The Idiocy of Policy: The Anti-Democratic Curriculum of High-stakes Testing

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Abstract
Making use of the body of literature outlining the various controlling aspects of high-stakes testing on classroom practice, the analysis presented here finds that vertical hierarchies are both established and maintained through the top-down structure of education policies in the United States, as exemplified by the No Child Left Behind Act. By looking at the effects of such policies through Parker’s (2005) discussion of key aspects of democratic education, this article finds that educational policies based upon systems of high-stakes, standardized testing represent a curriculum that teaches anti-democracy.

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High-stakes testing is a term that was first used in the 1980s to describe testing programs that have serious consequences for students or educators. Given that important policy decisions may follow from shifts in achievement levels or international comparisons of achievement, large-scale assessments must meet high standards of technical accuracy. A Short History of High-Stakes Testing. Accountability testing in the United States started in 1965 as part of the same legislation (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]) that first allocated federal funds to improve the academic achievement of children from low-income families. STANDARDIZED TESTING Wayne Au A standardized test is any test that is given and scored in a predetermined, standardized manner. In education, there are two broad types of tests: norm-referenced and criterion-referenced. A more. STANDARDIZED TESTING Wayne Au A standardized test is any test that is given and scored in a predetermined, standardized manner. In education, there are two broad types of tests: norm-referenced and criterion-referenced. A norm-referenced test is a standardized test. Publisher: books.google.com. • The idiocy of policy: The anti-democratic curriculum of high-stakes testing more. by Wayne Au. Publication Date: Jan 1, 2010.