

Assessments, and assessing “Race to the Top”



- Dr. Karie Mize, ED682



Proper Role of ELL Assessments

- Valid and reliable (Hakuta & Beatty, 2000)
 - Identifying students with limited English proficiency, placing them in appropriate instructional programs, and determining when they are ready to be reassigned to mainstream classrooms
 - Evaluating alternative program models to gauge their effectiveness in serving ELLs
 - Diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses to assist educators in improving instruction (formative)
 - Tracking long-term trends of achievement in various groups and contexts
 - Holding schools accountable for student progress

Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs)

All ELL students must meet specific annual targets of AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), called **AMAOs** (Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives). These are “AYP for ELLs”

Local Education Agencies will be held accountable for ensuring that ELL students meet these targets. (ODE’s periodic audits)

198 districts in Oregon,
129 (65%) reported ELL enrollment

AMAO Target #1

- 1) 85% of ELLs must move up by one level of proficiency (be “reclassified”)

2006-07: 48% of OR districts met the target [55 districts]

2007-08: Target changed to 35% of ELLs; 80% of districts met goal.

Statewide 2009-2010

AMAO Target #1 -- Did at least 50% of ELL students in Oregon move up by one level of English proficiency?

No, the percentage of Oregon’s ELL students moving up by one level of English proficiency is 49.5%.

This target increases yearly. The target for the 2010-2011 school year is 53%.

AMAO Target(s) #2

20% of ELLs must reach full proficiency (“exit”/be redesignated)

2006-07: 52% of OR districts met the target [50 districts]

2007-08: Target changed to 50% of students at Level 4 during the previous year, or 5 years in ELL program

“Every school district with a large population of non-native English speakers missed the state’s goal of ‘50 percent fully proficient within five years’ by a large margin. That was equally true for the many districts that teach students using English-only methods and the handful that teach students for part of the day in the native Spanish, Russian, or Mandarin.”

Betsy Hammond, Oregonian, 12/16/08

AMAO Target #2A 2009-2010 -- Did at least 14% of all ELL students in Oregon reach proficiency and exit the program? Yes, the percentage of all Oregon's ELL students reaching proficiency and exiting the program is 15.3%. This is up from 10.8% in 2008-09 and 7.8% in 2007-08.

AMAO Target #2B -- Did at least 22% of Oregon's ELL students identified for five years or more reach proficiency and exit the program? Yes, the percentage of Oregon's year five ELL students reaching proficiency and exiting the program is 26.7%. This is up from 18.2% in 2008-09 and 16.3% in 2007-08.

These targets also increase annually.

- The target for AMAO-2A is set to increase to 15.5% in 2010-11.
- The target for AMAO-2B is set to increase to 24% in 2010-11.

AMAO Target #3

3) ELLs must make AYP on content tests

2006-07: 38% of OR districts met the target [32 districts]

The State first reported that 51 districts (43%) met all three AMAOs, then changed the figure to 22 districts. All of these districts had less than 100 ELLs.

2009-2010 Did the state of Oregon make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for ELL students? No, the state of Oregon did not make AYP for ELL students.

Only 23 districts met all three targets, while 98 did not.

Q: What happens if a school district fails to meet the overall AMAOs?

A: In order to meet the federal requirement, school districts must meet the targets in all three AMAO's. Districts failing to meet the overall AMAOs for two consecutive years are required to submit **a plan of improvement** to the Department of Education. ODE reviews school district ELL programs **on a three year rotation** through the state Title III monitoring process ["audit"] aimed at facilitating program improvement. Currently, there are 52 school districts in improvement status based on their performance on the 2009-2010 AMAOs.

Q: Are there sanctions for being in Title III Improvement status?

A: Yes. If a school district has failed to meet AMAOs for 4 consecutive years, Title III funding could be withheld and the state could require the school district ELL program staff to be replaced.

To take a practice ELPA test, see:

<https://oakspt.tds.airast.org/student/>

The Current Administration



Race to the Top (RttT)

- In 2010, States were invited to compete for \$4.35 billion in federal stimulus funds, promising the money to those that come closest to meeting Education Secretary Arne Duncan's standards for school reform.
- Forty states and the District of Columbia submitted applications for grants. Only Delaware (\$100 million) and Tennessee (\$500 million) won in the "first phase." Oregon ranked 35th, or seventh from the bottom.
- 9 states and the District of Columbia won grants in the "second phase" of the Race to the Top competition. [Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Rhode Island.] The other 39 states received no additional funds.



After the “reward” . . .



- A number of school districts in states that won money in the Education Department's \$4 billion [Race to the Top competition](#) have decided they don't actually want the money because, in most cases, officials think it is more trouble to accept it.
- In Ohio, which won \$400 million in the Race sweepstakes, more than two dozen districts and public charter schools say they think it will cost them more than they will get from the federal government to implement the required reforms, according to [Sean Cavanagh at www.edweek.com](#).
- And then there is the [Jones County School District](#) near Macon, Ga., headed by Superintendent Bill Mathews . . .

- Mathews has decided not to accept \$1.3 million in Race to the Top money -- the district's share of Georgia's \$400 million pot -- for reasons including his refusal to implement a value-added assessment system for teachers, based on student standardized test scores. (The county had signed up for the money before Mathews became superintendent last year.)
- Assessment experts say these systems should not be used to evaluate teachers, pointing to new research that indicates they are not reliable and error rates are unacceptably high, but they are supported anyway by the Obama administration. Many of these systems are seen by teachers as ignoring other factors beside a teacher's influence that can affect a student's performance on a standardized test.



Value-Added Modeling (VAM)

- Analyses of VAM results show that they are often unstable across time, classes and tests; thus, test scores, even with the addition of VAM, are not accurate indicators of teacher effectiveness. Student test scores, even with VAM, cannot fully account for the wide range of factors that influence student learning, particularly the backgrounds of students, school supports and the effects of summer learning loss. As a result, teachers who teach students with the greatest educational needs appear to be less effective than they are. Furthermore, VAM does not take into account nonrandom sorting of teachers to students across schools and students to teachers within schools.

- There are further negative consequences of using test scores to evaluate teacher performance. Teachers who are rewarded on the basis of their students' test scores have an incentive to “teach to the test,” which narrows the curriculum not just between subject areas, but also within subject areas.
- Furthermore, creating a system in which teachers are, in effect, competing with each other can reduce the incentive to collaborate within schools—and studies have shown that better schools are marked by teaching staffs that work together.
- Finally, judging teachers based on test scores that do not genuinely assess students' progress can demoralize teachers, encouraging them to leave the teaching field.

- Evaluating teachers accurately is a critical piece of the effort to improve America's schools, and VAM methods are appealing in that they seem to offer an objective and simplified way of comparing one teacher with another. However, as EPI's report makes clear, "There is simply no shortcut to the identification and removal of ineffective teachers."
- The authors conclude that that, "Although standardized test scores of students are one piece of information that school leaders may use to make judgments about teacher effectiveness, **test scores should be only a small part of an overall comprehensive evaluation.**"

[According to Monty Neill of Fairtest.org, a small part is less than 10%.]

EXCERPTS FROM:

http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/news_from_epi_leading_experts_caution_against_reliance_on_test_scores_in_te

“NCLB on Steroids”

NCLB requires reading and math tests at the end of the academic year, which most people agree is far too much standardized testing. Education Secretary Duncan thinks that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is "too punitive, too prescriptive, it's led to a dumbing down of standards, and it's led to a narrowing of curriculum." (Education secretary: 'No Child Left Behind' has led to a 'dumbing down', 1/28). But his plan is far more punitive, prescriptive and narrowing, and will finish the job of turning schools into test prep factories.

According to the Department of Education's Blueprint for Reform, the new standards will be enforced with an astonishing increase in testing: The Blueprint recommends testing in all subjects, not just math and reading. The Blueprint insists we measure growth, which means testing in the fall as well as in the spring (spring to spring comparisons won't work because of summer learning and forgetting). The Blueprint insists that we include "interim" tests given frequently during the school year.

In other words, everything that goes on in classes will be constantly tested by outside federal tests, a narrower and more prescriptive approach than has ever been used in the history of education. This is an astonishing development, increasing testing and outside control far beyond the already excessive level demanded by NCLB. It is also a waste of money: There is no evidence that increasing testing increases learning. Duncan's approach is not a change of direction. As Leonie Haimson recently commented on twitter, it is NCLB on steroids.

~Stephen Krashen

For more information:

- **The Accountability Illusion:**

<http://www.nwea.org/support/details-simple.aspx?content=1376>

[Only possible solution for districts: increase numbers required for subgroups or lower standards.]

- **Why High Stakes Accountability Sounds Good but Doesn't Work – And Why we Keep Doing It Anyway:**

<http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>

[Fifteen years of state and federal sanctions-driven accountability has yielded relatively little]

- **Ravitch: Standardized Testing Undermines Teaching**

<http://www.npr.org/2011/04/28/135142895/ravitch-standardized-testing-undermines-teaching>

[NCLB, RttT, Teachers' unions, and the film *Waiting for Superman*]

“You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train.” Howard Zinn