

Generation Next Data Committee Statement on Data & Assessment Literacy and Data Use

Purpose & Goals

- To increase data and assessment literacy among relevant stakeholders
- To enhance the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of available data
- To evaluate data selection, collection, and reporting procedures

Data & Assessment Literacy

Data constitute the essential ingredients for evidence-based practice, quality program design, and effective policy development. Because of this, it is important that data are appropriate, meaningful, and useful. Any serious effort to address disparities in education, health, and other important arenas to promote the success of every young person, must adopt a principled approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting. Generation Next leadership and partners can proactively enhance the understanding of data and data-based reports among all stakeholders, including policy makers, educators, community leaders, families, and youth themselves. In improving data and assessment literacy among all stakeholder communities, we will enhance the communication and understanding of the magnitudes of achievement gaps, the contexts in which they are manifested, and the progress that will be monitored. In improving data and assessment literacy, we can improve data use and enhance data-driven decision making.

Data Use

To promote the effective use of data, we must understand its quality, the extent to which it is appropriate, meaningful, and useful. The Generation Next Data Committee is well positioned to evaluate the quality of data sources; ensure the appropriate, meaningful, and useful presentation of data; and monitor and promote the use and application of data and data-based reports. But to support these efforts, we must simultaneously promote and develop greater data and assessment literacy across stakeholder groups. We are driven by a set of principles and standards regarding data use and fair test use¹. These principles inform our work and define the bases for evaluating the selection, collection, analysis, reporting, and use of data.

¹ *Code of fair testing practices in education*. (2003). Washington DC. Joint Committee on Testing Practices.
<http://ncme.org/resource-center/code-of-fair-testing-practices-in-education/>

Code of professional responsibilities in educational measurement. (1995). Washington DC: National Council on Measurement in Education. <http://ncme.org/resource-center/code-of-professional-responsibilities-in-educational-measurement/>

Standards for qualifications of test users. (2003). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
<http://aac.ncat.edu/resources.html>

Evaluation to ensure Warrants & Transparency

Regarding the collection, analysis, and reporting of data, we strive to meet two fundamental requirements. These are based on the professional standards for empirical research by the American Educational Research Association² and have been adopted by the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership to enhance equitable dissemination, interpretation, and use of research on Minnesota educational outcomes.

1. Data-based reports of findings, conditions, and change should have ***sufficient warrants***; that is, sufficient evidence should be reported to support and justify results, conclusions, and recommendations.
2. Data based reports of findings, conditions, and change should be ***transparent***; reports should clearly explain the logic of inquiry, concrete definitions of the variables or measures, the methods of data collection and data analysis, and how these result in the clearly defined outcomes as reported.

Validity & Validation

We operate on the foundational basis of validity, where validity is the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores for proposed uses of tests³. Validation is the accumulation of relevant evidence to support intended interpretations and uses. In all evaluations of data reports, we will evaluate and make recommendations regarding the utility of the reports based on the validity evidence available. We strive to maintain the highest expectations for ourselves in this regard and promote the use of high quality data to directly inform and monitor progress on the primary goals of Generation Next. These principles should be included in efforts to develop greater data and assessment literacy among relevant stakeholders. As such, we will ensure the following:

1. Data will be collected for clearly stated purposes and uses, for which validity evidence exists.
2. Principles of efficiency, effectiveness, and equity will drive improvement efforts regarding data collection, reporting, and use.
3. Collection and reporting strategies will be periodically reviewed, on the above principles.
4. Data will be employed in a positive manner for continuous improvement, not as part of a negative campaign or for blaming.
5. Data that go unused will be reviewed for appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness, and will be modified if possible or removed from collection and reporting.

² American Educational Research Association. (2006). Standards for reporting on empirical social science research in AERA Publications. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 33-40. Available online at http://www.aera.net/Portals/38/docs/12ERv35n6_Standard4Report%20.pdf

³ American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.