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**EVALUATION OF THE PERCEIVED USEFULNESS AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL TESTING
REPORTS AT INTERMOUNTAIN INTERTRIBAL SCHOOL**

MARVIN BRYCE FIFIELD

1982

EVALUATION OF THE PERCEIVED USEFULNESS AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL TESTING
REPORTS AT INTERMOUNTAIN INTERTRIBAL SCHOOL

by

Marvin Bryce Fifield

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

Major Professor

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M. Bryce Fifield

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of the Perceived Usefulness and
Effectiveness of Psychoeducational Testing
Reports at Intermountain Intertribal School

by

Marvin Bryce Fifield, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1982

Major Professor: Dr. Karl R. White
Department: Psychology

By law and according to conventional practice, individual psychoeducational testing is an essential part of the identification and placement process of handicapped students. However, evidence reported in the literature suggests that testing results, especially in the form of testing reports, are rarely fully utilized.

This study was conducted at Intermountain Intertribal School at Brigham City, Utah and demonstrated a method of collecting objective data about the use of psychoeducational testing reports as well as the opinions and suggestions of staff members who used them. More specifically, this study documented:

1. Who the primary users of testing reports were and for what purposes the reports were used.
2. The clarity, accuracy, utility and adequacy of the reports as perceived by staff members.
3. The extent to which reports provided users with unique information about the student being evaluated.

4. The specificity, reality, applicability, and usefulness of the report recommendations as perceived by staff members.

In spite of the fact that respondents generally found the reports to be free from jargon and judged the reports to be useful in preparing the student's educational program, results indicate that the testing results were used almost exclusively in the placement of the student and preparation of the student's individual education plan. Specific problems were noted in the writing and editing of the reports and recommendations for increasing the use and usefulness of testing reports are given.

(92 pages)

INTRODUCTION

By law, and according to conventional theory and practice, many important decisions concerning placement and educational programming for handicapped children should be based on information drawn from the interpretation of individual psychological and educational testing results. If such testing is to be helpful, school personnel responsible for making placement and programming decisions must not only be able to understand and interpret the report of test data, but they must also have confidence that the conclusions and recommendations based on these data are valid and appropriate.

Administering individual psychoeducational tests to children referred for possible handicapping conditions represents a substantial investment of time and money. However, as will be documented in the following section, the time and money being spent in administering individual psychoeducational tests in some situations may not produce information which is useful in making placement and programming decisions for three reasons. First, school personnel who use psychological reports frequently complain that the reports are difficult to understand and are not particularly useful. Second, information from reports is sometimes not accessible when needed, or people needing the information are not aware that the information exists. Finally, in some cases, the actual test administration and/or interpretation of the test results is inappropriate.

One setting in which the potential for the problems noted above is particularly acute is in schools serving large numbers of Native

American children. Additional factors which create barriers to the successful use of testing reports in such settings include: lack of appropriate norms for available tests; scarcity of culture and language-free instruments; unfamiliarity of contracting examiners with the language and culture of the child being tested; and the unfamiliarity of contracting examiners with the resources of the system in which the handicapped Native American student will be served. All of the above noted conditions contribute to a situation in which school personnel do not make full use of testing results when making educational placement and programming decisions for handicapped Native American children.

Although there is widespread agreement among people serving handicapped Native American children that testing results are not being effectively used, there is little empirical data which defines the problem so that effective intervention can be implemented. For example, teachers and administrators generally agree that testing results are often difficult to understand (see documentation in next section), but data identifying what specific parts or sections of testing reports are confusing have seldom been collected and analyzed systematically. The limited studies which have been conducted have not addressed the procedures for assessment outlined by PL 94-142 nor the unique needs of schools serving large numbers of Native American students.

Research Questions

This study was designed to document the extent to which testing

reports are used by school personnel and identifying the problems and obstacles which affect the procedures by which individual psycho-educational testing reports are written and presented at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Intermountain Intertribal School (IIS) at Brigham City, Utah.

This study provided an evaluation of the assessment and reporting procedures by determining how staff members at IIS perceive the clarity and utility of testing reports generated during the 1979-1980 school year for students referred as being potentially in need of special education services. More specifically, this study was designed to provide information about the following questions:

1. What were the primary uses of psychoeducational testing reports at IIS and who were the primary users during the period between September 1979 and May 1980?
2. To what degree do staff members at IIS who use the reports perceive them as being clear, accurate, useful and adequate?
3. To what extent do the testing reports provide users with unique and valuable information concerning the student being evaluated?
4. How do report users perceive the recommendations in a testing report in terms of specificity, reality, applicability, and usefulness and to what degree do the recommendations address the issues raised by the referring teacher?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose and Rationale for Psychoeducational Tests

Public Law 94-142 (the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975) mandated that certain procedures be followed in the process of educating handicapped children. One requirement is that all children referred for special education placement have "a statement of the present levels of educational performance..." [PL 94-142, Section 4 (a) (19)]. Federal regulations also state that "no single procedure shall be the sole criteria for determining an appropriate educational program of a child." [PL 94-142 Section 612 (5) (C)]. In compliance with this legal mandate, a group or battery of individually administered psychological and educational tests is one of the most frequently used methods of identifying a student's current level of educational performance and academic strengths and weaknesses.

The task of screening, identifying, and diagnosing learning problems has traditionally been the function of personnel trained in disciplines such as psychology, speech pathology and physical therapy, while the special educator has had the primary responsibility of delivering services to and instructing the exceptional child (Welch & Dowdy 1978). Despite this traditional separation of roles, the focus placed by PL 94-142 on the establishment of annual goals and short-term instructional objectives has emphasized the need for effective communication between diagnostician and special educator. In determining what skills the handicapped child is to be taught, the special educator must rely heavily on a detailed assessment of what

skills the child already has (Hofmeister, 1977).

Public Law 94-142 requires educational agencies serving handicapped pupils to develop written individual education programs for each handicapped child and to specify who will participate in the various elements of the program (Anderson, Barner, & Larsen, 1978). As a minimum, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must contain sections on assessment, goals and objectives, and evaluation and review procedures (Schenck & Levy, 1979). The results of individual psychological and educational testing data should provide valuable information for the development of appropriate IEPs. Formulating instructional objectives, identifying entry points in skill hierarchies and evaluating the effectiveness of a student's educational program can be made easier if the results of individual psychoeducational testing are understood and used by school personnel (Hofmeister, 1977; Schenck & Levy, 1979).

As has been noted, federal laws as well as state and local agency guidelines mandate that such assessment shall be a part of the IEP, however, the steps which must be taken between "assessment" and "instruction" are not well defined by the law, existing guidelines or regulations (Bagnato, 1980; Schenck & Levy, 1979).

Improving the link between assessment and instruction has been called the most important need which must be addressed by special educators (Schenck & Levy, 1979). The way in which diagnosis leads to instruction must be clear if special educators are to effectively use the results of psychoeducational testing to develop instructional programs for individual students. "Lack of communication between

psychologists and educators is a major contributing factor towards the problem of linking diagnosis to instruction" (Schenck & Levy, 1979, p. 12).

Communication of Testing Results

In most situations the written report of psychoeducational test findings is the primary means by which the psychologist communicates test findings to the teacher (Bagnato, 1980; Erwin & Cannon, 1973; Hartlage & Merck, 1971; Rucker, 1967; Shively & Smith, 1969). Hammond and Allen (1953) have suggested that the written testing report serves two purposes, communicating information and providing a written record of test results.

DiMichael (1948, p. 432) has likened the mission of the psychological report to that of a teacher in that both must "put the subject across". Specifically, the psychological report must be structured "so that the professional contents are transmitted and the message understood" (p. 432). The meaningful communication of testing results is every bit as important as the validity of the tests or the skill with which the psychologist administers the instruments (Hartlage, et al., 1968; Talent, 1976). Hammond and Allen (1953) reiterated the importance of the psychologist's ability to describe testing results by stating that "the communication of psychological examinations is no less important than the correct interpretation of the examination itself" (p. vi.). Several authors have suggested guidelines and "rules of thumb" to help increase the usefulness of the written report at communicating the results of psychoeducational testing (Cason, 1945;

Erwin & Cannon, 1973; Mayman, 1959). However, very few of the suggested guidelines have been systematically evaluated to determine if they significantly increase the usefulness of the written report.

Effectiveness of Written Reports

General problems. The effectiveness of written psychological testing reports at communicating testing results to non-psychologists has been the subject of several studies. Talent (1976) attempted to define the problems associated with psychological testing reports. In 1959 he surveyed 1400 psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers by asking them to respond to the open ended statement, "The trouble with psychological reports is...".

Talent categorized responses to his survey under five headings, (a) problems of content, (b) problems of interpretation, (c) problems of the psychologist's attitude or orientation, (d) problems of communication, and (e) problems of science and profession. Although a large number of concerns were generated by responses to the survey, only a few problems were identified by more than 30% of those surveyed. Those problems with psychological reports which were indicated by more than 30% of the respondents included (a) reports are too general in nature and do not differentiate among patients, (b) psychologists make inappropriate and in many cases irresponsible interpretations of the test data, (c) reports are not written with a practical or useful purpose in mind, (d) and reports frequently include confusing and poorly defined terminology. An area of concern listed by 12% of the psychiatrists interviewed, but was not indicated by as large a percentage of the psychologists or

social workers, was that psychologists do not appropriately limit their work to their field of expertise.

Talent's study has several limitations, however. Those who responded to the survey were working in clinical situations. Talent did not examine the use of psychological and educational testing in the school system, nor did his survey include educators serving handicapped children. However, his work does outline several areas which should be of concern to the school psychologist.

Jargon. The use of technical items and confusing jargon has been identified as one of the primary factors inhibiting effective communication between the parents of learning disabled children and professional staff including teachers, psychologists and physicians (Dembinski & Mauser, 1977). The excessive use of jargon or technical terms is not confined to verbal exchanges. In a brief article, Rucker (1967) suggested that the use of jargon is one of the most serious blocks to communication between the psychologists and the teacher. Drawing on previous research and using a sample of reports from school psychologists, he developed a checklist of 31 terms which were commonly found in school psychologists' reports. Using this checklist he wrote a multiple choice test and administered it to teachers and psychologists. He found that respondents could only agree on the definitions of ten of the items, and even then, only eighty percent of the time.

Rucker offers no further elaboration about the use of jargon in psychological reports. Although his methods are unique, Rucker's study is limited by the poorly defined criteria by which he chose the

31 terms, and the validity and reliability of his multiple choice test. Rucker's study was completed nearly ten years prior to the implementation of PL 94-142 and therefore does not address the legal mandate for individual psychoeducational assessment.

In a study using similar methods, Shively and Smith (1969) found that teachers, counselors, and college students on the average only knew sixteen of thirty commonly used technical terms and phrases, suggesting that there are a number of terms and phrases which are meaningful to psychologists, but which do not communicate meaningfully to teachers. The results of this study parallel those of Rucker (1967). However, in their article, Shively and Smith failed to define the population. They also failed to outline how they dealt with the limitations of how the jargon words were selected or the validity and reliability of the test administered to the participants.

Conversely, Baker, (1965) in polling 333 public school personnel with a questionnaire, found that most did not find psychological reports too technical or theoretical in nature. However, staff members did report that they felt that the communication between the school psychologist and the classroom teacher was rather poor. Baker concluded that part of the cause of this poor communication was differences between what teachers wanted from the psychologist and what the psychologist could do. Baker's results do not lend themselves to critical evaluation for two reasons. In the first place, the article provides no details about what questions were asked in the questionnaire. Secondly, participants responded to vague and general stimuli, they were not asked to evaluate specific reports which they had used.

While these findings may appear to be in contradiction, these three studies make use of two different methods. Rucker and Shively and Smith determined beforehand what technical terms and jargon words would be examined and then asked respondents to answer whether or not they found jargon to be a problem in the psychological reports they had read. Baker used a general questionnaire to gather his data.

The reader and the report. Ambiguity and the use of confusing or poorly defined technical terms is not necessarily an inherent quality of psychological reports, but rather the result of a particular report and a given reader. Cuadra and Albaugh (1956) arrived at this conclusion after constructing several multiple choice items for each of four representative psychological reports at a Veteran's Administration clinic and having both the writer and an independent reader of the report answer the questions. They found that the writers and readers of the sample reports, on the average, could only agree on the meaning of various statements in the reports 53% of the time. They concluded that there are serious limitations in the psychologists' ability to communicate by means of the written report. Again, these results do not necessarily reflect what is currently happening with psychological reports in school systems.

Usefulness of reports. Another quality of the psychological testing report closely related to clarity is its value in determining the most appropriate educational placement for the student. Hartlage and Merck (1971) attempted to measure the utility of psychological reports being used in a clinical setting. By abstracting a total of 31 different content statements from 100 psychological reports and having supervisors

at a rehabilitation facility rate those statements in terms of utility, they concluded that there was little relationship between what was included in psychological reports and what the supervisors thought would be of value.

By having the psychologists who write the reports familiarize themselves with the uses of their testing reports, Hartlage and Merck found a general improvement in later reports. Although their conclusions are similar to Baker's, Hartlage and Merck's results do not necessarily reflect what is happening in school systems. The means by which the content statements were abstracted and the statements themselves are vaguely and inadequately defined. This further limits the generalizability of Hartlage and Merck's results and conclusions.

Dailey (1953) also attempted to determine how useful psychological reports are in a clinical setting. Dailey determined 32 clinical decisions which were frequently made about the treatment program for clients at a Veteran's Administration hospital. The clarity and utility of nine randomly selected clinical reports were determined by having two independent clinicians read each sample report and answer the 32 clinical decisions. Dailey found that on the average, clinicians could agree on the decisions only 53% of the time when the only source of information about the client they had was the psychological report. Dailey suggests that longer reports provide more information about the client and that they were therefore more useful. Because of the specialized needs of a Veteran's hospital and a clinical setting, Dailey's study may not be applicable to a school setting.

Length of reports and time. Although lengthy comprehensive reports may be clearer, they also take more time to write. Mussman (1964)

compared teacher perceptions of the usefulness of a brief handwritten report of screening measures to their perceptions of the conventional typewritten comprehensive report. Twelve teachers in the Columbus, Ohio, school system were given questionnaires and follow-up interviews. All twelve indicated that they preferred getting a brief report of findings immediately after the student's evaluation rather than waiting several weeks for the more comprehensive report. Teachers also unanimously indicated that they wanted to receive both the brief, handwritten report and the longer conventional report. Thirteen teachers in the same school system evaluated 25 conventional typewritten reports. The majority indicated that the "test results" and "recommendations" sections were most useful to them.

It is difficult to draw many specific conclusions from Mussman's work because of the size and geographic restrictions of his sample. While Public Law 94-142 specifies that a written report of the evaluation findings is to be included in the IEP/placement process, the length and amount of information to be included in that report is determined by the educational agency and the individual diagnostician. Restrictions governing the release of testing results make it difficult if not inappropriate to provide brief, handwritten reports to teachers. This may place the psychologist in a double bind where regulations and time constraints make it difficult to provide the services teachers desire.

Experience of psychologist and recommendations. Rucker (1967) attempted to determine whether or not school psychologists with extensive experience either as a psychologist or a teacher could

write more meaningful and useful reports than inexperienced school psychologists. He had sample reports reviewed and ranked by experienced teachers according to criteria including: Was the language of the report clear? Was the report well thought out? Were the referral questions answered? Were suggestions practical and applicable to classroom situations? No significant correlation was found between those reports rated as "good" and the factors of teaching experience or length of service as a school psychologist. Teachers who rated the sample reports as poor felt that recommendations were vague, unrealistic and did not address the referral question. Brandt and Giebink (1968) also found that teachers tended to prefer psychological reports which include specific and appropriate recommendations.

Writing skills of psychologist. Foster (1951) indicated that most students in clinical psychology are poorly trained in the techniques of report writing. To eliminate or decrease some of the difficulties encountered in report writing, Carr (1968) advocated the use of a standardized report outline and the use of a standard battery of tests. Keogh (1971) on the other hand, stated that no standard battery of tests should be used, but that tests should be chosen on the basis of the child's need. The guidelines for individual assessment established by Public Law 94-142 also state that tests should be based on the needs of the handicapped student. It follows that as the number and kinds of tests used in assessing students referred for special education varies with each student's needs, so the format and style of the written report will vary and the psychologist will need to make use of flexible writing skills

to adapt the report to the needs of the assessment and the needs of the student.

Inadequate Use of Testing Reports

The above cited studies outline the problems associated with writing testing reports and the limitations of using the written report as the primary means of communicating assessment results. It is perhaps axiomatic that regardless of how well a testing report may be written, no matter how clear and free from jargon it may be, no matter how specific and realistic the recommendations may be, if the testing reports are not read and used by the student's teachers, the lengthy and sometimes complicated assessment process will have little effect on the student's education.

To provide for the handicapped student's unique educational needs, multi-disciplinary teams have been mandated by PL 94-142 to consider the issue of support placement and the development of IEPs. However, practitioners report that psychological assessment reports are frequently accepted almost without question or totally ignored by the placement and IEP teams (Duffey & Fedner, 1978). In many instances, the latter is the case, the psychological report is completed to meet the letter of the law but ignored in preparing the IEP (Holland, 1980).

In work conducted with Native American populations (Fifield & White, 1980; White, 1980a; White 1980b) which involved six separate onsite evaluations and interviews with a variety of agencies responsible for providing services to handicapped Native Americans, inadequate and/or inappropriate utilization of testing results was

identified as one of the most urgent weaknesses in the service delivery systems. According to respondents at these agencies and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools, assessment procedures lacked focus and systematic implementation; people conducting the assessments seldom participated in the IEP meetings; reports were late in being delivered to the school; and, school personnel complained that they did not understand the reports, did not trust the conclusions and recommendations, and only rarely referred to the psychological reports.

Problems Associated with Test Reports for Native Americans

Legal considerations. The use of psychoeducational testing information to place children in special education categories has become a controversial issue (Reschly, 1979). Several court cases have limited the use of test information in placing children in special education programs (Diana v. State of California, 1970; Guadalupe v. Tempe Elementary District, 1972). These court rulings have criticized psychological testing as being biased and unfair, particularly to minority children (Tractenburg & Jacoby, 1977; Turnbull, 1978). The problems noted in these court cases are compounded when those making placement and programming decisions must glean testing results, conclusions and recommendations from a poorly written, complicated and difficult to understand assessment report.

Individual psychoeducational assessment reports of Native American students tend to be complicated and difficult to understand in part because the assessment of Native American students

is complicated. Not only do diagnosticians have the same problems inherent in any individual assessment, but the following factors contribute to the problems school personnel have in understanding and using the test results of a Native American student:

1. Inappropriate norms. The standardization and norming procedures of most tests do not include a sufficient number of individuals from minority groups to provide adequate representation of such groups in the norms for the test. For Native Americans, this is further complicated by the fact that each tribe has unique cultural characteristics, thus the cost and practicality of norming tests to account for these differences makes doing so impractical. As a result, a great deal of clinical judgment and interpolation is necessary to interpret the results of almost any standardized test for Native Americans. The added description and interpolation makes reports more difficult for school personnel to understand (Bailey & Harbin, 1980; Ford, 1980; Hilliard, 1980).
2. Language and cultural factors. Most psychological tests are not only normed for white Anglo cultures but the standardized questions and instructions are presented in English. These factors tend to discriminate against non-English speaking Native American children. The problems of language barriers and different value systems in cultures as different from the Anglo culture as the Native

American cultures are extremely difficult to address with existing instruments. To decrease some of the bias caused by language and cultural factors, Federal regulations require that children be evaluated in their own language and with persons familiar with their culture (PL 94-142, 1975). However, data collected at a BIA school suggests that these regulations are frequently violated (White, 1980a; White, 1980b). Because school personnel are aware of the problems caused by language and culture, and frequently do not know whether the examiner has made reasonable effort to account for them test results may be viewed skeptically and used infrequently.

3. Rural locations of BIA schools. Havighurst (1981)

estimated that 218,500 Native American students or 80% of all Native American students are attending BIA schools or other schools located in rural/remote areas. Schools located in rural/remote areas frequently operate with additional constraints not present in other settings. Such schools have difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified professionals to serve the handicapped and consequently must make greater use of para-professionals (Fifield, 1978; White, 1980a). Additionally, the low incidence of some handicapping conditions coupled with finite resources means that not all service options are available in some rural/remote settings which would be available in more populated areas.

The difficulty in recruiting qualified professionals also means that many schools serving Native American populations must contract for assessment services with psychological consulting firms located at universities or in cities off of the reservation (Fifield, 1978). Consultants from such firms frequently do not have sufficient understanding of the constraints on the service delivery system noted above to make appropriate recommendations about IEP development or instructional programming. Consequently, their recommendations are often unrealistic and are subsequently ignored by school personnel.

The use of the written report as a means of communication between the psychologist and teacher is extremely important when the education agency does not have a resident diagnostician and must contract with personnel outside of the agency to perform the needed psychoeducational assessment. In such cases, the written report is frequently the only means of communication between the diagnostician and teacher. Consequently, if the teacher cannot understand the report, there is frequently no one in the agency who can help. Even personnel well acquainted with testing and the interpretation of test data may have difficulty deciphering another diagnostician's testing report.

Summary

Federal law, state and federal regulations and BIA Office of Indian Education Programs guidelines require that children referred for special education be evaluated through the use of individually administered psychoeducational tests to determine the extent of handicapping conditions. Through the interpretation of individual

test data, placement decisions can be made and information obtained regarding the student's academic strengths and weaknesses. These data can be valuable in determining long-term goals and short-term instructional objectives as well as providing a means of evaluating the student's progress.

Previous research suggests that the individual psychoeducational assessment report is frequently used only to meet the letter of the law and that school personnel frequently do not understand and do not rely on the conclusions and recommendations of such reports. The difficulty of conducting the appropriate and valid psychoeducational assessment of Native American students further increases the probability that testing results will not be understood or used as extensively as would be desirable. Research efforts examining the use of psychological reports have generally been limited to clinical settings and have not addressed the specific guidelines for assessment established by Public Law 94-142 nor the unique needs of schools serving large student populations of Native Americans. Table 1 provides a summary of the findings and limitations of the above cited research studies.

Table 1

Summary of Relevant Research

Author and Date	Methods	Population	Major Conclusions	Limitations
Talent (1976)	Questionnaire by return mail.	Psychologists, psychiatrists, & social workers national sampling of those working in clinical settings.	Responses to questionnaire were categorized into 5 areas: Problems of content; Problems of interpretation; Problems of report writer's orientation; Problems of communication; and Problems of the profession	Population was not working in educational settings and the reports being indirectly evaluated were therefore not addressing mandates of PL 94-142.
Rucker (1967)	Multiple choice test to define jargon terms used in sample reports.	Not adequately explained.	The use of jargon is one of the most serious blocks to communication between the psychologist and teacher.	Validity and reliability of multiple choice test remains in question. The population is poorly defined and the criteria for selecting terms are not given.
Shively & Smith (1969)	Multiple choice test to define jargon terms used in sample reports.	Not adequately explained.	Jargon words are serious blocks to communication.	Validity and reliability of multiple choice test is not dealt with. The population is poorly defined and the criteria for selecting the jargon terms are not given.
Baker (1965)	Questionnaire	not adequately explained.	Generally poor communication exists between psychologists and teachers, however, testing reports were not viewed by teachers as being too technical or jargonistic.	Population is poorly defined. There is also very little information about what questions were asked in the questionnaire. Participants were also responding to general questions and not evaluating actual testing reports.

Table 1 (cont.)

Author and Date	Methods	Population	Major Conclusions	Limitations
Cuadra & Albaugh (1956)	Multiple choice test.	Veteran's Administration Clinic	Writers and readers of reports could only agree on the meaning of various statements in the report 53% of the time.	Population not dealing with an academic setting. Although the validity of their test may be evaluated by examining their procedures, the reliability of it is not well established.
Hartlage & Merck (1971)	Compared content of report with what was felt to be helpful by those who used the report	Rehabilitation Clinic (Not adequately explained)	Little relationship between what is included in written reports and what is felt to be useful information by those who use the reports.	Population not working in an educational setting. Criteria for selecting the reports and the content statements are not adequately defined.
Dailey (1953)	Identified 32 clinical decisions generally made about a patient's treatment program and had respondents make those decisions after reading the report.	Not adequately explained.	Clinicians could agree on what treatment decisions should be made only 53% of the time when the report is the only information available.	Population not working in an educational setting. Criteria for determining clinical decisions not adequately defined.
Mussman (1964)	Compared teacher perceptions of long and short reports by questionnaires and interviews.	Educators in Columbus Ohio.	Teachers preferred shorter reports to conventional comprehensive report because of time factor, but wanted to get both reports.	Questions asked in questionnaire and interviews are not listed. Definition of content in brief report is not given and reports written were not meeting mandates of PL 94-142.
Rucker (1967)	Experienced teachers rated reports from experienced and inexperienced psychologists.	Not adequately explained.	No significant correlation between reports which were rated as "good" and the factor of number of years experience as a school psychologist.	Definitions of "good report" and "experienced psychologist" are not necessarily correct. Reports evaluated were not meeting mandates of PL 94-142.

METHODS

Background and Related Work

In October, 1979, the Phoenix Area Office of the United States Department of the Interior - Bureau of Indian Affairs awarded the contract "Consultant Services for Conducting Psycho-educational Evaluation for Approximately 90 Students at Intermountain Indian High School, Brigham City, Utah", to the Utah State University affiliated Exceptional Child Center (contract number USDA/BIA h50c14201570). The purpose of this contract was to conduct psychoeducational assessments of students who had been referred for special education placement and provide the necessary diagnostic services needed to meet the deadlines mandated under PL 94-142 (Fifiield & Casto, 1979).

The Exceptional Child Center proposed to meet the special needs of this contract and the unique situations presented at Intermountain Intertribal School (IIS) through: (1) using non-biased standardized tests; (2) making greater use of criterion referenced instruments; (3) using culture-specific measures of adaptive behavior; (4) using a dispositional assessment model which focuses testing procedures on the solution of the referral problem (Cole & Magnussen, 1966); (5) assessing the child in his or her dominant language when necessary; (6) externally validating the psychometric findings by securing a "second opinion"; and (7) conducting a long-term follow up of the assessment process and procedures to evaluate and revise the assessment procedures

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(Fifield & Casto, 1979, pp. 10-14).

Report outline. After the contract had been approved, a standard format and outline for the psychoeducational reports was devised by the IIS staff and the project director. The outline included subheading titles and stated what information was to be included in each section. The report outline was given to each of the psychologists who conducted assessments at IIS under this contract and they were requested to write their testing reports according to the given outline. Appendix 1 is a copy of the testing report outline.

Population

Referral process. The procedures for referring, screening, evaluating and developing the IEP are continuing to evolve at IIS. The general procedure used during the 1979-1980 academic year included the following steps:

1. Referral of the student by a regular academic teacher.
2. Screening/observation of the student in the classroom environment by a member of the special education faculty and a teaching supervisor.
3. Individual psychoeducational assessment of the student by a psychologist and reporting of results. (Appendix 1 shows the report format which psychologists doing testing during the contracting period used to report testing results.)
4. Development of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

IEP Committee members. The IEP committee for each student usually consisted of a special education faculty member, a local education agency representative, and a parent or parent representative. All of the documentation for this process, including correspondence with the student's parents, the testing report and the student's IEP, were kept in the student's confidential file. An "access sheet" was placed in each file which was to be signed each time the file was accessed. The persons having regular access to this file included the student's teachers, parents, counselors and other members of the IEP committee, the student (when he or she is over 18), auditors, and researchers coordinating their activities with the administration.

Staff members who accessed student records. For the purposes of this study, only those records of students who qualified for special education placement and who were involved in an Individualized Education Program were used. Forty four students were in this category. A preliminary examination of student records conducted in May, 1980, indicated that the majority of people who signed the access sheet for student files were members of the student's IEP committee. Records also showed that 34 staff members served on IEP committees, 16 of whom served on two or more committees. The access sheets indicated that 35 persons had accessed student files for some reason, 19 of whom had accessed two or more files. Of the 19 people who accessed two or more files, 15 also served on IEP committees.

The population was defined as those staff members at Intermountain Intertribal School who participated on two or more IEP committees or who had accessed the IEP files of two or more students. The

initial examination of student records revealed that 20 staff members at IIS met these criteria. Six divisions or departments were represented by this group as follows:

1. Special Education - five persons
2. Teaching Supervisors - five persons
3. Counseling and Guidance - five persons
4. Instructional Media Center - two persons
5. Public Health Services - one person
6. Consumer Education - one person

Several of these staff members filled more than one function (local education agency representative or parent representative) in the various IEP committees on which they served.

Cross-reference of staff members and students. Ninety students had been individually assessed during the 1979-1980 school year by the Exceptional Child Center staff members. Of these students, 44 were placed in special education programs and had IEPs prepared and implemented. The names of these 44 students and the names of the staff members at IIS who were on the student's IEP committee or who accessed the student's file were cross-referenced on a matrix (see Appendix 2). Marks were made under the names of the students for whom each teacher had served as an IEP team member. Because of the duplication of staff assignments, many students had identical or similar IEP teams. The cross-reference matrix made it possible to identify these cases. This procedure was used to eliminate cases where the IEP team members were the same and made it possible to identify a small number of students who had the majority of staff

members serving as IEP team members.

Sample Reports and Participants.

Through the process of elimination noted above, it was found that seven students had IEP teams which included 19 of the 20 staff members. It was determined that these 19 persons would be the respondents in the study and the psychoeducational testing reports of the seven students would be used as samples for the staff members to review. The seven sample reports were reviewed by the director of the assessment contract and by the psychologist who had done the majority of testing during the contracting period. Both persons were of the opinion that the sample reports were appropriately representative of the kind of work which had been done by the diagnosticians who had conducted assessments at IIS as part of the contract.

Sample reports were selected in this manner so that staff members would have the opportunity to review and critique a report which they had already used in preparing and implementing the student's IEP. These procedures made it possible for staff members to review and critique the psychoeducational testing report for a student with whom they were acquainted. Staff members were therefore in a position to assess the accuracy and validity of the psychologist's conclusions about the student.

Confidentiality. A further area of concern in the selection of sample testing reports was that the confidential nature of the individual testing reports be maintained. During the field testing of the data collection procedures, all personally identifiable information was removed from the sample reports. However, when data were collected

at IIS, personally identifiable information was left on the sample reports. Because staff members had already accessed student files in conjunction with their IEP committee functions and because they only reviewed the report of a student for whom they had worked as an IEP committee member, confidentiality was maintained.

Psychoeducational Report Critique Form

A four part critique form was devised to aid staff members in reviewing the sample reports. The first two parts of the critique form asked general questions about the content of the report. The third and fourth parts requested respondents to rate verbatim quotations from the report. Therefore, seven versions of the critique form were prepared, one for each sample report. Appendix 3 provides a sample critique form.

General questions. Part 1 of the critique form requested the respondent to rate the sample report in five areas. The areas were:

1. How clearly were the test findings reported?
2. How often were technical terms or jargon words used?
3. How does the sample report compare to other reports?
4. Do recommendations address the referral question?
5. Does the report give consideration to the special circumstances the student may have been experiencing?

The questions for Part 1 were the same for all seven sample reports and dealt with the clarity and technical adequacy of the report.

Report content and usefulness. Part 2 of the critique form requested the respondent to rate each of seven sections of the report

as to how well each section met its stated objectives and how useful the information included in each section was in preparing the student's educational program.

Conclusions. Part 3 was designed to collect ratings on specific verbatim conclusions which the psychologist made about the student in the testing report. The questions in this part were designed to determine if the information was communicated clearly, if it was correct, and if the conclusions were useful in planning the student's educational program. Conclusions which the psychologist made about the student based on the student's performance on a test were drawn verbatim from the testing report. The conclusion was generally stated in two or three sentences and to aid the respondent in rating them, the major conclusions from the sample report were printed with the questions being asked on the critique form. This procedure made it possible for respondents to rate each conclusion without having to find it in the report. However, a page number was given for each conclusion so that respondents who wished to could refer back to the report and read the statement in context.

Recommendations. Part 4 of the critique form requested the respondent to review and rate verbatim recommendations which the psychologist had included in the testing report. The questions in this part were designed to determine whether or not the recommendations were appropriately specific, realistic, and helpful in planning the student's educational program. The format for presenting the psychologists' recommendations to the respondents was similar to the format used in Part 3. Each recommendation was listed with its page number so that it was not

necessary for participants to find it in the report.

Field testing. A preliminary edition of the critique form and the interview procedures were field tested using a classroom teacher, psychologist and special education coordinator from a Utah public school district and two psychology professors. Expert review of the critique form and data collection procedures was given by three university professors as well as the director of the assessment contract. Based on responses to the field test and expert review, several changes in the format and wording of the questions and response alternatives were made. Following these changes, the critique form and the procedures were reviewed with the Superintendent, Principal, and Special Education coordinator at Intermountain Intertribal School.

Instructions for participants. Staff members who participated in this study were given a memorandum from the principal of the school encouraging their participation (see Appendix 4). Critique forms and a copy of the appropriate testing report were given to participants at an orientation meeting. A general introduction to the study was given and instructions were given about what respondents were to do in the process of reviewing and critiquing the sample testing reports. The experimenter demonstrated how to answer the questions by working through a sample critique form with the participants. Staff members participating in this study were also asked at the orientation meeting to be thinking of some specific ways to improve the testing and reporting procedures. It was explained to the participants that these ideas, plus any other comments they might have would be gathered during individual interviews after they had completed

reviewing and critiquing the reports.

Structured Interview

In addition to reviewing and rating the sample testing report using the Critique Form, each respondent was also interviewed by the experimenter to identify specific examples of strengths and weaknesses in the sample reports. Using a structured format, the experimenter further questioned each staff member regarding his or her comments on the Critique Form to ensure clarity. On items which the respondent had rated as either very positive or very negative, the interviewer asked for specific examples from the sample testing report.

The participant's responses on the Critique Form were further probed to determine areas of agreement or disagreement. The probing process used in the individual interviews helped ensure that the respondents gave careful thought to their critique of the reports. In addition to the specific examples of strengths and weaknesses identified through the probing process, respondents were also given the opportunity to make suggestions and comments about the psycho-educational assessment and reporting process in general.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Critique forms were completed by 18 regular staff members at IIS. The same staff members also participated in a structured individual interview to discuss their comments and responses to the critique form. The critique form consisted of 15 questions. For the purposes of analyzing the responses to these questions, the critique form was divided into four parts. Part 1 consisted of general questions about the content of the reports. Part 2 consisted of questions about how well various sections of the sample report met their stated objectives and how useful these sections were in preparing the student's educational program. In Part 3 of the critique form, respondents were asked to rate the conclusions that the psychologist had drawn about the student from the testing data while in Part 4, respondents rated the specific recommendations the psychologist had given for that student. In this section, the responses to each question are discussed separately. Comments made by respondents during individual interviews are also discussed here.

Part 1: General Questions

Part 1 of the critique form listed 5 questions about the general clarity and adequacy of the report. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of responses for Part 1 of the critique form.

<p><u>Question 1:</u> How clearly does this report state this student's testing results?</p>
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Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of Responses to Part 1 of the Psychoeducational Testing Report Critique Form		PERCENTAGE	Frequency
1. How clearly did this report state this student's testing results?	Very clear, I understood everything	44	8
	Moderately clear, there were very few things I couldn't understand.	50	9
	Moderately unclear, there were several points I couldn't understand.	6	1
	Not at all clear, there were many points I couldn't understand.	0	0
2. How often did you find technical words or phrases which were not adequately explained?	The frequent use of jargon made the report extremely difficult to understand.	0	0
	There was substantial jargon used which made the report hard to understand.	6	1
	Some jargon was used, but the report was usually understandable.	44	8
	Little jargon was used.	50	9
3. How does this report compare with other reports you have seen in the past year?	About the same.	39	7
	Worse than the others.	28	5
	Better than the others.	33	6
4. Do these recommendations address the questions raised by the referring teacher?	Referral question well addressed.	78	14
	Referral question partly addressed.	17	3
	Referral question not addressed.	6	1
5. Do you feel that the testing report gave appropriate consideration to the special circumstances (name of student) may have been experiencing?	Completely appropriate consideration given.	44	8
	Partly appropriate consideration given.	44	8
	Partly inappropriate consideration given.	11	2
	Completely inappropriate consideration given.	0	0

As can be seen in Table 2, 94% of the staff members critiquing reports felt that the reports were either "very clear" or "moderately clear" at explaining the student's testing results. These results indicate that in general, staff members feel that the testing reports do a fairly good job at explaining the student's testing performance.

Specific comments about problems in the report were given by seven of the ten individuals who did not rate their sample report as "very clear". Among the problems noted were poor composition (i.e. confusing sentence and paragraph structure), repetition and inconsistent report format, and frequent typographical errors. Other comments included statements about vagueness and contradictions between conclusions and recommendations, inappropriate or incorrect information about the student and the use of judgments about a student instead of unbiased observations. One staff member noted that the use of jargon was confusing, another wanted further description about testing scores, while another felt that the behaviors observed during the testing session were not representative of the student's behavior in the regular classroom.

Very few of these problems were indicated by more than two respondents and those that were usually dealt with the structure of the report (i.e. poor composition). The comments about contradictions and vagueness in the reports as well as inappropriate judgments made by the psychologist are felt to be legitimate concerns. Consequently, psychologists should be careful in these areas. However, the other problems which were noted, because of the low frequency, seem to be a function of a particular individual, his or her background and

expectations, and a particular report. They are therefore not viewed as being highly significant problems.

Question 2: How often did you find technical words or phrases which were not adequately explained?

Fifty percent of the respondents felt that either "some" or "substantial" jargon was used in their sample reports. In spite of this, only 6% (one respondent) felt that the use of jargon interfered with her understanding of the report.

When the critique form was first explained to the respondents and given to them, they were asked to identify words or phrases on their copy of the student's report which were confusing to them. The majority of the respondents did this. The nine persons who did not respond with "little jargon was used" were also asked what they found difficult to understand about the report during the structured interview.

The most frequently indicated words and phrases which were not understood by the respondents included medical terms, psychological and testing terms, and unusual vocabulary words. The psychological and testing terms were the most frequently noted cases of jargon. Appendix 5 summarizes the words and phrases which staff members found confusing or inadequately explained.

The responses to the first two questions of the critique form suggest that in spite of the use of some professional jargon or technical terms, staff members at IIS who critiqued the reports generally felt that the reports were clearly written. However, during the

structured interview, several respondents noted that they had seen other reports, not necessarily the sample report which they had critiqued, which were very difficult for them to follow because of the way the report was written. In most of these cases, the reports mentioned were written by one psychologist in particular. The psychologist in question had written three of the seven sample reports and it is felt that his work was adequately represented.

While several respondents said that they had found other reports to be difficult to read, only two respondents made specific statements in regard to the report which they were critiquing. One said that reports should not be vocabulary exercises. The other said that the poor writing, the incorrect use of grammar and the structure of the report not only made the report hard to understand but also showed a lack of professionalism.

Further investigation into the process followed in writing the testing reports indicated that for some reports little effort was made to edit the report once it had been transcribed and typed. This is a mechanical detail which appears to have had a serious, although isolated, effect on the perceived credibility of the report and the testing information.

Question 3: How does this report compare with other reports you have seen in the past year?

Responses to this question were almost evenly distributed. This suggests that the reports used as samples in this study were generally representative of the reports completed as part of the testing contract.

During the structured interview, five staff members noted that they had seen systematic improvement in the reports from the beginning of the contracting period to the present. No staff members made statements indicating that they felt the reports were decreasing in quality.

Question 4: Do these recommendations address the questions raised by the referring teacher?

This question received the highest ratings of all the questions in Part 1. These responses suggest that in the opinion of IIS staff members who participate on IEP committees, the psychologists generally did a good job of addressing their recommendations to the specific concerns listed by the referring teacher.

Approximately 22% of the respondents felt that the psychologist did not address the referral question as completely as possible. A review of the referral problems shows that some of the information requested by the referring teacher is extremely difficult to assess with existing instruments (i.e. lack of attention span and emotional problems). However, specific conclusions are difficult to draw from this item because respondents had to rely on the Referral Information section of the testing report and their own memories to recall what the referral problems for the student were. Only one respondent reported reviewing the student's special education file while critiquing the report.

Question 5: Do you feel that the testing report gave appropriate consideration to the special circumstances this student may have been experiencing?

Approximately 55% of the respondents noted that only "partly appropriate", or "partly inappropriate" consideration was given to the special circumstances the student may have been experiencing. The other 44% felt that "completely appropriate" consideration was given.

During the structured interviews, four staff members (24%) indicated concern about whether or not the psychologist gave appropriate consideration to social, cultural, and language factors and whether or not the testing results may have been biased by these variables. A review of the sample reports used in this study indicated that while the examining psychologist may have been concerned about controlling for these potentially biasing factors and may have utilized several strategies to minimize the effects of such factors (i.e. use of non-verbal intelligence tests, the use of the dispositional assessment model, and the second opinion) the measures taken to control for these factors may not have been adequately communicated in the written report.

Other comments made during the structured interviews included a concern about inadequate background information about the student and disagreements with the psychologist's conclusions and diagnosis. These comments were made by two persons and are again viewed as a product of a particular staff member's expectations and a particular report.

Part 2: Content and Usefulness

The second section of the critique form listed seven sections from the report outline and the objectives of each section as out-

lined by the director of the assessment project. Respondents were asked to rate each section on how well it met its stated objectives. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the frequency and percentage of ratings to this question. Staff members were also requested to rate each section in terms of how useful the section was in preparing the student's educational program. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the frequency and percentage of ratings to this question.

Question 6: How well did this section of the report meet the stated objectives?

The Recommendations section received the highest percentage of positive ratings as 44% of the staff members felt that this section of the report met all of its stated objectives. The Background Information section received the lowest ratings in terms of meeting the stated objectives. The Referral Information and Summary sections also received low ratings in the "very well, every objective was met" category.

During interviews, respondents who rated a section as "fair" at meeting its stated objectives were asked how the psychologist could have made it better. Most of them identified particular objectives listed in the outline for the section which were not met (i.e. list records reviewed and information obtained, list the problems as the student sees them). Several respondents suggested that more detail in general would have helped while a few noted that the report had most of the information listed in the outline, but it was so scattered throughout the report that it was hard to find and continuity was lost.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage of Responses to Question 6
of the Psychoeducational Testing Report Critique Form

How well did this section of the report meet these stated objectives?	VERY WELL, every objective was met	GOOD, most of the objectives were met	FAIR, a few of the objectives were met	POOR, almost none of the objectives were met
REFERRAL INFORMATION				
PERCENTAGE	17	50	28	6
Frequency	3	9	5	1
BACKGROUND INFORMATION				
PERCENTAGE	11	28	56	6
Frequency	2	5	10	1
BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATIONS				
PERCENTAGE	33	50	17	0
Frequency	6	9	3	0
PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL FINDINGS				
PERCENTAGE	28	56	11	6
Frequency	5	10	2	1
SUMMARY				
PERCENTAGE	17	50	28	6
Frequency	3	9	5	1
RECOMMENDATIONS				
PERCENTAGE	44	33	17	6
Frequency	8	6	3	1
DIAGNOSTIC STATEMENT				
PERCENTAGE	33	39	28	0
Frequency	6	7	5	0

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage of Responses to Question 7 of the
Psychoeducational Testing Report Critique Form

How useful was this section in preparing this student's educational program?	VERY USEFUL, it helped a great deal and was necessary	GENERALLY USEFUL, it helped somewhat but was not necessary	USELESS, it was not needed and was not used
REFERRAL INFORMATION			
PERCENTAGE Frequency	39 7	56 10	6 1
BACKGROUND INFORMATION			
PERCENTAGE Frequency	44 8	44 8	11 2
BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATIONS			
PERCENTAGE Frequency	44 8	39 7	17 3
PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL FINDINGS			
PERCENTAGE Frequency	56 10	33 6	11 2
SUMMARY			
PERCENTAGE Frequency	50 9	28 5	22 4
RECOMMENDATIONS			
PERCENTAGE Frequency	56 10	44 8	0 0
DIAGNOSTIC STATEMENT			
PERCENTAGE Frequency	50 9	39 7	11 2

respondents indicated that if the psychologist would follow the suggested outline more carefully, it would have helped a great deal.

Question 7: How useful was this section in preparing this student's educational program?

Even though some sections of the report were rated low in terms of meeting their stated goals and objectives, the majority of the sections received high ratings in terms of usefulness in preparing the student's educational program. Ratings given to the Referral and Background Information sections were not as high, however. This finding is consistent with the low ratings which both of these sections received for meeting the objectives outlined for them.

Responses to this item indicate that staff members felt that the testing reports were generally very useful in preparing the student's educational program. The Test Results section and the Recommendations section both received the highest percentage of ratings in the "very useful" category. Each had 56% of the respondents in that category. The Summary section and the Diagnostic Statement section each had 50% of the respondents rating it as "very useful". These ratings, while not extremely high, might suggest that most of the staff members interviewed feel that these four sections contain the most important information for preparing the student's educational program.

During interviews, staff members who rated a section as being "somewhat useful" or "not useful" were asked what it was about the section that made it less helpful than it could be. The most frequent response was that the psychologist had not done an adequate job of

including all the information necessary to meet the section's stated objectives.

Four individuals rated one or more sections as less than "very useful" stating that the section was either repeating information already known or already stated in the report and that it was therefore redundant. One respondent indicated that a diagnostic statement in the test report was useless because the psychologist had failed to give proper consideration to cultural and social factors and that the behavioral observations section was useless because it represented an atypical situation for the student. Another staff member felt that the summary section was useless in planning the student's educational program because the psychologist had "taken liberty with the data".

During interviews, three respondents noted that they had difficulty completing this section of the report because of the wording of the response alternatives. In particular, they noted that the additional explanation of the "Generally Useful" category ("it helped somewhat, but was not necessary"), made it difficult to make what they felt were appropriate ratings of the educational relevance of the testing reports. In view of this observation, some of the low ratings in this section may be explained as a function of the response alternatives. However, the fact that almost half of the content of the reports was rated as helpful but not necessary suggests that not only do psychologists have difficulty identifying information which is relevant to the educational programming of the student, but many staff members have little idea about the purpose of the testing

report or how to use testing information in preparing the student's IEP.

Part 3: Psychologist's Conclusions

In Part 3, respondents were asked to review and critique verbatim conclusions drawn from the sample report. Each respondent reviewed a report for a student for whom he or she had served as an IEP team member. This strategy was selected to ensure that each respondent would already have been exposed to the conclusions and recommendations of the psychologist and would have presumably used that information in an IEP/placement meeting.

In Part 3 of the Critique Form, respondents rated the psychologist's conclusions about the student. Each conclusion made in the report, approximately six conclusions per student, was rated for clarity, accuracy, usefulness, and to what degree the conclusion provided the rater with new information about the student. The number of persons critiquing each report varied as did the number of conclusions in each report. The number of ratings made for each report is a product of the number of respondents critiquing that particular report and the number of conclusions included in the report (number of raters x number of conclusions = number of ratings). Table 5 provides a breakdown of the number of respondents critiquing each report, the number of conclusions in each report, and the number of ratings made for each report. A total of 102 ratings were made of the 41 conclusions made in the sample test reports. Table 6 shows the frequency and percentage of conclusions which respondents placed in each of the categories for the questions in Part 3 of the Critique Form.

Table 5

Breakdown of Reports, Number of Raters,
and Number of Conclusions

Report 1 (2 raters x 6 conclusions = 12 ratings)

Report 2 (2 raters x 6 conclusions = 12 ratings)

Report 3 (1 rater x 7 conclusions = 7 ratings)

Report 4 (4 raters x 6 conclusions = 24 ratings)

Report 5 (4 raters x 5 conclusions = 20 ratings)

Report 6 (2 raters x 6 conclusions = 12 ratings)

Report 7 (3 raters x 5 conclusions = 15 ratings)

Total number of ratings = 102

Mean Number of Conclusions per Report = 5.86

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage of Verbatim Conclusions

Rated by Staff Members

		PERCENTAGE	Frequency	
8.	Can you understand what the psychologist means by this statement?	Very Clear	58	59
		Clear	29	30
		Hard to Understand	12	12
		Impossible to Understand	1	1
9.	Does this statement provide you with new information about the student?	I didn't know this before	46	47
		This was obvious	9	9
		This confirms what I suspected	39	40
		No Response	6	6
10.	Based on your experience with this student, is this statement correct?	Correct	71	72
		Partly Correct	12	12
		Incorrect	7	7
		No Response	11	11
11.	Was this statement useful in planning this student's educational program?	Very Useful	65	66
		Helpful, but not necessary	25	25
		Useless, wasn't used and wasn't necessary	11	11

Question 8: Can you understand what the psychologist means by this statement?

Although the majority of the conclusions about students made by the psychologists were rated as either "very clear", or "clear", 13% of the ratings fell into the "hard to understand", or "impossible to understand" categories. During the probing, three of these raters, accounting for approximately 3% of the total number of ratings made, could state no specific reason why they found the conclusion statement difficult to understand other than the fact that they disagreed with it. Also, during probing, five conclusions were described as "vague". Raters of these conclusions stated that it would have helped them understand the conclusion if the psychologist had described the test a little more, or made a more definite conclusion. The majority of conclusions which were rated as hard to understand were situations in which the psychologist was providing a detailed breakdown of a student's scores on the sub-scales and scales of a test. In two instances of a low rating, the psychologist was giving a statistical breakdown of a student's performance in terms of grade levels and percentiles. In these instances, the use of psychometric jargon and numbers appeared to be confusing to the rater.

Question 9: Does this statement provide you with new information about the student?

While over 80% of the responses to this question were either in the "I didn't know this before", or in the "this confirms what I expected" categories, 9% of the conclusions were rated as "this was obvious". A closer examination of the conclusions that were obvious to at least one staff member reveals no particular pattern. An "obvious" conclusion in two cases was that the student had emotional problems. Six percent of the possible responses were not made because staff members felt that they had inadequate experience with the student.

Question 10: Based on your experience with this student, is this statement correct?

Respondents generally felt that the majority of the conclusions were "correct" while they rated 19% as either "partly correct" or "incorrect". Eleven percent of the possible responses which could have been made were left blank because some respondents felt that they did not have enough experience with the student to adequately rate this item. In addition to the possibility of a conclusion being invalid, four reasons were given for a conclusion being either partly or completely incorrect. In one instance the rater felt that the psychologist had ignored pertinent cultural and social information, in another, that the psychologist was "over-reacting" to a particular piece of information (about alcoholism in the student's family). In two cases, the rater felt that the conclusions were too vague while in one instance the use of "absolutes" was felt to be incorrect. In six cases, the raters felt that the conclusions

Also, in four cases, conclusions about the student's grade level of performance in academic areas were less than "very helpful". In three of these cases, respondents stated that the information was available from other sources. Only in one instance was a conclusion rated as "useless", because the respondent felt that it was impossible to understand.

The ratings of conclusions to the questions of how useful the psychologist's conclusion is and whether it provides new information about the student have been cross tabulated in Table 7. The results indicate that the conclusions about a student which are viewed as most useful are those statements which either confirm what the staff members suspected or provide new information about the student. Of particular interest is the number of conclusions which were rated as providing new information which were also rated as being helpful, but not necessary. Examination of Table 7 also indicates that conclusions which confirm a staff member's expectation are generally viewed as the most useful information.

Part 4: Recommendations

In part 4 of the Critique Form, respondents were requested to review and critique the verbatim recommendations of the psychologist. Each of the recommendations made in the report was rated for specificity, how realistic it was, whether it provided new information about the student, and how useful the recommendation was in preparing the student's educational program. The format for Part 4 was similar to that used in Part 3. The number of persons reviewing each report varied as did the number of recommendations in each report. The

Also, in four cases, conclusions about the student's grade level of performance in academic areas were less than "very helpful". In three of these cases, respondents stated that the information was available from other sources. Only in one instance was a conclusion rated as "useless", because the respondent felt that it was impossible to understand.

The ratings of conclusions to the questions of how useful the psychologist's conclusion is and whether it provides new information about the student have been cross tabulated in Table 7. The results indicate that the conclusions about a student which are viewed as most useful are those statements which either confirm what the staff members suspected or provide new information about the student. Of particular interest is the number of conclusions which were rated as providing new information which were also rated as being helpful, but not necessary. Examination of Table 7 also indicates that conclusions which confirm a staff member's expectation are generally viewed as the most useful information.

Part 4: Recommendations

In part 4 of the Critique Form, respondents were requested to review and critique the verbatim recommendations of the psychologist. Each of the recommendations made in the report was rated for specificity, how realistic it was, whether it provided new information about the student, and how useful the recommendation was in preparing the student's educational program. The format for Part 4 was similar to that used in Part 3. The number of persons reviewing each report varied as did the number of recommendations in each report. The

Table 7

Cross-tabulation of Conclusions Rated as Useful and
as Providing New Information about the Student

		<u>New</u>		
		I didn't know this before.	This was obvious.	This confirms what I expected.
<u>Useful</u>	Very Useful	25	5	32
	Helpful, but not necessary	15	5	5
	Useless, wasn't used and wasn't necessary	3	5	3

number of ratings made for each report is a product of the number of respondents reviewing that particular report and the number of recommendations included in that particular report (number of raters x number of recommendations = number of ratings). Table 8 provides a breakdown of the number of respondents reviewing and critiquing each report, the number of recommendations in each report, and the number of ratings made for each report. A total of 99 ratings were made of the 35 conclusions given in the sample test reports. Table 9 shows the frequency and percentage of recommendations which respondents placed in each of the categories for the questions in Part 4 of the Critique Form.

Question 12: Is the recommendation at an appropriate level of specificity?

While the majority of raters felt that recommendations were "appropriately specific", some 22% were listed as being either "too specific" or "vague". A closer examination of the recommendations which received low ratings indicated no particular pattern. One person felt that recommendations for the use of extra-agency resources were too specific while two people felt that the same recommendations for use of extra-agency resources were too vague. In three cases, the psychologist's recommendation for counseling was judged as being too vague, (i.e. lacking goals and directions). In one case, when the psychologist did list goals and directions for counseling, the recommendation was judged as being too specific. In only one case was the use of jargon and technical terms reported to be

Table 8

Breakdown of Reports, Number of Raters and
Number of Recommendations

Report 1	(2 raters x 5 recommendations = 10 ratings)
Report 2	(2 raters x 5 recommendations = 10 ratings)
Report 3	(1 rater x 4 recommendations = 4 ratings)
Report 4	(4 raters x 6 recommendations = 24 ratings)
Report 5	(4 raters x 6 recommendations = 24 ratings)
Report 6	(3 raters x 4 recommendations = 12 ratings)
Report 7	(3 raters x 5 recommendations = 15 ratings)

Total Number of Ratings = 99

Mean Number of recommendations per Report = 5

Table 9

Frequency and Percentage of Verbatim Recommendations

Rated by Staff Members

		PERCENTAGE	Frequency
12. Is the recommendation at an appropriate level of specificity?	Vague	17	16
	Appropriately specific	78	74
	Too Specific	5	5
13. Based on your experience with this student, does this recommendation provide you with new information?	I knew this would be recommended	12	11
	This confirms what I felt this student needed	49	47
	I didn't know this would be recommended	33	31
	No Response	6	6
14. Given the resources here at Intermountain, how realistic is this recommendation?	Completely unrealistic	0	0
	Somewhat unrealistic	28	27
	Realistic	72	68
15. How useful was this recommendation in determining this student's placement and in developing his/her individualized education program?	Very useful	57	48
	Somewhat useful	28	27
	Not very useful	18	17
	Useless	3	3

a problem in a vague recommendation. These contradictory opinions indicate that an individual's reaction to recommendations, as with jargon, is a function of his background, expectations, and a particular report. It might be surmised from these findings, however, that if a psychologist has a choice, it is better to make recommendations which are too specific, rather than too vague because only about a third of the responses indicated problems with recommendations which were too specific.

Question 13: Based on your experience with the student, does this recommendation provide you with new information?

Responses to this item indicate that the majority of recommendations given by the psychologist either address new areas of concern or address areas of concern already expected by the teacher. However, staff members identified several recommendations given by the psychologist which were obvious to them. No particular pattern is found in those obvious recommendations. In three cases where counseling was recommended, raters reported that they already knew such a recommendation would be made. Recommendations that a student's educational program emphasize the academic skills of reading and math were identified twice as being obvious. Other recommendations which raters felt were obvious were suggestions that a student be involved in a hearing program and recommendations that certain students be classified as learning disabled. Six percent of the possible responses which could have been made were not made because the staff members felt that they did not have sufficient experience

with the student to adequately rate this item.

Question 14: Given the resources here at Intermountain, how realistic is this recommendation?

The majority of responses to this item suggest that the psychologists generally did a good job of making realistic recommendations. Although no recommendation was rated as "completely unrealistic", 28% of them were rated as "somewhat unrealistic". During interviews, several comments were made about the "somewhat unrealistic" recommendations. Many of them concerned what might be termed the "professional biases" of the respondents in relation to the effectiveness of providing the recommended services at Intermountain. Others suggested that the recommendations, especially those suggesting some form of counseling, lacked detail and were therefore unrealistic. In two cases, particular goals were listed which were activities for teachers and staff members, rather than statements about what the student would do or accomplish. On two occasions, respondents suggested that the goals and recommendations be specifically geared to the resources available at IIS, rather than calling in outside help. In one of the sample reports, the psychologist outlined a specific procedure to be followed in developing the student's language skills. In spite of this, all four raters who reviewed this report found this recommendation to be unrealistic. Their responses may suggest that the outlined procedure was inappropriate, however, no specific comment about the procedure was made, other than it was felt to be unrealistic.

It should be noted that IIS is not a typical rural/remote boarding school. The school has a large support staff including guidance counselors and mental health experts as well as a large faculty.

Question 15: How useful was this recommendation in determining this student's placement and in developing his or her individualized educational program?

Responses to this item suggest that the majority of the recommendations made by the psychologist are perceived as being very useful or somewhat useful. A closer examination of those 21% of the recommendations which were rated as "not very useful" or "useless" indicated that in eight cases, when recommendations were rated low in terms of usefulness, they were also rated as being vaguely stated. On six occasions, when the recommendation was to get extra-agency resources, the recommendation was not viewed as being very helpful in planning the student's educational program. In four cases, recommendations for counseling for the student were also rated low.

General Comments

At the conclusion of the interview, respondents were asked what information they looked for in the psychologist's report. While several staff members had trouble stating what they expected from a testing report, the majority indicated that they sought information about the student's strengths and weaknesses, diagnostic information and supportive evidence, and the psychologist's recommendations for the student's educational program. Sixteen of the eighteen persons

interviewed stated that the information they expected from the report was usually there while the remaining two stated that it was only sometimes included in the report.

Staff members were also asked about the contact they had, if any, with the psychologist who wrote the report which they had reviewed. Only three persons indicated that they had any direct contact with the psychologist. Fifteen of the eighteen respondents indicated that they would have liked to have some contact with the psychologist. They indicated that it would have been helpful to share information with the psychologist and have the testing results and recommendations further explained, especially in cases where there may be disagreements between the testing results and opinions of the staff members. The remaining three persons stated that they did not feel that contact with the psychologist was necessary. Two of the three stated that they felt that the report was adequate and the third said that coordinated communication between the school and the psychologist was all that was necessary.

Suggestions for improvement. Staff members were asked if they had any suggestions about improving the assessment process in general. Appendix 6 lists the comments which staff members made regarding the testing and reporting procedures. The majority of concerns stated at this time are very similar to those which have been identified by responses to the questions in the Critique Form. However, several comments were made about the logistical details of the testing procedures such as completing the assessments and getting the reports to IIS staff quickly. Comments were also made

about problems with specific reports such as poor grammar, spelling and frequent typographical errors.

It should be noted that the majority of staff members who were interviewed in this study were generally complimentary of the psychologists and the services which they performed. While the comments made at this point in the individual interviews outline areas of concern for IIS staff members, most of them indicated that they were generally pleased with the conduct of the individual psychoeducational assessments over the past year.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Questions

This study was designed to provide information about four specific research questions (see page 5). It was found that the use of psychoeducational testing reports at IIS during academic year 1978-1980 was limited to the preparation of the student's IEP. It was also discovered that the staff members who accessed these reports formed a small nucleus of personnel at IIS which only rarely included the referring teacher. Staff members who used the reports in IEP/Placement meetings reported them as being generally free from jargon and understandable. In general, they reported that information included in the report was correct and useful in planning the student's educational program. Staff members participating in this study also noted that recommendations given in the reports generally addressed the concerns of the referring teacher, were appropriately specific and realistic and that they were applicable in the IIS setting and very useful in preparing the student's IEP.

These conclusions and recommendations are limited to a fairly narrow spectrum of psychoeducational testing reports used in a highly structured situation. Many of these conclusions and the resulting recommendations may have limited generalizability.

General Conclusions

Results of this study suggest that the psychoeducational testing reports provided by the Utah State University affiliated Exceptional

Child Center to the Intermountain Intertribal School during the 1979-1980 academic year were generally well received. In addition to the above stated conclusions drawn in response to the research questions, the data collected in this study outline several other areas of concern. The first area of concern on the part of the IIS staff members who participated in this study is the effects of social, cultural, and language factors on the testing results.

Concern about biasing factors. Although most of the staff members who participated only made general statements about how tests were biased, it is felt that the psychologist writing the testing report could help ease some of these concerns by making a brief statement about the efforts taken to minimize the effect of biasing factors. It may also be helpful to make some statement about how valid the assessment was in the opinion of the examiner. The effects of these procedural and reporting changes on the perceived usefulness of the testing reports should also be evaluated in future studies.

Use of testing reports. Based on data collected during preliminary phases of this study, the greatest, and in most cases the only, use of psychoeducational test reports is in the development of the IEP. A total of 152 signatures were made on the access sheets for the 44 students whose records were examined in the preliminary phases of this study. Of these, 112 signatures were made on the same day the student's IEP was prepared. It was also found that the teacher who originally referred the student very rarely accessed the report.

Usefulness of reports. The sample reports used in this study followed, with minor variations, a predetermined outline. The out-

line listed the objectives for each section and suggested what information was to be included in each section. In the opinion of the majority of staff members who critiqued reports for this study, psychologists often did not include information in their testing reports which was indicated in the suggested outline. This was especially true for the Background Information section which was to give brief social and educational history of the student.

Although, in the opinions of those who reviewed them, some of the reports lacked information called for in the sample outline, they were generally viewed as being helpful in preparing the student's educational program. Even sections which were rated quite low in terms of including the suggested information from the outline were usually rated by most respondents as still being useful in preparing the student's educational program.

Use of technical terms and jargon. The findings of this study support the statement of Cuadra and Albaugh (1956) that jargon and confusing technical terms are not an inherent quality of psychological reports, but rather the results of the interaction between a particular report and a given reader. It is felt that this statement may be expanded to indicate that the perceived usefulness of a psychoeducational testing report is also a function of the interaction between a particular report and a given reader. It is perhaps a truism that different people, coming from different backgrounds, each performing a different function on the IEP team will have different expectations of the psychologist and the psychoeducational testing report.

Recommendations for School Administrators

Staff expectations of psychologists. In this limited situation, there seems to be a fair amount of confusion about what was expected of the psychologist and what the psychologist did. In many cases the expectations of some staff members were unrealistic and suggested a lack of understanding about the nature and limitations of psychological and educational assessment. For example, one staff member questioned why the diagnostician had not provided answers to the cause, result, and solution of one student's emotional problems. This area of concern could be greatly minimized through the use of inservice training which would not only acquaint staff members with the legal requirements of individual assessment, but the statistical and psychometric limitations of testing information as well.

Staff expectations of tests. The single largest group of conclusions which were rated as either "helpful, but not necessary", or "useless" were conclusions which the psychologist made about the student's intellectual functioning. Although psychologists used a variety of methods to report these findings (I.Q., percentile ranking, and descriptions), many respondents did not feel that conclusions about the student's intellectual functioning were necessary or useful in preparing the student's educational program. Responses also suggest that a number of staff members did not approve of the use of diagnostic labels such as "mentally retarded" or the statement of an I.Q. score which indicates that there is some confusion among IIS staff members as to the purpose of psychological testing and what kinds of information can be drawn from test results. This is also an area which could be addressed through the use of inservice training workshops.

Use of testing information. Of the 44 students on whom information was gathered, it was found that in not one instance had the referring teacher accessed the testing report. Although the testing reports are to be kept confidential, it is felt that the information in the reports should be made more accessible to the referring teacher and the student's regular classroom teachers and counselors. Furthermore, those staff members who are providing direct services to the student should be encouraged to read and make use of it.

Staff member inservice training. Many approaches could be taken to decrease the above mentioned problems. However, it is felt that direct instruction of staff members, particularly regular classroom teachers would be the most appropriate means by which to increase the awareness of IIS staff about what kinds of information can be obtained through testing. While staff members do not need extensive instruction in complicated psychometric and statistical procedures, they do need an introduction to the process of assessment, how and why certain tests are selected, how biasing factors can be minimized, and what kinds of information can be obtained through test results.

Staff members also need an orientation to the purpose of the written testing report and what kinds of information are available in it. The use of a simulated exercise where staff members set IEP goals for a student based on the information available in a sample report may prove effective at helping staff members understand what is in the testing report and how that information is used.

Recommendations for Psychologists

Orientation to school resources. Although respondents in this study generally felt the reports were helpful in planning the student's educational programs, results indicate that there is room for improvement in making the testing report even more useful and appropriate. Results of this study indicate that one area needing improvement is the ability of the diagnostician to make recommendations using the specific resources readily available at the local education agency level. Persons providing diagnostic services to education agencies should do a thorough job of finding out what direct instructional and support services are available at the local level. If a recommendation is made for outside help, the recommendation should be tactfully stated and listed as a possible program option.

Report writing. The findings of this study suggest that there is a significant need for diagnosticians who conduct individual assessments to receive training in the techniques of report writing and editing. The integration of testing results into a comprehensive, yet useful and readable report is a difficult and time consuming task. When assessment is complicated by social and cultural factors, even slight alterations in syntax and word order can make a big difference between a statement that makes sense and one that is incomprehensible. In addition to the use of a report format which has stated objectives for each section, psychologists writing the reports should also include guidelines for the structure of sentences and paragraphs as well as suggestions for sentence length and the use of vocabulary and technical words.

When writing the reports, careful editing and proofing of the

final copy is an absolute necessity. No matter how good a job was done with the examination, if the report is chopped up, filled with incomplete sentences, poor grammar and spelling, the work done by the psychologist is going to be viewed as unprofessional. In situations where a group of psychologists will be providing a large number of diagnostic evaluations for an educational agency, it would be advantageous to conduct a seminar discussing these journalistic issues. Guidelines for report content should be explained and a flow chart describing the process of assessment and report writing including the steps of proofing, editing, final typing and final proofing should be developed.

Meeting staff expectations. This study has produced evidence that there is a fair amount of confusion among staff members at IIS about what role the psychologist is to fulfill, and particularly what kind of information the psychologist should be providing. These expectations vary with each person's background and function. To meet these needs and expectations, the psychologist working in the school systems must make every effort to establish effective professional communications. The psychologist should spend time, whenever possible, discussing his work with those who have to use the testing results and determine in so far as possible, whether or not his work is meeting the needs and expectations of those who use the testing information.

In cases where the psychologist is a consultant for an educational agency and time does not allow him the opportunity to determine what the needs of staff members are, educational agencies which contract for diagnostic work should be very specific about what is expected

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In cases where the psychologist is a consultant for an educational agency and time does not allow him the opportunity to determine what the needs of staff members are, educational agencies which contract for diagnostic work should be very specific about what is expected

from the psychologist in terms of assessment and what information is to be provided to the psychologist by the agency personnel. In most cases, as was done at IIS, a predetermined outline for the final testing report should be drafted including what information is expected to be included in each section of the report. These specifics should be determined by the staff members who have contact with students and in agreement with program and school administrators.

There will undoubtedly be situations where some staff members have unrealistic expectations of the psychologist. Regardless of the inservice training efforts on the part of school administrators, and no matter how clearly job descriptions and responsibilities may be defined, there in all likelihood will still be staff members who expect the psychologist to have the final answer about what is wrong with a student. Most psychologists have an aura of "expertness" about them and regardless of the validity or reliability of their statements, they are often viewed as understanding what is wrong with the student. The psychologist has a professional obligation to recognize the limitations of his instruments and field. He is also responsible for helping others to understand those limitations.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has demonstrated a useful and appropriate method for gathering data about the effectiveness of testing reports and how the reported information is used in a special education setting. Although the interaction between a person, his or her background, and a psycho-educational testing report is complex and individual, this method,

through the use of the individual interview, takes those differences into consideration. Because of the limited sample and population used in this study, the results can not be readily generalized to a wide variety of situations. Similar evaluations of assessment procedures and reporting formats need to be conducted in other settings with other educational agencies.

Results of this study indicate that a fair number of the conclusions and recommendations which a psychologist makes about a student based on testing information confirm what the staff member felt would be concluded or recommended. If teachers are indeed able to predict what conclusions and recommendations a psychologist will make for a given student, then the process of individual psychoeducational assessment is an expensive way to confirm teacher's suspicions. What teachers feel will be the psychologist's conclusions and recommendations and what the psychologist finally concludes and recommends for a student should be the subject of future research in this field.

The style with which any individual psychologist writes his testing report is a reflection of his personality and individual concerns. A wide variety of styles, formats, and emphases can be detected when examining any number of testing reports. It is not this author's intention to suggest that all individuality should be removed from report writing, but the use of a standardized outline helped give structure to the reports prepared at IIS. One question which to date has received little attention is if additional and/or more detailed information as might be outlined in the suggested report format increases the report's usefulness.

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APPENDICES

For the ... of the ...

C O N F I D E N T I A L

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING REPORT

Client:

Age:

Grade:

Referring Teacher(s):

School:

Date of Evaluation:

Tests Administered: (List the names of each test given, i.e.,
WISC-R
VMI
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test
Informal Assessment of Auditory Language
Etc.)

Referral - Who the client is, where the client is from, tribe, year at Intermountain - Referring teacher(s), problems identified - Records reviewed by - Screening Committee's findings and recommendations.

Background Information - Pretesting information (from the interview form) - Problems the client sees, social, academic, etc. Personal information, family, tribe, health, drugs, friends, special interests - Use of English to communicate.

Behavioral Observations - Language - Cooperation - Rapport - Motivation - Persistence - Distractability - Enjoyment of the tests - Interest in the tasks - Shifting from one task to another - Fear - Note any specific difficulties or strengths.

Test Results - Start each test with a new paragraph - Short sentence of what the test measures and why it was used - Ability test results reported as categories, bands, percentiles, range, etc. - Achievement test results reported in grade placement - Personality and social factors reported as emotional indicators.

Summary - Strengths - Summary of testing findings.

Recommendations

1. Diagnostic Statement - This statement should be in the words used in the Utah regulations. The diagnostic statement should be followed by statement indicating that other information will be considered as well as the testing data in making school placement and program decisions. (See example) - (Refer to Utah Regulations)
2. Other Placement Considerations - Small group - One-to-one - Reduce reading level of material in regular classroom - Vocational program - Grouping in dorms - Clubs - Extra curricular activities - Solid subjects - Electives - Etc. (For students not qualified for special education, the examiner should include a statement as to whether the individual child's educational problems were related to or resulted from educational disadvantages, language background or cultural or social background.)
3. Long-Term Goals (2 to 4 years) - Academic achievement - Social changes - Functional education - Health - Vocational.
4. Short-Term or Annual Goals - Reading - Math - Visual motor - Writing and spelling - Social or personality changes -

Appendix II

Cross-Reference Matrix of Students and
Staff Members Assigned as IEP Committee Members

The image shows a large, faint grid structure, likely a cross-reference matrix, with several circular markers placed within the cells. The grid is approximately 10 columns wide and 10 rows high, though the content is too light to read. The markers are scattered across the grid, with a notable concentration in the lower right quadrant.

StudentsSpecial Education

	A.F.	S.C.	J.R.	S.S.	T.S.	A.W.	F.S.
E.C.						●	●
G.B.		●	●		●		●
J.W.						●	
S.C.	●			●			●
O.W.		●					

Academic

C.O.		●					
A.W.	●				●		
P.J.				●			
A.B.				●			
H.R.							●

Guidance

G.L.							●
D.S.			●				
M.W.					●		
V.S.							●
B.O.							●
T.S.						●	
D.M.				●		●	
B.E.				●		●	

Appendix III

Psychoeducational Testing Report Critique Form

<p>1. Was the report written by a qualified professional?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>2. Was the report written in a clear and concise manner?</p>
<p>3. Were the test results reported accurately and completely?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>4. Were the test results interpreted correctly and in relation to the client's background?</p>
<p>5. Were the test results used to make appropriate recommendations?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>6. Were the test results used to make appropriate referrals?</p>
<p>7. Were the test results used to make appropriate educational recommendations?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>8. Were the test results used to make appropriate vocational recommendations?</p>
<p>9. Were the test results used to make appropriate social recommendations?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>10. Were the test results used to make appropriate psychological recommendations?</p>

Psychoeducational Testing Report Critique Form

INSTRUCTIONS: Please review the attached psychoeducational testing report for a student with whom you worked last year and complete this critique form by placing a check (✓) in the box next to the statement that is closest to your opinion.

How clearly did this report state ARLENE'S testing results?

- Very clear, I understood everything.
- Moderately clear, there were very few things I couldn't understand.
- Moderately unclear, there were several points I couldn't understand.
- Not at all clear, there were many points I couldn't understand.

Please note some examples of things which were unclear to you for the interview:

How often did you find technical words or phrases which were not adequately explained?

- The frequent use of jargon made the report extremely difficult to understand.
- There was substantial jargon used which made the report hard to understand.
- Some jargon was used, but the report was usually understandable.
- Little jargon was used.

Please note the phrases or jargon you found confusing for the interview (if you prefer, go through the report and circle them in red):

How does this report compare with other reports you have seen in the past year?

- About the same.
- Worse than the others.
- Better than the others.

Comments:

Do these recommendations address the questions raised by the referring teacher?

- Referral question well addressed.
- Referral question partly addressed.
- Referral question not addressed.

Please note some specific questions which were not addressed.

Do you feel that the testing report gave appropriate consideration to the special circumstance ^{may} have been experiencing?

- Completely appropriate consideration
- Partly appropriate consideration given.
- Partly inappropriate consideration given.
- Completely inappropriate consideration given.

Please note some specifics:

Listed below are several of the sections from report along with their stated objectives.

In column A evaluate how well the section of the report met its objectives.

In column B evaluate how useful the section was in planning this student's educational program.

Place a checkmark (✓) in the box corresponding to the statement that is closest to your opinion.

A
How well did this section of the report meet these stated objectives?

B
How useful was this section in preparing this student's educational program?

VERY WELL, every objective was met.
GOOD, most of the objectives were met.
FAIR, a few of the objectives were met.
POOR, almost none of the objectives were met.

VERY USEFUL, it helped a great deal and was necessary.
GENERALLY USEFUL, it helped somewhat, but was not necessary.
USELESS, it was not needed and was not used.

REFERRAL

- Objectives:
1. Provide background about student (tribe, year at Intermountain, etc.)
 2. List referring teacher(s) and their concerns.
 3. List records reviewed and information obtained.
 4. List findings and recommendations of screening committee.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Objectives:
1. List personal information about the student, family, tribe, health, school, special interests, etc.
 2. List the problems as the student sees them.
 3. State the student's ability to use English to communicate.

BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATIONS

- Objectives:
1. Describe how student cooperated during testing (rapport, motivation, interest, language, enjoyment, etc.)
 2. Note any specific strengths or difficulties.

TEST RESULTS

- Objectives:
1. Describe test, what it measures and why it is used.
 2. Report results as ranges, percentiles, and grade placements.
 3. Report personality and social factors as emotional indicators.

SUMMARY

- Objectives:
1. List student's strengths.
 2. Summarize testing findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Objectives:
1. Recommend placement category.
 2. List other placement considerations.
 3. List long and short-term goals.
 4. Suggest instructional materials and strategies.
 5. Suggest support services.
 6. Suggest a means of evaluating the student's educational program.

DIAGNOSTIC STATEMENT

- Objectives:
1. Recommend most appropriate placement category for student and refer to specific guidelines or regulations.
 2. Qualify statement to include other information to be provided by the placement committee.

One of the purposes of testing is to provide RECOMMENDATIONS or suggestions which may be helpful in planning the student's educational program. Listed below are some of the specific RECOMMENDATIONS taken directly from the report. Please rate each of them.

Is the recommendation at an appropriate level of specificity?

Based on your experience with this student, does this recommendation provide you with new information?

Given the resources here at Intermountain, how realistic is this recommendation?

How useful was this recommendation in determining this student's placement and in developing his/her individualized education program?

"It is recommended that _____ be considered for placement in a special education program under the classification of learning disabilities." (page 9)

"... It is recommended that the education program focus on developing the specific skills that she needs in reading and math to compete adequately and that arrangements be made for a behavioral intervention or counseling program..." (page 9)

"Recommended instructional strategies and materials include various instructional programs in reading and math that are individual in nature and focus on oral response to facilitate monitoring." (page 10)

"It is further recommended that counseling and support services be provided _____ and where possible and practical, placement changes in dorms, etc. be modified to reduce tension, anxiety, and undue competition among peers." (page 10)

	Vague	Appropriately specific	Too specific	I knew this would be recommended	This confirms what I felt this student needed	I didn't know this would be recommended	Completely unrealistic	Somewhat unrealistic	Realistic	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Useless
"It is recommended that _____ be considered for placement in a special education program under the classification of learning disabilities." (page 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"... It is recommended that the education program focus on developing the specific skills that she needs in reading and math to compete adequately and that arrangements be made for a behavioral intervention or counseling program..." (page 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"It is further recommended that counseling and support services be provided _____ and where possible and practical, placement changes in dorms, etc. be modified to reduce tension, anxiety, and undue competition among peers." (page 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Appendix IV

Letter of Support

During the past year and a half we have been involved with the study of the effects of the environment on the health of the population. This study is being conducted by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Centers for Disease Control. The study is being conducted in a number of communities in the United States and the results will be published in the next few years.

As with these activities, we are interested in the health of the population. I am convinced that there is a need for a study of the health of the population. I have asked my colleagues to conduct the preliminary and reporting studies which are necessary for the study. The study will be conducted in a number of communities in the United States and the results will be published in the next few years. I am convinced that there is a need for a study of the health of the population. I have asked my colleagues to conduct the preliminary and reporting studies which are necessary for the study. The study will be conducted in a number of communities in the United States and the results will be published in the next few years.

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There will be a meeting for the study in the next few months. I am convinced that there is a need for a study of the health of the population. I have asked my colleagues to conduct the preliminary and reporting studies which are necessary for the study. The study will be conducted in a number of communities in the United States and the results will be published in the next few years.

[Handwritten signature]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE: April 9, 1981

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Mr. Charles Geboe, Acting School Superintendent

SUBJECT: Evaluations

TO: All Concerned

During the past year and a half we have contracted with the Exceptional Child Center at Utah State University to provide psychoeducational evaluations for students who have been referred for special education placement. You have probably read or seen several of the reports which have been written for these evaluations in the IEP meetings you have been involved with.

Because these assessments represent a substantial investment of our resources and because you are required to use these reports frequently, I am concerned that they be as well done as possible. Consequently, I have asked Mr. Bryce Fifield to evaluate the procedures and reporting methods which were used by the Exceptional Child Center in providing these services. We are especially interested in gathering data about any weaknesses you see in the reports, determining how useful they may have been in developing the student's IEP, and getting your recommendations for how the reports could be improved. From this information we will develop guidelines for future examiners regarding the content and format of the reports to make them as cost-effective and applicable to our needs as possible.

Mr. Fifield will be asking you to critique a test report and will also interview each of you. All responses will be kept confidential and the results of his survey will only be presented as group summaries. I encourage each of you to cooperate with him so we can improve the usefulness of these testing reports.

There will be an orientation meeting for this study at 9:00 AM, Monday, April 13, 1981 upstairs in Building 22.


Acting School Superintendent



Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
(REV. 7-76)
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6
5010-112

Report #1

CO2 Narcosis

Reality orientation

Fickwink

Physiologic affective skills

Criteria for testing material

Lateral and remedial entry level

Report #2Technical Terms and JargonReport #3

Physiologic affective skills

Separation problems

Termination affairs

Developmental age

Kapitz scoring system

Visual-auditory integrative skills

[Use of abbreviations in general]

Someone will need to take the responsibility of

transferring her from point A (her current program) to point B (her new program which may include counseling).

Report #4

Emotional indicators suggest conflict, anxiety, and aggression.

On the vocabulary section (VISC-R), he received a scale

score of 2, and on the information section, a scale score of 1.

Report #5

Low normal to borderline mental ability

Report #6

Visual-auditory integrative skills

[Kaplan Auditory Discrimination Test] He still

- Report #1 C02 Narcosis
 Reality orientation
 Pickwickian
 Physiognomic affective skills
 Criterion referenced testing material
 Lateral and remedial entry level
- Report #2 Oral arithmetic problem solving skills
- Report #3 Physiognomic affective skills
 Separation problems
 Termination attempts
 Developmental age
 Koppitz scoring system
 Visual motor integrative skills
 (Use of abbreviations in general)
 Someone will need to take the responsibility of transmitting her from point A (her current program) to point B (her new program which may include counseling).
- Report #4 Emotional indicators suggest conflict, anxiety, and aggression.
 On the vocabulary section (WISC-R), he received a scale score of 2, and on the information section, a scale score of 1.
- Report #5 Low normal to borderline mental ability
- Report #6 Visual-motor integrative skills
 (Wepman Auditory Discrimination Test) He still

Report #6 (cont.) missed twelve items on the X scale. On both administrations he made zero errors on the Y scale.

Even in this area (his highest) a delay of 48% was noted.

Audiometric evaluation

Intelligence quotient

Disruptive behaviors

Positive reinforcement

Basal

Ceiling

Disfunction

Mode

Auditorily

Respondent 17: More standardized materials should be suggested.
 Respondent 18: More standardized materials should be suggested, some list of what should be suggested would be helpful.
 Respondent 19: More standardized materials of the student.

Appendix VI

Individual Suggestions for Improving Assessment and Report Procedures

Respondent 20: More background information about the student's functioning in the school would be helpful. You should get as much as possible.

Respondent 21: The test report will come as far as the accuracy of the data obtained with the psychologist was generally helpful in explaining core findings and recommendations. However, the recommendations and core findings were biased and overinterpreted the testing information. The analysis of information on the student is completely necessary and needs more effort on the part of the reporting psychologist and on the part of the school. Diagnostic assessment factors must follow IDEA guidelines and the accuracy of learning disability must be more carefully reviewed. If any help is needed, please contact the psychologist. Psychological status, findings, goals and available resources for assessment and report procedures should be reviewed.

- Respondent #1 More instructional materials should be suggested.
- Respondent #2 When counseling is suggested, some idea of what should be accomplished should be indicated.
- Respondent #3 Avoid dual diagnosis of the student.
- Respondent #4 Make more recommendations for what should be done with the student's regular academic program.
- Respondent #5 Statements about the student's emotional stability were not adequately addressed.
- Respondent #6 More background information about the student's functioning in the school would be helpful. You should get as much as possible.
- Respondent #7 The testing was well done as far as the mechanics of the tests. Contact with the psychologist was generally helpful in explaining conclusions and recommendations. Sometimes the recommendations and conclusions were biased and overinterpreted the testing information. The background information on the student is absolutely necessary and needs more effort on both the part of the examining psychologist and on the part of the school. Diagnostic recommendations must follow BIA guidelines and the diagnosis of Learning Disability must have recommendations for remediation. It may help to define technical terms in parentheses. Psychologists should identify goals and possible options for intervention and should tailor testing to meet the referral problem. If results

are on the borderline, the psychologist should give another test. The psychologist should never ride the fence since he is the expert. If he cannot make a diagnosis, how can the IEP team do any better?

Respondent #8 The evaluation report should give a list of program options. More time should be spent planning the assessment procedures.

Respondent #9 A number of the evaluations have not considered the student's ethnic background.

Respondent #10 Once the student is cleared for the evaluation, it needs to be done faster. I would like to see a more consistent effort on the part of the examiners to get the evaluations done sooner and avoid delays. Psychologists should do a better job proofing their final reports. I have found phrases left out, typographical errors and other problems. Sloppy typing sometimes makes the reports confusing.

Respondent #11 More communication and feedback between the examiners and teachers would help increase the adequacy of the reports and recommendations.

Respondent #12 Reports should not be vocabulary exercises. They should include facts about the students and describe the testing data more. What do the testing results mean in comparison with other norm groups?

Respondent #13 It would help to explain more about the testing

instruments and what the results mean. The psychologist should avoid judgments based on the student's looks and clothing.

Respondent #14 More background information would be helpful as would more information about the test and what it is supposed to measure.

Respondent #15 Test reports were generally lacking in social, emotional, and psychological information. However, they were generally very informative. Recommendations for counseling are usually too vague. The school should require background history of the student to be provided before the student can be enrolled at the school.

Respondent #16 The poor writing and structure of the reports shows a lack of professionalism on the part of the psychologists. More background information needs to be supplied to the psychologist before the report is written.

Respondent #17 More background information is needed. It would also help to have more of a description about the process of the pre-testing interview and the structure of the testing situation. I would also like to see more detail about the test, what it measures and the time spent in the interview.

Respondent #18 More information about the structure of the testing interview and the testing situation would be helpful.