A TRIP TO INTOLERABILITY

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JIM’S CAREER CLATTERS BY

• A Preoccupation with Instruction
• Criterion-Referenced Measurement
• High-Stakes Tests Change the Game
• All-Lose High-Stakes Assessments
• A 2001 National Commission
• Instructional Supportability Confusion
• Searching for Solutions and Support
• The First International Conference
Because many of today’s educational tests, originally designed to serve a comparative measurement mission, are being used evaluatively, the score-based inferences we now make about instructional quality are often invalid. The educational measurement community should address this truly intolerable situation without delay.
A DEFINITION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SENSITIVITY

Instructional sensitivity is the degree to which students’ performances on a test accurately reflect the quality of instruction specifically provided to promote students’ mastery of what is being assessed.
COMPARATIVELY ORIENTED EDUCATIONAL TESTS
A TURN-AND-TALK TASK

Please turn to a neighbor, preferably someone who appears to be relatively bright, and then exchange your responses to the following question:
WHY DO YOU THINK WE PERSIST IN EMPLOYING COMPARATIVE TEST-DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES FOR TESTS DESTINED TO BE USED IN THE EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION?
VALIDITY: THE CRUX OF OUR ASSESSMENT CAPERS
INSTRUCTIONAL SENSITIVITY: A SLIGHTLY DEEPER DIP
A TURN-AND-TALK TASK

Select the same neighbor, or a different one depending on how your previous experience turned out, then try to identify why the nation’s major teacher unions—faced with the prospect of their members’ being evaluated using students’ test scores—have not pushed vigorously for the evaluative use of instructionally sensitive tests.
LESSONS LEARNED FROM OUR EFFORTS TO DIMINISH THE ASSESSMENT BIAS PRESENT IN HIGH-STAKES TESTS
A TWO-TACTIC STRATEGY TO REDUCE THE INSTRUCTIONAL INSENSITIVITY OF HIGH-STAKES EVALUATIVE TESTS
A FINAL TURN-AND-TALK TASK

Assuming that you wished to see the evaluative use of more instructionally sensitive tests in this nation, what would be a practical, hopefully effective, way of accomplishing this outcome? Share with a neighbor the chief elements of how you think we can increase the use of instructionally sensitive evaluative tests.
A CONCLUDING PLEA FOR ACTION

When mistaken inferences regarding instructional effectiveness are made about schools or teachers, the decisions flowing from those mistakes typically erode the quality of education received by students. For those of us involved in educational testing not to minimize those evaluative errors is, in my view, intolerable.