

False Beginners in the Corporate L&D Teaching Learning Environment (TLE) – A Veiled Reality

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Abstract: False Beginner is a type of learner profile observed and established in the context of ESL (English as a Second Language) area of ELT (English Language Training) as a Learning Intervention(LI) and causes an effect on the learning process both positively, as well as negatively in different cases. This paper aims to organize and analyze the definitions and research already done and established on False Beginners in ELT TLE (Teaching Learning Environment), to summarize the symptoms of False Beginners. Further, summarizes current research on similar challenges in TLEs outside the ELT context and find correlations between these through focused questioning with subject matter experts and practitioners in corporate L&D (Learning and Development) and CUs (Corporate Universities), to verify whether a similar challenge exists in areas outside the ELT TLE, and hence FB; especially in the corporate L&D. Originality/value – This paper adds value to the Corporate L&D space by highlighting the veiled reality of False Beginners, which is already an established observation in ELT TLE, and hence opening the possibility of better design, and further research on the same, by factoring the False Beginners in the Audience analysis for the design of LI towards better BPE.

Keywords: False Beginners, Teaching Learning Environment, Corporate L&D, Corporate University, compliance education, English Language Training.

Date of Submission: 02-06-2018

Date of acceptance: 18-06-2018

I. Introduction

The world population of employed workforce has crossed 3 billion a few years ago, and continues to increase [1]. This continuing growth, has seen a heightened appreciation for education in the workplace, as an alternate to lateral hiring of ‘ready to perform’ workforce on a continued basis to balance responsiveness to customers with workforce talent management. Hence need for a more harmonious interplay between employee education and corporate goals for talent management.

English as an official language has gained popularity around the period of World War II, and even earlier around 1935, when English came up as the official language for more than one fourth of the earth’s total area [2]. While the language was gaining popularity, it was mostly through a conductive model, where one would learn basis the surroundings, from other people around. ELT as a formal learning or training dates back to times beginning later half of 19th century.

The advent of internet and specifically ARPANET (the Advanced Research Project Agency Network) that was a major project by US DOD, along with military contractors, around 1969 also contributed a great thrust, with the prime mode of communication being English. Eventually, towards end of 19th century and early 2000, English was the dominant language of the Internet, as well as BPOs, .coms and IT sector. ELT research work came into being much later, around 1970s [3] while research work in this area before that was comparatively feeble and far apart.

II. Rise of ELT ecosystem to produce RTP workforce

Around this new found thrust in increase of ELT as an explicit TLE, saw the rise of ELT in a task centric model, where there was a much crisper definition of the level and dialect of English required for various purposes ranging from the IT industry to BPO, and international business in general. The workforce now needs to be at a specific level of ESL or English as their first language, to be able to perform specific tasks. And hence immense pressure on the ELT ecosystem, to produce ready to perform workforce (RTP workforce) in a pre-defined time frame dictated by business, and with passage of time, such timelines themselves were shrinking. Which makes RTP workforce as the largest point in the knowledge worker ecosystem.

III. Requirement for decreasing Time to Performance(TTP) for RTP workforce and Identifying Varying Learner Classes:

This saw a Pygmalion effect [4], where the ever increasing business process excellence was driving and demanding for the Time to Performance (TTP) for RTP workforce to go down, almost expecting for it to tend to zero. And therefore, this phase saw much more research towards identifying various learner classes, which can learn differently, or rather better and faster than others. While identifying the ideal candidates for faster learning is important, so is identification of learner candidate population which may need a different attention or instruction set. This saw the emergence of yet another underlying concept, which is of prior knowledge as well as pre-requisite knowledge.

During the Learning Intervention, the new information links with existing knowledge or information to become ‘encoded’ and is available for later retrieval. This interplay between existing knowledge, and new information is crucial for any learning to happen.

IV. Linking Instructional Interplay with How Brain Processes Information

This is closely linked with the concept of plasticity of the human brain. Hummel and Cohen in their study on Current Opinion in Neurology[5]have described Neural plasticity as a crucial mechanism of the human brain to adapt to environmental changes in the developing and adult human central nervous system. This property of the central nervous system contributes to learning and even functional recovery from neurological diseases such as stroke.[5]

Instruction design factors invoked: *Hence, while designing Learning Interventions, the instruction design factors –establishedor newly emerging - need to be accounted for effectiveness of interplays as above.*

V. Established factor: Prerequisite Knowledge

It is a common practice to take into account existing knowledge. This is also called prerequisite knowledge[6]. Prerequisite knowledge, by dictionary meaning, is “required beforehand”[7]. Newyouth.ca[8]in their article on ‘What Are Prerequisites And Why Are They Important?’ defines prerequisite as a specific course or subject that one must complete before one can take another course at the next grade level. To be accepted into some courses, one will have to prove that one has completed a similar course in the same or a related subject, at a lower grade level. Prerequisites are usually in the same or a related subject, at a lower grade level.

What this means is that prerequisites for a Learning Intervention are knowledge about a topic that is a predecessor to the Learning Intervention that the learner is about the enter (Current LI), and is required to be able to understand what is covered in the current Learning Intervention.

The Newyouth.ca article further describes the correlation between certain courses and their prerequisites as:

*“To be accepted into some courses, you will have to prove that you have a certain amount of knowledge about the subject already. For example: The prerequisite for a first year university-level science course might require that you have already taken a grade 12 Chemistry or Biology class.Or:
The prerequisite for a third year university-level Spanish course might require that you have already taken a first and second year level Spanish course.”*

VI. Established factor: Prior Knowledge

There is yet another factor, Prior Knowledge, which has an important role to play [9][10].The concept of prior knowledge playing a vital role in the learning process is by now a well-established fact, which has a marked effect on learning outcomes. Researchers typically rely on a number of methodologies to control for this factor in learning design. The experiments reported, demonstrate that such methodological controls may be insufficient. [9]

VII. Newly Emerging factor: Recognizing presence of “more than zero level” learner category

Further to Pre-requisite and Prior knowledge, while Pre-requisite knowledge is the bare minimum required, some candidate learners may have prior knowledge about a subset of what the overall candidate learners need yet to learn. While at this stage, it is not as important where this prior knowledge came from, which can have statistically varying factors and implications, the fact is, that such learners already know some of what is yet to be taught. Which means, for such learners, those specific parts may not be the best utilization of learning time. Such learners that have a more than zero level of prior knowledge on the learning objectives(LO) to be covered in the LI [11], are also called as False Beginners in few prior research observed [12].

VIII. Consequent Existence of “False Beginner”:

While ELT became more and more popular in various forms around WWII, the spread of the language in general parlance increased. This led to increase in the awareness of and about the language even without formal interventions. In the writings and research work, the appearance of False Beginners as a term, dates far back, earlier than 1970s, but it was not before 1990's when False Beginners as a term, started appearing in ELT related research for ELT as a formal, and commercial TLE. This *False Beginners* as a type of learner profile observed and established in the context of ESL (English as a Second Language) area of ELT as an LI, causes an effect on the learning process both positively, as well as negatively in different cases.

Amongst many TLEs, the corporate TLE is a very important environment that makes a direct impact on the workforce, as well as the economy of the organization and the economy that the organization is a part of. Specifically, in the corporate TLE ecosystem process map (SIPOC), the Learning and Development (L&D) department is constantly evolving into what is being coined as Corporate Universities (CU). The CU, which should not be mistaken for Universities as we know. In the evolution of organizational learning as well as creating a learning organization, where the business hinges many times on how well the workforce can be trained or transformed, has derived a lot from the formal Universities as we know [13][14]. And in many cases, CUs have created a great transformational impact on the career progression of individuals, and hence a CU based HR development strategy [15].

IX. Basis Existence Formulation:

In the current corporate TLE ecosystem, the L&D or the Corporate University (CU) acts as a supplier of the LI framework and the LI itself, for Business Process Excellence (BPE), the success of such LI hinges on the successful completion of the LI, and has seemingly an overlap with the symptoms indicative of FB, and the corresponding effects on the effectiveness of the LI towards desired results for BPE [16].

X. Correlations between ESL in ELT with BPO Industry, CLD and CU

When correlated, ESL in ELT, with BPO industry, Corporate L&D (CLD) as well as Corporate Universities (CU), there is an evident correlation. A pronounced (accentuated) implication of factors' variability. In other words, multiple factors at play, and factors themselves in a state of dynamic change. Factors such as terminal objectives that have to be attained to reach the performance level (Exit criteria), or the level of prior knowledge, the kind of Terminal Objective (TO) for which prior knowledge exists, as well as the source of such prior knowledge.

With the ever-increasing popularity of ELT and ESL, False Beginner as a term has found place into dictionaries as well. Some dictionaries recognize False Beginners as a noun, “a person who has a basic knowledge of a language, but has started to study it again from the beginning” [17]. Others describe False Beginners as “someone who starts to study a language from the beginning again, although they already have a slight knowledge of it” [18]. The Oxford Learner Dictionary also describes it similar to the Collins Dictionary as “a person who has a basic knowledge of a language, but has started to study it again from the beginning” [19]. Most of the dictionary meanings of False Beginner are specifically in the context language learning as a second language, or a subsequent one.

In a Teaching Learning Environment (TLE) for any subject area, to reach a desired learning outcome or Terminal Objectives (TO), there occurs, an interplay between the instructional agent(s) (IA) and the learner. Each of the terminal objectives, have a corresponding part in the LI, most commonly called, Learning Objects [20].

While the Terminal Objectives (TO) define the desired end outcomes, the LOs act as enabling objectives towards TOs. There may be one or more LOs that enable a TO. For ease of understanding, all such interactions are collectively called the LI to produce the stated learning outcomes or meeting TOs. A LI is scoped by the achievement of desired objectives, or intended exit TOs, and starts with the learners at the Entry Profile (EP). The journey starts as what is defined as the EP level for that LI. And the journey of taking the learner from the EP through the TOs to attain the exit level is the LI.

The exit level in an LI is clearly defined by design in an LI with little variation expected across learners because that is verified and remediated by various method inside the LI, ranging from end-assessments to scaffolding and fading while the learner is still in the LI. The entry or beginner level is usually defined as prerequisite knowledge [21]. In other words, the minimum level that will qualify a learner to gain an entry to the LI.

But not all learners may be exactly at the entry level as intended, by design, for a given LI. While interventions such as entry test eliminate the ones who know less than desired beginner level (pre requisite knowledge), it may allow learners who know ‘more’, to enter the LI. This extra knowledge may have an effect on the outcomes or effectiveness of the LI.

In either case, it is an anomaly to the original design of the LI as a process, as input integrity failure in the IS view of the LI[22]. Because the LI was designed for a particular input profile (input to the IS process), but somehow, one or more learners entering the LI are not the exact match of the intended input profile.

Beginner is a learner who is at almost exactly the start line of a LI. A learner will travel the distance (figuratively) to the exit level during the LI, learning path(s). There are learners however, who are slightly ahead of the curve for various reasons (who know more than the pre-requisite), and hence not exactly ‘beginners’. This learner can be anywhere between the two ends of the ‘scope’ of the LI, and that is where multiple possibilities arise. Such a learner is being called a False Beginners (FB) in this writing.

While most LIs take into account prerequisite knowledge[6], there is yet another factor, Prior Knowledge, which has an important role to play[9][10].The concept of prior knowledge playing a vital role in the learning process is by now a familiar one, which has a marked effect on learning outcomes. Researchers typically rely on a number of methodologies to control for that factor in learning design. Some of the experiments reported, demonstrate that such methodological controlsare relatively insufficient, compared to controls for testing pre-requisite knowledge[9].

Such learners that have a more than zero level of prior knowledge on the Learning Objectives(LOs) to be covered in the LI [11], are also called is False Beginners[23].

XI. In ESL TLE, LI comprising of LOs, which are proficiency level progressive to each other

Taking a view of such learner category in ESL TLE, the view considers task centric instruction design as follows in ESL TLE, wherein LI comprises n objectives LOs (or TOs), which are proficiency level progressive to each other. For simplicity of understanding, let’s assume a 1 to 1 mapping of LO and TO (while in real life, many LOs may be enabling objectives for individual TOs). The symptoms of FB are indicative in task centric individual TOs.

The figure is a visual illustration of an LI, which covers n objectives, which are progressive to each other in terms of proficiency level of the learner going through the LI. While the LI progresses from objective #1 through #n, the learner may attain knowledge of certain external objectives other than what is covered in LI. As well as, the learner may already possess prior knowledge of some objectives which are same or similar to objectives covered in the current LI, even before entering the LI.

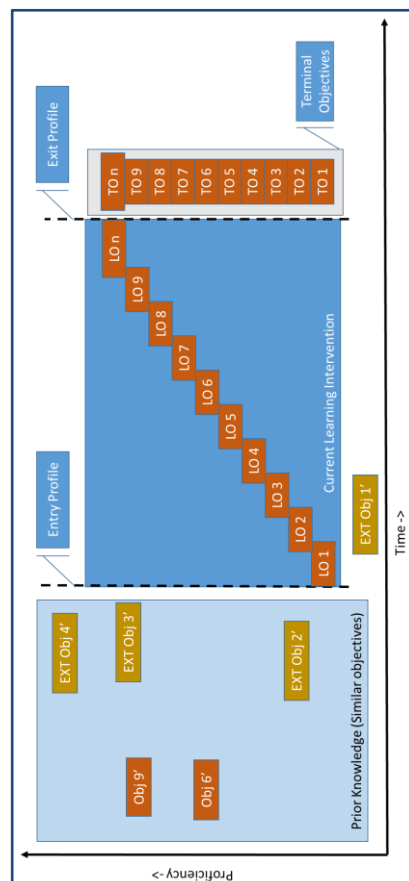


Fig 1: LI scenario, Including Prior Knowledge

XII. Summarizing emerging FB Characteristics in ELT:

To summarize, the characteristics of FB in ESL within ELT so far:

- FBs possess pre-requisite knowledge.
- FBs are blessed with Prior knowledge about current LI objectives.
- Some FBs get eliminated at entry criteria basis lack of pre-requisites, but others pass through the entry test, with or without Prior knowledge about current Li objectives.
- FBs have had prior exposure to certain LI, formal or informal, explicit or implicit, and in some cases purely experiential or vicarious.
- FBs tend to lose interest in certain ELT TLEs, and in some cases, tend to have a positive impact on their learning.

XIII. The Experiment resolving the main research question: In Learner category in CLD and CU, Symptoms of FB Indicative in Process Centric individual TO:

The CUs as well as L&D department as a supplier of the LI framework faces a common challenge across lines of learning. While exit test scores are important, they are secondary to the biggest challenge being of non-enrollment, as well as drop-outs post enrollment or during the LI progress, both leading to the same issue: low percentage of completion of LI, amongst the learner population, which was ‘required’ to complete the LI for certain pre-defined business results.

While factors influencing non-completion can be many, including a badly designed LI, the prime focus is to look at the LI TOs as a justified constant, and deep dive into the EP, and TOs. One of the main influencers of attention and engagement for adult learners in a given LI is the comfort with the flow and progression of the LOs in the LI, and more importantly, the learner’s perception of relevance of the LOs for their own progression [24]. The outcome of a BPE initiative hinges on the design of the LI, which begins with TNA (Training Needs Analysis) for the given audience in relevance to the BPE and operational sustainability[25]. While continuing to learn is universally accepted, adult learners inherently don’t like to spend time in a repetition of what they already know[26].

Typically in cases of lateral hire induction training, as well as continuing education, and compliance training, the learner population has past knowledge basis their individual experiences and no two learners may have the same prior knowledge [27]. And yet, the L&D and CU need to design LI, which will cater to the entire population, where the past experiential learning may not be fully homogeneous across the learner population. The past exposure could also be episodic in nature, which is a typical characteristic of high performing professional teams[28]. These teams may have gone through multiple projects together, in varied roles though, to gain the episodic knowledge, but at heterogeneous levels across the learners. Which means, that when creating a LI for a common TO across learners, it is a challenge to establish relevance for the entire learner population, yet, a completion and proof of attaining the TOs is required for compliance reasons, as well as reasons of BPE.

XIV. The Key Hypothesis of This Study is:

False Beginners is an established observation in the ELT TLE, especially ESL. Given the symptoms of FB observed in ELT TLE, similar are observed in corporate TLE by subject matter experts and practitioners in corporate L&D (Learning and Development) and CUs (Corporate Universities)

XV. Material and Methods: A research survey of relevant population segment to establish, whether the Issue of False Beginners is Prevalent in Corporate L&D ecosystem.

It is evident that a challenge similar to False Beginner exists in corporate L&D, and various attempts have been made at solving it. Hence basis this knowledge it is prudent to perform primary research in the form of a survey of relevant population segment to establish, whether the Issue of False Beginners is Prevalent in Corporate L&D ecosystem.

In 2014, a detailed survey was conducted to reconfirm the observations made in ELT context, and to find out, if similar observations exist in other areas of learning as well. This is further described in the following parts of this section.

Study design	Objective survey followed by an open ended interview questionnaire.
Study period	2014
Study location	Respondents primarily in US, Europe and India. Study conducted remotely form India.
Population size	Fortune 1000
Sample size	35
Selection method	Population was drawn from fortune 1000 or similar MNC. NonProbability sampling was used, to attain ‘expert sampling’
Inclusion criteria	Companies which have 500+ employees, and formal L&D function. This was also a function

	of reach, which is the set of eligible people within the network of reach. Respondents: L&D managers, or training sponsoring managers. From a respondent profiling perspective, a specific set of respondents from a specific role and set of organizations were chosen, who have observed multiple Learning Environments and LIs due to their job role, and hence would have relevant exposure to respond with.
Exclusion criteria	Organizations smaller than 500 headcount, no formal L&D function

Organizations were profiled on the following criteria:

- That have at least 500+ employees
- That have an explicit investment in employee training
- Have an explicit function dedicated to L&D with at least 2 employees dedicated to this function
- Respondent Profile chosen:
- Individuals from L&D department
- Individuals from Learner Community were also chosen
- Individuals from ‘sponsoring’ position were chosen. The sponsors are typically managers, who make recommendations, and business sponsorship from an expense and time perspective to recommend and facilitate the enrollment of individuals (learners) who will be attending a training. This can be supervisors who sponsor the employees, OR Individuals who sponsor creation of LI itself (in the form of budgets to the L&D division).

XVI. Glossary of Terms

- ARPANET: Advanced Research Project Agency Network
- BPE: Business Process Excellence
- BPO: Business Process Outsourcing
- CB: Continuing Beginner
- CE: Continuing Education
- CLD: Corporate L&D
- CU: Corporate University
- Current LI: Current Learning Intervention.
- DOD: Department Of Defense
- ELT: English Language Training
- ESL: English as a Second Language
- FB: False Beginner
- IA: Instructional Agent
- L&D: Learning and Development
- LI: Learning Intervention
- LO: Learning Objectives
- RTP: Ready To Perform
- RTP: Ready to perform
- TB: True Beginner
- TLE: Teaching Learning Environment
- TNA: Training Needs Analysis
- TO: Terminal Objectives
- TTP: Time To Performance
- TTP: Time to Performance

XVII. Procedure Methodology

After written informed consent was obtained, a well-designed sequence of question were used to collect the responses. The questionnaire included socio-demographic characteristics.

Initially digital survey distributed. Most respondents agreed to participate, on condition of anonymity, and requested that the digital survey also be included in telephonic mode. Hence for most participants, the digital survey was also noted in telephonic phase itself. Almost all (35) responses were collected from desired sample population. Basis the qualifying questions, 20 qualified for the information elicitation section of the questionnaire. What follows, is the response distribution of each of the questions and its analysis.

XVIII. Analysis and Interpretation of Responses:

Summary of responses from the survey:

- 100% respondents stated that their organization has a formal induction program for new employee orientation. And also that their organization deploys a common program that applies to all roles alike.
- 57% respondents stated that there are job specific modules in the induction programs as a subset of the overall induction program.
- 57% respondents stated there is a systems and process driven tracking for continuing education post the initial induction.
- 90% respondents stated that they have observed situations where either the learner or their sponsor is unwilling to invest the stipulated time for a training program.
- Amongst the common reasons for non-investment:
 - 39% cases: learner/sponsor feels the learner knows most of it already (experienced staff)
 - 31% cases: High Time-Off-Productivity (in case of post hire training)
 - 30% cases: High Time-To-Performance (In case of new hire)For the purpose of this research, this is one of our first symptoms of False Beginners, in context of possible False Beginner situation.
- 95% respondents stated that trainings (LI) are mostly elongated because they take into account the minimum entry criteria, and therefore the learning objectives begin with the lowest level learner in mind (hence adding low relevance topics for advanced learners attending same training)
- 90% respondents stated that the trainings are important. Because even the learners who 'know', do not know 'all'. Hence no question of abandoning such trainings. Rather continue with them, with improvements.
- 85% respondents stated current ways to solve this through compliance mandates, or adaptive learning path is somewhat solving the attendance issue, but not the learning issue.

Open ended questions:

Question: What are your views on: A learner, once a False Beginner, always a False Beginner?

A: No. A particular learner can be an FB in a given LI. The same learner in a different LI may or may not be an FB depending on the learners current level, and the defined beginner and exit level profile in that particular LI.

As an illustration, Joe has completed high school in English medium school, and is going through a new hire program in a batch of 50 new hires, for voice and accent training at a BPO, before he starts performing his new job in English and Spanish based voice process. Joe has prior knowledge for some of the learning objectives in the new hire program based on his schooling. Hence Joe is an FB in his batch during the English classes. However, since Joe has zero prior exposure to Spanish, Joe may not be an FB in the Spanish LI during the new hire program. He'd be a true beginner there.

Question: How do you think Learner's end up being in an LI?

A: The existence of FB is directly related to learner knowing more than the intended beginner profile in a given LI. Therefore, the question arises, was this learner in its current profile and level 'intended' as a participant in the LI?

If the answer is NO, then we clearly are dealing with a case of FB. However, if the answer is yes, then probably this person is not an FB or maybe he or she is. At this stage, the question arises on The Integrity of entry profiling, or rather the entry level screening performed. Why? Because it could be that the entry check was only checking for 'desired' or 'required' or 'must have' prerequisite knowledge, but not checking for existing knowledge that overlaps with objectives within the LI.

Caselet (Names changed for privacy reasons): John Doe joins as the new VP sales for laptop and printer sales at ACME Japan. He comes straight from a 5 star career as VP sales in AJAX Co. US, where he spent his entire career so far, selling AJAX printers and laptops in the US. He is told by HR to report for a 3-4 week training which is a custom for any new hire at such a senior position. This training will also include introduction to ACME laptops and printers. And also how to sell in Japan.

Now, John does not want to be told what is a printer or a laptop. Neither does he want to be put through fundamentals of how to sell in Japan. He obviously knows all this and that's why he was hired.

John's manager doesn't want him to be away for a month. That'd cost him nearly a third of the current quarter. Loss of potential business if the new promising sales person is not allowed to be on field. But at the same time, HR has a valid point. AJAX products have a different USP than ACME's. And Japan is not exactly the same as US either.

FAQ: how about LI with the smallest granular scope?

A: When LI objectives tend to 1, then FB tends to zero. That is because given the entry criteria will check for pre-existing knowledge on the Learning Objective, the outcome is Boolean.

Given these responses, a further detailed definition of True beginner, False Beginner are arrived at. Further, there is a clear case of multiple variety, or types of False Beginners as observed in these caselets.

True Beginner

The true beginner, is someone who has had no prior knowledge or exposure to the learning objectives being covered in the current LI. This does not mean that true beginners know nothing about the subject area. They may actually be required to know the exact pre-requisite knowledge, which is essential/critical to be able to make best utilization of the knowledge and information in the current LI; and without which, the efficiency as well as efficacy of the current LI will fall short of its goals.

To illustrate a true beginner, in a LI that will cover 3 main objectives, and say 18 sub objectives, with a possible score gradient of 10. In such a scenario, if these 18x3 sub objectives are to be taught, the true beginner, if given an entry test that comprises of same questions as the exit test for each of the sub objectives, should ideally score zero for each. Note that this test is not the entry test to test for pre-requisite knowledge, but rather, for the objectives which are going to be covered in the current LI. And by way of definition of true beginner, he/she should know the pre-requisites, but not the objectives yet to be covered. Co-related to this, if the learners or audience of a given LI is already assumed to be aware of a particular sub objective, then that sub objective should not be a part of the LI in the first place.

Sub Obj 18	0	0	0
Sub Obj 17	0	0	0
Sub Obj 16	0	0	0
Sub Obj 15	0	0	0
Sub Obj 14	0	0	0
Sub Obj 13	0	0	0
Sub Obj 12	0	0	0
Sub Obj 11	0	0	0
Sub Obj 10	0	0	0
Sub Obj 9	0	0	0
Sub Obj 8	0	0	0
Sub Obj 7	0	0	0
Sub Obj 6	0	0	0
Sub Obj 5	0	0	0
Sub Obj 4	0	0	0
Sub Obj 3	0	0	0
Sub Obj 2	0	0	0
Sub Obj 1	0	0	0
Sub Obj 0	0	0	0
	Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3
Learner #1 TRUE BEGINNER			

Fig 2: Illustration of True Beginner at the Entry level of a LI

In light of Pre-requisites and Prior knowledge, if we were to draw a False Beginner on same lines as the true beginner above, the False Beginner will have some prior knowledge of the objectives yet to be covered. Hence, when given a test on objectives converted in current LI, not all scores will be zero. Some of the scores will be non-zero. While there isn't a measure established for the 'degree' of False Beginner, the scores for such a False Beginner will be non-zero only in some of the sub-objectives. For ease of understanding, such False Beginners are being addressed as Type-1.

Sub Obj 18	9	0	0
Sub Obj 17	5	0	0
Sub Obj 16	0	0	0
Sub Obj 15	0	0	0
Sub Obj 14	0	0	0
Sub Obj 13	0	0	0
Sub Obj 12	0	0	0
Sub Obj 11	9	0	0
Sub Obj 10	1	1	0
Sub Obj 9	5	2	0
Sub Obj 8	0	2	0
Sub Obj 7	0	2	0
Sub Obj 6	0	0	0
Sub Obj 5	0	0	0
Sub Obj 4	0	0	0
Sub Obj 3	0	0	0
Sub Obj 2	0	0	0
Sub Obj 1	0	0	0
Sub Obj 0	1	9	0
	Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3
Learner #2 - FALSE BEGINNER Type-1			

Fig 3: Illustration of False Beginner at the Entry level of a LI. Type-1

If there were another set of learners, different from the False Beginner Type-1 in terms of further higher knowledge on the stated objectives of current LI, then the degree of their False Beginner-ness would be further higher, and to curb that, more supplemental material in terms of quantity, or rather higher order supplemental objectives would be provided. This can potentially increase the gap to catch up for the True Beginners. The illustration below describes False Beginner Type-1, in context of False Beginner Type-2 to illustrate the higher order of knowledge in Type-2.

Sub Obj 18	9	0	0	Sub Obj 18	0	0	0
Sub Obj 17	5	0	0	Sub Obj 17	0	0	0
Sub Obj 16	0	0	0	Sub Obj 16	0	0	0
Sub Obj 15	0	0	0	Sub Obj 15	0	0	0
Sub Obj 14	0	0	0	Sub Obj 14	0	0	0
Sub Obj 13	0	0	0	Sub Obj 13	0	0	0
Sub Obj 12	0	0	0	Sub Obj 12	0	0	0
Sub Obj 11	9	0	0	Sub Obj 11	0	0	0
Sub Obj 10	1	1	0	Sub Obj 10	0	1	5
Sub Obj 9	5	2	0	Sub Obj 9	5	2	0
Sub Obj 8	0	2	0	Sub Obj 8	0	2	0
Sub Obj 7	0	2	0	Sub Obj 7	0	2	0
Sub Obj 6	0	0	0	Sub Obj 6	0	0	7
Sub Obj 5	0	0	0	Sub Obj 5	7	0	7
Sub Obj 4	0	0	0	Sub Obj 4	0	0	7
Sub Obj 3	0	0	0	Sub Obj 3	0	0	0
Sub Obj 2	0	0	0	Sub Obj 2	0	0	0
Sub Obj 1	0	0	0	Sub Obj 1	0	0	0
Sub Obj 0	1	9	0	Sub Obj 0	9	0	0
	Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3		Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3
Learner #2 - FALSE BEGINNER Type-1				Learner #3 - FALSE BEGINNER Type-2			

Fig 4: Illustration of False Beginner at the Entry level of a LI. Type-1 and Type-2

There are yet another set of, or kind of False Beginners in ELT context, which exist because of repeat (multiple), unsuccessful exposure to same LI.

Another term that is seen in multiple places is the Continuing Beginner (CB). This refers to one common set of learning objectives being repeated. And for some reason, the learner ends up in a loop where these are repeated. This could also be a single enrollment, where the LI is being repeated. The simplest case would be a grade V student, unable to meet the criteria to be promoted to grade VI, and therefore, has to re-do grade V. And this loop can repeat n number of times. Similar can be in corporate L&D scenario, where an employee is aspiring for a role change from role A to role B, and therefore, enrolled in a LI part of his DAP (Development Action Plan) to attain competency level for role B. In case by the end of the LI, the learner is still unable to meet the criteria for role B, but wants to continue to pursue his/her aspirations for role B, then this learner will be subject to same or similar LI again, that will take her from role A to B. Hence the learner becomes a continuing beginner for the same LI.

The same applies to Continuing Education, and to a large extent, Compliance education too, because compliance requires that individuals be certified, and re-certified at regular intervals on majority of repeat learning objectives, while some of the learning objectives may change across cycles, or in some cases, while learning objective remains same, some of the contents may change. For instance, for certain information financial compliance requirement, the learning objective for certain pricing may continue to be 'knowledge of current year's allowance percentage' and remain same, but the specification of the percentage itself may change. However, there would be many LOs and TOs where the objectives, as well as specifications may remain unchanged, but yet, compliance may require a re-application of LOs, and corresponding tests towards re-certification.

A standard case is that LI is 'perfect' in all aspects for this set of terminal objectives in terms of coverage and accuracy. And is designated as L1. In some cases, the prior LI may have been incorrect (L2), or the LI was correct, but interpreted / understood incorrectly by the learner to develop incorrect concepts or retention of incorrect information. Continuing our metaphor of representing true beginners and False Beginners, the table below depicts another type of False Beginner, who has prior knowledge on some of the sub-objectives, and this prior knowledge on a further subset of the sub-objectives, contains some incorrect information too, in terms of learner's knowhow on the subject.

Sub Obj 18	0	0	0
Sub Obj 17	0	0	0
Sub Obj 16	0	0	0
Sub Obj 15	0	0	0
Sub Obj 14	0	0	0
Sub Obj 13	0	0	0
Sub Obj 12	0	0	0
Sub Obj 11	0	0	0
Sub Obj 10	0	1	5
Sub Obj 9	-2	2	0
Sub Obj 8	0	2	0
Sub Obj 7	0	2	0
Sub Obj 6	0	0	7
Sub Obj 5	7	0	-1
Sub Obj 4	0	0	7
Sub Obj 3	-3	-7	0
Sub Obj 2	0	0	0
Sub Obj 1	0	0	0
Sub Obj 0	9	0	0
	Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3
Learner #4 - FALSE BEGINNER Type-3			

Fig 5: Illustration of False Beginner at the Entry level of a LI. Type-3 comprising of incorrect Prior Knowledge

Overall, to summarize the various types of False Beginners discussed so far, in the context of 3x18 sub-objectives context, these types are summarized in a visual form in the figure below.

Sub Obj 18	0	0	0	Sub Obj 18	9	0	0	Sub Obj 18	0	0	0	Sub Obj 18	0	0	0
Sub Obj 17	0	0	0	Sub Obj 17	5	0	0	Sub Obj 17	0	0	0	Sub Obj 17	0	0	0
Sub Obj 16	0	0	0	Sub Obj 16	0	0	0	Sub Obj 16	0	0	0	Sub Obj 16	0	0	0
Sub Obj 15	0	0	0	Sub Obj 15	0	0	0	Sub Obj 15	0	0	0	Sub Obj 15	0	0	0
Sub Obj 14	0	0	0	Sub Obj 14	0	0	0	Sub Obj 14	0	0	0	Sub Obj 14	0	0	0
Sub Obj 13	0	0	0	Sub Obj 13	0	0	0	Sub Obj 13	0	0	0	Sub Obj 13	0	0	0
Sub Obj 12	0	0	0	Sub Obj 12	0	0	0	Sub Obj 12	0	0	0	Sub Obj 12	0	0	0
Sub Obj 11	0	0	0	Sub Obj 11	9	0	0	Sub Obj 11	0	0	0	Sub Obj 11	0	0	0
Sub Obj 10	0	0	0	Sub Obj 10	1	1	0	Sub Obj 10	0	1	5	Sub Obj 10	0	1	5
Sub Obj 9	0	0	0	Sub Obj 9	5	2	0	Sub Obj 9	5	2	0	Sub Obj 9	-2	2	0
Sub Obj 8	0	0	0	Sub Obj 8	0	2	0	Sub Obj 8	0	2	0	Sub Obj 8	0	2	0
Sub Obj 7	0	0	0	Sub Obj 7	0	2	0	Sub Obj 7	0	2	0	Sub Obj 7	0	2	0
Sub Obj 6	0	0	0	Sub Obj 6	0	0	0	Sub Obj 6	0	0	7	Sub Obj 6	0	0	7
Sub Obj 5	0	0	0	Sub Obj 5	0	0	0	Sub Obj 5	7	0	7	Sub Obj 5	7	0	-1
Sub Obj 4	0	0	0	Sub Obj 4	0	0	0	Sub Obj 4	0	0	7	Sub Obj 4	0	0	7
Sub Obj 3	0	0	0	Sub Obj 3	0	0	0	Sub Obj 3	0	0	0	Sub Obj 3	-3	-7	0
Sub Obj 2	0	0	0	Sub Obj 2	0	0	0	Sub Obj 2	0	0	0	Sub Obj 2	0	0	0
Sub Obj 1	0	0	0	Sub Obj 1	0	0	0	Sub Obj 1	0	0	0	Sub Obj 1	0	0	0
Sub Obj 0	0	0	0	Sub Obj 0	1	9	0	Sub Obj 0	9	0	0	Sub Obj 0	9	0	0
	Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3		Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3		Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3		Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3
Learner #1 TRUE BEGINNER				Learner #2 - FALSE BEGINNER Type-1				Learner #3 - FALSE BEGINNER Type-2				Learner #4 - FALSE BEGINNER Type-3			

Fig 6: Types of Beginners in a common context of 3x18 sub-objectives

The diagram displays an entry profile score for 4 sample learners who were put through a test for their Prior-knowledge level on objectives to be covered in the LI.

The LI has 3 main objectives, and each main objective has 18 sub objectives, scored on a rating 1-10. Learner #1 is an ideal beginner for this LI, while the other 3 learners have prior knowledge on some of the sub-objectives from the LI.

It is a fair assumption that no Learning Designer would want to intentionally create a LI, knowing that the target learners would already be well equipped with knowledge on certain sub-objectives in the LI. However, due to lack of information about the audience profile to the most granular level on various attributes, or lack of certain attributes in the input information itself, compels the learning designers to make certain assumptions to fill the information gap, which leads to an input integrity issue.

From the perspective of Information System view of business activities, the central work system (L&D) is making information dissemination decision basis the input profile data. Such input profile data being available, and the data integrity thereof, is critical to making the right decisions, to create the most pragmatic LI[29], so that the False Beginner factor tends to zero for that LI TLE.

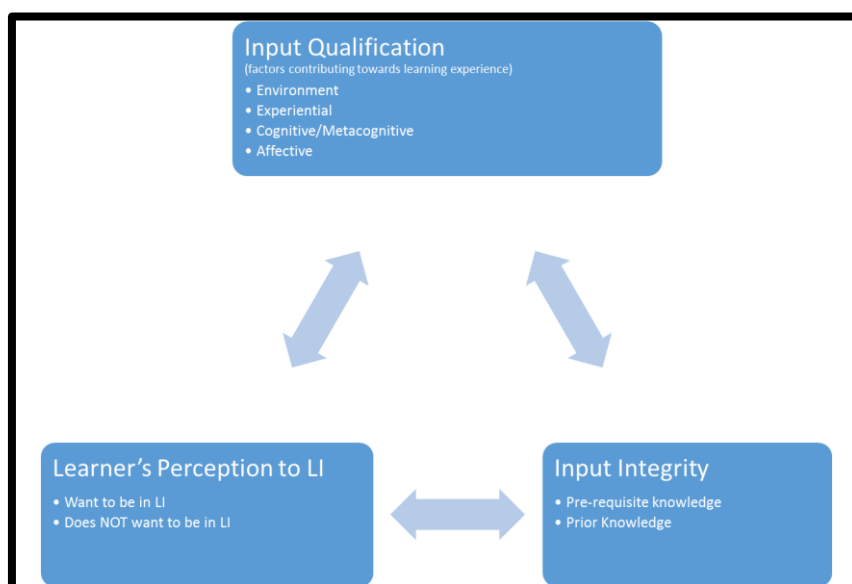


Fig 7: Contributors to FB

As depicted in the diagram above, the lead indicators, or rather the reasons of the False Beginner itself in a TLE, is varied. And the contributing factors identified so far include Input Integrity, Input qualification, and learner's perception to the LI. The input integrity is to do with whether at all, at the input selection level, the LI is even checking whether there exists enough pre-requisite knowledge, and lack of prior knowledge in context of the current LI. The input qualification is in relation to the various factors contributing towards learning experience. And last but not the least, is the Learner's perception to the LI, whether they do or don't want to even be in the LI. The reasons why they want to be or not be in the LI is secondary, and important to the remediation therefore, but at this stage of the factors, it is important to know at a Boolean level, the learner's view towards the LI.

XIX. Result, FB in CLD and CU Characteristics summarization, Discussion and Conclusion

Result

Based on observed characteristics of learners in CLD and CU, compared to ESL in ELT, there is similarity in characteristics of learners with prior knowledge in both scenarios, indicating presence of FBs in CLD CU as well.

A list of inferences were made from the responses. The respondents were also contacted over phone and email to reconfirm whether their view while making the Responses responses were in line with what we inferred from the responses. The list below summarizes the inferences that were re-confirmed by respondents.

- Evident that situations exist in abundance where learners themselves, or their sponsors unwilling to invest in stipulated time for a training program.
- Evident that Time-to-performance, and loss of productivity is a big reason for the unwillingness. The factor of 'I know most of it already' seems biggest, and overlapping with other two reasons.

- Evident that training is mostly elongated to accommodate the lowest level input profile, and the highest level of desired output profile.
- Evident that these trainings are desired. But, the current solution to above problems inadequate.
- In the corporate L&D the secondary and primary research hints towards the False Beginner kind of situations, but no such term is yet seemingly coined for False Beginners in the corporate ecosystem.

To summarize the Characteristics:

False Beginners have had a prior exposure to the same or similar learning objectives, through the same or similar LI or through an informal or experiential learning exposure, but to the same objectives, as being covered in a current LI.

The past learning exposure was either formal LI that was not completed successfully, or was completed, but a regression has happened between then and now, or the past learning exposure was an informal one, or experiential or vicarious in nature with undefined exit levels.

While these are mainly ‘causes’ or pre-conditions, the observed characteristics of FB in CLD and CUs are:

- Certain learner population is already, partly familiar with the learning objectives.
- Low interest during the LI, resulting in low engagement and low attendance. The drop in attendance, attention, engagement, assignment submission, are early indicators of LI not being completed consecutively.
- LI not being completed as per success criteria defined in the defined time frame.
- FB may bring in a general level of confidence, and in some cases over-confidence, which reduces attention and engagement levels, to the extent of drop outs, hence not completing the LI. This drop out can either be fully voluntary (direct), or indirect (requesting sponsor, for a bail out)
- A False Beginner for a given LI may not be a FB in another LI, provided the learner has pre-requisite knowledge as defined for the given LI, and does not have prior exposure to any of the LOs to be covered in the LI.

Overlap of symptoms FB indicative between process centric and task centric individual TOs:

This forms the basis of Formulation of existence of FB, TB, CB in CLD and CUs with many similarities with ELT TLE, yet some differences. One of the key differences is the process centric nature of CLD, and CU, as compared to task centric ELT. That said, when ELT becomes a subset of a process training, the individual TO of the ELT itself, can fairly be task centric, just like any other parts of the TLE, where at a TO level, each training is indeed task centric, helping the candidate learner attain the desired proficiency level for a target task; the target task for that particular TO.

XX. Discussion

In corporate TLE, typically in lateral hire cases, as well as continuing Education or Compliance Education, the learners have had prior exposure to the same or similar learning objectives, through the same or similar LI or through an informal or experiential learning exposure, but to the same objectives, as being covered in the current LI.

A False Beginner for a given LI may not be a FB in another LI, provided the learner has pre-requisite knowledge as defined for the given LI, and does not have prior exposure to any of the LOs to be covered in the LI. Such learners tend to drop out of the LI on a given opportunity.

Having known thus far, there are further research, and investigation pointers that will lead to more clarity on the types of FB, as well as different teaching and learning strategies that can enhance the success of FB in different TLEs.

- One such study is to experiment with a set of FBs of high degree; that is FB who have had prior exposure to ‘almost all’ LOs of a given LI, but yet need to comply with the LI for various reasons including but not limited to need for homogeneity of knowledge. This homogeneity can be possibly a need arising out of a compliance requirement itself.
- Given that FBs know more than TBs, is it logical to also call FB, the learners who know less than the TB? Note that incorrect knowledge is not considered less knowledge, and is covered as one of the FB scenarios in earlier sections. Effectively, the learners that know less than TB are the ones who lack ‘pre-requisite’ knowledge. Hence different from FB. Further study and investigations in the ILS view is desired, considering this as an input integrity failure, and its correlation with process and output integrity of the same process (the LI)
- The interplay between task centric Vs. process centric views of the TLE. The CLD and CU designs LI as a process comprising interrelated (in progression) LOs, which are together implemented to deliver towards specific TO for a learner/worker. At a further granular level, would it be possible to break the LOs into further smaller atomic units, to be able to isolate the ones that have a higher ‘prior

knowledge' factor, and hence moving them to pre-requisites, is another possible solution to decrease the FB factor, and increase completion percentages.

XXI. Conclusion

FB exist in CLD and CU scenario, and these are learners who possess prior knowledge of objectives included in the LIs they are subjected to, which has an impact on successful completion in various forms such as non-enrollment, mid-way drop out, unsuccessful exit, completion beyond timelines, or non-completion within desired time frame.

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Uday Kranti "False Beginners in the Corporate L&D Teaching Learning Environment (TLE) – A Veiled Reality" *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2018, pp. 18-31.