

Spring 5-2018

## **Planned Activity Checks: Teachers' Perceptions of Social Validity for Class-wide Behavior Assessment**

Jacquelynn Elizabeth-Sidnie Johnson  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://aquila.usm.edu/honors\\_theses](https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses)



Part of the [School Psychology Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Johnson, Jacquelynn Elizabeth-Sidnie, "Planned Activity Checks: Teachers' Perceptions of Social Validity for Class-wide Behavior Assessment" (2018). *Honors Theses*. 600.  
[https://aquila.usm.edu/honors\\_theses/600](https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/600)

This Honors College Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact [Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu](mailto:Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu).

ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

The University of Southern Mississippi

Planned Activity Checks:

Teachers' Perceptions of Social Validity for Class-wide Behavior Assessment

by

Jacquelynn Johnson

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Honors College of  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Bachelor of Science  
in the Department of Education and Psychology

August 2017



ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

Approved by

---

Evan Dart, Ph. D., Thesis Advisor  
Assistant Professor of Psychology

---

Joe Olmi, Ph.D., Chair and Professor  
Department of Psychology

---

Ellen Weinauer, Dean  
Honors College

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the implementation of Planned Activity Checks (PACs), which were a newly proposed method of behavioral observation which had been implemented by teachers in an elementary or high school setting, had the same results as a direct research observation in the classroom. The current system in place for behavioral assessment is a direct observer, either a social worker or counselor, coming into the classroom and directly observing a single student or a group of students for the entire class period. Most observations fall into three main categories: standardized rating scales, systematic direct observation, and direct behavior ratings. In this study, we conducted direct observation in a high school classroom during a 20-minute time segment with 15-second intervals, concurrently while teachers performed PACs at every 5-minute time segment for the same 20-minute observations. This study increased knowledge on: whether the data found between teachers and observers are cohesive and whether the teachers find this socially acceptable to implement into their daily classroom routine. Results indicated that the teachers' observation and implementation varied from the direct observation by 15% and the social acceptability was rated per category on acceptability between 4 and 5.

Key words: behavior observation, teacher implementation, education setting

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Evan Dart, for guiding me through the development of this final document. I would not have been able to complete this study without his mentorship and guidance. Thank you for continually working with me to improve myself as a student and a researcher.

I would also, like to thank Sarah Wright, a graduate student pursuing her Ph. D in Psychology. Thank you for being willing to work with me in data collection and for your help in contacting the teachers at the research site.

# ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

## List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Percentage of On-Task Behavior by Teachers and Observers.....11

Table 1: Average Responses of Teachers to URP-A.....12

**Table of Contents**

List of Tables and Figures.....vi

Chapter One: Introduction.....1

Chapter Two: Literature Review.....3

    Behavior Assessments in Psychology.....3

    Benefits and Drawbacks of the Different Types of Behavior Assessments.....5

    Grouped vs. Individual Assessment.....7

    Planned Activity Checks.....7

Chapter Three: Methods.....8

    Participants and Settings.....8

    Materials.....8

    Dependent Measures.....8

    Procedure.....9

    Analysis.....10

Chapter Four: Results.....11

Chapter Five: Discussion.....12

*Implementations of PACS*.....13

*Social Validity*.....14

*Limitations and Future Research Questions*.....16

*Implications for Practice*.....18

Chapter Six: Conclusion.....18

References.....20-21

Appendices.....22

    Appendix A: *5 Minute Planned Activity Checks During a 20- minute Time Span*.....22

    Appendix B: *15 Second Time Intervals Observations*.....23

    Appendix C: *URP-Assessment*.....24-25

    Appendix D: *Teacher Script* .....26

ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

Appendix E: *IRB Approval*.....27

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

As part of the education process, it is vital for professionals working in the schools (e.g., teachers and school psychologists) to be able to assess a wide variety of student domains of functioning including academic achievement, behavior, and mental health. Behavioral assessments often serve as the first step for behavioral intervention and thus, behavioral change. Through the implementation of effective behavioral assessments, behavioral change can be brought about in an efficient, concise manner in such settings as classrooms.

Disruptive behavior can hinder both individual student understanding as well as serve as a distraction for fellow students. Direct behavior assessment has been researched in terms of both individual student assessment and recent studies surrounding classroom behavior assessment as a whole. According to Briesch and colleagues (2014) “there is much research to support the effectiveness of class-wide interventions aimed at improving student engagement, there is also a great deal of variability in terms of how response to group-level intervention has been measured.” (Briesch, Hemphill, Volpe, & Daniels, 2014, pp. 1-2)

Current research in school-based behavior assessments has revolved around a few key methods that record and assess student behavior, including Standardized Rating Scales, Systematic Direct Observations (SDO), and Direct Behavior Ratings. Systematic Direct Observation includes two main subgroups: Momentary Time Samplings (MTS) and more recently Planned Activity Checks (PAC)s. PACs will be the focus of this research. Both of these systems have been found to produce similar results in terms of generating accurate estimates of classroom behavior. Continuous SDO typically involves watching a single student every second for a specific period of time and recording the number of times the student exhibited a particular behavior. Similarly, MTS involves observing a single student but only for a brief moment after a specific interval of time has elapsed (e.g., 15s), instead of continuously for total specified time

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

frame, with the observer recording if the student is exhibiting the particular behavior at that moment. Using MTS where a different student is observed at each interval creates a composite assessment of group behavior. Group assessment can be conducted in the same amount of time as a single student observation and provides a valid estimate of all of the behavior of all students as a group. Group observation can be useful when determining the on-task or off-task behaviors of a total group, which can then lead to a possible intervention at the class level, rather than the individual student. This is beneficial for teachers and researchers because this allows for intervention of behavior without stopping the course of education. Research for these two methods has produced nearly identical estimates of behavior as continuous observation.

However, each of the above methods of assessment are time consuming and intensive for observers. This is particularly problematic for classroom teachers, who might not be available to conduct the observation while they are delivering instruction. Recent research has worked to investigate a method of group behavior assessment, called a Planned Activity Check (PAC) that a teacher can implement in the classroom setting without disrupting the educational process. PACs use much longer observation intervals compared to MTS (e.g., 5-minutes vs. 15-seconds, respectively). Using a PAC, an observer would survey the classroom quickly at the end of each scheduled interval, taking a count of how many students are engaged in the target behavior. PACs divide the number of students engaged in the behavior by the total number of students being observed, resulting in an estimate of group behavior at each interval. For example, over a 20-minutes period, with 5-minute intervals, four of these estimates are generated. Averaging these four assessments produces an estimate of group behavior that can then be used to make educational decisions regarding the behavior of the class. Previous studies have shown that this method produces valid estimates when compared to more time-intensive methods. It is proposed

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

that this method would be easy enough to apply in an observation setting, but before asking teachers to implement this assessment it is imperative to determine whether it will be viewed as acceptable by teachers.

This research project would have teachers conduct a single 20-minute PAC observation within their classrooms using 5-minute intervals. After the observation, teachers would be asked to rate the social validity of the PAC assessment method using a rating scale developed specifically for this purpose. As the teacher is implementing the PACs in the classroom, researchers would simultaneously conduct a more intensive group observational method (i.e. group MTS method) to further support the accuracy of the PACs. It is hypothesized that the PACs would be both as accurate as previous methods of assessment, as well as, socially valid and acceptable for the implementation by teachers and school professionals.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

#### **Behavior Assessments in Psychology**

Behavioral assessments are used in many aspects of the world at large, such as work placements and performance assessment, as well as in school-aged children and in higher education. The main purposes of behavioral assessments are to quantify a dimension of behavior (e.g., duration, frequency, intensity; Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987). In the schools, behavioral assessment serves many different purposes. For example, it has been used as part of a “systematic process [that] identif[ies] problem behaviors and the events that reliably predict occurrence and nonoccurrence of those behaviors and maintain the behaviors across time” in order to determine behavior function. (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 12). Assessments of this type are used to measure a particular behavior, which can either be conducive to an academic setting or hinder the education process.

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

The importance of behavior assessments in education and psychology settings have led to many implications for the field of research. Todd and colleagues (2008) connected the use of behavioral assessments for students to better student engagement. Students who participated in the study were found to be at varying educational levels through the implementation of behavioral assessments in the form of direct observation for each of the students. Behavioral assessments were used to observe “3 or 4 days per week” for 20-minute intervals (Todd et al., 2008, p. 49). An important part of behavioral assessments is keeping the observation time the same for each student participating in the study. In this case, “observations took place during the same academic class period each day” and the specific time “was determined by teachers’ reports of the most problematic time of day” (Todd et al., 2008, p. 49).

Current behavioral assessments in the school setting fall into three main categories: standardized rating scales, systematic direct observation (SDO), and direct behavior ratings (DBR). Standardized rating scales typically include a large number of items that ask respondents to indicate the frequency with which students have engaged in specific behaviors. Barnhill (2005) lists some of the questionnaires and checklists that are frequently used in schools such as the “Achenbach Scales, which include the Child Behavior Checklist, Teacher’s Report Form, and the Youth Self-Report and the Behavior Assessment System for Children, which includes a parent, teacher, and self-rating scale.” (Barnhill, 2005, p. 137)

Barnhill (2005) described systematic direct observations as observations made in the natural environment where the behavior would typically be exhibited, then the observer quantifies the behavioral dimension of interest. There are a few methods of systematic direct observation: continuous observation and interval based observation, which can be divided into partial interval recording, whole interval recording, and momentary time sampling. Continuous

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

observation includes observing a student for every second of a given period of time and recording the exact number of times the behavior occurs within that time. In partial interval recording “the target behavior is recorded as it occurs at any time during the [given] interval; whereas, in whole interval recording, the target behavior is recorded only if it happens during the entire interval” (Barnhill, 2005, p. 140). The results recorded from systematic direct observations represent a percentage of time the target behavior occurred (Barnhill, 2005). Additionally, MTS uses a combination of smaller intervals and direct observation for individual students.

Momentary time sampling may be preferred because unlike whole interval and partial interval it does not systematically over- or under-estimate the target behavior (Barnhill, 2005).

Briesch et al. (2010), defined direct behavior ratings (DBR) as “A... single-item scale [that] is used to rate a single, operationally defined target behavior following a pre-specified period of time, with the resulting data analyzed independent of other items.” A DBR looks similar to any other rating scale. It is based on a 0-100% scale, with 0% representing that a student did not engage in the target behavior at any time during the observation, while 100% indicates that the student engaged in the target behavior for the entire observation period. This method is used to get a percentage of overall behavior for any given student, which can then lead to an individual intervention.

### **Benefits and Drawbacks of the Different Types of Behavior Assessments**

Each method of the behavioral assessments: standardized rating scales, SDOs, and DBRs, has both benefits and drawbacks. Standardized rating scales are an indirect method of assessment that are easy to administer and do not require much of the informant’s time (Barnhill, 2005); However, for standardized rating scales behaviors must be recalled from a previous memory and the possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpreting the checklist or questions by the reporter

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

(Barnhill, 2005). The questions are up to the interpretation of the reporter and this may lead to an interpretation of the questions differently than originally proposed by the researcher. Barnhill (2005) stated another disadvantage of standardized rating scales is that the results would be more valid if multiple reporters were given the assessment to report the information on the student in question; this is difficult, however, to get assessments from multiple reporters for one student.

SDOs are the most widely used of the three behavior assessments. They provide the most accurate assessment of a particular student because of the specialized attention to the target behavior. This is a direct method where “the observer is recording... behaviors... as they occur rather than reporting them from someone’s memory” (Barnhill, 2005, p. 131-143). The assessment happens in real time; the information is more likely to be objective and accurate. The information gathered from SDOs can lead to the “develop[ment] of an effective treatment plan.” (Barnhill, 2005). Interval-based SDOs are used when “continuous observation of a student [are] not practical or when an observer is measuring behaviors on several students in one setting” (Barnhill, 2005).

One of the newer methods of behavior assessment is direct behavior ratings or DBRs. This type of observational method involves directly observing that “occurs at the time and place that behavior occurs”; it also occurs in a natural environment for the behavior (i.e. the classroom) (Christ et al. , 2010, pp.826). Like SDO, DBRs are another way to quantify a dimension of student behavior without influencing the educational process; however, one major difference between SDOs and DBRs is the amount of time required to complete the assessment. Both methods require direct observation of a target behavior, in the natural setting, but DBRs are designed to be completed at a later time after the behavior has occurred. This is important because when considering behavioral assessment in the school system, many teachers do not

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

have time to conduct SDO as the behaviors occur. Thus, DBRs can be useful because they can be completed after the behavioral observation at a convenient time, such as at the end of the school day. This potentially can be inaccurate because of the delay in recording of behavior (Christ et al., 2010). Also, because the assessment does not occur for many hours, a large degree of human error becomes a variable, when a teacher is asked to think back to when the behavior actually occurred (Briesch et al., 2010).

### **Grouped vs. Individual Assessment**

It has been questioned as to why group assessment is needed over individual assessment. Group assessment is a more efficient method of gathering an average of classroom behavior. According to the article by Briesch and colleagues (2014), “classroom intervention is conceptualized as a way to address individual student needs with the added benefit of supporting the appropriate behavior of all students”; this means the implications of group systematic direct observation is two-fold, by helping individual students get the proper help they need, as well as, making general classroom management easier for the teacher (Briesch et al., 2014, p.1-2). Additionally, the pinpointing of one student could influence the teachers’ attention to the student, which could influence a change in the students’ performance or behavior. It is important to keep extraneous variables such as reactions to the teacher or performing behavior that the student would not normally participate in only because the teacher is observing the student (Wilczenski et al., 1987).

### **Planned Activity Checks**

Planned Activity Checks (PACs) are a particularly new method of behavioral assessment in the field of school psychology. PACs are defined, in a proposed manuscript by Dart and colleagues, as a “method involv[ing] the observation of the entire group at one time and assessed

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

how many individuals within the group were engaged in the behavior of interest.” They are a type of momentary time sampling; however, with this method the intervals are generally longer (i.e. 5-minute vs. 15-second intervals) with the accuracy of the data relatively the same to the shorter intervals.

One of the main questions surrounding the implementation of PACs into the regular academic setting is whether or not they are socially valid and socially acceptable for the teacher to implement. Social validity is described in terms of three relevant questions: “Are the specific behavioral goals really what society wants? Do the participants, caregivers, and other consumers consider the treatment procedures acceptable? Are [all] consumers satisfied with the results?” (Wolf, 1978, pp. 154). Further, do the outcomes from the behavioral assessment show what is being tested, and do the teachers implementing the assessment find them satisfactory when actually using the tests, as well as, do the ends justify the means (is the process worth the results?) (Wolf, 1978).

### **Methods**

#### **Participants and Settings**

This study included 15 teacher participants, each surveyed twice, and the students in their respective classrooms. The teacher participants came from public general education classrooms within a rural high school in the southeastern United States.

#### **Materials**

Research materials for this research included a MotivAider, and observation sheets for both teachers and researchers. The MotivAider is a vibrating timer that was used to prompt teachers to conduct a planned activity check every five minutes. The teacher observation form (Appendix A) included boxes in which teachers could record the number of students that were

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

academically engaged during any given PAC. The researcher observation form (Appendix B) included 80 intervals to record the class-wide academic engagement using a 15s-momentary time sampling procedure.

### **Dependent Measures**

The dependent variable that was being assessed was agreement between teachers and independent observers when each was responsible for assessing class-wide academically engaged behavior (AEB). Teachers assessed AEB using a 5-minute PAC while independent observers used the Individual-Fixed method using 15s MTS. An operational definition for AEB included both active and passive topographies of the behavior. AEB was considered active “when the student is actively attending to the assigned lecture” (Shapiro & Shapiro, 2008, p. 20). AEB was considered passive when students were “listening to the lecture, reading the assigned material silently, and looking at the blackboard during teacher instruction” (Shapiro & Shapiro, 2008, p. 20). Both forms of AEB were scored identically and not analyzed as separate behaviors.

**Social Validity.** To determine whether the teachers identified PACs as socially acceptable, each was asked to complete a modified version of the Usage Rating Profile Assessment (URP-A; Appendix C). The URP-A is a measure designed to assess the social validity of classroom interventions along six subsets: acceptability, understanding, home-school interaction, feasibility, system climate and system support. According to *Examining Innovation Usage: Construct Validation of the Usage Rating Profile* “The URP-A is a self-report measure for collecting information about the factors influencing use of an assessment methodology.” The usage inventory uses approximately 30 items, where the responder uses a 6-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree to 6 – strongly agree) to assess the overall acceptability of the behavioral observations. (Miller, Neugebauer, Chafouleas, Briesch, & Riley-Tillman, 2013).

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

### **Procedure**

To recruit participants, individual teachers at FCAHS were approached by a graduate research assistant and asked if they would be interested in participating in a research project investigating class-wide behavioral assessment. They were given a brief description of the study (Appendix D), allowed to ask any questions about participation, and asked to sign a consent form if they agreed to participate. After providing consent, individual scheduling of observation time slots was set with each specific teacher weeks before the actual observation. Specifically, teachers were asked to identify a 20-minute period in which two observations took place within their classroom during two separate days. They were also given a brief training on conducting 5-minute PACs and were provided with all of the necessary materials to do so (i.e., MotivAider and observation sheet). Next, during the previously agreed upon days and time, two 20-minute observations took place. During the observation, the teachers implemented a 5-minute PAC of class-wide AEB using the previously described definitions. The researcher simultaneously conducted a 15s MTS Individual-Fixed method of class-wide AEB using identical operational definitions. At the end of the second observation period, each teacher was asked to complete the social validity scale to assess how easily he or she felt the PAC was to implement in his or her daily teaching routine. Once the form was complete, the study was complete.

### **Analysis**

Agreement between teacher and independent observers was assessed in two ways. First, mean differences between teacher completed observations and independent observer completed observations were compared as part of a descriptive analysis. Second, Pearson correlations were calculated across the two datasets to determine the extent to which they co-varied.

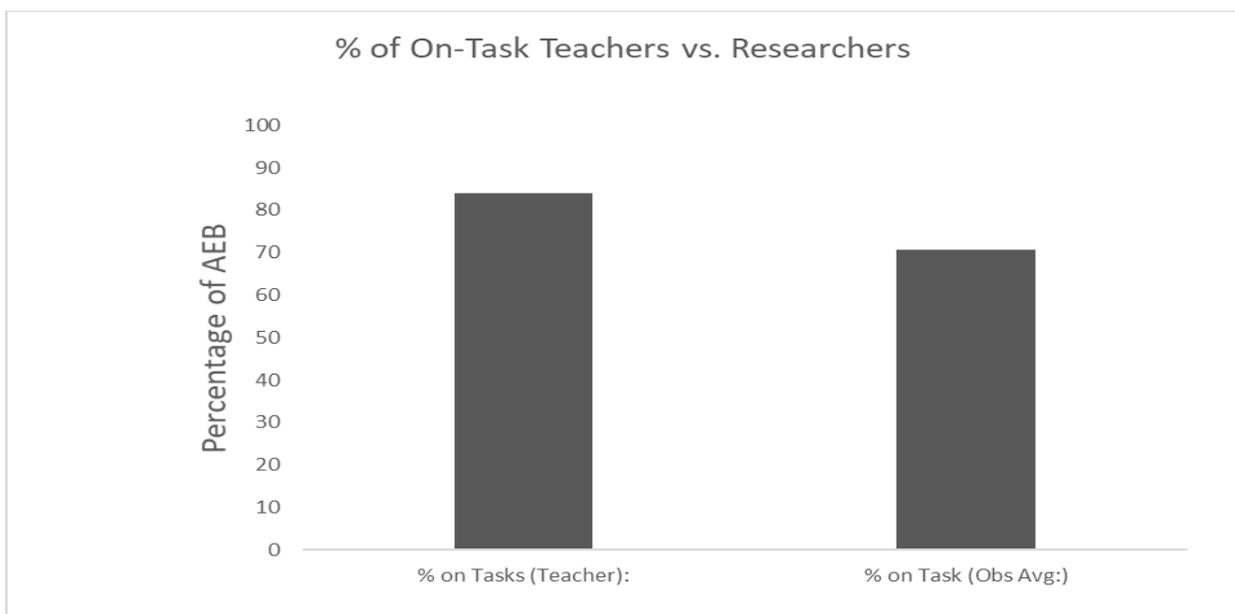
### Results

Data collection involved two types of observation: teacher recording of behavior and observer recording of behavior. Collection also included surveys regarding the social acceptability of implementing the PACs, which examined such categories as level of understanding, home-to-school interactions and feasibility of the PACs in the classroom. First, the observations collected using the PACs were compared to MTS and an overall average for AEB was found. Secondly, the teachers were surveyed on the different factors and overall averages were found for each of the subsets. This section details the results in determining the reliability of the PACs, and the acceptability in the classroom of the overall social validity.

#### *Teacher vs. Observer Comparison*

Results show that teachers consistently rating AEB behavior at a higher level ( $M = 84\%$ ) than what is found by the independent observer ( $M = 71\%$ ); however, correlations between the two observers' data yielded a Pearson's  $r$  of .45 ( $p = .013$ ), suggesting that shifts in scores between raters were generally consistent (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage of On-Task Behavior by Teachers and Observers



## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

### *Social Validity*

The concept of social validity of PACs was tested using the URP-A, which assesses six factors of social validity: acceptability, understanding, home-school interaction, feasibility, system climate and system support. Table 1 presents the results of the URP-A administration. Overall, teachers rated PACs as acceptable ( $M = 4.02$ ). Their ratings also suggested that the teachers understand how PACs function ( $M = 4.84$ ), believe it is a feasible assessment strategy ( $M = 4.12$ ), that their school system would support the use of PACs ( $M = 4.23$ ), and that PACs are consistent with the assessment climate within their school ( $M = 5.02$ ). The teachers did not indicate that a home-school interaction was necessary for PACs to be useful ( $M = 2.62$ ).

Table 1: Average Responses of Teachers to URP-A

Factor	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation
Acceptability	4.02	0.45
Understanding	4.84	0.81
Home-School Interaction	2.62	1.15
Feasibility	4.12	0.27
System Climate	5.02	0.81
System Support	4.23	0.62

### **Discussion**

PACs have been proposed as a new method of behavioral assessment that would be implemented into a regular education classroom and primarily facilitated by the teacher of the classroom. The benefits of PACS are multi-fold: previous methods of behavioral assessments are time consuming, taxing on the observer, lend themselves to human-error and often are not as

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

accurate as assessment—PACS serve to combat these forth-lying issues. In this study, the PACs used an interval of five minutes, instead of more taxing 15-second intervals, which are commonly used in traditional behavior observations. Additionally, PACs occur in real time and there is no memory recall involved for the observer, which may serve to limit the hindrance of human error in assessment.

Two questions were of primary importance in the current study. First, are PACs an accurate and reliable method of behavioral assessment compared to more traditional behavior assessment methods? Second, do teachers find PACs to be socially acceptable and easily implemented into the educational setting? This study found that overall, although PACs yielded somewhat different estimates of class-wide AEB, the scores obtained through PAC fluctuated in a similar fashion to SDO conducted by independent observers. The results of the URP-A suggest that teachers generally found PACs acceptable and feasible, suggesting that it may have utility within the classroom setting.

### *Implementations of PACS*

The design of this research allowed for direct comparisons to be made between a type of SDO, momentary time samplings (MTS) and the implementation of Planned Activity Checks (PACs). By conducting traditional MTS with an independent observer at the same time teachers were conducting PACs, it was possible to determine the extent to which both assessment methods produced similar data on class-wide AEB. MTS performed by the researcher was considered the standard for behavioral comparisons as MTS have previously been proven as reliable behavioral assessments and the researcher performing MTS did not hinder attention to classroom materials, management, or academic engagement.

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

During the thirty trials completed with fifteen different teachers, on average, teachers using the PACs rated behavior at approximately thirteen percent higher on-task than the information found from the MTS. This indicates that teachers are not directly observing AEB at the same level as the researcher recording the MTS; however, on average, the rating between researcher and teachers fluctuate in a similar pattern, lending to the evidence that PACs can detect behavioral disparities and changes in student behavior within the classroom environment. These results show that although the behavioral recordings of the PACs are not entirely accurate when compared to traditional SDO, they are consistent in their inaccuracy. That is, these data suggest that the inaccuracy is due to some consistent factor that in the future can be identified and remediated. For example, more thorough teacher training may be all that is needed to align the accuracy of PACs with traditional SDO. The results above show that PACs can be used by the teacher to demonstrate the same influx as the other forms of behavioral observations; they are sensitive enough to detect changes occurring with the students in the individual classrooms.

### *Social Validity*

Wolf (1978) spoke about the factors which define social validity: does the assessment measure the specific goals society is looking for, do participants feel the measures are acceptable and are results representative of what is being looked at. To determine the different factors of social validity in the implementation of PACs, the URP-A was completed by each of the fifteen participants. Social validity as rated by the teachers after the implementation of the PACs was variable within factors ranging in average from fairly easy application to very difficult application. There was a lot of variation between the teachers' ratings, as well as, among the different factors. The highest ranked average was found to be in system climate, which indicates PACs were ranked highly in implementation in the school and classroom. Questions to evaluate

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

system climate involve evaluating social supports for the implementation of PACs and how well the evaluation would be enforced in the school system. Home-to-school interaction was ranked as the lowest level of the overall averages for implementations; however, this indicates that PACs require very little support from the home environment and is well maintained in the school climate with little development or communication with parents of the children in the classroom. Questions that were used to evaluate the home-to-school viability include ones asking about parental involvement and additional education needed to use the assessment. This is beneficial to the implementation of PACs in a classroom setting because this specific behavioral assessment is completely contained in the educational setting; there are no factors outside of the school campus that would influence the use of this assessment method.

The other factors, acceptability, understanding, feasibility, and system support ranged in averages from highly in favor of implementation of the PACs to highly dissatisfied with the functionality of the PACs. Although it was designed to reduce the taxing nature of MTS on teacher observations, some teachers still reported finding it difficult to be notified every five minutes and check the overall AEB of their students in the classroom. Some teachers felt that this still intruded into the teaching process; however, this was not found to be true across the board for all teachers. Many found it to be easy to implement and satisfactory in determining estimates of AEB within the classroom.

Ratings for acceptability, understanding, feasibility and system support were marked as having mostly positive remarks on each subset. Acceptability is found by surveying questions assessing how teachers feel about the actual activity of the PACs in their classroom and their opinion of how accurately the PACs determine the prescribed behaviors. Understanding is related to the ongoing intellectual concept of the PACs, which was ranked very high from the

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

ratings of the teachers. This is found by assessing information related to the comprehension of the PACs and the procedures. Feasibility considers the amount of time allocated to setup, conduct and maintain administration of the PACs. Feasibility was found to be middle-to-high for the overall implementation of the teacher averages. System support regards outside supports for the behavioral assessment such as outside class time preparation or materials gathering. This section was determined to be very high for the overall approval of the behavioral assessment. The teachers found the PACs do not take outside time to prepare or get ready; many teachers took more time completing the implementation survey than implementing the PACs.

### *Limitations and Future Research Questions*

There are some factors of this study which limit the generalizability of these data and results. One of the causes for the variation found between the recorded behavior by the MTS and the PACs might be influenced by the difference of the definitions for AEB as defined by the teacher versus that of the observer. Although both were trained on the same operational definition, it is ultimately a decision by the individual observer to determine whether a specific student was academically engaged. This distinction could lead to the teachers rating certain behaviors by the student as on-task, such as being on the computer, whereas the observer might not consider this as on-task behavior. Similar in nature, the observer might have a different viewpoint of the students and might be able to discern different activities of the students that would not be considered on-task by either the observer or the teacher, but the teacher is unaware of the behavior and therefore considers the behavior as on-task.

As part of the structure of the PACs, training is designed to be minimal and limited for ease of implementation. It is possible through the design of the PACs that training and understanding of operational definitions and implementation of PACs is left lacking. Further

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

explanation of the process of the PACs before the beginning of data collection, including demonstrations and examples, might further the understanding of the PACs and facilitate both observer and teachers in conducting more accurate assessments of student behavior.

Data collection was completed over the course of three and a half months and included fifteen different teachers with data collection potentially done in two different class sections. Results could have been influenced by this process of data collection; different classes could have influenced how the PACs were implemented. Research done with the same teacher but done at different times of the day could result in different behavior of the students and thus, different on-task behavior recorded by the teacher. Later in the school day, both the teacher and the students could be tired from the school day and this could influence both student behavior and attention teachers allocated to behavior assessment. Going forward this could potentially be controlled for by using prescreened teachers and scheduling two observation periods during the same class period or two different data collection days but during the same class period with the same students.

Potential influence for data results could be due to the method of direct observation—MTS and PACs require for the direct observation to occur during the classroom setting and at the same time as regular education is going on; AEB behavior could be influenced by the inherent disruption of the classroom setting by the MTS. The observer could potentially solve this by staying in the same classroom all day and not causing a distraction; this method would also allow for data collection and comparison through the day. Additionally, for future research it would be important to expand the sample size of the study to include multiple different high schools, middle schools and elementary schools with expanded numbers of teachers with variations in class size, teacher experience and classroom dynamic.

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

### *Implications for Practice*

After analyzing and discussing the results, there are several implications that can be considered for future practice. First, we suggest that PACs can be considered as a teacher-implemented alternative to traditional direct observation within the classroom. PACs were identified as easy to implement overall—following the same patterns of behavioral assessment as previous methods without being as invasive and intensive on the teachers and the teaching environment, and they are easily supported in the classroom setting and the school system. PACs allow for entire classroom behavior assessment and from there, will allow for more effective classroom management and more individualized attention to students because classroom management is more easily regulated.

In the field of school psychology or school social work, this behavioral assessment tool would be used for the teacher to implement in the classroom, allowing for school psychologists and school social workers to focus on individual students or groups of students that need more intense and specialized services. Practitioners can use the data from PACs to implement new interventions and treat more students at one time. This will lead to new programs that can be put into place in the classroom, for behavior management and educational outcomes. Further development could allow for teachers and faculty to implement school-wide PACs of prosocial behavior and academic integrity to help promote certain beneficial behaviors in the school climate. This could boost overall morale of the entire school and in turn allow for greater self-esteem related to the school system.

### **Conclusion**

Implementations of the PACs proved to follow patterns of previous behavior assessment with some variations between the data collection of observers and teachers. It was hypothesized

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

that the PACs would be both as accurate as previous methods of assessment, as well as, socially valid and acceptable for the implementation by teachers and school professionals; this has both been supported and hindered. Similar results have been found in previous method; however, teachers do not all find the method completely socially valid and acceptable. The findings of this research indicate that PACs could be implemented for effective behavioral assessments and as a socially acceptable method of assessment.

**References**

- Barnhill, G. P. (2005). Functional Behavioral Assessment in Schools. *Intervention In School & Clinic, 40*(3), 131-143. doi:10.1177/10534512050400030101
- Briesch, A. M., Hemphill, E. M., Volpe, R. J., & Daniels, B. (2015). An Evaluation of Observational Methods for Measuring Response to. *School Psychology Quarterly*, pp. 1-12.
- Briesch, A. M., Chafouleas, S. M., & Riley-Tillman, T. C. (2010). Generalizability and Dependability of Behavior Assessment Methods to Estimate Academic Engagement: A Comparison of Systematic Direct Observation and Direct Behavior Rating. *School Psychology Review, 39*(3), 408-421.
- Christ, T., Riley-Tillman, T., Chafouleas, S., & Boice, C. (2010). Direct Behavior Rating (DBR): Generalizability and Dependability Across Raters and Observations. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 825-843*.
- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (1987). Applied behavior analysis. Columbus: Merrill Pub. Co.
- Miller, F. G., Neugebauer, S. R., Chafouleas, S. M., Briesch, A. M., & Riley-Tillman, T. C. (2013, August). *Examining innovation usage: Construct validation of the Usage Rating Profile – Assessment..pdf* Poster presentation at the American Psychological Association Annual Convention, Honolulu, HI.
- Shapiro, E. S., & Shapiro, E. S. (2008). *Behavioral Observation of Students in Schools. Minneapolis, MN: Pearson Assessments.*

## ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

Sugai, G., Horner, R., Dunlap, G., Hieneman, M., Lewis, T., Nelson, C., . . . Ruef, M. (2000).

Applying Positive Behavior Support and Functional Behavioral Assessment in Schools.

*Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 131-143. Retrieved September 26, 2015.

Todd, A., Campbell, A., Meyer, G., & Horner, R. (2008). The Effects of a Targeted Intervention

to Reduce Problem Behaviors: Elementary School Implementation of Check In Check

Out. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 46-55. Retrieved November 23, 2015.

Wilczenski, F. L., Sulzer-Azaroff, B., Feldman, R. S., & Fajardo, D. E. (1987). Feedback to

teachers on student engagement as a consultation tool. *Professional School Psychology*,

2(4), 261-272. Retrieved October 18, 2015.

Wolf, M. M. (1978). Social validity: the case for subjective measurement or how applied

behavior

analysis is finding its heart. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 11(2), 203–214.

Appendix A

**5 Minute Planned Activity Checks  
During a 20- minute Time Span**

\*\*\*Fraction form please: number of student academically engaged  
over total number of students in the class\*\*\*

Teacher Name:

Date:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Appendix B

**15 Second Time Intervals Observations**

Observer Name:

Date:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.	25.
26.	27.	28.	29.	30.
31.	32.	33.	34.	35.
36.	37.	38.	39.	40.
42.	42.	43.	44.	45.
46.	47.	48.	49.	50.
51.	52.	53.	54.	55.
56.	57.	58.	59.	60.
61.	62.	63.	64.	65.
66.	67.	68.	69.	70.
71.	72.	73.	74.	75.
76.	77.	78.	79.	80.



# URP-Assessment

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	This assessment is an effective choice for understanding a variety of problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I would need additional resources to carry out this assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I would be able to allocate my time to implement this assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I understand how to use this assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	A positive home-school relationship is needed to use this assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	I am knowledgeable about the assessment procedures.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	The assessment is a fair way to evaluate the child's behavior problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	The total time required to implement the assessment procedures would be manageable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I would not be interested in implementing this assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	My administrator would be supportive of my use of this assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	I would have positive attitudes about implementing this assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	This is a good way to assess the child's behavior problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Preparation of materials needed for this assessment would be minimal.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Use of this assessment would be consistent with the mission of my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6

ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

Appendix C Cont.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
15. Parental collaboration is required in order to use this assessment. 6		1	2	3	4	5	
16. Material resources needed for this assessment are reasonable.		1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I would implement this assessment with a good deal of enthusiasm.		1	2	3	4	5	6
18. This assessment is too complex to carry out accurately.		1	2	3	4	5	6
19. These assessment procedures are consistent with the way things are done in my system.		1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Use of this assessment would not be disruptive to students.		1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I would be committed to carrying out this assessment.		1	2	3	4	5	6
22. The assessment procedures easily fit in with my current practices.		1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I would need consultative support to implement this assessment.		1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I understand the procedures of this assessment.		1	2	3	4	5	6
25. My work environment is conducive to implementation of an assessment like this one.		1	2	3	4	5	6
26. The amount of time required for record keeping would be reasonable.		1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Regular home-school communication is needed to implement these assessment procedures.		1	2	3	4	5	6
28. I would require additional professional development in order to implement this assessment.		1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix D

**Teachers' Script**

Hello! Thank you for agreeing to be part of this study. There will be a 20-minute period in which the observation can take place within your classroom. You will be implementing 5-minute PACs (Planned Activity Checks) which is a new type of assessment for student engaged behavior. During this 20-minute section of time, the teachers will implement a 5-minute PAC (monitored by a MotivAider, which will be provided and set to vibrate every five minutes) of student academically engaged behavior using the previously described definitions. The teacher will be taking a count of how many students are either writing academic notes, paying attention to lecture, participating in discussion or reading the material quietly every five minutes of the 20-minute observation period and record on a separate sheet the number of children who were academically engaged. The researcher will simultaneously conduct a 15s MTS Individual-Fixed (15-second momentary time samples on each of the individuals in the class) method of class-wide academically engaged behavior using identical operational definitions. At the end of the observation period, you will be asked to complete the social validity scale to assess how easily he or she felt the PAC was to implement in his or her daily teaching routine.

# ACCEPTABILITY AND SOCIAL VALIDITY OF PAC

## Appendix E

### IRB Approval



---

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/research/institutional\\_review\\_board](http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional_review_board)

#### NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 16082908

PROJECT TITLE: Planned Activity Checks: Teachers' Perceptions of Social Validity for Class-wide Behavior Assessment

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Jacquelynn Johnson

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Psychology

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 08/30/2016 to 08/29/2017

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**

**Institutional Review Board**