TV INTELLIGENTSIA

THE

Rating Methodology

The transparent framework behind every TVI score.

VERSION 1.2

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SIGNATORIES

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01
Why this document exists

1.1 The measurement gap in entertainment

The entertainment industry has extensive infrastructure for measuring *who watches* (Nielsen), *what is in demand* (Parrot Analytics), and *what people say they liked* (Rotten Tomatoes, IMDb). It has no infrastructure for measuring *what the content actually does to the viewer's brain.* TV Intelligentsia was built to fill that gap.

1.2 The credibility crisis in existing ratings

Every major rating system in entertainment has a documented structural problem.

Rotten Tomatoes binarizes critic opinion into a Fresh/Rotten vote, then aggregates the votes into a percentage — a methodology that rewards consensus and obscures intensity. A film that nine of ten critics mildly approve of scores higher than one that four of ten critics consider a masterpiece.

Metacritic weights critic scores through an undisclosed proprietary formula, which by definition cannot be evaluated, debated, or reproduced.

IMDb and Letterboxd rely on user-generated ratings vulnerable to review bombing, brigade voting, and cultural-warfare campaigns. The pattern has been visible on major franchise releases from 2019 forward.

Common Sense Media focuses on age-appropriateness — a real service, but a different construct than content quality or cognitive value.

Nielsen measures attention volume, not attention quality.

None of these systems publishes its methodology in a form that can be challenged, reproduced, or version-controlled. TVI is designed as the clean-sheet alternative: a published, version-stamped, change-logged methodology with named signatories accountable for each dimension.

1.3 What this document is and is not

This is a published methodology — version-stamped, change-logged, and scheduled for quarterly review. It is a transparent account of how every score in the TVI database is produced, grounded in published cognitive science, and designed to be reproducible by any qualified reviewer applying the same rubric to the same title.

It is *not* a claim of peer-reviewed validation. That is Phase 3 work. TVI's credibility model is honest about its stage: expert authority first (Phase 1, this document), empirical evidence second (Phase 2, inter-rater reliability and outcome correlation), scientific validation third (Phase 3, university partnerships and published studies).

1.4 The founder's measurement credential

TVI is led by a founder with specific training in measurement science. Jordan Robinson holds a Master of Public Health, with substantial coursework in research methodology — the discipline that designs measurement instruments, evaluates psychometric validity, establishes inter-rater reliability, and mitigates measurement bias. That training, combined with his medical research background, is what qualifies him to construct a rating methodology. The methodology is not a physician opining on entertainment. It is a trained measurement scientist applying research methodology to a domain that has never been formally measured.

02
The IQ Score framework

2.1 The IQ Score defined

The TVI IQ Score is a composite score on a 0–200 scale measuring the intellectual and developmental value of entertainment content across three weighted dimensions. The score answers a single question: *what did watching this actually do to the viewer's brain?*

The IQ Score is a content rating. It is not a measurement of viewer intelligence. It is not a safety rating. It is not an age-appropriateness rating.

2.2 The formula

THE FORMULA

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IQ Score = round((CS × 0.40 + EV × 0.35 + EQ × 0.25) × 4)
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CS = Cognitive Stimulation (0-50)
EV = Educational Value (0-50)
EQ = Entertainment Quality (0-50)
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Result: integer 0–200

> *Note on naming. Within the IQ Score formula, "EQ" refers to Entertainment Quality. The separately developed Emotional Intelligence dimension described in Section 5 uses the display label EI Score on all public-facing surfaces to prevent confusion.*

Dimension scores are multiplied by their weights, summed, multiplied by four to produce a 0–200 scale, and rounded to the nearest integer. Maximum composite: 200.

2.3 Why these weights

Cognitive Stimulation receives the highest weight (40%) because the research literature consistently identifies cognitive engagement — not entertainment value or educational content — as the primary differentiator between content that produces measurable cognitive effects and content that does not. Four citations support this position directly:

- Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988; Sweller, van Merriënboer, & Paas, 1998) establishes that the mental architecture activated by content varies dramatically with structural complexity, and that the load a viewer must process determines the cognitive work performed.
- Narrative Transportation Theory (Green & Brock, 2000) demonstrates that narrative complexity drives deeper cognitive engagement and better retention of both factual and evaluative information.
- The Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated Message Processing (Lang, 2000; Lang, 2006) links media structural features directly to cognitive resource allocation.
- Madigan et al. (2020) in *JAMA Pediatrics* documents measurable associations between content *type* and developmental outcomes in children — not just duration.

Educational Value receives the second-highest weight (35%) because persistent knowledge transfer — what the viewer retains after the screen goes off — is the dimension most correlated with long-term cognitive benefit in the literature. Fisch (2004) articulates the capacity model for children's comprehension of educational content; Desmond & Dillman Carpentier (2019) document that educational structure predicts retention; Butler, Zaromb, Lyle, & Roediger (2009) establish that viewers learn factual information from entertainment, accurately or not.

Entertainment Quality receives the lowest weight (25%) because craft, emotional engagement, and production value — while essential for content to function as watchable entertainment — contribute less to measurable cognitive or educational outcomes than the other two dimensions. Excluding entertainment quality entirely, however, would produce absurd results: a poorly made educational film scoring higher than a masterfully crafted one. The 25% weight ensures craft is rewarded without dominating.

2.4 The weighting rationale as a design decision

The weights represent informed judgment, not empirical optimization. The literature supports the directional ranking — cognitive engagement, then educational content, then entertainment craft as predictors of cognitive impact — but does not dictate precise percentages. TVI publishes the weights explicitly so they can be evaluated, debated, and, as the empirical base grows, adjusted in future versions. This is the difference between a transparent methodology and a black box.

03 Dimension definitions and sub-metrics

Each dimension is scored 0–50 and is itself the average of four sub-metrics, each scored 0–50. Twelve sub-metrics across three dimensions constitute the full scoring rubric.

3.1 Cognitive Stimulation — 40% weight

How hard the viewer's brain works during viewing. Measures the cognitive resources required to follow, process, and engage with the content.

Sub-metric	What it measures	High-score exemplars	Grounding
Narrative Complexity	Number and interconnection of plot threads, temporal structures, character arcs, thematic layers	Interweaving storylines, non-linear timelines, unreliable narrators, thematic recursion — *The Wire*, *Dark*	Mittell (2015), *Complex TV*
Dialogue Density	Lexical sophistication, information load per line, subtext, conversational complexity	Dialogue that requires active parsing, domain vocabulary, double meanings — *The West Wing*, *Succession*	Lang (2000), LC4MP
Cognitive Load	Degree to which the viewer must actively construct meaning rather than passively receive it	Shows where critical information is lost if you look at your phone — *Severance*, *Westworld*	Sweller (1988), Cognitive Load Theory
Conceptual Novelty	Introduction of ideas, frameworks, or perspectives the viewer is unlikely to have encountered	Content that teaches you to think about something in a fundamentally new way — *Black Mirror*, *Cosmos*	Berlyne (1960), curiosity as a cognitive driver

3.2 Educational Value — 35% weight

What persists beyond viewing. Measures the extent to which the content transfers durable knowledge, skill, or understanding. Educational value is explicitly not limited to academic content: it includes emotional intelligence, critical thinking, life skills, and knowledge transfer across any domain the viewer might carry into their own life.

Sub-metric	What it measures	High-score exemplars	Grounding
Factual Density	Volume of verifiable, real-world information conveyed per episode or per hour	Content that teaches specific facts the viewer can recall and verify — *Cosmos*, *Chernobyl*	Fisch (2004), capacity model
Domain Knowledge Transfer	Depth of expertise in a specific field the viewer gains	Viewer understands a domain they didn't before — medicine, law, history, physics — *House M.D.*, *Band of Brothers*	Butler et al. (2009)
Practical Applicability	Whether the knowledge or perspective gained has real-world utility	The viewer can apply something learned to their own life or work	Bandura (1986), social cognitive theory
Historical / Scientific Accuracy	Fidelity to real events, verified facts, and established science	Content that does not fabricate or distort for dramatic convenience — *Chernobyl* vs. loosely "inspired by" narratives	Mutz & Goldman (2010)

3.3 Entertainment Quality — 25% weight

Craft and engagement. Measures the technical and artistic quality of the content as a piece of made entertainment.

Sub-metric	What it measures	High-score exemplars	Grounding
Emotional Range	Breadth and depth of emotional experience the content produces	Work that moves beyond a single emotional register — *Six Feet Under*, *BoJack Horseman*	Nabi & Green (2015)
Narrative Arc Completion	Degree to which the story delivers on its structural promises	Satisfying resolution of character arcs, thematic payoff — *Breaking Bad* vs. mid-season algorithmic filler	Brewer & Lichtenstein (1982)

Sub-metric	What it measures	High-score exemplars	Grounding
Production Value	Cinematography, sound design, editing, visual effects, score	Production choices that serve the story rather than substitute for it — *Shogun*, *Chernobyl*	Industry-standard craft assessment; expert judgment
Audience Retention	Degree to which the content sustains engaged attention across its runtime	Content that earns the viewer's time minute-by-minute, not just episode-by-episode	Green & Brock (2000)

04 The SEL dimension (children's content)

4.1 SEL defined and why it is separate

Social-Emotional Learning is scored 0–50 and reported alongside the IQ Score as a distinct measure. It does *not* feed into the IQ Score formula.

SEL measures developmental appropriateness and emotional-skill modeling — a different construct than cognitive or educational quality. A children's show can score 160 IQ and 8 SEL (highly stimulating, minimal social-emotional modeling) or 88 IQ and 48 SEL (minimal cognitive demand but exceptional emotional-development content). Conflating the two would obscure the signal each provides.

4.2 The CASEL framework

TVI's SEL dimension uses the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) framework — the same framework adopted by K–12 schools nationwide. Five competencies are scored:

CASEL competency	What it measures in content
Self-Awareness	Does the content model characters recognizing their own emotions, strengths, and limitations?
Self-Management	Does the content model emotional regulation, impulse control, and goal-directed behavior?
Social Awareness	Does the content model empathy, perspective-taking, and appreciation for diversity?
Relationship Skills	Does the content model healthy communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution?
Responsible Decision-Making	Does the content model ethical reasoning, consequential thinking, and constructive choices?

4.3 The credentialed reviewer

All children's content in the TVI database is reviewed by Cordelia Witty, EdS., NCSP — a licensed School Psychologist and Nationally Certified School Psychologist. The CASEL framework and her credential ensure that SEL scores are grounded in the developmental science used in educational settings, not in subjective impressions.

4.4 Anchor calibration scores

SEL scoring is anchored to reference titles that establish the scale. Anchor scores quoted here are pulled live from the TVI database at tvintelligentsia.com/explore at time of publication and may evolve with rescoring; the live database is always authoritative.

- *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* — SEL 48. High anchor. Explicit emotional-literacy instruction with clear SEL scaffolding by design; the highest-scored SEL title in the database.
- *Bluey* — SEL 46. Exceptional modeling of emotional regulation, family dynamics, imaginative play, and age-appropriate problem-solving.
- *Sesame Street* — SEL 44. Broad SEL range with strong modeling across all five CASEL competencies.
- *Ms. Rachel (Songs for Littles)* — SEL 30. Mid-range. Strong language and emotional-vocabulary modeling for early-toddler audiences with comparatively lighter scaffolding across the full CASEL range.
- *Teletubbies* — SEL 10. Low-mid range. Visual and tonal warmth without direct emotional-skill modeling.
- *Cocomelon* — SEL 8. Low anchor. Minimal emotional-regulation modeling, low social-interaction depth, high stimulation rate without SEL resolution.
- *Baby Shark* — SEL 6. Low anchor. Sensory-driven content with minimal character interaction to model social-emotional skills.

4.5 The SEL calibration flag

To prevent Educational Value from being assessed too narrowly — for instance, counting only academic content and ignoring emotional-intelligence or life-skills transfer — every scoring session runs an automated flag: any children's title where SEL ≥ 40 and EV ≤ 25 is surfaced for manual review. A discrepancy of this size almost always indicates that educational value was scored against an academic-only ceiling rather than the five-dimensional rubric (academic content, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, life skills, knowledge transfer). Flagged titles are reviewed by the scoring team, not auto-corrected.

The IQ Score is a content rating, not an intelligence measurement. Scores are derived from the published methodology applied to specific titles. The current scoring database is authoritative and available at tvintelligentsia.com/explore.

05 The EQ dimension (all content — in active development)

This section describes a dimension that is in active development as of v1.1. The EQ dimension is not yet publicly displayed on TVI surfaces. When launched, it will appear as a separate, non-compositing dimension alongside the IQ Score. This section documents the current state of the framework, the theoretical grounding, and the signatory arrangement.

5.1 What EQ measures

The TVI EQ dimension — Emotional Intelligence Score — measures how much a title develops or demands emotional intelligence in its viewer. It applies to all content in the TVI database, adult and children's alike, and captures a dimension that the IQ Score's three components do not fully address: the relational and emotional sophistication of the content's portrayal of human inner life.

Note on naming. Within the IQ Score formula, the abbreviation "EQ" is already used for Entertainment Quality. To prevent confusion, the Emotional Intelligence dimension uses the display label EI Score on all public-facing surfaces. In internal methodology documents and version history, it is referred to as the EQ dimension for continuity with v0.1 planning references.

5.2 Why EQ is a separate dimension

The IQ Score's Cognitive Stimulation and Educational Value dimensions capture intellectual complexity and knowledge transfer. Entertainment Quality captures craft and engagement. None of these fully captures the emotional intelligence dimension of content — how a title models, demands, or develops the viewer's capacity for empathy, self-awareness, emotional regulation, and relational understanding.

A show can score 185 on the IQ Score while presenting characters with no emotional interior life — procedural excellence without emotional depth. A show can score 112 on the IQ Score while featuring some of the most emotionally intelligent character writing in the medium. The EI Score captures the latter signal independently of the former.

5.3 Theoretical grounding

The EQ dimension is grounded in the clinical psychology literature on emotional intelligence and in narrative psychology research on how fiction develops emotional competencies.

Salovey and Mayer's four-branch model (1990, 1997) defines emotional intelligence across four hierarchical domains: perceiving emotions (recognizing emotional signals in faces, voices, and content), using emotions (harnessing emotions to facilitate thought), understanding emotions (comprehension of emotional complexity and transitions), and managing emotions (regulation of emotional experience). TVI's EI Score evaluates how effectively a title's characters model and navigate each of these domains.

Goleman's emotional intelligence framework (1995, 2006) maps emotional intelligence onto five practical competencies — self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills — that parallel and extend the CASEL framework used in TVI's SEL dimension. Where SEL captures developmental modeling for children, EI captures adult-grade emotional intelligence in all content.

Mar and Oatley's simulation hypothesis (Mar et al., 2006; Mar, 2011) proposes that fiction functions as a simulation of social worlds, developing readers' and viewers' capacity to understand others' mental states through narrative engagement. This theory provides the mechanism by which high-EI content may develop emotional intelligence in viewers — not through didactic instruction but through the cognitive-emotional rehearsal of complex interpersonal situations.

Kidd and Castano (2013) demonstrated in five controlled experiments that reading literary fiction — specifically fiction that demands that readers infer and model characters' mental states — improves Theory of Mind performance. The parallel implication for television is that narratively complex, emotionally nuanced content may develop similar capacities in regular viewers.

Zillmann's affective disposition theory (1994, 2000) provides grounding for how viewers emotionally engage with characters and why emotional depth in character writing produces stronger affective response and longer retention.

5.4 The five sub-dimensions

The EI Score is scored 0–50, as the average of five sub-dimensions each scored 0–50. Unlike the IQ Score's three main dimensions, the EI Score's five sub-dimensions are weighted equally.

Sub-dimension 1 — Empathy Modeling

Does the content portray characters who demonstrate the capacity to recognize, understand, and share the feelings of others? This sub-dimension evaluates whether empathy is modeled as a functional, practiced capacity — not merely referenced as a value. High-scoring content shows characters actively taking the perspective of others in conflict, adjusting their responses based on that understanding, and demonstrating that empathy produces better outcomes than its absence.

High-anchor examples: Inside Out, BoJack Horseman (later seasons), Six Feet Under.
Low-anchor examples: Content in which characters' emotional states are functional plot devices rather than developed interior lives.

Sub-dimension 2 — Self-Awareness Depiction

Does the content portray characters with accurate, developing self-knowledge? This sub-dimension evaluates whether characters demonstrate awareness of their own emotional patterns, blind spots, defense mechanisms, and growth over time. Critically, self-awareness depiction distinguishes between characters who *know* themselves and characters who merely *narrate* themselves — the latter being a common substitution.

High-anchor examples: The Sopranos (Tony's therapy arc), Fleabag, Better Call Saul.
Low-anchor examples: Content in which characters' stated self-awareness is contradicted by behavior without the contradiction being recognized narratively.

Sub-dimension 3 — Emotional Regulation in Characters

Does the content portray characters who demonstrate the capacity to manage emotional states — including the realistic portrayal of failure to regulate? This sub-dimension does not reward stoicism or emotional suppression. It rewards authentic portrayal of emotional regulation as a practiced, imperfect, developmental capacity. High-scoring content shows characters using named strategies (explicitly or implicitly), experiencing the costs of failed regulation, and developing regulatory capacity across a narrative arc.

High-anchor examples: Bluey (parenting regulation arcs), Succession (dysregulation as character study), Mare of Easttown.
Low-anchor examples: Content in which emotional dysregulation is presented as a character trait with no consequence or arc, or in which regulation is presented as unproblematic stoicism.

Sub-dimension 4 — Relational Complexity

Does the content portray relationships with genuine psychological depth? This sub-dimension evaluates whether the interpersonal relationships in the content demonstrate the actual complexity of human connection — including ambivalence, unresolved conflict, repair, rupture, implicit communication, and the layered history that characterizes real relationships. High-scoring content portrays relationships that are neither idealized nor pathologized, but recognizably, messily human.

High-anchor examples: The Americans, Parenthood, Marriage Story.
Low-anchor examples: Content in which relationships serve narrative functions without psychological interiority, or in which relational complexity is flattened to archetypal roles.

Sub-dimension 5 — Emotional Vocabulary and Specificity

Does the content use specific, differentiated emotional language — whether in dialogue, narration, or visual portrayal — that models precision in emotional identification? This sub-dimension evaluates whether the content distinguishes between related emotional states (frustration vs. shame vs. disappointment; affection vs. attachment vs. love) rather than operating at the level of generic emotional reference. High-scoring content treats emotional language as meaningful and precise, modeling the kind of emotional vocabulary that research associates with better emotional outcomes.

High-anchor examples: Inside Out (the Joy/Sadness distinction as the film's central argument), Normal People, Afterlife (Ricky Gervais).
Low-anchor examples: Content in which emotional states are named only at the level of happy/sad/angry/scared.

5.5 The EI anchor calibration

The following titles serve as calibration anchors for the EI Score. These anchors will be formally confirmed by Alexander Gigler, PsyD, before public launch of the dimension.

Proposed high anchors (pending signatory confirmation):

- Inside Out (Pixar) — EI 49/50 (proposed). The film's central narrative argument is a clinical-grade model of emotional complexity — the simultaneous validity of multiple emotional states, the function of sadness, the development of emotional integration. No other widely-seen film has done more direct work in building public emotional vocabulary.
- BoJack Horseman — EI 47/50 (proposed). Perhaps the most psychologically sophisticated depiction of defense mechanisms, avoidance, and self-sabotage in the animated medium.
- The Sopranos — EI 45/50 (proposed). The therapy-session structure provides a systematic container for self-awareness depiction across the series run.

Proposed low anchors (pending signatory confirmation):

- High-stimulation procedural with flat character emotional interiors — EI 12/50 (proposed, specific title TBD with signatory).
- Reality competition format with emotional portrayal reduced to strategic performance — EI 8/50 (proposed, specific title TBD with signatory).

5.6 The signatory arrangement

Alexander William Gigler, PsyD serves as Advisory Board member and EI dimension signatory-designate. His credential as a clinical psychologist — specifically his training in emotional intelligence, affect regulation, and psychological assessment — is the expertise that grounds the EI dimension's validity claims in clinical psychology rather than lay cultural criticism.

His role in the EI dimension development:

- Review and confirm the five sub-dimension definitions and their theoretical grounding.
- Confirm or revise the anchor calibration titles and scores proposed in Section 5.5.
- Serve as named signatory on the EI dimension when it launches publicly.
- Provide ongoing consultation on edge cases and scoring disputes that involve clinical psychological questions.

The EI dimension will not launch publicly without Dr. Gigler's explicit sign-off on the framework and anchor calibrations.

5.7 Launch criteria

The EI dimension launches publicly when:

1. Dr. Gigler has signed off on the five sub-dimensions, the theoretical grounding, and the anchor calibrations.
2. EI scoring coverage reaches a meaningful threshold of the adult database (target: 300+ titles, weighted toward the database's most-visited pages).
3. This methodology document has been updated to v1.2 reflecting the confirmed EI framework and anchors.

The IQ Score is a content rating, not an intelligence measurement. Scores are derived from the published methodology applied to specific titles. The current scoring database is authoritative and available at tvintelligentsia.com/explore.

06
Scoring protocol

6.1 Unit of analysis

Each title is scored as a complete body of work across all seasons, not episode by episode. Rationale: episode-level scoring introduces volatility that obscures aggregate signal, and the consumer question is *should I watch this show,* not *should I watch this episode.*

Anthology exception. Anthology series where each season is a different narrative work — *True Detective*, *Fargo*, *Black Mirror*, *The White Lotus* — retain season-level entries, because each season is scored as a distinct work. Non-anthology shows keep a single canonical entry covering the entire run.

6.2 Scoring process

1. Full viewing. The reviewer completes the title in full — every season, every episode of a serialized narrative. Partial viewing disqualifies a reviewer from scoring.
2. Independent sub-metric scoring. The reviewer scores each of the twelve sub-metrics (0–50) using the rubric definitions in Section 3.
3. Dimension aggregation. Each dimension score is the mean of its four sub-metric scores.
4. Formula application. The IQ Score is computed via the formula in Section 2.
5. SEL scoring (children's content only). Cordelia Witty scores SEL against the CASEL rubric defined in Section 4.
6. EI scoring (in development). Pending Dr. Gigler's sign-off on the framework defined in Section 5; not yet displayed publicly.
7. Internal consistency review. Scores are checked against internal consistency benchmarks — for example, a title cannot score 45/50 on Cognitive Stimulation overall while scoring 10/50 on Narrative Complexity without flagging for a sub-metric audit.
8. Calibration sweep. All kids titles are run against the SEL calibration flag described in Section 4.5.

6.3 Reviewer qualifications

The current reviewer panel comprises three named methodologists: Jordan Robinson (MD, MPH — research methodology, IQ framework), Cordelia Witty (EdS., NCSP — children's content and SEL dimension), and Alexander Gigler (PsyD — EI dimension, in active development as signatory-

designate). As TVI scales, the panel will expand with explicit qualification criteria: demonstrated subject-matter expertise, signed agreement to apply the published rubric, and documented inter-rater reliability testing before scores are published.

6.4 Inter-rater reliability (Phase 2)

TVI acknowledges that a small reviewer panel is a known limitation of v1.x. Inter-rater reliability testing is a Phase 2 priority: multiple qualified reviewers scoring the same titles independently, with Cohen's kappa or intraclass correlation computed to demonstrate scoring consistency within accepted measurement thresholds. Until this work is completed, TVI scores are expert-reviewed ratings, not statistically validated measurements. The distinction is stated here and on every public-facing score display.

6.5 Score integrity protocol

Scores published on tvintelligentsia.com are authoritative. Planning documents, marketing materials, internal drafts, and external citations are not publishable sources for scores. When TVI content cites a score, the score must be verified against the live database at the time of publication. The database is the record; anything else is a reference.

07 Score categories and database distribution

7.1 The five tiers

Range	Tier	Definition
160–200	Masterclass	Measurably increases domain knowledge or cognitive capacity
130–159	Stimulating	Significantly challenges the viewer intellectually
100–129	Competent	Meaningful engagement above passive consumption
70–99	Passive	Minimal cognitive demand, entertainment-driven
0–69	Numbing	Negligible intellectual engagement

7.2 Current database distribution

As of April 28, 2026, the TVI database contains 1,892 scored titles (1,674 adult, 218 children's). Distribution across tiers:

Tier	Count	Share
Masterclass (160+)	427	22.6%
Stimulating (130–159)	648	34.2%
Competent (100–129)	702	37.1%
Passive (70–99)	96	5.1%
Numbing (<70)	19	1.0%

7.3 Distribution analysis

The database skews toward higher-quality content because the initial corpus was built from titles with demonstrated cultural significance, critical acclaim, or sustained audience interest. As the database expands to include more platform-filler content — procedural network television, algorithmic filler, unscripted programming that currently sits outside the corpus — the distribution will shift downward. This is expected and methodologically appropriate: TVI rates what exists, not what it wishes existed.

The IQ Score is a content rating, not an intelligence measurement. Scores are derived from the published methodology applied to specific titles. The current scoring database is authoritative and available at tvintelligentsia.com/explore.

08
Supplementary dimensions (banked)

One additional dimension is designed and partially implemented. It is documented here to signal methodological depth and roadmap intent, and to prevent future-version additions from appearing ad hoc. (The previously-banked EQ/Emotional Intelligence dimension was promoted to its own Section 5 in v1.1.)

8.1 Cinematic Score — Music and Soundtrack

Scored 0–50. Measures composition quality, emotional impact, thematic integration, and memorability of a title's score and soundtrack. Currently populated for 428 titles where soundtrack is a significant artistic element. Reported alongside the IQ Score as a distinct dimension on qualifying titles. Does not feed into the IQ Score formula. Does not apply universally; titles without meaningful soundtrack presence do not carry a Cinematic Score.

09
What TVI does not measure

Defining the boundary of the methodology is as important as defining what is inside it.

TVI does not measure age-appropriateness. That is Common Sense Media's domain and they do it well. TVI measures quality and cognitive value, which is a different construct. A show can be age-appropriate and cognitively numbing, or age-inappropriate and intellectually masterful.

TVI does not measure popularity or audience sentiment. That is Nielsen's, IMDb's, and Rotten Tomatoes' domain. A show can be wildly popular and score 82 or relatively obscure and score 189. Popularity and cognitive value are independent axes.

TVI does not measure viewer enjoyment. A viewer may genuinely enjoy a Passive-tier show more than a Masterclass-tier show on a given evening. The IQ Score rates the content, not the experience. Enjoyment is a separate question that TVI explicitly does not answer.

TVI does not make clinical claims about individual viewers. The IQ Score does not predict that watching a 200-rated show will make a specific viewer smarter. It measures the cognitive, educational, and entertainment value of the content itself. Individual cognitive effects depend on attention, context, co-viewing, prior knowledge, and other variables outside TVI's scope.

TVI does not measure political ideology, representation, or values alignment. These are legitimate analytical frames. They are not the frame TVI measures.

10 Dispute process

A published methodology is only credible if it can be challenged.

10.1 Score disputes

Any member of the public, any creator, and any platform may dispute a specific score by submitting a written challenge to methodology@tvintelligentsia.com. A dispute must identify the title, the current score, the sub-metric(s) the challenger believes are misscored, and a reasoned argument grounded in the rubric.

A dispute is not a request to raise or lower a score on taste grounds. A dispute is a claim that the rubric was misapplied. Disputes grounded in taste, political disagreement, or marketing objection are acknowledged but not acted on.

10.2 Response timeline

TVI commits to acknowledging every dispute within fourteen days, and to responding with a reasoned decision within thirty days. Decisions fall into three categories:

- Rubric was misapplied. Score adjusted; change logged.
- Rubric was applied correctly, but the dispute surfaces a real edge case. Change-log entry flags the edge case for future rubric refinement.
- Dispute not supported. Score retained; response documents the rubric application.

10.3 Methodology challenges

Challenges to the methodology itself — sub-metric definitions, weights, scoring protocols, rubric logic — are welcomed and handled separately from score disputes. Substantive methodology challenges are incorporated into the quarterly review cycle and may produce versioned updates to this document.

10.4 Editorial independence

TVI accepts no payment, promotional consideration, or commercial incentive from studios, platforms, distributors, or talent agencies in exchange for scores. A score cannot be bought, negotiated, or withdrawn. This is stated in the founding operating principles and is not subject to dispute.

11 Methodology roadmap

11.1 Near-term (Phase 1)

- Comparative cohort benchmarking — percentile scoring within genre, platform, decade, and age group.
- Attention-architecture mapping — scene length, cuts per minute, dialogue-to-silence ratios as additional cognitive-load signals.
- Published rubrics — this document.
- EI dimension development under signatory-designate Dr. Gigler (Section 5).
- Content-creator feedback loop — structured channel for creators to submit corrections to factual claims about their titles.

11.2 Medium-term (Phase 2)

- EI dimension public launch — pending Dr. Gigler sign-off and the 300+ title coverage threshold defined in Section 5.7.
- Inter-rater reliability testing and reviewer panel expansion.
- Developmental-stage weighting for children's content.
- Scaffolding assessment — how content introduces complexity across a serialized run.
- Rewatch-decay modeling — how repeated viewing changes the cognitive signal.
- Genre-specific weighting experiments.

11.3 Long-term (Phase 3 and beyond)

- University-partnered EEG and fMRI studies correlating TVI scores with measured cognitive activity.
- Pre- and post-viewing knowledge delta testing for educational claims.
- Peer-reviewed publication of validation studies.
- Negative scoring — a cognitive-cost dimension distinct from the current baseline of zero.

12
Limitations and transparency

Stating what TVI does not yet have is the section that builds the most credibility with sophisticated readers. It is stated here in full.

12.1 The database is 1,892 titles. This is sufficient for consumer-facing recommendations and genre-level aggregation. It is below the threshold for statistically robust claims about entire platform catalogs. Platform-level comparisons (for example, “Netflix’s average IQ Score”) are reported with explicit sampling caveats.

12.2 The reviewer panel is three people (one as EI dimension signatory-designate). This is a known limitation of v1.x. Inter-rater reliability testing and panel expansion are Phase 2 priorities. Until inter-rater reliability is documented, TVI scores are expert-reviewed ratings, not statistically validated measurements.

12.3 The weighting is judgment-based. The 40/35/25 split is informed by the literature cited in Section 2.3 but is not empirically optimized. Future versions may adjust weights based on outcome data.

12.4 The score is a composite. Like any composite metric, it compresses multidimensional information into a single number. Users who want dimensional detail should consult the per-dimension breakdowns available on tvintelligentsia.com/explore.

12.5 There is no peer-reviewed validation yet. TVI’s phased credibility model is explicit: expert authority first (Phase 1), empirical evidence second (Phase 2), scientific validation third (Phase 3). This document is Phase 1 output. Claims of scientific validation in any TVI marketing or press material are unauthorized and should be reported.

12.6 The EI dimension is in active development and not yet publicly displayed. No EI scores should appear on any TVI surface until the full launch criteria in Section 5.7 are met. The framework, sub-dimensions, and proposed anchor calibrations are documented here for transparency, not because they are operational.

12.7 The scoring corpus reflects reviewer access. Titles available on major streaming platforms and via physical or digital rental are accessible. Titles restricted to specific regional markets or behind one-off paywalls may be underrepresented. The database documents which streaming platforms were sampled for each scoring cohort.

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14 Appendix A. Sub-metric scoring guide

Each sub-metric is scored on a 0–50 scale using the following anchors. A reviewer applies each anchor by asking whether the title clearly clears that threshold; if not, they move down to the next anchor.

Score	Anchor	Meaning
50	Definitional exemplar	Sets the standard for this sub-metric in the database. Reference titles at 50 include *The Wire* (Narrative Complexity), *Succession* (Dialogue Density), *Severance* (Cognitive Load), *Cosmos* (Factual Density), *Chernobyl* (Historical Accuracy).
40	Exceptional	Demonstrates the sub-metric at a level clearly above the stimulating tier but short of definitional.
30	Strong	Consistent, intentional, and reliably present. Typical of stimulating-tier titles.
20	Present	The sub-metric is visible but intermittent or modest in scope. Typical of competent-tier titles.
10	Minimal	The sub-metric is detectable only occasionally. Typical of passive-tier titles.
0	Absent	The sub-metric is not present or is actively undermined.

Reviewers may score at any integer value between anchors. Half-point increments are not used.

15 Appendix B. Database summary statistics

As of April 28, 2026.

Total scored titles: 1,892

- Adult titles: 1,674
- Children's titles: 218

Distribution by tier

- Masterclass (160+): 427 (22.6%)
- Stimulating (130–159): 648 (34.2%)
- Competent (100–129): 702 (37.1%)
- Passive (70–99): 96 (5.1%)
- Numbing (<70): 19 (1.0%)

Supplementary dimension coverage

- SEL scored: 218 (all children's titles)
- Cinematic scored: 428 titles where soundtrack is a significant artistic element
- EI (Emotional Intelligence) scored: 0 public. In active development under Dr. Gigler (Section 5). Not yet displayed publicly.

Platform and decade breakdowns are maintained internally and available on request to credentialed researchers.

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Appendix C. CASEL framework detail

The SEL dimension scored in Section 4 follows the five CASEL competencies. Each is assessed in the context of children's content through the questions below.

Self-Awareness. Does the content show characters identifying their own emotions? Recognizing personal strengths and limitations? Naming feelings accurately? Modeling the development of self-confidence?

Self-Management. Does the content show characters regulating emotions under pressure? Practicing impulse control? Setting goals and working toward them? Demonstrating stress-management techniques appropriate to the developmental stage?

Social Awareness. Does the content show characters taking others' perspectives? Practicing empathy across demographic lines? Recognizing cultural, familial, and individual differences without flattening them? Respecting people unlike themselves?

Relationship Skills. Does the content show characters communicating clearly? Cooperating across difference? Building healthy relationships? Resolving conflicts constructively? Seeking and offering help?

Responsible Decision-Making. Does the content show characters considering consequences? Applying ethical reasoning appropriate to the developmental stage? Evaluating choices? Taking responsibility for actions?

Each competency is scored on a 0–10 subscale. The five subscale scores sum to the 0–50 SEL score.

17 Appendix D. Advisory board and signatories

Jordan Robinson, MD, MPH
Founder and Chief Methodologist. Board-certified surgeon, Plastic Surgery Fellow at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Master of Public Health, with substantial coursework in research methodology. United States Navy veteran. Signatory for the IQ Score framework (all three dimensions).

Cordelia Witty, EdS., NCSP
Co-Founder, TVI Kids. Licensed School Psychologist and Nationally Certified School Psychologist. Head of Children's Content. Signatory for the SEL dimension.

Alexander William Gigler, PsyD
Advisory Board Member. Clinical Psychologist. EI dimension signatory-designate. Dr. Gigler's credential in clinical psychology and his expertise in emotional intelligence, affect regulation, and psychological assessment ground the EI dimension's validity claims. His sign-off is required before the EI dimension launches publicly.

Additional advisory board seats are available and will be filled in accordance with the methodology's Phase 2 expansion plan.

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Appendix E. Glossary

CASEL. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning — the nonprofit organization that maintains the SEL framework used in K–12 education and in TVI's SEL dimension.

Cinematic Score. A 0–50 dimension measuring composition quality, emotional impact, thematic integration, and memorability of a title's score and soundtrack. Reported alongside the IQ Score where applicable. Does not feed into the IQ Score formula.

Cognitive Stimulation (CS). The first dimension of the IQ Score. Measures how hard the viewer's brain works during viewing. Weighted at 40%.

Composite score. A single metric computed from multiple sub-metrics. The IQ Score is a composite of Cognitive Stimulation, Educational Value, and Entertainment Quality.

Educational Value (EV). The second dimension of the IQ Score. Measures what persists beyond viewing — durable knowledge, skill, or understanding. Includes academic, emotional, practical, and critical-thinking transfer. Weighted at 35%.

EI Score (Emotional Intelligence Score). TVI's term for the publicly-displayed Emotional Intelligence dimension (also referred to internally as the EQ dimension for historical continuity). In active development under signatory-designate Dr. Gigler. Detailed in Section 5. Not yet publicly displayed.

Entertainment Quality (EQ). The third dimension of the IQ Score. Measures craft and engagement. Weighted at 25%. *Note: within this document, "EQ" in the IQ formula refers to Entertainment Quality. The separately developed Emotional Intelligence dimension uses the display label "EI Score" — see Section 5.*

Inter-rater reliability. The statistical consistency of scores produced by independent reviewers applying the same rubric to the same title. A Phase 2 deliverable for TVI.

IQ Score. The composite 0–200 content-rating score published by TVI. Not a measurement of viewer intelligence.

Masterclass / Stimulating / Competent / Passive / Numbing. The five tier categories defined in Section 7.

SEL. Social-Emotional Learning. A 0–50 dimension applied to children's content and scored against the CASEL framework. Does not feed into the IQ Score formula.

Sub-metric. One of the twelve constituent measures that average to produce a dimension score. Each sub-metric is scored 0–50.

Version history

Version	Date	Changes	Signatories
0.1	April 19, 2026	Internal draft. Established dimensional framework, scoring rubric, SEL framework, and integrity protocols. Not distributed.	Robinson, Witty
1.0	April 23, 2026	Initial public release. Expanded Section 3 with per-sub-metric peer-reviewed citations. Separated SEL into Section 4 with credentialed-reviewer attribution and anchor scores. Added Section 7 “Supplementary Dimensions (Banked)”. Added formal dispute process. Added References and Appendices A–D. Distribution figures at 1,901-title baseline.	Robinson, Witty
1.1	April 28, 2026	Added Advisory Board structure (Appendix D) with three credential blocks. Promoted EQ/EI dimension from “banked” to its own Section 5 (in active development): full theoretical grounding (Salovey-Mayer, Goleman, Mar-Oatley, Kidd-Castano, Zillmann), five sub-dimension definitions, proposed anchor calibrations, and signatory arrangement with Alexander William Gigler, PsyD as signatory-designate. Added EI/EQ naming clarification (Section 2.2 footnote, glossary). Expanded References with emotional-intelligence literature. Renamed prior Appendix D to E (glossary). Distribution figures updated to 1,892-title baseline (post April 27 dedup). SEL anchor calibrations in Section 4.4 verified against live database.	Robinson, Witty, Gigler (advisory, EI dimension)
1.2	May 4, 2026	Founder credential phrasing in Section 1.4 and Appendix D softened from “Master of Public Health concentration in research methodology” to “Master of Public Health, with substantial coursework in research methodology” — accurate reflection of the	Robinson, Witty, Gigler (advisory, EI dimension)

Version	Date	Changes	Signatories
		MPH program structure. No score, signatory, framework, or distribution changes.	

Next formal methodology review: Q3 2026.

The IQ Score is a content rating, not an intelligence measurement. Scores are derived from the published methodology applied to specific titles by credentialed reviewers. The current scoring database is authoritative; it is available at tvintelligentsia.com/explore. Scoring disputes are handled per the protocol defined in Section 10. TVI accepts no payment or promotional consideration in exchange for scores.