

This is an interesting article that is based on an excellent meta-analysis of multi-section SET validity studies by Uttl, White and Gonzales published in *Studies in Educational Evaluation* in 2017. The report of this meta-analysis in the present paper is closely modelled after the report by Uttl et al. (2017). However, this information is necessary for readers to follow the arguments about COI.

In view of the fact that the impact of conflict of interest on research findings has been amply demonstrated for studies of drug efficacy as well as studies of the effects of soft drinks on weight, it is not surprising that we find similar effects in studies of the effectiveness of SETs. However, the manuscript would need some revision, before it can be published.

Given the importance of the classification of authors into categories of COI, there should be a supplementary table where sources as well as all the information about COI are listed for each author. At the moment, neither I nor the readers can evaluate the accuracy of this classification.

I also wondered about some of the cases. For example, Cohen got his job as Assistant Director after finishing his PhD. It is not surprising that somebody, who does relevant research on education should then be offered such a job. The question is whether Cohen hoped (or knew) that he would be getting this job during his work on his dissertation. Otherwise, it would not be a clear case of COI.

Having been both a department chair and a dean, I was also surprised that this constituted a conflict of interest. I personally always doubted the value of SETs and never based my personnel decision on such information. But I can see that in general, chairs and deans can be motivated to defend SETs.

The rules about disclosures of conflicts of interest have become much stricter in recent years. The authors should mention this when criticizing authors of SET reviews for not disclosing their conflicts. It is my impression that in the 80ies disclosure of COI in an educational journal would have been unusual.

Finally, I find the whole discussion of the IDEA Center's reaction to Uttl et al., s criticism of SETs out of place. I can totally understand that Uttl and colleagues

find this criticism unfair and would like to retaliate. But I think that the present article is not the place to do this.

I did not look at the raw data or checked the figures. I would not have done it anyway. I think the meta-analysis is extremely competently done (and already published). I think the more important check is of their classification of cases into categories of COI. And at present, they provide patchy evidence on this.