RIVIER UNIVERSITY

**DIVISION OF EDUCATION**

# **SPECIALIST IN THE ASSESSMENT OF INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING PROGRAM**

AND

**ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALISTS IN ASSESSMENT OF**

**INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING (ASAIF)**

[**http://www.asaif.net**](http://www.asaif.net)

**Comments on Reports Vernal Equinox 2017 # 260**

**CONTENT**

As you know, there have been difficulties with the IDEA website <http://idea.ed.gov/>. It seems to be functioning now and tells us, "February 16, 2017. Thank you for visiting the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) resource website – IDEA.ed.gov! After a technical outage of this page, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has restored the functionality and resources that were available prior to February 8, 2017. Please be aware that some of the materials herein are outdated, and that you may find the most current regulations, statute, and additional IDEA-related resources on the [OSERS/OSEP IDEA webpage.](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/osep-idea.html) Thank you for your interest and dedication to providing a high quality education for children and youth with disabilities!" Guy McBride <http://www.myschoolpsychology.com/> delved deeper and reported:

Over the past weeks, the IDEA web pages maintained by the United States Department of Education have periodically gone dark.  Some of our links were also down temporarily, although we replaced them with links to archived pages on the **[Wayback](https://archive.org/web/)** machine.

**Update:**  On February 22, 2017 the [**IDEA website**](http://idea.ed.gov/) was on-line again.  However, not all of the resources available on the previous web page have been restored.  For example, it was previously possible by pasting a quotation from the Comments/Discussion section into Google to get a link on the IDEA website to the specific Comments/Discussion section.   Now those links only result in a Routing Error.

If something you fondly remember seems to be missing, you could try, as Guy wrote, the Wayback Machine copy of the pre-crash website, which Erica Culler kindly dug up: [https://web.archive.org/web/20161228141735/http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home](https://web.archive.org/web/20161228141735/http:/idea.ed.gov/explore/home)

OSERS is also soliciting input from us.



## [U.S. Department of Education Seeks Comments on New Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Website](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTcwMzA4LjcwODcyMzcxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE3MDMwOC43MDg3MjM3MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3ODM1ODMxJmVtYWlsaWQ9c2ZhZ2VuQGJpcmNodHJlZWNlbnRlci5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPXNmYWdlbkBiaXJjaHRyZWVjZW50ZXIub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&100&&&https://sites.ed.gov/osers/2017/03/department-of-education-seeks-comments-on-new-idea-website/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is seeking input from users of the [**IDEA.ed.gov**](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTcwMzA4LjcwODcyMzcxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE3MDMwOC43MDg3MjM3MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3ODM1ODMxJmVtYWlsaWQ9c2ZhZ2VuQGJpcmNodHJlZWNlbnRlci5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPXNmYWdlbkBiaXJjaHRyZWVjZW50ZXIub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&101&&&http://IDEA.ed.gov?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=) website as part of our effort to provide updated, easy-to-navigate IDEA resources to children with disabilities and their families, teachers, administrators, advocates, and other stakeholders. To help us facilitate this effort, OSERS has posted a [**Blog**](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTcwMzA4LjcwODcyMzcxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE3MDMwOC43MDg3MjM3MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3ODM1ODMxJmVtYWlsaWQ9c2ZhZ2VuQGJpcmNodHJlZWNlbnRlci5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPXNmYWdlbkBiaXJjaHRyZWVjZW50ZXIub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&102&&&https://sites.ed.gov/osers/2017/03/department-of-education-seeks-comments-on-new-idea-website/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)for you to provide comments. OSERS appreciates your support and suggestions as we continue efforts to improve our online resources as part of our commitment to ensure that infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families have the supports and services they are entitled to under the IDEA.

Update your subscriptions, modify your password or email address, or stop subscriptions at any time on your [Subscriber Preferences Page](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTcwMzA4LjcwODcyMzcxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE3MDMwOC43MDg3MjM3MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3ODM1ODMxJmVtYWlsaWQ9c2ZhZ2VuQGJpcmNodHJlZWNlbnRlci5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPXNmYWdlbkBiaXJjaHRyZWVjZW50ZXIub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&103&&&https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/subscriber/new?preferences=true). You will need to use your email address to log in. If you have questions or problems with the subscription service, please contact [subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTcwMzA4LjcwODcyMzcxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE3MDMwOC43MDg3MjM3MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3ODM1ODMxJmVtYWlsaWQ9c2ZhZ2VuQGJpcmNodHJlZWNlbnRlci5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPXNmYWdlbkBiaXJjaHRyZWVjZW50ZXIub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&104&&&https://subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com/).

This service is provided to you at no charge by [U.S. Department of Education](http://links.govdelivery.com/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTcwMzA4LjcwODcyMzcxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDE3MDMwOC43MDg3MjM3MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3ODM1ODMxJmVtYWlsaWQ9c2ZhZ2VuQGJpcmNodHJlZWNlbnRlci5vcmcmdXNlcmlkPXNmYWdlbkBiaXJjaHRyZWVjZW50ZXIub3JnJmZsPSZleHRyYT1NdWx0aXZhcmlhdGVJZD0mJiY=&&&105&&&http://www.ed.gov/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=).

When we click our way into <http://idea.ed.gov/>, we are faced with a choice between Part B and Part C. Guy McBride has kindly assembled and posted a lot of valuable, new Part C information at <http://www.myschoolpsychology.com/federal-regulations/part-c-of-the-idea/>

Beginning January 1, 2017, **the vast majority of students who are approved for and using testing accommodations at their school through a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan will have those same accommodations automatically approved for taking the SAT®, PSAT™10, PSAT/NMSQT®, SAT Subject Tests™, and AP®Exams.** Most private school students with a current, formal school-based plan that meets College Board criteria will also have their current accommodations automatically approved for College Board exams. This streamlined process builds on the College Board’s August 2016 expansion of testing accommodations that can be approved directly by schools without the need for additional documentation. Additional information can be found at

<https://www.collegeboard.org/releases/2016/college-board-simplifies-request-process-for-test-ccommodations> (I don't know why the URL has "ccommodations": 2 c's, 2 m's, only 1 a.)

This update is a good reminder that, whenever we consider doing an assessment for an agency, college, or employer, we must ourselves personally check the relevant website for current information. Requirements change and can appear arbitrary or even capricious. Occasionally, I have encountered schools and agencies that insisted on an earlier edition of a test that had been updated, sometimes several years previously. The new edition "is not on our list." I have learned to my sorrow that clients often provide outdated or incorrect information about what the institution currently requires, and I have not discovered the error until my report was rejected. Bummer.

**Using older editions of current tests.** This practice is widely condemned as a psychometric sin without exception. Bless me, for I have sinned. My practice (not necessarily best practice—that's your call) has always been to use the most recent test with good validity for the purpose.  In some rare instances, that practice includes using a subtest from a previous edition of a perfectly good current test.  I can think of a couple of random examples.

* Reading the Directions of School Work from the TORC-3, which has been supplanted by the TORC-4
* Elithorn Mazes from the WISC-IV Integrated, which has been supplanted by the WISC-V Integrated
* Story Recall and Story Recall Delayed from the WJ III NU, which has been supplanted by the WJ IV
* Visual-Auditory Learning and Visual-Auditory Learning Delayed from the WJ III NU, which has been supplanted by the WJ IV
* Memory for Names and Memory for Names Delayed from the WJ III NU, which has been supplanted by the WJ IV
* Phoneme Reversal from the original CTOPP, which was voted off the CTOPP-2 island.
* Porteus Maze, Vineland Revision (1965).  (*Just kidding, although I still have it and Pearson apparently still sells it.  I don't use it any more, but it was fun because you were instructed to pull the maze away from the examinee immediately upon the first error, so there would be a jagged pencil line to the edge of the paper if the examinee did not lift the pencil when you yanked the maze.*)

In some cases, the only real interest is in the content of the (sub)test, not a score, for example, Directions of School Work from the TORC-3. In such cases, I would not report a score at all, but discuss the content of the examinee's responses. If there were not much to discuss, I should not have bothered to dust off the old test.

I use scores from a supplanted and superannuated test only when I believe I really need to assess a specific skill and there is nothing newer or better on the market.  In the list of tests in the Appendix to my report, I would write something like the following.

**Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Tests of Cognitive Ability, and Diagnostic Supplement (WJ III). Richard W. Woodcock, Kevin S. McGrew & Nancy Mather, Riverside Publishing, 2001; Normative Update, 2007.**

            The WJ III measures a great many aspects of cognitive abilities and academic achievement with a wide variety of relatively brief tests.  The three batteries of the WJ III were normed on 8,818 children and adults (4,783 in grades kindergarten through 12) in a well-designed, national sample.  The norms were revised in 2007 to reflect current U. S. Census data.  The WJ III has been supplanted by the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability, Academic Achievement, and Oral Language, Fourth Edition (WJ IV; Fredrick A. Schrank, Kevin S. McGrew, & Nancy Mather, Riverside Publishing, 2014), but the three delayed recall tests listed below were not included in the WJ IV.  The three WJ III delayed-recall tests are the only delayed-recall tests I could find that offered norms for a delay longer than 45 minutes, so I used these tests to assess Namexx's delayed recall over a span of xx days.  Because the norms are so old, these WJ III scores must be interpreted with even more than the usual caution.

Story Recall: the student retells stories that were dictated to the student.

Story Recall – Delayed: the student again retells the stories heard and retold earlier.  There are norms for delays from 30 minutes to 8 days.  The score is compared the scores of other students with the same length of delay.

Visual-Auditory Learning.  The student is taught rebus symbols for words and tries to “read” sentences written with those symbols.

Visual-Auditory Learning – Delayed.  The student tries again to "read" sentences written with the rebuses learned in Visual-Auditory Learning.  There are norms for delays from 30 minutes to 8 days.  The score is compared the scores of other students with the same length of delay.

Memory for Names.  The student is taught nonsense names for cartoon space creatures and tries to recall the names when the cartoon creatures are repeatedly presented.

Memory for Names – Delayed.  The student is retested on the previously learned names for cartoon space creatures. There are norms for delays from 30 minutes to 8 days.  The score is compared the scores of other students with the same length of delay.

If one of the referral questions were, "Why does Namexx seem to pay attention and know material right after I have taught it, but then seem to be utterly clueless the next day?" I might be desperate for a normed measure of overnight recall, even if those norms were antiquated.  Then I could begin my investigation of the question by acknowledging that standardized, normed testing agreed with the observation or by ruefully telling the teacher, "Sorry, it's you.  Namexx listened to passages played from a CD and retold the stories as accurately as or better than 67 percent of students hxx age (percentile rank 67).  Two days later, Namexx retold the stories again from memory with accuracy as good as or better than 83 percent of students hxx age with two-day delays (percentile rank 83)."

In addition to the disclaimer in the test description in my Appendix, I would insert a footnote every time I mentioned a WJ III score in text or listed it in a table in text or in my Appendix.  (Footnotes are a lot easier in Microsoft Word than on a typewriter!).

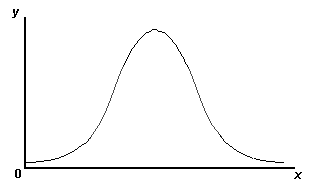
\* This score is from an earlier (2001/2007) edition of the Woodcock-Johnson and must be interpreted with even more than the usual caution.  The 2014 edition of the Woodcock-Johnson does not include this test of delayed recall.

I would, of course, keep relentlessly searching for a more recently normed test that accomplished the same purpose.

Some recent listserv discussions have reminded me that people are not paying as much attention as we should to **predicted scores** (e.g., achievement, job performance, football skills,[[1]](#footnote-1) or semen quality[[2]](#footnote-2) predicted from IQ[[3]](#footnote-3), job performance predicted from vocational tests, retest scores, etc.). As Francis Galton noted recently,[[4]](#footnote-4) a predicted score will be between the predictor and the mean of the distribution (50th percentile). In his usual clear, engaging style, Joel Schneider explains this phenomenon at <https://assessingpsyche.wordpress.com/2013/12/16/video-tutorial-misunderstanding-regression-to-the-mean/>. I recently saw a protracted discussion of the puzzle of a student with a FSIQ score in the 60s reaching achievement levels in the 70s and 80s. Many thoughtful hypotheses were advanced to account for this anomaly and to call into question the validity of the FSIQ before it was finally pointed out that the achievement scores were approximately what would be predicted from the FSIQ according to the WISC-V manual. Nothing to explain.

Some school teams compound the error of identifying specific learning disabilities through application of some arbitrary numerical formula involving IQ and achievement scores by using a "simple difference" method in which the predicted achievement score is the same as the IQ. If forced into using a formula by your state law, try (if permitted by your state law and local rules pursuant to that law) to use predicted achievement. The technical manuals for most IQ and achievement tests provide tables of predicted achievement scores and critical values for significant differences and base rates for differences between predicted and actual achievement scores. These tables leapfrog as new editions come out. The KTEA-3 tables based on correlations between ability scores and KTEA-3 subtest and composite scores, so you could use a published correlation between a new IQ test and the KTEA-3 scores.

high cathedral ceiling

My simple-minded mental image shows more room for variation under the high cathedral ceiling at the mean of the normal distribution than under the low eaves at the extremes. Not very sophisticated, but a handy mnemonic for people like me.

low eave

low eave

New IQ tests are often unfairly criticized because special-group studies in their manuals report relatively high scores for examinees identified as having intellectual disabilities and relatively low scores for examinees previously identified as gifted. The critics do not realize that regression towards the mean also applies to retesting. Please see <https://assessingpsyche.wordpress.com/2013/12/16/video-tutorial-misunderstanding-regression-to-the-mean/> for more and better information. There are, of course, quirks, as when a student chastened by a below average SAT scores takes a prep course and studies like crazy to earn above average scores on the retest or a student quits drinking between pre- and posttests.

**STYLE**

Don’t write merely to be understood. Write so that you cannot possibly be misunderstood.

– Robert Louis Stevenson

That's not writing; that's just typewriting. (Also quoted as, "That's not writing; that's typing.")

Truman Capote, 1959

**"Post-truth"** was named Word of the Year by the Oxford Dictionaries. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/16/post-truth-named-2016-word-of-the-year-by-oxford-dictionaries/>. I am retiring in the nick of time. My students for my remaining semester should be aware that ED 659 and 810 will not be on a post-truth basis.

I recommend using the **past tense** (*Ralph's score was . . .* ) to report test results. The present tense (*Ecomodine's IQ is* . . . ) tends to give some readers the impression that the score is a highly reliable and valid indication of an enduring characteristic. The past tense seems to suggest that this was how the student scored on that particular test that particular morning or afternoon, which is, I think, more accurate. To say *Ecomodine's IQ is in the wicked below average range of intellectual ability* is to imply that the particular test is a complete and valid measure of all relevant areas of intellectual ability, that her score was valid, and that the score is sufficiently reliable that she would continue to score in the same classification if she were retested tomorrow. None of these implications is trustworthy. It seems more prudent to report that *Ecomodine scored wicked below average range on the WISC-IV.*

**Bi-weekly** is a word that we simply should not use. Ever. I have consulted several dictionaries, which were unanimous in defining *bi-weekly* as meaning both "twice a week" (about eight times a month) and "once every two weeks" (about two times a month). Even if the reader of your report, Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Written Prior Notice (WPN; a notice written in the future perfect indicating what the school is about to have done) takes the trouble to look up "bi-weekly" in a dictionary, the poor reader still will not know what you meant. We need to write "once every two weeks" or "twice a week." If you think the writing becomes too bland without "bi-weekly," substitute "fortnight" for "two weeks." At least then, a dictionary will provide a single meaning.

**Triennial** is another word that will send the long-suffering reader to a dictionary. What's wrong with "three-year"?

Some folks capitalize **Kindergarten** because it is a German word (I think it means "children's garden")[[5]](#footnote-5) and Germans seem to capitalize all nouns (as we used to do some of the time in English with common nouns the writer considered important). Others do not capitalize *kindergarten* because we are in America and we should all write American. I go back and forth, depending on my medications, but I do try to be consistent within a single document, which is probably a good idea.

I try not to use "**negative**" with two different meanings in the same sentence or even the same report. Readers can be confused by "negative" meaning "no diagnosis or significant result," "inverse statistical relationship," and "sucky."

*The negative results of his health screening were a surprise, given the negative correlation between longevity and the negative life-style behaviors he favored, such as smoking, drinking, and spending nights and weekends writing evaluation reports.*

In fact, it is prudent always to be careful with the word "negative." Reporting that the testing for dyslexia or some horrible, lethal disease was "negative" will lead some people to think that they do have dyslexia or the horrible, lethal disease. Writing that John's obsessive fretting about language had negative consequences might mean that the consequences were bad or simply that there were no consequences (perhaps because nobody cared). Often, a different word, phrase, or clause will communicate more reliably.

Most of you know that I cling stubbornly to my beloved **Oxford** (or Harvard or serial) **comma**. Bob Walrath kindly sent me support for my viewpoint: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/16/oxford-comma-helps-drivers-win-dispute-about-overtime-pay?CMP=oth_b-aplnews_d-1>

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This newsletter goes out intermittently to about 400 people on eleven separate lists (because some mailboxes won't accept mailings to more than 49 recipients). If you wish to contact the entire list, not just your 1/11 of it, please send the message to me, and I will add it (subject to Comstock, Hays, Children's Internet Protection Act, HIPAA, FERPA, copyright, and Homeland Security considerations) to the next mailing. If you wish to be protected from receiving future copies, just email me at [johnzerowillis@yahoo.com](mailto:johnzerowillis@yahoo.com).

1. <http://wonderlictestsample.com/nfl-wonderlic-scores/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Arden, R., Gottfredson, L. S., Miller, G., & Pierce, A. (2009). [Intelligence and semen quality are positively correlated.](http://www.udel.edu/educ/gottfredson/reprints/2009semen.pdf) *Intelligence, 37*, 277-282.

   Pierce, A., Miller, G, Arden, R., & Gottfredson, L. S. (2009). [Why is intelligence correlated with semen quality? Biochemical pathways common to sperm and neuron function, and their vulnerability to pleiotropic mutations.](http://www.landesbioscience.com/journals/cib/article/8716) *Communicative & Integrative Biology, 2*(5), 385-387. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I am using "IQ test" generically to include cognitive ability tests that yield z-scores, GCA, GIA, CIX, and other scores. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Galton, F. (1886). Regression towards mediocrity in hereditary stature. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute, 15*, 246-263. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. New Hampshire's new Commissioner of Education, Frank Edelblut, “isn’t 'persuaded' that full-day kindergarten is the best option for kids, he said. 'I don’t think it's a great idea,' . . . . 'We have some risks associated with it for the kids in particular.'” "While [Governor Chris] Sununu has voiced support for state funding for full-day kindergarten, Edelblut is skeptical, but said he would implement the policy if it’s approved by the Legislature and governor." <http://www.concordmonitor.com/Frank-edelblut-nominated-as-education-commissioner-7539551> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)