Overview

What This Questionnaire Measures
In the context of education, assertiveness may be defined as the ability to express one’s beliefs, wants, or feelings in a self-assured and direct manner. Assertiveness is a marker of self-efficacy and a key component of self-advocacy (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005). Researchers and educators consider assertiveness to be an essential skill for adolescents, as it can help them engage in effective interpersonal behaviors that contribute to their academic success and social development (Buell & Snyder, 1981; Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006). In short, assertiveness can be defined as expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting others – even when it’s difficult (Gaumer Erickson & Noonan, 2016).

The Assertiveness Formative Questionnaire is designed to measure a student’s proficiency in the two essential components of assertiveness, which are:
1. Even when it’s difficult, express my wants, needs, and thoughts.
2. Even when it’s difficult, respect what others want, need, and think.

How This Questionnaire Is Accessed
Teachers can launch questionnaires and view both individual and aggregate student results by visiting http://ResearchCollaborationSurveys.org, creating an account, and following the instructions provided on the website. This website is free and available to all educators. Once students have completed the questionnaires, teachers can see graphed results for individual students as well as in aggregate. Teachers can also download a raw data file in MS Excel.

The questionnaire can be cited as:

This technical report can be cited as:

How This Questionnaire Is Completed
Teachers make the questionnaire available to students by providing the URL to the survey (http://is.gd/rcsurveys) and a survey code (specific code for each launched survey); both the URL and survey code are provided on the website when a survey is launched. Students enter the survey code and a student number assigned by the teacher. Students complete the questionnaire by self-rating items on a 5-point, Likert-type scale. This scale ranges from 1 (Not very like me) to 5 (Very like me). The results are automatically graphed for students and available to them once they complete the questionnaire. This enables them to immediately reflect on results.
The items on the questionnaire are written at a ninth-grade reading level, per the Flesch-Kincaid\(^1\) readability score. Accommodations should be provided when appropriate and can include reading the items aloud, explaining the items, and having a scribe fill in the response option.

**How to Use the Results**

Assertiveness Formative Questionnaire results can be used by both teachers and students. To ease interpretation, results are displayed on a 100-point scale. These scores can be interpreted similar to grades (e.g., 70-79 is a C). Results by essential component support reflection on relative strengths and areas for improvement.

Students can use the questionnaire results to gain an understanding of the differences between assertive, aggressive, and passive behaviors. They can use their individual results from the questionnaire to address assertive behaviors that they can cultivate or strengthen.

Teachers can enhance their instructional practices by determining which characteristics of assertive, aggressive, or passive behavior are most prevalent in their students, and then reinforcing the importance of assertiveness. After combining this targeted instruction with guided and independent practice, teachers can continually re-administer the Assertiveness Formative Questionnaire and alter their instruction accordingly. This allows teachers to engage in a process of data-driven decision making in order to increase their students’ fundamental ability to confidently express their wants, needs, and opinions while respecting others, even when the situation or topic is difficult. Additional resources for teaching assertiveness are available at [http://CCCFramework.org/Resources.html](http://CCCFramework.org/Resources.html).

**Technical Information**

The Assertiveness Formative Questionnaire was developed in 2015 by Research Collaboration ([http://ResearchCollaboration.org](http://ResearchCollaboration.org)). An extensive review of related research resulted in the identification of two components that are essential for successfully applying assertiveness. Following this literature review, it was determined that assertiveness requires individuals to express their wants and needs, and to respect what others want and need, even when it’s difficult.

The questionnaire was tested for reliability using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha\(^2\) with 2,071 5\(^{th}\) through 12\(^{th}\) grade students during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. Of the 2,071 students that completed the survey, 981 (47.4%) were female, 1004 (48.5%) were male, and 86 (4.1%) did not report gender. The dataset includes 182 students in fifth-grade, 189 in sixth-grade, 566 in seventh-grade, 492 in eighth-grade, 172 in ninth-grade, 236 in tenth-grade, 128 in eleventh-grade, and 106 in twelfth-grade.


Overall, the Assertiveness Formative Questionnaire was found to be moderately reliable (20 items; \( \alpha = .733 \)). The express subscale consisted of 13 items (\( \alpha = .747 \)), and the respect subscale consisted of 7 items (\( \alpha = .682 \)). When converted to a 100-point scale, the bottom quartile ranged from 28 to 62 and the top quartile ranged from 75 to 100.

The questions that make up each component are listed below. Questions that are framed negatively and therefore reverse scored are designated with ‘(N).’

**Express Wants, Needs, and Thoughts**
1. I stand up to my friends if they are doing something I don’t feel comfortable doing.
2. I speak up when someone is not respecting my personal boundaries like “no cheating off my homework” or “I don’t let friends borrow money.”
3. I often have a hard time saying "No." (N)
4. I express my opinions, even if others disagree with me.
5. When an argument is over, I often wish I would have said what was really on my mind. (N)
6. I tend to just go along with what everyone else wants instead of stating my own thoughts. (N)
7. I sometimes avoid asking questions for fear of sounding stupid. (N)
8. I tend to bottle up my emotions rather than talk about my feelings. (N)
9. If I disagree with my teacher, I talk to him or her about it.
10. If a person has borrowed money (or a game, clothes, or something else of value) and is overdue in returning it, I talk to the person about it.
11. I’m usually able to tell people how I’m feeling.
12. If I don’t like the way someone is being treated, I speak up about it.
13. I speak up about things I really care about.

**Respect Others**
14. I am careful to avoid hurting other people's feelings, even when I feel that I have been wronged.
15. I have a hard time controlling my emotions when I disagree with someone. (N)
16. I avoid attacking someone's intelligence when I disagree with their ideas.
17. I listen to other people’s opinions, even if I disagree with them.
18. In disagreements, I make sure that I understand other points of view.
19. In discussions, I communicate that I am listening through body language (nodding my head, avoiding rolling my eyes).
20. Even in an argument, I don’t interrupt the other person.
# Assertiveness Questionnaire

Please CHECK ONE response that best describes you. Be honest, since the information will be used to help you in school and also help you become more prepared for college and careers. There are no right or wrong answers!

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<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Date</th>
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1. I stand up to my friends if they are doing something I don’t feel comfortable doing. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
2. I speak up when someone is not respecting my personal boundaries like “no cheating off my homework” or “I don’t let friends borrow money.” | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
3. I often have a hard time saying “No.” | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
4. I express my opinions, even if others disagree with me. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
5. When an argument is over, I often wish I would have said what was really on my mind. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
6. I tend to just go along with what everyone else wants instead of stating my own thoughts. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
7. I sometimes avoid asking questions for fear of sounding stupid. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
8. I tend to bottle up my emotions rather than talk about my feelings. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
9. If I disagree with my teacher, I talk to him or her about it. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
10. If a person has borrowed money (or a game, clothes, or something else of value) and is overdue in returning it, I talk to the person about it. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
11. I’m usually able to tell people how I’m feeling. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
12. If I don’t like the way someone is being treated, I speak up about it. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
13. I speak up about things I really care about. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
14. I am careful to avoid hurting other people’s feelings, even when I feel that I have been wronged. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
15. I have a hard time controlling my emotions when I disagree with someone. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
16. I avoid attacking someone’s intelligence when I disagree with their ideas. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
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18. In disagreements, I make sure that I understand other points of view. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
19. In discussions, I communicate that I am listening through body language (nodding my head, avoiding rolling my eyes). | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |
20. Even in an argument, I don’t interrupt the other person. | ![Not very like me](1) ![Not very like me](2) ![Not very like me](3) ![Not very like me](4) ![Not very like me](5) |

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