

The Assessment of Bilingual Students: How Bilingual Can It Really Be?

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Abstract : The proposed study looks at the psychoeducational assessment of bilingual students, in English and French in this case. It will be the opportunity to look at language of assessment and specifically how certain tests can be administered in one language and others in another language. It is also a look into the questioning of the validity of the test scores that are obtained as well as the quality and generalizability of the conclusions that can be drawn. Bilingualism and multiculturalism, although in constant expansion, is not considered in norms development and remains a poorly understood factor when it is at play in the context of a psychoeducational assessment. Student placement, diagnoses, accurate measures of intelligence and achievement are all impacted by the quality of the assessment procedure. The same is true for questionnaires administered to parents and self-reports completed by bilingual students who, more often than not, are assessed in a language that is not their primary one or are compared to monolinguals not dealing with the same challenges or the same skills. Results show that students, when offered to work in a bilingual fashion, chooses to do so in a significant proportion. Recommendations will be offered to support educators aiming at expanding their skills when confronted with multilingual students in an assessment context.

Keywords : psychoeducational assessment, bilingualism, multiculturalism, intelligence, achievement

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