Today students are assessed daily. Some of these assessments are informal while others are high stakes. Some look at what a child has learned while others look at what a child is capable of. Two tests that are frequently used to diagnose certain disabilities are standardized intelligence quotient (IQ) tests and Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS). IQ tests look solely at a child’s various cognitive abilities, while VABS looks at how a child reacts in real-world situations. Each has their own scales and implications as well as strengths and weaknesses.

First I read about standardized IQ tests in the article “Academic Success in Adolescence.” In this article, the authors looked at the relationships between verbal IQ, social support, and emotional intelligence. The authors used specifically verbal IQ in order to represent a student’s cognitive ability. It is said that IQ is one of the best indicators of GPA, but that it doesn’t cover other factors such as socioeconomic status. It also doesn’t account for a child’s emotional intelligence, which is precisely why the authors chose to look at this relationship in more detail.

The results of the study show that for male students, there is a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and IQ. Thus they go on to assert that male students with high emotional intelligence will also have higher GPA’s than those with low emotional intelligence. That being said, they found no significant relationship when they studied female students. This, they said, was indicative that their results weren’t that conclusive after all. They also mentioned the fact that researchers largely still don’t fully comprehend IQ and its implications.
The second article I read was about an adaptive behavior assessment known as the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale. In “The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales in Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders at Different Cognitive Levels,” the authors examine the relationship between IQ and VABS especially with students with autism. They found that VABS can be used in diagnosing disabilities that are missed by IQ tests. One of the pitfalls of IQ tests is that it often misses autism spectrum disorders, which are actually characterized by higher IQ scores. VABS is used to measure more social and communicative skills that are commonly lacking in people with autism.

VABS in many ways covers what a standardized IQ test fails to measure. Autism is just one example of a disability that almost always requires a VABS assessment to diagnose. The authors also state that VABS can be used for students whose IQ is too low to be measured by an IQ test. Similar to how certain IQ scores reveal certain disabilities, VABS assessments can create profiles that indicate various disabilities. Although the researchers found that VABS scores tend to correlate with IQ scores, IQ tests alone are not sufficient in diagnosing all disability categories.

Both of these forms of assessment are extremely useful when diagnosing a disability. Although there is much that is missed by an IQ score, specifically emotional and interpersonal intelligence, VABS is very useful in covering these areas. Ideally there would be one test that could cover all kinds of intelligence and cognitive ability, but for now both IQ tests and adaptive behavior assessments must be used to do this.