Technology: Icing on the cake of assessment? Or the secret ingredient?

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No more sugarcoating: Asking and answering the hard questions about assessment and technology

A question and answer session

Where we do both!
If we leave no child behind, are any ahead?
With Congress, every time they made a joke, it’s a law, and every time they make a law, it’s a joke. -- Will Rogers
The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn. --Alvin Toffler
It is my wish that this be the most educated country in the world, and toward that end I hereby ordain that each and every one of my people be given a diploma.
How do teachers use technology in the classroom to improve student academic achievement?

Matthew Bowman
If we leave no child behind, are any ahead?

You decide...
1 Only the ones with technology
2 Here in Lake WoeBeGone, all the children are above average
3 Not if the we have enough teachers teaching to the tests
4 All kids can learn to some standard, just look at Texas
Are tests the best way to know no child is left behind?
Those who can do.
Those who can't teach.
Those who can't teach train teachers.
Those who can't train teachers write teacher training textbooks.
Those who can't write teacher training textbooks write state assessment tests.

-- Steve Nordby
WELL, JOHNNY, TELL US WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED!

EDUCATION TESTING REFORM
Finding ways to assess ourselves that is more than just the Carnegie credit unit and the resume. Jamie Stevens
Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted. -- Albert Einstein
Are tests the best way to know no child is left behind?

You decide ...
1 Absolutely, they measure everything important, except the communication, attitude and cooperation skills that lead to lifelong success
2 Yes, I want people who can take tests running the country
3 Maybe they will all be able to find Iraq on a map without a vice president
4 How else will we reign in all those divergent expectations?
What if we could measure everything, would that be a good thing?
If anything concerns me, it's the oversimplification of something as complex as assessment. My fear is that learning is becoming standardized. Learning is idiosyncratic. Learning and teaching is messy stuff. It doesn't fit into bubbles. -- Michele Forman, 2001 Teacher of the Year, quoted by the Associated Press
Here is a printout of the results of our recent standardized tests and here are the same results printed with a very small hard-to-read font, to make the implications less obvious.
Will assessment mandates pervert the portfolio as an effective device for measuring student growth?

Joanne Carney
What if we could measure everything, would that be a good thing?

You decide ...
1 Yes, it would certainly be more interesting
2 Yes we could sort people better, like they do in Europe to eliminate upward mobility
3 What do you mean, we can measure everything, if only we would.
4 Not really, the most important things are obvious and don’t need measuring
Does every child need a handheld digital watch - Game Boy device?
How one person's abilities compare in quantity with those of another is none of the teacher's business. It is irrelevant to his work. What is required is that every individual shall have opportunities to employ his own powers in activities that have meaning. Mind, individual method, originality (these are convertible terms) signify the quality of purposive or directed action.

-- John Dewey
“School’s out. Computers are down.”
What does assessment data mean to kids?

SarahMcPherson
Does every child need a handheld digital watch Game Boy device?

You decide ...
1 They already do – it’s called a brain – the best sensory input and output device we have.
2 Yes, but it will be multiple devices and everyone needs them or the digital divide will cause another civil war in this country between the haves and have-nots.
3 If they do, they can go much further in school – they are today’s thinking tools.
4 As long as they are connected to each other, cooperative and knowledge-building rather than violent isolating manual dexterity exercises.
If a portfolio really is the story of your life, who would read it?
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How are we going to make portfolios part of our lives?

John Ittelson
If a portfolio really is the story of your life, who would read it?

You decide ...
1 Your mom
2 Who cares? You did it! You are your most important audience. It is a window and mirror on you.
3 Can we handle that many bestsellers?
4 Archaeologists some day... trying to understand our primitive segmented learning methods?
If every eighth grader excelled at NETS-S, how would that change high schools?
I believe in standardizing automobiles, not human beings  --Albert Einstein
“Hello, Bob? It’s your father again. I have another question about my new computer. Can I tape a movie from cable TV then fax it from my VCR to my CD-ROM then E-mail it to my brother’s cellular phone so he can make a copy on his neighbor’s camcorder?”
The most important aspect of education is teaching children to think for themselves.

Eleanor Roosevelt
How do you generate, collect, disseminate, make available evidence based on sound assessments?

Don Knezek
If every eighth grader excelled at NETS-S, how would that change high schools?

You decide ...
1 High school scheduling would finally work because students would do it.
2 America would finally be on par with Singapore.
3 Network security would meet its greatest challenge.
4 The high school curriculum could go digital with curriculum and portfolio assessment.
The problems that exist in the world today cannot be solved by the level of thinking that created them. Albert Einstein
We have an opportunity to ask and answer questions that have not been asked before.
To have conversations with each other as teachers, students, parents, employers

Questions we have not asked before
We need only remember our raison d’etre

To use technology for learning
What questions do you have?
What questions do your students have?
Who is watching whom?
MAKE WAVES with your thinking!