Right-sizing Testing:
Useful information, efficient testing time

Brian Gong, Center for Assessment
Presentation at RILS, Boston, September 17, 2015
“Too Much Testing”?  

Publicity

Rationales

* Tests too long  
* Testing takes away from instruction  
* Parents have right to refuse to participate in anything they wish  
* Harms kids  
* Doesn’t benefit my child  
* High-stakes testing destroying education  
* Teacher evaluation distorts good instruction  
* Corporate reform profiteering from too much testing  
* Teachers tests provide all the information needed

Outcomes (by Legislatures, Districts, etc.)

• Review testing
• Limit testing
• Redesign/Re-procure

Inventory Results

What Counts as Testing Time?

1. Time student is given to answer test (e.g., “two 40-minute sessions”)
2. Time student is involved to complete test (e.g., including registration, practice, breaks, surveys, etc., e.g., “Allow 120 minutes from start to finish”)
3. Time school/district takes to administer test to all students, e.g., testing window with make-ups, getting students onto computers
4. Time school/district personnel spend on test administration (e.g., setting up CBT software, registering IEPs, CBT profiles)
5. Time teachers/students spend on preparing instructionally for test
Limit Testing
See section on reducing testing time
Sample Tools & Reports

• Achieve Student Assessment Inventory for States/School Districts
• *Assessment Inventory Facilitation Process*, Illinois State Board of Ed.
• *Assessment Inventory Results, 2015*, Idaho Department of Education
• *Testing Report and Recommendations, 2015*, Ohio Department of Ed.
• *Districts receive grants to help reduce testing, increase instruction, 2015*, Connecticut State Department of Education
• *How Much Testing is Taking Place in North Carolina Schools at Grades K-12? An analysis of federal, state, and local required assessments. 2014*, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Right-size = Costs : Benefits

Right-size = Costs [including testing time] are acceptable for the Benefits

Can *reduce the Costs* and/or

Can *increase the Benefits*
# Reduce Testing Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eliminate Whole Tests</th>
<th>Shorten Tests</th>
<th>Shorten Test Administration Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Redundant – do not replace</td>
<td>- Move practice outside of tests; reduce instructions</td>
<td>- Reduce start-up, elapsed time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Low value – do not replace</td>
<td>- Reduce number of content standards assessed</td>
<td>- Reduce permissible “extra” time for individual students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Enhance to make multi-purpose/dual use</td>
<td>- Reduce depth of content standards assessed</td>
<td>- Reduce testing windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salient Examples</td>
<td>- Reduce reliability of test scores with fewer items</td>
<td>- Move towards 1:1 computing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eliminate state’s K-2 tests</td>
<td>- CAT (variable length)</td>
<td>- Eliminate paper tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eliminate writing, social studies from certain grades</td>
<td>Salient Examples</td>
<td>Salient Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eliminate district’s redundant or low value tests (cut tests by 50%)</td>
<td>- Provide practice tests/tools before testing</td>
<td>- Implement policy on maximum “additional testing time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adopt ACT for state’s high school test</td>
<td>- Eliminate essays</td>
<td>- Implement policy with shorter testing windows, e.g., designated day(s) ala SAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use local assessments for federal purposes</td>
<td>- Design tests with fewer items</td>
<td>- Promote group computer-based testing to reduce district overhead handling time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Reduce Testing Pain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Get below time pain threshold</th>
<th>Address test-use issues</th>
<th>Address non-test issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do not have a single test much longer than alternatives  &lt;br&gt; • Do not have total testing contact time much longer than alternatives  &lt;br&gt; • Reduce test administration time that requires resources from schools/districts and/or disrupts instructional time  &lt;br&gt; <em>Salient Examples</em>  &lt;br&gt; • Reduce test battery time from 7+ hours to around 4-6 hours maximum  &lt;br&gt; • Provide accommodations differently to free up staff</td>
<td>• Make sure tests are not being used for purposes stakeholders object strongly to (different than do not support strongly)  &lt;br&gt; <em>Salient Examples</em>  &lt;br&gt; • Address objections to teacher evaluation, for which testing is seen as an enabling tool/policy</td>
<td>• Communicate and address issues where pain is with testing as a symptom or lightening rod, not the real cause of pain  &lt;br&gt; <em>Salient Examples</em>  &lt;br&gt; • Clear up with objection is to the time spent on testing, or to their association with the Common Core State Standards  &lt;br&gt; • Clear up whether objection is to content of the CCSS or to “federal intrusion”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Improve Benefits

## Better Information
- Provide information clearly relevant to stakeholders and users
  - Students
  - Parents
  - Teachers
  - Administrators
  - Policy makers
  - Public
- Provide information when it is most useful/timely
- Provide information in ways easy to understand and use

**Salient Examples**
- Content-based test interpretations
- Action-relevant summaries and interpretations
- User-flexible reporting

## Better Use
- Make sure intended uses are clear, e.g., claims
- Make sure intended uses are supported by relevant stakeholders and users
- Draw information together to provide context, greater credibility, applicability
- Communicate intended interpretations and limitations on interpretations and uses in practical ways
- Support assessment literacy in key user groups
- Support feedback to improve systems

**Salient Examples**
- Link score reporting to supports for use, e.g., instructional supports, evaluation supports
Evaluate for Improved “Right-sizing”

- Be clear about values and purposes
- Encourage simultaneous consideration of Costs and Benefits
- Balance evaluations using technical criteria with educational criteria with political criteria with financial/resource criteria, etc.
- Allow sufficient resources to get information to inform deliberations (e.g., learn from others); support good deliberations
- Plan in appropriate feedback and revisiting/revision