



# PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

July 2, 2016

Chad W. Buckendahl

# OVERVIEW



- Framing public perceptions
- Historical context
- Public opinion polls in the United States
- Informing public opinion

# FRAMING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

- Intuitive test theory
  - Buy what you know – Peter Lynch
- Policies reflecting public opinion
  - Be careful what you wish for. . .
- Perceptions change



## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Efforts to promote fairness/reduce subjectivity
- Civil service (e.g., China, France, U.K.)
- Professions
  - Guilds, licensure, certification
- Education (e.g., Belgium, Italy)



## PUBLIC OPINION POLLING IN THE U.S.



- Longitudinal Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa studies from 1969-present
- Support from 1969-1994 for:
  - National tests to compare achievement among schools (70%-81%; 1970-1988)
  - National achievement standards and goals (70%-81%; 1989-1991)
  - National graduation tests (65%-73%; 1976-1988)

## RECENT PERCEPTIONS IN THE U.S.



- Gallup/PDK Results from 2014:
  - Standardized tests are helpful (45% yes)
  - Support for Common Core State Standards (33% yes)
- However, support for specific purposes:
  - College entrance exams (80% very or somewhat)
  - Grade level promotion (77% very or somewhat)
  - Awarding college credit (91% very or somewhat)
  - High school graduation (78% very or somewhat)

# MORE RECENT PERCEPTIONS IN THE U.S.



- Gallup/PDK Results from 2015:
  - Emphasis on standardized testing (64% too much)
  - Excusing children from testing (47% parents support)
  - Quality improvement of using tests to measure what students have learned (67% very or somewhat important)
  - Children complaining about taking too many standardized tests (16% of parents strongly agree)
  - Using student test scores for teacher evaluation (55% oppose)

# INFORMING PUBLIC OPINION

- Assessment literacy
  - Basic measurement principles – validity, reliability, fairness
- Educators modeling good practice
- Communicating limitations of interpretation and use