Education 266E
Child and Adolescent Assessment: Strengths & Contexts

Gevirtz Graduate School of Education
Counseling/Clinical/School Psychology Program
Spring 2004

We have a choice about how we wish to view the people with whom we work. We can either view them as manifestations of pathology and deficit or we can view them as representing a degree of competence and skill. We cannot do both. Further, if we choose to view them in terms of pathology, then the focus on problems that this perspective requires makes it much more difficult for us to recognize their strengths and resources ... if we choose to view them as competent and resourceful, then our focus on strengths is more likely to obscure their deficits from our view.—
MICHAEL DURRANT, 1993

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Course Objective: Students will learn about the developing field of strength-based assessment. They will be exposed to a range of strength-based assessments that can be used with children and adolescents in the schools and community settings. Throughout the course we will integrate information about the valid use of these tools with special populations of youth. Students will also learn about the connections between strength-based assessments and the fields of positive psychology, positive youth development, optimism and pessimism, and psychological well being and life satisfaction. At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to critically evaluate and use the tools covered and have a better understanding of the newly forming field of strength based assessment. To provide coverage of relevant NASP and CCTC training standards, we will also examine strength-based assessment as being embedded in a transactional development model.

NASP and CTC Training Standards: (see relevant attached standards worksheets)

Class Schedule: Wednesdays from 4:00-6:50, Phelps Hall **1118**

Required Readings:
- Reader available at Alternative Copy Shop (now!)

- Seligman, M. E. P. (1995). *The optimistic child: A proven program to safeguard children against depression and build life–long resilience.* Boston: Harper.

- Chafouleas, S. M., & Bray, M. A. (2004). Positive psychology and wellness in children. *Psychology in the Schools, 41* (1), entire issue. (available on CD distributed in class)

- [Supplemental] Huebner, E. Scott, & Gilman, R. (Eds.). (2003). Toward a focus on positive psychology in school psychology. *School Psychology Quarterly, 18* (2), entire issue. (checking on electronic and back ordering)

Overview of Course Assignments:

1. **Class participation and completion of weekly readings.** Attendance and participation at each class, and completion of all readings and reviews is essential to gain the full benefits of this class.

2. **Reading reactions.** For each week's reading, identify an idea or a few sentences from the reading that you have highlighted. In a Word document, type up this section from the reading and briefly explain why you selected that statement (e.g., it was especially interesting, controversial, challenged your beliefs). Bring a note card to class each week with the statement. At the end of the quarter you will be asked to turn in the Word document with all of your selections and justifications.

3. **Paper Article reviews.** Complete a 1-page written review and class presentation of two (2) articles reviewed for you class paper. Please have copies of these reviews available to your classmates. Have all files in Word or PDF format so that we can begin to build a web resource of strength-based materials. This will start in week 4. A sign-up sheet will be distributed during the first class meeting.

4. **Paper.** Complete a 10-page paper (including references) on a topic relevant to strength–based assessments. Turn in a brief (few sentences) explanation of your paper topic in week 3. Provide a reference list on week 8 (plan to include about 10 references) Some suggestions for paper topics:

   - Choose one of the "constructs" of strength-based assessment (e.g., Hardiness, Humor, Persistence, Optimism, Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Social Support, Flow). Review the construct, how it relates to strength-based assessments, show how it has been used in research, and discusses your ideas about how it might be included in school-based and other assessments.

   - Emotional Intelligence: Describe what it is and what programs are designed to enhance Emotional Intelligence (e.g., the work of Ellias or Gardner).

   - School-Based Social Skills Development: Describe how you would use the information in this class to develop programs that increase strengths (rather than focusing on therapeutic techniques that address deficits)

   - Discuss how strengths/ positive psychology is used in a therapeutic context to drive theory, case conceptualization, and intervention techniques (e.g., solution-focused counseling, the miracle cure).

- Physical Health: What are schools doing to promote physical wellness? How does this relate to the rise of obesity in the country? What strengths are associated with physical wellness? How is immune system response impacted by the topics we have discussed in class?

- Memories: How are memories used to preserve positive ideas about the past? Why do some people have memories of good times, while other people focus on negative events? How are the strengths discussed in class related to the formation of positive memories?

- Examine the concept of the golden proportion hypotheses or what is called States of Mind Ratio research. Focus specifically on assessment and related issues pertaining to children and adolescents.
  (for example: **TITLE**: Convergent validity in cognitive assessment of social anxiety: Endorsement versus production methods in deriving *states* of *mind ratio*.
  ABSTRACT : Evaluated the convergent validity of 2 methods of assessing cognitive self-statements relative to social anxiety: an endorsement method (the Social Interaction Self-Statement Test, SISST; C. R. Glass et al, 1982) and a production method (thought-listing; J. T. Cacioppo et al, 1979). 133 undergraduate Ss (mean age 19.6 yrs) were randomly assigned to either method and exposed to a get-acquainted conversation after which they completed 1 of 2 self-statement measures (SISST or thought-listing). After converting self-statement scores to a *states* of *mind* (SOM) *ratio*, results showed the SISST yielded a significantly more adaptive SOM (.70) than the thought-listing SOM (.47). Also, the SISST was superior to thought-listing in accounting for predicted variance in 3 of 4 criterion measures. Reasons for lack of convergent validity and implications for future research are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2003 APA, all rights reserved). **AUTHOR**: Sturmer, Paul J.; Bruch, Monroe A.; Haase, Richard F.; Amico, K. Rivet

- Take a stand vis-à-vis the quote on page 1. Is this true? Does this over play the distinction between strength-based and pathology-based assessment? Are they truly mutually exclusive? What approaches have others, would you, suggest when exploring the needs of children and adolescents?

- **Other topics can be selected in consultation with the instructor.**

During week 10 you will present your paper to the class, using a brief PowerPoint presentation (about 5-10 slides).

The paper must carefully follow APA-style formatting. **Here are some web sites that provide APA format guidance:**

http://www.psychwww.com/resource/apacrib.htm
http://www.kelcom.igs.net/~nhodgins/apa_format_guidelines.html
http://www.kwantlen.bc.ca/library/Guides/apacitation.pdf

http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/apastyle.html
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1557987912/103-3031395-0967026 (to buy the 4th edition of the APA Style Manual)
http://www.apastyle.org/
http://www.ecok.edu/dept/psych/apastyle.html

If you locate other sites, please share them with the class.

****Note: For all class assignments that ask you to submit an electronic file, please use a file name that identifies you as the author.

Strength–Based Assessment Readings and Assignments

(March 31)
Optimistic Child pages 1-112.

(April 7)
Optimistic Child pages 115-299.

Jimerson, S. R., Sharkey, J. D., Nyborg, V., & Furlong, M. J. (in press) Strength-Based Assessment and School Psychology: A Summary and Synthesis. *California School Psychologist.*

Epstein, M. H., Rudolph, S., & Epstein, A. A. (2000). Strength-based assessment. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 32*(6), 50-54.

(April 14)
Proposal for Paper Topic Due
Larson, R. W. (2000). Toward a psychology of positive youth development. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 170-183.

CD—Clonan et al.
CD—Gilman et al.

 (April 21)
Epstein, M. H., Harniss, M. K., Robbins, V., Wheeler, L., Cyrulik, S., Kriz, M., & Nelson, J. R. (in press). Strength-based approaches to assessment in schools. In M. Weist, S. Evans, & N. Tashman (Eds.). *School Mental Health Handbook*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

CD—Terjesen et al.
CD—Akin-Little et al.

(April 28)

Schneider, S. L. (2001). In search of realistic optimism: Meaning, knowledge, and warm fuzziness. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 250-263

Boman, P., & Yates, G. C. (2001). Optimism, hostility, and adjustment in the first year of high school. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 71*, 401-411.

CD—Jensen et al.

(May 5)

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68-78.

CD—Martens et al.
CD—McLoughlin et al.

(May 12)

Saunders, R., & Pate, R. (2001). Promoting physical health. In K. M. Minke & G. C. Bear (Eds.), *Preventing School Problems – Promoting School Success* (pp. 337-374), Washington, D.C.: National Association of School Psychologists.

CD—Kehele & Bray
CD—Huebner et al.

(May 19)

Annotated Bibliography for Paper Due

Larson, R. W., & Richards, M. H. (1991). Boredom in the middle school years: Blaming schools versus blaming students. *American Journal of Education, 99*, 418-443.

Larson, R. W., & Verma, S. (1999). How children and adolescents spend time across the world: Work, play and developmental opportunities. *Psychological Bulletin, 125*, 701-736.

(May 26)

Positive Youth Development and Student Success
School Engagement

(June 2 – Finals Week)

Paper Presentations and Discussion

June 7 Final Paper Due

Internet Strengths and Assets Web Sites

http://cecp.air.org/interact/expertonline/strength/sba.htm
http://cecp.air.org/discstrength_post.htm

http://aba.grad.usf.edu/mhs6100syl.html
http://www.cyc-net.org/today/today000703.html
http://www.puckett.org/abc/agenda.php
http://www.kaatts.com/strategies/TS_2001_winter.html
http://www.mhcva.on.ca/WrapAround/wrapmain.htm
http://www.devereux.org/centers/ictr/DECI/monograph.htm
http://www.proedinc.com/jpbi.html
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/catalog/data/023111/0231112823.HTM
http://www.flbcinc.org/Documents/Research/The%20Wraparound%20Approach%20to%20Serving%20Children%20and%20Families/fla2000pres.pdf

http://web.nysed.gov/vesid/sped/trans/level%201%2099.hhttp://www.search-institute.org/assets/
http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/cyfs/youth.html
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/oneida/4h/4hindex.html
http://www.nydic.org/nydic/devdef.html#youth
http://www.slocs.k12.ca.us/edserv/AssetDev.html
http://www.hilton.k12.ny.us/youth.htm
http://www.nfhs.org/citizen/assets.htm
http://www.sanjuan.edu/osapp/building_bridges/building_bridges.htm
http://www.rcoe.k12.ca.us/divisions/grss/
http://www.ci.mankato.mn.us/cityh/pubrel/youth30.html
http://www.ctclearinghouse.org/fdevyou.htm
http://www.mecca-ic.org/youth.htm
http://www.valpo.edu/organization/copc/assest1.html
http://www.rndc.org/programs/mahy/
http://www.ymcamidpen.org/textpage.php?b=0&p=yassetchar
http://www.makinithappen.org/goals.html
http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/whatsup/assets.htm
http://www.buildingyouthassets.org/charactered.htm
http://www.sloassets.org/html%20files/SLOvision.html
http://cyd.aed.org/whatis.html
http://www.monocoe.k12.ca.us/youth_support_services.htm
http://caag.state.ca.us/cvpc/publications/Resilience.pdf
http://www.fact.msu.edu/GiveEm40.htm