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DEVELOPMENT OF A VOCABULARY-FREE LEISURE INTEREST ASSESSMENT
INSTRUMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SEVERE DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES AND COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES (123 pp.)

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The purpose of this project was to develop and evaluate the Preferences for Leisure Attributes (PLA) Assessment, a forced-choice computer software program, which was developed to assist students with severe disabilities and communication difficulties to convey their leisure interests to teachers and/or other service providers. Once the PLA Assessment was developed, it was evaluated for (a) content validity, (b) reliability, and (c) construct validity. In order to determine content validity of the PLA Assessment, four experts in fields related to leisure/recreation, special education, physical education, and adapted physical education were consulted to assign critical attributes to pictures of leisure activities, which resulted in an overall agreement rating of 89.6%. Construct validity of the PLA Assessment was determined by administering a written questionnaire and the PLA Assessment to subjects without developmental disabilities; the correlation coefficient for entire test was .357 (.01 significance). Reliability of the PLA Assessment was determined by correlating two administrations of the PLA Assessment to subjects who had developmental disabilities and communication difficulties. Reliability tests resulted in a correlation coefficient of .871 (.01) for the entire assessment. In addition, the following results were confirmed in this study: (1) transition-age youth (16 to 22 years old) with severe developmental disabilities and communication difficulties do indeed have leisure preferences; and (2) the PLA Assessment (a forced-choice presentation of leisure activity photographs) assists transition-age youth with severe developmental disabilities and communication difficulties in indicating their leisure preferences.