

# High-stakes testing in schools

Sociology



The paper " High-Stakes Testing In Schools" is an outstanding example of a research paper on sociology.

High Stake Testing, in general, is a procedure of testing and using the test scores to make decisions that have significant implications in the individual's career. It is used to access special opportunities or promotion to next grade. It is an outcome of a standardized test which is used as a sole determining factor for making important decisions.

Pros of High Stake Testing:

Tests are a natural part of education, ranging from essays to classroom tests to quizzes. High stake tests are generally used as the criteria for promotion to next grade or for entrance in different educational institutes. Such testing can provide useful information about the status of the student i. e. the strength and the weakness of an individual in regard to particular areas. For example, many children who face trouble in learning equations and solving problems in mathematics are unable to comprehend them and hence fail to understand the further coursework. How can he move on further with the subject when he is not clear with his basics? (Angelfire). Due to the high stakes involved, such a test can extract optimum hard work and results from the students. They are also a motivational factor for studying along with developing competitive skill. Testing also helps teachers to identify student's weaknesses and work on these weaknesses and also allows parents to see their child's progress and ability.

Cons of High Stake Testing:

Although the points mentioned above are valid these tests are not the only way to measure a student's level of learning and the credibility of these tests is often questioned. A multiple choice or a short answer test cannot

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always depict the knowledge of a student. On the other hand, these kinds of test can lead to psychological distress for students, parents, teachers and school authorities (wiseGEEK). The increased pressure increases the chances of utilization of unfair means, as through cheating one can easily clear the exam than earning credit through diligence. Decades of research shows that sources of motivation like stars, stickers, and grades undermine natural curiosity and student's enjoyment of learning. According to Debra Viadero, "thousands of low achieving students have been held back from entering high school, elevating students, the risk of dropping out of school by age of 17 by 8% points". These tests should not be a reason that a student cannot move on to the next class, or held back any grades, but provided with extra attention.

#### Conclusion:

More and more schools and parents are worried about their students getting the proper education, so they feel that high stake tests are the only way they can learn. Since the students are already exposed to testing, high stakes testing should not be considered such an important role in schooling. Instead of having a single high stake test, the testing procedure should be divided into a number of small interactive sessions where the students can identify their weaknesses and remove them without any undue psychological pressure.