

The SSSC: A New Multi-Informant Assessment for High School Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that the student be included in the development of educational plans that consider the postsecondary goals for the child and the related transition services needed. Currently there are few standardized measures designed to assess student goals and preferences, particularly students with autism spectrum disorders. The Secondary School Success Checklist (SSSC) is a new measure developed to allow students to describe their current skill level as well as rank their priorities for goal setting. The SSSC is designed to collect data from the perspective of multiple informants including the student, their parents, and the student's teacher. Our research question was to examine reliability of the instrument and describe student findings.

Method

Data were drawn from a larger ongoing study of high school students with ASD. For the present study, data were available from the first cohort of students who completed the SSSC and also from parents/caregivers and teachers (or other school staff).

Number of Student Participants	279
Age (between 13-22 years)	M = 16.3 SD = 1.5
Sex	83.9% Male
Ethnicity	75.1% White

The parent version of the SSSC included 105 items while the student version of the SSSC had 25 items (see Figure 1 for example). Both sets of items were representative of four key domains:

- independent behavior
- transition
- social
- academic

For each item, participants indicated on a Likert-type scale if the behavior was:

- 0 = not like student
- 1 = like student
- 2 = much like student

Items from each domain were then averaged to create four total scores, with higher scores reflecting better skills. Respondents also provided a priority ranking for learning each item. The priority ranking was used to calculate the proportion of students who “really wanted to learn” each skill.

Figure 1. Example SSSC Form for Student

Skill	This is NOT like me.	This is sort of like me.	This is very much like me.	I have not had a chance to try this.	Not sure	I would NOT like to learn this.	I would sort of like to learn this.	I really want to learn this.	I already know how to do this.
1. Read each skill:	2. Choose only one answer in the blue boxes that best describes you in the blue boxes.					3. Then choose one answer in the green boxes that best describes how much you want to learn the skill.			
1. I keep track of my homework and turn it in on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I bring everything I need to my classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I ask teachers for help if I need it during class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. When I have a problem in class I can figure out a solution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I look clean when I go to school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Results

- Total scores for each domain of the SSSC demonstrated moderate to high internal consistency with Cronbach alphas ranging from .50 to .82 for parents and .38 to .85 for teachers. The alphas for students were lower, ranging from .33 to .56.
- Agreement was strongest between parents and teachers, with correlations ranging from .39 to .56. There was less agreement between students and parents/teachers (most $r_s < .25$).
- In general, students reported lower levels of skills across domains than adults.
- Notably, student report of priority rankings (i.e. what they really wanted to learn) was highly aligned with past literature on educational needs for students with ASD, suggesting students had insight into their own areas of difficulty.

Student Reported Areas of Priority for Learning	Percentage of Students	Skill Domain
When I have a problem in class I can figure out a solution	27.2%	Independent Behavior
I have ideas about what I want to do after high school	27.1%	Transition
I can figure out what other people are feeling	27.0%	Social
I know how to stay calm when I am mad about something	25.5%	Independent Behavior
I understand what I read in my classes	21.7%	Academic

Conclusions

Findings suggest that the SSSC is a promising tool for developing educational goals for high school students with ASD. Further, students had fairly good insight into their areas of need and indicated interest in learning skills related to core domains.

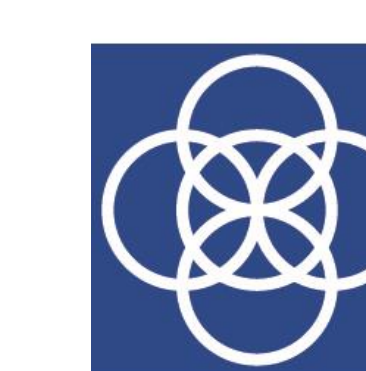
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