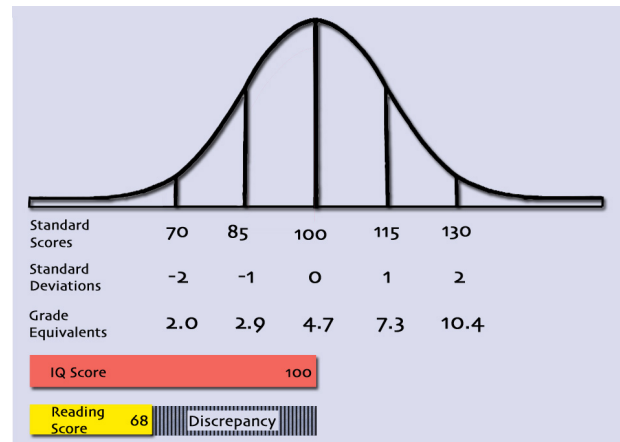


TOPIC: WHAT IS THE IQ-ACHIEVEMENT DISCREPANCY MODEL?

WHAT IS IT?

The IQ-achievement discrepancy model assesses whether there is a significant difference between a student's scores on a test of general intelligence (e.g., an IQ test such as the *WISC-IV*) and scores obtained on an achievement test (e.g., the *Woodcock Johnson Achievement Test*). The IQ-achievement discrepancy model is the approach traditionally used to identify children with learning disabilities. If a student's score on the IQ test is at least two standard deviations (30 points) higher than his or her scores on an achievement test, the student is described as having a significant discrepancy between IQ and achievement and, therefore, as having a learning disability.



KEY IDEAS



Many causes for concern exist regarding schools' use of the IQ-achievement discrepancy model as the method for identifying students with learning disabilities. Three major concerns are detailed here:

- This method does not allow schools to identify children as having learning disabilities while they are still in the primary grades.
 - Students often struggle for years prior to being identified as having learning disabilities.
 - Students often do not receive the support they need in the early grades.
- The information gathered from the IQ and achievement assessments does not indicate each student's specific learning needs:
 - The assessment process does little to inform classroom instruction.
 - It also is unable to provide information about whether classroom instruction meets each student's learning needs.
- The IQ-achievement discrepancy model can create inequitable treatment for students:
 - A variety of factors can cause students to be misidentified as having learning disabilities.
 - Many states and districts have experienced a disproportionate representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, based on traditional identification methods.



The Response-to-Intervention (RTI) approach is an alternative to the IQ-achievement discrepancy model for identifying students with learning disabilities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Articles

Reschly, D.J. (2005). LD identification: Primary intervention, secondary intervention, and then what? *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38*(6), 510-515.

Speece, D.L., Molloy, D.E., & Case, L.P. (2003). Starting at the beginning for learning disabilities identification: Response to instruction in general education. *Advances in Learning and Behavioral Disabilities, 16*, 37-50.

Books

Bradley, R., Danielson, L., & Hallahan, D.P. (Eds.). (2002). *Identification of learning disabilities: Research to practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
This book provides in-depth and detailed information on the identification of learning disabilities, including historical perspectives and the use of IQ-achievement discrepancy models, and has several chapters devoted to response to intervention.

Online Resources

National Research Center on Learning Disabilities

<http://www.nrcld.org>

The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Among its many activities, the center participates in RTI evaluation, technical assistance, and dissemination.

Please visit the IRIS Center's module RTI (Part 1): An Overview (http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rti01_overview/chalcycle.htm) for further information.