About the book

The past thirty years have seen a rapid expansion of testing, exposing students worldwide to tests that are now, more than ever, standardized and linked to high-stakes outcomes. The use of testing as a policy tool has been legitimized within international educational development to measure education quality in the vast majority of countries worldwide. The embedded nature and normative power of high-stakes standardized testing across national contexts can be understood as a global testing culture. The global testing culture permeates all aspects of education, from financing, to parental involvement, to teacher and student beliefs and practices. The reinforcing nature of the global testing culture leads to an environment where testing becomes synonymous with accountability, which becomes synonymous with education quality.

Underlying the global testing culture is a set of values identified from the increasing literature on world culture. These include: education as a human right, academic intelligence, faith in science, decentralization, and neoliberalism. Each of these values highlights different aspects of the dialogue in support of high-stakes standardized testing. The wide approval of these values and their ability to legitimate various aspects of high-stakes testing reinforces the taken-for-granted notion that such tests are effective and appropriate education practices. However, a large body of literature emphasizes the negative unintended consequences – teaching to the test, reshaping the testing pool, the inequitable distribution of school resources and teachers’ attention, and reconstructing the role of the student, teacher, and parent – commonly found when standardized, census-based tests are combined with high-stakes outcomes for educators or students.

This book problematizes this culture by providing critical perspectives that challenge the assumptions of the culture and describe how the culture manifests in national contexts. The volume makes it clear that testing, per se, is not the problem. Instead it is how tests are administered, used or misused, and linked to accountability that provide the global testing culture with its powerful ability to shape schools and society and lead to its unintended, undesirable consequences.

Contents

William. C. Smith. An Introduction to the Global Testing Culture

THE GLOBAL TESTING CULTURE AND THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AGENDA

D. Brent Edwards Jr. A Perfect Storm: the political economy of community-based management, teacher accountability, and impact evaluations in El Salvador and the global reform agenda

Rie Kijima & Jane Leer. Legitimacy, State-Building, and Contestation in Education Policy Development: Chile’s involvement in cross-national assessments


Ji Liu. Student Achievement and PISA Rankings: policy effects or cultural explanations?

Angeline M. Barrett. Measuring Learning Outcomes and Education for Sustainable Development: the new education developmental goal

Karen E. Andreasen & Christian Ydesen. The International Space of the Danish Testing Community in the Post-War Years

THE ABSENCE OF FORMATIVE TESTING AND THE POLITICS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Sumera Ahsan & William C. Smith. Facilitating Student Learning: a comparison of classroom and accountability assessment

Renáta Tichá & Brian Abery. Beyond the Large-Scale Testing of Basic Skills: using formative assessment to facilitate learning

http://www.symposium-books.co.uk/books/bookdetails.asp?bid=94
Contributors

Brian Abery is a co-director of the Educational Assessment and Intervention core area at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI) and an adjunct faculty member within the Institute on Child Development and School Psychology Programs at the University of Minnesota. He has been principal investigator of numerous projects designed to enhance the educational outcomes, social inclusion and self-determination of persons with disabilities at both a national and an international level. His international work includes implementation of the Response to Intervention framework in India and the implementation of Inclusive Service Learning in Costa Rica. He holds a PhD in Educational Psychology/School Psychology and has an extensive background in research, assessment, program development and evaluation related to children, youth and adults with disabilities.

Sumera Ahsan is a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She works as an assistant professor at the Department of Educational Evaluation and Research, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She also worked at the Institute of Educational Research, BRAC University, Bangladesh, as a lecturer. She is interested in educational assessment policies and practices in global context with a special emphasis on developing countries. She has also worked as consultant for the World Bank, Save the Children, UNESCO, UNICEF and Verulam Associates Ltd in areas such as quality of student assessment, project evaluation, technology in education, and teacher training & professional development. She has published several articles and books on educational assessment in Bangladesh. She was also involved in textbook writing and teacher training programs in Bangladesh.

Karen Egedal Andreasen holds a PhD in education and is Associate Professor in Education and Pedagogical Assessment at the Department of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, Denmark. Her main interests concern questions of socialisation, social mobility and processes of inclusion and exclusion and marginalisation in different educational contexts.

Hilla Aurén completed her MA in International Studies at the University of Denver’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies, where she was a recipient of the PEO International Peace Scholarship, in 2014. A native of Finland, she has previously worked for the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in international development in the Middle East and Central Asia. Her main research interests lie in the areas of development, education, good governance and peace-building.

David Balwanz is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. His current research focuses on secondary education and youth development in low- and middle-income countries. David holds a PhD in International Education Policy/Political Economy from the University of Maryland-College Park.

Angeline M. Barrett is a senior lecturer in education at the University of Bristol, UK. For the last 15 years, she has conducted a range of research on the quality of basic education in sub-Saharan Africa. This includes work on teacher professionalisation, pedagogic practices, social justice conceptualisations of quality and the development of innovative bilingual learning materials.

Patrick Blanchenay is an economist in the OECD’s Directorate for Science, Technology, and Innovation. He holds a PhD in Economics at the London School of Economics, where he was also a Teaching Fellow. Prior to joining the OECD, his research revolved around skill accumulation in agglomerations. He also holds an MRes in Political Theory from Sciences Po Paris. and an MSc in Management from HEC Paris.

Sandra G. Bowman, EdD, is a senior researcher at the University of Arkansas working on the Math Science Partnership, Pre-K School Portal, Mathematics Portal, and other projects focused on improving educational outcomes for students. She is an expert on assessment and evaluation models designed to assess the effectiveness of educational programs.

Tracey Burns heads the Governing Complex Education Systems project in the OECD’s Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). She also directs the Centre's work on Trends Shaping Education. She holds a Master of Arts and PhD in Psychology from Northeastern University, USA. Previous to her current work she worked on social determinants of health and on education and social inclusion issues both at the OECD and in Vancouver, Canada.

Hyeonwoo Chea is an elementary school teacher and a field researcher in Gyunggi Province, South Korea. She...
is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Education, Educational Administration, at Yonsei University in Seoul. Her research interests include accountability policy systems, social capital and school effectiveness for students with disadvantaged backgrounds, and comparative analysis of national education systems.

Pearl J. Chung is a PhD candidate in the Department of Education, Curriculum and Instruction, at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea, finishing her studies with funding from the Korean Global Scholarship Program (KGSP). Prior to this, she was a Global Apple Scholar and an elementary/middle school teacher at the Academy for Urban School Leadership in Chicago, Illinois. Her research interests include curriculum and instruction for students with disadvantaged backgrounds, accountability policy systems, and comparative analysis of national education systems.

D. Brent Edwards Jr. is currently an assistant clinical professor of educational administration and international education at Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA. His work focuses on the political economy of education reform and global education policies, with a focus on low-income countries. Previously, he has worked with the University of Tokyo; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Amsterdam; the Autonomous University of Barcelona; the George Washington University; the Universidad Centroamericana; and the World Bank. In addition to his work appearing in such journals as Comparative Education Review, Comparative Education, Journal of Education Policy, Prospects and Education Policy Analysis Archives, among others, he has a forthcoming book, titled International Education Policy and the Global Reform Agenda: education with community participation in El Salvador (Palgrave MacMillan).

Bjørn Hamre has a PhD in History and Education (2012), and is currently assistant professor at Aarhus University. His work mainly concerns the sociology and history of diagnosing, special needs education and inclusion in an international perspective. He is engaged in developing the analytical use of Michel Foucault’s concept of dispositive. He is chair of the Danish section of the Nordic Network on Disability Research (nnr.dk).

Devin K. Joshi is currently Associate Professor in the School of Social Sciences at Singapore Management University. Author of over two dozen academic journal articles and book chapters, his most recent co-authored book is Strengthening Governance Globally: forecasting the next 50 years (Paradigm/Oxford University Press, 2014). His research focuses on education policy, comparative politics and international relations.

Rie Kijima is a lecturer at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. Her research interests include education in developing countries, the politics of foreign aid, the impact of social policies on educational outcomes. With funding from Education International, she is completing her two-year postdoctoral research on why countries participate in cross-national assessments. Prior to starting her doctoral studies at Stanford University, she worked at the World Bank on education projects in the Middle East/North Africa and East Asia/Pacific regions.

Florian Köster is a consultant at the OECD’s Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), on the Governing Complex Education Systems project. He holds a MA in Government (specializing in Public Policy and Comparative Politics) from the University of Konstanz, Germany, and a MRes in Political Science from Universität Pompeu Fabra, Spain.

Kristine Kousholt has a MA in Danish Literature and Psychology (2004), a PhD (2009), and has been an associate professor since 2015. Her work primarily concerns assessment practice and teachers’ and pupils’ perspectives on and participation in educational standardised testing.

Jane Leer is a research specialist in the Department of Education and Child Protection at Save the Children, USA. She holds a Master’s degree in International Education Policy Analysis from the Stanford Graduate School of Education and a Bachelor’s degree in Development Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research addresses the role of international aid in educational development, the links between education and socioeconomic development, and early childhood education.

Ji Liu is a PhD student in Comparative International Education and Economics at Teachers College, Columbia University. His research focuses on human capital theory in rural and development contexts, and pays particular attention to cross-national policy instruments, institutions and processes. He was born in Xian, China, and first arrived in the United States as a sponsored KU-IIE scholar through the Institute of International Education. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from the University of Kansas, and received his Master of Arts degree in International Education Development from Columbia University.

Sean W. Mulvenon, PhD, is Professor of Educational Statistics at the University of Arkansas and created the National Office for Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES) in 1998. Since that time he has worked with numerous state educational agencies (SEAs) and spent 31 months as a senior adviser to the Deputy Secretary at the US Department of Education. He has developed large-scale data systems, growth models and policy associated with testing and assessment practices at both the SEA and national levels. He has served as a consultant on research projects in the United Arab Emirates, India and China.

Mariam Orkodashvili has been affiliated with Peabody College of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University; UC Berkeley; Edinburgh University; Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology; Tbilisi State University; Georgian American University; and the Parliament of Georgia. Her research interests include access to education; international large-scale data and comparative education; corruption in education; social cohesion and education; education and economic development; neural theory of metaphor; cognitive linguistics; language typology and universals. She has published articles in European Education, Sociology of Education, Equity in Higher Education: theory, policy, and praxis; Journal of the European Higher Education Area; Comparative and International Education; International Perspectives on Education and Society, vol. 13: The Impact of International Achievement Studies on National Education Policymaking; and Peabody Journal of Education.

William C. Smith is a senior associate with RESULTS Educational Fund, where he is developing the Right to
Education Index (RTEI). Prior to this position he completed a dual-title PhD in Educational Theory and Policy and Comparative International Education at Pennsylvania State University and was a Thomas J. Alexander Fellow at the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). His research addressing education’s role in international development and educator-based testing for accountability has resulted in over 15 publications in high-impact journals such as Social Science and Medicine, Education Policy Analysis Archives and Practical Assessment Research and Evaluation.

Anthony Somerset is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for International Education, University of Sussex. He has worked as an educational practitioner and research worker in developing countries since 1963, initially in Uganda, then in Kenya, where, as Head of Research at the newly established Kenya National Examinations Council, he was involved in a major examinations reform programme. More recently he has worked in a number of countries in South and South-East Asia, including Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Renáta Tichá received her PhD in Educational Psychology with emphasis on Special Education from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. She works as a Research Associate at the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration. She has extensive experience in the development, implementation and evaluation of assessments and interventions for children, youth and adults with different types of disabilities on both a national and an international level. Her international work is focused on the development and validation of formative assessments for struggling learners in Indian elementary schools as well as on the development of a technology-based progress monitoring system for students with significant disabilities in the Russian Federation.

Christian Ydesen holds a PhD in history of education from the University of Aarhus, Denmark. He is currently an associate professor at the Department of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, Denmark. His main interests are education policy, educational assessment, international organisations and education in multicultural contexts.

Related titles
Revisiting Insider–Outsider Research in Comparative and International Education MICHAEL CROSSLEY, LORE ARTHUR, ELIZABETH McNESS
Globalisation and Europeanisation in Education ROGER DALE, SUSAN ROBERTSON
Globalisation and Higher Education in the Arab Gulf States GARI DONN, YAHYA AL MANTHRI
Higher Education and the State: changing relationships in Europe and East Asia ROGER GOODMAN, TAKEHIKO KARIYA, JOHN TAYLOR
Comparing Standards Internationally: research and practice in mathematics and beyond BARBARA JAWORKSI, DAVID PHILLIPS
Europeanizing Education: governing a new policy space MARTIN LAWN, SOTIRIA GREK
The Rise of Data in Education Systems: collection, visualization and use MARTIN LAWN
PISA, Power, and Policy: the emergence of global educational governance HEINZ-DIETER MEYER, AARON BENAVOT
Transnational Policy Flows in European Education: the making and governing of knowledge in the education policy field ANDREAS NORDIN, DANIEL SUNDBERG
Shaping the Futures of Young Europeans: education governance in eight European countries MARCELO PARREIRA DO AMARAL, ROGER DALE, PATRICÍA LONCLE
Educational Policy Borrowing: historical perspectives DAVID PHILLIPS, KIMBERLY OCHS
Internationalisation of Higher Education and Global Mobility BERNHARD STREITWIESER
International Higher Education’s Scholar-Practitioners: bridging research and practice BERNHARD STREITWIESER, ANTHONY C. OGDEN