**Assessing intelligence**

Testing is a part of our everyday lives especially during our years of schooling. It is always important that any test measure what it is actually set out to measure. For example, you would not expect to be asked for swimming pool safety rules at a driving test. A test must be credible. Commonly, tests fall into one of two categories:

1. **Aptitude tests**thesetestspredict your future performance or ability to learn a new skill. Some examples include: college entrance exams (designed to test your ability to do college work), intelligence tests, physical examinations, etc.
2. **Achievement tests**these testsassess your current knowledge. Some examples include: final course examinations (designed to test the knowledge you already obtained during the course), chapter tests, and Public exams.

Currently, the most widely used *intelligence test* is the **Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS).**It has 11 subtests and gives a verbal score, a performance score, and an overall score. Large differences between the verbal and nonverbal scores indicate possible learning difficulties.

Psychological tests must meet all **3**of the following criteria in order to be widely accepted:

1. **Standardization**To standardize a test, it must first be given to a large representative sample of people in which their scores will be set as the standard for comparison. You may recall that a*Normal* *curve* is a bell shaped curve of scores formed by standardized test results. The majority (68%) of people fall within the center or average of the curve (see section on statistics).
2. **Reliability**To be reliable, a test must yield consistent results. This is done by comparing scores on two halves of a test or by retesting. If the results are similar enough, the test is deemed reliable.
3. **Validity**The degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. The term **criterion** is used to describethe behavior being tested. There are two types of validity:

**a. *Content validity*:**with respect to achievements tests. It is the extent to which a test *measures*the intended behavior.

**b. *Predictive validity***(or ***criterion-related validity):***with respect to aptitude tests, it is how successful the test is in *predicting* intended behavior. It is interesting to note that the predictive ability of aptitude test scores diminish with increased education.

**Flynn Effect**This phenomenon is named after researcher James Flynn who documented the finding that intelligence tests worldwide showed an increase in scores since 1960s. But college aptitude test scores were decreasing. The possible explanations for this trend may be more academic diversity and better greater number of educated people in general.