

Connecticut Testing Program

Melissa A. Bloomrose
EDU 582/Singh
Eastern Connecticut State University

December 12, 2006

Connecticut Mastery Test

Question	Answer
1. What is the complete name of the latest version of CMT?	Connecticut Mastery Test, Fourth Generation
2. Why does Connecticut have to carry this assessment?	As part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, states must “create their own standards for what a child should know and learn for all grades” and then “test every student's progress toward those standards by using tests that are aligned with the standards” (<i>Introduction to NCLB</i> , n.d., para. 2 & 3).
3. At what grades do students take CMT?	Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, students in grades 3-8 must take the CMTs.
4. What does CMT measure?	The CMT “provides an accurate assessment of how well students statewide are reaching the standards of achievement that have been established by the State Board of Education in reading, writing and mathematics” (<i>CMT Parent Brochure</i> , 2005, p. 1). The skills tested in each subject can be found in the Connecticut curriculum frameworks. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, science achievement will also be measured.
5. What are the specific areas within each subject that CMT measure?	Reading: Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Reading Comprehension Writing: Direct Assessment of Writing Editing & Revising The Mathematics test includes basic math skills, math concepts and problem-solving.
6. Give two objectives within each area measured by CMT.	Mathematics: 1. Use spatial reasoning, location, and geometric relationships to solve problems (<i>Math Frameworks</i> , 2005, p. 4). 2. Understand and apply basic concepts of probability (p. 5). Degrees of Reading Power: (considered a single-objective test) 1. Read nonfiction text with missing words and choose appropriate words to complete the text. 2. Understand surface meaning of text. Reading Comprehension: 1. Determine the main idea (nonfiction) or theme (fiction) within the text (<i>Language Arts Handbook</i> , 2005, p. 10).

	<p>2. Make connections between the text and outside experiences and knowledge (p. 10).</p> <p>Direct Assessment of Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft a piece of writing (3-page maximum) in response to a given topic. 2. Use a specific mode of writing (i.e. narrative, persuasive) based on grade level. <p>Editing & Revising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Edit passage to show proper use of commas. 2. Revise a run-on sentence.
7. <i>When was the first time CMT was administered in Connecticut?</i>	The CMT was first administered to public school students in grades 4, 6 and 8 in 1985.
8. <i>What kind of assessment is this? Standardized? Criterion referenced?</i>	As discussed in class, the CMTs are standardized, but criterion-referenced. They are standardized because they are not teacher-made and they have consistent scoring, but they are also criterion-referenced because they determine whether a student met the criteria for adequate yearly progress rather than comparing a student's performance to that of a norm group.
9. <i>What kinds of scores are reported for different areas measured by CMT?</i>	The score range for mathematics, reading and writing tests is 100-400. The DRP "yields a DRP Unit Score, which is produced by applying a conversion formula to the student's raw score" (<i>Interpretive Guide</i> , 2006, p. 15). The Direct Assessment of Writing is scored from 2 to 12, as well as non-scorable (NS).
10. <i>As a teacher, how can you prepare your students for this type of assessment?</i>	Teachers must prepare their students for the CMTs by being aware of what is tested and then by teaching those concepts to a mastery level. Teachers may also administer "practice tests" so the students are prepared for the structure of the CMT, such as how questions may be asked and how they must answer the question to receive credit (i.e. showing work).
11. <i>How do students with disabilities, especially those with learning disabilities and mental retardation, participate in this state-wide assessment?</i>	Students receiving special education services must either take their grade-level CMT "with any accommodations called for in their" IEP, or must participate in the CMT Skills Checklist, the "only alternative assessment available," which is intended for students with "significant cognitive impairments" (p. 14).
12. <i>Do students with disabilities have to participate in this assessment? If yes, why?</i>	Yes, all students must participate in the CMTs. According to the Connecticut State Department of

	Education's <i>Assessment Guidelines</i> , the 1997 reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included an amendment requiring students with disabilities "included in appropriately challenging curriculums and in districtwide and statewide assessments, and that states and school districts publicly account for their progress" (2005, pp.6-7).
13. <i>What does Connecticut Department of Education do with CMT data?</i>	Results of the CMTs are given to schools and to parents/guardians. CMT data is organized into a plethora of reports for the Connecticut Department of Education. As part of NCLB, both school and district performance will be "publicly reported in district and state report cards. Individual school results will be on the district report cards. If the district or school continually fails to make adequate progress toward the standards, then they will be held accountable" (<i>Introduction</i> , n.d., para. 5 & 6).
14. <i>What would happen to students and schools that do not perform well on CMT?</i>	NCLB states that if a school which receives Title I funding does not meet the state's standards for adequate yearly progress for at least 2 years, it is deemed a school "in need of improvement." Schools in that situation are given "extra help" to improve and students may be eligible to receive free tutoring and extra help. Parents also have the option to transfer their child to another public school, including a public charter school, with free transportation to the new school (<i>Facts and Terms</i> , 2005).
15. <i>What is CMT based on? What is the basis of item selection on CMT?</i>	The CMT is directly aligned with The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards. The development of the CMTs takes a couple years and involves many decisions. These "basic decisions are based on the collective expertise of both assessment specialists and curriculum specialists at CSDE, along with input from the CMT advisory committees. Current educational research in the content areas, current assessment research, and current policies and priorities for education in Connecticut form the bases for these decisions" (<i>CMT-III Program Overview</i> , 2004, p. 12).
16. <i>How are test scores used?</i>	The scores are used to determine whether the students and schools are making adequate yearly progress. According to the CMT-III's Program

	Overview, “CMT results are one means of evaluating the effectiveness of specific educational programs and are the primary basis for assessing the annual progress of schools and school districts as specified under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act” (2004, p. 10).
17. Find the most recent CMT data and report the rank of your school district you work with or live in.	The CDSE no longer ranks the CMT results by school district. I was unable to locate even the 2004 rankings online. For EDU 502 this semester, though, I did my fieldwork experience in a 4 th grade class at the W.B. Sweeney School in Willimantic. The Windham School District is one of the ten lowest-ranking districts in the state.
18. Report the name of the school district that has a rank of “1” and a school district that is at the end of the ranking list.	Again, I could not find the rankings, but one <i>Hartford Courant</i> article stated that the results of the 2006 CMTs ranked Hartford, Windham, New London and New Britain and New Haven “among the bottom 10 districts in every subject at every grade” (Frahm, 2006, p. A13).
19. Is this state test required for all schools and all children in CT?	Students enrolled in <u>public schools</u> in Connecticut must take the CMTs in grades 3-8.
20. Are there any students/schools that are exempt?	Only public schools (including charter and magnet schools) must administer the CMTs; private schools and Catholic schools are, therefore, exempt. Also, “students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and who are enrolled in a U.S. school for the first time for 10 months or less may be exempted from the reading and writing portions of the CMT” (<i>Understanding</i> , n.d., p. 1).
21. Your reaction to CMT. Why is it needed?	I don’t necessarily disagree with students taking criterion-referenced, standardized tests; I took the Iowa Basic Skills Test all through elementary school. BUT, we were tested for only one week and my scores did not impact the amount of funding my school received or whether teachers were fired. My problem is with No Child Left Behind. While it is necessary for schools to be held accountable and show that their students are actually learning, there are too many flaws in NCLB for it to be successful.
22. Are they planning to revise this assessment?	The Fourth Generation was just implemented in the spring of 2006; because it is so new, it will probably be a couple years before they revise it.
23. Have they ever revised it in past?	Yes, the CMTs have been revised. They were first administered in the fall of 1985 to students in grades 4, 6 and 8. In 1993, the second generation

	of the CMT was introduced and then the third generation was introduced in September of 2000. The current CMT, the fourth generation, implemented in the spring of 2006, made revisions in accordance with No Child Left Behind (2001) and now all public school students in grades 3-8 must take the CMTs.
24. <i>What are some of the variables that explain differences in CMT scores?</i>	The CMT scores have shown an achievement gap between white students and minority students. Schools in wealthier districts, such as Greenwich, have more property tax money to spend on each child and have more qualified teachers so their students perform well on the CMTs, while urban districts such as New Haven and Windham, do not have as much money and cannot keep qualified teachers, so they are always at the bottom of the rankings. Also, students with disabilities and ELL students do not perform as well on the CMTs because they start out at the gate at a disadvantage.

Connecticut Academic Performance Test

1. <i>Who takes this test?</i>	All public school students in 10 th grade take the CAPT.
2. <i>What subjects are assessed?</i>	The CAPT “assesses and reports on student performance in four content areas: Mathematics, Science, Reading Across the Disciplines (based on a Response to Literature test and a Reading for Information test), and Writing Across the Disciplines (based on two Interdisciplinary Writing tests and an Editing & Revising test)” (<i>CAPT Interpretive</i> , 2006, p. 4).
3. <i>What happens to students who do not do well on CAPT?</i>	Students can voluntarily retake the CAPT in grades 11 or 12. If they meet the goal standard in each content area on the retake, they will receive the Certification of Mastery.
4. <i>Can students graduate from high school if they do not perform well on CAPT?</i>	Results of the CAPTs are documented in students’ school records and high school transcripts. The CAPT cannot be used as the sole “criterion for graduation or promotion, but that it will be the basis for awarding Certification of Mastery for those students who achieve the state goals in” any of the tested subjects (p. 4). But, as of September 1, 2002, “local and regional boards of education must include results from the CAPT when

	developing criteria to be used in assessing whether students have the basic skills necessary for graduation” (p. 4).
5. <i>When was the first time that CAPT was administered in CT?</i>	The CAPT was first administered to 10 th grade students in the spring of 1994.
6. <i>When was it last revised?</i>	The second generation of the CAPT was introduced in May 2001 and concluded in 2006. The third generation of CAPT will be first administered in March of 2007.
7. <i>What kind of assessment is it? Standardized? Criterion referenced?</i>	The CAPT is much like the CMTs: they are standardized but criterion-referenced. According to the <i>CAPT 2nd Generation Program Overview</i> , “students are not compared to one another in terms of performance; rather, student scores are compared to performance standards related to specific learning outcomes or skills” (2006, p. 7).
8. <i>Is this assessment based on any sort of standards? If yes, what are those standards?</i>	The CAPT is based on standards and goals set forth by the Connecticut Common Core of Learning as well as the state’s curriculum frameworks and guides.
9. <i>Why do we have to administer CAPT?</i>	CAPTs have to be administered due to No Child Left Behind (2001). According to that act, beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, all public school students had to be tested in each of the three grade spans (3-5, 6-9, 10-12). Beginning in 2006, the requirement expanded so students were tested in grades 3-8, along with the one time during the grade span of 10-12. The CAPTs had been administered in the 10 th grade before NCLB evolved so it has just continued in accordance with NCLB.
10. <i>Are there any scoring rubrics for CAPT?</i>	According to the <i>CAPT Program Overview</i> (2006), “While there is no passing score on the CAPT, goal standards in Reading Across the Disciplines, Writing Across the Disciplines, Science, and Mathematics have been established for Grade 10 students. These goal standards represent high, yet reasonable, expectations for students at the end of Grade 10” (p. 9).
11. <i>What kind of scores is reported?</i>	Students receive a Certification of Mastery and it is noted in their school records and transcript if they meet or exceed the goal standards for each content area.
12. <i>How do we interpret CAPT scores?</i>	Either the student mastered the content area by meeting or exceeding the goal standard for mastery, or the student did not master the content area.

<p>13. What does State Department do with CAPT scores?</p>	<p>Because the CAPT is the only assessment used for all high school students in Connecticut, the CAPT is used for comparison and accountability purposes. “The results are used in evaluating the effectiveness of particular educational programs and are the primary basis for assessing the annual progress of high schools and school districts as specified under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act” (<i>CAPT Program Overview</i>, 2006, p. 9).</p>
<p>14. What are schools supposed to do with CAPT scores? Why do they have to do whatever they do?</p>	<p>Schools must use CAPT results as one of the factors for determining whether a student should graduate. This applies to the graduating class of 2006. They must include CAPT results in their graduation criteria due to P.A. 01-166.</p>
<p>15. Is CAPT a high school graduation test?</p>	<p>No; students can graduate from high school without receiving a mastery certification. The CAPT cannot be the sole criterion for graduation; however, CAPT results must now be used to determine whether students have “the basic skills necessary for graduation” (p. 31).</p>
<p>16. How do students with mental retardation, learning disabilities, and other challenges participate in CAPT?</p>	<p>As with the CMTs, all public school students in grade ten must take the CAPT. As part of the student’s IEP, assessment accommodations will be provided if the PPT feels it is necessary. The CAPT Skills Checklist may be used for students with significant cognitive impairment.</p>
<p>17. Why should you, a teacher, bother about CAPT?</p>	<p>Just like the CMTs, the CAPTs are testing the teachers more than the students themselves. A teacher must, therefore, care about these tests because he or she is accountable for the results.</p>
<p>18. Your reaction to Connecticut’s Testing Program.</p>	<p>Although I understand the necessity of schools and teachers being held accountable for what they are teaching today’s children, I am bothered that so much emphasis has been put on these tests and their major content areas: “reading, writing and ‘rithmetic.” I am also bothered that there is such a huge achievement gap between white students and minority students here in Connecticut. Although Connecticut had the CMTs and CAPTs before No Child Left Behind, I think NCLB has made the situation worse and teachers are put in an uncomfortable position.</p>

References

- Connecticut State Board of Education. (2004). *Connecticut Mastery Test Third Generation Program Overview*. Retrieved November 20, 2006, from http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/misc_cmt/cmt3_prog_over_04.pdf.
- Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). *Introduction to NCLB*. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/nclb/faq/nclb_overview.htm#intro.
- Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). *Understanding Your Child's Scores on the CMT*. Retrieved November 3, 2006, from http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/misc_cmt/ScoreReportFolder.pdf.
- Connecticut State Department of Education. (2005). *CMT Generation 4 Parent Brochure*. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/brochures/cmt4_parent_brochure_english.pdf.
- Connecticut State Department of Education. (2005). *Connecticut Mastery Test Fourth Generation Language Arts Handbook*. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/handbooks/lang_arts_2005/cmt_gen4_languageartshandbook_aug_2005.pdf.
- Connecticut State Department of Education. (2005). *2005 Connecticut Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks: Grades PreK through 12 Matrix*. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/math/MathPrek-12Matrixv2.doc>.

Connecticut State Department of Education. (2005). *Assessment Guidelines* (10th ed.) [Draft].

Retrieved November 2, 2006, from

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/agl/resources/agl_10th_edition-draft_12-15-05.pdf.

Connecticut State Department of Education. (2006). *2006 CMT Interpretive Guide*. Retrieved

November 2, 2006, from

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/misc_cmt/2006_cmt_interpretive_guide.pdf.

Connecticut State Department of Education. (2006). *CAPT Second Generation 2006 Interpretive*

Guide. Retrieved November 4, 2006, from

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/resources/misc_capt/2006_capt_interpretive_guide.pdf.

Connecticut State Department of Education. (2006). *CAPT Second Generation Program*

Overview. Retrieved November 4, 2006, from

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/resources/misc_capt/2006_capt_program_overview.pdf.

Frahm, R. (2006). City ranks at bottom of test list; officials discouraged at lack of progress. *The*

Hartford Courant. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from Lexis-Nexis.

U.S. Department of Education. (2005). *Facts and Terms Every Parent Should Know About*

NCLB. Retrieved November 2, 2006, from

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/parents/parentfacts.html>.