

SITUATIONAL TEST FOR BASIC EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCES DEVELOPMENT (DCBE)



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The DCBE is a situational test that assesses the development of basic employability competences in young people between the ages of 12 and 18. The test comprises five separate stories that present various problem-situations, and each problem-situation has five possible answers. Young people have to answer what would be the answer they would most likely give in that problem situation. It is a psychoeducational tool aimed at helping educators and adolescents assess competences and work on them.

Basic employability competences are those needed to access a job, be able to keep it, and win promotion. They are competences that are learned in the course of socialization, primarily within

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the family and compulsory education. Families and teachers help young people to develop them through modelling, direct instruction or involving them in educational activities that promote the development of these competences.

The IARS group has developed a model of eight competences (Arnau, Marzo, Jariot and Sala, 2014), which has been validated and aims to provide a framework to reflect on and improve the educational practices developed in residential care homes for adolescents.

As mentioned, the model is based on eight competences:

SELF-ORGANIZATION. Planning, managing and carrying out a task or work taking into account its objectives and taking care of all the details.

CONSTRUCTION OF A PROFESSIONAL CAREER PLAN. Identifying and analysing the training and experience needs to proactively obtain a job, keep it and get promoted.

DECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING. Being able to make decisions, identify problems and solve them effectively and constructively, considering different options and their viability.

TEAMWORK. Having a good relationship with others in order to achieve group goals.

COMMUNICATION. Knowing how to express oneself in different contexts (social, school, family, etc.) in a respectful and assertive way.

PERSEVERANCE. Making a sustained effort to achieve personal goals or tasks, in spite of difficulties.

FLEXIBILITY. Adapting behaviour, ideas and emotions when required, without harming one's own interests.

RESPONSIBILITY AND JOINT RESPONSIBILITY. Accepting personal obligations and those shared with others, being consistent.

The test you will find here is a revised version of the original test. This revised version includes adapted questions and answers so that it can be answered by adolescents from different family backgrounds and adolescents in care. Three questions have also been included to assess the level of concordance among the answers. The test was developed as part of a project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (EDU2013-43326-R), and was reviewed and validated within the project (EDU2016-77284-R). The competences were validated by specialists (Arnau et al. 2014) and workers from different sectors (Jariot et al. 2021²). A factor analysis showed a unifactorial structure with good internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$) (Sala et al. 2021³). In addition, Jariot

² Jariot, M., Sala, J., Arnau, L. & Marzo, M. (2021). Validation of the theoretical model of a situational test for measuring the development of basic employability competences: The workers' perspective. *Pedagogía Social, Revista Interuniversitaria*, 37.

³ Sala, J., Jariot, M., Arnau, L. & Doval, E. (2021). Diseño y validación del test situacional Desarrollo de las Competencias Básicas de Empleabilidad. *Pedagogía Social, Revista Interuniversitaria*, 37.

et al. (2021) showed its criterion validity, and the IARS group has also tested its stability over time (data not yet published).

DCBE

Here are five stories with problem-situations that you may encounter on a daily basis. Put yourself in the shoes of the characters and choose the answer that most closely resembles what you would do in each of the situations. You have five different response options (a, b, c, d and e). Answer honestly, because there are no right or wrong answers, just different ways of reacting to the same situation.

It will take 20 minutes to complete the test. At the end, a screen will appear with your results, which will give you information about your characteristics and where you need to improve to get a job in the future.

We hope you find it useful.

Remember to press the Send button at the end, otherwise the answers will not be recorded and the results will not appear.

I HAVE A LOT OF HOMEWORK (D1-D6)

1. On Monday you have to hand in an assignment on a book and some maths problems. Also, on Saturday afternoon you have a match and then you've arranged to meet friends, and on Sunday you've got a day out with your social club. What do you do?

I don't meet my friends.

I don't do my homework or ask a friend to give me theirs.

I do it over the weekend at times when I don't have any activities planned and I don't go to bed until I finish it on Sunday.

I do as much of it as I can during the week (during school breaks, in the evening, etc.) and so when the weekend arrives I'm not so rushed.

I do what I can in the time I have left over and hand in whatever I've managed to do.

2. When you start doing the maths problems you find that the first one is very difficult. You make a first attempt but it doesn't work out, you try again a second time and that doesn't work either. What do you do?

I ask someone for help.

I ask a classmate for the answers.

I leave it for the next day.

I don't do the exercise.

I review my notes and try again.

3. On Monday, before handing in the work, you realize that you didn't do all of it. What do you do?
I hand it in anyway and tell the teacher what happened; it's better not to tell lies because they will catch up with you.

I hand it in the next day and then I tell the teacher what happened.

I tell the teacher I couldn't finish it because I wasn't feeling well, just in case he decided not to accept it.

I finish it as best I can in class.

I ask a classmate for the part I didn't do.

4. The next day, one of your classmates tells you that your best friend, who you always sit with, says that you didn't do the work you handed in, someone else did it. You get angry with your friend... What do you do?

I talk to him about it to sort out the misunderstanding.

I ignore him, I won't talk to him again.

I ask him for an explanation.

I ask him to take back what he said.

I talk to the teacher about it.

5. The language teacher asks to talk to you at the end of the class because she really liked the work you did on the book. She thinks you would make a good writer and wonders if you've thought about what you want to do as an adult and if you're clear on what you need to do to achieve it. What do you tell her?

I'm clear on what I want to do as an adult, but I don't know how to achieve it.

I'm clear on what I want to do and how to achieve it.

I'm not clear on what I want to do.

I know I want to keep studying but I still don't know what.

I haven't thought about it yet.

6. Next Friday there's a delegates meeting in the afternoon and since you are the delegate for your year, you are invited. It's not a good time for you because you've already arranged to meet a friend to go shopping. What do you do?

I tell the sub-delegate that I can't go to the meeting and he must go.

I cancel my shopping plans.

I make up an excuse to not go to the meeting.

I explain to my friend and we look for a solution.

I ask that they change the day of the meeting.

THE PET (M1-M6)

1. Together, you have decided to ask for a pet as a Christmas present. What do you consider when making the suggestion?

Everyone's opinion.

The price.

The space we have and the care our pet will need.

How to convince the adults that we can take care of it ourselves.

That it's a pet I like.

2. The adults don't like the idea of having a pet at home at all. They tell you no, that if you can't clean your room without being told to, then you won't be able to take care of an animal. How do you react?

I accept their decision without argument, even though I don't agree.

I insist and give all the reasons I can think of to convince them.

I sulk as a way of insisting.

I don't say anything at the time and I do things so they see that I'm responsible.

I listen to their reasons and give my own arguments to reach an agreement.

3. In the end the adults say yes, but they don't want to spend any money on it. You discuss a strategy and decide to look for the pet at an animal shelter. You start looking at websites and you don't see the type of pet that would make you most excited, but you still want a pet. What do you do?

I keep searching the animal shelter websites.

I expand my options by looking at various protection agencies, asking friends, schoolmates, and so on.

I choose the one I like best.

I postpone the idea of having a pet for later.

I stop looking and give up.

4. You agree that you will visit the different animal shelters in the area to see if you can find a suitable pet. However, you have a lot to do in the coming months.

I tell them to look at what shelters there are and I'll go there when I can.

I make a list of shelters and organize my time so that I can go and see one a week.

I ask a friend who loves animals if he knows any shelters and wants to come with me.

Whenever I can I go to the first shelter I can find and I get it over with.

I tell them to go instead.

5. After three weeks you find the pet you want, but before you go to get it, the adults ask you to tell them how you will all take care of it. What do you suggest?

I'll take full responsibility and organize my time.

I'll do some of the tasks when I can.

We'll organize and share the work among ourselves.

We'll share the work with the adults.

I'll play with the animal and the adults will take care of the pet's food and other needs.

6. You're so happy with your pet that your friend tells you that now he doesn't know if he wants to be a vet or a doctor as an adult and asks you for advice. What do you tell him?

To choose the profession where he'll make the most money.

To do a Bachelor in health sciences or a vocational training in health or veterinary medicine.

I guide him by telling him the pros and cons of each profession.

I accompany him to talks and help him find information.

I tell him to think about what he would be better at: treating animals or people.

THE PARTY

1. Your best friend and family are moving to another city. You find out that some friends are having a party and they haven't told you anything. What do you do?

I prepare something for her myself.

I get angry and do nothing.

I ask them for an explanation.

I ask them if I can go to the party.

I offer to help.

2. It seems that they had included you in the plan but hadn't been able to tell you yet. You're thinking about giving her a farewell gift, but you're not sure whether to do it just yourself, because she's your best friend, or whether to tell other friends and all do it together. What do you do?

I give her an individual gift because I want her to have a personal memory of me and let the group know that I won't be participating in any joint gifts.

I wait to see if anyone says anything, and if no one does, I give her a gift myself.

I suggest to other friends that we buy her one together to make it a nicer gift.

I buy a joint gift with other friends and as well as that I also give her an individual gift.

I ask the other friends what they want to do.

3. You've got some money together so you can shop for the party and go to the supermarket with a friend. How do you organize the purchase?

We make a mental list.

We share out the money and each of us buys what is needed.

We make a list and prioritize purchases according to the budget.

We make a list of what we need and if there isn't enough money we add some of our own.

We keep shopping until the money runs out.

4. You were all very excited about renting a very powerful sound system for the party, but it turns out to be too expensive and the money you've collected isn't enough to rent it. What do you do?

I suggest that we make do with a system we already have, even if it isn't very loud.

I add the missing amount or ask others for it.

I ask my friends to put more money in.

I suggest we forget about the sound system.

I suggest we forget about the party.

5. It turns out that a friend's parents have a place they don't use where you could hold the party, but when you go to see it you see that it's very dirty and you'll need a week to clean it up. What do you do?

We look for somewhere else.

We go to clean it as many days as we can, and then use it whatever state it's in.

We organize our time to clean it properly, however long it takes.

We take it if our friends help us clean it.

We don't have the party.

6. When the day of the party arrives, you start preparing the tables with a partner. She has made some very good cakes and she tells you that she wants to be a cook, which is why she's going to do a hotel and catering training course. She asks you if you've decided what you will do in the future yet. How do you respond?

I don't know yet.

I have some idea but haven't decided anything.

I know what I'd like to do professionally, but I still don't know what I'm going to study.

I know what I'll study but I'm not sure what I want to do professionally.

I am clear about both what I will study and what I want to do in life.

7. The party is a success and everyone has a great time. When it's over and you start clearing up, you see that a drink one of the boys dropped has stained the wall a little. What do you do?

We apologize to the owner of the place.

We try to clean it all together and, if we don't succeed, we paint over it.

We try to clean it up and if it doesn't go away, we leave it.

We hide the stain.

We ask the boy to remove the stain, as he was the one that did it.

8. You have to do a maths problem that is to be presented in front of the class the next day. It's a difficult problem. When you get home, you try to do it after you've had a snack but it's hard to solve. You make a first attempt, and it doesn't work out, you try again a second time and that doesn't work either. What do you do?

I ask a classmate for the answers.

I review my notes and try again.

I ask someone for help.

I leave the exercise undone.

I leave it for the next day.

THE STALL

1. The basketball team you play with needs a new kit. Although lot of different ideas come up the day you meet to talk about it, there is no way to agree. What do you do?

I propose a vote on the list of ideas so as to not waste any more time.

I propose everyone take turns giving their opinion for or against and then we vote.

I propose everyone take turns giving their opinion and we try to reach an agreement without voting.

I leave and let the others decide.

I tell them that if they decide something I don't like, I'll leave the team.

2. In order to be able to buy the kit, you have thought of setting up a stall to sell sandwiches and drinks during the matches. What do you do to implement this idea?

We meet a month beforehand to organize and distribute the different tasks.

We agree that everyone brings sandwiches from home.

I offer to do whatever they ask me to.

We meet up very early on the day of the match to go shopping and make sandwiches.

Since I have a lot of work, I go there on the agreed day and join the group.

3. The coach tells you that the owners of the sports bar will not like the idea of you selling sandwiches. What do you do?

I don't care, we do it anyway.

We forget about the stall and think of something else.

We speak to the bar owners to reach an agreement.

We do it somewhere else (at the entrance or on the street).

We sell somethings other than sandwiches.

4. In the end, the group decides to go ahead with the sandwich stall. When the director of the sports centre finds out, he tells you that you can't sell sandwiches because you don't have a food handling permit. What do you do?

Look for someone who has one or take the course to obtain the permit.

Abandon the stall idea and do something else.

Sell other products.

Try to convince the director.

Don't do the stall.

5. Despite everything, the group decides to set up the stall and sell whatever they can. You plan to set it up the next Saturday there is a match, thinking that many parents will buy from you. When the day comes, you don't sell many sandwiches. What do you decide to do on the following match days?

Continue to sell sandwiches and, if they don't sell, freeze them or give them away.

Think about selling another type of product (sweets, crisps, etc.).

Advertise, do offers and promotions.

Ask attendees what kind of products they would buy.

Stop doing the stall.

6. When the match is over, all your teammates leave and you're left with the stall set up and no one to help take it down. What do you do?

I don't say anything, I take it down myself, but I'm angry.

I call them and tell them to come and help take it down.

I leave too, leaving the stall there.

I get angry with them and tell them they're idiots..

I take it down and tell them that someone else will do it next time.

YOU ARE THE DELEGATE

1. You and the other class delegates from the different years have agreed to meet to talk about the meeting you will have with the school director regarding the use of the football pitch and basketball court. However, it's not at a good time for you because you have arranged to meet a friend to play your favourite game. What do you do?

I tell the sub-delegate that I can't attend the meeting and that she has to go.

I ask them to change the day of the meeting.

I make up an excuse not to go to the meeting.

I cancel the plans to play with my friend.

I tell my friend and we look for a solution.

2. Each delegate has to make a proposal. How do you make yours?

I give the matter some thought and make a list of proposals.

I think of the best option for everyone while thinking about my own group's problems.

I collect suggestions from some classmates and make a proposal.

I talk to my classmates to make the proposal.

I go to the meeting and I decide on my proposal based on what is said.

3. All of the delegates make their demands at the meeting. The final year delegate demands that his year have preference when it comes to using the spaces because they are preparing to play in a league and it is their last year of school. All of the delegates give their opinion. What do you say?

I accept it, because I understand the arguments.

I wait to see what everyone else thinks and accept what the majority say.

I say I disagree.

I ask that we negotiate to reach an agreement.

I propose we make a league to include all of the school year groups.

4. In the end, the final year students get the pitch for themselves, and you don't agree at all. What do you do?

I give them a dirty look but I don't say anything.

I tell them that I understand their arguments but don't agree at all.

I insist with my proposal.

I get up and leave.

I tell them they are being manipulative.

5. When the meeting is over, you go to congratulate a delegate for explaining herself very well and tell her that she would "make a good lawyer". She tells you that she would like to be one, but that she has no idea what to study. What do you tell her?

I tell her that if I were her, I'd fight to get what I wanted.

I recommend that she searches for information on the Internet.

I recommend that she goes to the Education Fair and youth information points.

I tell her not to worry, that when the time comes, the school will tell her what to do.

I tell her I don't know either.

6. Another delegate tells you that a group of your classmates are preparing a welcome back party for one of your friends who has had a long illness, and they haven't told you anything, what do you do?

I ask them if I can go to the party.

I prepare something for him on my own.

I ask them for an explanation.

I offer to help.

I'm angry but I don't do anything

The answers I have given to the different situations...

Are what I think should be done, even if I would'nt normally react like that.

Are what I really usually do.

SCORING

Table 1 details the points that the experts assigned to each of the problem situations in the different stories.

In order to check concordance, some of the same problem-situations as those appearing in other stories were added to Test 3, with identical response options but presented in a different order. The aim here was to verify that random responses were not given or that the adolescents did not respond inconsistently due to comprehension difficulties.

Table 1. Item scores

	Story 1: I have a lot of homework	Story 2: The pet	Story 3: The party	Story 4: The stall	Story 5: You are the delegate
Self-organization	AD1 (3 0 3 5 1)	AM4 (2 5 3 1 0) AM5 (4 2 5 5 0)	AF3 (2 2 5 4 0)	AP2 (5 3 2 3 0.5)	ADel2 (4 4 5 5 0)
Construction of a professional- educational career plan	CPD5 (4 5 1 3 0)	CPM6 (1 3 5 5 3)	CPF6 (0 2 3 3 5)		CPDel5 (3 3 5 1 0)
Decision making and problem solving	PDD3 (4 3 1 3 2)	PDM1 (5 3 5 3 2)	PDF (3 0 2 4 5) PDF4 (4 3 4 2 0)	PDP1 (3 4 5 0 0) PDP3 (0 2 5 4 3) PDP4 (5 2 4 3 0)	
Teamwork		TEM5 (1 1 5 5 0)	TEF2 (0 1 5 5 5)	TEP2 (5 3 2 3 0)	TEDel2 (2 2 4 5 0)
Communication	CD4 (5 0 3 2 2)	CM2 (0 4. 2 2 5)	CF1 (1 0 4 4 4)	CP6 (0 5 0 2 3)	CDel4 (0 5 4 0 1)
Flexibility		FM3 (3 5 4 2 0)	FF4 (5 3 3 2 0)	FP3 (0 3 5 4 4) FP5 (1 5 4 5 0)	FDel3 (4 3 2 4 5)
Perseverance	PD2 (4 0 2 0 5)	PM2 (0 4 2 4 5) PM3 (4 5 3 1 0)	PF5 (1 3 5 2 0)	PP4 (5 1 2 3 0)	
Responsibility and Joint responsibility	RD1 (4 0 4 5 1) RD3 (5 4 1 3 1)	RM4 (2 5 3 1 0) RM5 (4 1 5 5 0)	RF7 (4 5 2 2 1)		RDel1 (1 2 0 4 5)
Concordance	D6 (1 2 0 4 5) Equivalent to RDel1		F8 (4 0 2 0 5) Equivalent to PD2		Del6 (1 0 4 4 4) Equivalent to CF1

Note: The experts assigned discrete (non-Likert) scores of 0 to 5 points.

To calculate the discordance, the absolute values of the difference between the scores must be added to the three pairs of equivalent situations [ABS (RDel1-D6); ABS(PD2-F8); ABS(CF1-Del6)]. The maximum discordance accepted from this sum is 4 points.

The factor that emerged from the factor analysis⁴ is calculated according to the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Overall Factor: } & AD1 * .5 + PD2 * .51 + PDD3 * .3 + CD4 * .41 + PDM1 * .46 + CM2p * .28 + FM3p * .39 \\ & + RM4a * .46 + RM5 * .39 + CF1 * .34 + TEF2 * .42 + AF3 * .37 + FF4 * .25 + PF5 * .42 + RF7 * .35 + \\ & PDP1 * .39 + TEP2te * .36 + PDP3 * .46 + CP6 * .33 + RDel1 * .46 + TEdel2 * .34 + FDel3 * .29 + CDel4 \\ & * .40 \end{aligned}$$

An online version of the test is available, which immediately returns the results according to the values of an average sample of adolescents aged 12 to 16 in Catalonia. In this version, the results have been transformed into IQ scores (mean 100 and standard deviation 15). Users can access the online version via the platform <https://apps.uab.cat/iars>, entering the questionnaire number (**566103**) and selecting the **language** in which they wish to do the test (Catalan or Spanish) from the menu. After taking the test, on the final results screen, users can enter an email to receive and review their results. Emails are not stored.

⁴ Sala, J., Jariot, M., Arnau, L. & Doval, E. (2021). Diseño y validación del test situacional Desarrollo de las Competencias Básicas de Empleabilidad. *Pedagogía Social, Revista Interuniversitaria*, 37. // Sala-Roca, J., Jariot-Garcia, M., Arnau-Sabatés, L., & Doval, E. (2021). Situational judgment test of basic employability competences development: validation of a psychoeducative instrument for socioeducative intervention. *Pedagogia Social*, (37), 39-52. DOI:10.7179/PSRI_2021.37.02