

Oregon's Progression of Standardized Testing

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### Oregon's Progression of Standardized Testing

Oregon history shows a progression of proof through standardized testing of students in elementary and secondary school age students since the late 1960's and early 1970's in public education to validate student achievement. The success of student's mastery of curriculum content continues today and is connecting Common Curriculum State Standards with a Federal connectivity. This has been a point of contention for various entities and has evolved with political and economic changes.

#### 1960's and 1970's

As all theories in education, the pendulum swings and those with money and ideals sometimes collide in identifying student needs to be productively successful citizens upon their adult status. It was Joseph C. Conaty that said, "I am pleased to approve Oregon's assessment system under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended." At that time he was delegated the authority to perform the duties of the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education. William Charles "Bill" Ayers has been identified in multiple sources as an advocate for "free school movement" that did not believe in grade or report card systems that can hold student potential from reaching their optimum output.

#### 1970's and 1980's

Schools in Oregon were utilizing IOWA BASICS standardized testing in the 1970's which seemed to phase out with the economic downturn approaching the 19780's. Schools were moving away from a private and a higher percentage of state and federal government funding packages. Then more government at the state and federal levels became involved in public education the more political entities became involved. Competencies of achievement were implemented in the late '70's and early '80's which gave change to passing percentages of grade

systems and a set minimum competency era that impacted high school graduation requirements were seen. Presidential influence has definitely shown connections to political party input and reform goals set by the Department of Education on a national and state level. SAT's were being used for norm referencing of student indicators for college success to compare peer scores. Students were compared to the state and national norms.

#### 1990's and 2000's

Then the progression of criterion based assessment took hold in the 1990's and is currently being used to measure student success that is identified using rubric style charts that are directed to standard based measures. As the state and government became the larger financial backing for public schools in Oregon when the Timber Dollar Support diminished with the economic downturn the public outcry for reports of mandate outcomes of Oregon students. In 1996 new state standards for reading and math met the Oregon Education Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century then science came around 2003. Work Samples in all areas of content taught were incorporated into Oregon Schools. The unfortunate part is that once this was being done with fidelity, the realization of how to consolidate and utilize this vast collection of each students work was proving insurmountable for auditing purposes and legitimate use. The information of proof was in the student samples but they became too cumbersome and costly to keep up. The movement to technology taking the information from standardized testing made a leap in verification of student achievement. This lead to Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) reports that included in the Report Cards for all public schools receiving funding. There were many factors in this assessment and once again criticized followed for 'comparing apples to oranges' when comparing schools and students to one another with discrepancy of economics in a community and school funding measures with relationship to small school challenges and inner city school

dynamics. 2001 On-line TESA (Technology-Enhanced Student Assessment) was being introduced and compared to the time and cost of administering the paper and pencil methods of testing. Many supportive private businesses came through in offering technology grants that helped along with the subsidies for students using computerized testing measures.

Once again and even more severe economic recession inhibits goals of academic movements in standardized assessments to prove student success. No Child Left Behind mandates play key roles in education reform. In 2002, new policies in Oregon moved from concentration on work samples to looking at the end results of academic outcomes. CIM (Certification of Initial Mastery) and CAM (Certification of Advanced Mastery) were adapted by statutes that follow the initiation of these ideals and can be viewed on:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/specialty/pre-post/standards/orpolandprogrelk12.aspx>

retrieved 2013. These requirements were set to insure degrees of success by students to verify achievement of set standards.

Then the OAKS- Criterion Referenced Assessment based on Oregon Content Standards began with paper and pencil assessment. The scoring system is similar to other “growth” scales like the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) in that each point on the scale is set equally on the line which allows for comparison from year to year and student to student, so that student performances can be measured.

Scores are then correlated in segments for percentages that correlate to the exceeds, meets, nearly meets, low, and very low in contrast to the original exceeds, meets, conditionally meets and does not meet standards of achievement per academic category and grade level. These measures are now easily accessible in an immediate compilation of data that can be analyzed in each strand of the assessment in mathematics and reading/language arts.

Writing rubrics are used by credentialed examiners for the writing assessments which were done in grade 3, 5, 8 and high school. Then the transfer of which years to test put much pressure on certain grade level teachers and students. The six writing trait elements were listed but word choice and voice were not implemented for assessment in the lower grades. Conventions were doubled eventually for the upper grades. There were two scorers that identified the rubric scores and if there were a discrepancy a third scorer was used. Six point scales are used with six being exemplary and three's and four's being average or meeting standards depending on the grade assessed.

National Normed-Reference Tests took on three phases to set achievement standards in 2006 and 2007.

Phase I - The Department of Education solicited 500 educators, parents, and community/business representatives reviewed test materials and acclaimed "cut score".

Phase II – In 2006, the 230 Oregonian's chosen reviewed "impact data" to determine "cut scores" and classifications for the prospective percentages of students that would likely be in each category. The recommended standards were set for the interim grades: 4,6, and 7.

Phase III – In 2007, face-to-face video conferencing occurred in January. Final review and public input was given. Web site video and survey processes occurred. At professional conferences and community or business meetings break-out sessions transpired.

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=223> and

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=849> retrieved 2013.

Statutory and regulatory requirements were being established for achievement and alternative achievement standards in language arts, math, and science.

Post-Secondary institutions are still seeking results of SAT results. ACT scores are also being used to establish likelihood of student potential successes. There is current controversy and charges for students falsifying these tests. In China a huge percentages of students are confessing to cheating on exams to meet pressures to succeed in this competitive world we live in. Evaluations to find the elite are ever present even though mastery is sought by all students in all subjects with higher and higher standards. The questions then arise. How will all citizens compete equally for all careers? Are all careers equal in measure? Then, what are we trying to accomplish with the high stakes testing? Some will debate that personal achievement is worth high stakes success and others will value other virtuous qualities as being truly successful.

#### 2010's

Most recently, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium was one of two systems that the US Government funded to receive quality proposals for the advancement and replacement of current K-12 testing, scoring, and reporting. Educational reform pushes new standardized testing focus and government dollars are granted to higher performing schools to continue to make reform measures 'work'. The Race The Top has spurred new developments: Smarter Balanced Assessments will be implemented in 2014-2015 to assess 3<sup>rd</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades and high school students within the state and federal accountable entities. The Common Core State Standards Initiative began in 2009, a collaborative effort among nearly all of the U.S. states and territories, the National Governors Association, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, (Doorey, 2012/2013). There were any factors in reaching this new assessment system. The transient students between states that received conflicting curriculum/standards that possibly created gaps in their education. The changes in job requirements for current and future employment needs will require unique skills and knowledge base in the work force which

expands to likelier world-wide opportunities. The Smarter Balance will offer an optional interim assessment available for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades in reading/language arts and mathematics will be used as formative assessment that will mirror the summative assessment measures to be given at the end of each school year.

This latest movement and pursuit by Oregon to utilize Smarter Balanced assessment will do so by district proposals to transition into using CCSS's with the expansive collection of resources provided with this program. Nationally curriculum alignment is not a part of this but will allow CCSS's to be adaptable to meet the Smarter Balanced assessment success.

PAARC is the other assessment program that Oregon didn't choose to use, but both offer many of the same components by their consortiums. (For PARCC, go to <http://parconline.org/parcc-states> ; for Smarter Balanced, go to [www.smarterbalanced.org/about/member](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/about/member) .) The assessment consortia are drawing on new advances in technology, cognitive science, and measurement, (Doorey, 2012/2013).

Oregon has been on board with new policies and has taken the lead in pursuit of educational 'reform' over the past five decades but is not in the high running for obtaining grants on a large scale. There are definitely matters of interests that lie in the educational profession, school districts, and state measures that have been impacted by the National Department of Education. It is apparent that economics and politics have played a large role in the progression of standardized testing in Oregon. It certainly is obvious that Oregon is never stagnant in addressing the needs of our students and future citizens of the United States of America that will likely participate in world-wide issues.

### Reflection

I was a student during the 1970's and 1980's and a teacher since. I have been involved with professional development and testing from third grade through eighth grades over these years. There have been many frustrations as it always seems to be change especially when we are changing political foundations. I have been in Oregon this entire time and have seen and experience the changes that economic highs and down turns have played and measured into the assessment requirements of our students.

I think that the tremendous growth has been through technological advances. I am thrilled not to be collecting work samples that accumulate in great mass to carry over from grade level to grade level. But I feel that by housing just the rubric scores of each student on a data base seems impersonal to the student's accomplishments but is a feasible detail of information.

There are many wonderful treasures in my career that are being identified by our nation through assessment and success of students as evaluated with respect to the benefits of small schools. I have had the pleasure and faced challenges with being employed and educated by small schools, even with their limitations. I have returned to the school district in which I received my education that was assessed using all of these different measures. I hold strong the need to assess each of my students that have room for growth and deserve acknowledgement of their accomplishments. It is a necessity in assisting with their challenges and needs. I can reflect on my teaching with these assessment measures also. But I can also see that raising scores and expectations do not always account for respect to growth and maturity levels. I am inspired by making sure my students are fit with the skills and strategies they will need to build a foundation to branch out into the world as competitive work force members. I will have successfully done this if they achieve the abilities to make a positive difference with adequate assets to do so and

integrity to do it well. I will be most successful if they accomplish these things with peace of mind and confidence that help them be respectful and responsible citizens.

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### Research Paper Rubric

Criteria	Qualities	Points	Comments
<b>Cover page, Running Head, and page numbers</b>	Cover page is appropriately formatted to the APA 6 <sup>th</sup> ed. Format  There is a running head (header)  Page numbers are used	____/2	
<b>Introduction, body of paper, and conclusion</b>	Introduction is clear, states the topic, and introduces the rest of the paper.  Paper is engaging, organized well, and sources are used and cited appropriately to support information presented.  Used quotes sparingly and connected to content  Conclusion wraps up the paper nicely	____/10	
<b>APA Format 6<sup>th</sup> ed.</b>	APA format is used in paper including margins, font size, line spacing,  Sources are cited throughout the paper and match references on reference page  References are listed according to APA 6 <sup>th</sup> ed. And are from peer reviewed journals or other reliable sources such as text books or books from the library.	____/3	
<b>Total Points</b>		____/15	