose the narrator.	2.1. The narrator is a character from whose point of view you want to tell a story. It is not necessarily an animate object, nor should this narrator be originally present in the story. For instance, in The Little Red Riding Hood the following new narrators are possible: wolf, Little Red Riding Hood, wood, bear (e.g., the one from Goldilock and the Three Bears), etc.	Ability to vary values of features beyond possible and real *(e.g., inanimate narrator)* Ability to imagine and evaluate how an element is transformed when certain features change their values *(exactly this skill is required in order to choose the most suitable narrator for one's intentions)*
Step 3. Choose the addressee and	3.1. The more detailed is a description given, the easier it will be to make the next steps. Students tend to limit	Ability to see an element in the system of other elements

[47] Project tasks are normally more time consuming, however work on them is usually extended in time – see section … for more details.

[48] Algorithms offered to learners are not meant to substitute their thinking but rather assist them in effective thinking. It is also important *when* an algorithm is introduced to learners. See Section 3 for more details.

the situation in which the story will be told.	their description by just labeling the addressee and the situation, e.g., the wolf tells a story to his grandson at home. In this situation, it is important to ask students to single out other important features, for instance, age of the grandson, his attitude to the grandfather, how much he likes fairy tales, who else is present at home when the story is told, which moment it is, etc.	Ability to see an interaction of elements as a change of values under the same names of features of one or several elements interacted. *(E.g., the story will change – certain values of features under certain names will change - depending on the values of features of the addressee to whom this story is told)*
Step 4. Choose the function of the story.	4.1. The function of the story told from another point of view must be different. This is the reason for telling a story. Otherwise it is just enough to agree with the original version. 4.2. The function of the story cannot appear out of the blue. It is strongly motivated by the situation and the addressee. 4.3. Formulate the function keeping to the following formula: a) verb + object(s) b) change (or specific kind of change) + parameter of the object that must be changed. For instance, in case of the wolf's point of view in the Little Red Riding Hood: a) explain the situation to the grandson b) change the grandson's opinion about the young wolf = improve from ashamed to proud.	Ability to see function as one of the features of an element. Ability to see a change of function of an element as a result of a change of certain values of features of other elements it interacts with (e.g., if the addressee – one of the elements – changes its value under the name 'relation to the wolf' from 'grandson' to 'fellow-wolf', the function of the story can also change to, for instance, boast in front of them, i.e. change their opinion from 'cowardly' to 'brave').
Step 5. Describe the narrator by means of the Element – Name of Feature – Value of Feature (E-N-V) model.	5.1. Try to consider different names of features. Do not limit your description by character and appearance. Other features may be very important as well, e.g. intelligence or communication skills in case of wolf, as they can make a significant impact on how the narrator sees the story. 5.2. Take into account that it is possible to consider name or even value of feature as an element that can be divided into a name of feature and a value of feature. For instance, appearance of the wolf can be considered as an element. Then a possible name of feature would be 'height' and a value of feature 'medium'.	Ability to present elements as a list of features and certain values under them; Ability to see those features of elements which are often not obvious and thus not paid attention to by many observers; Ability to consider names of features and their values as elements with their own names of features and values under them.
Step 6. Which values of which names of feature (from those mentioned in 5) will you choose as the basis for	6.1. At this step, we look at the list we got at the previous step as resources. Now it is necessary to choose those of them which are the most suitable ones for performing the function formulated at step 4. 6.2. Evaluate the ideality of the resource chosen. The ideal resource is the	Ability to differentiate between values under certain names of feature upon their ideality, i.e. suitability to serve as a systemshape feature of an element which performs a certain function in a given specific situation without any additional changes required. *(For instance, in the situation of 'telling*

you story? (Check that they are the most resourceful ones for performing the function mentioned under 4)	one which performs the function by itself (i.e., it is evident from the original story, no necessity to convince the addressee it is so – no additional investment - on the one hand, and the addressee makes the conclusion required himself). For instance, it is clear that the wolf is quite intelligent from the original story (he planned the operation well) which is obviously one of the reasons to improve the opinion about him.	*a story to the grandson in order to improve his opinion' ability to plan is quite an ideal value of feature of the element 'wolf' as no additional changes are required to make it serve as an agent of the wolf's 'positivity'.*
Step 7. Think of other specific values of features (from those mentioned in 5) which can make a significant impact on how the narrator sees the P-Facts (mentioned in 1).[49] Use those values of feature that can help you perform the function formulated under 4.	7.1. Pay attention that you do not automatically restate the major facts of the story as they were. For instance, the wolf would hardly view his meeting with RRH as incidental (he is intelligent, everything was well planned), nor would he probably leave without comment the fact that the mother sends a small girl alone through the forest. 7.2. Ask yourself a change of which values under which names of features make the new narrator different from the original one. Which changes are the most dramatic ones? They can become a basis for a new story. For instance, the wood is one tree and plenty of trees, bushes, paths and sounds at once. This definitely makes an impact on how it may see the story.	Ability to see how a change of a value under one name of feature can cause changes of other features of other elements. (*For instance, a change of the value under the name 'narrator' from 'RRH' to 'wolf' – and the element 'wolf' having a value 'ability to plan' under the name of feature 'intelligence' – will cause a change in the value of the element 'meeting' from 'incidental' to 'well-planned')* Ability to distinguish between values of features upon their importance (influence on other values of features of other elements) in a given specific situation. *(For instance, in a specific situation 'telling a story to the grandson in order to improve his opinion' such values of features as 'ability to plan' or 'sociable' are much more important that values of features 'big eyes' or 'sharp teeth')*
Step 8. Will there be new names of features of the narrator (and certain specific values under them) which were not important in the traditional version of the story and are important for the new one? Point out how they help you reach the function	8.1. It is more ideal if no new features of the wolf are introduced . However, in case it is necessary (i.e., the function cannot be performed well without them) it is important to show that they logically follow from what we already know about the narrator. For instance, presentation of the wolf as a vegetarian hardly helps us reach the function, nor does it sound convincing on the basis of what we already know about this character. Compare it with the wolf as a social creature who was simply looking for communication. 8.2. Certain new values of features of the new narrator can also be important to justify the appearance of some new events (see step 9)	Ability to see certain values under certain names of features as a cause for choosing to see one event rather than another. Ability to understand how a change of a value under a certain name of feature may cause a change in the choice of events and a type of their description.[50] (*E.g., the original narrator could choose to omit the rude language used by characters when talking to the wolf as this would prevent him from reaching the function of his/her story. The wolf as a narrator would obviously mention these events as such features of other characters as 'rude language used' are quite an ideal resource for the wolf in the given situation.)*

[49] - There can be universal names of features relating to all facts and specific names of features and values under them making an impact on seeing a particular fact.
[50] - choice is probably a type of description as well – not choosing is a zero description.

formulated in 4.		
Step 9. Will you introduce any new p-facts into the story? How will they be justified in terms of function of the story (mentioned in 4) and resources? Will the introduction of these facts not lead to any undesirable consequences?	9.1. A new fact is always an external resource that is why it is better to do without them. In case it is impossible, check that its omission in the original story is possible to explain (some features of the original narrator – which? and the function of his story – which? made him omit these facts). Explain how these new facts help you reach the function of the new story. 9.2. An introduction of a new fact always causes changes to the given story. Check that the new fact does not lead to undesirable effects.	See examples to steps 1, 6 & 7.

2.2.3.2.1.4. Language tasks

As the name suggests, this group of tasks focuses on language of the text. The main purpose of the task is helping learners see language as a resource for problem solving and teaching them to operate with it as such. Tasks can be divided into three groups: tasks with a grammar focus, tasks with a lexical focus and mixed ones. Let us consider them in turn.

Tasks with a grammar focus can have several functions. First of all, any text is a potential input for learners' grammar banks. Although it is usually not necessary to give a specific task for Bank 2 input, using a text for collecting Bank 1 on a theme requires a specific task. The task itself depends on language resources of a particular text. For example, the text "I Wouldn't Have the Guts" in the Thinking Approach project database[51] could be used as a source of conditional sentences referring to past, the so-called third conditional. Work with banks is connected mainly with the first two groups of OTSM-TRIZ skills: in addition to an ability to describe elements (Group 2) which is quite obvious in this content, learners have to define limitations of a given model and change between various models for description (Group 1).

[51] A materials database of the Thinking Approach Project is available at www.thinking-approach.org

Another function of grammar tasks in TT is shifting learners' grammar stereotypes or providing input for enlarging their models. A sample task from the text "The Magic Chewing Gum" by Roald Dahl can illustrate this idea.

Table 2.2.18. Example of a Language Task Serving as Input for Bank 2.

8.1.	What time does the following sentence from the text refer to? *'If you were to start chewing it,' said Mr Wonka, 'then that is exactly what you would get on the menu."* What is the function of the verb 'were' in the first part of the sentence? Think of three examples of sentences containing the verb 'were'. Try to find such examples, so that the verb 'were' always has a new function.

Here learners are expected to question the model that "were" is always used to speak about past because it is a past form of the verb "to be". In a sense, this task may also be seen as an alternative to a presentation of a certain language form.

The last type of grammar tasks[52] would be the one connected with a change of text. Learners are asked to re-write a text as a result of a change of one of its features. A sample task below illustrates this idea.

Table 2.2.19. Example of a Language Task Aimed at Changing the Text

8.3.	Imagine the narrator has not really been to Old Ernie's – he's just telling you what his worst nightmare would be: to go to this place. Choose a paragraph and re-write it like that, ie "and I would be sitting there and watching all the phony guys who would probably...."

Apart from an extensive language practice, here learners develop an ability to trace changes of values of other parameters that appear as a result of a change of a given parameter as well as work with a real-imaginary axis of a full scheme of powerful thinking (N. Khomenko, 2004). (Group 3)

Lexical tasks offered in the TT may look rather different. The following are examples of lexical tasks from the sample system of tasks.

Table 2.2.20. Examples of Lexical Language Tasks

8.1.	Salinger is famous for writing in a spoken language. Some of his vocabulary can belong to slang, or even taboo words.

[52] This task is already much closer to a mixed group than a pure grammar task. At the same time, the whole existence of "pure" tasks can be questioned, therefore a classification offered here mainly performs the purpose of a presentation of materials.

Classify Salinger's vocabulary according to how informal it is. How many groups have you got?
Do any of the words in the groups seem dated? Which ones and what their possible alternatives could be today?

8.2. Make a list of words the narrator uses for expressing his attitude to things and people in the club. Try to connect them into a chain from "very positive" to "very negative". You may have several chains, i.e. nouns, adjectives, etc.

8.3. The odd one out. Exclude each word in turn. Be ready to provide a reason for exclusion.

moron	jerk	bastard	dummy

The common feature of all the tasks is that they focus on vocabulary work and some OTSM-TRIZ skills at the same time. Task 8.1. for example deals with the theme of register (learners work on stylistic colouring of the text vocabulary) and classification skills seen as a part of the skills necessary for work with the ENV model (Group 2 of skills). In Task 8.2. learners focus on another important aspect of vocabulary training – work with connotational meaning. And again they are mastering one of the aspects of working with an ENV model by focusing on organising values of features. Task 8.3. may require additional comments as this type of task in TA context differs from its traditional use. (The description of the task below is adapted from (Sokol, Galpern, & Lasevich, 2003)

The Odd One Out (offered in many modern course books) is simple to prepare and easy to implement in the classroom. The teacher traditionally offers students a list of four words (for example: a cat, a dog, a hamster, a wolf), three of which make one logical group (a cat, a dog, a hamster are all pets in our example) and the fourth is "the odd one" (a wolf). Students find the word and explain why it has been chosen (three pets contrasting a wild animal). We will now claim that with a little change this activity can be made much more challenging and be used for the development of thinking skills.

In our case the words chosen are: *a barber, a butcher, a teacher, a nurse*. It's time to see four differences which make the activity a "thinking approach style".

Difference 1. ***The teacher chooses the word*** for the class to exclude. Let us try and exclude the word *a barber*. Easy? You have found that what makes it different

is that a barber works only with men (a sex of a client he/she deals with), when others may have both men and women.

Difference 2. The teacher offers students ***to exclude every single word*.** Thus we find a reason why *a teacher* may be excluded (educational requirements – higher, when others do not need it), then *a nurse* (word derivation – not by adding *–er* as the other words), *a butcher* (as the only one not exclusively dealing with humans).

Difference 3. ***The TA teacher uses definite thinking models*** (the ENV model in this case) underlying the activity and helps his/her students see and apply them, too. We see that any element (an element, E in the acronym, may be anything: a process, a thing, a person, etc.) can be described through the names of features (N in the acronym, such as: education, age, appearance, shape, etc). We can further compare elements, which are described through the same names of features. For example, it may seem hard to find similarities in the words *a table* and *to crawl* unless we come across the same name of feature, which is *the number of letters in the word*. The values of features (V in the acronym) under the same name may coincide or be very different. *A teacher (E)* will have *higher* (V) under the name of feature *required education* (N) while the other three will normally not have such a high requirement.

Difference 4. ***The TA teacher may choose to focus on process rather than on result of the activity.*** Thus students are invited to offer their hypotheses and check if they work. For example, if the proposed explanation is “a teacher is different because of working with students”, the teacher may suggest that students find the same value of feature *customer* universal for the other three words. If students are not able to do it, they understand they have to reconsider their initial idea.

In the mixed group of tasks one can hardly draw a border line between lexis and grammar, moreover learners should often take other features of the text into account as well. As a rule, these tasks are more complex than the first two types and thus give a larger potential for a thinking focus. Several sample tasks coming from a system of tasks to the text “About TV” will illustrate the idea.

Table 2.2.21. Examples of Mixed Language Task

8.1. Make as few changes as possible to the given poem to produce a promotional text about TV.

8.2. Write an anti-poem of the given one.
You could make it an anti-poem according to one element of a poem (eg, theme) or several elements simultaneously (eg, theme, arguments, form, etc).

8.3. Make a description of any other thing. Changes to the poem must be as minimal as possible.

Apparently, the above tasks require learners to go beyond language as such having to deal more with communication as problem solving where language is used as a resource.

2.2.3.2.1.5. Project tasks

In the project tasks a text is used as a springboard for own problem related projects of learners. Work on projects stretches far beyond the actual work with a system of tasks and is described in a detailed way in section 2.3.4. Examples of project tasks are given below.

Table 2.2.22. Examples of Project Tasks

7.1. "*And you could tell his date wasn't even interested in the goddam game, but she was even funnier-looking than he was, so I guess she had to listen. Real ugly girls have it tough. I feel so sorry for them sometimes*."

Salinger describes one of possible contradictions in relationship here.
If a girl listens to boring conversations, guys are interested in her(+), but she's bored during dates (-).
If a girl doesn't listen to boring conversations, guys are not interested in her (-), but she's not bored during dates (+).

What are typical contradictions girls face in relationships. Are they different from those boys face?
Collect contradictions from one of the above standpoints (or both if you wish) and prepare a manual for girls or boys.

7.2. Launching a successful night club. You are about to open a new night club. You want it to become THE most popular one in town. What will you do? What things do you have to take into account? The only external requirement is that it should be a cool place for different people. Such as Holden and such as all those jerks.
You need to prepare a business plan for launching such a place in the city you know well.

2.2.3.2.1.6. Reflection tasks

Reflection tasks connect TT with the Self-Study Technology. Here learners are expected to stop and analyse what and how has been done and make conclusions for further learning. Reflection tasks are practically the same in any system of

tasks to texts in the TT. Let us look at reflection tasks offered in the sample system. The idea of this group was suggested by Edgar Lasevich (personal communication) while ideas of some tasks go back to Kari Smith (K. Smith, 2002)

Table 2.2.23. Examples of self-study tasks.

9.1. List the words and expressions you found useful and worth learning when working upon these materials:

From the text:

From tasks:

Other:

9.2. Explain why you chose to work on these particular tasks in parts 3 – 8? If you could choose again, would you work on the same tasks? Please explain.

9.3. How did you like working on the tasks? Please explain.

9.4. Look back at the tasks you chose to do.
9.4.1. Which OTSM-TRIZ models could be practised when working with these tasks – list them and provide short comments why you think so.

9.4.2. Which OTSM-TRIZ models did YOU use when working on these tasks?

9.4.3. Did the use of the models help you do the tasks better? Please explain.

9.5. Which new tools did you work out / old tools did you improve for performing with the type of tasks you worked with?
(a) (in case of new tool) Describe the tool and point out how you think it can be used for performing similar tasks in the future.
(b) (in case of improvement of an old tool) Present the previous version of the tool and describe additions that have been made to the tool.

9.6. Have you worked out / improved any tools that can help you fulfil tasks in other subjects (real life)? Please explain.

9.7. Did someone help you with the tasks? What kind of help was it?

9.8. How much time did you spend on the tasks? _____ Did you find it enough? Please explain.

9.9. How would you estimate your work? _____ (10 point system). Why?

The above tasks can be divided into two groups. The first one asks to describe the process of work on the system. It includes tasks 9.1. (language focus),. 9.3. (personal response to tasks), 9.7. and 9.8. (reflection on process). The second group is more about a future perspective – it is aimed to connect this work with further learning. It includes tasks 9.4. (reflection on application of OTSM-TRIZ models), 9.5. and 9.6. (reflection on personal banks). There is also a task 9.2. (reflection on choice) which can be said to be between the groups as it includes both elements of describing the actual process of choosing in the past and a future perspective by inviting learners to reflect on their approach to the choice of tasks.

2.2.3.2.2. OTHER ELEMENTS

As well as CGT, TT includes work with banks. However banks are different here. If banks in CGT contained models of objects or so-called WHAT banks, banks in TT are HOW banks as they contain models of approaching tasks. As types of tasks repeat from one system of tasks to another, learners have a possibility to deal with the same type of tasks several times during a period of learning. Each time learners deal with a task, they are expected to work out a tool that is meant to help them perform this type of tasks, for example a tool for doing co-authoring tasks. Thus, when a learner chooses to do a co-authoring task next time, in addition to performing the task itself they will have a meta aim of improving a tool for dealing with this type of tasks. In fact, each task is thus just an instance in the process of working out tools – a process similar to what Davydov refers to as theoretical knowledge (Davydov, 1996).

2.2.3.2.3. SYSTEM OF TASKS

When comparing systems of tasks in CGT and TT at least one important difference needs to be mentioned. In CGT systems are more horizontal in the

sense that a major outcome (a model of the difference between structures developed by learners) appears at the end of working with a system. In TT however systems are more vertical as the major outcome (tools for fulfilling similar types of tasks in English lessons and, mainly, beyond them) appear as a result of working with a group of systems. This distinction is crucial for understanding the essence of working with TT as no result can be expected unless learners work with systems of tasks on a regular basis.

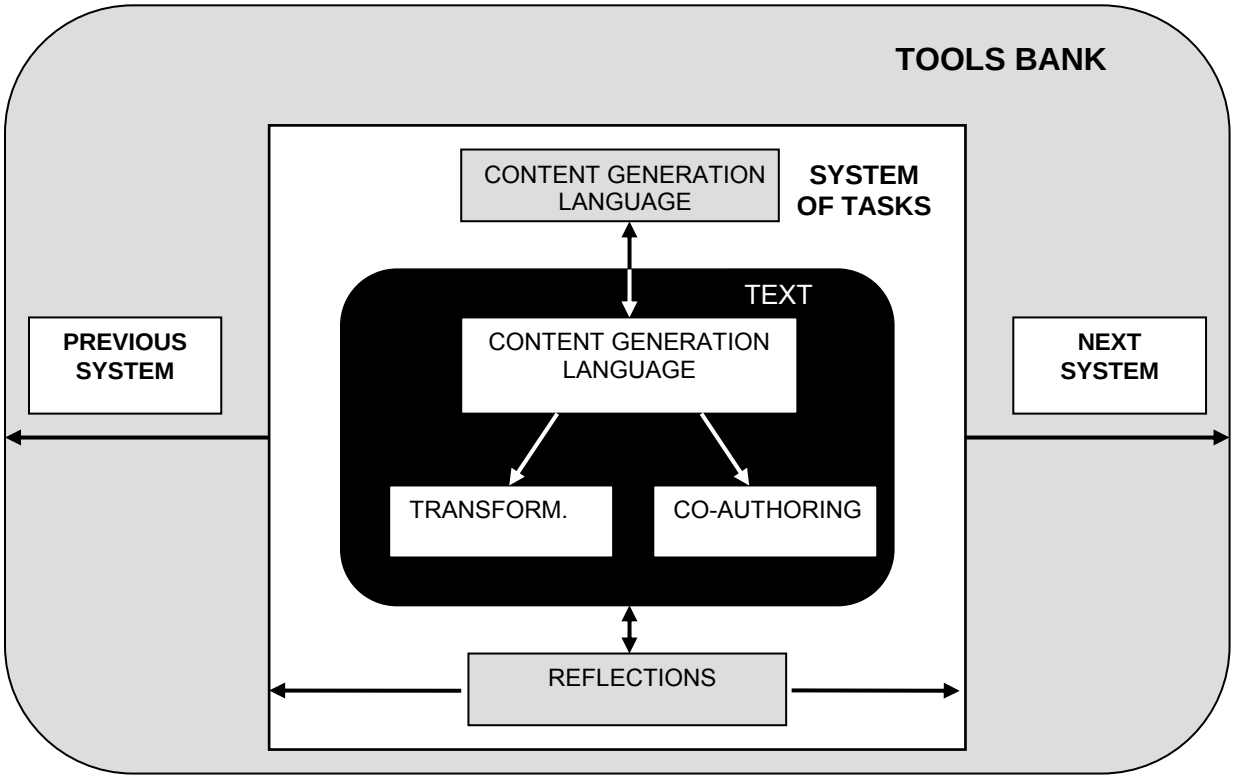
Let us summarise what is included into a system of tasks in TT. Any system of tasks to text consists of nine parts. The table below presents names and functions of all parts.

Table 2.2.24. Names and Functions of Parts in the System of Tasks in TT and FT.

Name of Part	**Function of Part**
Part 1. Content generation tasks.	Help learners analyse own background and thus prepare to respond to text
Part 2. Language tasks.	Help learners see language as a resource for problem solving and operate with it as such.
Part 3. Co-authoring tasks.	Help learners see a text as a solution to a group of problems
Part 4. Content generation tasks (writing focus) Part 5. Content generation tasks (speaking focus)	(a) help learners see what the text does not say (b) help learners understand the reader's response to text (c) help learners bring the reality of the text to contact with other realities and thus obtain a better interpretation
Part 6. Transformation tasks.	Help learners solve problems connected with transformation of various features of texts (help learners see discourse as a problem solving activity and operate with it as such)
Part 7. Project tasks.	Help learners start and implement individual research projects where they can apply the system of inventive thinking skills dealt with in the course
Part 8. Language tasks.	Help learners see language as a resource for problem solving and operate with it as such.
Part 9. Reflection tasks.	Help learners analyse the process and the products of their work and plan further learning.

It is important to see the above parts as a system which is aimed at a collection and implementation of a bank of personal tools that can be used for performing various types of communicative tasks (in a very broad meaning) both in and especially beyond English lessons. Figure 2.2.4. below presents a structure of work with a system of tasks in TT.

Fig.2.2.4. A Structure of Work in TT.



2.2.3.2.4. SUMMARY ON TT

The problem of text work in language classrooms is usually connected with what McRea refers to as low order tasks:

> This done (vocabulary work – A.S.), many teachers feel that the greatest part of their work is over because the greatest impediment to 'comprehension' has been coped with; a true/false exercise can check up on any doubtful moment and some 'wh-' questions will clarify the facts of the matter. This reductive is the extreme, applicable perhaps to referential materials, but hardly in a representational context. For these are all *low order* tasks/questions. Representational texts invite the reader to move on fairly rapidly to *high order* questions, probing the interpretative possibilities of the text, and beginning to look at the author's presumed intention, at the connotations and implications of what is written, at the wise subject matter the text touches upon.
> (McRea, 1991:95)

At the same time, many researchers point out that reading is a complex phenomenon. Reading is different now and will be even more different in the future – this is one of the main premises of a book entitled "English for Tomorrow"

(Tweddle, Adams, Clarke, Scrimshaw, & Walton, 1997). The authors speak about such issues as non-linearity, reading encompassing more than just words and reader as a co-creator of text. Carter and Long (Carter & Long., 1991:99) quote Eagleton's Literary Theory:

> Reading is not a straightforward linear movement, a merely cumulative affair; our initial speculations generate a frame of reference within which to interpret what comes next, but what comes next may retrospectively transform our original understanding, highlighting some features of it and backgrounding others. As we read on we shed assumptions, revise beliefs, make more and more complex inferences and anticipations; each sentence opens up a horizon which is confirmed, challenged or undermined by the next. We read backwards and forwards simultaneously, predicting and recollecting, perhaps aware of other possible realizations of the text which our reading has negated. Moreover, all of this complicated activity is carried out on many levels at once. for the text has 'backgrounds' and 'foregrounds', different narrative viewpoints, alternative layers of meaning between which we are constantly moving.
> (Eagleton 1993:77)

These are requirements of the modern world. Responding to them would be a step towards what McRea refers to as "learning to read the world" (McRea, 1991:64). Let us summarise the main principles of the TT which we can see as one of possible paths to the goal of reading the world.

- meaningful content is the primary criterion for selection of texts
- learners participate in the choice of tasks they make and define their learning goals
- learners may work on different tasks and at a different pace
- comprehension is only a tiny element of working with a text
- the main purpose of the task is to organise a challenge for learners – a problem solving situation where learners will have a possibility (and necessity) for employing OTSM models, thus developing their inventive thinking skills
- learners develop their own tools for coping with various types of tasks (types of challenges). These tools are described in learners' tools banks.
- Work with a new system is always a test for learners' tools. As a result of such work, tools are expected to improve and become more powerful. Improvement of tools in the process of application to tasks is seen as the central element of learning.

- The teacher's feedback focuses on the areas where learners' models (tools) do not work. The main role of the feedback is to organise a challenge. In this respect, feedback leads to the appearance of a new task.
- It is never possible to finish working with a task. At some point the learner may just decide that the task has already fulfilled its learning potential. Normally at least two drafts must be done to come to this conclusion.
- learners work with at least one system of tasks to text each month in order to make the development of tools banks possible.

As we have previously mentioned TT is still less technological than CGT. That is why further research must be aimed at increasing exactly this component of the TT. Two aspects appear more important in this respect. Firstly, work with banks must become more transparent. A possible structure of the bank should appear and mechanisms of learners' contributions to banks at different moments of working with a system of tasks must be described. Secondly, a block of reflection task should develop so that learners start with goal formulation and then stop over and reflect in the process of working with a system of tasks not only at the end of it.

2.2.3.3. The Self-Study Technology

Although hardly anyone argues today about the necessity of learning to learn, understanding of what it involves may differ. In the context of formal education, we see two major problems on the way towards learner autonomy.

The first problem deals with a learning programme or syllabus. The syllabus should be individual for each learner in order to be conceptualised as "my syllabus" which is essential for learner autonomy and at the same time the syllabus should be the same for at least a group of learners working with it in order to make it possible to organise the process of learning.

The second problem deals with the development of life-learning skills. In order to develop these skills, learners themselves should make decisions about their

learning (what, how and what for they learn), but learners do not know how to do it and are not ready to accept responsibility for their learning.

The Self-Study Technology (SST) is aimed at resolving these problems. Its main purpose is educating a learner who wishes and is ready to accept full responsibility for his/her learning and knows how to make learning a success.

We will first look at the main elements of the SST and then see how they work in a system.

2.2.3.3.1. PLANNING BLOCK

According to an old wisdom there is no fair wind for those who do not know where they are going. Unfortunately, most learners have neither an ability to formulate goals nor a disposition to do it. Every term of working with a TA based course starts with learners filling in a General Self-Study Plan. This plan defines the goal learners plan to reach by the end of the learning period (usually one term), sets out the objectives necessary for reaching the goal and describes the activities learners will be involved in to reach their goals. Thus, in addition to a general syllabus we described in section 2.2., there is also a personal syllabus developed by each learner. It is necessary to note that we see learners' self-study not as an addition to the main syllabus as it is usually understood, but rather the main syllabus being a part of learner's personal syllabus. Apparently learners face plenty of problems when they start planning their own syllabus as they are usually not used to this type of work nor do they have skills necessary for it. Yet, problems are seen as something positive in the TA context as they always offer possibilities for learning. As Richard Bach put it "there is no such thing as a problem without a gift for you in its hands. You seek problems because you need their gifts." (Bach, 1978:57) Thus, TA students are encouraged to find problems in their learning to learn, these problems are being solved in the process of learning and as a result learners come to a new level where they meet new problems.

2.2.3.3.1.1. Basic General Self-Study Plan

Working with a Basic General Plan during the first semester of learning (see Appendix 2.4 for a sample of the plan), students learn to formulate goals and objectives paying attention to such parameters as specificity, clarity and

measurability, they start distinguishing between objectives and activities realising that the former are products while the letter ones are processes, they are learning to select materials and feel their time. Let us illustrate some problems of this stage.

When students formulate goals for the first time the most popular answer is “to improve my English”. While generally true, such an aim can hardly be useful for learners, as (a) it is not clear what exactly needs to be improved, (b) how the result will be measured – in this formulation learning a couple of new words will already be an improvement and (c) how realistic the aim is – one, for example, may hope to improve his/her English to a native speaker-like level during three months[53].

Another common difficulty appears to be distinguishing between objectives and activities. When filling in the plan form for the first time, students often write something like “read books, do grammar tasks, etc” under objectives. It takes time to realise that objectives are parts of the goal, sub-goals and they should be better conceptualised as products, or results of learning, e.g. “to be able to understand and enjoy books by Kurt Vonnegut in the original” rather than “read books” or “to have not more than 1-2 mistakes per 3 tasks on such grammar themes as …” rather than “do grammar tasks”. In other words, objectives should be seen as products of learning and activities as processes leading to these products.

Learning to feel one’s time is another objective for SST. Few students are able to say how much time they actually spend on this or that activity or how much time they will need to do this or that. Some enthusiastic learners may mention that they plan to spend about 15 hours a week for their self-study work on English only to realise in some time that they normally spend about 4. At the same time, an ability to control one’s time and knowledge of how much time is required for an activity is essential for an autonomous learner.

2.2.3.3.1.2. Advanced Self-Study Plan

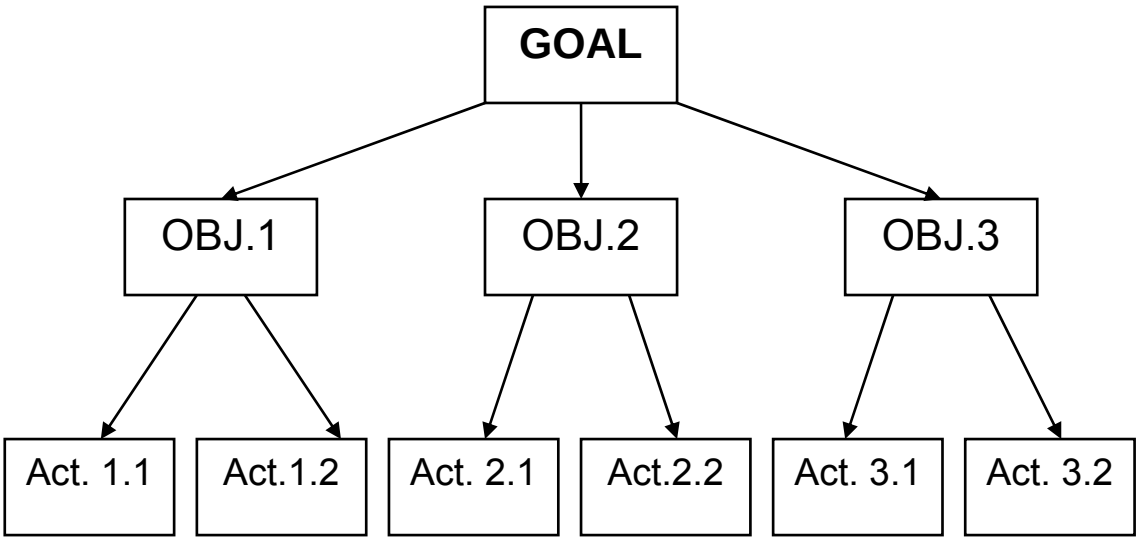
As learners have acquired basic skills they are offered a new form of a plan. In addition to the Basic Plan, the Advanced General Plan (also available in Appendix

[53] Formulations like “I want to speak English fluently” are not unlikely among learners at the beginning of working with TA programme.

4) asks learners to plan their self-study on OTSM in addition to language. Besides that, few details are required from learners as they are assumed to have already developed such useful habits as giving full reference information, paying attention to different skills without a reminder to do so, etc. At the same time, more attention is paid to connections between goals, objectives and activities, motivational part where learners are supposed to explain their choices and a dynamic dimension of a plan. Let us clarify what is meant here.

Goals, objectives and activities must be a system in the sense that activities result in reaching objectives and reaching objectives leads to achieving a goal. Figure 2.2.5 illustrates this idea.

Fig.2.2.5. Connections Between Goals, Objectives and Activities.



Thus, if a student aims, for example, to be able to understand news in English in the same way as they do in their mother tongue and sets out such objectives as knowledge of widely-used news vocabulary and understanding of major accents which will be reached as a result of regular watching of BBC news, learning vocabulary with a certain vocabulary book and doing tasks connected with different accents using certain software, a number of potential problems can be identified. First of all, it is arguable whether knowledge of widely used news vocabulary and familiarity with major accents will be enough for being able to

understand news in English in the same way as in the mother tongue. It is well-known that a comprehension problem of many learners of English as a foreign language, especially when they listen to native speakers, is connected with the fact that the stress model in an English sentence is different. Although it is arguable whether a stress-timed vs. syllable-timed dichotomy exists (Jenkins, 2000:149-150), many words which are not stressed in an English sentence are merely not heard by less proficient non-native speakers. Thus, one of the essential objectives on the way to the goal "being able to understand news in English in the same way as in my native tongue" appears to be "ability to hear non-stressed words in a sentence". This, in its turn, requires a number of activities, such as, for example, recording a programme and watching it several times, using a script of a programme, etc.

Being able to explain one's choices is another aspect highlighted at this stage. There are generally two approaches to problems: from functions and from resources. According to the first approach, it is first necessary to define functions or aims and then see for obstacles on our way to them. In the second approach, one first looks at what is already available (resources) and how they could be used. Although it is best when both approaches are employed, our experience shows that most learners prefer to approach problems from resources. In the case of working with a plan, it will mean that instead of defining what they want to reach as a result (goals and objectives), they ask themselves what they already do with their foreign language (e.g. watch MTV channel) and which materials they have already got at home (a book on the shelf parents used to read in school 20 years ago). Having included this information into the plan form, they ask themselves which goal and objectives could be reached on the basis of what they have written. On the one hand, such an approach makes it easier for them to fill in the plan. On the other hand, however, if they regularly do so, they are not working towards solving their learning problems and do not move in the direction of learner autonomy.

Finally, a good plan is supposed to be changing as a result of adjustments in the process of learning, it is dynamic rather than static. If a student writes a plan once and keeps saying that nothing needs to be changed, it is usually a bad sign. Until

becoming high level professionals in planning, it is extremely difficult to write a plan which will not change when it comes to contact with real life. Changes themselves are not seen as something negative in the context of TA. It is important however that learners respond to these changes. Thus, if a learner planned to read a book of 400 pages during three months spending approximately ten hours each month and their report for the first month says that 40 pages were read and 5 hours spent, there are a number of things the learner has to re-think. Firstly, an amount of time he/she can afford to spend on reading has to be re-considered. Secondly, the question about an average speed of reading has to be asked and the plan should be re-adjusted according to the answer. Thirdly, the learner should ask whether it appears realistic to have read a book by the end of the term at the present speed of reading. Depending on the answers, some other changes need to be introduced. For example, if the learner decided to give up a book, it is necessary to see whether the objective this activity was supposed to lead to can still be reached. Thus, dynamic dimension of the plan is also connected with an ability to see it as a system we discussed above.

The final level of planning is planning without a form, i.e. learners are ready and able to produce a qualitative self-study plan without any special form offered to them. This is what happens in the fourth semester of learning when learners are just invited to submit their plans on a blank sheet of paper. At the moment, we do not have enough empirical data to speak of typical problems at this stage. This question requires further research.

2.2.3.3.1.3. Monthly Plans

Apart from the General Plan, students are also asked to fill in Monthly Plans which are more specific and are seen as milestones on the way to fulfilling a general plan. The levels of Monthly Plans are the same: from the Basic Plan offered to students in the first semester of learning to a blank sheet of paper they fill in the last stage. Examples of both basic and advanced monthly plans are given in Appendix 4 It is also possible to see a General Plan as a tool for making learners

start doing thinking about their self-study and a Monthly Plan as a more specific learning tool[54].

2.2.3.3.1.4. Forms of Planning in Other Technologies

Apart from planning at the level of the syllabus, students are also involved in planning in other technologies: students participate in the choice of materials they are going to deal with (see description of the syllabus), when materials are selected they decide what tasks will be done, etc. Table 2.2.25 summarises how learners plan activities in different technologies.

Table 2.2.25. Planning Activities in Various Technologies of TA.

Technology	**Planning activities**
Text and Film Technologies	• defining personal goals • selection of texts / films to work with • choice of tasks to work upon
Creative Grammar Technology	• defining personal goals • selection of themes to deal with • selection of materials to work with • choice of tasks to work upon
Research Technology	• selection of field for research • defining personal goals • selection of sources to work with

2.2.3.3.2. IMPLEMENTATION BLOCK

The implementation block of the SST is the actual learning students are involved into. In other words, this is what happens when students work with other technologies and are involved in the activities they planned for themselves in the planning block. The implementation block is the learners' personal syllabi. Learners' process portfolio we describe in section 2.3.3.4 and banks described under TT and CGT are seen as the major elements in this block.

2.2.3.3.3. ASSESSMENT BLOCK

As any teacher knows nothing will work if students are not controlled. It is for this reason that we speak of assessment block rather than self-assessment.

[54] For many learners it takes quite a long period of time to accept self-study as a natural part of learning rather than another task given by the teacher. Thus, when coming after a holiday period they need a tool to make them start thinking about self-study. The General Plan is seen as such a tool. In order to fill it in, learners not only have to start thinking about their learning, but also do a number of practical things: choose materials (probably by going to the library), select themes, etc. And these small things – which are essential for the learning to start - are often the most difficult ones to do.

Eventually self-assessment should take over the functions of control, however, in our opinion, it happens on later stages of learning only. Initially the teacher's control should also be present though. Normally it takes the form of controlling learners' self-assessment and interviewing them on the process and results of learning at the end of the month. Let us consider all assessment elements in turn.

2.2.3.3.3.1. Daily Account Form.

Daily account form is a simple tool for teaching learners to be aware of their time and to be able to plan it effectively (see Appendix 4). It can be seen as a part of Lyubischev's system (Granin, 1976). At the end of each day, students are asked to put down how much time has been spent on this or that aspect of working with their personal syllabus and what has been done during this time. Such work takes hardly more than a couple of minutes per day, however if learners are honest with themselves the efficiency of this work can be very high. It often appears surprising for learners how much free time they have actually got as practically all of us think in terms of gross time spent on an activity rather than net time we devote to it. Think, for example, of an eight-hour working day. How much of it we actually spend on work as such and how much is dedicated to other "inevitable" activities: coffee pauses, personal phone calls and emails, chatting with colleagues, etc.

2.2.3.3.3.2. Portfolio Checklists.

Portfolio checklists are aimed at helping learners evaluate their portfolios. They are very simple tools that do not aim at giving an objective evaluation of various works a portfolio contains (these are evaluated separately). The purpose is to help students decide if their portfolios contain everything they are supposed to contain by a given assessment period. Samples of portfolio checklists are presented in Appendix 2.4.

2.2.3.3.3.3. Monthly and Term Report.

Monthly reports are parts of monthly plans which a learner fills in at the end of the month. Their purpose is to demonstrate both to the learner and the teacher to what extent the plan has been followed. As a result, the learner is supposed to adjust the General Plan (see a list of correction in the sample plan). It is also important to analyse why there is a discrepancy between what was planned and actually done and how it can be avoided in the future. To monitor this kind of progress, the

learner should get used to evaluating several monthly plans (at least three plans from the previous months) at once rather than only the plan for the current month.

2.2.3.3.3.4. Interviews

At the end of each month, the teacher holds interviews with each learner where they discuss their work with their personal syllabus. Interviews appear very effective, especially at earlier stages of learning when very few learners already accept responsibility for their learning. A drawback of this activity is that it takes quite a lot of time and therefore it may be difficult to introduce it with large groups that have few contact hours[55].

2.2.3.3.3.4. Forms of assessment in other technologies

As well as with planning, a whole range of assessment activities takes place within technologies. Here we will focus on self-assessment tasks learners are involved in when working with TA. Table 2.2.26 presents self-assessment activities students are involved into in other technologies of TA.

Table 2.2.26. Self-Assessment Activities in TA Technologies.

Technology	**Self-assessment activities**
Text and Film Technologies	• Part 9 of the system of tasks (see section 2.3.2.1.6. for details) • Reflection on the teacher's and peers' comments in the process of working with tasks • Reflections on various aspects of work with a system[56] • Assessment of tools at various stages of their development • Work with banks[57]
Creative Grammar Technology	• Assessment of personal knowledge • Assessment of grammar models at different stages of their development • Assessment of various aspects of work with a system (see reflection tasks in section 2.3.1.2.2.) • Reflection on other aspects of working with a system

[55] It is necessary to note that interviews never take "pure" lesson time as the group are always working on some task while the teacher is interviewing a student.

[56] Apart from working with reflection tasks incorporated into a system of tasks, TA students exchange reflections on various aspects of their learning electronically. Themes of discussions are usually offered by forum moderators who are more active students from the class. For samples of such discussions, see http://forum.thinking-approach.org

[57] Although Part 9 includes reflections on the tools banks collected by the learners, in real life learners stop over and analyse the content of their banks much more often than once per system. Analysing banks is something that should happen all the time. It should not necessarily be an observable activity as learners may often analyse banks within their heads. This process, however, should bring about tangible results – only then can it be considered valuable.

Research Technology	• Work with Bank 1 and Bank 2 • Reflection on own interests • Work on self-assessment tasks at the end of the project • Reflection on teacher's and peer's comments in the process of working with a project • Reflection on other aspects of work with a project

2.2.3.3.4. PORTFOLIO

Portfolio can also be seen as an assessment tool. We consider it separately though as portfolio has other important roles in the SST which go beyond self-assessment. Let us consider all this in turn.

2.2.3.3.4.1. Function of Portfolio[58]

As we agreed in section 2.1.3. in the TA context learning is seen as a construction of knowledge and teaching to facilitate changes in perspectives and attitudes. It means then that assessment should definitely be more than just administering a test at the end of a unit. It is no longer just "informing you of student progress; it should also help students enlarge their understandings of what is being studied". (Perrone, 1998) There are three types of assessment involved in portfolio work:

- Summative assessment
- Formative assessment
- Self-assessment

Let us have an example. Imagine that a student is working on her essay. She starts with choosing a topic. Then she produces the first draft of her essay. She brings it to the classroom and receives the first feedback. It may come from either the teacher or her peers. They may tell her to pay more attention to paragraph structure, or think of a better example to the second argument or make her language less spoken. The important thing is that the student is given directions for further work. This is formative assessment. Then, the student produces a second draft and the story repeats until she is satisfied with her product and is ready to receive a mark for it. Our mark is an example of summative assessment. After this, the student can be asked about the reasons for choosing this particular theme, whether she enjoyed the process of working on her essay, if she thinks she

[58] - this and next section are adapted from Sokol (Sokol 2005)

could have produced a better writing, etc (Kari Smith, 2002). Here we deal with self-assessment[59].

Thus, we can define the function of a portfolio. Portfolio is a framework for a different kind of assessment, i.e. ongoing assessment of learners.

2.2.3.3.4.2. Portfolio in the TA classroom

Students working with the TA are requested to have two types of portfolio – a process portfolio and a presentation or showcase portfolio. The presentation portfolio is derived from the process portfolio, yet it is necessary to remember that these are two different things. First, we may summarise the difference by comparing the features of the two types of portfolio.

Table 2.2.27. Types of Portfolio in the TA Classroom. Features.

Process portfolio	**Presentation portfolio**
• Done for oneself	• Done for external reader
• Made throughout the term	• Made at the end of the term
• Contains all learning material	• Contains selected material

Another way of understanding the difference is to compare reasons for making a portfolio, i.e. their functions.

Table 2.2.28. Types of Portfolio in the TA Classroom. Functions.

Process portfolio	**Presentation portfolio**
• Teach students to plan and organise their learning	• Present students' language and thinking skills
• Teach students to reflect on learning and accept responsibility for their own learning	• Present students as learners
• Provide students with necessary reference information	• Be the major assessment tool
• Organise a learning dialogue between teacher and students	

[59] - many teachers would object here pointing out that they have no time for such elaborate work on one single essay. Agreeing that teachers often face the problem of having very few hours, I would like to note that it is often possible to sacrifice quantity for the sake of quality. For example, instead of doing six different essays during a term, the teacher may choose to work on only three of them following the framework described here.

Although the two types of portfolio are connected, we can see that the differences are quite essential. These differences are also reflected in the actual content of both portfolios which is presented in Table 2.2.29 below.

Table 2.2.29. Types of Portfolio in TA Classroom. Content.

Process portfolio	**Presentation portfolio**
o Texts, vocabulary work on texts and reflections about texts	• Final versions of obligatory assignments and reflections about them
• Tasks to texts, vocabulary notes and reflections on them	• Final versions of the best samples of learning and reflections about them
• Written works (at least 2 versions);	• Best samples of learning materials and reflections about them
• Self-study plans and daily accounts for each month;	• Quantitative summary of learning
• Project forms and various materials related to project work;	• Self-assessment of the project work
• Grammar tasks, own grammar tasks and grammar reflection tasks	• Grammar models - summary
• Classroom notes	• Summary of the classroom notes
• Self-study materials, notes on learning and reflections about learning	• Self-study report for the term
• Questions about learning	• Summary of questions on learning
• Grammar and tools banks	• Grammar and tools banks – final versions
	• Introduction and conclusion

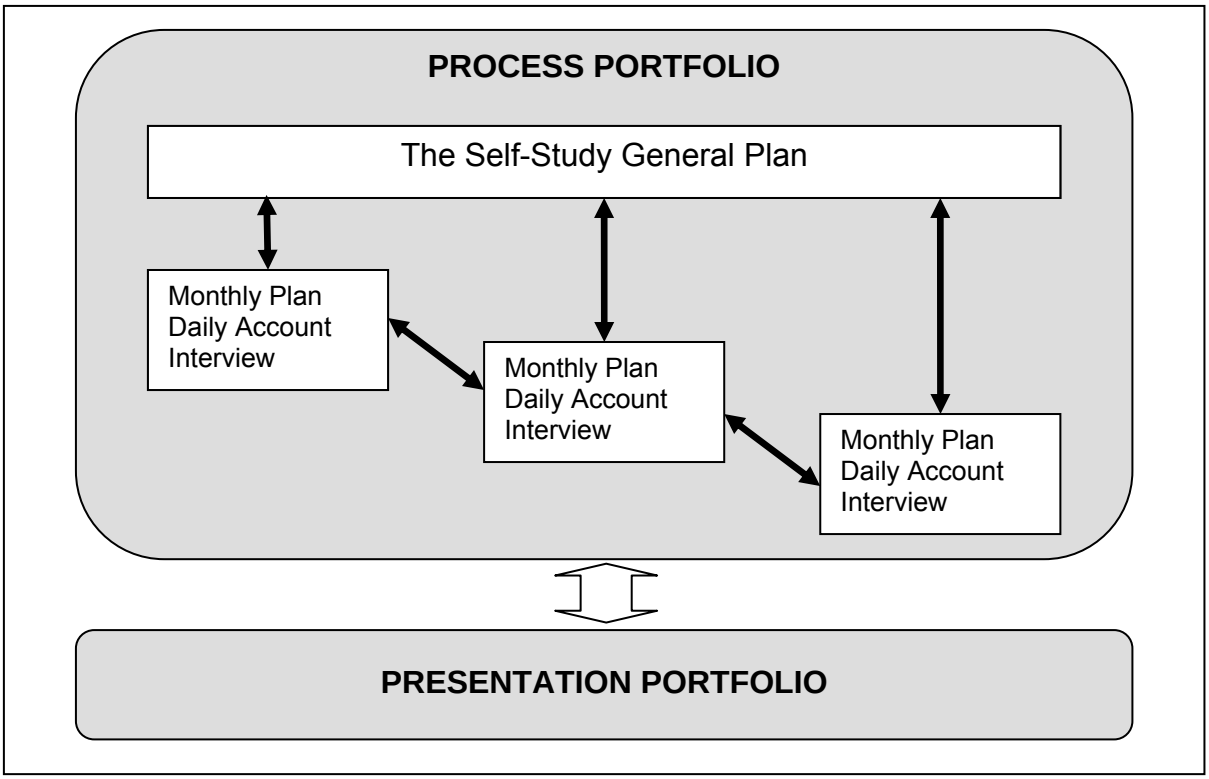
It is also important to understand that a portfolio is just an element of the SST and works best in this context. We will consider it in the next section. Before we do it however, let us summarise benefits of working with a portfolio:

- Learners learn to plan and organise their learning;
- Learners learn to reflect and accept responsibility for learning;
- Learners receive personalized feedback on learning from the teacher and peers;
- Learners have a tool for presenting them as learners;
- Learners deal with much more real life tasks;
- Learners are involved in peer and self-assessment;
- Learners are assessed for progress and evidence of effort in addition to product.

2.2.3.3.5. ELEMENTS TOGETHER – SST AS A SYSTEM

The SST presents a system of connecting chains for all other technologies of TA. Any visual representation of these connections will be just a simplification. We attempt to demonstrate relationships between technologies in section 2.3.5. Here we just present main elements of the SST and show how they are connected. This is summarised in Figure 2.2.6.

Fig.2.2.6. The Self-Study Technology



2.2.3.3.6. SUMMARY

At the beginning of section 2.2.3.3. we formulated two problems the SST aims to resolve. Let us now see whether they have been solved.

The first problem dealt with two demands to syllabus: it must be individual and collective at the same time. As we have seen above, students and the teacher together finalise the syllabus for classroom work – this is a collective syllabus necessary for an organisation of the learning process. At the same time, each learner defines a personal (individual) syllabus for their self-study. Thus, a collective syllabus appears as a part of a personal syllabus as developed by each learner. It is also necessary to note that a large individual part is incorporated

even into a collective syllabus and a large collective part can be found within an individual syllabus. This is possible as learners are encouraged to work at their own pace and following their own style when dealing with a collective syllabus. What makes individual syllabi similar is that aims are often reached and tasks fulfilled following the same approach, despite the fact that aims and tasks themselves may be rather different.

The second problem dealt with a necessity to make decisions about learning and accept responsibility for learning in the situation when learners have neither skills nor desire to do that. A TA course is organised so that learners are given a possibility to make decisions and feel responsibility from the very beginning (choice of materials, planning own syllabus, defining one's own problems, etc) and they are learning to do so better and better as they are working with TA. These changes are reflected, for example, in different levels of self-study plans we described in section 2.3.3.1.

2.2.3.4. The Research Technology

The aim of any teaching is transfer of knowledge and skills. Transfer "means… the use of knowledge or skill acquired in one context in another." (D. N. Perkins & Salomon, 1990:2) To make sure that far transfer of inventive thinking occurs learners need to start applying the acquired knowledge in new fields which are "vastly different from the context of learning." (D. N. Perkins & Salomon, 1990:2) The purpose of the Research Technology (RT) is to provide learners with possibilities for such transfer. Moreover, a learner who wishes and is able to conduct a qualitative research is seen as one of the aims for TA courses. Let us follow the same structure and first look at different elements of the RT.

2.2.3.4.1. CHOOSING A FIELD AND FORMULATION OF GOALS

Any research starts with a choice of field. TA students are encouraged to conduct their mini-research projects in the fields they are already interested in. Such an approach has a double purpose. First of all, it is important that students are motivated to be involved in a difficult and time consuming activity. Choosing a field of interest appears to be the best insurance against boredom. Another reason is to help learners decide what they want to do in the future. It is not unlikely that students choose a certain discipline in the university only to understand in a

couple of years that it is not what they had imagined. Doing a project in the field that seems attractive could help students decide to what extent they are really interested in it.

When the field is chosen, learners need to decide about the product of their research. Here they face the question of a type of research to be involved in. According to Nesterenko (Nesterenko, 2005b) there are two types of research project: a free research and a problem based research. The former deals with the question "what will happen if…" while the latter would be better described as "how to make it so that…". Thus, the first one will be connected with empirical thinking which is not targeted at a specific result. On the other hand, a problem based research is connected with theoretical thinking, it always aims at a specific outcome and is connected with problem solving. It is this second type of research we are interested in in the context of the RT.

It is necessary to note though that a problem based research is usually more difficult for learners. Therefore, they are not required to conduct this type of research at once and during the first semester of learning a major focus is on getting acquainted with the technology. This first stage – the one of choosing a field and formulating a goal – starts with filling a Project Application Form. This form defines the theme of the project, its purposes for both the researcher and other people and information sources necessary for implementing the research project (see Appendix 2.5 for a sample form). As we have mentioned before, learners are free to choose any theme for their projects. If some learners experience difficulties in choosing a field, they are encouraged to take up one of the projects offered as a project task in the TT.

2.2.3.4.2. ORGANISING CONTENT. CLARIFICATION OF GOALS DEVELOPMENT OF A PRODUCT

The RT has been steadily developing over the last year and a number of problem areas appeared. The block dealing with organisation of content is one of this new additions to the RT. It turned out that it is difficult for learners to go from the initial idea of a goal to an organised presentation of material they came across in the sources. The new block aims to resolve this problem by offering learners tools for representation of source materials in the way suitable for problem based research

projects. The form itself has not been fully developed yet, however its function is clear and such an element will take its due place in the RT.

2.2.3.4.3. PRESENTATION OF PRODUCT

The RT originally goes back to another technology that used to exist in TA, namely the Speaking Technology. The purpose of the technology was to help learners make a successful presentation. At present, a work with a presentation is integrated into the RT. However, this initially different purpose explains that some of the elements of the technology may still appear not fully integrated. This is especially true of the two elements which deal with a presentation of the product developed in the course of the research, namely Presentation Preparation Form Content and Presentation Preparation Form Procedures (see Appendix 2.5). The former aims at an organisation of content in the form suitable for a future presentation and deals with what can be called the WHAT of the presentation. The latter, however, focuses more on how an effective presentation could be made, thus dealing with the HOW of a presentation or delivery.

At present, both forms are in the process of re-organisation that will most probably result in one form. The purpose of the new form will be to help learners prepare a successful presentation for presenting the products of their projects.

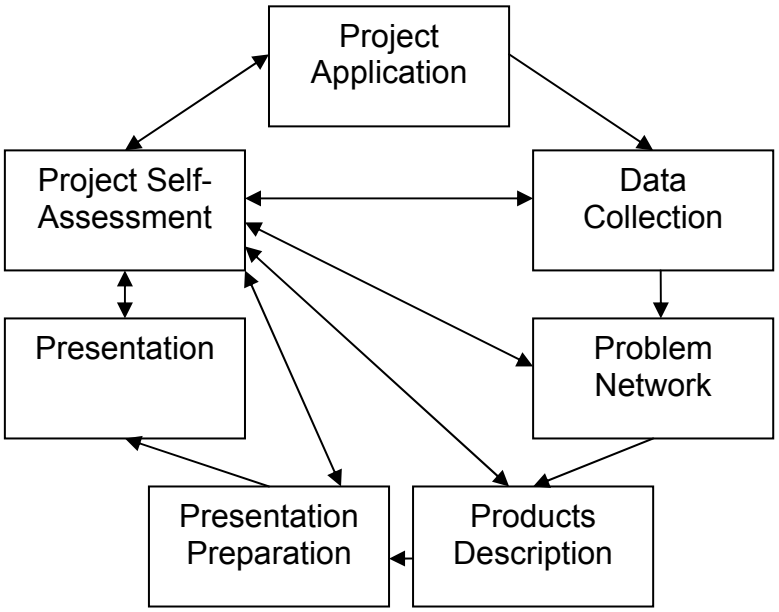
2.2.3.4.4. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE PROCESS AND PRODUCTS

As well as all other TA technologies, the RT contains an element that performs the purpose of reflection and evaluation and thus connects the technology with the SST. At present the self-assessment form consists of four parts: collection of material, material analysis and development of products, presentation content and delivery, evaluation and plans for further learning. The first three parts aim to evaluate different stages in working with a research project while the last part presents a summary and conclusions for further work.

2.2.3.4.5. ELEMENTS TOGETHER – RT AS A SYSTEM

As well as in other TA technologies, elements of the RT are connected into a system. It is illustrated in Figure 2.2.6. below.

Fig.2.2.7. Structure of the Research Technology[60]



2.2.3.4.6. RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY – SUMMARY

As stated above, the main aim of the RT is to provide learners with possibilities of transfer of knowledge and skills to new contexts which are often very different from the initial contexts of learning. Mini-research projects students conduct in the framework of the technology are usually not connected with the theme of language and may range from such themes as “mobile communication technology” to “relationship between the opposite sexes”. At the same time, when working on projects, students continue dealing with language (source materials as well as presentation should be in the target language) and problem-solving (problem-oriented research is always connected with problem solving). Only this time they are testing their skills and knowledge in new contexts, thus having a possibility to see where transfer actually occurs.

Apart from that, students are acquiring skills of research work which is the second aim of the RT.

[60] Fig. 2.2.7. presents the structure of the RT as it is implemented during the academic year 2005-2006. As mentioned earlier, this is the first time the technology has been implemented in the present form, that is why not all elements are fully developed yet.

2.2.3.5. The Yes-No Technology

The object of the Yes-No Technology is problem solving. This technology was originally developed for teaching OTSM-TRIZ by N.Khomenko (N. Khomenko, 1992-1994). The technology has undergone slight modifications in the context of the TA to adapt it for purposes of language learning and teaching. The main aim of the technology is to help learners see the work of various models of OTSM in a system. Most of the practice within the technology takes place when learners work with inventive and explanatory problems (see below), however as these types of problems are usually rather complex, initially learners deal with easier types. In subsequent sections, we will describe the main types of yes-no games as they usually appear in TA classroom. Our description will be based on Khomenko's publication (Khomenko, ibid.)

2.2.3.5.1. PROBLEMS ON DEFINING THE VALUE OF FEATURE

These are probably the easiest problems that can be offered to learners. Many of the problems in this category can be employed already from the very first lessons. As a result, learners will get acquainted with the main problem of the problem solving process – narrowing of solution search space and will also start acquiring some components of the ENV model of OTSM (see Group 2 of OTSM skills in Appendix 1.1). In addition to this, these tasks create the context for presentation of some useful materials to students (presentation becomes more student centred, as the teacher gives information which students are interested in at the moment) and gives a possibility for practicing the material described by values of feature students focus on, e.g. numbers (see example in section 2.3.5.1.1 below)

2.2.3.5.1.1. Problems with linear features

Here belong problems dealing with features having numeric values or any other values that can be systematized along one linear axis. Normally a systematization under one name of feature is enough for solving the problem. Examples of this type of tasks are presented in Table 2.2.30 below.

Table 2.2.30. Yes-No Problems with Linear Features

- Guess a number from 1 to 1000
- How many words are there in the … language?
- How many words are there in … dictionary? (various dictionary types)
- How many letters are there in the alphabet?
- How many languages are there in the world/this or that family/group?
- How many irregular verbs are there in English?
- How many parts of speech are there in the … language?
- How many tense forms are there in the … language?
- How many exceptions are there from some rule? (Degrees of comparison, plural of nouns)
- When did the English language appear?
- When was the last invasion to Britain?
- How many big periods were there in the development of English?
- How many sounds are there in English?[61]

2.2.3.5.1.2. Problems with geographical features

Here belong problems dealing with features the values of which cannot be systematized along one linear axis. Normally, the solution of a problem is connected with consideration of several names of features.

In these problems, the values of a feature can normally be systematized along several axes. For instance, when guessing a grammar form, the name of feature is the name of a grammar form, while values are all grammar forms that exist in languages. They can be systematized along several axes, i.e. language (English, Russian, Latvian), part of speech (noun, verb, adjective), type (synthetic, analytical), etc.

As a result of working with this type of problems, learners deal with a larger variety of skills necessary for a successful application of the ENV model. For example, unlike when working with problems dealing with linear features, here learners are involved in work with practically all major skills of Group 2 – they describe elements as systems which have a hierarchic nature, change in time and have their anti-systems. At the same time, as well as in the problems with linear features, here information is also given to learners when they mostly need it (eg information about functions of verbs in English such as grammatical function is given, or rather arrived at by learners, when dealing with problem 2 in the grammar part of the example below), thus making the learning process more student-centred.

Examples of problems with geographical features are given in Table 2.2.31 below.

[61] - This could be a good game for introducing the concept of phoneme.

Table 2.2.31. Yes-No Problems with Geographical Features.

Phonology
- Guess a transcription symbol
- Guess a phoneme
- Guess a letter

Grammar
- Guess a grammar form
- What is the difference between the meanings of 'do' in "Do you do your homework?"
- What is the difference between 'other' and 'another'?
- What is the difference between the following Latvian words and their English equivalents: work - darbs; end - gals; answer – atbilde.
- What do suffixes such as –er, -ly, -ship, -ful, etc. do in the language? What is their function?
- What is the difference between 'no' and 'not'?
- What is the difference between little – a little; few – a few?

Other
- Guess a language
- Guess a book/film/actor/political leader, etc. (Background studies)
- Guess a word (various levels of specification are possible, i.e. from the text, from the course book, etc)

2.2.3.5.2. PROBLEMS ON DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT

Here students have to identify the main names of features upon which a given object can be described and provide the values of features characteristic to the specific object the teacher thought about. At first sight, one may think that learners are involved in practicing the same skills necessary for a successful application of the ENV model. The difference, however, lies in the fact that when dealing with description of objects, learners work on problems which are closer to real life situations when a large number of parameters are involved into consideration. Here they not so much look for an object but are involved in *building* it which is how the process of working with a problem is understood in the context of OTSM. Table 2.2.32 presents examples of problems dealing with description of objects.

Table 2.2.32. Problems on Description of Objects

Grammar
What is … ? (name of any grammar form)
- what is an invitation tag?
- what is an absolute form? (pronouns)
- what is Present Perfect Progressive?

What is …? (name of any grammar term)
- what is a stative verb?
- what is a retrospective form?
- what is a prospective form?
- what is a durative form?
- what is a (dummy) auxiliary?

- what is a remote form?
- what are wh- words?

I filled in the gap in the following sentence. Which form / word did I use? (with a limitation of questions)

- I … this book. (read)
- It's … advice.
- My brother … to Portugal. (go)

Different Aspects

What is … (name of a useful term), for instance: convention; connotation; phrasal verb, etc.)

- What is a convention?
- What is a connotation?
- What is phrasal verb?

Other

Who is … ? (name of a historical figure, a literary character, etc.)

- Who is king Arthur?
- Who is Anne Frank?
- Who is Holden Caulfield?

2.2.3.5.3. PROBLEMS DEALING WITH PROBLEM SITUATIONS

Here we deal with a type of problems one often comes across in real life. Students face a problematic situation rather than a problem (it is neither clearly stated nor clear in general what has to be done). The number of parameters one has to consider in order to find a solution for such problems is practically unlimited. When working with such problems, learners are involved into practising of virtually all groups of skills. It is no longer just a description of various elements involved in a problem. Working on problems described in this section, learners have to analyse the situation as a whole (Group 3 of skills), transform their models of problems into models of solutions (Group 4) and spend more time on evaluation of their partial and final solutions and the process of arriving at them (Group 5).

2.2.3.5.3.1. Inventive problems

Inventive problem is a type of problem we usually come across in real life. This problem appears as a contradiction between our wishes and peculiarities of a specific situation. There is practically no difference between linguistic and non-linguistic inventive problems, however the latter are usually more attractive to learners. Table 2.2.30. presents examples of both linguistic and non-linguistic examples of problems.

Table 2.2.33. Inventive Problems.

- Attributive subordinate clauses sometimes make sentences in the English language rather ambiguous. For example,
  He rode all the way on a camel which was not very sensible.
  What was not sensible - camel or the man's action?
  Or:
  He gazed at the poor girl, too embarrassed to speak.
  Who was embarrassed to speak - he or the girl?
  It may occur that the meaning is clear from the context, though it's not always so. How can we make it 100% clear what is meant by the statement?

- Speaking to people in your native language you can often automatically predict what's going to be said next. The situation is quite different if it concerns a foreign language. You can't do anything automatically, first you have to learn how to do it. So, how can you predict what's going to be said next speaking a foreign language?

- When making a film about the lead-singer of the band "The Doors" Jim Morrison, a famous director Oliver Stone had an idea to present him as "a great American poet". At the same time, Stone wanted to make a true representation of a life of a pop-star in 1960s. A true representation means that for about three hours the audience sees Jim Morrison drink a lot, use drugs, abusing people by his behaviour, etc. At the end of the film Jim Morrison dies.
  How can Oliver Stone make it obvious for the audience that it was the death of a great American poet rather than one more sacrifice of the culture of the sixties?

2.2.3.5.3.2. Explanatory problems

Despite their seemingly unrealistic form, explanatory problems are very close to inventive problems and require the same skills from people dealing with them. At the same time, explanatory problems often require no knowledge of specific resources and look more motivating than other types of problems. In fact, probably most of yes-no games belong to this type. As well as with inventive problems, non-linguistic explanatory problems are often more interesting than linguistic ones.
Table 2.2.34. presents examples of explanatory problems.

Table 2.2.34. Explanatory problems.

- 'My mother stopped to smoke when she decided to have a child.' Explain why the above sentence is strange.
- A man is sitting in bed. He makes a phone call, saying nothing, and then goes to sleep.

2.2.3.5.4. YES-NO TECHNOLOGY: SUMMARY

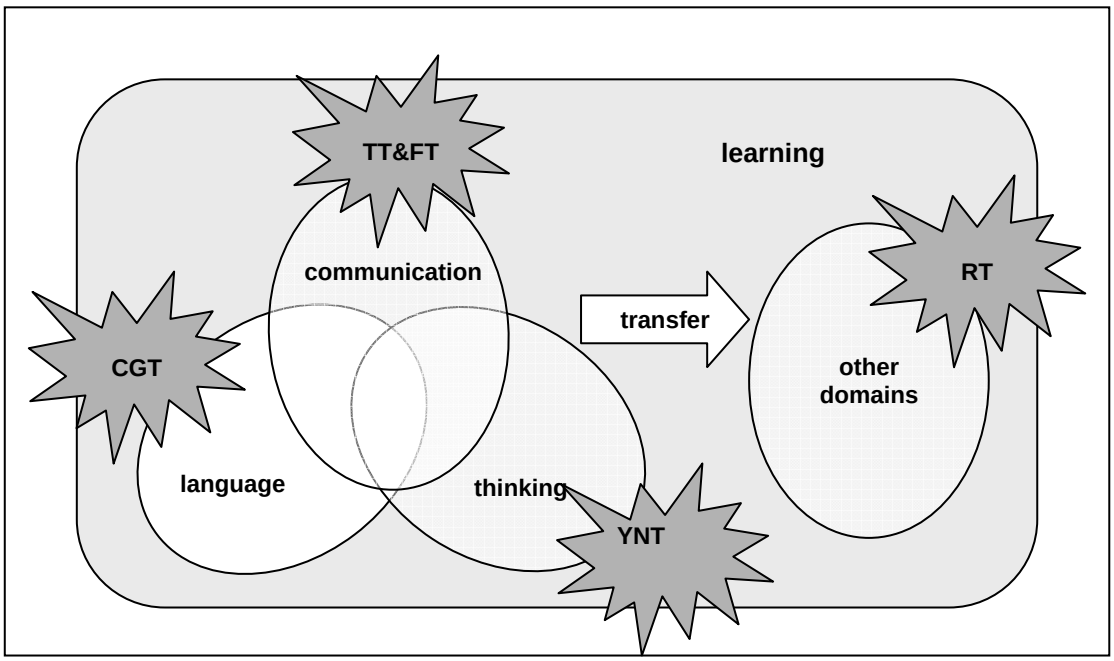
As we mentioned in the introduction to this section, the YNT focuses on problem-solving and aims to help learners use OTSM models in a system. Let us summarise the principles of working with the technology that make the above aims possible.

- Learners are encouraged to ask as few questions as possible rather than an unlimited number of questions which is characteristic of yes-no games in more traditional classrooms;
- Learners understand the functions of their questions and see connections between different questions, thus asking questions in a systematic way;
- Learners work in a group listening to each others' questions as questions asked by other learners (and answers received) may appear essential for finding a solution to a given problem;
- Learners stop over and reflect about questions they have already asked and answers they have received. These reflections are important for re-formulation of problems which is an essential part of building a solution.
- When learners are stuck, the teacher encourages them to apply one or several OTSM models or introduces them if it has not happened yet. The process of practising a model is more important for the learning process than finding a solution itself.
- Problem situation problems normally have more than one possible answer. It is important that solutions proposed by learners are duly evaluated not only and not so much against the key, but the problem they are supposed to resolve.

2.2.3.6. Technologies: summary

TA technologies we have described above are interconnected and make a system. Work with one technology always includes elements of the other. For example, when working with TT and FT, learners also do language tasks and are involved in the types of work we described in CGT, i.e. facing a problem, development of a model of a solution and a collection of examples beyond the scope of the model. Besides this, there are elements characteristic of all TA technologies. These are mainly tasks dealing with various elements of the SST, such as formulation of learning goals and evaluation of processes and products of work. This is easy to explain as the SST underlies the work with all other technologies. Possible relationships between various technologies are presented in Figure 2.2.8. below.

Fig.2.2.8. Relationships between TA Technologies.



As shown in Figure 2.2.8. at each particular moment of time a focus in the TA classroom is either on language as such (language as an object of study), communication (understood as a purposeful exchange of various kinds of texts) or thinking (understood as solving non-typical problems). As oval shapes cross, in a particular moment a focus can be on two objects (e.g. language and problem solving when learners are involved into developing a model of a structure in CGT) or even three of them (e.g. when learners are involved into doing a point of view task in TT and construct a language of the new narrator). At the same time, the focus of a particular task may be transfer of either language or problem-solving skills (or both) to other fields (e.g. preparation of a presentation of project results in RT). And, finally, all of the above tasks are seen as elements of learning to learn and thus are a part of the SST.

2.2.3.7. Typical concerns about forms of work offered in TA

2.2.3.7.1. LANGUAGE FOCUS

One of the questions articulated by language teachers who start working with TA is about language focus. Teachers are especially concerned about vocabulary learning. It is true that classroom work with TA is hardly ever focused around

vocabulary items, nor vocabulary acquisition is seen as the main aim of any of TA activities. We believe that vocabulary learning and acquisition happens within other tasks offered by various TA technologies and syllabus organisation allows for necessary recurrence of vocabulary items. This view is in fact supported by other researchers, see, for example, Prabhu's report on his Bangalore / Madras project. (Prabhu, 1988:58-59)

2.2.3.7.2. TA AND FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS

One of the typical questions is how the development of the four skills is seen in the TA. Initially, this question is usually asked about listening and writing and then teachers start being interested in the systematic vision of skills.

2.2.3.7.2.1.TA and Listening.

Standard listening practice is normally absent in the TA classroom. This is explained by the fact that traditional listening tasks are comprehension tasks which should take only a very limited amount of the classroom time in TA based courses. Standard listening practice is aimed at teaching learners to cope with typical problems which are not the subject of an explicit focus in a TA classroom. It is believed that many of these problems can be solved while learners are involved in other kinds of tasks, i.e. within other activities. Thus, TA students listen to the teacher and each other when dealing with different tasks and to various characters when watching films. Apart from that, listening comprehension is always a substantial part of each learner's self-study work and, thus, gives them a chance to focus on those typical problems each of them faces.

2.2.3.7.2.2. TA and Writing.

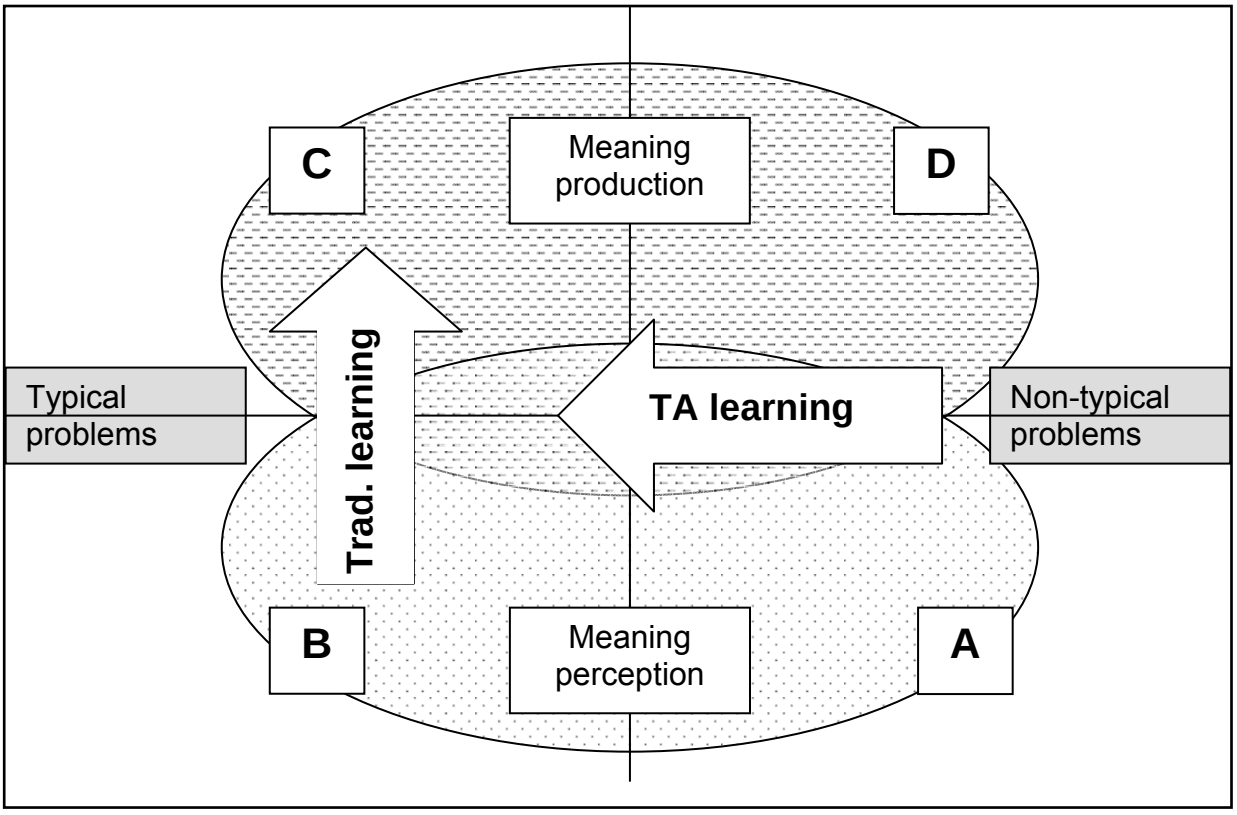
While there is no specific technology that deals with writing, writing practice is widely used in TA. First of all, technologies dealing with effective communication (FT and TT) offer a large variety of forms for writing. When performing a task, learners can usually choose a form for their writing and thus learn to do this or that particular type of writing. It also has to be noted that development and improvement of tools necessary for performing different types of tasks are one of the major foci in TT and FT and writing is obviously a part of the task for which learners need to develop tools.

Apart from that, TA students are involved into many forms of functions writing: filling in forms in SST, presenting and reporting on projects in RT and writing reflections in CGT. Moreover, when writing reflections on student forum[62] – and this is where most TA students write their reflections – learners are involved in a real life writing which is addressed at a much wider audience than just the teacher.

2.2.3.7.2.3. TA and language skills.

One may have difficulties to point out the place of the four skills in TA based courses. Although it is theoretically possible to say when either speaking or writing are learnt, another description of skills will probably be more relevant. The four skills can be divided into two groups: meaning production skills and meaning perception skills. Within both groups, learners are involved into dealing with two kinds of problems: typical (when a solution to this particular kind of meaning perception or meaning production is known) and non-typical (when a solution is not known). This is represented in figure 2.2.9.

Fig.2.2.9. Development of Language Skills in TA Classroom



[62] Each TA class has their own forum where learners are encouraged to write reflections on processes and products of their work, as well as discuss other questions arising in the process of learning. Please see forum.thinking-approach.org for more information.

In the very beginning of learning, most typical solutions are still not known to learners, thus they deal mainly with non-typical problems (Area A). This is a natural situation for language learning and it is important that learners are not moved to area B where they are fed with typical solutions to their typical problems.

If learning is natural, with time more and more typical solutions are accumulated and at the same time learners start dealing more with language production. As a result, learning shifts towards areas B and C. Most part of traditional learning takes place in areas B (reading and listening) and C (speaking and writing) with occasional appearance of areas A and D. TA always pulls learners to areas A and D where they start working out typical solutions and drift back towards areas B and C. When the latter are reached, learners are pulled back again. Thus, the vector of TA learning goes from quadrants A and D to quadrants B and C. In traditional learning, the movement is usually from quadrant B to quadrant C.

2.2.3.7.1.3. THINKING AND LANGUAGE TEACHING.

One of the differences that need to be highlighted when discussing TA is the difference between a thinking approach and the Thinking Approach. Depending on how we define thinking, a number of methods for language teaching that can be called thinking may vary from all (language is always connected with thinking) to quite a large number (it is good when learners think) in the former case. In the latter case, when speaking about the TA, we are not speaking so much about a kind of language learning when learners are asked to think (they always think), but about a kind of language learning when they are taught to effectively think about non-typical problems. A system of models from OTSM is seen as a tool for approaching such problems. Thus, the TA is not just an approach where learners are asked to think, but the one where they are taught to think effectively as a result of acquiring a system of models from OTSM.

2.2.4.Learner roles

2.2.4.1. Types of learning tasks set for learners

A detailed description of tasks set for learners is given in section 2.2.3. The most striking feature of a TA classroom will probably be the absence of purely

reproductive tasks. Practically all tasks offered to learners provide quite a high level of challenge and when they fail to it is considered to be the teacher's task to raise the level back.

2.2.4.2. Degree of control learners have over the content of learning

The TA learner has a high degree of control over learning. Initially the teacher and learners are expected to share responsibility over learning at a ratio of 50:50. With time however, the learner is supposed to take over more and more responsibility and approach as close to 100% responsibility as possible by the end of the course. It means that towards the end of the study period, learners are expected to take over most functions of the teacher. In order to be able to do it, learners should be given a possibility to make decisions about their learning. Decisions should be made at different levels of learning (level of a specific task, level of a material, level of a theme, level of syllabus) and also about different stages of learning (planning, implementation and assessment). TA learners are offered to make such decisions from the very beginning of learning and with time they learn to do it better.

2.2.4.3. Patterns of learner groupings that are recommended or implied

It is hardly possible to speak about one type of grouping that is considered best in the TA classroom. Depending on the type of task, particular context of a situation, type of learners, etc it may be more appropriate to work either individually, in pairs or in groups. At the same time, it is necessary to note that it is usually a mixed grouping that is adopted in the TA classroom, i.e. learners work individually on a part of the task, in pairs on another part and then proceed to group work and whole class activity when dealing with the remaining parts of the task.

2.2.4.4. Degree to which learners influence the learning of others

TA learners may substantially influence each other's learning. First, work with peers is embedded into a number of TA technologies, i.e. constant collaboration with a peer in the RT, peer feedback on a draft model and grammar banks in CGT, peer's feedback on the process and products of working with task in TT and FT, etc. Second, as learners have a very high control over learning and take over many of the teacher's functions, decisions made by most motivated learners may affect the learning of others who are less motivated and thus less involved into

managing the learning process. On the other hand, it is possible to say that TA learning is individual to a large extent as each learner works on his/her own syllabus and thus is only partly subjected to the influence of others.

2.2.4.5. The view of the learner as a processor, performer, initiator, problem solver, etc

As the TA learner is expected to have more responsibility than other types of learners, he/she is normally given more freedom. Thus, TA learners initiate things more often and are seldom seen as mere performers. As well as within Communicative Approaches, the process of work is extremely important in TA and it is while working on a task when most learning occurs. Apparently, TA learner is also seen as a problem solver. It is necessary to note though that the view of problem solving in TA is radically different from how it is traditionally understood in the field of ELT - a problem solving activity in the TA classroom takes place when learners face a problem a standard solution to which is not available to them. (cf. with other understandings as presented in (2001:Part 7.1; Littlewood, 1981:34; Prabhu, 1988:46-47; Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Willis, 1990:63))

Despite such differences, a number of features are similar if we compare TA learners and those working with other approaches. For example, a number of similarities would exist with content based instruction. The problems faced by learners exposed to this kind of teaching mentioned by Richard and Rogers are very close to those often come across by TA learners:

> "Learners need commitment to this new kind of approach to language learning, and CBI advocates warn that some students may not find this new set of learner roles to their liking and may be less than ready and willing participants in CBI courses. Some students are overwhelmed by the quantity of new information and in their CBI courses and may flounder. Some students are reported to have experienced frustration and have asked to be returned to more structured, traditional classrooms. Students need to be prepared both psychologically and cognitively for CBI and, if they are not adequately primed, then "missing schemata needs to be provided".
> (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:213-214)

In TA language, we would rather speak about developing a missing schemata rather then providing it. As a TA learner will quite often need to develop a new

schemata, we may assume that flexibility is one of the most essential features for a TA learner.

2.2.5. Teacher roles

2.2.5.1. Types of functions teachers fulfil

According to some TA teachers, it is exactly the new functions of the teacher that appears most difficult when working with TA. While the general TA philosophy about the teacher being a coach with the main purpose of helping learners learn can hardly be called an absolute novelty, the actual practice of training TA teachers demonstrates that a change in the teacher's mind set is often quite a different enterprise.

One of the most difficult things for the teacher appears to be accepting the role of a constant learner. The TA teacher is inevitably a learner as he/she permanently faces situations when answers are not available. This happens at all levels of learning, starting with working on a task which has no one correct answer to planning a syllabus when learners may choose to work with something we have never expected them to. Such situations are especially difficult for teachers who are used to have all answers and hold everything under control as neither the first nor the second variants are possible in the TA classroom.

Another requirement placed on the TA teacher is a high degree of professional knowledge. As TA syllabi always have a non-linear organisation, teachers should be ready to deal with any element of the syllabus at any lesson. A fishing net analogy may be helpful here. Such a net consists of many nodes and at different moments of time various nodes need to be lifted. This is exactly what happens with the syllabus in a TA classroom when different elements (nodes of the net) are emphasized at the right moment (when students face a problem and this node will provide them with information necessary for solution). Thus, the teacher should be able not only to keep all the nodes in mind and see connections between them, but also understand how the net needs to be lifted so that it is exactly that node where fish is caught that is emphasized.

If sometimes it is necessary to lift the net to help learners, at other times the teacher's role is opposite. He/she must help learners see something new, something they have not seen before. The teacher should be patient enough to keep the net in water or even pull it away from an over-excited learner to give a chance to a larger fish to appear and thus offer some additional learning potential to the learner, so that he/she has more time before everything is over. Here the teacher acts as a challenge provider – the role which is essential in the successful in the TA classroom.

This, however, is not all. In order to be a master in performing the above roles – to know how fishing nets are organised, to have experience and skills in lifting them and moving around, to be interested in learning more and more about fishing – one has to be involved in making nets. The teacher has to be a materials designer. Work with a course book in its traditional understanding is impossible in TA and although many materials can be adopted for various contexts, the teacher will anyway have to add his/her own ones to make it a system that works.

2.2.5.2. Degree of teacher influence over learning

It seems that the TA teacher has very little influence over learning – students are given lots of freedom and appear to be learning by themselves, as if without the teacher. It would be wrong though to say that the TA teacher does not affect learning. Moreover, we would claim that his/her influence over learning is greater than in many other approaches. However, this influence often has a different purpose and takes another form in comparison with more traditional classrooms.

Traditionally, teachers affect learning at WHAT level, they make decisions about what is learnt, when it is learnt and why it is learnt. Practically no attention is paid to HOW level with a possible exception of emphasis on learning styles. Although styles may be important, many aspects of HOW remain beyond their scope, eg how to determine the content of learning, how to decide what to learn first, how to decide why something needs to be learnt. It is exactly these aspects where the TA teacher influences learning. If one aims at the learner taking over 100% of responsibility, he/she should affect the learning process so that learners are really moving towards autonomy which is a situation when they are ready and able to

answer all of the above questions or, in other words, learners are able to build their own scaffoldings.

2.2.5.3. Degree to which the teacher determines the content of learning

As we have mentioned above, there are two kinds of learning contents in TA courses. The first is the content of a course which is proposed by the teacher and then finalised by learners. Here the teacher determines to a certain extent what would be learnt. Degree to which each particular teacher chooses to influence this kind of content usually depends on the teacher him/herself – the fewer opportunities for selection are given to learners at the finalisation stage, the higher is the degree of influence.

The second content is the one chosen by the learner for his/her individual syllabus. Here the degree of the teacher's involvement is extremely low. The teacher can only recommend something to this or that particular learner while the final decision is always made by the learner him/herself.

2.2.5.4. Types of interaction between teachers and learners

One of the main requirements to communication in the TA classroom is that of being real. Although reality of communication is apparently a relative notion, it is important that artificial communication (when an answer to a question is well-known and both students and the teacher just perform certain prescribed roles[63]) is avoided as much as possible. Real communication means that a possible number of interaction patterns in the classroom is virtually unlimited.

2.2.6. The role of instructional materials

2.2.6.1. Primary function of materials

The primary function of TA materials is to involve learners in work as a result of which they will develop both their language and inventive thinking skills. As we mentioned earlier, materials within each technology may have a more specific role, e.g. help students learn to build models of grammar (CGT) or work out typical

[63] When speaking of prescribed roles, we do not speak against role plays as forms of work. We mean roles which force artificial communication, such as for example asking questions about a learner's name or today's weather when the teacher and the learner know each other very well and have both just come to the school building.

solutions for coping with different forms of writing (TT). On the other hand, the whole technology may have a specific emphasis, e.g. learning to learn (SST). Thus, for the best understanding, discussion of functions of TA materials should take place in the context of specific technologies and at different hierarchic levels (task, system of tasks). We have tried to do it in section 2.3.

2.2.6.2. The form materials take

As described above (see section 2.2.3), depending on technology TA materials can take quite a different form. What is important to stress however is that TA is not a course book based approach. Agreeing that a course book is a wonderful invention for giving a certain standard for language teaching (especially in contexts where this standard is difficult to maintain due to such factors as not high level of language proficiency of teachers or inadequate training) we believe that it is not a good solution for one aiming at a student-centred approach, and especially a problem solving focus. We consider that the best syllabus is the one done for these particular students while course books are usually done for everyone (in fact, the more they are done for a local context, the less international publishers are interested in them)[64]. This trade off, or a contradiction as we refer to such situations within the OTSM approach, can be resolved (see section 2.2.2 in case the teacher also accepts the role of a syllabus designer.

The general core of the syllabus offered to different TA teachers is the same, however teachers are free to choose different materials and tasks to them. The materials and tasks are offered in the form of a database[65] and the eventual choice is normally done by teachers and students as a result of negotiation.

Some of the features of this approach were also outlined by Prabhu when reporting on Bangalore / Madras project:

> "Any collection of tasks acting as materials for task-based teaching can only have the status of source books for teachers, not of course books. Although it is possible to organize the collection in some order of increasing task-

[64] A popular justification that teachers are always welcome to add other materials to the chosen course book is not serious in our opinion as practically no course book is designed so that the teacher should add other materials to it (unless the course book is a part of the package which includes these other materials, which is the same international course book, only a bigger one).
[65] The data base of TA materials is available at www.thinking-approach.org

> complexity (with tasks of the same type appearing in short sequences, at various points, and with later task-types exploiting the kinds of reasoning, content familiarity likely to result from earlier ones), the ordering has necessarily be partial and suggestive rather than definitive, because what constitutes reasonable challenge for any class at any time is unpredictable and depends, as noted already, both on the learners' ability and on the degree of help given by the teacher. Teachers should therefore be free to modify the information content or reasoning-gap of some tasks, omit some tasks or alter their sequence and, when possible, devise their own tasks and add them to the collection."
>
> (Prabhu, 1988:94)

2.2.6.3. Relation of materials to other input

Specially designed TA materials always go hand in hand with other forms of input. First, it happens every time learners work on their personal syllabi where they deal with all sorts of materials, starting from specially written language learning materials to authentic samples of language. Second, within technologies themselves, learners work both with specially designed materials and other forms of input. Let us consider how it could happen.

In CGT, work with systems of tasks always happens simultaneously with testing grammar models against real corpora. The latter may be either texts learners work with in the personal and class syllabi or any other language samples they come across. Moreover, at higher levels of proficiency certain types of grammar tasks (e.g. sorting out) can be substituted by corpora altogether, i.e. the function of tasks is taken over by working with corpora in the process of natural contact with them.

In TT and FT, learners are expected to go beyond a specific system of tasks and turn to other sources when working on a task. For example, when doing a co-authoring task, it is often necessary to find and evaluate information about the author. Being involved in transformation task, learners often need to look up information connected with a type of medium to which a given text has to be transformed. Moreover, in time, learners are expected to start transferring the acquired skills to new texts and films, those to which no specific tasks have been written.

As we mentioned above, SST does not limit forms of input – here learners can work with any material they find appropriate for their aims. A similar thing occurs

when students deal with the RT. While forms they fill in may be seen as a form of specially designed materials, a large part of learning takes place when students deal with other materials they have chosen to work with to reach the aims of their research projects.