

TEST BIAS AS A BARRIER TO IDENTIFICATION

There are two competing views regarding the bias in standardized testing. The first contends that there is little or no evidence of bias in the most well-constructed tests of intelligence. The other view asserts that factors such as low SES status and differences in social and cultural heritage, in communicative behaviors, and in language contribute to test bias. Since testing of IQ and achievement continue to be part of identification processes, it's important to look at the issue of test bias.

Any time we talk about testing it's important that we are all operating with the same understanding of testing terminology.

Standardization - A standardized test is a test administered and scored in a consistent manner. The tests are designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner.

Norming - Process of developing test performance data of a group of test takers, designed as a reference for evaluating, interpreting, or otherwise placing in context individual test scores. To establish norms, the test developers try to take a representative sample of the school population at all age levels. However, because of the diversity of this population, this is almost impossible. The situation worsens when you try to compare IQ scores in different societies. Under the circumstances, no IQ score can be claimed as the best IQ score, even when all other variables remain constant.

Construct - An informed, scientific idea developed or generated to describe or explain behavior; some examples of construct include intelligence, personality, anxiety, and job satisfaction.

Reliability - The extent to which measurements are consistent or repeatable; also the extent to which measurements differ from occasion to occasion as a function of measurement error.

Validity - A general term referring to a judgment regarding how well a test or other measurement tool measures what it purports to measure; this judgment has important implications regarding the appropriateness of inferences made and actions taken on the basis of measurements.

Standard error of measurement - A statistic designed to estimate the extent to which an observed score deviates from a true score.