

# Chapter 3.

## Instructional Contribution

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# Instructional Contribution

- If they are worth using, all educational tests should make a contribution to the quality of education that children receive. In other words, most educational assessments really ought to help teachers do a better job of teaching
- One evaluative factor by which educational leaders ought to judge tests is by the contribution those tests make to the quality of instruction that that teachers provide.

# A New Test-Evaluation Factor

- Educational leaders should make a test's instructional contribution the most important factor to be used in judging the test's quality
- If it doesn't help a teacher's instructional decision-making, the assessment flops.

# A New Test-Evaluation Factor

- Validity and reliability

- Traditionally, measurement experts have directed educators to appraise tests chiefly on the basis of two psychometrically sanctioned factors, namely, validity and reliability.

- But validity and reliability are not the most important factors by which to appraise educational tests.

- Instructional contribution

- The most important factor by which to judge educational tests is the instructional contribution those tests are likely to make.

## *A measurement maven's perspective*

- Educational measurement experts, tracing back to World War I's Army Alpha, have been consumed by the drive to create assessment instruments that accurately and consistently determine an individual's skill, knowledge, or affect.
- In a real sense, the measurement specialist's task was to measure, not use the results of that measurement.
- Accordingly, we've had several generations of educational measurement mavens who perceived their responsibilities to cease as soon as accurate and reliable measurements had been made.

## *A measurement maven's perspective*

- We must understand that, for the most part, educational measurement people really have not been attentive to the instructional impact of the assessment devices they were creating.
- As far as educational measurement experts were concerned, measurement folks measured; teacher folks taught.

## *The game changes*

- In the 1970s, state legislative bodies began to enact laws requiring students to pass tests in order to demonstrate that the state's students possessed legislatively required tests.
  - Sometimes, for example, students had to pass particular tests before being awarded a high school diploma or before being promoted to the next grade.
  - The era of educational accountability had definitely rumbled onto the scene.
- \*Educational Accountability: The imposition of required student tests as a way of holding educators accountable for the quality of schooling.



## *The game changes*

- The key feature of the educational accountability movement was the installation of state-mandated student testing.
- State legislatures, one by one, enacted laws calling for mandated student testing.
- The legislators wanted evidence that students were learning as well as they should be learning.
- Educational assessments that, for a half-century, had simply been used to identify students' skills or knowledge were soon transformed into quality-monitoring tools.

## *The game changes*

- Sometimes a state created a brand new test intended to yield criterion-referenced interpretations.
- Sometimes a state created a new test that was intended to yield state-level norm-reference interpretation.
- Irrespective of the quality of the student outcomes being assessed by the accountability tests of the seventies, because of the significance of the tests' consequences, those tests were instantly transformed into curricular magnets

## *The game changes*

- Increasingly, accountability assessments became high-stake tests in the sense that they produced either
  - (1) Important contingencies for the student test-takers or
  - (2) evidence that was used by the public to rate the quality of schools and districts.
- High-stakes tests soon began to influence educators.
  - Because educators, quite understandably, wanted their students to perform well on these significant tests, whatever the tests measured began to occupy more importance in the curriculum.
  - Educational tests began to play a key role in the day-to-day decisions made by educator

## *New games call for altered plays*

- There was a time when the world of education and the world of education testing didn't intersect all that meaningfully.
- But today's educational leaders would have to be genuinely impaired if they continue to allow measurement folks to run the educational assessment game in private.
- The impact of educational assessment on the educational process is far too substantial
- In the past, most educational leaders would simply defer to whatever words were written or spoken by measurement experts.

## *New games call for altered plays*

- Moreover, many educational leaders considered the field of educational measurement, bristling with numbers and formulae, as more than a little intimidating.
- The era of psychometric-off-put evaporated as soon as accountability testing and its high-stakes assessments began to influence what went on in classroom.
- Anyone who is going to be a genuine educational leader today must understand the rudiments of educational measurement

## *New games call for altered plays*

- What educational leaders need to know about assessment is not all that esoteric.
- The really important elements of educational measurement simply embody common sense.
- Validity and reliability, it was thought, are best dealt with by measurement specialists. But This is not true.
- If we're going to be an effective educational leader, we need to understand what the essence of validity is and, beyond that, why there are several sorts of reliability evidence.

# Instructional Contribution as an Evaluative Factor

## *Deciding whether the evaluative factor applies.*

- In deciding whether to judge an educational test according to its likely contribution to instruction, we first need to decide whether the test under consideration should be helping educators make better instructional decisions.
- If the test's use is intended to benefit education but not instruction, then don't judge it on the basis of its instructional contribution.
- If use of the test can lead to more defensible instructional decisions, then the test's instructional contribution becomes a significant factor by which you should evaluate its quality.

## *Deciding whether the evaluative factor applies.*

- The types of educational assessments  
(impact on instructional decision-making)
  - A classroom teacher's preassessments: because, on the basis of students' performances, the teacher can determine what content to emphasize instructionally
  - A classroom teacher's progress-monitoring tests: because, based on how well students are mastering the knowledge, skill, or affect being emphasized by the teacher, decisions can be made by the teacher about whether to continue or cease instruction related to what was assessed.



## *Deciding whether the evaluative factor applies.*

- A statewide diploma-denial examination: because teachers will not want their students to be denied a high school diploma, whatever knowledge and skills are assessed by the statewide examination are apt to receive instructional attention in the state's classrooms.
- A classroom teacher's end-of-year final examination: because student's performances on culminating examinations such as this can suggest to teachers whether alterations should be made in the instruction they will supply during the following year.

## *Deciding whether the evaluative factor applies.*

- A countywide school-ranking examination: because, if schools are to be ranked on the basis of a countywide examination, such as a commercially produced standardized achievement test, attempts will be made by many teachers and administrators to improve the test scores of their school's students.

## *Deciding whether the evaluative factor applies.*

- Before attempting to judge an educational assessment on the basis of its instructional contribution, first think through whether the assessment really can have an impact on instructional decision-making.
- If that impact is possible, as an educational leader then must realize that a factor in the test's appraisal should be the test's instructional contribution

## *Determining whether a test does make an Instructional contribution*

- Once we've decided that an educational assessment should make an instructional contribution, our next task is to decide whether the assessment does make an instructional contribution.
- In order to tackle that assignment, you must first recognize that the instructional process is invariably intended to help students acquire certain knowledge, skills, or affect.
- Variations in instructional strategies notwithstanding, teachers want their students to attain certain kinds of objectives.
- Those intended instructional outcomes were described as the curriculum

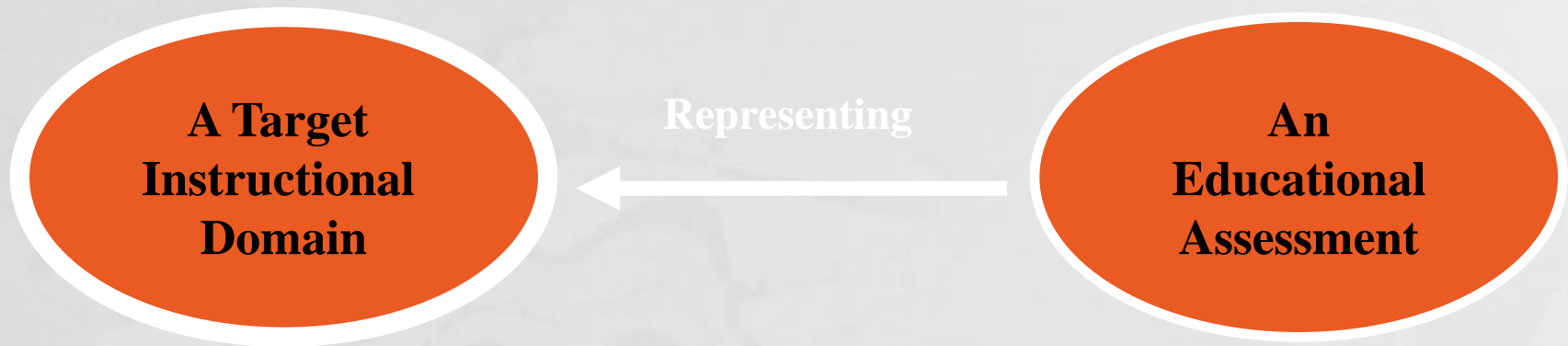
## *Determining whether a test does make an Instructional contribution*

### **A Target Instructional Domain**

The knowledge, skill, or affective Instructional objective that the teacher intends to promote

- Target instructional domains, if they are too numerous, will render teacher irrational.

## *Determining whether a test does make an Instructional contribution*



- Note that the assessment oval is thin-lined while the instructional domain's oval is thick-lined.
- This is intended to indicate that the assessment is only a sample-based representation of the instructional domain itself

## *Determining whether a test does make an Instructional contribution*

- It is the assessment's sample-based representation of the target instructional domain that educators use in order to make inferences about students' status with respect to the domain.
- Educators should use students' test performances to make inferences about students' domain status.

## *Determining whether a test does make an Instructional contribution*

- With this distinction having been drawn between instructional domains and educational assessments, let's consider the pivotal question that must be answered affirmatively if a test is going to make an instructional contribution.

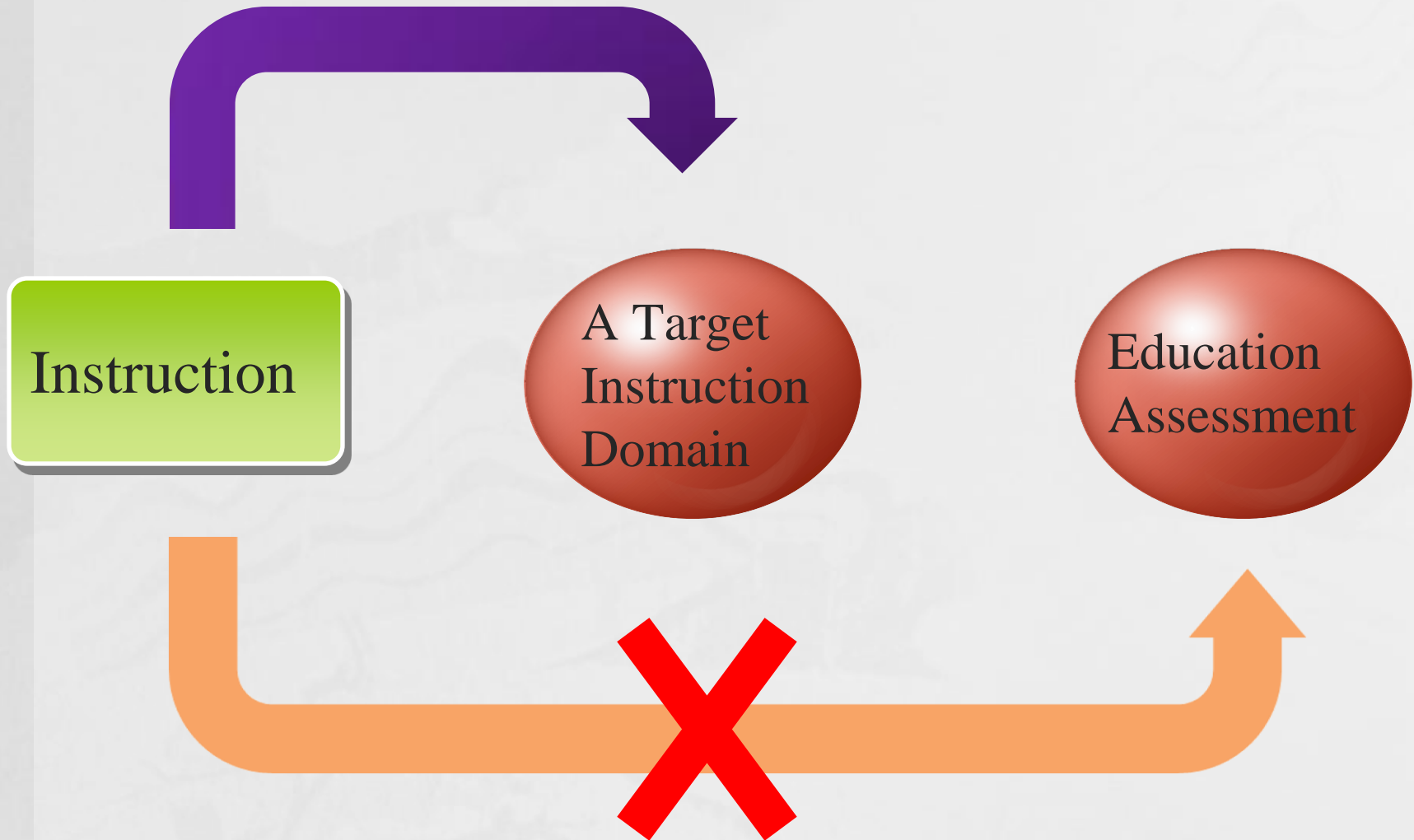
**Will the test, and/or the descriptive information accompanying it, help a teacher make sensible decisions about how to promote students' mastery of the target instructional domain represented by the test?**

→ There's no need for the interpretation of this question to be very complicated



## *Determining whether a test does make an Instructional contribution*

- If a test can help a teacher plan a more effective lesson for tomorrow, the test makes an instructional contribution.
- These contributions are not abstract, theoretical contributions.
- On the contrary, they are very practical
- They help answer the question of “What should the teacher do next?”



[Appropriate and in inappropriate directions for instruction]

# The Relationship between Testing and Teaching

## Instruction-Influenced Assessment



## Assessment-Influenced Instruction



# The Relationship between Testing and Teaching

- Accurate task analyses
- On-target practice activities
- Lucid expositions

# Two Test-preparation

- Professional Ethics Guideline
- Educational Defensibility Guideline

A faded, light-colored background image showing a group of people in a meeting or discussion. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a backdrop for the text. The people appear to be engaged in a conversation, with some gesturing. The overall tone is professional and collaborative.

**Thank you.**