

Task Analysis

What is a task analysis?

The breaking down or ANALYSIS of a given TASK into bite sized pieces arranged in a linear sequence

When do we use task analysis?

Whenever we want to more clearly understand or teach a specific skill

Task analysis is a tool for both people involved in a reciprocal learning interaction

Task analysis happens all the time in very natural ways, and can also happen in more formal and structured ways as a device to support learning

How do I create one?

- Just like writing a recipe
- Identify the steps and put them in the most logical order.
- Use clear and objective language
- Title your task analysis accurately

Can I do a task analysis for anything? Yes..... let's try it!

Working solo, write down the steps you use when washing your hands

Find a partner and compare your T.A. with your partner's

Notice similarities and differences.....

Similarities and differences in...

- size of steps
- sequence
- inclusion of steps
- ***who's right???????***

NOW...

- a) Merge your task analysis' to create one that you could agree to teach to another person.
- b) Find another team of partners and teach them your task analysis.
- c) Then reverse and invite them to teach you "their" way.
- d) Share your insights about what you have learned about the nature of "ownership" of task analysis.

Let's try another one!

Working with your partner, write a Task Analysis for one of the following tasks:

- brushing teeth.
- pouring coffee from pot into cup
- tying a shoelace

What did you discover?

- Step size is critical - any of these could have 3 - 30 steps!
- There's more than one right way to do any task.
- There's more than one sequence that is possible.

Size of steps

Think of measuring spoons - each holds a different size - sometimes a tablespoon size is called for, sometimes 1/4 of a teaspoon.



Decide, based on the learner's situation, what sized steps are most appropriate for the task you are analyzing.

Where do I start?

Begin with what you already know about the learner and then...Aim higher!

Think of an airplane landing in the Castlegar airport.

If the pilot comes in too low (underestimates what is needed) he/she will be challenged to land the plane!

If the pilot comes in too high (overestimates what is needed) he/she can always circle around and return at a slightly lower altitude.

Adapt the T.A. to respond to the realities of the situation

- If the task of washing hands is happening in a public restroom and there are no towels - just a hot air dryer, then what?
- If someone is used to using bar soap and then liquid soap is all that is available, then what?
- If someone is shifting from paper to cloth towels, then what?

Try writing a 10 - 12 STEP Task Analysis for one of the following tasks incorporating what you have learned (solo):

- brushing teeth.
- pouring coffee from pot into cup
- tying a shoelace

Now share with your partner and explore your insights!

Be sure that the Task analysis supports the person, not the other way around!

Make it functional

- Don't do a Task analysis just for the sake of doing a task analysis (*except for your assignment for this class which has a definite purpose in demonstrating your ability to do a task analysis*)
- Always ask yourself - WHY???? Are we doing this? Does it truly support the individual or is it just supporting me to feel good about my job?
- Don't waste anyone's time!
- Make sure it's real and relevant

Adapt the focus to be sure you are accurately targeting the required task.....

Check out your thoughts about the relevance of the task you are analyzing with

- a) your professional interpretation of the Golden Rule
- b) the person you are supporting
- c) others who support that individual

When would a T.A. be useful?

- When learning a new task
- When assessing prior knowledge, skill or understanding
- When demonstrating competence
- As a checklist/reminder/visual prompt
- When planning a teaching support approach