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Establishing Content Validity for WMU's Special Education Key Assessments

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Mini-Assessment Grant Project Progress Report

October 2022

Establishing Content Validity for WMU's Special Education Key Assessments

This funded project, “Establishing Content Validity for WMU's Special Education Key Assessments”, seeks to validate the content in the key assessments used in three special education programs at WMU. The purpose of key assessments is to assess student performance and drive ongoing program improvement. Shared key assessments across WMU's teacher education programs have been validated, but those specific to special education have not been. This project is working to validate the three intern evaluation rubric addendums for each of the endorsement areas in WMU's special education program— emotional impairments (EI), learning disabilities (LD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Validation of these rubrics will improve program faculty's ability to assess these programs, as well as teacher candidates' performance, and will drive program improvement. At this time, the funded project is in progress, with an estimated completion date of December 2022. An overview of project progress and next steps is outlined below.

Overview of Content Validity Process

The process of establishing content validity for the intern rubric addendums is the same that was used for the Teacher Education Unit Key Assessments. The process includes gathering evidence to demonstrate that the assessment content (i.e., intern rubric addendums) fairly and adequately represents a defined domain of knowledge or performance (Rubio et al., 2003). The review panel should include a mixture of EPP faculty (i.e. content experts) and school or community practitioners (lay experts; UNC- Charlotte College of Education, 2018). Minimum credentials for each expert should be established by consensus from the program faculty and credentials should bear up to reasonable expert scrutiny (Davis, 1992). Each panel should have a minimum of seven members (UNC- Charlotte College of Education, 2018).

An assessment packet is compiled for each of the experts. The packet includes a letter explaining the purpose, a description of the assessment and its scoring, and an explanation of the Qualtrics response form. The packet also includes a copy of the assessment rubric and how it is used within WMU's special education program. Additionally, the panelist is given a PowerPoint explaining all of the above and sample questions.

Panelists are then asked to independently complete a Qualtrics (an electronic survey program) response form. For each item, the overarching construct that the item purports to measure is identified and operationally defined. The panelists are asked to rate the item's level of representativeness in measuring the aligned overarching construct on a scale of 1-4 with 4 being the most essential. Experts are also asked to rate the item's level of clarity on a scale of 1-4, with 4 being the most clear. Space will also be provided for the experts to comment on the item or suggest revisions.

Once the panelists submit their scores the results are entered into an Excel Spreadsheet which will generate a Content Validity Index (CVI). This index will be calculated based on recommendations from Rubie et. al. (2003), Davis (1992), and Lynn (1986)-- the number of experts who rate the item as a 3 or 4 over the numbers of total experts. A CVI score of .80 or higher is considered acceptable.

Current Status of Project

Rubrics

The three endorsement area intern rubric addendums were initially developed by program faculty and had not yet been validated, which is what this project seeks to do. The rubric addendums are based on the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards. Once funded, the PI and Co-PI sought to begin the content validation process. However, it was quickly realized

that the rubrics had not been updated to align with the new CEC standards (released in 2020). This caused the project to pivot, as validation of rubrics based on outdated standards was not worthwhile.

At this time, new intern rubric addendums that are in line with the updated CEC standards have been created for the emotional impairments (EI) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) endorsement areas. Dr. VanDerwall is an expert in EI and took the lead on revising the EI intern addendum rubric, and Dr. LaLonde, who is an expert in ASD did the same for the ASD intern rubric addendum. This fall the former learning disabilities (LD) faculty expert retired and a new faculty member with an expert in LD began. Drs. VanDerwall and LaLonde are collaborating with her to review and revise the LD rubric in accordance with the updated CEC standards.

Once revised, the endorsement area intern rubric addendums will be sent out to program faculty for review. The program faculty will then revise each rubrics, as needed, as a group. This will be completed prior to sending the rubrics to panelists.

Panels

The content validity process requires that a review panel of at least seven professionals, including a mixture of EPP faculty and school or community practitioners, be established for each of the three endorsement areas (EI, LD, and ASD). At this time, a review panel of 10 professionals has been recruited for each of the three endorsement areas (total of 30 participants). The review panels include a mixture of EPPs from various institutions across the country, as well as school-based practitioners, both those in the classroom and working in special education administration. Input from program faculty was requested in developing a list of contacts for the

panels. Once established, the panel for each endorsement has been shared with, and approved by, program faculty.

Assessment Packet

An assessment packet has been created for each of the panelists. The packet includes a letter explaining the purpose of the project, a description of the assessment (i.e., intern rubric addendum for the endorsement area the panelist is considered an expert) and its scoring, and an explanation of the Qualtrics response form has been created. The packet also includes a description of how the intern rubric addendums is used within WMU's special education program. A copy of the full rubric will be added to the assessment packet once finalized. Additionally, the packet includes a PowerPoint explaining all of the above and sample questions.

Qualtrics Response Form

Shells for the three Qualtrics response forms have been created. Once the endorsement area intern rubric addendums have been finalized by program faculty, each item of the rubric will be inserted into the corresponding Qualtrics response form prior to sending out to panelists. For each item on the rubric, the survey identifies and operationally defines the overarching construct and what the item purports to measure, and then asks panelists to rate the item's level of representativeness in measuring the aligned overarching construct on a scale of 1-4, with 4 being the most essential, and to rate the item's level of clarity on a scale of 1-4, with 4 being the most clear. Space is then provided for panel experts to comment on the item or suggest revisions.

Data Analysis/Spreadsheet

A spreadsheet that will be used to analyze panelists' responses has been created for each endorsement area intern rubric addendum. The spreadsheet contains all formatting and formulas to calculate the Content Validity Index (CVI). As panelists' responses are returned, project

faculty will insert them into the spreadsheet. This will calculate the CVI, which will ultimately determine if content validity has been established for each of the items on the three endorsement area rubrics. For items that do not meet the .80 threshold for establishing content validity, panelists' comments and recommendations will be reviewed.

Budget

The budget for this project requires the time of panelists and faculty members. Funding for this project totaled \$1,500, with \$630 of the projected budget allocated towards panelists' time and \$870 allocated towards faculty time. At this time, all funds have been utilized as projected, and there is a budget balance of \$0. Thirty Amazon gift cards were purchased to incentivize panelist participation and compensation for their time and expertise (30 panelists x \$21 = \$630). The gift cards were purchased electronically and will be delivered to panelists as surveys are returned. The remaining \$870 in funds were split between Dr. VanDerwall and Dr. LaLonde's WRAP accounts as support for research and continued assessment work (2 faculty x \$435 = \$870).

Summary & Timeline

The content validation process entails a panel of experts reviewing and providing feedback on specified content. This project seeks to establish content validity on three WMU special education program endorsement area intern rubric addendums. At this time, expert panelists have been recruited, assessment packets, Qualtrics response forms, and data analysis spreadsheets have been created, and the gift card incentive for panelists have been purchased.

Upon initiation of the project, the PI and Co-PI discovered that the intern rubric addendums to be validated were not updated to align with the new Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards. Establishing content validity on rubrics with outdated standards is not

worthwhile. Therefore, the project PIs, along with special education program faculty, are working to update these rubrics. Once these updates are complete, the final portion of the content validation process will commence by sending response forms to panelists and analyzing their responses using the Excel spreadsheet that has been created.

The anticipated timeline for the completion of the project includes finalization of the endorsement area intern rubric addendums in October 2022, sending out assessment packets and Qualtrics response forms to panelists in November 2022, and analysis of content validity scores and revision of rubrics, as needed, in December 2022. The revised intern rubric addendums will be ready to use in Spring 2023, and the data collected then and in subsequent semesters will be analyzed as part of the on-going key assessment analysis and program evaluation.

References

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