

# Rethinking School Reform: The Role of Testing in Promoting Genuine Improvement

In the ongoing debate over school reform, testing has become a central issue. Critics argue that testing is a harmful distraction that narrows the curriculum and stifles creativity. They also claim that testing is biased against students of color and low-income students. Proponents of testing, on the other hand, argue that testing is a necessary tool for holding schools accountable and ensuring that all students are learning.

The truth about testing is likely somewhere in between these two extremes. Testing can be a valuable tool for identifying areas of need and promoting genuine improvement. However, it is important to use testing wisely and to avoid the potential pitfalls.



## Tests, Testing, and Genuine School Reform (Hoover Institution Press Publication Book 610) by Herbert J. Walberg

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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One of the most important things to keep in mind about testing is that it is only one measure of student learning. Tests can provide valuable information about what students know and can do, but they do not tell the whole story. It is important to consider other measures of student learning, such as classroom performance, homework assignments, and projects.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that testing can be biased. Tests are often designed by white, middle-class educators who may not be aware of the cultural biases that can creep into their work. This can lead to tests that are unfair to students of color and low-income students.

Despite these potential pitfalls, testing can be a valuable tool for school reform. When used wisely, testing can help to identify areas of need and promote genuine improvement. Here are some specific ways that testing can be used to improve schools:

- **Identify areas of need.** Tests can help to identify areas where students are struggling. This information can then be used to develop targeted interventions to address those needs.
- **Monitor progress.** Tests can be used to track student progress over time. This information can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and to make adjustments as needed.
- **Hold schools accountable.** Tests can be used to hold schools accountable for the performance of their students. This can help to ensure that all schools are meeting the same high standards.

Of course, testing is not a panacea. It is important to use testing wisely and to avoid the potential pitfalls. When used wisely, testing can be a valuable

tool for school reform. It can help to identify areas of need, monitor progress, and hold schools accountable.

For more information on the role of testing in school reform, please see the Hoover Institution Press Publication 610, 'Tests, Testing, and Genuine School Reform'.



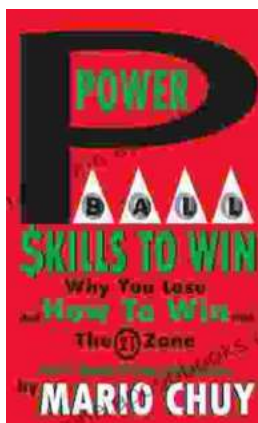
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