

Telepractice and the TELL

The telepractice information in this document is intended to support professionals in making informed, well-reasoned decisions around remote assessment. This information is not intended to be comprehensive regarding all considerations for assessment via telepractice. It should not be interpreted as a requirement or recommendation to conduct assessment via telepractice.

Professionals should remain mindful to:

- Follow professional best practice recommendations and respective ethical codes
- Follow telepractice regulations and legal requirements from federal, state and local authorities, licensing boards, professional liability insurance providers, and payors
- Develop competence with assessment via telepractice through activities such as practicing, studying, consulting with other professionals, and engaging in professional development.

Professionals should use their professional judgment to determine if assessment via telepractice is appropriate for a particular examinee, referral question, and situation. There are circumstances where assessment via telepractice is not feasible and/or is contraindicated. Documentation of all considerations, procedures, and conclusions remains a professional responsibility.

Several professional organizations and experts have provided guidance on telepractice assessment (American Psychological Association Services [APA Services], 2020; Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards [ASPPB], 2013; Grosch et al., 2011; Inter Organizational Practice Committee [IOPC], 2020; Stolwyk et al., 2020) to assist professionals in decision making and ethical and legal practice issues.

The Test of English Language Learning (TELL; Pearson, 2016) can be administered in a telepractice context by using a high-speed internet connection and a secure teleconference platform or smart phone, and a facilitator or proctor in the examinee's location.

A spectrum of options is available for administering this assessment via telepractice; however, it is important to consider the fact that the normative data were collected via in-person assessment. Telepractice is a deviation from the standardized administration, and the methods and approaches to administering it via telepractice should be supported by research and practice guidelines when appropriate.

Professionals engaging in telepractice assessment may train facilitators to work with them on a regular basis in order to provide greater coverage to underserved populations (e.g., only two professionals within a 500-mile radius). If such a facilitator is well trained and in a professional role (i.e., a professional facilitator), they can help monitor the examinee as well as adjust audiovisual equipment.

In times when physical distancing is necessary (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), using a professional facilitator may not be safe or feasible. In this case, Pearson recommends you ask a responsible adult in the examinee's home to be present during testing to help monitor the examinee and keep them on task during testing. This is especially important for younger examinees.

An initial virtual meeting should occur in advance of the testing session to address numerous issues specific to testing via telepractice. This initial virtual meeting is described in the administrative and technological tasks portion of the Examiner Considerations section and referred to in various sections of this document.

Conducting Telepractice Assessment

Conducting a valid assessment in a telepractice service delivery model requires an understanding of the interplay of a number of complex issues. In addition to the general information on Pearson's telepractice page, examiners should address the following factors (Eichstadt et al., 2013) when planning to administer and score assessments via telepractice:

1. [Telepractice Environment & Equipment](#)
2. [Assessment Materials & Procedures](#)
3. [Examinee Considerations](#)
4. [Examiner Considerations](#)

1. Telepractice Environment & Equipment

Devices and Connectivity

A tablet device is required for the examinee to test, either:

- iOS: iPad 2 or higher (including iPad mini), iOS version 9 and iOS 10
- Android: all Android tablets with screen sizes 8" and higher, Android versions 4.4 and higher

The TELL app must be locally installed on the tablet device, and the app requires an internet connection to begin each test and at the end of the test to transfer responses for scoring. Flash is not required for either the examinee or examiner. A tablet stand is recommended.

The examiner should have a computer with audio and video capability. Stable high-speed internet connectivity (10 MBPS or more) and a web browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, Safari) are needed as well.

The audio portion of the test can be delivered in one of two ways:

1. On a separate device (e.g., desktop, tablet, Chromebook, iPad) from the one that will be used for testing. In this usage, the facilitator/examinee and examiner join a shared web-based meeting via devices with audio and video capability allowing both to see and hear one another throughout the testing session
2. On a smart phone with video capability.

The examiner should work with the facilitator to make sure that the technology is set up correctly:

- The examinee's tablet is charged or is plugged into an outlet
- The TELL application is downloaded onto the tablet the examinee will be using
- If using, the examinee is prepared to join a web-based conferencing app:
 - The examinee's device is connected to the internet and a browser open
 - The conferencing app is downloaded (the examiner will provide instructions)
 - The facilitator and examinee join the meeting at the appropriate time, following the instructions provided by the examiner

When ready to begin testing, the examinee opens the TELL app and log in using the Access Code and Test ID provided by the examiner.

Audio Considerations

Tablet-compatible headsets (single jack) with boom microphone are highly recommended because the use of the tablet microphone or earbuds may pick up background noise which could result in an imputed Speaking score.

The examiner should test the audio for both the examiner side and examinee side in the initial virtual meeting and at the beginning of the testing session to ensure a high-quality audio environment is present. Testing the audio should include an informal conversation before the administration where the examiner is listening for any clicks, pops, or breaks in the audio signal that distort or interrupt the voice of the examinee. The examiner should also ask if there are any interruptions or distortions in the audio signal on the examinee's end.

Audiovisual Distractions

As with any testing session, the examiner should do everything possible to make sure the examinee's environment is free from audio and visual distractions. If the examiner is unfamiliar with the examinee's planned physical location, a visual tour of the intended testing room should be given during the initial virtual meeting. The examiner can then provide a list of issues to address to transform the environment into one suitable for testing. For example, remove distracting items, silence all electronics, and close doors. The examiner should confirm that these issues have been addressed at the time of testing. If possible, the examinee should be positioned facing away from

the door to ensure the examiner can verify through the examinee's camera that the door remains shut and can monitor any interruptions. The examiner should confirm that all other applications on the computer, laptop, or peripheral device are closed, the keyboard is moved aside or covered after the session is connected, and alerts and notifications are silenced on the peripheral device. Radios, televisions, other cellular phones, fax machines, smart speakers, printers, and equipment that emit noise must be silenced and/or removed from the room.

Lighting

Good overhead and facial lighting should be established for the examiner and examinee. Blinds or shades should be closed to reduce sun glare on faces and the tablet screens.

Teleconferencing Software

Teleconferencing software is optional. A smart phone with video capability may be used instead. How the audio portion of the test will be delivered should be determined when the examiner sets the test date and time.

2. Assessment Materials & Procedures

Test Session

Prior to testing, the examiner sends each examinee their Access Code and Test ID. To determine this information, the examiner goes to the Sessions tab, clicks on the session name, and then selects the printer icon to view the students' Access Code and Test ID.

During testing, the examiner instructs examinees to open the TELL app, enter their Access Code and Test ID, and begin testing. The examiner monitors examinees' progress during testing through the Sessions tab.

When the examinees have completed their test, the examiner asks them to click on Upload Status from the TELL app home screen and to ensure the status says "complete."

The examinees' results are available within minutes after testing is completed. On the Sessions tab, the examiner clicks on the session name and then clicks "View" next to any examinee's name to see their individual results. Also through the Sessions tab, the examiner can click on the session name and then select the Reports tab at the right for a full listing of available reports.

Test Item Security

The examiner is responsible for ensuring test item security is maintained, as outlined in the Terms and Conditions for test use. The examiner should address test security requirements with the examinee and facilitator during the informed consent process. The examiner should make it clear to the examinee/caregivers that the video should not be captured, photos should not be taken, and stimuli should not be copied or recorded, as this is a copyright violation. The examinee must agree that they will not record (audio or visual) or take photos or screenshots of any portion of the test

materials or testing session, and not permit anyone to observe the testing session or be in the testing room except for a facilitator.

Disruptions

The examiner should record any and all atypical events that occur during the testing session. This may include delayed audio or video, disruptions to connectivity, the examinee being distracted by external stimuli, and any other anomalies.

Facilitator Considerations

Review [Table 1](#) for the specific the specific dos and don'ts for a facilitator on-site.

Table 1. Specific Telepractice Considerations for the Facilitator

Do:	• Help manage the examinee's behavior with gentle prompts • Make sure the examinee continues to look at the screen throughout the test • After a test is over, tell the examiner anything you think they should know (for example, interruptions during testing)
Don't:	• Restate directions to the examinee; only the examiner should give directions and they will repeat if needed • Provide answers or clues to the answers; clues include pointing to an answer, covering up wrong answers, giving reminders, or looking directly at the item • Give indications to the examinee whether their response is correct or incorrect (e.g., through nods, sounds, smiles) • Provide feedback or questions to the examiner during a test as this can interfere with the examinee's score; wait until the test is over

Evaluating Equivalence Evidence

The calibration and norming of the TELL was not done within a telepractice context. As such, the educator administering the TELL should use their professional judgement to determine if the telepractice assessment experience for a given examinee was comparable to a typical assessment experience at school. Pearson Clinical Assessment is tracking and aggregating the relevant equivalence evidence for our assessments, including the age range, population, direct evidence, and indirect evidence (see [Evidence for Remote Assessment](#)).

3. Examinee Considerations

Appropriateness

The examiner should first ensure that a telepractice administration is appropriate for the examinee and for the purpose of the assessment. Professional judgment, best practice guidance for telepractice (e.g., APA Services, 2020; ASPPB, 2013; IOPC, 2020), information from professional organizations and other professional entities (e.g., licensing boards, legal resources, professional liability insurance providers, payors), consultation with other knowledgeable professionals, existing research, and any available federal or state regulations should be considered in the decision-making process. Consideration should be given to whether the necessary administrative and technological tasks involved in a telepractice session can be accomplished without influencing results.

Preparedness

Before initiating test administration, the examiner should ensure that the examinee is well-rested, able, prepared, and ready to appropriately and fully participate in the testing session. The facilitator should make sure that the examinee is seated comfortably in front of the tablet, and should sit near the examinee, but not obstruct the examinee's view of the screen. The examiner should instruct the examinee to work with the examiner like they do during testing in school.

Facilitator Role

If using a facilitator, the role of the facilitator must be explained to the examinee so participation and actions are understood. The examiner should explain to the examinee that the facilitator will be assisting the examiner to make sure they do their best work.

4. Examiner Considerations

Practice

The examiner should work through one Practice Test together with the facilitator(s) and examinee(s).

Standardized Procedures

The examiner and facilitator must follow the administration procedures of in-person administration as much as possible. Part of what makes testing valuable is that it is done in the same way for all examinees.

Real-Time Troubleshooting

In order to conduct a smooth telepractice session, audiovisual needs and materials must be managed appropriately. The initial virtual meeting involves the examiner, examinee, and the facilitator, and is the opportunity for the examiner to provide information about the audiovisual needs and materials.

Collaborating With Facilitators

The facilitator is to assist with administrative and technological tasks. The examiner should direct them not to interfere with the examinee's performance or responses. Before the assessment, the examiner should go through the following checklist to ensure that the testing is delivered successfully to the examinee:

- Have the guidelines in this document been reviewed?
- Is the sound clear and loud enough?
- Is the internet connection good, or is there a lag?
- Does the lighting in the room reflect off the examinee's screen?
- Is the web conferencing app video camera turned on? Can everyone see each other?
- If you're using a smartphone for the audio portion of the test, can the examinee clearly hear the examiner?
- Is the content displayed correctly on the screen (full screen, etc.)?
- Can the examinee sit comfortably in front of the screen?
- Is the examinee location free from distractions?

Conclusion

This test was not standardized in a telepractice mode, and this should be taken into consideration when utilizing this test via telepractice and interpreting results. For example, the examiner should consider relying on convergence of multiple data sources and/or being tentative about conclusions. Provided that the examiner has thoroughly considered and addressed the factors and the specific considerations as listed above, the examiner should be prepared to observe and comment about the reliable and valid delivery of the test via telepractice.

References

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