

Excerpts from Reviews of the DESSA

Devereux Student Strengths Assessment. (2010). In R. A. Spies, J. F. Carlson, & K. F. Geisinger (Eds.), *The eighteenth mental measurements yearbook*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.

Strengths: "The DESSA is an elegant, comprehensive measure of young student social-emotional strengths."

"The questions are thought-provoking."

"These (internal consistency) estimates are impressive."

"The DESSA is a well-thought-out, appropriately developed test that holds great promise of value for those working with children who face adversity in their lives. The emphasis on identifying positive behaviors is a major attribute of the DESSA."

"The DESSA manual is well organized. The rating scale is easy to complete."

"The DESSA is a well-thought-out, norm-referenced, easily administered and interpreted behavior rating scale."

"Initial reliability and validity information...is very promising. The developmental processes of the DESSA meet or exceed the standards for test construction set forth by the American Psychological Association. The results of the DESSA would lend themselves well...to help children overcome adversities they have faced or will face in their lives."

Weaknesses: "The only relative weakness of the DESSA was that its scoring procedures are tedious. Scorer errors could be an issue when adding subtest raw scores and transferring data to the profile chart by hand. The development of a computer scoring system for this test would be of value. [Editor's Note: The test authors advise that a computer administration, scoring, and reporting system is now available.]"

Denham, S. A., Ji, P. & Hamre, B. (2010). ***Compendium of preschool through elementary social-emotional learning and associated assessment measures***. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Strengths: *“It utilizes only strength-based items whereas most rating scales have a larger focus on clinically oriented items.”*

“The DESSA also lends itself to be used with the general population in Tier 1 (i.e., universal screening) to promote the social-emotional well-being of all youth as well as for more targeted and intensive interventions.”

“Another advantage the DESSA has over both the BASC-2 and the BERS-2 is that it is shorter and simpler because the same form can be used with both parents and teachers. This also enables parent and teacher ratings to be directly compared on the same set of behaviors.”

Weaknesses: *(None were noted)*

Merrell, K. W., & Gueldner, B. A. (2010). ***Social and emotional learning in the classroom: Promoting mental health and academic success***. New York: Guilford Press.

Strengths: *“The DESSA evidences careful development, with commendable attention to both theoretical issues and practical details of test construction. The nationwide norming sample is large and impressive, as are the psychometric properties and basic validity research.”*

“The DESSA appears to be advantageous for several reasons, including its specific focus on protective factors or resilience, its dual-rater (parent and teacher) target, its structural connection to the three-tiered prevention model that is increasingly popular in education, its strong technical properties, and the availability of the brief 1-minute checkup version of the scale.”

“Overall, the DESSA appears to be a solid and welcome addition to the available assessments in this realm.”

Weaknesses: *“The DESSA’s chief limitations appear to be the lack of a self-report version for use by students and the fact that it is intended to be used only through grade 8. These limitations may or may not be important issues, depending on the needs and aims of potential users.”*

Haggerty, K., Elgin, J., & Woolley, A. (2011). *Social-emotional learning and school climate assessment measures for middle school youth*. Retrieved from the Raikes Foundation website: <http://www.raikesfoundation.org/Secondary.aspx?file=Resources>.

Strengths: "Strong psychometric properties. It has solid conceptualization and ease of administration."

"The profiles are easy to read and interpret. Information on the website is readily available and easy to access."

Weaknesses: "An area of future development in the field of SEL assessment would be to turn the DESSA into a self-report assessment and conduct research on the psychometric properties of the instrument." [Executive Summary]

For More Information about the DESSA, please contact:

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