Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Website: www.sdqinfo.orq

(Please consult the website for latest questionnaires and information)

The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire designed to identify potential psychiatric and mental health disorders in young people. Primarily used by researchers and clinicians around the world, it is also a useful tool for educational practitioners wishing to measure change during specific programmes.

Measures:

- emotional problems
- conduct problems
- hyperactivity problems
- peer problems
- prosocial difficulties

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mission (Erasmus+). The document reflects the views only of the ACE-

Wild team and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

PDF 1 Student SDQ

Type:

Paper-based questionnaire, 25 statements on a 3 point scale - "not true", "somewhat true", "certainly true" (PDF 1). Plus extra optional questions - the "impact supplement" - which ask whether the respondent thinks the young person has a problem, and if so, enquires further about chronicity, distress, social impairment, and burden to others. Questionnaires for **teachers, pupils** and **parents.**

Suitable for:

- Ages 3 16 years
- As a "before and after" tool to measure change during an intervention/programme (summative assessment)

Permission/cost: free but unauthorized translations are not permitted. Paper versions may be downloaded and subsequently photocopied without charge by individuals or non-profit organizations provided they are not making any charge to families.







Pros	Cons
Flexible user group - pupils, parents and student versions	May need explaining as easy to complete wrong way round, eg not true for certainly true
Used internationally - and available in many languages	Lots of questions in dull-looking format
Robustly tested	Reasonable literacy level required
Updated (in spite of 2005 date on paper	
Free	
Score can be compared to national average	
Online scoring system and automatic report generation	

Hints & Tips:

- Encourage your students to be honest when completing the form and explain why you are asking them to complete the questions
- Be with the students when they complete the questionnaire as reflection on statements may generate distress for some.
- Use the online scoring system to generate a PDF summary of the results, but
- To present students' results in a visual way (the PDF report is all text), you
 may wish to set up a spreadsheet for the scores, so that bar charts can be
 produced.







Scoring

Whilst it is easiest to use the online scoring system on the <u>website</u> to generate scores and results, it is helpful to know how the scores are generated. We have therefore included the manual scoring system, too, for guidance.

1. Manual Scoring

A scoring sheet is available on the **website** (also PDF 2). Each item is scored as 1, 2 or 3 depending on which column is ticked. "Somewhat True" is always scored as 1 but the scoring of "Not True" and "Certainly True" varies with the item.

For each of the categories - emotional, conduct, hyperactivity, peer and prosocial - the maximum score is 10.

The higher the score, the greater the difficulty EXCEPT for pro-social which is scored as a strength, with a higher score indicating a greater strength in this area.

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PDF 2 Manual SDQ scoring sheet

Following scoring you can determine:

 A "total difficulties" score - generated by summing scores from all of the categories except the prosocial scale, resulting in a score out of 40. It categorises these scores as "Close to Average", "Slightly Raised", "High" or "Very High" compared to the national average for that age group

The higher the total score, the greater the total difficulties

• A **risk factor** - Low, Medium or High.

This is the risk of the student developing a mental health disorder **based on national averages** for that age group.





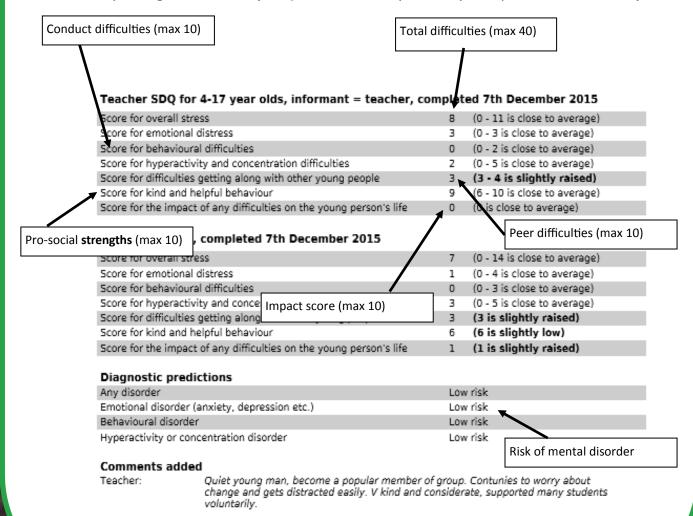


2. Online scoring

The website has an online scoring system which enables you to enter the results from each questionnaire. It then automatically generates a PDF summary report containing:

- A total difficulties score (termed "overall stress")
- Scores for each of the categories, including pro-social
- An impact score (out of 10) if the impact supplement is used, and
- Risk factors for potential disorders

An example is given below. (SDQ was also completed by the parent, not shown)





Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Sometimes bullied

Young person:

Analysis & Presentation

In the UK, we set up a spreadsheet to record the SDQ scores for each pupil so that the results could be presented in a variety of ways.

We used the **classroom teacher's assessment** for quantitative analysis of total difficulties but included parents' and students' SDQ results to determine overall risk factors.

The example given below illustrates the SDQ scores for students before (Sep 2015) and after (Dec 2015)a weekly programme of outdoor learning. We used a traffic-light colour coding system to quickly identify major difficulties for each student and highlight changes. This information could then be used to determine **which type of activities** from the <u>activity bank</u> may be most appropriate for individuals or the group as a whole.

upil name		Pro-Social strengths	Hyperactivit y difficulties		Conduct difficulties	Peer difficulties	TOTAL difficulties (excl PS) max 40	Diffs before	Diffs after	
	Sep-15	4	10	5	3	1	19	19		
	Dec-15		6	1	0	0	7		7	
	Sep-15	5	5	6	4	8	23	23		
	Dec-15			1	0		8	23	8	
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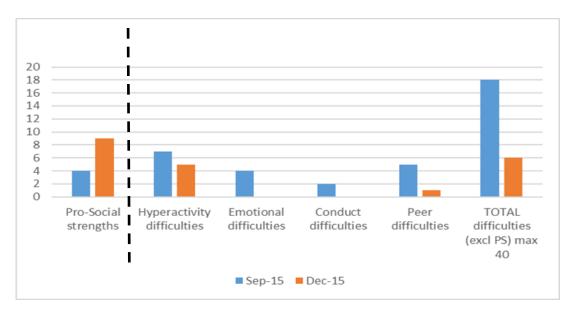




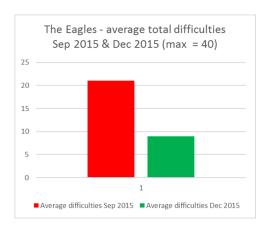


Analysis & Presentation

Difficulties for individual students can be represented as bar charts using the data from the spreadsheet.



The example above shows how a students' total difficulties decreased following a programme of outdoor learning (Sep - Dec 2015) and how their pro-social strengths increased.



Group difficulties can also be charted to illustrate change following an intervention or other style of programme.







Analysis & Presentation

Risk factors - getting professional support

Where the SDQ results indicate a **high risk** of mental health disorder (as in the example below) specialist, **professional assistance** may be needed to support the student's emotional well-being and minimize risk of disorders developing.

Diagnostic predictions

Any disorder	HIGH risk
Emotional disorder (anxiety, depression etc.)	HIGH risk
Behavioural disorder	Low risk
Hyperactivity or concentration disorder	Low risk

In the above instance, the student attended the Nurture unit at the high school, rather than mainstream classes, to help reduce the student's anxieties and fears. The SDQ tool, in combination with discussions with parents and teachers, allowed a well-informed decision to be made to effectively meet the student's needs.





