

Counterbalance Assessment: The Chorizo Test

Just like all the high-stakes tests that determine students' futures nowadays, The Chorizo Test is a standardized test rooted in the culture of the test-makers. Try taking the test to find out how much of a *baboso* you can feel like when that culture isn't yours.

BY NOLAN L. CABRERA AND GEORGE A. CABRERA

SINCE THE days of the reform movements of the 1980s and 1990s, standardized testing has increased greatly in the public schools. The problem has become particularly acute in the wake of the testing mandated for accountability under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. States simply can't afford to jeopardize their federal funding.

The limitations of high-stakes, standardized, paper-and-pencil assessments have been documented extensively in the literature.¹ Cultural bias is one of the long-standing limitations of these tests. Because they are created by and for white middle-class populations, they typically reflect the dominant, white middle-class culture. However, this cultural hegemony has not gone unnoticed, and some interesting responses have emerged.

Many years ago, Adrian Dove, a black sociologist, created The Dove Counterbalance Intelligence Test as a means of demonstrating the folly of evaluating black children with tests that reflect white middle-class values and language.² During the 1950s and 1960s, such group intelligence tests were often used to classify children of color as "culturally deprived" or even "mentally retarded."

It seemed fitting to us, 40 years after the creation of The Dove Counterbalance Intelligence Test (1967) and its short form, The Chitling Test (1968), to develop a new instrument, The Chorizo Test, which addresses the continuing discriminatory practices against the new largest ethnic minority group, Hispanics. Even the descriptor, Hispanic, is itself a biased, colonialist term used by the federal government as an identifier.

■ **NOLAN L. CABRERA**, a former middle school teacher and administrator, is a doctoral candidate in the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute. **GEORGE A. CABRERA** is a psychometrist, education consultant, and university professor emeritus at Western Oregon University, Monmouth.

According to the Census Bureau, in 2005 so-called Hispanics made up 14.5% of the U.S. population and were the fastest-growing ethnic group in the nation. In addition, 63.8% of U.S. Hispanics self-identified as Mexican/Chicano in government surveys.³

The Chorizo Test was originally created to be used with students in teacher training programs to sensitize them to the pitfalls inherent in standardized pencil-and-paper tests, such as linguistic bias and cultural stereotyping. The test does not purport to avoid bias — or even to be fair. Instead, it is designed to be a counterbalance to the widely used standardized group tests administered in our public schools. However, it might have broader applications in the social sciences. So we offer for your consideration The Chorizo Test (page 678).⁴

1. See James Noll, ed., *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Educational Issues*, 13th ed. (Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin, 2005); and Susan Ohanian, *One Size Fits Few* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1999).

2. Adrian Dove, "The Dove Counterbalance Intelligence Test," *New Republic*, vol. 157, 1967, p. 7.

3. The data in this paragraph can be verified at www.census.gov.

4. PDK and the authors freely grant permission to photocopy The Chorizo Test for nonprofit educational purposes.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Acuña, Rodolfo. *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*. 6th ed. New Jersey: Longman, 2006.

Bósquez, Mario. *The Chalupa Rules*. New York: Plume, 2005.

Burciaga, José Antonio. *Drink Cultura: Chicanoism*. Santa Barbara: Joshua Odell Editions, 1993.

Fields, Virginia M., and Victor Zamudio-Taylor, eds. *The Road to Aztlán: Art from a Mythic Homeland*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2001.

Gutiérrez, José Angel. *A Gringo Manual on How to Handle Mexicans*. 2nd ed. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2001.

—. *A Chicano Manual on How to Handle Gringos*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2003.

THE CHORIZO TEST

Directions: Please select what you think is the best answer for each item below.

1. Aztlán is:

- a. A territory created by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- b. A popular Mexican fast-food chain
- c. The Mexican capital of the Republic of China
- d. The mythic native land of the Aztecs
- e. A resort on the Mexican Riviera

2. César Chávez is best known as:

- a. A fictional character in the Zorro movies
- b. The first Chicano representative to the U.S. Congress
- c. A writer known for his best seller, *Letters from the Fields*
- d. Lead guitarist for Santana
- e. A union leader who organized farm workers

3. Cinco de Mayo is:

- a. A celebration of the beginning of spring in Mexico
- b. A celebration of Mexican Independence Day
- c. A Mexican military victory over the French at Puebla
- d. A Mexican salad dressing
- e. A celebration of Mexican St. Patrick's Day

4. Dolores Huerta is:

- a. A well-known newscaster on Telemundo
- b. The mother of the Chicano movement
- c. The most recognized Chicana in advertising
- d. A successful Latina business executive
- e. A popular telenovela star

5. A gabacho is a:

- a. Vegetable
- b. Cowboy
- c. Fruit
- d. White male
- e. Horse rider

6. "¡Huelga!" means:

- a. "Strike!"
- b. "Careful!"
- c. "Watch out!"
- d. "Halt!"
- e. "Stop!"

7. El Chupacabra is a:

- a. Decorated piñata
- b. Man's belt buckle
- c. Mythical devil
- d. Famous racehorse
- e. Movie hero

8. La Llorona:

- a. Lights the way for travelers
- b. Cries for her children whom she killed
- c. Is a sign of the four seasons
- d. Prays and cares for the safety of the family
- e. Stands for anger and revenge

9. La Raza means:

- a. The politics
- b. The public
- c. The family
- d. The nation
- e. The race

10. El Norte refers to:

- a. The North Pole
- b. Canada
- c. Alaska
- d. The United States
- e. Baja California

11. La Virgen de Guadalupe is the:

- a. Bridge between El Paso and Juárez
- b. Sign of a good autumn harvest
- c. Child who represents innocence
- d. Final stop before crossing into the U.S.
- e. Patron saint of Mexico

12. MEChA is a:

- a. Legal assistance group
- b. Student activist group
- c. Federal aid group
- d. Business support group
- e. Political immigration group

13. Menudo is:

- a. Breakfast of Champions
- b. Dark chocolate candy
- c. Music played at a wedding
- d. A form of self-defense
- e. An iron cooking skillet

14. An Americanized Mexican is known as a:

- a. Pachuco
- b. Pocho
- c. Tío
- d. Muchacho
- e. Primo

15. Which word is out of place here?

- a. Nopales
- b. Caldo
- c. Chancla
- d. Chalupa
- e. Chorizo

16. The word that does not fit is:

- a. Curandero
- b. Estúpido
- c. Tonto
- d. Pendejo
- e. Baboso

17. Quetzalcóatl is:

- a. The patron saint of the poor
- b. Clothing worn by peasants
- c. A small restaurant with home cooking
- d. The Mayan leader who fought Cortez
- e. An Aztec god

18. A Quinceañera is a:

- a. Place of worship for lost children
- b. Group of small family farms
- c. Festival of lights during January
- d. Fifteenth birthday celebration
- e. Strong herb used for healing

19. September 16th is:

- a. President's Day in Mexico
- b. The running of the bulls
- c. Mexican Independence Day
- d. Día de los Muertos
- e. Registration day for voting

20. "Sí se puede" means:

- a. "Yes, we can."
- b. "My house is your house."
- c. "I am somebody."
- d. "Keep hope alive."
- e. "Choose wisely."

21. The Battle of the Alamo was:

- a. A major victory for the Republic of Texas
- b. An attempt to rid Mexico of illegal Americans
- c. The beginning of the Mexican Revolution
- d. Fought by American Minutemen
- e. A defeat for Mexican General Santa Ana

22. What term does not fit with the rest?

- a. Vato
- b. Amigo
- c. Carnal
- d. Esé
- e. Patrón

23. La migra is:

- a. Spanish for "Minutemen"
- b. A group of undocumented workers
- c. A street gang from East Los Angeles
- d. The immigration enforcement patrol
- e. The most vocal Mexican political group

24. Río Bravo is:

- a. The Mexican Medal of Honor
- b. A rich Mexican landowner
- c. The same as Rio Grande
- d. A well-known Mexican cowboy movie
- e. A popular Mexican play performed outside

25. Nochebuena is another name for:

- a. Poinsettia
- b. "El Che"
- c. Corona beer
- d. Disneyland
- e. Night of the Kings

ANSWER KEY

21. b 22. e 23. d 24. c 25. a
16. a 17. e 18. d 19. c 20. a
11. e 12. b 13. a 14. b 15. c
6. a 7. c 8. b 9. e 10. d
1. d 2. e 3. c 4. b 5. d

File Name and Bibliographic Information

k0805cab.pdf

**Nolan L. Cabrera and George A. Cabrera, Counterbalance
Assessment: The Chorizo Test, Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 89, No. 09,
May 2008, pp. 677-678.**

Copyright Notice

Phi Delta Kappa International, Inc., holds copyright to this article, which may be reproduced or otherwise used only in accordance with U.S. law governing fair use. MULTIPLE copies, in print and electronic formats, may not be made or distributed without express permission from Phi Delta Kappa International, Inc. All rights reserved.

Note that photographs, artwork, advertising, and other elements to which Phi Delta Kappa does not hold copyright may have been removed from these pages.

All images included with this document are used with permission and may not be separated from this editorial content or used for any other purpose without the express written permission of the copyright holder.

Please fax permission requests to the attention of KAPPAN Permissions Editor at 812/339-0018 or e-mail permission requests to kappan@pdkintl.org.

For further information, contact:

Phi Delta Kappa International, Inc.
408 N. Union St.
P.O. Box 789
Bloomington, Indiana 47402-0789
812/339-1156 Phone
800/766-1156 Tollfree
812/339-0018 Fax

<http://www.pdkintl.org>

Find more articles using PDK's Publication Archives Search at
<http://www.pdkintl.org/search.htm>.