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EDUC 6000
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Week 2 – Discussion #1

Formative assessment has been shown by research to have a high correlation with student achievement while summative assessments have a much smaller impact on learning. Given this situation, why do you think such a heavy emphasis placed on summative forms of assessment in education?

I believe one big part of why summative assessments are so emphasized is frankly because of money. A simple look at standardized testing (and the big bucks it commands) will verify that standardized tests (a common form of summative assessment) are not only popular, because they claim to provide actionable and comparable data among students, classes, districts and states, but because they are heavily pushed by publishers and their sales' reps. For example, the recent RISE testing was contracted out for a cool **\$44 million dollars**. Though it was recently canceled due to repeated and frequent technical problems, the state went ahead and contracted the company involved **knowing full well that they had had similar issues many times in the past** (McCombs, 2019). This isn't even all that much, apparently, with our neighbor Colorado spending about **\$78 million** in 2014 alone for testing, and Pennsylvania spending **\$114 million** in 2017 alone for such standardized tests (Engdahl, 2014; Dinniman, 2017).

Perhaps even more sadly, many states are realizing that despite the hundreds of thousands (or millions) of dollars they are heaping at standardize test publishers, the money isn't getting them the results they want. The undue stress they create, the costs involved, and the lack of accountability have led increasing numbers of families to opt their students out, thus making the results even less worthwhile (Mulvahill, 2017). After the recent college entrance scandal, there have been rumblings of throwing out the ACT / SAT requirement for college admission (Strauss, 2019). Time will tell if this is a growing trend in education, or not.

Sources:

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