Decisions to be made in developing an adaptive testing system for K–12 education

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Welcome and Introduction
Presenter

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Decisions to be made in developing an adaptive testing system for K–12 education
An adaptive test is a test that adjusts its characteristics based on the performance of a test taker.
Questions and Answers
Computerized Adaptive Testing

20 Item Test

Achievement Score vs. Test Questions
Pioneers of adaptive testing

- Alfred Binet
- Frederick Lord
- David J. Weiss
- Fumiko Samejima
- Mark Reckase
First implementers

- David Foster
- Jim McBride
- Tony Zara
- Gage Kingsbury
You have chosen to use an adaptive test because ...

- It can be more efficient than a fixed-form test
- It provides good information across a broader spectrum of student performance
- It can provide immediate scoring and reporting
- It can provide better security than a fixed-form test
- It can be designed to measure growth
Since the first implementations

• We have seen *international growth* in the use of CAT for
  – Educational testing
  – Medical outcomes assessment
  – Certification and licensure
Accuracy of adaptive tests

• Compared to a fixed-form test
• As a function of test length
• Depending on termination procedure
Relationship between Spring and Fall Reading Scores

![Graph showing the relationship between Spring and Fall Reading Scores. The x-axis represents Spring RIT scores ranging from 150 to 250, and the y-axis represents Fall RIT scores ranging from 150 to 250. Two lines are plotted: one for PP to CAT and another for PP to PP.]

- **PP to CAT**: Dashed line
- **PP to PP**: Solid line

Additional information:
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium logo
Students' Mean = **211.7**  
 s.d. = **11.11**  
 Proficiency = **205**  
 Basic = **192**

Test Information Functions for Grade 4 Mathematics
Choosing to use an adaptive test requires making a series of decisions in the areas of...

- Psychometrics
- Interface (including accommodations)
- Item designs
- Test designs
- Test distribution
- Item usage
- Item and test security
- Proctor training
- Reporting
Basics of a theoretical CAT

• IRT model
• Item pool
• Select first item
• Select next item
• Terminate test
• Score
Decision areas for an operational CAT for measuring student achievement

• Before the test (Test stuff)
  – How will we develop the measurement scale?
  – What mix of item styles will we need?
  – Which IRT model is appropriate?
  – What depth do we need in our item bank?
  – How will we choose an operational item pool?
  – What will our test blueprint include?
  – How will we QA everything involved?
Questions and Answers
Decision areas for an operational CAT for measuring student achievement

- **Before the test (School stuff)**
  - School, teacher, and student identification
  - Establishing a *testing environment*
  - **Teacher training**
  - Software/hardware setup
  - Proctor training
  - Student familiarization
  - Student scheduling
  - QA
Decision areas for an operational CAT for measuring student achievement

- Test administration
  - Student verification process
  - Test selection
  - Proctor throughout
  - Identify previously used items
Decision areas for an operational CAT for measuring student achievement

• Test event
  – Apply test blueprint
  – Select first item or set of items
  – Check for effort
  – Update item selection theta hat
  – Update constraints
  – Select next item
  – Terminate test
Decision areas for an operational CAT for measuring student achievement

• **After the test**
  – Calculate final score
  – Calculate growth
  – Terminate test session
  – Store data
  – Identify student as completing test
  – Compare to norms, growth norms, content, etc.
  – Create individual student report
  – Add information to teacher/administrator reports
Measuring growth and adaptive testing

- Measuring at multiple points in time
- The standard deviation of growth
- The standard error of growth
- Reduction of uncertainty
- Growth and instruction
Adaptive testing and idiosyncratic knowledge patterns

• Can there be multiple thetas without multidimensionality?
• Selecting items to reveal knowledge patterns
• A simple algorithm
• The impact on instruction
Field testing within an adaptive testing system

- Calibration differences from paper to CAT
- Random sampling for calibration in CAT
- Using provisional calibrations in CAT field tests
Cautionary notes

• Adaptive testing needs to be well tuned to avoid bad tests.
• The item pool must support the stakes.
• Adaptive testing changes, but doesn’t eliminate, security issues.
  – Brain dump sites
• Limit desire. No test can do everything.
• Adaptive test development is never done.
Have fun

• The decisions to be made should consider the good of the students for whom the test is designed.
• Don’t try to build the perfect test—it won’t be.
• Consider a “dry eye” policy—making kids cry isn’t the purpose of the test.
Thank you

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