

Smart Implementation: Pre-Test and Post-Tests

A. Value of a Pre-Test/Post-Test

One of the most valuable things you can do for your program is a pre-test/post-test. A pre-test allows you to establish a baseline for the youth in your community. In other words, you will have a reference point for how much and what kind of information students knew before your programming. *This information is crucial for your curriculum development.* For instance, upon issuing a pre-test, if you discover that 90% of your students understand the physical changes that men and women experience during puberty, then you do not need to dedicate a great deal of class time to this component.

A post-test is equally important. A post-test allows you to assess what your students are learning from your curriculum. It also enables you to see elements of your curriculum that could be stronger. For instance, if during the pre-test, only 30% of students know the methods of transmission for HIV, and that number does not change during your post-test, then that element of the curriculum needs to be modified. *Post-tests are important because they provide you with tangible evidence of the success of your programming.* This will be increasingly important when you begin to look at your program's future.

B. Executing a Pre-test/Post-test

There are a variety of ways to conduct a pre-test/post-test. These are largely going to be determined by your available resources. We will briefly discuss a few ways that pre-tests/post-tests can be conducted.

Data Collection

Before you conduct a pre-test/post-test, you will need to decide:

- Who is responsible for collecting data?
- What data will be collected?
- Where will the data be stored?

- How will the data be analyzed?
- Who will analyze the data?

In the way of data analysis, it is recommended that you find someone who has previously analyzed data sets to review your data. You will need to work with this person on the parameters of your data collection and analysis. If no one in your organization is experienced in analyzing data, you can reach out to local colleges and universities. Fortunately, simple data analysis can be performed in Microsoft Excel. Many college students who are studying math or the sciences can conduct this sort of analysis.

All-In-One or True Before and After?

Traditionally, the two most common ways to execute a pre-test/post-test are either “all-in-one” or a “true before and after”. Either of these methods will garner results, but both have distinct advantages. An “all-in-one” pre-test/post-test is administered at the end of your programming. An “all-in-one” will present series of questions such as, “Before I took this class, I knew that HIV is the virus that causes AIDS” and “After I took this class, I knew that HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.” An “all-in-one” is convenient because both tests can be executed at the same time, saving both time and resources. An example of an “all-in-one” pre-test/post-test is included in the “Resources” section.

A “true before and after” pre-test/post-test is administered at the beginning and end of your programming. The questions on the pre-test/post-test will be the same, just administered at different times. A “true before and after” is useful if you actively in the process of trying to develop a curriculum. For instance, if your pre-test asks students “I know that a person can have sex only one time and get pregnant or get someone else pregnant” and the majority of your students answer that they did know this before the program, then that is potentially a component of your curriculum that will not require as much class time.

Method of Execution: Paper or Electronic?

Once you have decided on your pre-test/post-test method, you must decide how you will execute your survey. The two most common ways to do this will either be on paper or electronically. A paper survey has its advantages in that it is relatively inexpensive and simple to produce. All the paper survey requires is that you have a printer/copier and students have a writing utensil. However, one disadvantage of paper surveys is physical space and tallying. Storing your paper surveys can consume much storage space. Additionally, you will need someone with the skills to tally your results and input/analyze your data, which can be time consuming. Electronic, or technology-based, surveys have an advantage of making data processing simple: there are many types of software that can quickly compile your data. Additionally, because everything is stored digitally, electronic surveys will not require any storage space. However, some disadvantages with electronic surveys include cost and technological knowledge. If you are going to conduct a survey electronically using technology such as clickers, the cost can become substantial. The i>clicker[®] software system has been used in the Be In Charge classroom. However, an individual clicker for this system costs between \$30-40. Additionally, using this software to compile your data takes a moderate amount of technology expertise. If you are interested in using technology for your survey, check with your school to see if there is already a clicker system available.

A copy of the Be In Charge pre-test/post-test is included under the “Resources” section. This pre-test/post-test was designed so that it could be executed either on paper or electronically.

[C. Participant Satisfaction](#)

In addition to conducting a pre-test/post-test, it is strongly suggested that you also conduct a participant satisfaction survey. This survey will allow your students to give their input on your class. Participant input is important because student critiques allow us to better develop our curriculum. For instance, one of the questions asked by the Be In Charge participant survey is “If I needed to, I know how to get help.” If students were routinely answering “No” to this question, then this is an indication that more class time

needs to be spent addressing resources available to teens. Additionally, it is important for your students to feel that their input has been included and is valued regarding a program designed for them. The more included your students feel, the more likely they are to participate.

A copy of the Be In Charge Participant Satisfaction Survey is included under the “Resources” section.