Understanding Validity for Teachers Activity: What does a classroom teacher need to know about validity to help ensure the quality of classroom assessment?

This activity will help you answer the essential question:

What does a classroom teacher need to know about validity to help ensure the quality of classroom assessment?

Activity 5: What does a classroom teacher need to know about validity to help ensure the quality of classroom assessment?
You may complete this activity individually or in groups.

Part 1

Read the excerpt from Trochim and then answer the following questions:

- If you are serving on committee to select an assessment for your school and/or district why wouldn't you want to use Face Validity as the only determination of the assessment's validity?

- Why is it more important to consider Content-Related Validity rather than Face Validity when designing a classroom assessment? Or, when considering the quality of a textbook provided assessment?

> **Face Validity** (Trochim)
>
> In **face validity**, you look at the operationalization and see whether "on its face" it seems like a good translation of the construct. This is probably the weakest way to try to demonstrate construct validity. For instance, you might look at a measure of math ability, read through the questions, and decide that yep, it seems like this is a good measure of math ability (i.e., the label "math ability" seems appropriate for this measure). Or, you might observe a teenage pregnancy prevention program and conclude that, "Yep, this is indeed a teenage pregnancy prevention program." Of course, if this is all you do to assess face validity; it would clearly be weak evidence because it is essentially a subjective judgment call.

Part 2

Read the excerpt from Popham and then answer the following questions:

- Why isn't Consequential Validity a bona fide form of validity evidence?

- Why is it important for classroom teachers to understand what does and does not confirm the accuracy of score based inferences about students?

- What can teachers do to ensure that our tests won't be used to "make terrible education decisions" and why is this not necessarily related to a test's validity?

> Another more recently introduced variant of validity is something known as consequential validity. *Consequential Validity* refers to whether the uses of test results are valid. If, for example, a test's results are inappropriately employed to deny students a reasonable expectation, such as progressing to the next grade level, the test may be said to be consequentially invalid because its results had been used improperly. Yet, *whereas educators should obviously be attentive to the*

consequences of test use, the notion of consequential validity is apt to confuse the central thrust of validity – namely, to confirm or disconfirm the defensibility of the score-based inferences we make about our students. If we make accurate inferences about students' status based on a test, yet rely on those inferences to make terrible educational decisions, our test will have negative consequences. But it was the use to which we put our valid score score-based inferences that is deplorable. The score-based *inference* was right on the mark. Consequential validity might be a decent way to remind educators of the importance of consequences when tests are used; it isn't a *bona fide* form of validity evidence. (Popham, Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know)

Part 3

Read the following excerpt from Semans and then complete the table that follows.

Creating Reliable and Valid Tests (Semans)

Whenever they are creating tests, teachers have to take validity and reliability into consideration. Teachers should view the tests they create in a new light, and be more critical about the questions they use to assess their students.

Also, be cautious if you work in a district where there is a written curriculum that includes test written by curriculum specialist. Just because a test is made by the curriculum department does not make it a valid or reliable test. Make sure to read over the test questions on such tests, and see if it the questions are covering material covered in your class. Or, if teachers want to save time and use the ready-made tests, read the tests before introducing the unit and make sure your plans cover each objective on the test.

While writing valid test questions, take into consideration the objectives that were covered in class. This means that teachers have to keep "the end" in mind while writing the lesson plans that lead up to the test in the first place. "A well-written objective provides extremely strong clues about how to assess it" (Shank, 2005). After teachers know what it is they need to assess, they have to create activities and lessons that make sure the students "gain adequate understanding and practice to be able to perform at the desired level on assessments" (Shank, 2005).

Carefully planning lessons can help with an assessment's validity (Mertler, 1999). At the same time, take into consideration the test's reliability. To ensure a test is reliable, have another teacher review the test or assessment activity. Having a fresh pair of eyes read over the assessment tool (i.e. tests, rubrics, and projects) will bring attention to any errors that may have overlooked.

Strategies to Ensure More Valid Classroom Assessments	**I do not do this.**	**I have done this but it isn't standard practice.**	**I plan to implement this strategy on this date.**
I align my units and lessons to all related assessments prior to teacher. I "begin with the end in mind."			
I review tests provided by my district prior to administering them to my students to check that what will be tested is taught.			
I write classroom tests prior to teaching the objectives and keeping in mind what the			

standard is asking the student to know and be able to do.			
When writing original classroom tests, I ask another teacher to review the test to check reliability and also to look for alignment with the standard being assessed.			