

## Rivier University

### Department of Education

SAIF and Psy.D. Programs

ED 656, 657, 658, 659, 810

### Age Norms vs. Grade Norms

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**WE CANNOT EVER, EVER  
COMPARE GRADE-BASED  
ACHIEVEMENT SCORES  
TO AGE-BASED  
ABILITY SCORES!!!**

2

Johnny has been retained twice because of his weak reading. He is of average stature for his age and has average intellectual ability. Mixing age-based and grade-based percentile ranks, we obtain the following percentile ranks.

3

### Johnny's Scores

	Percentile Rank by Norms for:	
	Age	Grade
Height	50	90
Weight	50	90
Reading	01	50
IQ	50	90

4

### Johnny's Scores

	Percentile Rank by Norms for:		Percentile Rank by Norms for:	
	Age	Grade	Age	Grade
Height	50	90	50	
Weight	50	90		90
Reading	01	50		50
IQ	50	90	50	

Johnny is reading just fine,

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### Johnny's Scores

	Percentile Rank by Norms for:		Percentile Rank by Norms for:	
	Age	Grade	Age	Grade
Height	50	90	50	
Weight	50	90		90
Reading	01	50		50
IQ	50	90	50	

and he is obese.

6

Comparing an age-based score on one test to a grade-based score on another is not an apples-to-apples comparison. It is not even apples to kumquats. The comparison is meaningless.

7

If we use grade-based norms for the achievement test, we also need grade-based norms for the ability test to make any comparison. (The Woodcock-Johnson IV COG is an individually administered ability test with grade-based as well as age-based norms.)

8

Furthermore, when a student has had "the gift of time" (has been held out of school for a year or has repeated one or more\* grades), or scores by age norms differ notably from scores by grade norms for some other reason, we must report both sets of achievement scores.

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The truth does not reside fully in either set of norms. In such cases, we need to consider how achievement compares to both grade norms and age expectations.

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\* Repeating more than one grade is the gift that keeps on giving

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