

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR STUDENT'S CUMULATIVE FOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

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Research Guide for Student Cumulative Folders

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The purpose of this study was to develop a resource guide for teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators at North High School in Eau Claire, WI. Primary data was collected by randomly selecting cumulative folders from each grade level (9-12) during the spring of 2000. A pattern was established as to the commonality of content. The resource guide was then generated to reflect the cumulative folder.

The following reference guide was developed as a collection of medical, educational, and measurement terms, and the professionals who are often a part of a student's school career.

The survey indicated educational personnel had very little knowledge of what was in a student cumulative folder, as well as little knowledge and background as to how to find and interpret information about a student.

For this reason the intent of this resource guide was to help educational personnel to become more proficient in understanding the information found in a student's cumulative folder.

DEDICATION

To my sister, Mary Ann, because she was willing to give of herself, giving me a second chance at life. To my wonderful parents, Paul and Annabelle Sullivan, who brought me up believing anything is possible with hard work and determination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my husband, Roger, and my advisor, Dr. Amy Gillett, for all of their wisdom, time and energy. I couldn't have completed my thesis without their support. To my sons, Ryan and Jay, for being patient during the time I was busy getting my master's degree and for understanding why I couldn't be in two places at the same time. A special thank you to Kristi Olson for all the nice things she did for me; I will always be grateful. To all of the wonderful friends I have met at UW-Stout, I will never forget all of the wonderful times we have had together.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction & Methodology

Schools are required by federal and state laws to maintain certain records and to make these records available to both specified staff and parents. Hayden, Anderson, and Chitwood (1997), (21) report The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (1974) also known as the Buckley Amendment, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA (1997), have established the minimum requirements school systems must meet in maintaining, protecting, and providing access to students' school records. State laws will sometimes go beyond these minimum requirements and provide specific procedures for reviewing and or modifying school records. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and IDEA require that every school district have a written policy governing the management and confidentiality of records. Further, the policy must include a procedure for parents to gain access to confidential records. The term "parent" as used in these Acts, is broadly defined. It includes natural parents, guardians, anyone acting as a parent in the absence of the natural parent, and foster parents. Divorced or noncustodial parents have the same rights as custodial parents with respect to their child's school records unless a state law, court order, or binding custody agreement declares otherwise.

The Student Cumulative File will most often be kept in the student's school building. The file is confidential because access to information is limited to certain school personnel. The Buckley Amendment prohibits schools from disclosing student cumulative files to anyone without written consent. The only exceptions are: school officials, including teachers, in the same district with a legitimate educational interest as

defined by the school's procedures; school officials in the school district to which a student intends to transfer, certain state and national agencies, if necessary, for enforcing federal laws; anyone to whom a state statute requires the school to report information; accrediting and research organizations helping the school, provided they guarantee confidentiality; student financial aid officials; people who have court orders, provided the school makes reasonable efforts to notify the parent or student before releasing the records; and appropriate people in health and safety emergencies such as doctors, nurses, and fire marshals.

Student cumulative folders follow a student from his/her first day of school to the end of the student's school career. Throughout a student's career, McCullough (1992) indicated he/she will be exposed to dozens of tests that doctors, school systems, teachers, and the school psychologist may recommend to measure student progress or screen for specific problems. Tests alone, however, are not the only means to gather critical information regarding how a child performs what he or she knows or does not know. The cumulative folder provides a wealth of information that can assist school personnel in making decisions about students' learning and instructional needs (Elliott & Braden, 2000). A review of student records includes reviewing: health and developmental histories, previous test results, prior educational placements, attendance, anecdotal and discipline records, primary language, and other relevant data.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to develop a resource guide for teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators at North High School in Eau Claire, WI. Primary data was collected by randomly selecting cumulative folders from each grade level (9-12)

during the spring 2000. A pattern was established as to the commonality of content. The resource guide was then generated to reflect the cumulative folder.

Research Objectives

There are three main objectives this study wished to address. They were:

1. To document the commonalties of randomly selected cumulative files.
2. To report the range of documents contained within the randomly selected cumulative files.
3. Compile a resource guide to help practitioners to better utilize cumulative files.

Definition of Terms

The definition of terms and or programs are as follows:

Anecdotal records – The observer describes incidents or behaviors observed in a particular setting in concrete narrative terms. This type of record allows insight into cause and effect by detailing what occurred before a behavior took place, the behavior itself, and consequences or events that occurred after the behavior.

Assessment – Is an information gathering and synthesizing process for the purpose of making decisions about students' learning and instructional needs.

Cumulative Folder – Students' confidential file, which includes all written evaluations, if any; medical records that have been released, correspondence between parents and school officials, discipline issues, test scores, etc.

Family Educational Right to Privacy Act – Also known as the Buckley Amendment. States that no funds shall be made available under any applicable program to any educational agency or institution which has a policy of denying, or which

effectively prevents, the parents of students who are or have been in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institutions, as the case may be, the right to inspect and review the education records of their children.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act– Also known as IDEA. IDEA is an attempt to remedy these and other problems that contribute to the barriers children with disabilities face. IDEA will make these changes by:

- Raising expectations for children
- Increasing parental involvement in the education of their children
- Ensuring that regular education teachers are involved in planning and assessing children's progress
- Including children with disabilities in assessments, performance goals, and reports to the public
- Supporting quality professional development for all personnel who are involved in educating children with disabilities.

Selection of files

Files were selected randomly from each class (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior). A file drawer containing each class was accessed. Once the drawer was opened, files were randomly pulled, regardless of their location in the drawer or the gender of the student. Forty-three freshman files, 48 sophomores, 39 juniors, and 44 seniors were selected, for a total of 174 cumulative files.

School Demographics

The high school that was used in this study consisted of 1760 students enrolled as of April of 2001. Ninth through twelfth grades are housed within the same building.

There are three high schools in the community, two of which are public schools. The school utilized in this study was one of the public high schools. The freshman class consisted of 226 males and 210 females. The sophomore class was made up of 228 males and 254 females. There were 393 juniors, of which 202 were males and 191 females. Finally, the senior class consisted of 220 males and 229 females.

Commonalties

The commonalties that were found in the 174 cumulative files randomly selected were personal information (home address, home and parent's work phone numbers), medical history records, parent teacher conference notes, reports cards, and third grade reading test scores. Other commonalties found were the Iowa Basic Skills test and the Cognitive Abilities Test Scores for grades first, second, fifth, and eighth grades. Also found were the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) Knowledge and Concept examinations and the Career Inventory in eighth grade.

Variations

There were many variations found in the 174 randomly selected student's cumulative files. The variety of items found were Special Education evaluations, Individual Educational Plans (IEP), 504 plans, court documents, Gifted and Talented considerations, critical health issues (Physician's letters), Learning Foundation Center (LFC), Stanford Testing Achievement scores, English as Second Language (ESL), truancy petitions, and expulsion notifications. Few sophomores participated in the PLAN test (preliminary ACT). Another discrepancy found in the junior and senior's files was the taking of the ACT and SAT College entrance exams. Student's cumulative folders

varied in organization and detail. Some of the files were not complete and lacked important data and information.

Other relevant and Interesting Information

Other relevant information found were notes from teachers on parental involvement or lack of involvement. Investigations from Human Services reporting possible neglect, retention documents, adoption papers, students participating in Off Campus school were also noted.

Common things that should be in a student's cumulative folder:

- Description where the child has gone to school in the past.
- Tell with whom the child lives; his parents/guardian and siblings.
- Show the child's progression or retention through the grades.
- Contain report card comments and grades from past teachers.
- Give group achievement or group intelligence test scores of this child.
- Report the results of any vision or hearing screening the child has had.
- Indicate any special programs that have been completed.
- Show the child's attendance patterns.
- Show demographic information; parent's education, occupations, etc.
- Indicate any significant health problems of the child and documentation of

immunizations.

These 10 items should be included in each student's cumulative folder, however please note that not all cumulative folders will be as complete as others.

Assumptions

It was assumed that:

1. There would be commonalties within cumulative folders across grade levels and within grade levels.
2. There would be standardized test results and personal records for each child within the cumulative folders.
3. The files would be complete and organized throughout the child's educational experience in the district.
4. Some files may be more detailed in content than others may.

Limitations

Some of the cumulative files may not be complete and organized in a chronological order.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter will include interviews from school administrators and teachers to ascertain their level of usage of student cumulative folders.

Three administrators and teachers from elementary and secondary schools from the Eau Claire Area School District were interviewed for the purpose of gathering their perspectives on the use of student cumulative folders. The questions for each of the groups (administrators and teachers) are located in Appendix A.

The administrators were asked how they utilized student cumulative folders. All three respondents used them. Mahoney (personal communication, November 30, 2000) indicated that he read all new student folders. He would read other student folders as needed. Fiedler (personal communication, January 5, 2001) indicated that he felt very strongly that his staff should read the folders whenever they recognize a behavioral or learning difficulty with a given student. He does utilize them when a problem occurs. Garrison (personal communication, January 5, 2001) stated, “Whenever I need to find out background information on a troubled student.”

Specific information that the administrators looked in the folders was consistent. They all looked at attendance records, test scores, disciplinary reports, and relevant information from previous teachers, school psychologists, or counselor notes. Legal documentation was also noted.

When asked who has access to the folder, all three administrators indicated that staff has access. Two of the respondents indicated in detail how staff needs to access the folders (where and when). In addition, two respondents indicated that parents do have

access with prior arrangements and supervised. Fiedler (personal communication, January 5, 2001) stated, "Every school building should have an enforced policy."

When asked what procedures are in place for ensuring confidentiality of the files, two of the administrators feel staff should use the information professionally. Mahoney (personal communication, November 30, 2000) stated, "This information is to be used to benefit the student, and not to be used for gossip." Fiedler (personal communication, January 5, 2001) stated, "The door to the room where the student's folders are located should be locked at all times and be fire rated for safety and protection."

When the three administrators were asked if they understood and know how to interpret standardized test scores for each child, two responded yes and one responded to a limited degree. Mahoney (personal communication, November 30, 2000) stated, "I have taken the time to read the manual from test companies, and I have had a statistics class. No one ever asks questions for interpretation of the standardized tests. I feel parents rely on teacher's interpretations of the tests."

When asked if they ever utilize standardized test information two of the administrators said yes they do. Mahoney (personal communication, November 30, 2000) stated, "Our Site Council at my school annually reviews our standardized test scores. Our school goal is set from the Site Council reviews."

When the three administrators were asked what are the value(s) of teachers looking at student cumulative folders, all three responded the teachers would gain information on the individual student's background. It helps the teacher to be more informed on what worked for the student and what didn't. Fiedler (personal

communication, January 5, 2001) stated, “To get a clear picture we need to look at today, tomorrow and yesterday.”

The teachers were asked similar questions (see Appendix A). There were varying degrees of usage by the teachers. Two teachers indicated that they have never accessed student cumulative folders. Three teachers indicated that they have accessed folders a few times during their entire teaching career. Still other teachers interviewed stated that they utilize the folders one to three times a year. One teacher indicated that she looked at new student folders and as needed for other students. One teacher (S. Bluem, personal communication, December 1, 2000) stated that she looked at every single student folder in her class. The range of usage reported by the teachers interviewed ranged from none at all to the entire class.

The teachers were asked what specific information do you look for in student cumulative folders. Four of the teachers indicated that they look for previous grades and past history of the student. Two of the teachers interviewed also look in the student’s folders to see if the student is in a special needs program.

When asked if the folders have worthwhile information that can be utilized five of the teachers interviewed said yes. Bluem (personal communication, December 1, 2000) stated that she looks for background information, test scores, referrals, previous notations on behavior, and if the student is new to my building I look in the student’s folder for any special needs. Ackermann (personal communication, December 1, 2000) stated that she usually uses the student cumulative folder on how to approach parent(s) on a particular issue (old or new). According to an English teacher (personal communication, December

15, 2000) she feels she generally gets her questions answered about a student, have they had trouble in English before.

When the teachers were asked how they utilize the information obtained in the folder Severson (personal communication, December 15, 2000) stated she uses the information in the student's cumulative folder to write Individual Educational Plans (I.E.P.), develop adaptations, and diagnosis. Two of the teachers interviewed look for prerequisite classes the student has taken. One of the teachers interviewed feels student cumulative folders usually do not have worthwhile information in them.

The teachers were asked if they understand and know how to interpret the standardized test scores five of the teachers feel they do understand and can interpret the standardized test scores. One teacher said no. According to an English teacher (personal communication, December 15, 2000) she feels she can't interpret the test scores very well, even after taking graduate level classes in testing and measurement. Gharrity-Johnson (personal communication, January 5, 2001) stated it depends on the part of the test. Ackermann (personal communication, December 1, 2000) stated, "I do and I don't understand how to interpret the standardized test scores. Just when I think I understand how to interpret the tests, an administrator tells me something about the tests that I don't understand." Barnes (personal communication, January 4, 2001) feels he has idea on how to interpret the test scores because "I have read and looked at them, and I have tried to understand my own children's test scores."

The interviewed teachers were asked if they ever utilize standardized test information three of the teachers said yes. Severson (personal communication, December 15, 2000) stated, "I can't diagnose learning disabilities without the standardized test

information.” Bluem (personal communication, December 1, 2000) stated, “Yes when I’m making a referral on a student.” Ackermann (personal communication, December 1, 2000) stated, “I use the standardized test information very seldom. Standard test scores are just one component; it shouldn’t be used by itself. The best analogy I’ve heard to describe standardized test, it is just a snap shot of the student.” Gharrity-Johnson (personal communication, January 5, 2001) feels by the time we get the results from the test it is too late to make changes that will benefit the student.

When the teachers were asked if they knew where the student cumulative folders were located in their building all of the respondents were consistent and said yes they did know where to access the folders.

The interviewed teachers were asked if they knew how to access the student cumulative folders. All except one of the teachers responded yes.

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CHAPTER THREE

Resource Guide

Introduction to the Resource Guide

The purpose of this resource guide is to provide necessary information for school administrators, teachers, school counselors, school psychologist, and parents when trying to understand and interpret important data found in student cumulative folders. This resource guide will provide the reader with explanations and definitions of items generally found in the student's folder. Understanding and interpreting data found in the student cumulative folders is essential for students' success in planning for their educational future.

This glossary is a compilation of terms and definitions adapted from a number of sources, which are duly noted. All definitions not otherwise attributed have been written by the Learning Disabilities Council's Handbook Writing Committee.

Academic Classes

Classes in basic subjects such as reading, arithmetic, science, and social studies at elementary level; and English, history, science, and math at secondary level. (1)

Achievement Test

A test that measures the extent to which a person has acquired certain information or mastered certain skills, usually as a result of planned instruction or training. These tests are often called educational tests.

Adaptive Physical Education

A special physical education program developed to fit the limits and disabilities of persons with handicaps. (2)

Amphetamines

A group of drugs used to stimulate the cerebral cortex of the brain. Sometimes used to treat hyperactivity. (See also Dexedrine and Ritalin.) (2)

Anoxia

Deficient amount of oxygen in the tissues of a part of the body or in the bloodstream supplying such part. (3)

Aptitude Test

A test designed to measure a person's ability to learn and the likelihood of success in future schoolwork or in a specific career.

Articulation (Speech)

Refers to the production of speech sounds resulting from the movements of the lips, jaw, and tongue as they modify the flow of air. (1)

Association

Ability to relate concepts presented through the senses (visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic). (4)

Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD)

A term frequently used to describe the academic and behavioral problems of children who have difficulty focusing and maintaining attention. Also called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD).

Attention Span

The length of time an individual can concentrate on a task without being distracted or losing interest. (*See also Distractability.*) (2)

Auditory Discrimination

Ability to detect differences in sounds; may be gross ability, such as detecting the differences between the noises made by a cat and dog, or fine ability, such as detecting the differences made by the sounds of letters "m" and "n."

Auditory Figure-Ground

Ability to attend to one sound against a background of sound (e.g., hearing the teacher's voice against classroom noise). (5)

Auditory Memory

Ability to retain information which has been presented orally; may be short term memory, such as recalling information presented several seconds before; long term memory, such as recalling information presented more than a minute before; or sequential memory, such as recalling a series of information in proper order.

Basic Skill Area

Includes such subjects as reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics. (1)

Behavior Modification

A technique intended to change behavior by rewarding desirable actions and ignoring or "negatively rewarding" undesirable actions. (2)

Binocular Fusion

The blending of separate images from each eye into a single meaningful image. (2)

Blending

See Sound Blending. (1)

Body Image

The concept and awareness of one's own body as it relates to space, movement, and other objects. (5)

Brain Damage

Any actual structural (tissue) damage due to any cause or causes. This means verifiable damage, not neurological performance that is indicative of damage.

Catastrophic Reaction

Extreme terror, grief, frustration, or anger without apparent cause. May be triggered by changes in routine, unexpected events, or over stimulation. Children reacting in this manner may throw or break things, scream uncontrollably, or burst into tears. (2)

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

Council for Exceptional Children was founded in 1920 by Elisabeth Farrel for the purpose of advocating for children with exceptionalities. (2)

Central Nervous System (CNS)

The brain and spinal cord. (2)

Cerebral Cortex

The outer layer of the brain; controls thinking, feeling, and voluntary movement.
(2)

Channel

The routes through which the content of communication flows. It includes both the modalities through which impression is received and the form of expression through which the response is made. Ex: Auditory--Vocal Channel. (4)

Child Study Committee

Is located in each school building to receive and act upon referrals of students suspected of being handicapped. The membership of this committee usually consists of at least three persons, including the school principal or a person chosen by the principal, the teacher or teachers, specialists, and the referring source if appropriate.

CNS

See Central Nervous System. (2)

Cognition

The act or process of knowing; the various thinking skills and processes are considered cognitive skills. (7)

Cognitive Ability

Intellectual ability; thinking and reasoning skills.

Cognitive Style

A person's typical approach to learning activities and problem solving. For example, some people carefully analyze each task, deciding what must be done and in what order. Others react impulsively to situations. (2)

Compensation

Process in which a person is taught how to cope with his learning problems, how to work around skills or abilities which may be lacking; emphasis is placed on using the individual's strengths. (See Remediation).

Conceptualization

The process of forming a general idea from what is observed. For example, seeing apples, bananas, and oranges and recognizing that they are all fruit. (2)

Conceptual Disorder

Disturbances in thinking, reasoning, generalizing, memorizing.

Confidential File

File maintained by the school; contains evaluations conducted to determine whether a child is handicapped, as well as any other information related to special education placement. This is a Limited access file; however, parents do have a right to inspect the file and have copies of any information contained in it.

Configuration

The visual shape or form of words; may be used as a cue in word-attack skills. (8)

Congenital

A condition existing at birth or before birth. Congenital does not imply that a condition is hereditary. (2)

Coordination

The harmonious functioning of muscles in the body to perform complex movements. (2)

Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA)

This is a state funded agency that provides special services to schools. Schools purchase services from CESA but the school is still responsible for the service.

Criterion Referenced Test

Designed to provide information on specific knowledge or skills possessed by a student. Such tests usually cover relatively small units of content and are closely related to instruction. Their scores have meaning in terms of what the student knows or can do, rather than their relation to the scores made by some external reference group. (14)

Cross-Categorical

Refers to a system in which a teacher addresses more than one disability condition within one instructional period. (1)

Cross Dominance

A condition in which the preferred eye, hand, or foot are not on the same side of the body. For example, a person may be right-footed and right-eyed, but left-handed.

Also called mixed dominance. (2)

Cumulative File

General file maintained by the school for any child enrolled in the school. Parents have a right to inspect the file and have copies of any information contained in it.

Decoding

The process of getting meaning from written or spoken symbols. (See Receptive Language). (2)

Developmental Lag

A delay in some aspect of physical or mental development. (2)

Dexedrine

Trade name for one of several stimulant drugs often given to modify hyperactivity in children. (2)

Directionality

The ability to know right from left, up from down, forward from backward, and direction and orientation. (9)

Discrepancy

Significant difference

Discrimination

Process of detecting differences between and/or among stimuli. (1)

Disinhibition

Lack of restraint in responding to a situation. A child exhibiting disinhibition reacts impulsively and often inappropriately. (2)

Distractibility

The shifting of attention from the task at hand to sounds, sights, and other stimuli that normally occur in the environment. (2)

Due Process

The application of law to ensure that an individual's rights are protected. When applied to all children with disabilities, due process means that parents have the right to request a full review of any educational program developed for their child. A due process hearing may be requested to ensure that all requirements of Public Law 94-142 have been met. (2)

Dysarthria

A disorder of the speech muscles that affects the ability to pronounce words. (2)

Dyscalculia

Difficulty in understanding or using mathematical symbols or functions. A child with dyscalculia may be able to read and write, but have difficulty in performing mathematical calculations. (15)

Dysfunction

Any disturbance or impairment in the normal functioning of an organ or body part. (2)

Dysgraphia

Difficulty in producing legible handwriting with age-appropriate speed. (16)

Dyslexia

Impairment of the ability to deal with language (speaking, reading, spelling, writing). A dyslexic may see letters, syllables, or words upside down, reversed, blurred, backwards, or otherwise distorted. (16)

Dysnomia

Difficulty in remembering names or recalling appropriate words to use in a given context.

Dyspraxia

Difficulty in performing fine motor acts such as drawing, buttoning, etc. A person with dyspraxia has difficulty producing and sequencing the movements necessary to perform these kinds of tasks. (16)

Early Intervention Program

A program specially designed to assist infants delayed developmentally and preschool children. The purpose of this type of program is to help prevent problems as the child matures. (2)

Educational Consultant/Diagnostician

An individual who may be familiar with school curriculum and requirements at various grade levels: may or may not have a background in learning disabilities; may conduct educational evaluations.

Educational Evaluation

One of the components necessary to determine whether a child is handicapped. Although the specific content of an educational evaluation is not specified by the regulations, the evaluation generally consists of a battery of tests and/or classroom observation and analysis of class work designed to determine the current levels of achievement in areas such as reading, math, spelling, etc. Perceptual abilities and learning style may also be evaluated.

Educational Psychologist

See School Psychologist.

Electroencephalogram (EEG)

A graphic recording of electrical currents developed in the cerebral cortex during brain functioning. Sometimes called a Brain wave test. A machine called an electroencephalograph records the pattern of these electrical currents on paper. (2)

Eligibility Committee

Determines whether a child has a handicapping condition which requires special education and, in some cases, related services such as speech and language therapy; identifies the handicapping condition and recommends the special education services (and, where needed, related services) that are needed. It is composed of the special education administrator or a person representing the administrator and school division personnel representative of the disciplines involved in the conduct of the evaluation (e.g., psychologist, educational diagnostician). At least one school division representative must be a person who tested or observed the student.

Encoding

The process of expressing language (i.e., selecting words; formulating them into ideas; producing them through speaking or writing). (See Expressive Language.) (1)

Etiology

The study of the cause or origin of a condition or disease. (2)

Expressive Language

Communication through writing, speaking, and/or gestures. (2)

Eye-Hand Coordination

The ability of the eyes and hands to work together to complete a task. Examples are drawing and writing. (2)

Far Point Copying

Writing while copying from a model some distance away, e.g., copying from the Blackboard.

FCLD

Foundation for Children with Learning Disabilities. (2) (Now known as NCL~
The National Center for Learning Disabilities.)

Figure-Ground Discrimination

The ability to sort out important information from the surrounding environment. For example, hearing a teacher's voice while ignoring other classroom noises (air conditioners, heaters, etc.) or seeing a word among others on a crowded page. (2)

Fine Motor

The use of small muscles for precision tasks such as writing, tying bows, zipping a zipper, typing, doing puzzles. (2)

General Education

All education not included under Special Education. (See Regular Education.) (1)

Gross Motor

The use of large muscles for activities requiring strength and balance. Examples are walking, running, and jumping. (2)

Handicapped

Any person with any physical and/or mental disability who has difficulty in doing certain tasks such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, or working. Federal law defines disabled children as those who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, blind, multihandicapped, or as having specific learning disabilities and who require special educational services because of these disabilities. (2)

Haptic Sense

Combined kinesthetic and tactile sense. (1)

Hyperkinesis

Another term for hyperactivity. (1)

Hyperactivity (or Hyperkinesis)

Disorganized and disruptive behavior characterized by constant and excessive movement. A child usually has difficulty sticking to one task for an extended period and may react more intensely to a situation than a normal child. (2)

Hypoactivity

Underactivity; child may appear to be in a daze, lacking energy.

IEP

See Individualized Education Plan (or Program).

IEP Committee

Writes the Individualized Education Program for the youngster who has been identified by the Eligibility Committee as disabled. Members are (1) a school division employee, other than the student's teacher, who is qualified to provide or supervise special education; (2) the student's teacher(s); (3) the parent or guardian (4) the student, if appropriate; (5) other individuals whom the parent(s) or the school division select.

Impulsivity

Reacting to a situation without considering the consequences. (2)

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

A written educational prescription developed for each (including learning disabled) child who has a disability. Sometimes called an Individualized Education

Program. School districts are required by law to develop these plans, in cooperation with parents. An IEP must contain:

- the child's present levels of educational performance
- annual goals and short-term educational objectives
- the specific special education program and related services that will be provided to the child
- the extent to which the child will participate in regular education program with non-disabled children
- a statement of when services will begin and how long they will last
- provisions for evaluating the effectiveness of the program and the student's performance
- this evaluation must occur at least once a year
- statement of transition services for students 14 years of age or older.(2)

Informal Tests

Task-oriented tests to provide information concerning specific skills that not standardized. (1)

Integrity

Complete, unimpaired. (8)

Insertions

In reading/ spelling, or math, the addition of letters or numbers which do not belong in a Word or numeral. (e.g., since are for sincere).

Inversions

In reading, spelling, or math, confusion of up down directionality of letters or numbers, e.g., m for w, 6 for 9, etc.

IQ

Intelligence quotient. The ratio between a person s chronological age (measured in years) and mental age (as measured by an intelligence test), multiplied by 100. (2)

Itinerant Teacher

Special Education teacher who is shared by more than one school. (8)

Kinesthetic

Pertaining to the movement of muscles. (2)

Kinesthetic Method

A way of teaching words by using the muscles. For example, a student might trace the outline of a word with a finger while looking at the word and saying aloud the word or its letters in sequence. (2)

Laterality

The tendency to use the hand, foot, eye, and ear on a particular side of the body. For example many people use their right hand when eating and their right foot when kicking. (2)

LD

Learning disability, learning disabled, learning disabilities (See Learning Disabilites). (2)

LDAA

Learning Disabilities Association of America.

LEA

Local Education Agency (a school division).

Learning Disabilities (LD)

Disorders of the basic psychological processes that affect the way a child learns. Many children with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence. Learning disabilities may cause difficulties in listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic. Included are perceptual disabilities, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Excluded are learning difficulties caused by visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbances, or environmental disadvantage. (2)

Learning Disorder

Damage or impairment to the nervous system that results in a learning disability. (2)

Learning Style

The channels through which a person best understands and retains learning. All individuals learn best through one or more channels: seeing, hearing, moving, touching, or a combination of these.

Lesion

Abnormal change in body tissue due to injury or disease. (2)

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

A psychologist who is competent to apply the principles and techniques of psychological evaluation and psychotherapy to individual clients for the purpose of

ameliorating problems of behavioral and/or emotional maladjustment. (12)

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

A social worker who, by education and experience, is professionally qualified to provide direct diagnostic, preventive and treatment services where functioning is threatened or affected by social and psychological stress or health impairment. (12)

Licensed Professional Counselor

A person trained in counseling and guidance services with emphasis on individual and group guidance and counseling; assists individuals in achieving more effective personal, social, educational, and career development and adjustment. (2)

Linguistic Approach

Method for teaching reading (decoding skills) which emphasizes use of word families. For example, the child is taught to read at and then subsequently is taught to decode words such as "cat," "bat," "sat," "mat," etc. Early stories adhere strictly to the words which have been taught previously and so may sometimes seem nonsensical (e.g., "Sam sat on a mat. The cat sat on a mat. The cat is fat," etc.).

Mainstreaming

The practice of placing children with special educational needs into regular classrooms for at least a part of the children's school programs. (2)

Maturation Lag

Delayed maturity in one or several skills or areas of development. (2)

Mental Age

The age for which a given score on a mental ability test is average or normal. The term is most appropriately used at the early age levels where mental growth is rapid. (8)

Milieu Therapy

A clinical technique designed to control a child's environment and minimize conflicting and confusing information. (2)

Minimal Brain Dysfunction (MBD)

A broad and unspecific term formerly used to describe learning disabilities. (2)

Mixed Dominance

See cross dominance. (2)

Mixed Laterality or Lateral Confusion

Tendency to perform some acts with a right side preference and others with a left, or the shifting from right to left for certain activities. (10)

Modality

The sensory channel used to acquire information. Visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory (odors), and gustatory (taste) are the most common modalities. (2)

Modified Self-Contained

Closely approximates the self-contained class; however, students receive instruction from a regular education teacher for some part of the school day. (1)

Motor

Pertaining to the origin or execution of muscular activity. (3)

Multi-Categorical

A special education classroom model in which students with more than one handicapping condition are assigned to a special education teacher. (1)

Multidisciplinary Team

In education, a group made up of a child's classroom teacher and several educational specialists who evaluates the child's disability and prepares an Individualized Education Plan for the child. (2)

Multisensory

Involving most or all of the senses. (2)

NCLD

National Center for Learning Disabilities.

Near Point Copying

Writing while copying from a model close at hand (e.g., copying from a textbook).

Neurological Examination

Testing of the sensory or motor responses to determine if there is impairment of the nervous system. (2)

Noncategorical

Refers to a system of grouping children with disabilities together without reference to a particular label or category of exceptionality. (7)

Norm-Referenced Test

See Standardized Test. (2)

Norms

Statistics that provide a frame of reference by which meaning may be given to test scores. Norms are based upon the actual performance of pupils of various grades or ages in the standardization group for the test. Since they represent average or typical performance, they should not be regarded as standards or universally desirable levels of attainment. The most common types of norms are standard scores such as stanines or deviation IQ, percentile rank, and grade or age equivalents.

Ombudsman

An official appointed to investigate complaints and speak for individuals with grievances. (2)

Oral Language

Those verbal communication skills needed to understand (listen) and to use (speak) language.

Organicity

A disorder of the central nervous system; brain damage. (2)

Orton Dyslexia Society

Organization of professionals in the field of LD, as well as scientists and parents.

Orton-Gillingham Approach

An approach to teaching individuals with learning disabilities. The technique, devised by Dr. Samuel Orton, Anna Gillingham, and Bessie Stillman, stresses a multisensory, phonetic, structured, sequential approach to learning.

Perceptual Abilities

The abilities to process, organize, and interpret the information obtained by the five senses; a function of the brain.

Perceptual Disabilities

Difficulty in ability to process and organize, as well as interpret information through the senses.

Perceptual-Motor

Muscle activity resulting from information received through the senses. (2)

Perceptual Speed

Specific meaning of this term varies, depending upon the manner in which a given test measures this ability. May refer to motor speed, how fast something is copied or manipulated, or to visual discrimination (e.g., how quickly identical items in a given series are identified, etc.).

Perseveration

The repeating of words, motions, thoughts or tasks. A child who perseverates often has difficulty shifting to a new task and continues working on an old task long after classmates have stopped. (2)

Phonetic Approach

Method for teaching reading and spelling in which emphasis is placed on learning the sounds which individual and various combinations of letters make in a word. In decoding a word, the child sounds out individual letters or letter combinations and then blends them to form a word.

Psychiatrist

An individual who treats behavioral or emotional problems. Is a licensed medical doctor (M.D.), therefore is permitted to use medications in treating a problem.

Psychological Examination

An evaluation by a certified school or clinical psychologist of the intellectual and behavioral characteristics of a person. (1)

Psychomotor

Pertaining to the motor effects of psychological processes. Psychomotor tests are tests of motor skill which depend upon sensory or perceptual motor coordination. (3)

Public Law (P.L.) 94-142

The federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act that became law in 1975. P.L. 94-142 requires each state to provide free and appropriate public education to all children from 3 through age 21. The law also requires that an Individualized Education Plan be prepared for each child, that parents must have access to their child's school records, and are entitled to a due process hearing if they are dissatisfied with the educational plan. (2)

Readiness

Acquisition of skills considered prerequisite for academic learning. (8)

Reasoning Ability

Specific meaning of this term varies, depending upon the manner in which a given test measures this ability; generally refers to nonverbal, deductive, inductive, or analytical thinking.

Receptive Language (Decoding)

Language that is spoken or written by others and received by the individual. The receptive language skills are listening, seeing and reading. (7)

Regrouping

In arithmetic, the processes traditionally known as carrying in addition or borrowing in subtraction.

Regular Education Initiative

All education not included under Special Education (See General Education). (1)

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Civil Rights Act for the Handicapped. The act prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental handicap in all federally-assisted programs. Section 504 of the act stipulates that people are entitled to:

- the same rights and benefits as nonhandicapped applicants and employees
- all medical services and medically-related instruction available to the public
- participate in vocational rehabilitation, senior citizen activities, day care (for disabled children), or any other social service program receiving federal assistance on an equal basis with nonhandicapped persons
- an appropriate elementary and secondary education for physically or mentally handicapped children. (2)

Remediation

Process in which an individual is provided instruction and practice in skills which are weak or nonexistent in an effort to develop/strengthen these skills.

Resource Room

An instructional setting to which a student goes for specified periods of time on a regularly scheduled basis. (1)

Resource Teacher

A specialist who works with students with disabilities; may also act as a consultant to other teachers. (1)

Reversals

Difficulty in reading or reproducing letters alone, letters in words, or words in sentences in their proper position in space or in proper order. May also refer to reversal of mathematical concepts (add/subtract, multiply/divide) and symbols ($>$; $x+$). (See also Transposition). (1)

Ritalin

Trade name for one of several stimulant drugs often given to modify hyperactivity in children. (2)

Scatter

Variability in an individual's test scores. (11)

School Psychologist

A person who specializes in problems manifested in and associated with educational systems and who uses psychological concepts and methods in programs which attempt to improve learning conditions for students. (2)

SEA

State Education Agency (the state Department of Education).

Self- Concept

How a person feels and thinks about himself or herself. Sometimes called self-image. (2)

Self- Contained Classroom

Special class for specific types of students with disabilities who spend all or the largest portion of the school day in this setting. (1)

Semantics

The meaning or understanding given to oral or written language.

Sensorimotor

Relationship between sensation and movement. Sometimes spelled sensory-motor. (2)

Sensory Acuity

The ability to respond to sensation at normal levels of intensity. (3)

Sequence

The detail of information in its accustomed order (for example, days of the week, the alphabet, etc.). (1)

Sight Words

Words a child can recognize on sight without aid of phonics or other word-attack skills. (8)

Sight Word Approach

Also known as whole word approach; method for teaching reading which relies heavily upon a child's visual memory skills, with minimal emphasis on sounding out a word; child memorizes the word based on its overall configuration.

SLD

Specific learning disability. Difficulty in certain areas of learning is contrasted with a general learning disability (i.e., difficulty in all areas of learning). Learning disabilities as discussed in this handbook are SLD. SLD is also sometimes interpreted as Specific Language Disability.

Slingerland Method

A highly structured, multisensory teaching method designed for group instruction of persons with specific learning disabilities. Named for its developer, Beth Slingerland.

(2)

Social Perceptions

The ability to interpret stimuli in the social environment and appropriately relate such interpretations to social situations.

Socio-Cultural

Combined social and cultural factors as they affect the development of a child in all areas of life. (1)

Soft Neurological Signs

Neurological abnormalities that are mild or slight and difficult to detect, as contrasted with the gross or obvious neurological abnormalities. (7)

Sound Blending

The ability to combine smoothly all the sounds or parts of a word into the whole. (8)

Spatial Orientation

Awareness of space around the person in terms of distance, form, direction, and

position. (3)

Spatial Relationships

The ability to perceive the relationships between self and two or more objects and the relationships of the objects to each other. (8)

Special Education

Instruction specifically designed for children with disabilities. (2)

Specific Language Disability (SLD)

Difficulty in some aspect of learning how to read, write, spell, or speak. Is also called Specific Learning Disability.

Standardized Test

A test that compares a child's performance with the performance of a large group of similar children (usually children of the same age). Also called a norm-referenced test. IQ tests and most achievement tests are standardized. (2)

Structure

Consistent use of rules, limits, and routines. The use of structure reassures a child with learning disabilities that the environment is somewhat predictable and stable. (2)

Structural Analysis

Using syllabication, prefix, suffix, and root word clues, etc. to read or spell a word.

Substitution

In reading, spelling, or math, interchanging a given letter, number, or word for another (e.g., sereal for cereal).

Survival Skills

Minimal skills needed for a student to cope with everyday society. (1)

Syntax

Grammar, sentence structure, and word order in oral or written language.

Syndrome

A set of symptoms that indicates a specific disorder, often hereditary. (2)

Tactile

Having to do with the sense of touch. (2)

Task Analysis

The technique of carefully examining a particular task to discover the elements it comprises and the processes required to perform it. (7)

Thematic Maturity

Ability to write in a logical, organized manner that easily and efficiently conveys meaning. (13)

Thinking Skills

Refers to the manner in which humans acquire, interpret, organize, store, retrieve, and employ knowledge. (1)

Transposition

In reading, spelling, or math, confusion of the order of letters in a word or numbers in a numeral (e.g., sliver for silver, 432 for 423, etc.).

Visual Auditory Kinesthetic Tactile (VAK)

Acronym for visual-auditory-kinesthetic; multisensory teaching approach which emphasizes using all of the senses to teach skills and concepts .

Verbal Ability

Specific meaning of this term varies, depending upon the manner in which a given test measures this ability. Generally refers to oral or spoken language abilities.

Visual Association

Ability to relate concepts which are presented visually, through pictures or written words. For example, given a picture of a dog, house, flower and bone, the child is able to indicate that the dog and bone go together.

Visual Closure

Ability to see only the outline of an item or picture, or a partially completed picture, and still be able to indicate what it is.

Visual Discrimination

Ability to detect similarities and/or differences in materials which are presented visually (e.g., ability to discriminate h from n, o from c, b from d, etc.).

Visual Figure-Ground

Ability to focus on the foreground of material presented visually, rather than background. Those who have difficulty with this may find it hard to keep their place while copying or reading, may find a crowded page of print or illustrations confusing, etc.

Visual Memory

Ability to retain information which is presented visually; may be short term memory, such as recalling information presented several seconds before; long term memory, such as recalling information presented more than a minute before; or sequential memory, such as recalling a series of information in proper order.

Visual Motor

Ability to translate information received visually into a motor response.

Difficulties are often characterized by poor handwriting.

Visual Perception

Ability to correctly interpret what is seen. For example, a child sees a triangle and identifies it as a triangle. (2)

Word Attack Skills

Ability to analyze unfamiliar words visually and phonetically. (2)

Word Recognition

Ability to read or pronounce a word; usually implies that the word is recognized immediately by sight and that the child does not need to apply word analysis skills. Does not imply understanding of the word.

Written Language

Encompasses all facets of written expression, (e.g., handwriting, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, format, ability to express one's thoughts in sentences and paragraphs, etc.).

Glossary of Measurement Terms

Achievement Battery

A battery of achievement tests. (13)

Achievement Test

A test designed to measure the amount of knowledge and/or skill a person has acquired, usually as a result of classroom instruction. It may be either an informal or standardized. (14)

Adaptive Testing

The act or process of ensuring that the test items that an examinee will be asked to answer are of appropriate difficulty for the examinee. If not modification of the test item is done. (14)

Age Equivalent

The chronological age for which a specified raw score is the average.

Age Norms

Norms that give age equivalents for raw-score values. (13)

Alternate-Form Reliability

One of the choices for a multiple-choice item-either the correct response or a distracter. (13)

Anchor

A test or other variable used to ensure the comparability of two or more forms or editions or levels of a given instrument.

Aptitude

That combination of characteristics, both native and acquired, that indicates the capacity of a person to develop proficiency in some skill or subject matter after relevant training; usually, but not necessarily, implies intellectual or skill aspects rather than emotional or personality characteristics. (14)

Articulation

The act or process of developing different editions, forms, and levels of the same test that will yield results that are comparable.

Assessment

The act or process of determining the present level (usually of achievement) of a group or individual, typically on the basis of multiple sources of information. (14)

Average

General term for any central tendency measure; e.g., the mean, median, or mode. (14)

Battery

A group of several tests standardized on the same population so that results on the several test are comparable.

Bell-Shaped Curve

See normal distribution.

Bias

Unfairness, real or imagined, in an item or set of test items.

Buckley Amendment

A federal law passed in 1974 that decrees (among other provisions) that school records, including test data, must be made available to students and/or parents upon request.

C-Score

A normalized standard score of eleven units.

Ceiling

The upper limit of ability that can be measured by a test. When an individual makes a score, which is at, or near the highest possible score, it is said that the test has too low a ceiling for him; he should be given a higher level of the test.

Central Tendency

A measure that provides a single most typical score as representative of a group of scores; the trend of a group of measures as indicated by some type of average, usually the mean or the median. (14)

Chronological Age (CA)

A person's age. The CA is a factor to consider when interpreting certain types of score, especially age scores.

Coefficient of correlation

An index number indicating the degree of relationship between two variables; i.e., the tendency for values of one variable to change systematically with changes in values of a second variable; no relationship = 0.00, a perfect relationship = +1.00. (Although there are different coefficients for various purposes, the basic type is the Pearson product-

moment correlation (r), which is used when both variables are continuous and distributed symmetrically).

Composite Score

A total score consisting of the sum of scores on two or more variables; (less commonly) an average of such scores.

Concurrent Validity

Criterion-related validity is when both test scores and criterion values are obtained at about the same time; contrast with predictive validity. (14)

Content Reliability

The consistency with which a test measures whatever it measures; may be estimated by a reliability coefficient based on (a) split halves, (b) alternate forms, or (c) internal consistency. (13)

Content Validity

Logical (as opposed to statistical) evidence that the item content of a test is suitable for the purpose for which the test is to be used; concept is used principally with achievement tests. (14)

Correlation

The tendency for two (or occasionally more) variables to change values concomitantly. Note: Evidence of correlation is not evidence of causation. (14)

Criterion

A standard against which a test may be validated; e.g., grade-point average is an obvious criterion for scholastic aptitude. (14)

Criterion-Referenced

Testing that is not norms-referenced, but where test performance is described directly in terms of performance at any given level on the continuum of an external variable. (14)

Criterion-Related validity

Test validity based on a correlation coefficient between test score and criterion values. (14)

Culture-Fair test

Describes a test that is relatively unbiased; no test can be completely culture free. (14)

Cross-Cultural test

A test believed to be suitable for use in different societies because it is relatively free from cultural influences (such as language). (13)

Cross Validation

The act or process of verifying results obtained on one group (or one study) by replication with a different, but similar, group or study. (14)

Culture Biased

Describes a test on which the items, whether intentionally or not, are easier for one cultural subgroup than for others. (14)

Cutting Score

The minimum passing score, usually determined through research, for some practical situation (e.g., college entrance or job selection). (14)

Derived Score

Any type of score other than a raw score. (14)

Deviation

The amount by which a score differs from a specified reference point (usually, but not always, the mean or other average). (14)

Deviation IQ

An aged-based index of general mental ability. It is based upon the difference or deviation between a person's score and the typical or average score for persons of his chronological age. Deviation IQ's from most current scholastic aptitude measures are standard scores with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 16 for each defined age group. (14)

Diagnostic Test

A test (usually achievement) designed to identify specific educational difficulties. A test given as a part of counseling or psychotherapy as an aid in determining the nature of an individual's mental disorder, maladjustment, etc. (13)

Difficulty value

A statement of a test item's difficulty, usually expressed as the percentage of individuals in a group who answered the item correctly. (13)

Discrimination Value

Any statistic used to express the extent to which a test item shows a difference between high-ability and low-ability. (13)

Edumetric

Measurement of learning outcomes through criterion-referenced measurement. Ant.: psychometric. (14)

Empirical Validity

See criterion-related validity. (14)

Equivalent Form

Any of two or more forms of a test, usually standardized on the same population and published at the same time, that are designed to be similar in item content and difficulty so that scores on the forms will be comparable. (14)

Error

A generic term for those elements in a test and testing situation that operate to keep a test from being perfectly reliable: (a) constant errors have a direct adverse effect on validity, but may not affect reliability (e.g., having arithmetic items on an English test); and (b) variable (or random) errors reduce reliability directly and validity indirectly (e.g., nonstandard conditions of test administration, chance passing or failing of items, ambiguous wording of test items). Note: Errors are inherent in all measurement, but mistakes are not. (14)

Evaluation

A statement of test results that includes a judgmental factor (e.g., “The class is achieving higher than others in the school” or “Maria is doing better in arithmetic than in English. (14)

Face Validity

Superficial appearance of validity; i.e., a test looks as if it should measure what is intended. (14)

Factor

(1) Strictly and technically, an element or variable presumed to exist because of its ability to help explain some of the interrelationships noted among a set of tests. (2) Equally properly, the ability or characteristic represented by a factor. (3) Loosely, anything partially responsible for a result or outcome. (14)

Factor Analysis

Any of several complex statistical procedures for analyzing the inter-correlations among a set of tests (or other variables) for the purpose of identifying the factors, preferably few in number, that cause the inter-correlations. (14)

Frequency

The number of individuals obtaining any specified score or falling in any specified class interval. (14)

Frequency Distribution

Any orderly arrangement of scores, usually from highest to lowest, showing the frequency with which each score (or each class interval) occurs. (14)

Grade Norm

The average test score for pupils with a given grade placement. (14)

Grade-Placement Score

A derived score expressed as the grade placement of those pupils for whom a given score was average. (14)

Halo Effect

An unwarranted generalization of test interpretation; e.g., inferring that an examinee is highly intelligent because of a high score on one aptitude test, or inferring low ability because of a single observation. (14)

Heterogeneity

Possessing great variability; thus, in testing, a test with a great variety of content, or a group that varies considerably in the attribute tested. (14)

Histogram

A type of graph often used for displaying distributions of continuous variables such as test scores; resembles a bar graph used for displaying discrete data. (14)

Homogeneity

Having relatively little variability; thus, in testing, a test composed of items that vary little, or a group that varies little in the attribute tested. (14)

Individual Test

A test that usually, if not always, can be administered to only one examinee at a time. (14)

Inferential Statistic

To infer about the population from the sample results. (14)

Informal Test

Any test intended primarily for the use of the test constructor or in a single setting; used as a substitute to standardized test. (14)

Intelligence

An abstraction variously defined by different authorities; in general, the capacity or set of capacities that enables an individual to learn, to cope with the environment, to solve problems. (14)

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

See deviation IQ.

Internal Consistency

Any of several techniques for estimating the content reliability of a test through knowledge of item analysis statistics. (13)

Interpolation

The act or process of estimating a value that falls between two known or computed values; this practice is often followed in establishing age and grade-placement scores, so that the norms table will cover all possible ages or grade placements. (14)

Inventory

Most commonly, a paper-and-pencil test of personality, interest, attitude, or the like. Less commonly, an achievement test designed to take an inventory of student or class knowledge or skill on a specific task. (14)

Item

Any individual problem or question on a test. (14)

Item Analysis

The act or process of examining a test item empirically to determine (a) its difficulty value and (b) its discrimination value. Note: Such values will differ somewhat

from group to group, from time to time, and according to the particular item statistic used. (14)

Item Bank

A collection of questions available for use on a test, especially, a file of items stored in a computer and available for retrieval. (14)

Key, Scoring

The collection of correct answers (or scored responses) for the items of a test. The device or sheet, containing the scored responses, which is used in scoring the test. (14)

Kuder-Richardson formula(s)

Any of several formulas developed by Kuder and Richardson for estimating content reliability through internal-consistency analysis. (14)

Mean (M)

Most widely used measure of central tendency; equals the sum of scores divided by the number of examinees. (14)

Median (Md)

The middle score in a distribution or set of ranked scores; the point (score) that divides the group into two equal parts; the 50th percentile. Half of the scores are below the median and half above it, except when the median itself is one of the obtained scores.

Mental Age (MA)

The age for which a given score on a mental ability test is average or normal. If the average score made by an unselected group of children six years, 10 months of age is 55, then a child making a score of 55 is said to have a mental age of 6-10. Since the mental age unit shrinks with increasing (chronological) age, MA's do not have a uniform

interpretation throughout all ages. They are therefore most appropriately used at the early age levels where mental growth is relatively rapid. (14)

Modal Age Norms

Achievement test norms that are based on the performance of pupils of normal age for their respective grades. Norms derived from such age restricted groups are free from the distorting influence of the scores of underage and overage pupils.

Mode

The score or value that occurs most frequently in a distribution.

Multiple-Choice item

A test item in which the examinee's task is to choose the correct or best answer from several given answers or options.

N

The symbol commonly used to represent the number of cases in a group.

Norm

Average, normal, or standard for a group of specified status (e.g., of a given age or grade placement). (16)

Normal Distribution Curve

Useful mathematical model representing the distribution expected when an infinite number of observations (e.g., scores) deviate from the mean only by chance; although a normal distribution can never be attained in reality, many actual distribution do approach this model. The curve drawn to portray the normal distribution is a symmetrical bell-shaped curve whose properties are completely known. (16)

Norm Line

A smooth curve drawn to best fit (1) the plotted mean or median scores of successive age or grade groups, or (2) the successive percentile points for a single group. (13)

Norms-Referenced

Descriptive of an objective test that has been standardized on a group of people, so that the performance of examinees can be described in reference to this comparison (i.e., norm) group; such tests are psychometric, as opposed to edumetric. (14)

Non-Verbal Test

A test that does not require the use of words in the item or in the response to it. (Oral directions may be included in the formulation of the task). A test cannot, however, be classified as non-verbal simply because it does not require reading on the part of the examinee. The use of non-verbal tasks cannot completely eliminate the effect of culture. (13)

Objective Test

A test made up of items for which correct responses may be set up in advance; scores are unaffected by the opinion or judgment of the scorer. (14)

Omnibus Test

A test, usually of intelligence, in which items of several different types are used in obtaining a single overall score; usually has one set of directions and one overall time limit. (14)

Percentile (P)

A point (score) in a distribution at or below which fall the percent of cases indicated by the percentile. Thus a score coinciding with the 35th percentile (P35) is regarded as equaling or surpassing that of 35 percent of the persons in the group, therefore 65 percent of the performance exceeded this score. Percentile has nothing to do with the percent of correct answers an examinee makes on a test. (14)

Performance Test

An ambiguous term used variously to mean (a) a test involving special apparatus, as opposed to a paper-and-pencil test, (b) a test minimizing verbal skills, or (c) a work-sample test. (14)

Personality Test

A typical-performance test, questionnaire, or other device designed to measure some affective characteristic of the individual. (14)

Portfolio

An accumulation of the products (papers, tests, notebooks, artworks, etc) belonging to an individual (student), probably to be used in evaluating that individual's achievement. (14)

Power Test

Any maximum-performance test for which speed is not an important determinant of score; thus, a test with very generous (or no) time limit. (14)

Practice Effect

The influence of previous experiences with a test on a later administration of the same or a similar test; usually an increased familiarity with the directions, kinds of questions, etc. Practice effect is greatest when the interval between testings is short, when the content of the two tests is identical or very similar, and when the initial test taking represents a relatively novel experience for the subjects. (13)

Predictive Validity

Criterion-related validity where criterion values are obtained at a later than the test scores; contrast with concurrent validity. (14)

Profile

A graphic representation of the performance of an individual (or, less commonly, a group) on a series of tests, especially the tests in an integrated battery. (14)

Prognosis (Prognostic) Test

A test used to predict future performance (usually success or failure) in a particular task or course of study. (14)

Projective Technique

Any method of personality measurement or study that makes use of deliberately ambiguous stimuli (e.g., ink blots, incomplete sentences, etc) into which examinees “project” their personality when responding. (14)

Psychometric

Psychological (or educational) measurement that is norms-referenced, rather than criterion-referenced. (14)

Quartile

Any of the three points that divide a frequency distribution into four groups of equal frequency. The first quartile (Q1) equals the twenty-fifth percentile (P25); Q2=P50 or the median; and Q3=P75. (14)

Random Sample

A sample drawn from a population in such a manner that each member of that population has an equal chance of being selected; samples so drawn are unbiased and should yield statistics representative of the population from which they were drawn. (14)

Range

The difference between the highest and lowest scores made on a test.

Raw Score

The basic score initially obtained from scoring a test according to directions given by the test maker; usually equal to the number of correct responses, but may be the number of wrong answers or errors, time required for a task, etc. (14)

Readiness Test

A test that measures the extent to which an individual has achieved a degree of maturity or acquired certain skills or information needed for successfully undertaking some new learning activity. (13)

Recall Item

A type of item that requires the examinee to supply the correct answer from his own memory or recollection. (13)

Recognition Item

An item which requires the examinee to recognize or select the correct answer from among two or more given answers (options). (13)

Regression Effect

Tendency of a predicted score to be nearer to the mean of its distribution than the score from which it is predicted is to its mean. Because of the effects of regression, students making extremely high or extremely low scores on a test tend to make less extreme scores, i.e., closer to the mean, on a second administration of the same test or on some predicted measure. (13)

Reliability

Reproduceability of a set of scores under differing conditions; i.e., consistency or stability of a measuring instrument; necessary, but not sufficient, for validity. Commonly expressed as a reliability coefficient or a standard error of measurement. (13)

Reliability Coefficient

A coefficient of correlation designed to estimate a test's reliability by correlating (a) scores on equivalent forms, (b) scores on matched halves (corrected for length), or (c) scores on two administrations of the same test. (14)

Representative Sample

A sample that corresponds to or matches the population of which it is a sample with respect to characteristics important for the purposes under investigation. In an achievement test norm sample, such significant aspects might be the proportion of cases of each gender, from various types of schools, different geographical areas, the several socioeconomic levels, etc. (13)

Sample

A general term referring to a group, however selected, that is assumed to represent the entire population from which it was drawn. (14)

Scaled Score

Loosely, any derived score. More technically, any of several systems of scores (usually similar to standard scores) used in (a) articulating different forms, editions, and/or levels of a test; or (b) developmental research. (14)

Scholastic Aptitude

The combination of native and acquired abilities that are needed for school learning; the likelihood of success in mastering academic work as estimated from measures of the necessary abilities. (13)

Skewed Distribution

A noticeably asymmetrical distribution of scores. A distribution with many high scores and very few low scores is said to be skewed to the left or negatively skewed, a distribution with many low scores and few high scores is said to be positively skewed. (14)

Spearman-Brown Formula

A formula giving the relationship between the reliability of a test and its length. The formula permits estimation of the reliability of a test lengthened or shortened by any multiple, from the known reliability of a given test. Its most common application is the estimation of reliability of an entire test from the correlation between its two halves. See Split-Half Reliability Coefficient. (14)

Spilt-Half Reliability Coefficient

An estimate of content reliability based on the correlation between scores on two halves of a test; usually the odd and even items are scored separately to provide these two half-test length scores. Must not be used with a speed test. (14)

Standard Deviation (S.D.)

A measure of the variability or dispersion of a distribution of scores. The more the scores cluster around the mean, the smaller the standard deviation. For a normal distribution, approximately two thirds (68.3 percent) of the scores are within the range from one S.D. below the mean to one S.D. above the mean. Computation of the S.D. is based upon the square of the deviation of each score from the mean. (14)

Standard Error

An estimate of what the standard deviation of a statistic would be if successive values were found for that statistic through repeated testings (usually on different, but similar, samples drawn from the same population). (14)

Standard Error of Measurement

An estimate of the standard deviation that would be found in the distribution of scores for a specified person if that person were to be tested repeatedly on the same or similar test (assuming no learning); thus, a measure of test reliability. (14)

Standardized Test

A test designed to provide a systematic sample of individual performance, administered according to prescribed directions, scored in conformance with definite rules, and interpreted in reference to certain normative information.

Standard Score

Any of several derived scores based on the number of standard deviations between a given raw score and the mean of the distribution. (14)

Stanine

A normalized standard score of nine units, 1-9; in a normal distribution, stanines have a mean of 5.0 and a standard deviation of 1.96. (14)

Statistic

A summary or descriptive value (e.g., mean or standard deviation) for a sample (rather than an entire population). (14)

Sten

A normalized standard score, similar to the more common stanine, but having five units on either side of the mean; the mean sten (in a normal distribution) is 5.5, and the standard deviation is about 2.0. (14)

Subjective Test

A test on which the personal opinion or impression of the scorer is one determinant of the obtained score; i.e., the scoring key cannot be (or is not) fully prescribed in advance of scoring. (14)

True Score

A theoretical concept never obtainable in practice, an error-free score; usually defined as the average of the scores that would be obtained if a specified examinee were to take the same test an infinite number of times (assuming no learning). (14)

T-Scaled Score

A normalized standard score with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.

(14)

T-Score

A standard score having a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.

Typical-Performance Test

Any test designed to measure what an examinee is “really like, rather than any intellectual or ability characteristic; e.g., tests of personality, attitude, interest, etc. (14)

Validity

The extent to which a test does the job desired of it; the evidence may be either empirical or logical. Unless otherwise noted, criterion-related validity is implied. (14)

Variability

The amount of scatter or dispersion in a set of scores. (14)

Variable

Any trait or characteristic that may change with the individual or the observation. More strictly, any representation of such a trait or characteristic that is capable of assuming different values; e.g., test scores. (14)

Variance

A statistic, equal to the square of the standard deviation; it is used widely in research.

Z-Score

The basic standard score widely used in test-related research; $Z=(X-\text{mean})/s$, where X =individual score, and s = standard deviation. (14)

Standardized Educational Tests

ACT (American College Testing Program) Assessment

The well known ACT is an independently developed, standardized test that is part of a program of testing used by many colleges and universities when considering applicants for admission. It has four major sections: English Usage, Mathematics Usage, Social Studies Reading, and Natural Science Reading. It is considered both an achievement and ability test that helps those involved in college admissions determine a student's chances for success at that particular institution. (16)

Auditory Screening

Auditory screening is routinely performed upon entry into school, and some states mandate periodic screening throughout the school years. It may also be requested by parents, teachers, or other educational professionals, and a variety of health care providers. Nonprofessionals can be trained to perform routine screening. However, only audiologists and otologists (physicians who specialize in problems of the ear and related disorders) are qualified to diagnose and treat auditory disorders.

Basic Achievement Skill Individual Screener (BASIS)

BASIS measures (for grades 1 through 8) skills in three basic areas: reading, mathematics, and spelling. The student is tested in grade clusters; that is, with groups of questions that increase in difficulty. BASIS is considered a test that evaluates achievement in order to place students in appropriate classroom groups. It may also influence choice of textbooks and other learning materials. An optional writing exercise is included. (16)

Boehm Test of Basic Concepts (The Boehm)

The test helps to assess a child's understanding of space, quantity, and time concepts. In practical terms, this means a child's ability to understand such concepts as before/after, half/whole and so on (Grades K through 2). (16)

Brigance K and I Screen, Revised (Brigance K&I)

The Brigance K&I is a quick screening tool designed to assess development and school readiness. The areas screened include speech and language (vocabulary, syntax, and so on) counting, letter recognition, some general knowledge of parts of the body, colors and so on. It is used with children entering kindergarten or first grade. (15)

The Career Directions Inventory (CDI)

The CDI is designed to assist high school and college students in educational and career planning by measuring interests related to career areas. Some of the categories are Mathematics, Business, Social Studies, and Creative Arts. The CDI is also used with adults in career counseling.

Detroit Test of Learning Aptitude (Fourth Edition) (DTLA-4)

The DTLA-4 is the oldest and most venerable of the tests of specific mental abilities. The test includes 10 subtests. The results of the subtests can be combined to form 16 composites that measure both general intelligence and discrete ability areas. Three types of scores are available: percentiles, standard scores, and age equivalents. The following subtests are contained in the DTLA-4: Word Opposites, Design sequences, Sentence Imitation, Reversed Letters, Story Construction, Design Reproduction, Basic Information, Symbolic Relations, Word Sequences, and Story Sequences. (16)

Diagnostic Achievement Battery-2 (DAB-2)

The Diagnostic Achievement Battery – 2 is the latest version of one of the most popular and useful individual achievement tests available today. Designed for children between the ages of 6 and 14, the DAB-2 provides a profile of abilities in Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Twelve subtests measure performance in areas key to LD assessment. The speed and ease of administration are heightened by the fact that the Writing Composition, Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation, and Math Calculation subtests may be given to small groups. (16)

Diagnostic Screening Test: Language (DSTL)

The DSTL is designed to estimate overall achievement level in written language and more specifically, levels in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure and spelling rules (Grades 1 through 13). (16)

Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES)

The Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scales (GATES) is an innovative quick approach for identifying students age 5 to 18 who are gifted and talented. Based on the most current federal and state definitions, the GATES satisfies the critical national need for a norm-referenced instrument that assesses the characteristics, skills and talents of gifted students. Designed for use in schools, the GATES comprises 50 items that describe characteristic behaviors of persons who are gifted and talented. It is easily completed by teachers, and others who are knowledgeable about the student being considered for a gifted and talented program. The test is useful for screening and clinical assessments in schools, clinics, and private practices and can also be used for evaluating treatment

strategies and in research projects. The instrument has proven validity in identifying gifted students. With the development of the GATES, schools and school districts have a viable method of screening large groups of students for programs for the gifted and talented. (16)

Gilmore Oral Reading Test, Forms C and D

The Gilmore Oral Reading Test assesses oral reading accuracy, comprehension, and speed. It provides a way to analyze errors individually (Grades 1 through 8). (15)

Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation- Second Edition (GFTA-2)

The second edition of this systematic measure of a child's articulation of consonant sounds is available with an expanded age range of 2-21. GFTA-2 yields the information you need to assess a child's articulation ability with 39 consonant sounds and blends sampled. (16)

Gray Oral Reading Tests (Gray Oral), Forms Q, B, C and D (3rd)

This test measures progress in oral reading and is a diagnostic tool for problems with oral reading. (Grade 1 through college.) (15)

Gray Silent Reading Test (GSRT)

The Gray Silent Reading Test (GSRT) will help you quickly and efficiently measure an individual's silent reading comprehension ability. The GSRT is a new addition to the Gray reading test battery. This test consists of two parallel forms each containing 13 sequenced reading passages with five multiple-choice questions. You can give the test to persons 7 years through 25 years of age. It can be given individually or to groups. Each form of the test yields raw scores, grade equivalents, age equivalents, percentiles, and a Silent Reading Quotient. (15)

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS): Forms J, G, and H;**Primary Battery; Multilevel/Separate Level Editions**

One of the most widely used of all the standardized academic achievement tests. The ITBS measures performance in numerous areas, from early learning skills in the Primary Battery (listening, vocabulary, word analysis, and so on) to social studies and science in the Multilevel Battery (grades 9 through 14). School administrators vary widely in their choices of which “test package” to use at any given time. Therefore, one school district might choose Level 7 of the Basic Battery, which includes fewer tests than Level 7 of the Complete Battery. The Multilevel Battery offers a supplemental writing test. In addition to basic reading, language, and math skills, some levels in the ITBS also include tests that assess a child’s ability to use reference tools, read maps, and interpret graphs. (16)

Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC)

The K-ABC measures both intellectual ability and achievement. The intellectual ability portions of the test measure two ways of processing information: sequential reasoning and simultaneous processing. The former involves the ability to see spatially integrated relationships (e.g. arranging shapes to match a model or recalling placement of pictures in a group). The achievement portion of the K-ABC measures such things as word recognition, grasp of concepts, and expressive vocabulary (Ages 2 ½ to 12 ½). (15)

Key Math Diagnostic Arithmetic Test, Revised (Key Math-R)

Key Math-R assesses a child's understanding and application of mathematical concepts and skills. It has thirteen subtests in three areas: basic concepts, operations, and applications. It is intended for students in grades K through 9. (16)

Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), Sixth Edition

The OLSAT is a basic mental abilities test, designed to measure a child's capacity to learn in those areas traditionally taught in school. Some test items are verbal, in that words, word combinations, and word meanings are used to measure verbal reasoning skills. Other test items are nonverbal and assess the ability to evaluate objects and see relationships among various pictorial representations. Numerical and quantitative concepts are also assessed. (16)

Peabody Individual Achievement Test, Revised (PIAT-R)

The PIAT-R measures achievement using six subtests: Mathematics, Reading Recognition, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, General Information, and Written expression. (Grades K through 12). (16)

School Readiness Survey, Second Edition

The test consists of six sections, each of which measures basic skills needed in kindergarten-level activities (e.g., knowledge of colors, shapes, and numbers). General knowledge is evaluated. (16)

Screening Test of Educational Prerequisite Skills (STEPS)

The STEPs measures the basic skills 4 to 5 year olds need for kindergarten. The test is divided into five areas: intellectual skills, verbal information skills, cognitive strategies, motor skills, and attitudes in learning situations. An optional home questionnaire is included. (16)

Slingerland Screening Tests for Identifying Children with Specific Language Disability (Slingerland Tests)

The Slingerland tests measure multisensory (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) skills related to reading and spelling abilities (Ages 6 to 12). (16)

Stanford Achievement Test Series, Eighth Edition: Stanford Achievement Test (The Stanford), Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT), Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)

The Stanford tests are used by some school districts to fulfill state or locally mandated testing requirements. The Stanford test series measures many areas of academic achievement: reading, language arts, mathematics, and science, among others. It also includes tests that measure listening skills, and some test items throughout the battery are scored under a category called thinking skills. (16)

Test of Written Adolescent and Adult Language- Third Edition (TOAL-3)

The Test of Adolescent and Adult measure receptive and expressive language, both spoken, and written. It provides a fairly complete assessment of a persons ability to use language skills and acquired vocabulary. (16)

Vision Screening

The most commonly used screening tests-The Snellen Wall Chart and the Snellen E Test- measure visual acuity (sharpness of vision). Acuity problems are sometimes the

cause of a child's inability to distinguish letters or numbers, which results in difficulty with classroom work.

The problems that may be revealed in this screening are hyper-opia (farsightedness); myopia (nearsightedness); astigmatism, a condition characterized by an irregular curvature of the cornea or lens of the eye; strabismus, crossed eyes that result from a muscle imbalance, meaning that the eyes do not work in a coordinated way; amblyopia, commonly known as lazy eye, which also results from a difficulty in the eye muscles. Screenings for color blindness are common in later school years or are included in other, more comprehensive vision screenings. (16)

Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)

The WRAT is a test of reading, written spelling, and arithmetic skills. Two levels of WRAT are available: one for children ages 5 to 11, and one for ages 11 and up. (16)

Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery (WJPEB)

WIPEB tests a student's cognitive abilities, scholastic aptitude, achievement, and interests (Ages 3 to adult). The test is long and complex, and some sections are timed, whereas others are not. The cognitive ability test (Part I) has twelve subtests that measure various areas of language, math, memory, and verbal reasoning skills. The achievement tests (Part II) is divided into ten subtests that measure a child's knowledge of science, literature, art, problem solving, humanities, and social skills. Part III measures interests and consists of five subtests. The examiner may decide to use only certain sections of the test. (16)

Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, Revised

The test measures several aspects of reading ability through six subtests and supplementary letter checklist. The subtests are divided into three clusters. The Readiness cluster measures visual-auditory learning and letter identification; the Basic Skills cluster measures the child's word identification and word attack skills; and the Reading Comprehension cluster measures the child's comprehension of words and passages. The test can be used for quick assessment of a child's reading ability, or to obtain more comprehensive diagnostic information (Grades k through 12). (16)

Psychological Tests

Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test (The Bender)

The Bender tests visual-motor integration and is sometimes used to detect neurological difficulties or emotional problems. (16)

The Child Behavior Checklist

The Child Behavior Checklist is not, strictly speaking, a test. Rather, it is a system of questions and responses designed to assess various aspects of a child's behavior from the point of view of those who have consistent contact with him or her. The checklist assumes that some behavior difficulties are present and seeks to get reports on these behaviors from teachers, parents, and, in the case of teenagers, from the child himself or herself. The Teacher Report Form gathers information on a child's classroom behavior; the Parent Report Form reports on behavior at home. Other observers could report behavior in a clinical setting, with the results compared with the parent, teacher, or "self" reports. (16)

Conners Parent Symptom Questionnaire (The Conners)

The Conners is not a test, but rather a checklist- style report designed to assess behavioral problems at home. (16)

Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT)

The K-BIT is used to estimate intellectual ability through two test categories: Vocabulary (verbal) and Matrices (nonverbal). The verbal portion measures school-related skills such as language development, understanding of verbal concepts, general information, and word knowledge. The nonverbal portion measures the ability to solve new problems, to understand relationships among pictures and designs, and to reason by

analogy. The K-BIT can provide a general idea of a child's intellectual strengths and weaknesses. (Ages 4 to adult). (15)

Slosson Intelligence Test -Primary (SIT-P)

The SIT-P is a new, brief, standardized screening test of children's intelligence. It is not just a lower extension of the SIT and SIT-R, but includes both Verbal and Performance items to give a balanced measure of a child's cognitive ability.

The SIT-P was designed to facilitate the screening identification of children at risk of educational failure, to provide a quick estimate of mental ability, and to identify children who may be appropriate candidates for deeper testing services. Test administrator will find the SIT-P to be very current and adaptable screening test for ages 2 through 8 years. (15)

Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale, Revised (WAIS-R)

WAIS-R measures the general intelligence of a person age 16 and older, and is used widely with older adolescents. It is commonly used in both school and clinical settings; it contains eleven subtests, scored on either Performance or Verbal scales. (16)

Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, Revised (WISC-R)

The WISC-R is designed to test general mental abilities and can identify those children who are in a learning environment either beyond or below their intellectual capacities (Ages 6 to 17). (16)

Weschler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Revised (WPPSI-R)

The WPPSI measures intellectual abilities of young children (Ages 3 years, 3 months to 7 years). (16)

Glossary of Professionals Service Providers

This is a brief list of some of the professionals who work with school aged children, along with a simple explanation of the services they provide. This list is a collection of professional service providers taken from the Glossary of Professionals, Parents' Educational Resource Center, (http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/glossary_of_professionals.html)

Audiologist

Assesses hearing acuity and provides services for auditory training; advises on devices for hearing amplification.

Child Psychiatrist

Medical doctor who specializes in the behavior and emotional aspects of infants, children, and adolescents and may prescribe medication for treatment as necessary.

Clinical Psychologist

Provides psychological and intellectual assessment and addresses issues relating to an individual's mental and emotional health.

Educational Consultant

Individual who may conduct educational evaluations; familiar with school curriculum but may or may not have a background in special education issues.

Educational Psychologist

Administers and interprets psychological and educational tests, interprets behavior, and consults with parents around educational issues. Sometimes referred to as a school psychologist.

Educational Therapist

Assesses, develops, and implements appropriate remedial programs for learning, emotional and behavior problems.

Neurologist

Medical doctor who assesses for potential damage to the brain and may provide medication to assist in enhancing brain function.

Neuropsychologist

Psychologist who assesses for possible impaired areas of the brain that might be affecting verbal and non-verbal functions in learning and social skills on the behavioral level. Provides interventions to help maximize cognitive strengths and minimize weaknesses.

Occupational Therapist

Treats for restoration or improvement of impaired motor or sensory functions in order to improve ability to perform tasks for independent living.

Pediatrician

Provides medical services to infants, children, and adolescents; trained in overall growth and development of these individuals and their motor, sensory, and behavioral development.

Program Specialist

Specialist with expertise in at least one of the disabling conditions and provides services of consultation, staff development, and program evaluation and innovation.

Psychiatrist

Medical doctor who treats behavior or emotional problems and may prescribe medications as necessary.

School Psychologist

Administers and interprets psychological and educational tests; assists with behavior management; provides counseling; consults with parents, staff, and community agencies about educational issues.

Speech and Language Specialists

Identifies and provides services for children with articulation problems, as well as expressive and/or reception language problems.

UNDERSTANDING TESTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Any given test is a sample of behaviors and abilities. This sample can be about knowledge, personality, aptitudes, career interests, skills, or a host of other human characteristics. Tests are designed to be given either to groups of students or to individuals. Statistics are simply ways to measure things and to describe relationships between things, using numbers. Different tests use different types of scores to describe the same concepts. When you measure educational progress, the test scores can be reported and compared in several different ways. For this reason a single type of test scale would be inappropriate and perhaps misleading. Gathering as much information about the child, as well as comparing different test scores, provides a better picture of what the child is able to or not able to do.

Three types of tests most commonly used to assess students in schools are: tests of achievement, ability (IQ), and behavior.

Achievement tests measure students' skills in subjects such as arithmetic, written language, social science and reading. There are four types of achievement tests:

Teacher made or textbook tests are designed to measure achievement in the skills studied in the classrooms.

Criterion-Referenced tests measure levels of skill to determine the appropriate next step or level to learn.

Diagnostic tests examine many parts of a skill and can help determine a child's specific problem(s).

Norm-reference tests, allow for the comparison of one student's score to others of the same age or grade.

Ability and Intelligence (IQ) tests measure a child's intellectual (also referred to as "cognitive") skills and knowledge of information learned both in and out of school. These tests may evaluate a child's ability to solve puzzles, use words, follow directions, remember numbers, or copy designs. The scores on these tests are sometimes used to predict how well a child will do in school.

Behavior Evaluations, are done with interviews, checklists, work samples, and observations of behavior, attitudes, interests, and beliefs.

This resource guide is a collection of educational and psychological tests and terminology that may be found in a student's cumulative folder. The student's school success will determine the types of assessment information found in a student's folder.

Most school districts test their students on standardized groups educational achievement tests at regular intervals. The results of these tests provide information about how well school districts are accomplishing their mission of educating children. In Wisconsin, school districts administer the Wisconsin Student Assessment System Test (WSAS) in the fourth, eighth, and tenth grades. When you measure educational progress, to understand a test score, you need to know two things: how the score compares to other students' scores, and how the score compares to a given performance standard. Scores that tell how a child does relative to other children are called "norm-referenced scores." Scores telling how a child does relative to a performance standard are called "criterion-referenced scores."

The most popular types of norm-referenced scores are percentiles, normal curve equivalents, standard scores, and stanines.

Percentiles are a norm-referenced score between 1 and 99. A percentile represents the proportion, or percentage of children who scored equal to or worse than the child.

Normal Curve Equivalents is a normal curve equivalent (NCE) is a two-digit score also between 1 and 99. However, a normal curve equivalent is an equal interval scale. It defines how well a child scores relative to the middle of the norm group, and does so in equal units.

Standard Scores are essentially the same kind of scores as NCE's, but they set the midpoint and standard deviation of the distribution to different values.

Stanines divide the range of scores into nine equal or standard units. This method simplifies the task of reporting where students are in the distribution. The intervals between stanines are fairly crude, and so stanines are a less precise description for where students fall than either NCE's or standard score.

Grade Equivalents are merely the mid point of a distribution of scores for children in a given grade. Grade equivalents are median scores defined so that half of the children in a given grade will score below the equivalent, and half of them will score above the equivalent. Grade equivalent scores are easily misunderstood, that is most people think they reflect criterion-referenced scores, or mastery of academic subject matter by grade.

Scores from criterion-referenced tests will often be the following: percentages, objective performance indexes, scale scores, and proficiency levels.

Percentage is the proportion of items a student answered correctly out of the total number of items in the test. Percentages range from 0-100 percent. Percentages are not

percentiles! Percentages are criterion-referenced, because they reflect performance against an absolute (0-100 percent), not a normative standard.

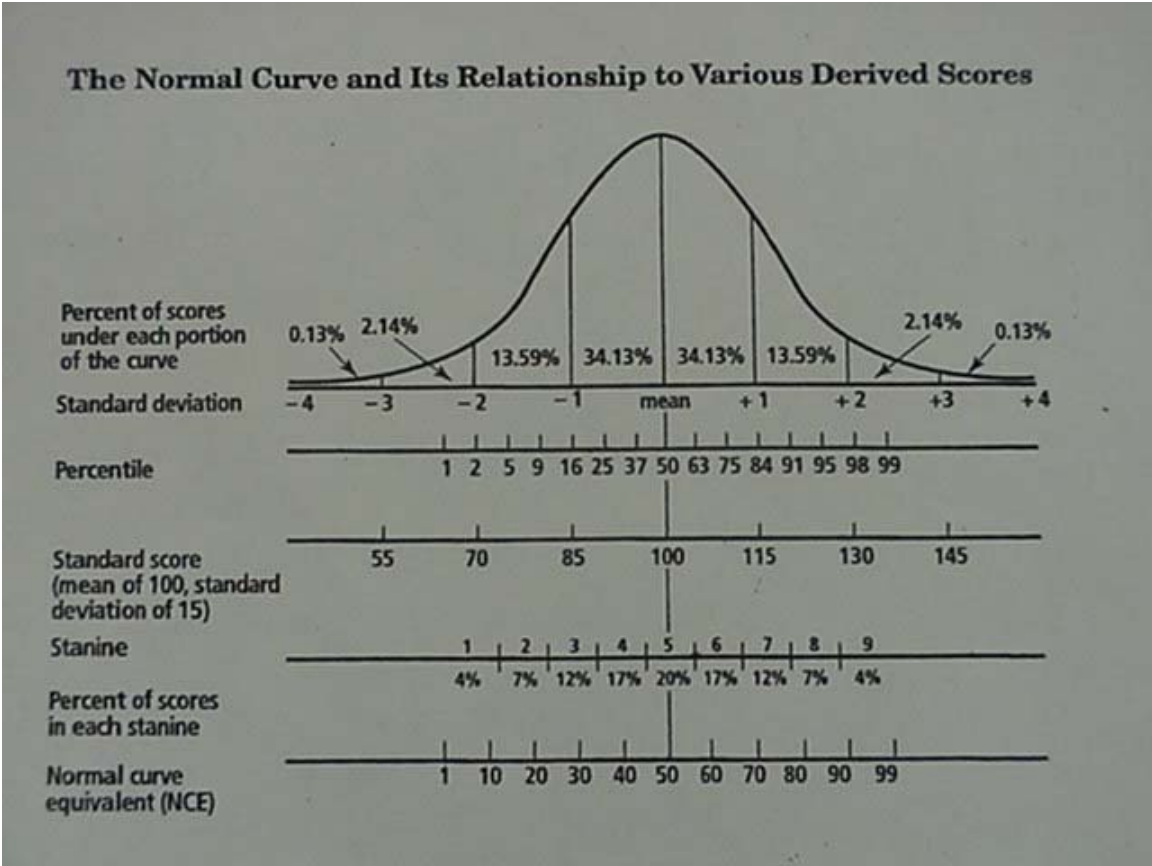
Objective Performance Index scores (OPI) estimate the percentage of items a student would get correct in a test in which all items measure the same academic objectives or skill. OPI, like percentages, range from 0-100 percent. However, they are grouped into three categories. Mastery (75-100 percent) - OPI's in this range suggest the student has mastered the skill. Partial Mastery (50-74 percent) - OPI's in this range suggest the student has partially, but not completely and reliably, mastered the skill. Non-Mastery (0-49 percent) - OPI's in this range suggest the student has not mastered the skill. OPI's are very useful scores, which can be used for planning instruction. These scores can identify individual strengths and weaknesses, as well as reviewing class averages and then determine which skills need to be reviewed or re-taught.

Scaled Scores, these scores are difficult to understand; yet they form the basis of all other scores, including state proficiency levels. Specific test items are linked to points in the curriculum. The child's score is then placed along the continuum from 0-900. Zero represents absolutely no knowledge and 900 represents complete mastery of the domain. Most students have acquired oral language, concepts of numeration, understanding of basic social units, and classification skills before entering kindergarten. Most students begin kindergarten approximately at a scaled score of 400 to 450. Scaled scores also have many advantages over the other scores. First, they describe a child's progress in the curriculum regardless of the level of test. Second, they can describe a child's absolute progress in curricular independent of the child's relative standing. The

third advantage of scaled scores is that they can be used to fix expectations for a given level independent of how well other students do on the test.

Proficiency Levels, proficiency levels set grade level expectations for curricular mastery. They define certain points in the curriculum as goals for tests within a subject matter. There are four proficiency levels for a given grade (fourth, eighth, or tenth) that has been established in different curricular areas (minimal performance, basic, proficient, and advanced).

The Bell Curve, (Standard Normal Curve) shows a typical distribution of scores on a test. The Bell Curve is designed to show low-test scores on the left hand side of the diagram, and high scores on the right hand side. As the top line moves from lower bottom to higher top, more students are indicated. Therefore, the small space between the bottom line of the figure and the curve at the left end means few students had very low scores. The small space between the curve at the right and the bottom line means few students had very high scores. The large space between the curve and the line in the middle of the figure means lots of students have average scores. The Reviewing the child's scores show how they line up using the normal frequency curve or "Bell Curve" can also help in understanding where any particular child is located, when compared with other children who are the same age or in the same grade. The diagram illustrates where the various scoring methods fall within the frequency distribution.



Elliot, S., Bradon, J. (2000). Educational Assessment And Accountability For All Students. Madison, Wi.: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Acronyms Frequently Used

This list of acronyms is a compilation adapted from a number of sources. All items and definitions have been compiled through the Eric Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Updated August 23, 2000. <http://ericec.org/fact/acronyms.htm>

ABA applied behavior analysis

ABD antisocial behavior disorders

ABE adult basic education

ACROS automated cross referencing occupational system

ACT American College Testing

AD attachment disorder

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act; average daily attendance

ADC aid to dependent children

ADD attention deficit disorder

ADHD attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder

ADL activities of daily living

ADM average daily membership

ADR alternative dispute resolution

ADVOC Net adult vocational network

AEA acquired eleptiform aphasia (Landau-Kleffner syndrome)

AFDC aid to families with dependent children

AFS adult and family services

AG annual goal

AHSD adult high school diploma

AIDS acquired immune deficiency syndrome

AIT Agency for Instructional Technology

ALO alternative learning options

ALS advanced life support

AMD alternative mobility device

AP advanced placement

APD antisocial personality disorder

APE adaptive physical education

ARD admission, review, and dismissal committee

ARP advisory review panel

ASC advanced study center

ASL American Sign Language

AT assistive technology

ATC area technical center

AUT Autism

AVTI area vocational technical institute

BASIS Basis Adult Skills Inventory System

BD behaviorally disordered; behavior disorders; brain damaged

BEP behavioral education plan

BEST basic education study team

BETAC bilingual education technical assistance centers

BI brain injury

BIA Brain Injury Association; Bureau of Indian Affairs

BIP behavior intervention plan

BLS basic life support

BMP behavior management plan

BOCES Board of Comprehensive Education Services (New York State)

CA chronological age

CAI computer-assisted instruction

CAM certificate of advanced mastery

CAP control auditory processing

CAPD control auditory processing disorders

CAT committee on accessible transportation

CBA curriculum based assessment

CBM curriculum bases measurements

CC cross categorical

CD communication development; conduct disorder

CDA child development associate

CDRC child development and rehabilitation center

CDS children development specialist

CESA Cooperative Educational Service Agency

CFLA community and family living amendments

CFR Code of Federal Regulations

CHAP child health assurance program

CHD center on human development

CHI closed head injury

CIL center for independent living

CIM certificate of initial mastery

CLAS culturally and linguistically appropriate services

CLD culturally and linguistically diverse

CMHP community mental health program

CNS central nervous system

COTA certified occupational therapist assistant

CP cerebral palsy

CPPC cooperative personnel planning council

CPSE committee on preschool special education

CSA childhood sexual abuse

CSE case study evaluation; committee on special education

CSEF Center for Special Education Finance

CSPD comprehensive system of personnel development

CSS community support service

CTT community transition team

D&E diagnosis and evaluation

DARTS day and residential treatment services

DAS developmental apraxia of speech

DBL deaf-blindness

DCD developmental coordination disorder

D deaf

DD developmental disabilities; developmentally delayed

DDC developmental disabilities council

DDD division of developmental disabilities

DHHAP deaf and hard of hearing access program

DHR Department of Human Resources

DI direct instruction

DNR do not resuscitate

DODDS US Dept. of Defense Dependent Schools

DOE Department of Education

DON determination of need

DPI Department of Public Instruction

DREDF Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

DRG diagnostically related groups

DS direction services

DSM Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (for Mental Disorders)

EBD emotional and behavioral disorders

EC early childhood; exceptional child [ren]

ECE early childhood education

ECSE early childhood special education

ECT early childhood team

ED emotionally disturbed; emotional disorders; US Department of Education

EDGAR Education Department General Administrative Regulations

EEN exceptional educational

EFA experimental functional analysis

EHA Education for All Handicapped Children Act (since 1990, known as IDEA)

EI early intervention

EI/ECSE early intervention/early childhood special education

ELL English language learner

EMDR eye movement desensitization and reprocessing

EMH educable mentally handicapped

EMR educable mentally retarded

EMT emergency medical treatment

EPSDT early periodic screening diagnosis and treatment program

ERC education resource center

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

ESA education service agency

ESD exceptional student district

ESE exceptional student education

ESEA elementary and Secondary Education Act

ESL English as a second language

ESOL English for speakers of other languages

ESY extended school year

EYS extended year services (ECSE)

FAIP functional assessment and intervention program

FAPE free appropriate public education

FBA functional behavior assessment

FC facilitated communication; foster care

FDAB Fair Dismissal Appeals Board

FERPA Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (also known as the Buckley Amendment)

FIPSA Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

FLSA Fair Labor Standards Act

FMLA Family Medical Leave Act

FR Federal Register

FSA Family Support Act

FSD flexible service delivery model

FTE full-time equivalent

FY fiscal year

GAPS guardianship, advocacy, and protective services

GT gifted and talented

HBCU historically black colleges and universities

HI health impaired; hearing impaired

HOH hard of hearing

HS head start; high school

HSC high school completion

IASA Improving America's Schools Act

IAES interim alternative educational setting

ICC interagency coordinating council

ICD international code of diseases

ICDP individual career development plans

ICF intermediate care facility

ICFMR intermediate care facility for mental retardation

IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IDELR Individuals with Disabilities Education Law Report

IED intermittent explosive disorder

IEE independent education evaluation

IEP individualized education program

IEPC individualized educational planning committee

IEU intermediate educational unit

IFA individualized functional assessment

IFSP individualized family service plan

IHE institution of higher education

IHCP individualized health care plan

IHP individualized habilitation program or plan

IHTP individualized habilitation and treatment plan

ILC independent living center

ILP independent living plan

IMC instructional materials center

IML instructional materials laboratory

IPL initial program load

IPP individualized program plan

IQ intelligence quotient

ISP individualized service plan

ISS in school suspension

ITH intensive training home

ITIP instructional theory into practice

ITP individualized treatment plan (similar to IEP)

JDRP joint dissemination review panel

JOBS job opportunities and basic skills

JTPA Job Training Partnership Act

JJAEP juvenile justice alternative education

LD learning disabilities; learning disabled

LDA Learning Disabilities Association

LDP language development program

LEA local education agency

LEDS law enforcement data system

LEP limited English proficient

LICC local interagency coordinating council

LOF Letter of Finding issued by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

LPTA licensed physical therapy assistant

LRE least restrictive environment

LSSP licensed specialist in school psychology

LTCF long-term care facility

LTCT long-term care and treatment

MA mental age

MBD minimal brain dysfunction

MBO management by objective

MDC multi-disciplinary

MDT multidisciplinary team; manifest determination team

M/ED mental or emotional disturbance

MESC migrant education service center

MFCU medically fragile children's unit

MH multiply handicapped

MHM multihandicapped mainstream

MI multiple intelligences

MIS management information systems

MMR mild mental retardation

MR mentally retarded or mental retardation

MR/DD mentally retarded/developmentally disabled

MR/MED mentally retarded and mentally or emotionally disturbed

MSDD multisystem developmental disorder

MST multisystem developmental disorder

NCES National Center for Education Statistics

NDT neurodevelopmental treatment

NEA National Education Association

NICU neonatal intensive care unit

NSBA National School Boards Association

OCD obsessive compulsive disorder

OCR Office of Civil Rights

ODAS occupational data analysis system

ODD oppositional defiant disorder

OE open entries

OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OHI other health impairment

OMI other minorities

OSEP Office of Special Education Programs, US Department of Education

OT occupation therapy/therapist

OT/PT occupational therapy/physical therapy

P and A protection and advocacy

PACER parent advocacy coalition for educational rights center

PALS peer-assisted learning system

PAVE parents advocating for vocational education

PCA personal care attendant

PDD pervasive development disorder

PDD-NOS pervasive development disorder-not otherwise specified

PEATC parent education advocacy training center

PECS picture exchange communication system

PEL present education level

PET pupil evaluation team

PIC private industry council

PLATO programmed logic automatic teaching operations

PLOP present level of performance

PPCD preschool program for children with disabilities

PPS pupil personnel services

PT physical therapy/therapist

PTA physical therapist assistant; post-traumatic amnesia

PTG parent teacher group

PTSD post-traumatic stress disorder

PTT planning and placement team

PVS persistent vegetative state; private vocational schools

PY project year

QAFB questions about functional behavior

QMRP qualified mental retardation professional

RAD reactive attachment disorder

RCF residential care facility

RCH residential care home

RDD reading disorder-dyslexia

R&D research and development

REBT rational emotive behavior therapy

REI regular education initiative

RFP request for proposal

RMT regional management team

RRC regional resource centers

RSP resource specialist

R&T research and training

RTC residential treatment center

RTH residential training home

RWQC regional workforce quality committee

SAT scholastic aptitude test

SBE state board of education

SB L-M Stanford-Binet, Form L-M (language /memory)

SDC special day class

SEA state education agency; state education association

SECC special education child count

Section 504 part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is an anti-discrimination law, obliges public schools to provide accommodations to students with attention deficit disorders (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) even if they do not qualify for special services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

SED seriously emotionally disturbed

SENG supporting the emotional needs of the gifted

SERVE secondary education reporting of vocational enrollment

SIB self-injurious behavior

SICC state interagency coordinating council

SIG state improvement grant

SILP semi-independent living program

SIP state improvement plan

SIS shared information systems

SLC structured learning center

SLD specific learning disability

SLP speech-language pathologist assistant

SLR state liaison representative

SPENSE study of personnel needs in special education

SOL standard of learning

SOSCF states offices for services to children and families

SPED special education

SSA social security act; SSA Social Security Administration

SSBD septimatic screening for behavior disorders

SSD social security disability

SSDI social security disability income

SSI statewide systemic initiative; supplemental security income

SST student study team; student support team

STO short-term objective

TAG talented and gifted

TBI traumatic brain injury

TDD telecommunication devices for the deaf

TESOL teachers of English for speakers of other languages

TIP teacher improvement process

TLC therapeutic learning center

TMH trainable mentally handicapped

TMR trainably mentally retarded

TPP transition planning process

TTY teletypewriter (phone system for deaf individuals-see TDD)

UAF university affiliated facility

UAP university affiliated program

VAC vocational adjustment counselor

VCD volitional conduct disorder

VEDS vocational education data system

VI visually impaired

VRD vocational rehabilitation division

VSA very special arts

WAC work activity center

WISC-R Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children Revised

WISC-III Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children-Third Edition

WQC workplace quality council

WRAP wraparound program

YTP youth transition program

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APPENDIX A

Administrators

3. How often do you utilize a student's cumulative folder?
4. What specific information do you look for in a cumulative folder?
5. Who has access to student cumulative folders? Teachers? Parents? Etc.
6. What procedures are in place for ensuring confidentiality of the content of the folders?
7. Do you understand and know how to interpret the standardized tests scores for each child?
8. Do you ever utilize standardized test information?
9. What are the value(s) of teachers looking at student cumulative folders?

Teachers (elementary)

3. What specific information do you look for in a cumulative folder?
4. Have you found that the folders have worthwhile information that you can utilize?
5. How do you utilize the information obtained in the folder?
6. How often do you utilize a student's cumulative folder?
7. Do you understand and know how to interpret the standardized test scores for each child?
8. Do you ever utilize standardized test information?

Teachers (secondary)

1. How often do you utilize a student's cumulative folder?

2. What specific information do you look for in a cumulative folder?
3. Have you found that the folders have worthwhile information that you can utilize?
4. How do you utilize a student's cumulative folder?
5. Do you understand and know how to interpret the standardized test scores for each child?
6. Do you ever utilize standardized test information?
7. Do you know where the cumulative files are located?
8. Do you know how to access the cumulative files in your building?