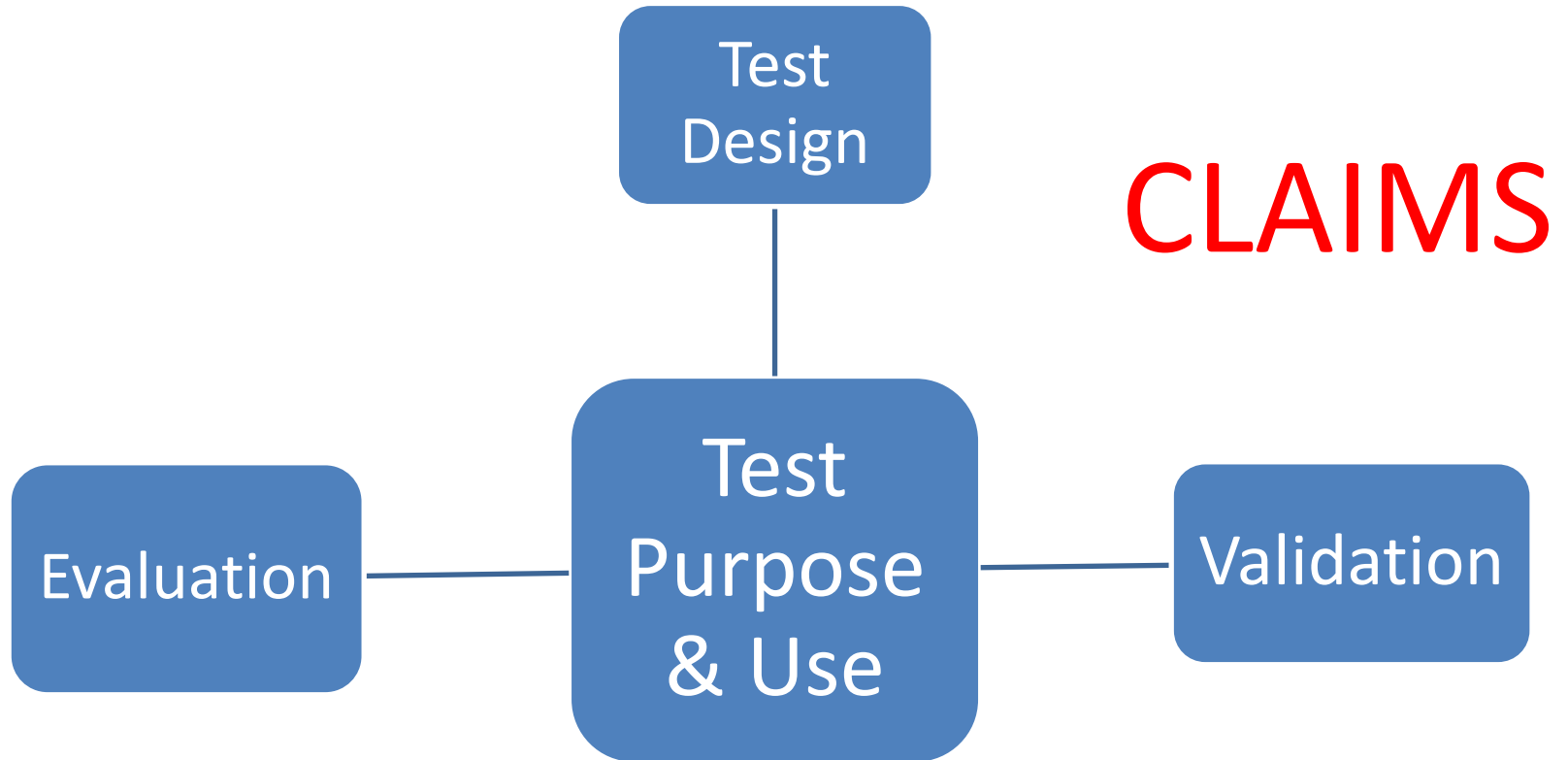# Assessment Literacy: Test Purpose and Use

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Reidy Interactive Lecture Series

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Claims

- Claims are the statements or inferences you want to make about a student, educator or school in light of observed test performance *in order to support use of test scores as intended.*

- They can be written at different levels of specificity/granularity

    – The student has mastered proportional reasoning skills

    – The student is proficient in Grade 3 mathematics

- reflect different types or categories of inferences, such as indicating:

    – **Attainment** of expected knowledge and skills

    – **Readiness** for future activities or courses

    – **Likelihood** of success

- And be specific to different users

    – Students, teachers, schools, districts, state

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Claims (cont.)

- Claims may be based on the obtained data or transformations/aggregations of that data.

  – Direct use of test score: Student has met the proficiency standard within the assessed content domain.

  – Once removed from test score: Student has shown growth beyond expectation in the content area. (claim based on an application of the test score)

  – Twice removed from test score : The teacher is supporting student learning at the level expected. (aggregate of transformations of data – SGPs and VAM)

Claims (cont.)

How claims are articulated depends both on how results are intended to be used and what you feel you need to be able to say in order to use them in that manner.

THEORY OF ACTION!!!

Example – Student Accountability

Specific Use	User	Test-Based Claim	Claim Category
Determining eligibility for promotion to the next grade	School	The student has acquired the pre-requisite skills in the content area/domain necessary to be **ready** for the subsequent work in the content area.	Readiness
Determining the need for remedial college courses within a particular content area	Higher Ed.	The student is demonstrating a level of proficiency in the content domain **necessary to be successful** in college credit bearing courses.	Predictive
Assign a course grade	Teacher	The student has attained the knowledge and skills defined as **representing proficiency within the content area/domain**	Attainment
Determine Eligibility for Graduation	State or District	Any of these three claims may support this use.	

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Test Purpose and Use

Claims to support purpose/use

Assessment Design

Validation

Evidence

Assessing Quality

- The categories of evidence necessary to support the evaluation of an assessment may be consistent across these purposes and uses:

  - Construct representation

  - Reliability/precision

  - Comparability

  - Fairness

  - Performance Standards

  - Relationship to external variables

  - Administration and Reporting

- However, how that evidence is prioritized or the criteria defining what is appropriate/good enough will vary depending on the claim you are making and the nature of the intended use.

Different Claim – Same Use

	Claim	Key Evidence to support this claim
A	The student is demonstrating a level of proficiency in the content domain necessary to be successful in college credit bearing courses.	• Performance Standards: Cut-scores were established in consideration of evidence/expectations representing what it means to be "successful" in non-remedial, college credit bearing courses. • Validity: Students meeting the cut-score are ultimately "successful" in college bearing courses.
B	The student is *Proficient* in the assessed content areas.	• Performance Standards: the standard setting process was conducted represent thresholds between clearly defined knowledge and skill-based proficiency expectations. • Validity: the items that Proficient students answer correctly reflect the expectations defined within the Proficient performance level descriptor.

Different Use – Same Claim

Claim	Use
The student is reading on grade-level	Support decisions regarding promotion to the next grade
	Identify which reading group a student should be in during classroom instruction.

How might the way in which evidence is prioritized/considered differ in these two use cases?

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Closing Thoughts

- A test is only "good" to the extent that it provides data and information that supports it's intended purpose and use.

- To support validation one must be clear as to the claim they are making to support a given use.

- To support an evaluation of assessment quality one must consider both the claim being made in combination with the intended use.

- The extent to which a test can serve multiple purposes and uses depends upon the degree to which the claims underlying those uses and the evidence necessary to support them are consistent.

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