Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-Second Edition
(WIAT-II)

Publisher/Date:
• Pearson Assessments, PO Box 599700, San Antonio, TX 78259-9700. Published, 2001.

Purpose:
• Individually-administered test of achievement for individuals ages 4-85 years, assessing broad and domain-specific functions of reading, math, written language, and oral language.

Provides:
• Composite scores for an individual’s performance in areas of reading, math, written language, and oral language. Each composite area is comprised of 2 subtests (reading, 3), assessing more basic functions and applied processes.

Standardization Issues:
• Norms were collected 1999-2001 (two separate samples totaling over 5,000 individuals), representative of October of 1998 Census data, and were stratified by gender, ethnicity, geographic region, and parent/self educational attainment. 3% of the sample was identified as gifted, and 8-10% represented students with "mild" disabilities.

Reliability and Validity Issues:
• Most split-half, test-retest, and interrater reliabilities meet, or are well in excess, of .80 (subtests) and .90 (composites), which supports the test’s appropriateness for screening and diagnostic uses. In terms of validity, construct validity is evidenced through intercorrelations between subtests, measures of ability, and analysis of group differences. Content validity was determined by curriculum experts in their respective areas. Moderate-to-high evidence of criterion-validity is reported in the manual through comparison of the WIAT-II to a number of individual- and group-administered achievement tests and school grades.

Additional Points:
• The revision represents substantial changes in content and format from its predecessor (the WIAT), to reflect the incorporation of new research related to learning and assessment of academic skills.
• Administration and scoring of the Reading Comprehension subtest may be complex.
• The inclusion of an “error-analysis” component can be helpful to practitioners with knowledge in linking data to interventions to instructional programming. A guiding framework is available in the manual.
• Differential performance among nine separate “special groups” (gifted, CD, EBD, LD/reading, LD/not specific to reading, ADHD, ADHD/LD, and mild hearing impairments) are reported in the manual, and in each case, appear to confirm expected patterns of special needs students.
• Additions to the reading component address skills related to letter identification, phonological awareness, decoding, reading rate, oral reading accuracy and fluency, and oral/lexical comprehension.
• Revisions to the writing portion reflect more recent research in that area, incorporating elements of word fluency, sentence construction, writing fluency, and written responses to both visual and verbal cues.
• Oral Language subtests were redesigned to provide less emphasis on literal comprehension and greater emphasis on fluency and expressive vocabulary and recall of contextual information.
• Extensive development went in to the WIAT-II, beginning just four years after the publishing of its predecessor. Development included focus groups and blueprints developed and compared to national and state standards and curricula, as well as including prominent researchers in each of the specific academic fields as advisors throughout the development-phase.
• 8-10% of the norming sample included students with identified disabilities (LD, Speech-Language, EBD, CD, ADHD, and mild Hearing Impaired), and 3% included Gifted students.
• There was a slight overrepresentation, geographically, in the norming sample of students from the Western and the Southern US, and an underrepresentation of students from the Northeastern US.
• 1,069 individuals in the standardization group also were administered one of the Wechsler intelligence tests, to develop and provide ability-achievement discrepancy analysis data.
• The test includes “Supplemental Scores,” intended to further identify areas of strength and weakness (i.e., examining oral and written word fluency, word accuracy and rate). While these may add a “process-based” approach to the test’s clinical utility and can be used to assist in designing accommodations, the lack of strong psychometric data on these preclude them from diagnostic or eligibility decisions.
• “Ceiling-limits” may pose a problem for high-functioning, older adolescents (i.e., assessing for giftedness), as the maximum possible score for two of the reading tests (Pseudoword Decoding and Word Reading) are 124 and 118, respectively.
• There may be “floor-limits” with regard to reading for students below 3rd grade, resulting in overestimation of scores in 1st and 2nd grades. Floor-effects for low-functioning preschoolers (4 & 5 year olds) are reportedly significant enough to question the test’s use with them. Alternative tests
designed to measure pre-academic skills and language functions may be recommended.