Learning from the Past: CLAS and the Common Core

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Improving Student Assessment

Test:
1. When did the Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock?

1620.

As you can see, I've memorized this utterly useless fact long enough to pass a test question. I now intend to forget it forever. You've taught me nothing except how to cynically manipulate the system. Congratulations.

They say the satisfaction of teaching makes up for the lousy pay.
If \( m = 3 \) and \( n = 5 \), what is the value of \( 4m + mn \)?

- A 180
- B 27
- C 20
- D 15
43057

A construction worker is using wooden beams to reinforce the back wall of a room.

Determine the height, in feet, of the beam that ends at point G. Explain how you found your answer.
Introducing the Brief

• What is the Collaborative?
• Engaged with the Common Core since 2010
• Meeting focused on assessment in June 2011
Introducing the Brief

• Data Sources
  – Research on CLAS
  – Media accounts of CLAS
  – Interviews conducted in spring 2012
The History of CLAS

- Administered in 1993 and 1994
- Aligned to the California Frameworks
- Assessment format
  - Multiple choice items
  - Constructed response items
  - Performance tasks
The History of CLAS

• Sources of criticism
  – Controversial assessment items
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• Sources of criticism
  – Controversial assessment items
  – Low student scores
The History of CLAS

“The dismal showing on the CLAS test by even our state's brightest students is a clear example of the misleading nature of the test results and flies directly in the face of the significant number of California students who consistently score in the highest ranges.”

-Capistrano USD Superintendent James Fleming
The History of CLAS

• Sources of criticism
  – Controversial assessment items
  – Low student scores
  – Technical problems

• Funding for reauthorization vetoed in 1994
Introducing the Brief

• Assessment as an essential component of implementing the Common Core
• Timing: released September 2012
• 4 key lessons
Lesson 1

Implement immediate and sustained capacity-building strategies.

• Help teachers develop performance tasks and review student work

• Capitalize on existing efforts

• Demonstrate commitment

• Begin now
Lesson 2

Anticipate and respond to potential controversy surrounding assessment content and format.

• Transparency and clear messaging

• Prepare students and the public for new assessment formats
Lesson 3

Address technical and administrative challenges around assessment development, administration, and scoring.

• Anticipate and plan for technical challenges
Lesson 4

Build a constituency of support for new instructional and assessment efforts through a clear strategy of public engagement.

- Educate the public
- Expect imperfection and improvement
- Leverage teachers and leaders
- Anticipate, identify, and respond to criticism
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