
 Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation



2012 Annual Educational Conference - September 6-8  
**San Francisco, California**

### Questions About Examinations: Responding to Your Questions- A Practical Approach

Presenters:

- Grady Barnhill  
Commission on Dietetic Registration
- Chuck Friedman  
Association of Social Work Boards
- Rose McCallin  
Colorado Dept of Regulatory Agencies
- Tracy Montez  
Applied Measurement Services

*Promoting Regulatory Excellence*

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### Additional Presenters

- YOU.....conference participants



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### How?

- Pre-conference survey: July 2, 2012
- Panelist perspective
- Your
  - Perspective
  - Comments
  - New Questions
- Interactive i-clicker 

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**1** Why are you attending CLEAR?

- A. My boss forced me
- B. My partner forced me
- C. I wanted to see the Golden Gate Bridge
- D. To have fun at the CLEAR conference

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**1** Which of the following best describes the size of your testing program?

- A. Less than 200 candidates/year
- B. Less than 500 candidates/year
- C. 500-5,000 candidates/year
- D. 5,000-10,000 candidates/year
- E. More than 10,000 candidates/year

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**1** Which of the following best characterizes the organization with which you work?

- A. Independent state licensing Board
- B. Umbrella agency of state licensing Boards
- C. Professional association
- D. National certifying organization
- E. Vendor or corporation

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1 Which of the following best describes the **delivery method** for your testing program?

- A. Paper-and-pencil administration
- B. Computer-based testing in a proctored site
- C. Online testing at home
- D. In person (practical exam, OSCE, oral exam, standardized patients)
- E. Other or multiple delivery methods

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Session Game Plan: Top Survey Topics

- 1. ADA update
- 2. Alternative testing formats
- 3. Feedback and results to candidates
- 4. Number of times candidates can repeat exam
- 5. Public release of school pass-rates
- Half Time: Your Questions

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Session Game Plan-2

- 7. Exam security
- 8. Using a national licensing exam
- 9. State budget cutbacks: options
- 10. Translation/adaption issues
- 11. On the testing horizon
- 12. Extra/overtime: Your Questions
- 13. Other Clear Sessions, Networking!!!

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What are some updates on ADA and how it affects testing? Are there matters to be concerned with?



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Accommodations Interpretations Differ

- Title I (Employment Provisions)
  - **Reasonable** Accommodations: Selecting & Administering most effective manner
- Title III (Commercial Facilities)
  - § 309: Postsecondary Exams or Courses
  - **Testing** Accommodations: “modifications” or “auxiliary aids” to best ensure

Reasonable Accommodation Distinct from Testing Accommodation

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Equal Access to Credentialing Exams

- Test sites (physical, virtual)
- Processing of requests
  - Timely; Not require extensive analysis
  - No excessive or unreasonable documentation
- Administrations
  - Offer at same frequency
  - Same deadlines
  - Manner which best ensures measuring intended characteristics—not individual’s disability

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### Licensing Exams: Legal Challenges

- Rejected “reasonable” & adopted DOJ’s “best ensures” interpretation
  - Elder v. Natnl Conf of Bar Examiners
  - Enyart v. Natnl Conf of Bar Examiners
  - Bonnette v. DC Court of Appeals
- Statements of Interest of USA DOJ
  - Jones v. Natnl Conf of Bar Examiners
  - CA Dept. of Fair Empl & Housing v. Law School Admission Council, Inc.

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### Standardized Testing Conditions

- Tests administered in controlled environments under equivalent conditions to offer examinees comparable testing experiences to demonstrate their proficiencies
  - Standardization tends to promote fairness & appearance of fairness



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### Test Accommodations & Comparability of Test Results

- Accommodations to promote access and fairness in testing may lead to results that cannot be compared to or aggregated with those from standard version of test



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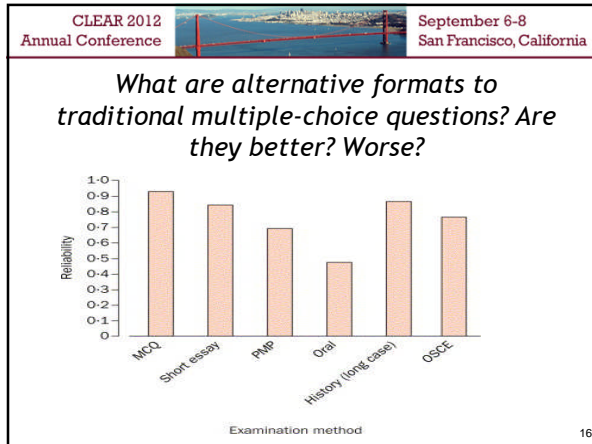
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**i** Which of the following item types does your certification/licensure program use?

- A. Multiple Choice only
- B. Essay/Short Answer
- C. Oral
- D. Performance/OSCE
- E. Multiple item types or other

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MCQ's - 3 Choice? Really?

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**Constructed Response**

- Short Answer
- Essay ---- Uncued -- yay!

Standardization/Constraining the problem  
Grading Standardization/Inter-rater reliability  
Spelling

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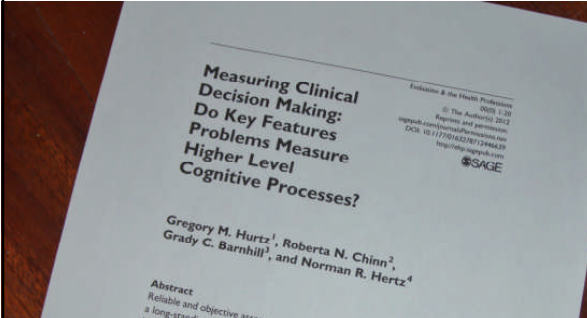
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**Key Features**



Measuring Clinical Decision Making: Do Key Features Problems Measure Higher Level Cognitive Processes?  
Gregory M. Hertz<sup>1</sup>, Roberta N. Chinn<sup>2</sup>, Grady C. Barnhill<sup>3</sup>, and Norman R. Hertz<sup>4</sup>

Abstract  
Reliable and objective assessment of clinical decision making is a long-standing goal of the health professions.

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**Oral Examinations**

- Fidelity
- Threats to validity
- Confidentiality
- Bias
- Structure/format/standardization

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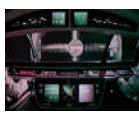
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Performance/OSCE

OSCEs/"Practical" Exams  
Skills, not just knowledge  
Test Fidelity/ Face Validity  
Standardization  
Costs



Standardized Patients  
See above  
...and if you think 4 was bad before-

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Wild Card

- Which testing alternative have you heard about or wondered about?
- What can you tell us about it?
- What might we tell you about it?

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*What type of results information/feedback reports should our Board provide to candidates: total score, content sub-scores, pass/fail only?*



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What is test designed to assess?

- Knowledge & skills essential to safe practice in regulated occupation
  - Minimum Competency Test

???...Fail | Pass...???

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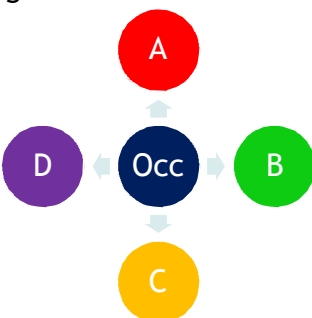
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Knowledge & Skill Content Areas



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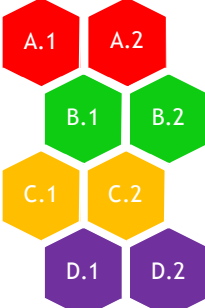
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Content Area Components & Test Items



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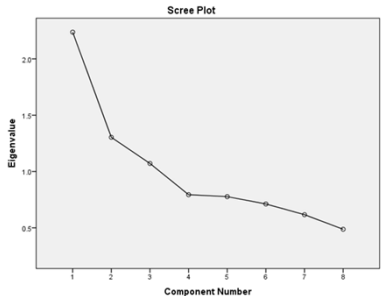
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Are subscores distinct enough to report?



Component Number	Eigenvalue
1	2.2
2	1.3
3	1.1
4	0.8
5	0.8
6	0.7
7	0.6
8	0.5

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Results Reporting: What is useful?

- Does information have adequate psychometric utility?
- Strengths and limitations of test, including level of precision of test results

Discourage over interpretation of information that may be subject to considerable error

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Should our Board place restrictions on the number of times a candidate can take the exam?



HELLO I AM HISTORY  
HELLO I AM HISTORY  
HELLO I AM HISTORY

HISTORY KEPT ON REPEATING ITSELF

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Should our Board place restrictions on the number of times a candidate can take the exam?

- A. Yes, three strikes and you're out
- B. No, it's not fair and defensible
- C. Maybe, it depends



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*Should a Board place restrictions on number of times a candidate can examine?*

No restrictions

- Utilize on-demand testing with retake app processing time between attempts
- Assign alternate test forms for repeat attempts
- Create testing windows with wait periods between attempts

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*Multiple attempts by a candidate?*  
*(continued)*

Place Restrictions

- Evaluate impact of repeated content exposure on exam integrity
- Assess threats to exam security
- Consider requiring additional education after a specific number of failed attempts
- Involve legal counsel

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*Should our Board publicly (web post) release pass-rate statistics and/or content sub-scores by school/program for all schools in our state?*



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**i** Does your program or licensing board publish (web post) the school/program pass-rates in your jurisdiction?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Some programs yes, others no
- D. Don't know

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**Sample #1: Exam Scores by Program, 2006-2011**

Jur	School	#	Pass Rate	% Correct by Content Area		
				Area 1	Area 2	Area 3
AB	U Alberta	37	86%	68%	71%	84%
	U Calgary	30	80%	77%	68%	74%
AL	Auburn	28	71%	65%	67%	65%
	Alabama	98	100%	73%	78%	78%
	ABC	*	*	Less than 10 candidates		
	ZZZ	48	54%	64%	62%	57%

All candidates, not just first time takers. Self-report information.

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**Sample #2: Passing Rates for First Time Candidates, 2008 to 2011**

School	2009		2010		2011		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Albany	200	96%	195	93%	218	89%	613	94%
Ferris	128	97%	162	98%	127	97%	417	97%
UC-SD	52	100%	54	100%	58	100%	164	100%
XXX	47	89%	62	69%	53	92%	162	94%
YYY	N/A	N/A	176	92%	188	95%	364	94%

First time candidates, accredited schools.  
 N/A= no graduating class for that period.

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*Public release of school pass-rates?*

- Pros: release to the public
  - School pass rates may be required for program accreditation
  - Public and students have the right to know how schools perform
  - Provide input to educational programs; drive educational quality
  - Accountability is part of public education

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*Public release of school pass-rates?*

- Cons or caveats
  - Misuse of data
  - Pass rates should not be used to rank schools: different admissions criteria
  - Mission of licensure test/regulation to assess minimal competency may not fully correspond to broad educational mission
  - Small programs skew data

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*Public release of school pass-rates?*

- Alternatives and thoughts
  - Provide only to each school with details and caveats on interpretation
  - Restrict public dissemination/comparison of school pass rates
  - Release pass rate by jurisdiction only
  - Other factors: overall pass rates for the profession, number and diversity of schools, professional climate

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**Half Time**

- **What is on your mind? Your questions?**
- Topics coming up
  - Exam Security
  - Using a national exam
  - Budget cutbacks—remote proctoring, options
  - Translation/adaptation
  - What's on the testing horizon?

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*What is the biggest threat to exam security today? What is the best way to keep our program secure?*



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### Threats to Exam Security

- The “innocent” discussion - list serves
- Previously - the fraternity “exam files”
- More currently - brain dump sites
- Prep courses
- Educators
- The cell phone
- High tech gadgets

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### Threats to Exam Security - What to do?

- The item bank as a bucket with holes...
- Physical Therapy (PT) experience

1. Write more items
2. Internet searches
3. Security Vendors, web crawlers
4. When that doesn't work, See #1

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*What factors should a state board consider in using a national examination? What oversight responsibilities should a state assume?*



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**i** Why should a jurisdiction use a national examination?

- A. Because other jurisdictions use the national examination
- B. Because legislation mandating use of the national examination is being considered
- C. Because the national examination offers a better alternative for measuring entry-level competence



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*What factors should be considered when using a National licensing exam?*

- Mission of national credentialing body and purpose of its examination
- Compliance with accepted professional standards and technical guidelines
  - See CLEAR Resource Briefs: Reference Guide for Auditing A Credentialing Examination Program (99-1)
- Fairness to candidates

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*What oversight responsibilities should a jurisdiction assume?*

- Jurisdictions should understand how exam components impact a valid and legally defensible examination program
- Jurisdictions should monitor passing rates and candidate feedback
- Jurisdictions should attend annual association meetings

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*What are the issues and potential pitfalls in adapting or translating our examination?*



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**i** Legislation requiring our exam to be offered in a different language is being considered. How should we respond?

- A. Support legislation, just make sure it includes a budget increase
- B. Oppose legislation, citing lack of resources
- C. Evaluate factors associated with translating exam into respective language



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*What are the issues and potential pitfalls in adapting/ translating our examination?*

- Adapting vs. Translating
  - Translation is only one part of adaptation
  - Translation does not guarantee fairness
  - Translation may be a more costly strategy to implement than alternatives

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*Adapting/translating our examination*  
(continued)

Practical Issues

- Consumer Protection
  - Instructional material & product labels
- Test Development
  - Use of competent translators
  - Training materials in target language
- Test Scoring/Evaluation
  - Comparability of forms & results across languages
- Fiscal/Legal



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*Adapting/translating our examination*  
(continued)

Resources

AERA, APA, & NCME. (1999). Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Washington, DC: AERA.

Hertz, N. (2006). To Translate, or Not To Translate: That is the Question (Resource Brief). Lexington, KY: CLEAR.

International Test Commission. (2010). International Test Commission Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests. [<http://www.intestcom.org>].

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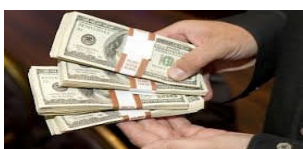
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*Because of budget cutbacks, our administrator wants our Board to consider less expensive means of testing our candidates, even including “remotely proctored” online testing. What are the options, and what factors are important for us to consider?*



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**Testing Costs & Consequences of Decisions Based on Test Results**

- What is being assessed?
- How are knowledge and skills being assessed?
- What are consequences of decisions based on test results ?
- What changes will reduce costs?
  - Impact of changes to validity of test results interpretations

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**Testing Costs & Stakes Associated with Inferences Made from Test Results**

**i** What interpretations do you intend to make from assessment outcomes?

- A. Low-stakes inferences (minor consequences)
- B. Medium-stakes inferences (indirect consequences)
- C. High-stakes inferences (important, direct consequences)

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**Testing Costs: Do changes to reduce costs threaten validity of inferences?**

- Construct-Irrelevant Variance (CIV)
  - Systematic error that introduces extraneous information into test results
- Construct Underrepresentation
  - Failure to capture important aspects of construct test is intended to measure

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### Testing Costs & Validity Threats

- CIV Components or Construct Underrepresentation may give unfair advantage or disadvantage to one or more subgroups of examinees

To what extent do concerns about test costs influence tolerance for threats to Validity of inferences make from test results?

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*What is on the horizon in the next five years that will affect the testing process for licensure and certification?*



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### Near Horizon

- For big programs - IRT still king
- But less Computer Adaptive Testing(CAT)
- Increased focus on security, candidate identification, etc.

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### Near Horizon

- Increased focus on costs, reliability, outcomes, “bang for bucks”
- Move away from “secondary” test centers
- For recertification testing - more of an emphasis on competencies, online testing

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### Speaker Contact Information

- Grady Barnhill  
- [gbarnhill@eatright.org](mailto:gbarnhill@eatright.org)
- Chuck Friedman  
- [cfriedman@aswb.org](mailto:cfriedman@aswb.org)
- Rose McCallin  
- [Rose.McCallin@dora.state.co.us](mailto:Rose.McCallin@dora.state.co.us)
- Tracy Montez  
- [tracymontez@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tracymontez@sbcglobal.net)



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