

Assignment: Task structure in your assessment

Example assessment: MSPAP

● Rationale

For some items, students work in small group on “pre-assessment” or group activities in MSPAP.

As to some degree, MSPAP measure the performance of Maryland schools by illustration “How well students solve problems cooperatively?” Such items provide them tasks with “Group interaction” feature and provide us the observation opportunity to see this feature.

In MSPAP, integrated tasks afford rich opportunities for students to apply and demonstrate their skills and understanding in meaningful ways that are very much like the problems they encounter outside of school. The open-ended questions in MSPAP construct the situation in which examinees are asked to explain, to make summary lists, so that the value of children construction response can be greatly revealed. Tasks with those properties create opportunity to identify not only what people know, but also how, when, and whether they use what they know. Such properties within the situation evoke behavior that evidence high-ordered` thinking skills.

● Task Model variables

Looking at MSPAP tasks from a higher level of abstraction, as to the rationale behind the particular features. We can draw out the following three Task Model variables. Any given task may be thought of as one specific instance.

- “Time”: Each task in MSPAP contains six to eight items. There’s no exact time limit for each item, but there’s a fixed overall time limit for each task. In real life, solving problem should be instant or have some deadline. So in order to evoke their high-level thought and real problem-solving ability, all tasks written to this task model must have constrained values for overall time. “Time” varies according to the quantity and difficulty of items.
- “Group/Individual”: Some items have group discussion before students begin work in their Answer Books in order to help them focus on test questions. Other items are totally under individual efforts. It’s a dichotomous variable in the Task Model, affecting evidentiary focus with its values. Items with “individual” feature reflect students’ achievement

individually while with “group” feature indicate their achievement cooperatively. These two evidentiary focuses contribute together to the interpretation of school performance.

- “Combination”: Some items focused on one MLO or one content area exclusively and some address multiple MLO or multi content areas. It’s a Task model variable, affecting task difficulty. The latter generally has a higher difficulty indicator than the former, which in turn, the latter has a higher evidential strength on reasoning students’ high-ordered ability.

One MSPAP task---- Recycling is an example of the integration of mathematics and Language Usage. Students begin by taking a class survey on the number of families in the classroom that recycle. The students then process that and other recycling information; create tables, make predictions. They end the task by writing a newspaper article on the benefits of recycling. There is a overall time limit. A few items are group-discussed before students begin to write on their answer books. Some items concerns with Math exclusively and some concern only with language usage. The last item, writing a newspaper article combined “Language” and “Math” together.

● **Conditions for examinee interaction**

MSPAP is administered over a five-day period, approximately one hour and 45 minutes of testing time per day. It’s paper-based open-ended test, requiring students to write sentences or essays, make lists, sketch drawings, or create tables or graphs. Students use information in the Resource Book and write their answers in the Answer Books.

There are specific instructions on how to administer each MSPAP task during the entire testing period in the Examiner’s Manual. One particular condition is that MSPAP allow students from the same schools a beforehand discussion for some items. This is accomplished though interaction between nearby students.

● **Stimulus materials Specs**

The tasks are provided on paper. There are information book and answer book. Students read the task, get all information from the information book and give their answers on the answer book. All students are provided with the task with the same form and by the same way.

- **Work Product specs**

The responses in students' answer books in MSPAP are the work products. Examinees' performances are captured by their answers to these open-ended questions. They are in forms of sentences, graphs, tables, etc., and for each task we would specify exactly what the work product is. With some scoring tools and rubrics, we would then determine the values of observable variables, which would in turn provide clues about students' target skill/knowledge.