

KERA UPDATE

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#3

Recent UK Study Shows:

KIRIS Tests Are Not Useful for Predicting College Performance

A study released in March, 1995, by the University of Kentucky's Chancellor's Office concluded that "... using KIRIS scores does not increase the ability of the University to predict how well a student will perform in specific introductory courses in English, mathematics, social science and the physical sciences." They also concluded: "The relationship between KIRIS assessment scores, whether we are talking about the four performance levels, the raw scores on the subject area tests, or the combined percentile rank calculated by the Kentucky Department of Education, do not exhibit strong correlations with grades earned in introductory courses at the University."

The UK study echoes many previous reports that clearly state KIRIS cannot be used for making decisions about individual students. But, the results of this study also raise a question about whether KIRIS is suitable for its intended purpose of evaluating school performance. Poor correlation between KIRIS results and the performance of the UK Freshmen is problematic because the UK student sample is relatively large (1,516 students). If a sample of this size demonstrates poor correlation, the question must be raised as to whether the KIRIS results for the

entire Kentucky school system are misleading. The Office of Education Accountability's National Technical Panel reached that conclusion without consideration of the UK information. Clearly, the UK study adds still more support for the OEA Panel's conclusions.

The chart below shows composite results for 12 UK Freshman courses. Note that ACT is nearly

twice as good a predictor of Freshman performance compared to KIRIS, while high school grade point average is over three times more accurate than KIRIS.

Is it fair to judge our teachers and schools with a system only one third as accurate as the grades those teachers award to their students? What might a court of law say?

How Well ACT, High School Grade Point Average, and KIRIS Tests Predicted Performance in 12 Freshman Courses at UK

