
Melissa M. Edmonds

Abstract

Recent research in the area of gifted education has focused on developing alternate strategies for identification in order to increase the diversity of students identified for gifted services. Many alternate identification strategies rely on group-administered, nonverbal reasoning tests. Two of the most commonly administered group tests are the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). The purpose of this study was to compare the nonverbal scores of the most recent editions of each test in terms of gender, cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic sensitivity for gifted student identification. The study compared the test performance of 12,670 third-grade students in one school division who took both tests as part of a division-wide screening for gifted identification. No significant differences were found between the two tests in terms of the similarity of nonverbal mean scores and variances among subgroups, and neither test had an advantage in providing minority representation at hypothetical gifted program cut scores. The CogAT Form 7 (CogAT7) nonverbal subtest was a better predictor of student success on the Virginia third-grade end-of-course tests in math and reading than the NNAT second edition (NNAT-2). The results of this study suggest that divisions should not assume that the NNAT-2, a nonverbal figural reasoning test, has an advantage over the CogAT7 in terms of identifying minority students for gifted evaluation.