

# The Culture of Testing: It's Worse Than You Think

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# What is the Purpose of a Test?

- Mastery of :
  - Information
  - Concepts
  - Skills

# What Students Do...

- Analyze
- Critique
- Recall
- Enumerate
- Synthesize

# Tests

Students respond to prompts in order to demonstrate mastery of a body of concepts, facts, and skills.

# How People Learn

Brain, Mind, Experience, and School

By The National Research Council

# Critical Elements to Learning

- Builds on the brain's existing circuits
- Is created by the learner's brain
- Is more durable when learner controls
- Importance of metacognition
- Disappears if not revisited

# Who Are Life-Long Learners?

Life-long learners are people with durable, self-sustaining interests.

# Where Do Tests Come From?

Or, if we are preparing students for life, why do we make them do things in school that they'll never do in the real world?

# History of Tests

- Begin in China in 605
- Army alpha tests in World War I
- Extension of societal, teacher control
- Designed to perform societal sorting

# Schools as Sorters

- Teachers work backwards from the need to produce grades
- Most rigorous instead of most interesting
- Subjects valued based on sortability
- And then we don't rank and tell them the grade is not the bottom line...

# Problems With Tests

- Students Respondents, Not Creators
- Tests Not About What Happens Today
- Controlling Agent is the Teacher

# Litmus Test

- If students need to study, the value is problematic.
- Studying is the same as looking up information, which they can do anyway

# Most Valuable Learning?

- Conventional classroom?
- Student-driven?

The story told by college essays.

# The Diversity Paradox

Schools seek diverse learners for a standardized learning environment.

# Sorting = Life-Long Learning?

When schools use academic skills to sort students on the basis of ability, what is the impact on life-long learning?

# What is Your Mission?

Ask your seniors...