

Teaching Notes for Constructing and Validating Assessment Tools for School-Based Practitioners: The Elementary School Success Profile
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Slide 1

This lecture would be appropriate for students as they learn about assessment and children, and as they learn about the development of assessment instruments. It could be used in advanced child HBSE and practice courses, school social work courses, and courses in social work research.

Slide 2

Begin discussion by highlighting the importance of good, accurate assessment instruments in social work practice.

Discussion Question:

Ask students to identify as many answers as possible for the question “Why is the development of accurate and appropriate assessment instruments important in social work?” Discuss in large group, linking the concepts of evidence-based practice and strong assessment instruments.

Slides 3 and 4

Review the slides, then move to the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions:

1. In slide 4 the domains for the ESSP are listed. Think about each of these domains, and identify risk and protective factors for school performance that you think should be explored in each domain.
2. How might a social worker use the information from the ESSP when intervening with a child?

Slides 5 and 6

Review slide, ensuring that students understand all concepts, and the particular challenges faced in developing the ESSP. Emphasize the challenge of developmental validity for the ESSP.

Slides 7 through 9

Review the slides, ensuring that students understand all concepts, such as item pool, and focusing on the literature's emphasis of developmental appropriateness when designing an instrument.

Group Activity:

Break students into small groups of 3-4. Ask each group to pick one of the assessment domains from slide 4. Then ask each group to develop at least one question within their chosen domain appropriate for a 3rd-5th grader. The question should be multiple choice, with four response options. Encourage students to focus on developmental appropriateness of topic, level of abstraction, wording, and structure of the question.

Return to large group, read out each sentence, and discuss.

Slides 10 and 11

Review the slides, emphasizing the importance of creative thinking in developing instruments for children. Also discuss the importance of gathering and using external feedback throughout the instrument development process.

Slides 12 and 13

Review the slides, emphasizing the importance of cognitive testing and describing the process used.

Group Activity:

If at all possible, bring in a 3rd-5th grader to participate in a demonstration of cognitive testing. If this is not possible, the instructor should role play the child.

Set up a fishbowl exercise, with one volunteer student practicing the cognitive testing process with the child volunteer/role player. Use 5-6 of the questions the groups developed for the activity in slides 7 through 9. Ask all other students to observe carefully and note what they would suggest as changes to the questions based on the cognitive testing process. After the demonstration is completed, discuss in large group and modify the questions.

Slides 14-17

Review the slides, emphasizing the importance of pilot testing, both for statistical purposes, and for obtaining feedback from participants. Feedback can be used for additional modification of the instrument, as well as modification of the administration process.

Slide 18

Summarize the study and conclusions. Emphasize that though this lecture has demonstrated instrument development with children, equal care and thought must be invested in instrument development for any population, particularly vulnerable populations. Participation and feedback from end users is a valuable addition to any instrument development process.