

STUDENT COGNITIVE LOAD QUESTIONNAIRE – TEACHER FORM

SCLQ-T • Pilot / Hypothesis-Generating Form
Sam Goldstein

School/District: _____
Teacher: _____
Class/Subject: _____

Student: _____
Grade / Date: _____ / _____
Observation period: Past 4–6 weeks

Purpose. This teacher-report form identifies classroom conditions in which a student may show increased cognitive-load sensitivity. It is intended to generate assessment and intervention hypotheses, not to diagnose ADHD, a learning disability, or any other condition.

Directions. Rate how often each statement described the student during typical instruction and independent work over the past 4–6 weeks. Consider patterns across tasks, especially changes that occur as memory, organization, attention, or simultaneous-processing demands increase.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

#	Teacher observation	1	2	3	4	5
1	The student has difficulty completing tasks when several directions or steps are given at once.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	The student loses track of what to do next during multistep assignments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	The student's performance declines as a task requires more information to be held in mind at the same time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	The student appears to understand individual parts of a task but has difficulty managing them simultaneously.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	The student performs better when directions are written or visually available rather than requiring them to be remembered.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	The student performs better when complex assignments are divided into smaller, clearly defined steps.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	The student becomes less accurate, slower, or less productive as task complexity increases.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	The student appears inattentive or disengages when tasks place high demands on remembering, organizing, or manipulating information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	The student has difficulty maintaining the goal of an assignment while also completing the individual steps.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	The student has greater difficulty when listening and completing another task at the same time (e.g., taking notes while listening).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	The student's performance is negatively affected when relevant information is spread across different pages, screens, locations, or materials.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	The student has greater difficulty working when irrelevant visual, auditory, digital, or peer distractions compete for attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	The student has difficulty resuming a task or remembering where they left off after an interruption or task switch.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	The student completes work more successfully when examples, checklists, models, organizers, or other external supports are available.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	The student demonstrates knowledge or skills more successfully when unnecessary memory, organizational, or attentional demands are reduced.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SCLQ-T • SCORING & INTERPRETATION PROFILE

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Use ratings to identify patterns and testable student × task/environment hypotheses.

Total Score	_____ / 75	Items rated 4 or 5	_____
Possible range	15–75	Primary setting/task	_____

Interpretation caution. Do not use numerical cut scores such as “average,” “elevated,” or “clinically significant.” This pilot form has not been standardized or validated and has no normative data. Higher totals only indicate more frequent teacher-observed indicators of possible cognitive-load sensitivity. Focus on the pattern of items, contexts, and response to supports.

Interpretation Profile

Provisional domain	Items	Interpretive question
Working Memory & Simultaneous Processing	Items 1–4	Does performance deteriorate when the student must maintain, manipulate, sequence, or coordinate multiple pieces of information?
Response to Cognitive Supports	Items 5–6, 14–15	Does performance improve when demands are externalized through written directions, chunking, models, checklists, or other supports?
Performance Under Increasing Demand	Items 7–10	Does greater complexity correspond with slower performance, errors, disengagement, loss of task goals, or difficulty with simultaneous demands?
Extraneous Load & Competing Demands	Items 11–13	Does performance deteriorate when information is dispersed, distractions compete for attention, or the student must switch tasks?

Teacher Follow-Up

What type of task is most likely to produce this difficulty?

What usually happens immediately before the student's performance deteriorates?

What does the student typically do when the task becomes difficult to manage?

What changes or supports noticeably improve the student's performance?

Where can the student complete similar academic work successfully, and what is different in those situations?

School Psychologist / Team Hypothesis

Primary demand(s) to test:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Working memory | ☐ Multistep/organization | ☐ Simultaneous processing | ☐ Distraction |
| ☐ Task switching | ☐ Instructional presentation | ☐ Prerequisite knowledge | ☐ Other |

Brief intervention experiment: Change one or two demands (e.g., written directions, chunking, fewer visible items, worked example, reduced copying or digital distraction), then compare accuracy, productivity, independence, and engagement.

Support/change tested	_____
Outcome observed	_____

Next step

- ☐ Keep ☐ Modify ☐ Discontinue ☐ Gather more data

Core interpretation principle: Ask not simply whether the student has “high cognitive load,” but under what task and environmental conditions performance deteriorates—and what happens when those demands are changed.

Use note: This form is an original pilot tool informed by cognitive-load and classroom working-memory literature. It is not a standardized, norm-referenced, diagnostic, or eligibility measure. Results should be integrated with direct observation, interview, academic data, standardized assessment when appropriate, and other ecological evidence.

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