



STEIRISCHE GESELLSCHAFT
FÜR PSYCHOLOGIE

WHAT ARE WE MEASURING? MANY THINGS, BUT PROBABLY NOT IQ



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ABSTRACT

International large-scale assessments (ILSAs), including TIMSS, PIRLS, and PISA, have become important evidentiary sources for countries to understand their education systems, to make comparisons, and to learn from others. Although ILSAs have proven beneficial in various ways, their data have also been used to make questionable claims. A troubling example is a rise in research that uses ILSA achievement scores as an intelligence measure. Initially, ILSA-based intelligence research was attributable to fringe scientists with empirically questionable bona fides. Concerningly, however, in recent years ILSA-based intelligence research has been conducted by more mainstream scholars, with publications in peer-reviewed, high-impact journals. This shift, from the fringes to mainstream scholarship, necessitates a careful conversation. In this talk, I provide a brief history of intelligence testing. Based on seminal historic and current research, I offer several empirical and theoretical examples that build a case for why international assessments are not measures of intelligence and the possible errors of inference that can arise.