


Implementing Task Based Language Assessment (TBLA)

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Outline

- rationale
- process
- teacher feedback
- student feedback
- what next?
- Q & A

Definition

- What is Task Based Language Assessment (TBLA)?

“The elicitation and evaluation of language use (across all modalities) for expressing and interpreting meaning, within a well-defined communicative context, for a clear purpose, towards a valued goal or outcome.” (Norris, J.M. 2014)

Rationale: why TBLA?

- authentic: assesses real world behaviours
- aligns closely with classroom and workplace tasks
- formative
- measures skills often not targeted in assessment
- its particular strength as an assessment is *impact*

Process

- version creation
- format
- communicating with teachers

Learning from teacher feedback (1)

Feedback: rubric and instructions too dense

Actions:

- put instructions on a power point
- simplified rubric and graded the language

Original rubric

	Task completion (group score)	Collaboration and reflection (individual score)	Effectiveness of communication (individual score)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful and thorough achievement of all key aspects of task. Extended thought demonstrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays a high level of ability to interact and collaborate with other participants Is able to carry an appropriate load of the work, i.e. does not overly rely on the other participants, but also does not dominate. Reflection is thorough and insightful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of accurate grammatical structures and lexis used, resulting in clear communication Effective production of individual sounds, linking and use of contractions convey meaning clearly and consistently Effective use of paralinguistic features aid communication and fully engage audience
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful achievement of most key aspects of task; minor elements may be missing. Extended thought demonstrated, but some elements could have been further developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays some ability to interact and collaborate with other participants effectively Is able to carry an appropriate load of the work, but may occasionally rely on other participants or dominate. Reflection is generally well considered and insightful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of accurate grammatical structures and lexis used, resulting in generally clear communication Effective production of individual sounds, linking and use of contractions convey meaning clearly, but occasional lapses occur Can use some paralinguistic features to aid communication and engage audience
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory achievement of most key aspects of task; some minor elements are missing. Little evidence of extended thought. Further elaboration or development of task elements required in parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction and collaboration with other participants managed adequately with some lapses. Is able to carry an adequate amount of the work load but sometimes relies on other participants or dominates. Displays some ability to reflect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An adequate range of accurate grammatical structures and lexis is used; errors sometimes impede communication. Production of individual sounds, linking and use of contractions generally effective, but mispronunciation sometimes causes confusion Attempts to use paralinguistic features to engage audience, but this is inconsistent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most aspects of task attempted, but not successfully achieved overall. No evidence of extended thought. Development of task elements is lacking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions and collaboration with other participants not well handled. Over-reliance on other participants to carry the workload, or dominates the group and gives little opportunity for other group members to participate. Reflection is superficial and inadequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited range of accurate grammatical structures and lexis is used, resulting in frequent miscommunication. Mispronunciation of individual sounds is frequent; linking and use of contractions are rare or lacking. Use of paralinguistic features and ability to engage audience is barely apparent
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task not performed or there is too little material to grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task not performed or there is too little material to grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task not performed or there is too little material to grade.

Simplified rubric

Outcomes:

- Can participate actively and effectively in all aspects of a task
- Can collaborate with others in order to achieve a goal
- Can reflect insightfully on participation in a task
- Can communicate effectively with accurate grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and body language

	Task completion (group score)	Collaboration and reflection (individual score)	Effectiveness of communication (individual score)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All key parts of task successfully and thoroughly achieved. • Shows extended thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays high level of ability to work in group • Carries appropriate load; does not rely on others; does not dominate. • Reflection is thorough and insightful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses wide range of accurate language • Consistently clear pronunciation and effective use of intonation • Effective use of body language
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All key parts of task successfully achieved. • Shows extended thought but could be further developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays ability to work in group • Carries appropriate load but may rely on others or dominate. • Reflection is generally insightful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of accurate language but errors are noticeable • Generally effective pronunciation and intonation with occasional lapses • Adequate use of body language
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most key parts of task achieved. • shows limited extended thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays inconsistent ability to work in group. • Carries adequate load but sometimes relies on others. • Shows some ability to reflect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language accurate in parts; errors are distracting. • Pronunciation and intonation errors sometimes cause confusion • Attempts to use body language with limited success
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task not successfully achieved. • No evidence of extended thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to work in group effectively. • Relies on others • Reflection is inadequate OR not attempted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language errors are frequent and cause confusion. • Frequent errors in pronunciation and intonation which cause confusion. • Little attempt to use body language
0	• Task not performed or there is too little material to grade		

Learning from teacher feedback (2)

Feedback: timing difficult to manage

Actions:

- automatic timer in the power point
- reduced the elements in the task

Learning from teacher feedback (3)

Feedback: group mark unfair

Action:

- explained rationale in assessment documents; ie:
 - develops responsibility
 - reflects the real world
 - builds solidarity

Teacher quotes: the good news

“The TBLA makes class group work more purposeful”

“It’s improved the atmosphere in the class”

“Students take the tasks more seriously”

“I could see the relationships building”

“much less stressful than non-TBLA assessments”

Student feedback—positive

+ group work

- ‘we challenged each other to become the best and get better mark’
- ‘can help me know my classmates better’; ‘My connection with the students in the class had increased more than before’
- ‘Our group members can corporate with each other for task. It is very more efficient than one.’
- ‘they made me feel so happy and comfortable. Instead of feel afraid’
- ‘we need to trust each other enough and consider other team members’

Student feedback—positive

+ feedback

- ‘it was a nice feeling that I was helping my friends to improve’
- ‘I told to Jaicup that “you should use your body language”.
He did that. His happy reaction when he saw a good comment in his feedback about his body language made me very proud to help him.’
- ‘because we can learn from errors. That can improve your weakness, so if get feedback, we will do better and better.’

Student feedback—positive

- + student-identified areas for improvement
 - macro skills
 - grammar, vocab, pron
 - body language, eye contact
 - presentation skills
 - time management

Student feedback—challenges

- group work
 - ‘sometimes work by my self is easier than work as a group’
 - ‘some people in the group hard to agree with him’
 - ‘some people don’t accept the recommends’
 - ‘i could not understand some words’
 - ‘our team members are very hard working and serious. So, I feel that I will blame myself if our group’s score is not as we expected.’

Student feedback

- group work

- 'when we cannot understand, we spoke slowly and try to explain more.'
- 'one of the members of the group stopped talking on the pretext of not having more ideas and information and I solved this problem by urging him to try to find new ideas and information and not to despair'
- 'we have a shy person, all my group help him with relaxing by the words "It's easy", "You have a good pronunciation", "Don't worry you will do a good job".'
- 'I talked to them as we are friends. They wanted to talk, just didn't have confident'

Student feedback—challenges

- time
 - ‘I would like to take more time to think before I start the task.’
 - ‘There was not enough time for practice our presentation together.’
 - ‘What I did well was to remember the time and I was doing like a reminder to help our group could work on time.’
 - ‘In the next time, I will make a correct timetable to save a lot of time to do the most important thing in the task.’

What next?

- roll out at pre-intermediate level
- we'll continue to welcome feedback
- second info session for teachers

Questions?

References / Further reading

Norris, J.M. (2014, April). *How do we assess task-based performance?* Invited LARC/CALPER testing and assessment webinar