INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND FEASIBILITY IN LEARNING DISABILITY IDENTIFICATION:
EXAMINING CRITERIA EFFECTS IN THE INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The accurate identification of learning disabilities is critical for applied settings as well as for research purposes. Currently, there are multiple methods of learning disability (LD) identification utilized by practitioners, including: IQ/achievement discrepancy, response to intervention, and patterns of strengths and weakness (Hale & Fiorello, 2004). Despite the use of these methods, there is a lack of research on the validity and the rates of Learning Disability identification associated with these methods. Additionally, the use of different methods creates potential differences in the base rates of students identified as having a learning disability. Further, the identification of learning disabilities needs to be associated with the interventions provided. The current study examined the frequency of cognitive and academic weaknesses in LD and control participants, using different criteria thresholds. The study also sought to examine the validity of the Integrated Assessment and Intervention Model (I-AIM), an identification approach that synthesizes assessment and intervention in a method that is user friendly (Decker, 2012). Participants included 42 children who had been previously diagnosed with a specific learning disability, and 42 children from the normative sample of the Woodcock-Johnson, Third Edition. Results of the study indicated that significantly more students from the learning disability group than the control group met I-AIM LD criteria. Although the results are promising, future research is needed to further examine the validity of the I-AIM.