Brain Enhancement Center

The History of IQ

ONE NUMBER THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

If you listed the 10-most important scientific discoveries of the 20th century—such as DNA, atomic energy, or space flight—would "IQ" make your final cut? Many think it should. Created to quantify a person's intelligence, the IQ score and an unfortunate French-to-English translation changed the course of education for a hundred years.

In 1904, Alfred Binet was commissioned by the French government to develop a test to separate *intellectually normal* from *inferior* students. The purpose was to send lesser children to special education. At the time, he cautioned the test wasn't suitable as "a general device for ranking all pupils according to mental worth."

Just like today, some at the turn of the century believed intelligence was fixed, but Binet vehemently disagreed. "We must protest...[their belief] is founded on nothing." If the inventor of the IQ test never intended IQ to be a comprehensive picture of intelligence—and he knew it could be modified, what happened?

In 1909, H.H. Goddard translated the *Simon-Binet* (IQ) *Test* into English. He considered intelligence "a solitary, fixed, and inborn entity." His bias shaped the translation and led people to accept IQ . . . as a definitive, permanent representation of a person's quality.[1] American schools used the intelligence scales, but ignored Binet's warnings.

By the 1920's, the test's importance grew into a multi-million dollar industry. Popularity escalated, and according to the Mental Measurements Yearbook, 2,467 tests measuring some form of intellectual ability were in print by 1974. Five hundred million tests were given in one year in the 80's alone!

What's the problem? Intelligence tests are unreliable predictors of performance, and are inaccurate (sometimes varying by as much as 15 points from test to test.) If Goddard's position were true, IQ should obviously predict reading. However, there are clearly individuals with a low IQ who are good readers.[1] In another injustice, IQ tests are of inflated importance for people with learning disabilities. Most have deficiencies in one or more component skills that are part of the tests (such as word attack) and may lead to underestimating the real intelligence of that person.[2] The IQ score may be lower than someone who doesn't have these problems, even though they have identical reasoning and problem-solving skills.[3]

IQ tests measure what can be done now, not what can be done in the future [potential].[3] Parents are wise to seek testing designed to find out what exactly gives their child difficulty, not general intelligence. Get a child the testing and training he needs, and see what happens!

1 Strydom, Jan, Du Plessis, Susan. IQ Test: Where Does It Come From and What Does It Mean? http://www.audiblox2000.com/dyslexia_dyslexic/dyslexia014.htm
2 Das, Dr. J.P. Measuring a Child's IQ is an Obsolete Way to Determine Intelligence. Child Health News. 18 October 2004.
3 Siegel, Linda S. Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.

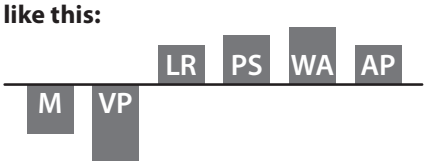
BrainRx™

A Look Inside Two IQ Scores

Why IQ Scores Alone Don't Tell the Whole Story

Student A: Rebecca is a polite, well-adjusted 6th grader. Her older sister has to help her occasionally with her homework, particularly in math, but in most subjects she gets by OK. She reads well enough to keep up with her peers, but struggles with geography and fractions. Rebecca's IQ score is 106. Testing revealed that her underlying memory and visual processing skills are weak and cause her struggles.

Rebecca's Cognitive Skills Profile™ looks like this:

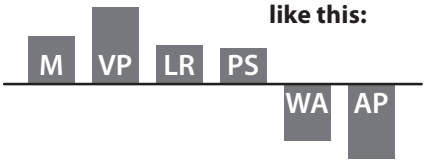


TWO STUDENTS

One IQ score—two different learning challenges. Specific, intense training in weak skills will help unlock the academic potential of both.

Student B: Anthony is frustrated and withdrawn at times. He's been to tutors and several after school programs with little success. He won't read and rebels when forced to try. He is barely passing his classes, except art. In art class he thrives and keeps a sketchbook with him all the time. Anthony's IQ score is 106, but his underlying word attack and auditory processing skills are weak.

Anthony's Cognitive Skills Profile™ looks like this:



M = Memory **VP** = Visual Processing
LR = Logic & Reasoning **PS** = Processing Speed
WA = Word Attack **AP** = Auditory Processing
*An IQ score of 100 is considered "Average".