A task analysis is steps of a chained skill that are broken down into a series of discrete responses that are linked sequentially. A discrete skill is a skill that cannot be broken down any further. Saying hello, activating a switch, and reading a sight word are just a few examples of a discrete skill. Putting on pants is a skill that is chained skill because it is made up of several discrete skills. Here is one example for a task analysis for putting on pants.

A task analysis has several functions. First, it serves as the identification of all the teachable components or parts of a chained skill. Second, the steps serve as a basis for which you will collect data and measure progress. So when collecting data on a task analysis, you will actually set up your data sheet to reflect each step of the TA and collect data on each individual discrete skill. Third, the steps of a TA set the occasion for the way the task is taught, meaning what chaining procedures you will use. It serves as a link between the curriculum and methods to teach the curriculum. Next, task analytic instruction saves time and allows more than one person to work with the student. Finally, a TA can be used as a great school to home communication tool.