Professional Development Kit for Assessment Task Development

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# Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSWE</td>
<td>Certificates in Spoken and Written English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Learning Outcome</td>
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Section one

Developing an assessment task

Issues in task design

There are four key issues in task design. They are listed below and each will be discussed in turn in this information sheet.

1. Key principles in assessment task design and how they relate to the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE).
2. The task writing and development process.
3. Key variables in task difficulty in the assessment of receptive skills.
4. Task piloting and evaluation.

1. Key principles in assessment task design

The three cardinal principles in assessment are validity, reliability and practicality. You may already be familiar with these terms and understand their meaning. However, because we are working with an outcomes-based curriculum, the way in which these principles are applied is slightly different from the way they are applied in proficiency testing.

Validity

Does the assessment task measure what you want it to measure?

When we talk about validity and in particular about construct validity, we are usually referring to the macro skills and whether the test is actually assessing those skills. For example, if we are talking about the construct validity of a reading task in a proficiency test, we might start by trying to define the reading skills and strategies that learners use to read a text. The task will then be designed with those skills and strategies in mind and will attempt to target them specifically in order to measure a learner’s ability in reading. However, in the CSWE we have a Learning Outcome (LO) as our construct so the task developer needs to ensure that the task is measuring that particular LO. In addition, the LO is described in detail by the assessment criteria in the specifications of the CSWE curriculum document. For example, if we are assessing Certificate III Module J LO2: Interpret an advertisement, the learners must identify the main topic, locate specific information and interpret persuasive devices. This means that a reading task must specifically target and measure those criteria.

Reliability

Is the assessment consistent across tasks and raters and assessors? Are the conditions of administration consistent across assessment occasions?

Reliability is applied in much the same way in the CSWE as in proficiency testing. There are two types of reliability that we are concerned with here.

The first is the reliability of the task. This means ensuring that all the tasks used to assess a particular LO are equivalent. While this is very hard to achieve, we need to come as close as possible to equivalence. For example, in a speaking task, if the prompt includes a list of information which structures the task, then the prompt for all tasks for that LO should include the same amount and type of information as that included in the list in the speaking task.
An example is given below. See how, without the prompts, the second version of this speaking task would make it much more difficult for a learner to produce enough pieces of information to satisfy the criteria for achieving the LO.

**Example 1: Speaking task: Certificate II Module C LO2: Participate in a spoken transaction for information/good and services**

**A**

**Learner card**

You want information about English classes for yourself. You inquire at a local teaching centre. Ask about the following and write the information in the spaces provided.

- Cost
- Starting dates
- Class times
- Length
- Class size
- Certificate

**B**

**Learner card**

You want information about English classes for yourself. You enquire at a local teaching centre. Ask for the information you need and write it on the lines below.

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
The same principle applies to listening tasks. The next example, for Certificate II Module D LO1: Demonstrate understanding of a spoken information text is structured quite differently to the previous example, yet the two tasks give an equivalent level of support to the learner in locating the information, with the same number of items and type of information being sought.

**Example 2: Listening task for Certificate II Module D LO1: Demonstrate understanding of a spoken information text**

A

Answer the questions in a few words while you listen. You will hear the recording twice.

1. What direction is Pederson from Brisbane?

2. How long does it take to get to Pederson by train from Brisbane Central?

3. On what day of the week is the Pederson Country Market held?

4. What time does it start and finish?

5. What will the kids enjoy at the Market?

6. Name two things you can buy there.

7. What is the phone number for more information?

Tick (✓) the correct answer:

8. This text is a:
   - [ ] radio advertisement
   - [ ] recorded telephone message
   - [ ] television announcement
   - [ ] speech
Practicality

How practical is it to develop, administer and mark the tasks?

This is a major issue for the CSWE where teachers are required to develop and administer assessments themselves. We therefore need to ensure that there are adequate resources to assist teachers and that they are adequately trained in assessment task design and in marking and rating.

2. The task writing and development process

The three crucial elements to be considered in this process are the skills-based approach to task development, understanding the specifications of an LO and how they might be operationalised and finally how to develop a draft task including the text and items for receptive skills as well as designing the prompt for productive skills.
The skills-based approach to task development

Within the CSWE, LOs are grouped into macro-skills although some LOs are integrated, for example when a listening task is assessed on the basis of the notes the learner has taken while listening or an interactive speaking/listening task such as Certificate II Module E LO2: Participate in a telephone exchange to leave a message.

Specifications and how they might be operationalised

We need to be very clear about the specifications for each LO. What is the task assessing? It is worth talking to other teachers about how they interpret the LOs in the CSWE to try and get agreement on what individual specifications mean and what they look like when they are applied to an assessment task. In addition, it is a good idea to look at some of the model tasks in the online assessment task bank to see how other people have interpreted and applied the specifications.

Developing draft tasks

This section covers assessment tasks for receptive skills which include both listening and reading texts, as well as comprehension questions which enable the assessor to determine whether the learner has understood the text.

The first step is to choose a suitable text which can be used as a reading text or as the basis for a script for a listening task. You will rarely find a text that can be used without modification and it is important to be aware of copyright issues when using existing texts. Section 8 of this kit, Copyright and the online assessment task bank will give you information about copyright. Alternatively you may decide to develop your own ideas and write the text yourself.

Choosing a text

In his book on language testing for teachers, Arthur Hughes outlines a number of points to follow when choosing a reading text.

- firstly, make sure that the text conforms to the specifications of the LO. For example the length of the text and the number of information items included in it should conform to LO specifications
- you will probably need to modify the text to make it the right length
- to make a test more valid and reliable, Hughes recommends that you include a number of short passages so that a range of variables is covered in the test. However, in the CSWE this is not possible, so it is even more important that tasks that test the same LO are as consistent as possible
- if one of the reading skills you are testing is scanning, you should choose a text that is full of information, such as the range of facilities in a public library, things to see at a museum, different methods for getting somewhere and contact details and so on. This will make it much easier to write good items
- well written texts have a clearly defined, logical structure. Make sure that your reading text is clearly structured and that the structure is overtly marked in the text. In the CSWE, recognition of text structure is often assessed, so it is essential to include clearly structured texts that conform to the prescribed structure. You may need to rewrite parts of the text so that it conforms
- texts need to be interesting, but not overly exciting or disturbing. We need to be careful about texts that might be distressing for humanitarian entrants
- background knowledge is important but rather hard to ascertain as we don’t always know what our learners’ interests are. However, any specialist information about computers, for example, is likely to advantage some and disadvantage others, unless it is a text that covers material that has been taught in class (such as word processing for a procedural text)
- texts that require cultural knowledge should be avoided as learners may not understand information that is culturally specific
- always use unseen texts, as learners may remember a text that they have already read.

Guidelines for selecting and developing texts for assessing the receptive skills in the CSWE are given in Section 3 of this kit, Guidelines for selecting and developing texts for assessing receptive skills.
Writing items for the text

Once you have written a text or chosen one and modified it to suit the specifications of the LO, you need to develop a set of items (questions, including multiple parts of a question). Check the specifications carefully before you start to make sure that the number of items and item types conform to the specifications for that LO.

There are eight common item types used in receptive skills assessment. Each will be discussed in turn.

- multiple choice questions (MCQs)
- grid completion
- summary cloze
- short answer questions
- sentence completion
- matching
- ordering
- information transfer (for example, label the diagram).

Multiple choice questions

MCQs are useful as they reduce the amount of reading and writing required to answer the item. However, they are difficult to write and you may need to re-write the text so that you have enough information for the distracters. Ideally you should have 4 or 5 distracters which should be plausible but incorrect.

Example 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The topic of this text is:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School holidays</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne zoo</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkville zoo</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grid completion

To be able to use grids for answers, you will probably need to write the text so that it is structured specifically for that particular answer format. A grid should have some clear relationship to the way it is structured and not just be a box surrounding other item types (such as summary cloze). For example, the range of columns and rows should correspond to the way the information is structured in the text.

Example 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where to find a job</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Daily newspapers</th>
<th>Local papers</th>
<th>Employment agency</th>
<th>Notice board</th>
<th>Advertise yourself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>Hear about jobs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
<td>Choices limited</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary cloze

This is a good item type for the CSWE as it requires minimal writing. It is also good for LOs which requires the recognition of explicit information in the text.
Example 5:

1. Janet is ___________________________ years old

2. She wears a black suit and a ___________________________ blouse to work.

Short answer questions

and

Sentence completion

These are probably the most common item types that are used in the CSWE. They are probably also two of the easiest item types to produce. However, there are some points it is important to remember when writing short answer questions or sentence completion items.

• space them out well in the text, as the learner will need time to read the item and write a response
• check that the amount of lexical overlap with the text is appropriate for the level of difficulty of the Certificate (too much overlap will make the item too easy)
• avoid responses that are too wordy
• avoid ‘What’ and ‘How’ questions which require lengthy responses and are generally open to interpretation, making it difficult to get a consensus on them.

Example 6:

Short answer questions

Answer these questions in a few words.

1. Who is the e-mail to?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Name two features of the Guided Walks.

a. _________________________________________________________________________________________

b. _________________________________________________________________________________________

Sentence completion

Complete the following sentences in a few words.

1. The movie was set in ______________________________________________________________________

2. Michael’s sister enjoys playing _____________________________________________________________
Matching

This is often used in teaching tasks. These items generally have two lists of information which need to be matched by drawing lines across the columns or putting numbers or letters into corresponding items in one of the lists.

Example 7:

Where do you go if you want to do the things in the list below? Draw a line between the list on the left and the place on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You want to</th>
<th>You go to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get help with your studies</td>
<td>Customer Service Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get an updated course timetable</td>
<td>Faculty Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal a teacher’s decision</td>
<td>Educational Tutorial Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for a statement of attainment</td>
<td>Director of Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave your course after it starts</td>
<td>Customer Service Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a complaint</td>
<td>Faculty Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ordering

Ordering involves numbering or sequencing parts of a text or events in a story. This is commonly used to check understanding of narrative structure. However, both matching and ordering can be problematic and if one of the items is wrongly numbered, the whole list is wrong. Always include a few extra examples than are required to be ordered or matched. Count the whole item as one.

Example 8:

Number the events in the order they happen in the story. The first one has been done for you.

- Abida went to bed.
- Abida and Selma cried.
- Selma walked to her unit.
- Abida left home. 1
- Abida met Selma.
Information transfer
This involves labelling a diagram.

**Example 9**

Label the items mentioned in the text.

My kitchen has a lovely gas oven with a range hood. There are glass-fronted display cupboards and drawers where I can keep knives and forks. There is a sink by the window and an attractive tiled floor.

**General guidelines for item design**
The previous section gave detailed information about writing specific item types. However, there are also general guidelines for item design.

- be aware of test method effect
- use a range of item formats
- writing rubrics
- pilot items and then moderate them
- ensure that there are only a few possible correct answers
- review the answer keys following the piloting process.

**Be aware of test method effect**
This refers to the difficulty of certain item types and the familiarity that learners have with different types. For example, if learners have not done a matching activity before, they may not know how to do it and either waste time working out what they have to do or get it wrong because they didn’t know what was required. Test preparation courses usually include a lot of practice with the types of items that will be met in the test.

**Use a range of item formats**
In order to minimise test method effect, it is a good idea to use a range of item types in the task. In this way, learners who find one type difficult won’t be overly disadvantaged. However, you need to be careful that the task isn’t too cognitively demanding because there are too many different item types – balance is important.
**Writing rubrics**

These instructions need to be simple. You don’t want the learners to get stuck because they don’t understand the instructions! They should be consistent for all tasks in that LO. (For productive skills tasks (for assessing writing and speaking) you only need to develop a prompt and rubric).

**Pilot items and then moderate them**

Once your draft task is ready, do it yourself and change anything that isn’t right. Then co-opt a group of willing volunteer teachers to do it for you. Once they’ve done the task, compare their responses and ask them about the task – how difficult it was for the target learners, what was problematic and so on. Then moderate the text and items and pilot it with a group of learners.

**Ensure that there are only a few possible correct answers**

Check whether the responses correspond to what you were expecting and moderate the items and/or the text if there are more than three possible responses.

**Review the answer key**

Once you’ve piloted the task and are happy that the text and items are satisfactory, check the answer key and send the task to the Assessment Task Bank Coordinator so the task can be trialled nationally and put in the task bank. Marian.Hargreaves@mq.edu.au

**Activity**

Write two multiple choice items for this reading text. You can then compare your items to some which have already been written for the text.

*Certificate II Module I LO1: Demonstrate understanding of a short written information text*

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**Casual work Fact Sheet**

Casual workers don’t usually have a permanent number of working hours each week. There is no minimum number of hours they work each week. The number of hours depends on how much work there is. Some weeks there may be many hours and other weeks there may be no work at all.

Casual workers don’t receive benefits such as holiday pay, sick leave or other paid leave.

Casual workers usually get paid more per hour than part-time workers. It is more per hour because casuals don’t receive other benefits.

All workers injured at work or travelling to or from work receive Workers’ Compensation. This is payment for medical expenses.

Casual workers are employed on an hourly basis, so they only need to give one hour’s notice if they want to resign.

These are the items that were written for the text. Do them. Are they good items? Are yours better?
Suggested items

Tick (✓) the correct answer. The text is about:

- permanent work for casual workers
- information about casual work
- minimum hours of work
- pay for casual workers

Tick (✓) the correct answer. This text helps the reader to understand:

- casual workers’ conditions of work
- how to get holiday pay
- when workers can resign
- what they must do if they are sick

Nobody writes good items alone and we all, including professional item writers, write bad items on occasion. Here are some points it is useful to remember when writing items.

- do the task yourself. It isn’t enough just to look it over
- ask your peers to do the task and give them feedback - nobody writes good items alone
- don’t be defensive about your tasks – we all write bad tasks. Accept suggestions for improvement
- get feedback from respondents on what they think the task and items are testing
- check respondent feedback with the LO specifications
- check overall compliance with specifications
- make sure that the test method is familiar to learners
- pre-test the task on learners
- always do listening items while listening, rather than reading the script. Have someone read the text to you before it is recorded
- check whether the language of the items is easier than the language of the text
- check whether all possible and plausible answers have been included in the answer key
- make sure that the item is contextualised
- check how true to life the item is and whether it looks like a real world task.

(Alderson, 2000: 69)
3. Key variables in task difficulty in the assessment of receptive skills

The four elements to take into account for the evaluation of assessment tasks are the nature of the input, the nature of the task, factors relating to listeners and finally text and item interaction.

Nature of the input

This includes the complexity of the language in the text, the difficulty or familiarity of the vocabulary, the structure of the text and whether it includes markers to help the listener follow the argument. For listening tasks, it also includes such things as speech rate, length of passage, syntactic complexity, vocabulary, discourse structure, noise level and recording quality, accent, register, propositional density and amount of redundancy.

Listener factors

The task difficulty also depends to some extent on how the learner interacts with that task. For example, does it require the learner to have good memory or will a particular learner be more interested in the content or subject of the task? You should also consider whether interest, background knowledge is needed and whether these factors will motivate some learners more than others.

Nature of the task

Taking the task as a whole, we might want to consider how much context has been provided. This includes whether a title, an image or other form of contextualisation is provided on the task sheet and if this is adequate. It also covers how much time there is for question preview. You should consider whether learners have the opportunity to ask for clarification of the items, and whether the instructions and response format are clear.

Text and item interaction

There is some research to indicate that interaction between the text and the items impacts on the difficulty of the task. For example, in a listening task if the same word is used in the text and in the item, it is easier for the learner to answer that item. Another aspect of this interaction is the distance between the cues. If the items are too close together, in a listening task the learner will still be responding to the previous item when they should be attending to the next one. A final characteristic is the amount of lexical overlap between the text and the items. If the same word string is used in the text and the item, then it will make that item much easier. These aspects of lexical overlap, distance between cues, lexical match between item and text should be given close attention.

4. Task piloting and evaluation

Once you have developed your draft task you should firstly do it yourself. Then give it to some teachers to do and get their feedback. Lastly, it should be given to some learners at the right level and ask them what they think about the task – how difficult it was and whether they liked the task. This learner piloting process is essential.

You should then analyse your pilot results. For receptive skills tasks, check that the responses to your items were the ones you expected and that the range of responses is limited (only one or two for each item). If you have too many plausible responses you may need to revise the item to make it less ambiguous. For productive skills you need to check that the learners were able to satisfy the assessment criteria for the relevant LO. Refer to Section 4 of this kit, Piloting receptive skills tasks with learners. Finally, using the results of the pilot and the feedback from peers and learners, do a final revision of the task and develop your answer keys for the receptive skills tasks.
Section two

Task evaluation and modification

To develop valid and reliable tasks for assessing the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE), there are three essential steps in the task design process: evaluation, modification and learner piloting. A task may undergo these processes a number of times. They should be done first by the task designer, then by peers and finally by learners. Modifications to the task should be made, if necessary, after each of these trials. Tasks which have completed all these stages may then be submitted to the AMEP Research Centre for national trialling and possible inclusion in the online assessment task bank.

Evaluation

Once a task has been created, it is essential to do the task yourself, as the first step in task evaluation. The importance of this step cannot be over-emphasised, as it is only by sitting down and actually doing the task that you can tell whether or not it works.

Use a checklist to ensure all aspects of the task are covered. Headings in the checklist are:

- the conditions under which the task is administered
- the characteristics of the task
- the features of the task. For example, for a listening task, these would be:
  - The text (in this case this is the listening script)
  - The items
  - The text/item relationship
  - The answer key.

Going through the evaluation checklist and the specifications for the learning outcome in the CSWE curriculum should identify problems in the task that need to be addressed or indicate that the task is unsalvageable and should be abandoned.

Modification

After the task has been done and evaluated, it should be modified. Problems which have been identified during task evaluation should be rectified during this stage according to the feedback received.

The revised task is then ready to be done again, either by peers or by learners.

Piloting

Piloting every task with learners is a vital step in the task development process. Piloting enables you to check whether the task works and elicits performances that are compatible with the CSWE performance criteria. It establishes whether the task requires further modification or if it should be rejected.

Piloting should be done with at least five learners under uniform conditions. Where possible obtain a range of learner profiles. Vary the language background of learners, their age, their level of formal education and so on.

Give learners the possibility of commenting on the task. This feedback should be considered in addition to the learners’ performance in the task.
You should then evaluate the task using the information you have gained from learner performance feedback and the checklists. This will lead to listing modifications to the task itself, or the task conditions or it may suggest that the task is not effective in assessing the LO and should be rejected.
Section three

Guidelines for selecting and developing texts for assessing receptive skills

The following guidelines outline the important steps in creating assessment tasks from authentic or semi-authentic texts. They will help you source texts and modify them to make valid and reliable assessment tasks for reading or listening skills.

1. Decide for which Learning Outcome (LO) you are going to create a task. For example, you may need a new task for:
   - Certificate II, Module D LO1: Demonstrate understanding of a spoken information text; or
   - Certificate III, Module I LO2: Demonstrate understanding of a news article.

2. Search for texts, choosing topics according to learner needs and interests. Consider Arthur Hughes' advice on choosing a reading text. It also applies to listening texts:
   - know your specifications
   - choose texts of appropriate length
   - use as many passages as possible
   - for scanning, find texts which have the specified elements that have to be scanned for
   - choose texts that have a recognisable structure
   - choose texts that are interesting but not over exciting or disturbing
   - consider candidates' background knowledge
   - do not use texts that require cultural knowledge
   - do not use texts which learners have already read.

   (Hughes, 2003: 142 – 143)

   For more details on choosing a reading text, see Section 1 of this kit, Developing an assessment task.

3. Evaluate the text in detail according to the specifications for the LO in the CSWE and consider the following criteria:

   **Topic**
   - interest level for learners
   - bias (cultural, sexual, religious and so on)
   - avoid very familiar topics.

   **Difficulty**
   - length (density of information)
   - difficulty of vocabulary (technical, colloquial)
   - difficulty of grammar (such as amount of embedding, verb tenses and so on)
   - discourse structure (cohesion, rhetorical structure)
   - amount of contextualisation (for example, supporting graphics, introductions).
**Nature of input**

- for listening texts, consider clarity of voice, speech rate, accent, quality of recording
- for reading texts, consider the effects of formatting, fonts, legibility and so on
- for all tasks, consider whether the content validity is high. ie, whether the test is a good representation of the material that needs to be tested. This can be evaluated by comparing the text of the task to the criteria for the LO in the CSWE curriculum.

4. Now modify the text if necessary, to take into account any of the issues listed above or to make it fit the specifications for the LO. For listening, this might mean re-writing the listening script and re-recording it, or simply re-recording if the script is appropriate but the recording is not clear. For reading, it might mean cutting the text, expanding, reformatting and so on.

At this stage, you should change the text as necessary. You might need to build in redundancy if items are too close together, change the structure and include more discourse markers, take out ambiguities, include more information/propositional content and so on.

5. Write or rewrite the listening script if you haven’t already done so (This can be semi-scripted for Certificate III or fully scripted for lower levels); write up the reading text and format it.

6. Record the listening text (or re-record if an original cannot be reused). If this is not being done by professional actors as is likely, make sure that the speed of the text is correct and that the stress and intonation are natural.

7. Write the items and answer keys. If you are doing this in a workshop context, go back to slides on the Powerpoint presentation if you need ideas.

8. Now give the task to your peers to do and evaluate.

9. Modify the task, taking into account your peers’ feedback.

10. Pilot the task with your learners. Use the information in Section 4 of this kit: *Piloting receptive skills with learners*.

11. Re-modify the text, items and answer keys based on learner responses.

12. Complete final formatting. If you are happy with your task and it has passed through all of the stages above, please consider submitting it to the AMEP Research Centre for national trialling and possible inclusion in the online assessment task bank. Marian.Hargreaves@mq.edu.au
Section four

Piloting receptive skills tasks with learners

Piloting tasks with learners is a vital step in the task development process.

The purpose of the piloting process is to check whether the tasks:

- work and whether learners can understand them
- elicit performances which are compatible with the performance criteria of the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE)
- require further modification
- should be rejected.

By carefully analysing learners’ performances in the tasks, you will be able to see what modifications are necessary. In addition to the learners’ performances, you will also get data about the tasks from learner evaluations.

This document contains everything you need to pilot tasks with a group of learners after you have done the tasks yourself and modified them and after they have been done by peers and modified. It includes:

- guidelines for carrying out the piloting process
- a task analysis grid (receptive skills)
- a task evaluation sheet.

Guidelines

Stage 1: Run the piloting process

You will need:

- a copy of the task (with instructions) for each learner
- a task evaluation sheet
- a means of recording the learner evaluations.

1. You should pilot the task with at least five learners in your centre or class. Try to obtain a range of learner profiles. Vary the language background, the level of formal education, the age and so on.

2. Administer the task, observing the required conditions. Note any issues that arise on the task evaluation sheet.

3. Carry out a learner evaluation once the learners have finished the task. Ask the learners if they enjoyed the task, if it was too easy or difficult, if they understood what to do and so on. Encourage their input on all aspects of the task. Probe into any problems they had with further questions to provide you with as much help as possible for modifying the task. This evaluation can be done orally and recorded, or as a written exercise using a questionnaire or noting down responses to a set of questions.
Stage 2: Collate the responses

You will need:
- the learner responses
- the answer keys
- the task analysis grid (receptive skills) given below.

1. Mark the responses according to the answer key and record the results on the task analysis grid. The first row has been filled in as an example. The completed grid will:
   - provide a system that is consistent for all tasks
   - help you to make more reliable observations about the quality of items and text
   - help you to make decisions about which items need modification and which parts of the text may need to be rewritten (for example there is an ambiguity in the text that needs to be clarified)
   - facilitate discussion about the tasks with colleagues and allow comparison of results.

Stage 3: Analyse the results

You will need:
- the task analysis grid
- input from learner evaluation
- the task evaluation sheet.

1. Analyse the data on your task analysis grid. Look closely at any items for which incorrect and blank responses exceed the number of correct responses. Consider why this might be. For example, is the language in the text or the item too difficult; is enough time given to understand and write the correct answer between key pieces of information; is the answer key incomplete or inaccurate and so on?

2. Consider the comments learners made in the evaluation session. For example, if none of them liked the task, what reasons did they give?

3. Now consider how you could modify the task to address any problems you have uncovered in the task.

4. Note your ideas and recommendations for modifying the different components of the task, on the task evaluation sheet. At this stage you might consider rejecting the task because learners didn’t like the topic or because the task didn’t work or because it was too difficult and so on. To be rejected, a task would have to contain features that cannot be modified.

5. You should also note any modification of task conditions you consider necessary. These will have come from your observations during the piloting process (such as the length of time for pre-reading questions) and from the data (for example, students found the task too easy).

Stage 4: Modify the task

You will need:
- the task analysis grid
- the task evaluation sheet
- an electronic version of the task.

1. Working with colleagues, discuss your analysis and suggestions for modifying the task, then make the final modifications.

2. Complete final proofreading and formatting.

You are now ready to submit your task to the AMEP Research Centre for moderation, national trialling and possible inclusion in the online assessment task bank. Marian.Hargreaves@mq.edu.au
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no. in task</th>
<th>Answer key</th>
<th>Range of learner responses</th>
<th>No. of correct responses</th>
<th>No. of incorrect responses</th>
<th>No. of items left blank</th>
<th>Total no. of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>Saturday(s) and Sunday(s)</td>
<td>Saturday and Sunday, Saturdays and Sundays</td>
<td>every weekend, daytime, during the day on Saturday and Sunday</td>
<td>on Saturday, every day, in the city centre</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.

2.

3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task evaluation sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CSWE Level:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, Compliance with CSWE, time limit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, Clear rubrics, format)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, Appropriate level of difficulty, length)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, compliance with CSWE, do they produce a small No. of unambiguous responses?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text/items relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, Items in text order?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, Does it include all acceptable responses?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your opinion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section five

Checklist for selecting authentic texts

☐ Choose the Certificate level and Learning Outcome (LO). For example, Certificate II Module B LO1: Can read a procedural text.

☐ Consider topics that are:
  • relevant to the learners
  • interesting for the learners
  • appropriate for the current learning focus, for example, work issues
  • practical to assess.

☐ Avoid very familiar topics, traumatic topics and texts with undue cultural, sexual or religious bias.

☐ Avoid texts that the students have already read.

☐ Collect as many potential texts as possible.

☐ Look for texts that have a lot of discrete information that can be used to formulate questions.

☐ Consider the difficulty of the text including:
  • length
  • density of information
  • difficulty of vocabulary
  • difficulty of grammar
  • discourse structure
  • contextualisation.

Much of the above can be modified to suit the level and LO.

☐ Check the criteria from the curriculum.

☐ Start modifying the texts according to the criteria and the level of the learners. Remember the importance of font and formatting for text comprehension.

☐ Once the text has been written, remember to seek permission from copyright holders if necessary. It is usual to send the copyright holder the new text and a copy of the original text, together with a letter detailing the use to which the material will be put. For more information look at Section 8 of this kit Copyright and the online assessment bank.

☐ Start writing questions for the text. Bear in mind the sort of questions you would like to write, for example:
  • multiple choice questions (four responses, with three plausible but incorrect)
  • grid completion
  • summary cloze
  • short answer questions
  • sentence completion
  • matching
  • ordering
  • information transfer (for example label the diagram).
Don’t be tempted to include dichotomous items (yes/no; true/false).

You may need to:

- write in redundancy (to space out the items or add extra detail)
- change the structure (to allow for a sequencing question)
- remove ambiguities
- include more discourse markers.
Section six

Reading task evaluation checklist

CSWE level ________________________ Module _______________________ LO _______________________

Title of task ____________________________________________________________________________________

Task conditions

☐ Comply with CSWE curriculum
☐ Use of dictionary is stated
☐ Compulsory questions are identified (those which the learner must get right in order to achieve the LO)

Task characteristics

☐ Comply with CSWE curriculum
☐ Assesses range of skills required by the LO
☐ Equivalent difficulty to other tasks for this LO
☐ Includes visual clues, introduction and so on to contextualise the task
☐ Rubrics are clear
☐ Format and layout are clear

Reading text

☐ Complies with CSWE curriculum
☐ Discourse difficulty is appropriate

Items

☐ Comply with CSWE curriculum
☐ Language of items is simple
☐ Item types are familiar
☐ Rubrics are clear
☐ Items produce unambiguous responses

Text/item relationship

☐ Items in text order
☐ Limited number of possible responses for each item

Answer key

☐ Answer key indicates all acceptable responses
☐ Directions to teachers are included (for example, compulsory questions are identified; the marking of questions with multiple parts is clear, so teachers know whether the learners must get all parts correct to achieve the LO or whether each part of the question warrants a mark).
Section seven

Listening task evaluation checklist

CSWE level ________________________ Module _______________________ LO _________________________

Title of task _____________________________________________________________________________________

Task conditions

☐ Comply with CSWE curriculum
☐ Use of dictionary is stated
☐ Quality of recording is clear
☐ Compulsory questions are identified (those questions which the learner must get right in order to achieve the LO)

Task characteristics

☐ Comply with CSWE curriculum
☐ Assesses range of skills required by the LO
☐ Equivalent difficult to other tasks for this LO
☐ Includes visual clues, introduction and so on to contextualise the task
☐ Rubrics are clear
☐ Format and layout are clear

Listening text

☐ Complies with CSWE curriculum
☐ Discourse difficulty is appropriate
☐ Speed of recorded text is appropriate
☐ Speaker is fluent and accent is familiar

Items

☐ Comply with CSWE curriculum
☐ Language of items is simple
☐ Item types are familiar
☐ Rubrics are clear
☐ Items produce unambiguous responses

Text/item relationship

☐ Items in text order
☐ Limited number of possible responses for each item

Answer key

☐ Answer key indicates all acceptable responses
☐ Directions to teachers are included (for example, compulsory questions are identified; the marking of questions with multiple parts is clear so teachers know whether the learners must get all parts correct to achieve, or whether each part of the question warrants a mark)
Copyright and the online assessment task bank

Copyright is a question of ownership. It describes a form of legal protection given to people who create written, visual or other materials and therefore have ownership those materials.

Creating an original assessment task
Assessment tasks created from scratch, including new texts and illustrations, normally belong to the author. However, individual employment contracts should be checked to ensure that ownership is not pre-empted by the employer, as part of the author’s terms of employment. Please note that the Commonwealth of Australia owns the copyright of all tasks in the online assessment task bank.

Involving other people (photographs/recordings)
Where a task includes a portrait of one or more people, permission should be obtained from the people in the photo. If the people cannot be easily identified or are not know, no permission needs to be sought. Where a task includes a sound recording, permission should be obtained from the performer.

Permission forms for images and sound, approved by DIAC, are now available.
Both the writer of the task and the performer or subject of a photo should keep a copy of the signed form.

Background copyright
If existing material is used to create a task, the ownership of that existing material is referred to as background copyright. This applies to material published online as well as printed material in books, newspapers and so on. It is the responsibility of the person using existing material to seek permission to use it from the owner of the copyright.

Licensing
If an owner can be identified for the material which is used to create a task, it is usually possible to come to some agreement with the owner of the copyright in the form of a licence or permission. This may involve a fee.

Acknowledgement
Often, however, owners are happy for their work to be used, providing that their ownership is acknowledged. They may have a preferred form of wording for the acknowledgement and this should be clarified when requesting permission to use the material. They may also ask to see the new material.

Web references should follow the style of this example:

Adapting other people’s work
It is often possible to adapt existing work to create a suitable task. Adapting work involves more than superficial changes, such as just changing a few words and/or characters. The original work must not be identifiable in the new task. The original is best used only as a model for the new task. You may also use information from a text and use it to create a task.
Foreground copyright

This is defined as the ownership of the material, or task that has been created. Please note that the Commonwealth of Australia owns the copyright of all tasks on the online assessment task bank.

For further information on copyright, go to the website of the Australian Copyright Council:

http://www.copyright.org.au/information

References


Sound recording consent form

Online Assessment Task Bank

I………………………………………………………(please print name) do hereby consent to the use of sound recordings that include my voice, for the creation of a teaching resource that may be used in teaching and learning activities, within a classroom or workplace, accessible to teachers via the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) online Assessment Task Bank. I understand that these sound recordings will not be used for any other purpose, and that the task becomes copyright of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I acknowledge that the original recording(s) will be retained by the online assessment task bank.

Signature……………………………………..

Date…………………………………………..
Appendix B
Image Consent Form

Assessment Task Bank

I………………………………………………………(please print name) do hereby consent to the use of pictures (photographs, drawings etc) that include my image, for the creation of a teaching resource that may be used in teaching and learning activities, within a classroom or workplace, accessible to teachers via the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) Assessment Task Bank. I understand that these images will not be used for any other purpose, and the task becomes copyright of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I acknowledge that the original of the image will be retained by the Assessment Task Bank.

Signature……………………...............…………………..

Date…………………………………………………………

Image Consent Form

Assessment Task Bank

I………………………………………………………(please print name) do hereby consent to the use of pictures (photographs, drawings etc) that include my image, for the creation of a teaching resource that may be used in teaching and learning activities, within a classroom or workplace, accessible to teachers via the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) Assessment Task Bank. I understand that these images will not be used for any other purpose, and the task becomes copyright of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I acknowledge that the original of the image will be retained by the Assessment Task Bank.

Signature…………………………………………………………

Date…………………………………………………………