

LD Test Selection Committee

Minutes of Meeting of January 23, 2009
(corrected 2/2/09)

Present: Janet Gibbs, Vickey Carleson, Mary Griffin, Tony Loveless, Fulvia Franco, Pam Plant, Dick Baer

New Members

Janet predicted the committee will lose Phil because he has purchased a home in Florida and his attention is drawn there. In light of this, the committee needs to solicit new members. They might be psychologists, speech language pathologists, or special education teachers. It is hard to attract special education teachers because it is hard to release them from the classroom. Janet will advertise that the committee is looking for new members.

Member List

Dick passed around an updated list of committee members and their contact information. Members made corrections. Dick will update the list again and distribute it.

High Praise

Committee members had high praise for the work Brad Althouse has done on the web based Estimator. The program and site get progressively better as he incorporates feedback from the committee and other sources.

Review of Web Based Estimator

1. Brad sent out revised instructions for how to navigate to the Estimator homepage and set up an account. The two versions, PDF and Word, both had links to the webpage. Dick reported they did not work for him. However, they worked fine on Janet's laptop during the meeting.
2. Considerable time was spent editing the Introduction to Estimator on the homepage (see attached revisions).
3. There may be some place where the program should send "are you sure" messages. For example, "Are you sure you want to close this report without saving a copy?"
4. The following edits were suggested for the description of Dr. Baer:

Dr. Baer's Ph.D. is in psychology. For many years, until his retirement in August 2008, he served as Director of Outreach, Development, and Dissemination for Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities. Within that role, one of his

responsibilities was to serve as chairperson of Utah's [SLD Eligibility Assessment LD Test Selection](#) Committee and content expert for the Estimator program. Dr. Baer continues to fill that role as well as pursuing research interests in learning disabilities diagnosis, violence against people with disabilities, behavior analysis, and program evaluation.

5. Letters in the bubbles on some of the pages are broken and unclear. For example, although the letters in the page copied below are clear, they are not clear on the webpage.

The screenshot shows the Estimator website interface. At the top, the header includes the site name 'Estimator', a user greeting 'Welcome, Brad Althouse | Your Account | Logout', and a status indicator '1 Member Online'. Below the header is a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Tools', and 'Resources'. A breadcrumb trail reads 'Main Site > Estimator formula and reports'. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Estimator Consultation', 'Estimator Materials', and 'SLD Eligibility Assessment Committee Materials'. Each section contains links to various documents and reports. Three callout boxes provide instructions: the first points to the 'Your Account' link, the second points to the navigation menu, and the third points to the breadcrumb trail. A fourth callout box points to a 'Feedback' link in the footer.

Estimator Welcome, Brad Althouse | [Your Account](#) | [Logout](#) 1 Member Online

[Home](#) [Tools](#) [Resources](#)

[Main Site](#) > Estimator formula and reports

Estimator Consultation

Click [here](#) to run an Estimator for consultation.

Estimator Materials

Manual:
[Estimator: Version 11.0 manual](#)

Sample Reports:
[Summary of Discrepancy Information report](#)
[Explanation of Percent Confidence report](#)
[Formula Intermediate Values report](#)

SLD Eligibility Assessment Committee Materials

Procedures:
[SLD Eligibility Assessment Committee Test Rating Procedures](#)

Meeting Minutes:
[November 2008 Committee Minutes](#)
[October 2008 Committee Minutes](#)
[September 2008 Committee Minutes](#)

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The "Your Account" link takes you to a page where you can change information related to your account, such as your password.

The menu bar gives you quick access to site resources such as the "What's New" page and training modules.

The breadcrumbs trail helps you to navigate around the site. The current page is in grey, the rest of the trail is links that you can click on to go to those pages. The "Main Site" is the login page.

The Feedback link is found on the bottom of every page on the Estimator site. When you click on it a screen will pop up where you can send a message to the support staff. Use the feedback to let us know about your comments, bugs, improvement ideas, or other needs. This is, by far, the best way to contact us.

Beta Test

Fulvia reported she has everything she needs to get the beta test started. It will be conducted at three Jordan district schools. If she needs help she will contact Dick and Brad, The beta test should take about a month. Thus, toward the end of Febuary we should be able to determine what final changes and necessary, how long it will take to make them, and when the web based Estimator program will be ready for general deseminatin.

Buros Mental Measurements Resourse

It was recognized the committee should have access to Buros online mental measurements resources. Janet will look into securing these resources through USOE.

Meeting Dates

Dates for future committee meetings were established as follows:

- o February 20
- o March 20
- o April 24
- o May 29
- o June 26
- o August 28
- o September 24
- o October 23
- o November 19
- o December 17

Test Reviews

1. Tony volunteered to review the Bracken Basic Concept Scale.
2. Dick reported he has not yet received the promised copy of the TAPS-3. He will follow up to see what happened.
3. Pam asked if there is a new version of the Test of Reading Comprehension the committee should review. We need to find out.
4. Mary pointed out there is a discrepancy between decisions on written language scales of the KTEA and WIAT-II. On one a spelling subtest is included, on the other it is not. On the one it is not included, the reliabilities are much lower. Discussion was tabled until the next meeting because time ran short.

Jose Martin

A discussion of Jose Martin's paper was on the agenda for discussion but time ran short. He mentioned Dawn Flanagan's work relative to assessing patterns of strengths and weaknesses in the assessment of LD. Pam brought some of her research to share. A good reference is:

Flanagan, D. P. & Ortiz, S. (2001). Essentials of cross-battery assessment., John Wiley & Sons.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2009.

Aptitude/Achievement Discrepancy Calculation Software for Help in Making Learning Disabilities Qualification Decisions

Overview

Federal Regulations

Traditionally, ~~special~~ Special education-Education programs were required by federal regulations to ~~demonstrate-determine~~ that students had ~~ave~~ a severe discrepancy between aptitude (~~intelligence~~ Q) and achievement in order to qualify them for special education services under the ~~specific~~ Specific learning-Learning disabilities-Disabilities (SLD) category. With the reauthorization of federal special education laws, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), qualifying students using a severe discrepancy model became an optional. ~~Under new federal regulations accompanying IDEA 2004, school districts can choose to continue using a severe discrepancy model, adopt a new model, for example, response to intervention, or use severe discrepancy in combination with other procedures in making SLD eligibility decisions.~~

Measuring Severe Discrepancy

~~How to~~ Appropriate procedures for measuring severe discrepancy has yes been a subject of much debate. Further, much criticism has been leveled at state and district special education programs for adopting technically inadequate procedures for measuring aptitude/achievement discrepancies. To address this issue, the United States Department of Education established the Special Education Programs Work Group on Measurements Issues in the Assessment of Learning Disabilities (Reynolds, C.R. (1984-85). Critical measurement issues in learning disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education*, 18 (4) 451-476.). This group of measurement experts developed the following formula and recommended it as most appropriate for measuring aptitude/achievement discrepancy.

$$z_x = (z_x r_p) - \left(\left(1.96 \sqrt{1 - r_p^2} \right) - \left(1.65 \left(\sqrt{1 - r_p^2} \right) \left(\sqrt{1 - \frac{r_p + (r_x r_p^2) - (2r_p^2)}{1 - r_p^2}} \right) \right) \right)$$

Estimator

Utah State Office of Education (USOE) adopted the Special Education Programs Work Group formula in 1989. The formula is lengthy and requires a user to know the reliability of the aptitude and achievement tests being employed as well as the correlation between the two tests. In light of this, the Estimator software program was developed to make it easy for special Special educators Educators to use the formula. Users enter demographic information on the students tested, the names of the aptitude and achievement tests administered, and ~~the~~ tests scores. The program uses the formula to calculate aptitude/achievement discrepancy and determine if the discrepancy

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is severe. It then generates three reports: (1) a Summary of Discrepancy Information which, summarizing demographic and test data for the student and making provides written statements as to whether the test data indicate a severe discrepancy between aptitude (IQ) and achievement; (2) an Explanation of Percent Confidence which, explaining how the program determined the level of that the difference in aptitude (IQ) and achievement scores represents a severe discrepancy arrived at the level of confidence it did that the test data indicate a severe discrepancy; and (3) an Estimator Formula Intermediate Values report which is, a technical report showing the values entered for all terms in the formula as well as values for intermediate steps in the calculation.

LD Test Selection Committee

To support the Estimator program, Utah USOE also established the LD Tests Selection Committee. The group meets monthly to review newly published aptitude (IQ) and achievement tests and determine their appropriateness for use in qualifying students as SL Devaluation procedures. This meets federal regulations and state rules for establishing the technical soundness of tests used in evaluations. Reliability and test-to-test correlation data for tests approved by the committee are entered into the Estimator program. The program has generally been updated and a new version distributed to school districts about every two years. The most recent version, Estimator: Version 11.0 was published in 2008.

Improvements

New Formula

In 1999, with publication of Estimator Version 7.0 modifications were made to the original Special Education Programs Work Group formula. The modified formula retained the basic regression characteristics of its predecessor, but incorporated a one-tailed test (the original formula employed a two-tailed test) and a mathematically more elegant way of correcting for test unreliability. The modified formula is shown below.

$$z_{cut} = (z_x r_{xy}) - \left(1.476 \sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{r_{xy}}{\sqrt{r_{xx}} \sqrt{r_{yy}}} \right)^2} \right)$$

Web Access

As noted, Estimator was traditionally updated and users provided with new program disks about every two years. Under this distribution method, users had to wait as much as two years after a test was published before it was included in the Estimator program. Beginning in 2009, internet

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access to Estimator was established. With this distribution method it became possible ~~to add improvement to the program, including newly approved tests, shortly after they were approved~~ update the program in a more timely manner.

Estimator-NJ

In 2000, a new version of Estimator, Estimator-NJ, was developed for the state of New Jersey. New Jersey chose to retain the original Special Education Programs Work Group formula rather than adopt Utah's modified version. The current version of Estimator-NJ is Version 3.0. Because it has been quite a few years since New Jersey has updated Estimator-NJ many New Jersey school districts have adopted the more recently updated Utah versions.

Cooperative Effort

Development of Estimator has been a cooperative effort among:

- o Utah State University - Center for Persons with Disabilities
- o Utah State Office of Education
- o New Jersey State Office of Education
- o New Jersey Association of Pupil Services Administrators
- o Effective Instructional Materials and Systems
- o DB Enterprises

Contact Information

For general questions about SLD qualification and Estimator contact:

Richard D. Baer, Ph.D.
(435) 752-6305
rd_baer@msn.com

For specific information about Estimator or to order contact:

Effective Instructional Materials & Systems
(435) 752-6305
rd_baer@msn.com

For specific information about Estimator-NJ or to order contact:

DB Enterprises
(435) 752-6305
rd_baer@msn.com

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