

Teaching Current and Future Professionals Techniques for Lay Communication: Validation Study of Published Training Material

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ABSTRACT

Thomas et al. (2023), developed two mock physical activity promotion (PAP) material, which university students (and others) could practice critiquing and revising using the suitability assessment of materials (SAM) protocol. Their objective, however, was to produce mock material at two reading grade levels (11th & 8th RGL), meaning they did not compute suitability scores for other sub/main areas (eg, font size, literacy demand, respectively). **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the present study was to (1) establish trustworthy baseline data in other SAM sub/main areas for students to compare their own scores to (2) compare mock material SAM scores to one another and published research trends (3) interpret the results using our pilot research directly investigating lay adult comprehension of the mock material, using the cloze procedure (Cardinal et al., 1995). **METHODS:** An expert coder (JDT) rated the mock material to establish valid scores, using an adapted SAM protocol (Thomas et al., 2020). Intra-rater reliability (JDT) was assessed using a three-day grace period, test-retest method (statistical test: Krippendorff's alpha, $k-\alpha$). Suitability scores were compared to contemporary trend data (Thomas et al., 2022). **RESULTS:** Rater reliability was almost perfect (11th RGL, $k-\alpha = .889$; 8th RGL, $k-\alpha = .907$). The mock material suitability was overall adequate (11th RGL = 55.88%, 8th RGL = 67.60%). The materials differed in three main areas (eg, literacy demand & learning stimulation), with suitability greater for the 8th RGL material. Both material had three main areas with the same suitability judgments as the published trend data. The 8th RGL material had more subareas with scores equal to, or greater than, the trend data. **CONCLUSION:** Findings suggest the 8th RGL material had greater suitability than the 11th RGL, and better mirrored PAP material trend data. This suggests PAP material in circulation may be adequately understood by lay adults in non-stressful situations. Our pilot test showed the reverse, however. The 11th RGL material had greater comprehension *before* the 8th RGL material was revised using the cloze procedure (SAM scores were equivalent for the original & revised draft). We produced valid/reliable SAM scores for the mock material, and further evidenced the need to directly investigate PAP material comprehension.