Through-Year Assessment: Ten Key Considerations (Webinar)

May 10, 2023 (1:30-3:00 PM ET)

Nathan Dadey, Carla Evans & Will Lorié (Authors & Presenters)
Scott Marion (Moderator)

The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment
Zoom protocols (yeah, we know you know)

• Please ensure your name is visible as a participant
• Please introduce yourselves via chat
• We will be monitoring the chat and Q & A for questions and comments throughout the webinar
  ▪ We’ll do our best to keep up with your questions
Webinar Outline

Ten Key Considerations (40-50 min)
- Conceptualization and Design (Considerations 1-4)
- Curriculum and Instruction (Considerations 5-7)
- Logistical and Technical (Considerations 8-10)
- Concluding Thoughts
- Brief Q & A following each section

Q & A Session (30+ min)

Additional Resources & Wrap-Up (5 min)
Framing

• The Center for Assessment has a nuanced perspective on through-year assessment programs: We are not “all in” or “all out.”

• Center Associates do not all share the same perspectives, which we see as a feature, not a bug.

• As you enter this space today, we encourage you to interrogate the claims and evidence about through-year assessment programs with us.
  - See our paper for a full discussion of some of the points we will skim over today.
A through-year assessment program is:

- Administered in multiple distinct sessions during a school year, and
- Intended to support (a) the production and use of a summative determination, and (b) one additional aim.

We introduced “aims” to capture a core motivation behind through-year designs: to accomplish “something else” while also creating a summative determination.
Current Landscape: States Developing or Considering a Through-Year Program

1. Alaska
2. Delaware
3. Florida
4. Georgia
5. Indiana
6. Kansas
7. Louisiana
8. Maine
9. Montana
10. Nebraska
11. North Carolina
12. Texas
13. Virginia

Plus assessment programs like DLM
Goals of the Paper

Through-year assessment is garnering a lot of attention.

We want to draw attention to the complexities of through-year assessment programs.

The goal of this paper is to provide a critical and constructive examination of what it would mean to move towards implementing a through-year assessment program, in light of the constraints and requirements of large-scale state testing.

Ten Key Considerations
Conceptualization and Design
Considerations 1-4
Consideration 1:
Research on through-year assessment is limited.

Why?
Through-year assessment programs are just now being explored and developed, so research is limited. We don’t yet know what will work, and what doesn’t work.
We **have** some research on recommendations and guidance

We **need** research on implementation and effectiveness

Guided by a comprehensive research agenda
Consideration 2: No through-year program can solve all assessment problems.

Why?
A through-year program can only **address a limited number of problems**. Attempting to do too much will likely mean that the program doesn’t do anything well.
High-Level Guidance on Program Theory

Prioritization is critical: the more an assessment program is designed to do, the less it can do well.

Also critical is:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Long Term Commitment
- Intentional Detail
Consideration 3:

*Each through-year assessment design requires trade-offs.*

**Why?**

Not all through-year assessment programs are the same. There are a few emerging models, that also differ in the details. Each comes with tradeoffs and potential benefits.
What will be assessed and when?

How will the assessments be administered?

How will annual determinations be created?
Consideration 4:
The needs of students with disabilities and English learners must be considered in the earliest stages of design.

Why?
There has not yet been in-depth work on the ways general through-year assessment programs can support—and affect—students who need accommodations and support.
Patterns of learning are highly variable.

Some key questions include:

- Does the timing and structure of administration work equally well?
- Are the intended goals reached equally well?
- Does the program offer appropriate accommodations and supports at each and every administration?
Questions?
Comments?
Wonderings?
Curriculum and Instruction

Considerations 5-7
Consideration 5: 
*Through-year assessment programs could reduce local control over curriculum*

**Why?**
Through-year assessment programs require states to decide how and when they will assess students during the year. These decisions affect how teachers, schools, and district administrators handle curriculum and instruction decisions (e.g., pacing; scope and sequencing; etc.).
# Example: Grade 4 Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
<th>Unit 4</th>
<th>Unit 5</th>
<th>Unit 6</th>
<th>Unit 7</th>
<th>Unit 8</th>
<th>Unit 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors and multiples</td>
<td>Fraction equivalence and comparison</td>
<td>Extending operations to fractions</td>
<td>From hundredths to hundred-thousands</td>
<td>Multiplicative comparison and measurement</td>
<td>Multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers</td>
<td>Angles and angle measurements</td>
<td>Properties of two-dimensional shapes</td>
<td>Putting it all together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Unit 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place value, rounding, and algorithms for addition and subtraction</td>
<td>Multi-digit multiplication and division</td>
<td>Angle measure and plane figures</td>
<td>Fraction equivalence, ordering, and operations</td>
<td>Decimal fractions</td>
<td>Exploring measurement with multiplication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beginning of the Year  

End of the Year  

Center for Assessment. Through-Year Webinar. May 10, 2023
Implications

If students are tested multiple times per year, districts must consider *when* they teach *what* content.

Currently, such decisions vary widely from district to district, reflecting curriculum variation.
Consideration 6:
Using state tests—through-year or not—to directly inform instruction requires radical changes.

Why?
State assessment results are designed for systems monitoring and evaluation; in particular, identifying schools in need of additional support and intervention.
Quantitative Results Reported

- Scaled score
- Achievement level
- Subscores
- Grade level equivalent
- Percentile rank
- Growth metric

Changes to the Instructional Core of Classrooms
Consideration 7: *Through-year programs may compound existing tensions between accountability and instruction.*

**Why?**

The literature is full of cases documenting the ways accountability pressure can have a negative impact on instruction. With more state testing throughout the year, *what is the likelihood those negative effects will increase rather than decrease?*
Some Possible Mitigation Strategies

➢ Do not use the results from within-year administrations in a student’s summative determination of proficiency.

➢ Design through-year components based on rich performance tasks or other models of good classroom assessment.
Questions? Comments? Wonderings?
Logistical and Technical
Considerations 8-10
Consideration 8:

*Through-year assessment programs likely require more time, money, and resources than current state testing programs.*

Why?

Through-year assessment programs **increase the number of testing occasions**. The costly and resource-intensive large-scale assessment processes of item development, form assembly, scoring, reporting, and psychometric quality assurance apply to each administration.
Greater demands on state and local capacity

1. Administration
   - Training *times X*
   - Rostering *times X*
   - Teachers and coordinators diverted to test admin *times X*

2. Managing missing data
   - Multiple make-up days?

3. Monitoring of accommodations

4. Communicating results
Consideration 9:
*Through-year programs will reduce overall testing time only if districts use them in place of their own interim tests.*

**Why?**
Through-year assessment programs *increase* the time that students engage in state testing. To reduce the overall testing time for students, time for through-year must be taken from testing elsewhere.
Consideration 10:
Making claims about student proficiency is more challenging with a through-year assessment program than with current state testing.

Why?
End of year testing programs can make claims about student proficiency at the end of the year. To do the same, through-year programs must support strong assumptions or work through new challenges.
What kind of interpretive claim is at work?

• Is the claim about end-of-year proficiency?
  ▪ Prediction assumption
• Is it a claim about proficiency on the last tested occasion of particular content?
  ▪ “Adequate OTL” assumption
  ▪ Aggregation challenge
• Is it a more complex claim, similar to course grades?
  ▪ Conceptual challenge
Questions?
Comments?
Wonderings?
Concluding Thoughts
We Need:

• **Evidence.** Building a research base involves:
  ▪ Careful and deliberate design and implementation
  ▪ Making space and time for research
  ▪ Attending to unintended consequences

• **Partnerships** across vendors, states and research groups to build this evidentiary base together.
The Road Ahead

- Assessment evolves.
  - There have been a number of periods in this evolution.
- Each period has offered promise, and delivered on *some* of that promise.
  - What are the promises we, collectively, should work to deliver on?
  - What do we hope will be the legacy of through-year assessment in five years? Ten?
Q & A Session
We Want to Hear from You

• We’ll take your questions however you want to ask them:
  ▪ Use the Q & A function
  ▪ Use the chat
  ▪ Raise your virtual hand and we’ll unmute you

• Please keep your questions concise and comments relatively brief.
Kickoff Questions

1. What do you think is driving this interest in through-year assessment?
2. What are the most optimistic outcomes you envision for through-year assessment systems?
3. What are your biggest concerns about things that could go wrong with through-year systems?
Additional Resources & Wrap-Up
2021 Convening Materials

https://www.nciea.org/library/?_resource_events=convening

Considerations Paper


Blogs

https://www.nciea.org/blog/?_search=through-year
Thank you!

Please contact us with any questions.

Nathan Dadey  
ndadey@nciea.org

Carla Evans  
cevans@nciea.org

Will Lorié  
wlorie@nciea.org

Scott Marion  
smarion@nciea.org

www.nciea.org