**Who's on My Team?** (Pronunciation of vowel sounds) https://tblt.indiana.edu/tasks/details.html?id=46

It is a focused task, following Willis’ three-stage task framework (Pre-Task, Task Cycle, Language Focus). The proficiency levels targeted by its author are CEFR: A1-B2

**Student Activity**: Students have to compare names on the lists (most of the names are minimal pairs, e.g., Cindy Still – Cindy Steele), choose people from those lists based on several criteria, report to the class, repeat the task with a new list.

**The extent to which the material supports Skehan’s (1998) definition of a pedagogic task.**

I believe it is a very good example of a pronunciation task that meets Skehan’s definition. During the whole task cycle students are faced with the need to identify the right person by pronouncing their name correctly. There are two communication problems to solve: on the first stage SS must compare two lists to see who is absent, on the following stage they must choose and rank the four classmates they find suitable for a given academic assignment. On both stages, the instructions clearly state that the goal is task completion rather than any linguistic outcome. The setting which is designed for this task appears to be a natural context for the proposed cycle. There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities; though Skehan himself mentioned that these characteristics “are matters of degree, rather than being categorical” (Skehan 1998: 96). No assessment criteria are provided, but, admittedly, Willis’ three-stage task model itself does not clearly state any evaluation components. It might be assumed that the teacher’s monitoring during the task cycle can be a form of informal assessment, but nothing is specified in terms of his/her feedback.

**Its suitability for the target community of learners (if specified)**

The task is presented in only one version, and the author does not suggest ways to vary its complexity. I have reservations about the appropriateness of this task for A1 students, particularly during the Main task phase (task cycle in Willis’ terms). The instructions require students to compare, choose, rank four candidates, and then summarize their reasoning before reporting to the class. A1 students typically lack the language skills necessary for comparison and reasoning. To enable them to engage in these tasks, it would be beneficial to provide a more input-based task or a longer sequence that gradually leads students towards the output.

**Its effectiveness in supporting task performance and how this could be improved – suggest tweaks, and justify them**

It is peculiar that a task centered around pronunciation lacks any audio input. Students are expected to read and compare names without the opportunity to hear how they are pronounced. Considering the well-known mismatch between English spelling and pronunciation, it could be counterproductive to introduce these names through spelling alone. Therefore, I would suggest incorporating audio materials to provide students with the necessary auditory input.

If we revisit the author's notion that this task design aligns with Willis' framework, another aspect that lacks justification is the absence of audio recordings featuring native speakers performing the same task or a part of the same task cycle. Not only is this characteristic typical for this approach, but it is also logical for a pronunciation-focused task.

Post-task stage offers repetition of the task cycle with a new list of names and a language focus which could be done either through a minimal pair practice or a reflection on the task recording. I would also consider using bits of the proposed minimal pair practice in a more reactive way throughout the task cycle when and if needed. I also appreciate the options offered. I would personally choose a group reflection on the task recording to enhance auditory acuity, a skill that is invaluable for developing pronunciation.

**Other relevant observations**

This task is a rare example of a task-based approach to pronunciation. It does offer a meaning-focused context to practicing sounds.