



Gifted Education 103: Assessment

Identifying students for services can seem like a whirlwind of scores and recommendations. Knowing a few key terms and how they relate to each other can help you make more sense of it.

Raw Score

The **number of items answered correctly** on a test. When you tell a student that he/she answered 10 questions correctly out of 15 quiz questions, that is a raw score.

Normative Group

Before a standardized test is used in the general population, it is first given to a large group of representative students, in order to determine **how we might expect students in general to perform on the test**. This group is called the "normative" or "comparison" group. Later, when a student is tested, his/her scores can be compared to those in the normative group. The student's performance might be average, above average, or below average when compared to that normative group.

Scale Score

For standardized tests, raw scores are statistically adjusted and converted onto a common scale to account for differences in different forms of the same test. Scale scores allow the scores of students who took different forms of the test to be represented on the same scale. In other words, they adjust **everyone's scores** to be on the **same grading scale**.

Percentile Rank

Explains how well a student scored on a test **compared to other students**. A student who scores in the 50th percentile has a score that is higher than 50% of the other students' scores. Talented students tend to score at the 95th percentile or above when compared to their own grade group. In other words, they score higher than 95% of the other students in their grade.

In other words:

Always keep the comparison group in mind when looking at percentile rankings.

Raw scores...

...are converted to scale scores

...then compared via a percentile rank

(the number of questions answered correctly)

(so we can compare across different versions of the test)

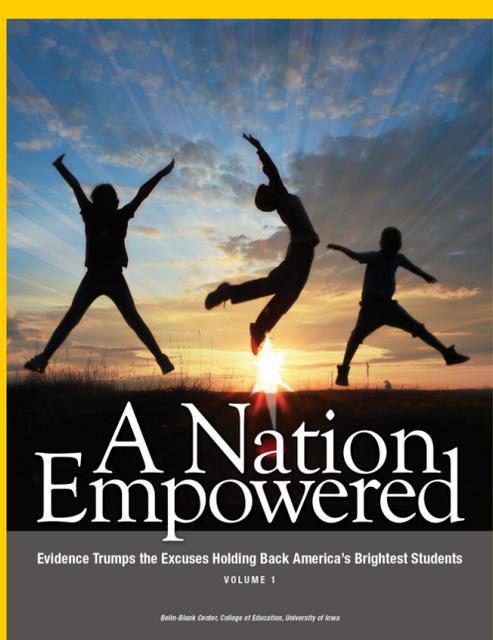
(to see how the student performed compared to others - either of the same age or older)

For instance, a 4th grader who out-scores 75% of 8th graders on a test needs much more challenging work than a 4th grader who out-scores 75% of other 4th graders on a test.

Extra Credit!

"**A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students**" provides the latest research and practical information about academic acceleration for highly capable students.

Download it for free at nationempowered.org!



Various Types of Tests in Gifted Education:



Ability test: A standardized test of general reasoning that assesses a student's competence in multiple areas, such as an IQ test. Students' scores are usually compared to others of the **same age**.



Achievement test: A test that measures what a student **has or hasn't learned**; it is usually given to students after completing a course or topic. You may know this as an end-of-course assessment or a post-test.



Aptitude test: A test that is used to **predict performance** in specific areas (e.g., SAT/ACT). Items are more content-specific and measure only one or a few abilities, as compared to intelligence tests, which measure a wide variety of abilities.



Above-level testing: Giving a test to younger students that was **developed for older students**. Also known as out-of-level testing or beyond-level testing.

High-ability students tend to "max out" or score at the very top of grade-level tests. We call this the **ceiling effect**. Above-level tests raise the ceiling, so that we can tell what the student is ready to learn next.

One example of above-level testing is high-ability **7th-9th graders taking the ACT** (yes, that ACT!). Learn more about why this is a good fit for some students at belinblank.org/whybests