



Hearing of the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy

Testimony Deems Standardized Testing Inappropriate for the Assessment of APA Students

A hearing report critical of standardized testing for language minority students has just been released by the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy. The blue ribbon commission is conducting a three year study on the effect of standardized tests on the educational and employment opportunities of U.S. students. Its first hearing, co-sponsored by NAAPAE, was held in Honolulu, Hawaii in April of last year, and focused on the concerns of Asian and Pacific Americans (APAs). The hearing offered experts in the field an opportunity to discuss their concerns and make recommendations on the subject of testing of APA students.

The testimony repeatedly pointed to 1) APA students' low test score; and 2) these tests' inherent bias, which denies APA students educational, training and employment opportunities commensurate with their linguistic and socio-cultural needs and abilities.

Chui Lim Tsang, Executive Director of San Francisco's Chinatown Resources Development Center, testified that APAs are unfairly assessed when being considered for college admission and employment, since standardized tests do not take into consideration the differences between these students' cultural and linguistic writing and speaking conventions and those of their native American counterparts.

Edmund Lee, President of the California Association of Asian and Pacific Bilingual Education, stated that the CBEST teacher certification test

is biased against APA teachers, and results in a shortage of APA teachers in California. John Lum of the San Francisco School District suggested that test score data be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, allowing for the consideration of the characteristics and needs of each racial and ethnic group when analyzing factors related to test performance.

Also discussed at the hearing was the inappropriateness of the procedures used in placing APA students in special programs. Pio De Cano of the Tacoma Public Schools recommended that students be tested in their native language in all subjects other than English.

A number of witnesses discussed

the poor performance of Native Hawaiian students, which they believe is directly related to their low socioeconomic status and poor health.

The general consensus at the hearing was that test procedures must be modified and assessment instruments be developed that are specifically designed for APA students.

A report on the Honolulu hearing was prepared by Tony Lam from the University of New Mexico, and is available from:

The National Commission on Testing and Public Policy
Graduate School of Education
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720.

National Education Longitudinal Study

A group of 1500 Asian-American eighth graders is a key component of a major new longitudinal study of educational outcomes sponsored by the National Center for Educational Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education.

The study is designed to provide trend data about critical transitions experienced by young people as they develop, attend school and embark on careers. The study focuses initially on eighth graders, their schools, teachers and parents, with follow-up surveys scheduled every other year till 1994 and at less frequent intervals thereafter. The 1988 base year data collection has just been completed, and it includes a sample of 1,000 schools and 26,000 students nationwide.

The special oversample of Hispanic and Asian-Pacific American language minority students, teachers, principals and parents has been sponsored by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs. The Asian subgroups include Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Southeast Asians, Pacific Islander and South Asian students.

A public use data tape and user's manual will be available in late spring 1989. For further information on NELS:88 contact Dr. Steven Ingels, NELS:88 Project Director, NORC, University of Chicago, 1155 E. 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, (312) 702-8999.

Positions Open

University of Guam

- Administration and Supervision—
Assistant/Associate Professor,
Educational Foundations
- Bilingual/Bicultural Education
- Elementary Education
- Guidance and Counseling
- Secondary Education
- Special Education
- Secondary/vocational Education

Responsibilities: Teach graduate/ undergraduate courses, advise students, supervise and conduct research, provide curriculum leadership.

Qualifications: completed doctorate in respective field.

Contact: Etta Miller, Search Committee, College of Education, UOG Station, Mangilao, Guam 96923.

Eugene School District Eugene, Oregon

- Elementary Principal
Salary: \$39,314-47,787
- Middle School Assistant Principal
Salary: \$39,751-47,102

Qualifications: Master's Degree, valid Oregon administrative certificate, teaching experience.

- Human Resource Administrator

Qualifications: B.A. or equivalent.

The Eugene School District plans to open a Japanese immersion program at its elementary school this fall, to be later expanded to K-5 and middle school. Experienced, certified native language speaking teachers will also be needed.

Contact: Anselmo Villanueva, Multicultural Education Program, Eugene School District 4J, 1350 McLean Blvd., Eugene, OR 97405.

Upcoming Events

Teaching, Learning and Testing of Minority Students

June 27 -July 1

The second annual institute of the Educational Materials & Services Center will offer educators the opportunity to meet with leading scholars and practitioners to discuss their concerns and learn about successful educational programs and practices. The event will be held at the Edgewater Inn in Seattle, Washington.

The \$295 registration fee includes materials, one dinner, three continental breakfasts, three lunches, and a buffet breakfast. Room reservations should be made directly with the Edgewater Inn by calling (800) 624-0670 or (206) 728-7000.

To register, or for more information, please contact Cherry A. McGee Banks, President, Educational Materials & Services Center, 144 Railroad Avenue, Suite 107, Edmonds, WA 98020, (206) 775-3582.

JACL Nikkei Education Conference

August 6 & 7

The National Japanese American Citizens' League will sponsor the Nikkei Education Conference, to be held in August at the University of Washington (Kane Hall) in Seattle.

The conference will address issues of current concern to Japanese Americans, such as: redress — now and after, Nikkei leadership and affirmative action, curriculum and textbook perspectives, effects of the internment experience, cooperative pluralism and Nikkei education.

The registration fee for the conference is \$55. For more information please contact Saki Shimizu, 2706 33rd S., Seattle, WA 98144, tel. (206) 722-4753.

Symposia on Culturally Diverse Exceptional Children

October 28-29

Reaching New Horizons is the title of this training event sponsored by the Council for Exceptional Children, to be held in Denver, Colorado.

The program will balance a broad range of topics pertinent to the education of handicapped, gifted, and talented students from culturally diverse backgrounds, including American Indian/Native Canadian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black and Hispanic.

Participants will include special education, regular and bilingual education teachers, administrators, educational diagnosticians, social workers and psychologists.

For more information contact the Council for Exceptional Children, Department of Professional Development, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091

Legislative Update

English Literacy Grants

Last month the President signed into law the School Improvement Act recently passed by Congress, thereby giving his approval to the English Literacy Grants program as well.

Once funded, this project will provide for the establishment, operation and improvement of literacy services for limited English proficient adults and out-of-school youths. A unique feature of the program is that half the funds awarded to the states must be reserved for community-based organizations.

Appropriation subcommittees are holding hearing on the 1989 budget to determine funding levels for the program.

Official Language Amendment

In response to a concerted letter-writing campaign from the "U.S. English" organization, the House Subcommittee on the Constitution will soon hold hearings to consider various versions of a proposed "English-Only" amendment to the constitution pending before Congress.

Congress will consider both the open-ended version of the amendment, which establishes English as the nation's official language while leaving it up to Congress and the courts to interpret what it means, and the proscriptive version, outlawing the use of languages other than English by local, state and federal governments. Thirteen states already have English language amendments or statutes in the books, of which 11 were passed since 1981. This year alone

State Official English bills have been introduced in an additional nineteen states. At its Tenth Annual Conference in April, NAAPAE passed a resolution opposing all proposals to establish English as official language at any level of government. Instead, NAAPAE declared its support for programs that allow students to maintain their language and culture, encourage English speakers to learn foreign languages, and increase the understanding of the cultural and linguistic pluralism of this country.

If you wish to make your feelings on the constitutional amendment known to the members of the House subcommittee, you can write to: The Hon. Don Edwards, Subcommittee on the Constitution, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Redress Legislation

The Civil Liberties Act of 1987, which would compensate Japanese Americans thrown into internment camps during World War II, has been passed overwhelmingly by Congress and is presently awaiting the President's signature. It is not clear yet whether President Reagan will sign it or not, although a decision is expected any day.

If you would like to make your views on this issue known to the President please contact the White House right away or send a mailgram through the National Redress Hotline by calling 1-800-257-4900, and asking for Operator 9225. You will be billed \$4.50 on your phone bill.

For more information contact Richard Konda at (408) 287-9710.

NAAPAE News

Executive Council Meeting

During its April 11 meeting in Denver the NAAPAE Executive Council decided to add NAAPAE to the list of official endorsers of the English Plus Information Clearinghouse (EPIC). Founded last October in response to the English Only movement, EPIC provides information on language policy and promotes public awareness of the issue.

* * *

NAAPAE Regional Representative Quan Anh Cao will chair an ad hoc committee to monitor U.S. resettlement policies and support services for Southeast Asian refugees, and to propose policy objectives. In addition to Cao, the following will be members of the newly-formed committee: John Withers, Kenji Ima, Diep Haw, and Seng Naoleh.

Hawaii Regional Representative Virgie Chattergy is looking into the possibility of organizing a NAAPAE chapter in Hawaii.

* * *

A nominating committee has been formed for the 1989 election of NAAPAE officers. Sally Chou will chair the committee, with Jeanette Kwok, Noriko Takada and Darlene Durgan as members. Nomination solicitations will be mailed to NAAPAE members in December.

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The 1988 NAAPAE Conference proceedings will be published by next year's conference. Conference program chair Russ Endo will serve as editor.

Editor's Column

The follow-up report to the hearing of the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, written by NAAPAE member Tony Lam, consists of two major parts: a summary of the hearing testimony, and a review of the technical suggestions that would make the testing of APA LEP students more valid.

Technical areas include: out-of-level testing, special norming procedures, non-compatibility of English language proficiency tests among themselves, testing in native languages, testing conditions and sophistication, and test development with APA professional and technical input.

Lam discusses the pros and cons of each technical procedure proposed. By adding this review to the hearing testimony, he presents a fairly comprehensive coverage of the testing concerns of APA LEP students. At the same time, however, his decision to limit his discussion to LEP youth leaves two issues unanswered, which NAAPAE still needs to address: First,

a clear statement needs to be made about what should be done to measure APA student cognitive growth. Secondly, there are APA students who are *not* LEP, but who need to have their concerns in this area addressed as well.

Meanwhile, the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) may find itself in its last year of operation. The U.S. Department of Education has cut off almost half of its funding, after three years in business. Based at U.C.L.A., the Center is responsible for research on LEP students and on second language for FEP students.

CLEAR's selection was not without controversy from the start. Its director had also headed a similar center that was later defunded. The peer review panel and key staff-members from the National Institute of Education (NIE), who attempted to advance the candidacy of another center, were overruled by top NIE offi-

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cial (NIE was the agency in charge of contracting out a center before its current restructuring into the U.S. Department of Education). Finally, NAAPAE has found CLEAR to be unresponsive to its concerns.

While the passing of CLEAR itself will not be mourned by many, the lessening of its mission certainly will.

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