National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Long history of providing a “Nation’s Report Card” of educational progress

Proposed future to provide an assessment of “preparedness” for post-secondary education and work
My role today

- Summarize Final Report of the Technical Panel on 12th Grade Preparedness Research
- Offer comments on other issues related to reporting preparedness, especially for work training
Technical Panel on 12th Grade Preparedness Research

- Michael Kirst (Chair), Stanford University
- John Campbell, University of Minnesota
- David Conley, University of Oregon
- Michael Kane, National Conf of Bar Examiners
- Mark Milliron, Catalyze Learning International
- Robert Mislevy, University of Maryland
- George Thornton, Colorado State University
Purpose of Technical Panel

- Assist NAGB in planning research to report preparedness for college and job training
- Met several times over 2 years
“Preparedness”

Reading and math skills needed to enter post-secondary education, occupational training, military training
“Preparedness” does NOT include:

Other knowledge, skills, abilities, personality attributes needed for success in training or work
Key Recommendations

- Use variety of research methods
Relationships among multiple types of studies

- Content alignment
- Post-secondary survey
- Statistical Linking
- Judgmental Studies
- NAEP scale
Key Recommendations cont’

- Focus on reading and math skills
- Contribute unique indicators in relation to other assessments
- Be mindful of evolving context
- Conduct research as an iterative process
Comments on related issues
Is NAEP assessing the “right stuff”? 

- Yes! Reading and Math Skills are essential
Are other attributes important? Should NAEP assess them?

- Yes
  - General mental ability (IQ)
  - Conscientiousness
  - Emotional intelligence (EQ)
  - ...

- No
  - “Stick to your knitting”
Should NAEP set a standard for preparedness?

- Or, show reference points relating scores to various levels of preparedness?
- State single clear standard
  - “Score X on NAEP reading indicates preparedness for...”
- Make statements about the percent of students “prepared”
Should NAEP develop different standards for...

- 4-year universities
- 2-year colleges
- Technical programs
- “Viable” jobs/occupations
- Military training

This is an empirical question answered by the research
Should NAEP report preparedness at *state* level?

- Risky
- State’s choice
- If a State accepts risk,
- My answer: Yes
Important to study preparedness for work

- Organizations lament lack of preparedness of high school graduates
- NAEP tests appear to measure relevant attributes
- Tests may need revision to capture content more directly related to workforce preparedness
Grade 12 NAEP: Measuring Preparedness for College and Work

George C. Thornton III
Department of Psychology
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523
George.Thornton@colostate.edu
30 – 40% of workers enter job market without college degree

- 20% of high school graduates do not go to college; 25-35% freshmen do not graduate
- BLS estimates of % of jobs filled with individuals with less than college degree
  - 28% of all jobs
  - Larger % in some occupations
“Viable” occupations

- College degree not required
- Living wage
- Considerable training requirements
- At least medium reading and math skills
- Level 2 in ONET, In demand
- Non-trivial numbers employed
Exemplar jobs (ONET code)

- Electrician (47-211.00)
- Auto mechanic (49-3023.01)
- Medical and clinical lab tech (29-2012.00)
- Insurance sales agent (41-3021.00)

http://online.onetcenter.org/
Assess preparedness for lower level jobs?

- No
- Reading and math requirements are different from the content/level of NAEP
Should NAEP report preparedness for work?

- Yes! We need a “Nation’s Work Skills Inventory”
- Organizations lament lack of preparedness
- NAEP tests appear to measure relevant attributes
- Tests may need revision to capture content more directly related to workforce preparedness
BLS estimates for Non-college Occupations

- Increase in employment in:
  - Management, business, financial
  - Service
  - Construction
  - Installation, maintenance, repair

Viable jobs in several occupations
Conclusions

High potential that NAEP measures preparedness
Multi-year research program
Balance of studies on preparedness for college, work, and military
Congratulations to NABG for past; best wishes for future