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Two Techniques for Assessing Rates of Acquisition and Retention Among the Gifted

Michael T. Paff

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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TWO TECHNIQUES FOR ASSESSING RATES OF ACQUISITION
AND RETENTION AMONG THE GIFTED

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Michael T. Paff

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Educational and School Psychology

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Michael T. Paff

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

Joseph F. Kovaleski, D.Ed.
Professor
Department of Educational and School Psychology
Advisor

Mark J. Staszkiwicz, Ed.D.
Professor
Department of Educational and School Psychology

Timothy J. Runge, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Educational and School Psychology

Joel Erion, D.Ed.
Professor
Department of Counseling, School Psychology, and
Special Education
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

ACCEPTED

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: Two Techniques for Assessing Rates of Acquisition and Retention Among the Gifted

Author: Michael T. Paff

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Joseph F. Kovalski

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Mark J. Staszkiwicz
 Dr. Timothy J. Runge
 Dr. Joel Erion

School psychologists routinely spend their time evaluating students with disabilities, but there is also a need to remember the unique needs of gifted students. Among these is an objective, culturally-fair measure of rates of acquisition and retention, which is one of the criteria which should be investigated when determining whether or not students meet criteria as gifted. These constructs have not been consistently defined, nor have specific means of assessing them been fully validated. The purpose of this study was to investigate the utility of two assessment techniques: a teacher rating scale, called the Modified Chuska Scale (MCS), and a performance assessment called Instructional Assessment using Incremental Rehearsal (IAIR). This study examined the relationship between gifted status and a number of other demographic variables (sex, grade, parental education, and annual household income), whether or not a student's status as gifted could be predicted by a combination of MCS and IAIR scores, which of these variables would be the better predictor, and whether or not gifted students score differently than nongifted students on the IAIR task.

Findings indicated that sex was unrelated to gifted status. Results for the other demographic variables (grade, parental education level, and annual household income) were indeterminable. A model of predictors including MCS scores and IAIR scores did contribute to the classification accuracy of a student's gifted status; MCS was a much more powerful predictor than IAIR. Gifted students scored statistically significantly higher for both acquisition and retention on IAIR. In light of these results, implications for additional research and the practice of school psychology are discussed, and tentative recommendations for incorporating formal assessment of rates of acquisition and retention for gifted students are offered.