

Practical Issues Regarding the Assessment of 21st Century Skills

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Practical Assessment Issues

- How are the scores to be used? At what level —student, teacher, school—are inferences to be made?
- Test stakes are important.
- Assessment test versus assessment program
- What are the practical limits on the amount of time we really have to assess students?

Individual Score Validity

- The extent to which a score is free from construct-irrelevant factors.
- Potential threats:
 - low stakes: test-taking motivation
 - high stakes: item/task exposure, familiarity with items/tasks, language proficiency, cheating, coaching, socially desirable responding, test anxiety, test-taking motivation

Item/Task Complexity

- Low complexity (multiple-choice; other highly-structured, easily scored items)
- High complexity (e.g., constructed response, oral presentations, performances, simulations)
- Practical Issues:
 - cost to develop
 - cost to score
 - domain coverage
 - scalability

Some Key Policy-informing Questions to Consider

- How scalable is the assessment to an assessment program?
- How vulnerable is the assessment to validity threats? Which threats are of most concern?
- Different careers need different configurations of 21st century skills. Can we design an assessment process that takes into account the aspirations of individual students? Should we?