

**This can be done by every child, can it?  
The Swiss “Intelligence and Development Scales”**

Dipl.-Psych. Katharina Stöbel, Dipl.-Psych. Mohini Lokhande  
Prof. Dr. Rainer K. Silbereisen

**Abstract**

It is not only in Germany, that discussion has emerged in the recent past regarding the academic achievement of school children. Already the child's achievement in primary school can play an important role for further opportunities and decisions in an individual's life (e.g. decision on the track in High school, application at university and for jobs). Therefore it is important to understand the processes that lead to academic achievement. We would like to take up this current topic during this course. In particular, we hope to discuss the issue, as to what extent a child's cognitive and motivational skills account for the success in primary school. Whilst intelligence is a well-known predictor for academic achievement, the role of motivation continues to be a subject of controversial debate. If we understand better how motivational factors influence academic achievement we will be able to find better ways for supporting students in this matter.

A new test was developed at the University of Basel in Switzerland has been entitled named “Intelligence and Development Scales” (IDS). This test battery is revised and newly developed and consists not only of subtests on cognitive competencies. In addition to this the IDS can also test the mathematical, language, social and motor skills. Furthermore parents and teacher can fill out a questionnaire to evaluate the child's motivation and school achievement. What is special about this test is its focus on development in middle childhood. Along with a development profile, school and counselling psychologists will be able to calculate a child's IQ. The standardisation of the IDS has already started to take place in Germany, Austria and Switzerland with about 1400 children.

In the winter term students applied the IDS to test children in local kindergartens and primary schools. In summer term we shall focus on our research question: The explanatory value of cognitive and motivational skills on academic achievement. Participating students will be

involved in all the aspects of conducting an empirical study, e.g. search/study of literature, the development of hypotheses, data analyses. Students from PSU and FSU will work closely together, partly in small groups. Course language will be English. Students from the PSU will also get an introduction into the test itself:

## **Structure**

### **Part I (winter term 2007/2008) – what we did in the winter term:**

- Gather the project's theoretical background (introduction into the use of development and intelligence tests, validation of tests, construction of the IDS, a theoretical introduction into the concepts of intelligence, motivation and academic achievement)
- Data collection

### **Part II (summer term 2008): - what we are going to do together with you:**

- Development of the research questions on the explanation of academic achievement
- Statistical testing of our hypotheses based on the data collected in Germany, Austria and Switzerland
- Presenting the results and writing our final report