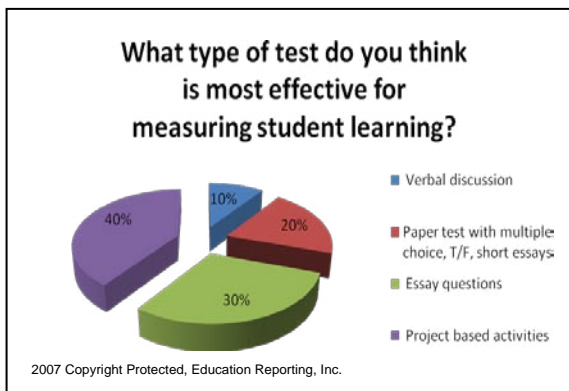


TEACHERS TALK: MEASURING STUDENT LEARNING

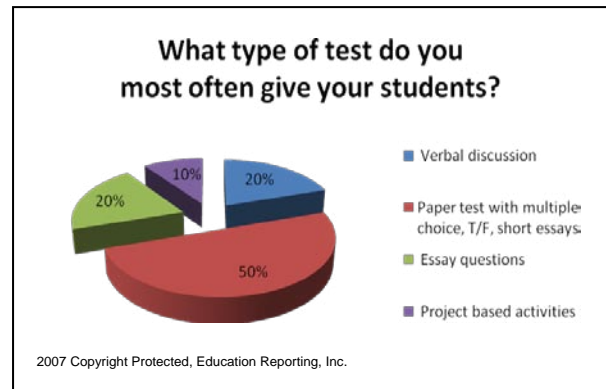
Most people won't make an effective teacher. Why? Teaching is a complex job, requiring multiple skill sets. Three essentials teacher skills are being a nerd in the subject content, another is sufficient social skills to maximize organized chaos - classroom management, and one more is being a quality decision maker. Blue ribbon teachers, again and again, correctly choose among conflicting "A" priority tasks.

All teachers have conflicts lurking in the shadows: outdated school policies, lacking school resources, or district policies out of touch with what happening in classrooms but the effective teacher has a successful track record of student learning taking place in their classes. What to do? When a teacher knows that complying with a policy in the classroom won't produce the highest student learning outcome, what should they do? A case in point: choosing the appropriate test to measure student learning of work done in the classroom.



Of the teachers giving feedback at Education Reporting, Inc. on best testing methods, 50% responded by stating they most often give paper tests – multiple choice, true/false, or short essay questions. Oddly enough, 80% of those same teachers said the paper test isn't the most effective test to measure student learning.

What can bring about this testing conflict? Teachers must follow policy – just like any professional does. So when the school policy or district policy dictates that all student success will be measured by a paper test – everyone will be using the paper test measurement stick.



The difference in a paper test and a project based assessment is the difference between talking about driving versus getting in the car and heading down Main Street. Today, since the course of education is directed by the winds of testing, then isn't it in the best interest of educators, students, and parents to use the most effective test type?

We need to empower teachers to use effective measurement methods. Even better, perhaps we can mobilize the wisdom of effective teachers to contribute and shape education policy. Listening to effective teachers is a common sense approach to produce the desired results we all want: improved scores on high –stake testing in K-12 classes.

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