

About the Assessment Guide

About the Assessment Guide is a companion to the AWG Assessment Guide that provides additional information on the content and development of the Assessment Guide. This includes a description of the sections of the guide, the criteria for inclusion of social emotional learning (SEL) competency assessments in the *Guide*, and the methods and stages of development in the creation of the *Guide*.

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What is the Assessment Guide?

The purpose of the Assessment Guide is to provide up-to-date, information for practitioners to select and use assessments of students' SEL competencies. The assessments in this guide are intended to measure the SEL competencies of PreK through 12th grade students in school and afterschool settings.

Our target users are leaders and implementation teams in PreK through 12th grade settings who are making decisions about selecting and using measures, but we imagine a range of practitioners, researchers, and policymakers could benefit from use of the *Guide*. We hope the Guide will empower educators across the nation to foster students' SEL competencies by equipping them to use student assessment data to inform instruction, practice, and policy.

The Assessment Guide is a product of the Assessment Guide subgroup of the Assessment Work Group (AWG). The AWG is a collaborative of universities, nonprofit organizations, and school districts created to advance progress toward establishing practical SEL assessments that are scientifically sound, feasible to use, and actionable as a key priority for the field.

The Guide includes the following features:

Guidance content

Content on how to assess student SEL. Users can read summaries of each section on the homepage, then read the full brief for more information. The content is in 3 parts:

- Part 1: Prepare to Assess
- Part 2: Select an Assessment
- Part 3: Use Measure Data

Assessment Catalog

A searchable, filterable catalog of student SEL assessments. View summaries of each assessment then access the full profile for each to learn more.

SEL Assessment in Action

Real life stories from the field of practitioners using student SEL assessments to inform instruction, practice, and policy.

Sequence

We recommend that users fully understand the guidance content provided in Parts 1, 2, and 3 before advancing to the Assessment Catalog, and revisit it as they move through the assessment process. This preparation can help ensure that the practitioner selects an appropriate assessment and uses it in a way that promotes positive and equitable outcomes for all students.

Guidance for Assessing Student SEL

The homepage of the Assessment Guide provides guidance on several topics to guide the user through the process of SEL assessment. Additional guidance on these topics is presented through a brief, [Choosing and Using SEL Competency Assessments: What Schools and Districts Need to Know](#). This brief aims to prepare practitioners to select SEL competency assessments and use the resulting student data to improve instruction and decision-making. The contents of this brief are organized into 3 parts. Within each part, topics are presented to users through buttons on the homepage, each of which link to a deeper dive on the respective topic.

The brief includes the following sections:

Part 1: Prepare to Assess

- What are SEL competencies?
- Why assess SEL competencies?
- Considerations for SEL competency assessment
- Step 1: Frame the overall SEL effort
- Step 2: Plan the role of assessment
- Step 3: Choose the SEL competencies to assess

Part 2: Select an Assessment

- Step 4: Review the assessment options
- Step 5: Select assessment tool(s)

Part 3: Use Measure data

- Step 6: Implement assessment
- Step 7: Use data

Assessment Catalog

The Assessment Catalog is a searchable, filterable database of student SEL competency assessments for grades PreK to 12th grade. Measures are selected for inclusion based on a set of criteria ([see below](#)) related to what the assessment measures and how it's used.

The Catalog provides pertinent information on SEL competency assessments to enable practitioners to choose one that suits their needs and context. Each measure is described in brief on the homepage through summary cards of each measure, and in detail on the profile page for the measure.

Measure summary cards

Measure summary cards are located on the homepage of the *Guide* after Part 3 of the assessment guidance content. After a user has narrowed their options, they can bookmark measures to review later.

Figure 1: Example measure summary card



Search and filtering

There are 3 filters for narrowing down the number of measure summary cards displayed: (1) competencies the assessment measures, (2) grade level, and (3) respondent and format.

If you need help determining your filters, refer to the guidance content in Part 1 and Part 2.

Figure 2: Filter your results by competency, grade level, and format

The screenshot shows a search and filter interface. At the top is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search for competencies, e.g. self-management". Below the search bar are two filter sections. The first section, "Select Grades:", contains buttons for "Pre-K", "K", and grades "1" through "12". The second section, "Select Respondent and Format:", contains buttons for "Peer", "Performance measure", "Family", "Student self-report", and "Teacher/staff". A green "Clear Filters" button is located at the bottom right of the filter area.

Profiles of individual measures

A user can view more details about a measure on that measure’s profile page. The profile page includes a summary of the measure, the competencies assessed by that measure, and ‘Measure Details’ tables. Users can access a measure’s profile page through the measure’s summary card on the homepage.

Measure summary

A summary of the measure is at the top of each measure profile page. These paragraphs summarize important attributes of the measure like the respondent and format, links to reliability and validity information, and reporting capabilities.

Figure 3: Example of a measure summary

ZooU

Zoo U is a performance task measure that assesses six social-emotional competencies, for children in second through fifth grade. The assessment is strength-based, completed by students.

The RAND Assessment Finder’s page for this measure has references to studies of the reliability of the measure and/or its validity for particular purposes. The developer also provided additional information on the measure’s reliability and validity (see Technical Documentation section).

Data from the ZooU can be reported at the individual level or can be aggregated and reported at the group level. The measure includes sufficient items to assess and report scores for individual domains of SEL competence, in addition to an overall SEL competence score.

Competencies assessed:

Each social emotional (SE) competency that the assessment measures. An SEL competency is defined as an interpersonal or intrapersonal awareness or skill, for example, self–management or self–awareness.

Figure 4: Example of competencies assessed

- ### Competencies Assessed
- ✓ Communication
 - ✓ Emotion Regulation
 - ✓ Impulse Control
 - ✓ Cooperation
 - ✓ Empathy
 - ✓ Social-Initiation

Measure Details

This table provides an overview of important attributes of each measure related to administration, developer, training and technical assistance, and scoring and reporting.

Figure 5: Example of Measure Details table

Measure Details

<p>Developer Support</p> <p>Developer: ACT Tessera</p> <p>Training and Technical Assistance: Users are given the opportunity to participate in a webinar explaining the administration and/or the training manual. Technical assistance is available via phone 5 days a week. ACT Tessera Technical Readiness Manual</p> <p>Fee for Use: \$9.99 per student More information on purchasing ACT TESSERA can be found here: Purchase ACT Tessera</p> <p>Other Forms or Versions: No</p>	<p>Administration Information</p> <p>Grade Levels: 6 to 12</p> <p>Available Languages: English</p> <p>Respondent and Format: Student self-report</p> <p>Method of Administration: Digital</p> <p>Number of Items: 92</p> <p>Administration Time: 45 Minutes</p> <p>Sample Questions: ACT TESSERA - View Demo ACT TESSERA Sample Questions</p>
<p>Technical Documents</p> <p>Information on Reliability and Validity: ACT Tessera Technical Manual</p> <p>RAND Assessment Finder: ACT Tessera</p>	<p>Scoring and Reporting</p>

Below, you'll find the definitions and categorization of each field in the Measure Details table:

Administration Information:

Grade Levels: Grade(s) of students for which an assessment is intended to be used.

Available Languages: The languages for which an assessment is available from its developer or primary source of distribution.

Respondent and format: SEL assessments can take several forms and be administered by a variety of stakeholders. Possible options include "Student self-report", "Teacher/staff", "Peer", "Performance measure", "Family".

Student self-report: A survey questionnaire or rating scale where a student rates their own SEL competencies. For example, a survey measuring self-awareness might ask the student to self-assess the extent to which they know when their feelings are making it hard for them to focus.

Teacher/staff: Typically a survey questionnaire, rating scale, or observation protocol where a teacher or other school staff member evaluates student behaviors or abilities.

Peer: Typically a survey questionnaire or rating scale where a peer evaluates the behavior or abilities of fellow students or the quality of their relationship with other students.

Family: Typically a survey questionnaire, rating scale, or observation protocol where a family member evaluates the behavior or abilities of their child.

Performance measure: Performance measures provide structured opportunities for students to engage in complex, real-world tasks that can be used as direct measures of students' SEL competencies and behaviors. These assessments can take many forms, including discipline-embedded projects, and game-based simulations.

Method of Administration: Indication of whether the assessment should be administered with a pencil and paper and/or digitally.

Sample Questions: When available, items from the assessment that were provided by the developer.

Number of items: The number of discrete items on the assessment. Common types of items include selected-response, such as a true/false or multiple choice question, a constructed-response like a fill-in-the-blank or short answer, or an individual performance task.

Administration time: The number of minutes an assessment's developer estimates that the full assessment takes to administer during a single measuring occasion.

Scoring and reporting:

Scoring: the method by which individual items are scored. For example, assessments might be scored by hand by the person who administers the measure, by the developer, or automatically by software.

Reporting: The form in which individual items, summary reports, and other assessment data are shared with users.

Linked to Resources: When available, resources made available by the developer to utilize the results of the assessment

Developer support:

Developer: the individual or company responsible for developing and/or distributing the assessment (if it has changed hands, we will make every attempt to note the current developer). This field is linked to the developer's website when available.

Training and technical assistance: Link to training and technical assistance information on the developer's website, or description of training and technical assistance available by developer

Fee for Use: ["Free", Cost in U.S. Dollars, or Link to pricing page] – Cost is an indication of the price of a single user license, i.e., price per student, in U.S. dollars and associated costs for reporting and training. When simple cost estimate is not available, we may link to pricing information on the developer's website.

Other Forms or Versions: Other forms of the assessment, if available. This is intended to identify other versions of the same measure (e.g., for a different age group or respondent), not entirely different measures from the same developer. When the other version has a profile on the Assessment Guide, we will link to it.

Technical Documents:

Information on reliability and validity: Links and uploads provided by the developer to documents on the reliability and validity of the assessment.

Manual: When available from the developer, this is a link to the instruction and/or technical manual of the assessment.

RAND Assessment Finder: A link to the measure's profile on the Rand Assessment Finder for users to find more citations on the reliability and validity of the measure.

Criteria for inclusion of SEL assessments

All measures included in the Guide must meet a set of four criteria:

1. Measure intrapersonal and/or interpersonal competencies (see Table 1).
2. Developed for PreK – 12th grade students
3. Actively used in practice.
4. Strengths-based.

Criteria are defined below. For more discussion of topics related to these criteria, see our [Choosing and Using SEL Competency Assessments: What Schools and Districts Need to Know](#) brief.

Criterion 1: Measure intrapersonal and/or interpersonal competencies.

The assessment must measure intrapersonal and/or interpersonal competencies as defined in Table 1. An assessment is within our scope to be considered for review if some or all of the constructs that it measures fit within that definition.

For the purposes of this guide, we organize SEL competencies into two categories—interpersonal and intrapersonal—and distinguish within each between “awareness” and “skills” (see Table 1). We define these categories as follows:

- Interpersonal:** Knowledge, skills, and attitudes directed toward other people, institutions, or social structures
- Intrapersonal:** Ways of dealing with oneself, including ones' thoughts and emotions; awareness, beliefs, and skills directed and applied inward
- Awareness:** Mindsets, facts, information, knowledge, beliefs, or understandings about oneself, others, and the world
- Skills:** Learned abilities to carry out a task with intended results or goals

Table 1. Categories and Examples of Social–Emotional Competencies Addressed in this Guide

	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal
Awareness	Intrapersonal Awareness (e.g., growth mindset, self-efficacy)	Interpersonal Awareness (e.g., empathy, social awareness)
Skills	Intrapersonal Skills (e.g., self-control, goal-setting, stress management)	Interpersonal Skills (e.g., social perspective taking; collaborative problem-solving)

Criterion 2: Developed for PreK–12th grade students

The assessment must be developed for students within the grade range of PreK–12th grade, though not necessarily spanning the entire age range.

While the AWG recognizes the importance and increasing need for assessments of post–secondary and adult social emotional competences, the current scope of the AWG is confined to students in primary and secondary school settings.

Criterion 3: In active use in practice.

The assessment must be in active use in practice in a school, district, or OST provider setting. This provides confidence that the measures included in our guide are feasible to implement in school, district, and OST settings and are currently available for other practitioners to use.

Criterion 4: Strengths–based.

The assessment must be strengths–based, meaning that it explicitly assesses what students know and are able to do. Measures will not be included if they are intended for clinical use in evaluating problem behaviors or, similarly, intended for screening students for behavioral or emotional problems.

For practitioners looking to identify students in need of additional support based on emotional or behavioral problems, we recommend using tools developed for this explicit purpose.

Why doesn't the Guide include SEL–related assessments like those measuring the learning environment and climate, teaching practices, and adult SEL?

The mission of the Assessment Work Group and the Assessment Guide focuses on the advancement of measures that were specifically developed to assess students' social and emotional SEL competencies. That said, users of this guide are encouraged to draw on other additional data sources (i.e., observational rubrics on classroom practices, school culture and climate data, academic and behavioral data) to inform decisions and obtain a holistic view of the students' SEL environment. There are many resources that exist to aid practitioners in selecting and using these types of data sources.

Note that many developers provide items to measure school climate, culture, and the learning environment. Talk to the developer about customizing your measure to include these items.

Reviewing measures for inclusion in the Guide

The AWG team follows a consistent procedure for determining whether a measure should be included in the Assessment Catalog, and if so, describing the measure in the summary cards and measure profiles.

Step 1: The measure is nominated for inclusion or discovered through our national scan of measures that are currently in use.

Step 2: The assessment developer completes the application form and uploads supporting materials.

Step 3: The Assessment Guide team reviews the assessment submission and determines whether the measure qualifies according to our criteria. If the measure qualifies, the team reviews all form responses and supporting materials for accuracy and completeness. Where necessary, the team contacts the developer with follow up questions or requests.

Step 4: The team interprets and edits the submission information to create the measure profile and summary of the measure.

Step 5: The measure profile is reviewed and approved by the team and developer, then uploaded to the Assessment Guide website.

SEL Assessment in Action Series

The *SEL Assessment in Action* series is an ongoing effort to collect stories from educators who are using measures of SEL competencies. These vignettes are the product of written testimonies and qualitative interviews, conducted by the guide team, of educators who are using SEL competence assessments in practice.

Over time, this series will represent an increasing variety of contexts and uses of assessment to help illustrate for other practitioners how assessments can be used to improve the social and emotional skills of students.

[Contact the Assessment Guide team](#) if you'd like to share your story or nominate a school or district who is using SEL competence measures.

The SEL Assessment in Action posts can be accessed throughout the process of using the *Guide* to deepen understanding and provide ideas for how practitioners can select and use SEL competence measures in their context. Posts will be added on an ongoing basis, so users should check back regularly for new content.

Future Plans

Nomination Platform (January 2019)

A nomination platform will enable developers and practitioners to nominate assessments for inclusion in the Guide. When an assessment is nominated, the team will reach out to the developer contact to invite them to fill out an application to be considered for inclusion.

User Forum (Spring 2019)

A user forum will launch to allow practitioners to share their experiences, ask questions, and ultimately learn from each other.

Link to Evidence-Based SEL Programs (Spring 2019)

The SEL Assessment Guide's database of measures will be reviewed for links to available SEL programs appearing in CASEL SEL Program Review. Connections will be identified and linked on measure pages to programs that specifically foster competencies that are the target of evaluation for a given assessment. We hope this will promote alignment between SEL instruction and assessment in the field.

Refinement of the Assessment Guide

The team will collect feedback and monitor website usage on an ongoing basis to continuously improve the Guide. Additional improvements to features and functionality will be determined based on this feedback, so please [share your input here](#).

New Measures

Measures will be reviewed and added to the Assessment Guide on an ongoing basis.

Related Projects

RAND Assessment Finder:

[The RAND Assessment Finder](#) lists more than 200 assessments of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and higher-order cognitive competencies, including associated descriptive and evaluative information. The Assessment Finder enables practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to explore what assessments are available and obtain key information about what they are designed to measure, how they operate, what demands they place on students and teachers, and what kinds of uses their scores support.

When available, measure profiles link to the corresponding profiles on the *RAND Assessment Finder*.

Harvard Taxonomy Project

[The Taxonomy Project](#) will create a platform that showcases the points of alignment and divergence across social and emotional learning (SEL) frameworks in a way that enables those doing the work of the field to both identify common ground and to see what is distinct within any particular framework.

We hope that future iterations of the Assessment Guide will be able to link assessments to their associated frameworks on the Taxonomy Project website.

Are you Ready to Assess Social Emotional Learning?

American Institutes for Research, 2015

This [suite of tools](#) includes a brief, decision-tree, and an index of available SEL assessment. It's intended to help education leaders, practitioners, and policymakers decide whether and how to assess social and emotional development.

Appendix A: Methods and Stages of Development

The Assessment Guide was developed through a collaborative effort led by Jeremy Taylor and Katie Buckley and included input from AWG subgroup members: Craig Bailey, Laura Davidson, Susanne Denham, Laura Hamilton, Ben Hayes, Eric Moore, Michelle Steagall, and Marty West, as well as the broader membership of the AWG (see all AWG members). Staff involved in the development of the Guide include Lindsay Read, Jordan Trejo, and Rebecca Lectura. During guide development, this group met at least monthly and came together in-person during the AWG's meetings twice annually. Other CASEL staff members were also integral to the Guide's production, including Kay Daly and Carolina Herrera, as were members of the RAND Assessment Finder team, including: Laura Hamilton, Brian Stecher, and Jonathan Schweig

To start the development process, the Assessment Guide subgroup established the scope and parameters of the assessment guide, conducted a field scan of SEL assessment measures currently used in practice, and developed and obtained feedback on a prototype of the assessment guide.

To ensure the assessment guide will serve educators needs, the subgroup engaged in two beta testing periods, during which user feedback was obtained and used to improve the guide. First, there was a “closed beta” launch of the initial version of the online assessment guide to help educators to effectively use currently available SEL assessments in July of 2017. During this period a small group of educators, including classroom teachers, school administrators, and out-of-school time providers, gave feedback on the usability of the online assessment guide pages, using a sample page of a single measure to provide their reaction.

A second “public” beta period occurred in January 2017. During the public beta period, feedback about the guide was obtained from AWG Collaborator Network members, with a variety of roles and about various aspects of the guide, including measure pages' usability, ease of navigation of the guide, and degree to which the guide serves the needs of the educator users overall. Like the closed beta, feedback from the public beta was used to improve the usability of the guide leading up to the full launch.

Prior to launch, several experts in the fields of assessment, child development, and SEL provide a technical review of the Guide, including: Angela Duckworth, Camille Farrington, Heather Hirsch, David Yeager, Nick Yoder, and Michael Rodriguez. Several AWG collaborators also provided a review, including: Dale Blyth, Laura Davidson, Rob Jagers, and Roger Weissberg. Feedback from these reviews were compiled and integrated into the final version of the SEL Assessment Guide.

To provide proper context and preparation for users of the Guide to select and use measures, the subgroup collaborated with RAND to create the Practitioner Guidance document that is linked to in Part 1, 2, and 3 of the Guide.

Appendix B: Coding for Inclusion of Measures

How the AWG team determines inclusion of assessments according to our specific criteria are explained below:

1. Measure intrapersonal competencies and/or interpersonal competencies

(Yes/No) Developer provides evidence of the constructs measured and at least one of these constructs qualify as interpersonal and/or intrapersonal competencies as defined by our AWG Assessment Guide Construct Matrix

2. Developed for PreK–12th grade students

(Yes/No) Developer provides evidence that the measure was developed for use with kids ages PreK–12th grade

3. In active use in practice

(Yes/No) Measure shows up in the Assessment Work Group’s preliminary scan of measures (reported as being used by a practitioner)

OR

Developer provides evidence that the measure is currently used in practice in a school, district, or OST provider setting.

4. Strengths–based.

(Yes/No) Assessment Guide teams’ review of measure items and constructs results in agreement that at least 50% of constructs are strengths