



From the President

ROLE OF TEST DIRECTORS IN REFUTING THE RHETORIC

Dear NATD Colleagues:

The polls tell us most people think public education is in trouble. They believe students are learning less than in previous decades and that schools do not adhere to high standards. When assessment experts provide data that show most students are learning more than ever before, this information is drowned out by cries that the sky is falling.

As test directors, is there anything we can do or should do about this phenomena? If you are like most test directors, you probably feel your job is already too big to be manageable. Your tasks probably include doing or supervising most of the following:

- Selecting or developing traditional and alternative assessments;
- Working with vendors to purchase or print materials;
- Coordinating distribution of materials to local sites;
- Scoring or scanning answer

documents or arranging for external scoring;

- Training local or site-based staff to administer the tests;
- Coordinating with curriculum specialists and program evaluators who rely on test data;
- Assisting parents, teachers, administrators, and board members in using test results; and,
- Disseminating the results.

Yup, sounds like enough to do, doesn't it? Unfortunately, I've come to the conclusion that we must do a bit more. We must either help publicize the good things happening in public schools or assist those in our school districts who are willing to take up that battle. Reporting test results in the matter-of-fact ways we have used in the past has served to light and extinguish small brush fires while the forecast still burns.

Yes, we have provided useful

assessment data to assist instruction, evaluate the performance of schools, and report on the merits of programs in local districts and states. While we are helping schools improve, however, public education is under attack by individuals who bend, distort, or ignore the data we disseminate. Their allegations concerning the failures of public schools yield proposed solutions ranging from charter schools to private school vouchers and tuition tax credits. Fortunately, the allegations are generally false. I won't restate

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

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the points made by Brophy (1995) and Berliner and Biddle (1995).

But what role should test directors play in refuting the rhetoric? If we speak out, will our own communities and boards of education question our objectivity? Do we lose our credibility as unbiased observers? I can't tell you what will be acceptable in your specific position, but I would like to share two strategies I'm using in my own community.

First, I bought a copy of The Manufactured Crisis for our Board members and superintendent. I then prepared a set of overheads they can use in presenting a more accurate picture: "achievement nationally and in our own district is as high as it's ever been." (The overheads also show our district does better in math than in language arts, while writing is particularly in need of attention. The picture is balanced, but bright.) We have a good school system, and in all probability, you do, too. I don't go on the campaign trail as often as our board chair because that's not my primary role, but when I do make presentations, I speak

strongly and -
armed with
facts, not
opinions - find
it easy to silence
those in the



audience who claim the sky is falling.

The second strategy is to change my own personal interactions. When speaking about my school system or public schools in general, I make sure to reflect the pride I feel in being a part of public education, and sometimes share my frustration over the inaccurate portrayal of students' academic performance. These same strategies work at my neighborhood block parties, sitting on an airplane, or standing in line at the grocery store.

We may never know if such conversations lead people to share a more balanced and accurate perspective with their friends and neighbors, but as individuals, they are better informed and may stop contributing to the problem. Perhaps these ideas will stimulate your thinking about other strategies we might use in disseminating more accurate information, or about the role test directors should play in these efforts. If you have thoughts you'd like to share, please send them to me and I'll share them with other members.

With warm regards,

Karen E. Banks

(kbanks@ga.unc.edu)

IMPORTANT DATES

For updated
information ...
tune into NATD's
Home Page
on the Net.

NATD meets annually in conjunction with the National Council on Measurement in Education, the American Educational Research Association, and the Directors of Research and Evaluation. The next meeting will be March 24-28, 1997, in Chicago. Please be sure to hold the following dates/times in Chicago:

NATD Joint Meeting with DREs.

Monday, March 24, 1997.
Location: Hyatt, Buckingham,
West Tower, Concourse Level.
Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

NATD Breakfast/Business Meeting Sponsored by NCS.

Tuesday, March 25, 1997.
Location: Sheraton Hotel, room to
be announced.
Time: 7:30-9:30 a.m.

NATD Symposium.

Tuesday, March 25, 1997.
Time: 8:15.
Location: Hyatt Columbia Room.

NATD Dinner Sponsored by Riverside Publishing Company.

Details to be announced.

MINUTES OF THE NATD

1996 ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

Background: Each year the NATD Officers and Board of Directors conduct an annual business meeting in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of AERA. The following is a summary of the 1996 NATD Board Meeting.

Individuals present: Guy Glidden, Karen Banks, Joe O'Reilly, Steve Henry, Linda Elman, Maryellen Donahue, Jim Myerberg, M. Kevin Matter, Joe Hansen, Joe O'Reilly, Mary Yakimowski, Mardel Kolls, and Stella Port.

Guy Glidden called the meeting to order.

Organizational Update

Guy Glidden provided an update of the status of the NATD Board for 1996-97. Linda Elman served as facilitator of the nominations and election process. Karen Banks will serve as President. Successfully elected were Joe O'Reilly as President-elect/Vice President, Steve Henry as Treasurer, Mary Yakimowski as Secretary, and Peter Wolmut as Board member. Fred Doctor's interest in continuing to serve as a Board member given his recent retirement will be pursued.

The Treasurer's Report was provided by Steve Henry who reported that the current overall balance is approximately \$8,900

with this year's net growth at \$1,094. In 1995-96 income included annual dues (\$2,860), checking account interest (\$184), and revenue from publications (\$145). Expenses incurred included 1994-95 convention expenses (\$897), general mailings (\$73), membership processing (\$122), publication expenses (\$857) and other expenses (\$857). The budget was unanimously accepted.

Dialogue then ensued regarding the possibility of funding a fellowship. Joe Hansen indicated the topic had been discussed a few years ago with the intention that should a fellowship be established, matching funds from other sources would be sought to supplement the awarding of a fellowship to a graduate student focusing on measurement with an emphasis on school-based applications. It was indicated that Paul had developed a brief proposal for the establishment of such a fellowship. It was resolved that the issue would be further researched.

Review of 1995-96 NATD Activities

The joint NATD/DRE meeting conducted earlier this morning was reviewed. In particular, Guy Glidden applauded the efforts of Steve Henry in taking the initiative in developing a Home Page on the Internet for NATD and for his exceptional

presentation at this morning's meeting. Joe O'Reilly's efforts in placing all NATD publications on the Internet also were applauded. It was evident from the feedback sessions this morning that the initiation of a home page by NATD is extremely well received by our members.

Old Business

In discussions relative to acceptance of the *Guiding Principles for Performance Assessment*, Guy Glidden recommended some fine-tuning based on feedback received from the membership. He stressed that the content not be changed as it was very well developed and comprehensive. Joe Hansen stressed the need for the full document, not just the abstract. The critical need to disseminate this document in a timely manner was stressed. It was resolved that within the next two to three weeks the language would be modified and a copy sent to the membership.

New Business

Members have been very receptive to the NATD Home Page. The only major recommendation to surface during this morning's meeting was a modification to the

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membership form allowing individuals the option of not

Perspective from Anonymous Member

THE EVOLUTION OF ASSESSMENT

1960's

Arithmetic Test

A logger cuts and sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is four-fifths of that amount. What is his profit?



1970's

New Math Test

A logger exchanges a set (L) of lumber for a set (M) of money. The cardinality of Set M is 100. The Set C of production costs contains 20 fewer points. What is the cardinality of Set P of profits?

1980's "Dumber Down" Test

A logger cuts and sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost is \$80, his profit is \$20. Find and circle the number 20.



1990's Assessment

An unenlightened logger cuts down a beautiful stand of 100 trees in order to make a \$20 profit. Write an essay explaining how you feel about this as a way to make money. Topic for discussion: How did the forest birds and squirrels feel?

*This Day in 1986 ...Ten years ago an update called:
"A National Test - Definitely On Its Way!" was presented in the NATD Newsletter.*

MINUTES OF THE 1996 ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

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having their name/address appear in the NATD Directory now located on the web page. Some individuals during the meeting also indicated their desire for information on test preparation activities and test security issues to be incorporated.

Also under New Business, Mardel Kolls recommended that a salary survey be developed and sent to the membership. Kevin Matter indicated that this was a good idea but it would be necessary to qualify what was sought. More specifically, he recommended that the salaries of all department members with responsibilities in the area of

assessment be ascertained. Guy Glidden further supported the idea and indicated the need to obtain information from individuals who are responsible for assessment along with wearing other hats in the district.

Where We Go From Here

The interest of the Board in expanding beyond testing into assessment, research and evaluation was discussed. Joe Hansen stressed his desire for this tighter focus on testing/assessment and the ability of the organization to provide leadership opportunities for members. Consensus was reached to keep the focus on testing/assessment. How to

reach more individuals with assessment-related responsibilities also was considered. After extensive discussion, it was resolved that an individual will be designated as the contact person in each state. This contact person would then "reach out" to colleagues involved with state organizations and related affiliations. The NATD Home Page will further serve as an important vehicle in expanding membership in this and subsequent years. The meeting concluded at 7:55 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Joe O'Reilly and Mary Yakimowski*

1997 NATD Symposium

THE RASCH TIGER TEN YEARS LATER: USING IRT TECHNIQUES TO MEASURE ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

NATD's 1997 symposium will be held on Tuesday, March 25th at 8:15 in the Hyatt Columbia Room.

Ten years ago the NATD Symposium focused on "Taming the Rasch Tiger." Some of the early users of Rasch models presented their approaches to assessment and the benefits they say in an IRT based approach. Since that time the computers on our desks have become more powerful than our old mainframes and the availability of test analysis software has become increasingly sophisticated and easier to use. Testing also has become more high profile as calls for "accountability" have grown louder.

So where are we ten years later? How are school districts "taming the Rasch tiger" today? Come to the annual NATD Symposium

on Tuesday, March 25th, and find out!

The symposium will begin with a brief overview of the use of the Rasch techniques in school districts. The representatives from three school districts will present how they use IRT techniques to measure student achievement. First, Portland Public Schools, which has been using these techniques for over 20 years, will discuss their testing system and what they have learned over this time. Next, Mesa Public Schools will discuss their recent efforts in developing, scaling and reporting their own assessments. Finally, Glendale Schools will discuss their work in using IRT techniques such as Facets to scale and report performance assessments. The discussants, Joe Ryan and H.D. Hoover, will

then discuss the pros and cons of using IRT techniques, both as it relates to the specific examples presented and in the K-12 context generally.

This promises to be an interesting and stimulating session. If you are at NCME be sure to attend. If you cannot attend, the presentations will be available in the annual proceedings.

The Tug of War between Traditional and Performance Assessment Systems



NATD OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President	Dr. Karen Banks	Wake County (NC) Public Schools
Vice President	Dr. Joseph O'Reilly	Mesa (AZ) Public Schools
Secretary	Dr. Mary E. Yakimowski	Portsmouth (VA) Public Schools
Treasurer	Dr. Steve Henry	Topeka (KS) Public Schools
Immediate Past President	Dr. H. Guy Glidden	Wichita (KS) Public Schools
At-Large Board Members	Mr. Peter Wolmut	Portland (OR)
	Dr. Maryellen Donahue	Boston (MA) Public Schools
	Dr. James Myerberg	Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools

Some Exciting Events

UPCOMING EVENTS IN CHICAGO

Soon it will be that time of year ... when we either pack our bags to head for Chicago or yearning to make the trip (though business or personal reasons prevent us from doing so).

As noted on page two of this newsletter, there are many events being planned. For NATD this includes the annual meeting with DRE, symposium, breakfast/business meeting, and special dinner. For those in NATD who are members of NCME, this includes the walk/run, breakfast/business meeting, and a number of exciting sessions. For those in NATD who are members of AERA and various divisions (of particular note, Division H for School Evaluation and Program Development), there will be the publication awards, sing-along, breakfast/business meeting, and a plethora of roundtables, symposia, paper presentations, and other types of sessions to attend. Both NCME and AERA also sponsor mini-sessions.

As a first time (or returning) participant, please be sure to mark your calendar for all dates/times/locations noted on page two. Another consideration may be Dr. Ronald A. Berk's Extended Course entitled: Using Humor in the Classroom and in Professional Presentations. Scheduled for Monday, March 24th from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., this is a lively session and, as in past years, often sells out quite early.

Under the leadership of NATD's Vice President who also served this year as AERA Division H's Program Chair, there are numerous sessions designed for the practitioner, that is, those of us who serve in the capacity of testing directors. Some of these program highlights are covered in pages 6-8. Please feel free to browse the AERA Division H Home Page for a full listing.

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Paper Sessions:

A NOTE TO MEMBERS

Yes, it is January and it is now 1997! Have you ever noticed that time certainly has a way of passing too quickly when you want to capture the moment, and a way of standing still when you want it to hasten the pace?

The past few months have been the fastest "moving", literally, that I can recall. Moving from one state (CT) to another (VA), from a house to an apartment, from an apartment to a newly built house, from one job to another, and never really sure in which storage facility my earthly belongings (such as technology necessities) were located, I am happy to say my feet are finally on the ground. I now know where to find the basics: my computer, books, pens, addresses, etc. I am also quite comfortable with a new culture which includes eating (not wearing) hush puppies. As such, please let me take this opportunity to first extend my appreciation to all my NATD supporters and also to apologize to the membership for the delay in the production and dissemination of this newsletter which I had hoped to be to the membership Nov./Dec. Please feel free to submit articles for the next newsletter. Information may be faxed to me at (757) 638-3303, e-mailed to yakimowski@aol.com

or mailed to
103 Lookout Circle,
Suffolk, VA 23435.

The purposes of the NATD organization:

- ⇒ To share information about testing in educational settings.
- ⇒ To encourage the appropriate use of testing in educational settings.
- ⇒ To improve the applications of measurement to students and educational programs.
- ⇒ To encourage research in the area of elementary



EVENTS IN CHICAGO *[continued from p. 6]*

- ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
- TEACHER TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY
- THE IMPACT OF STATE LEVEL SCHOOL REFORM
- USING MULTIPLE MEASURES IN EVALUATION
- EVALUATING PROGRAMS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- DEVELOPING/USING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS
- SCHOOL REFORM FROM A DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE
- TEACHER EVALUATION
- IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIONS-SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- SITE BASED DECISION MAKING
- ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: WHAT SHOULD WE BE MEASURING?
- EVALUATING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
- METHODS AND MODELS FOR EVALUATING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
- TRANSITIONS
- MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL REFORMS
- DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS: PARENTS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

Symposia (A Sampling):

- BUILDING SCHOOL-LEVEL ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS IN CHICAGO: VOICES FROM THE SCHOOLS
- ALIGNING LOCAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION WITH TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES
- NEW ROLES FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION DEPTS.
- SUCCESSFUL INNER CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- EVALUATION OF THE NEW AMERICAN SCHOOL INITIATIVE (NAS): METHODS AND EARLY FINDINGS
- SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: COMPLEXITIES, AMBIGUITIES, AND BARRIERS
- FROM HEAD START TO PUBLIC SCHOOL: TRANSFORMATIONS, TRANSITION AND LESSONS ABOUT CHANGE
- UNIVERSITY/PUBLIC SCHOOL COLLABORATION: IMPROVING THE LEARNING OF STUDENTS FROM DIVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES
- ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF PROGRAMS TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
- VOICES OF RESTRUCTURING: TALK FROM THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS
- EVALUATING SYSTEMIC EDUCATION REFORM: PROMISE AND PITFALLS IN THE ROLE OF EVALUATION

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- URBAN REFORM: POLICIES AND PRACTICES
- SCALING UP SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING DESIGNS

NATD HOME PAGE

Two years ago at the annual conference it was merely a thought - that NATD should consider developing an Internet Home Page. Last year at the annual meeting it became a reality - the NATD Home Page was up-and-running. This year at the annual meeting we can reflect upon an outstanding model. The NATD Home Page provides us with a comprehensive source of pertinent information on testing/assessment, evaluation and research.

Much appreciation is extended to Dr. Steve Henry and Dr. Joe O'Reilly for making the NATD Home Page a reality. In the event that you have not visited the Home Page recently, you are missing the following:

Upcoming Annual Meeting Events
Overview of the Organization
NATD Officers
Membership Directory
NATD Constitution
Membership Application
NATD Publications
District Level Assessment Policies and Regulations
Links to Internet Assessment and Evaluation Resources including General K-12 Assessment Resources, Curriculum Standards, ERIC System Resources, Regional Educational Laboratory Networks, U.S. Government Resources, Professional Organizations Related to Assessment and Evaluation, and Grant Seekers Information Available.

Appreciation is extended on behalf of the membership to these two exceptional individuals for making the Home Page a reality!

INVITE AND BE A FRIEND

Do you know a colleague who has responsibilities in the area of student testing but currently is not a member of NATD? If so, make one of your new year's resolution in this area. Invite your colleague to attend NATD.

Also, do you remember your first AERA/NCME/DRE/NATD meeting? This conference is LARGE. Should you know someone who is attending for the very first time, or should you meet someone in Chicago who indicates it is his/her first time in attendance, extend a helping hand. With over 10,000 individuals in attendance, it can be mind-boggling, at best, to locate sessions and understand how to "attack" the program book.

PUBLICATION AWARDS COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

Once again this year, Division H of AERA will be sponsored a competition for publications. Awards will be given to best norm-referenced test reports, alternative assessment reports, and those representing models in other designated categories. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 1997. Contact the AERA Division H Home Page or the most current Reality Test Newsletter for details.

Many NATD members won awards during the 1996 competition. Best wishes are extended to all submitting entries this year.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN CHICAGO

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- SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING EVALUATION PROJECT: KEY PERSPECTIVES OF KEY PARTNERS
- CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA: A VEHICLE FOR IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
- BLOCK SCHEDULING IN NORTH CAROLINA: ISSUES AND RESULTS
- SUCCESSFUL AND IMPROVING SCHOOLS: WHAT YOU SEE DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK
- THE CHICAGO LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE CHILD PARENT CENTERS: ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT
- MAKING SCHOOLS SAFE FOR CHILDREN: ISSUES IN ASSESSING DRUG EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS' EFFECTIVENESS
- CRESPAR'S TALENT DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL REFORM: GETTING READY FOR NATIONAL DISSEMINATION
- COMPARING TWO REFORM STRATEGIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS BASED EDUCATION
- RECENT ADVANCES IN MEASURES OF OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN IN CLASSROOMS: WHAT ARE THE APPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS AND POLICY MAKERS?
- ARE YOU BEING SERVED? MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- THE EFFECTS OF SIX YEARS OF STATE-MANDATED SCHOOL REFORM IN KENTUCKY BASED ON CASE STUDIES OF 40 SELECTED SCHOOLS
- DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUMENT FOR FACILITATING EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
- THERE ARE NO EXCUSES: ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN
- SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS BRIDGING THE RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE GAP: FOUR STUDIES OF RESTRUCTURING
- WRESTLING WITH THE OCTOPUS: EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEARN REFORMS IN THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
- METHODS TO THE MADNESS: ISSUES IN DRUG EDUCATION RESEARCH
- THE DREAMS OF EQUALITY AND UPWARD MOBILITY AND THE POTENTIAL OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY
- SUCCESS FOR ALL: QUALITY MATTERS
- AN OUTLIER STUDY OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT