

The United States: Multiple Polities and the Shaping of Educational Assessment

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Abstract

Assessment of public education in the United States—and, by extension, of educational assessment as topic—has become increasingly a centrepiece of conversation and debate on its contribution or lack thereof to the health and wealth of the nation in a globalized 21st century capitalist economy. Accountability measures applied to the traditional public school system have moved the nation into substantial activity to effect school reform through standards-based education and high stakes testing. Multiple polities have engaged with the education system in addressing the goals of NCLB and RTT; and, in the proliferation of privatized alternatives to public sector schooling and university teacher education. A challenging socio-economic climate has added to the disparities in educational experience, and compounded problems for a national pursuit of educational excellence. Educational assessment in the USA today leaves many unanswered questions.

Keywords: educational assessment, academic achievement, accountability

Introduction

Assessment of USA public education—and, by extension, of educational assessment as topic—has become increasingly a centrepiece of conversation and debate on its contribution or lack thereof to the health and wealth of the nation in a globalized 21st century capitalist economy. Accountability measures and privatization of public sector functions such as postal services, utilities, transportation, etc., since the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, has also impacted the traditional public school system in the United States.

What follows is a brief summary of the socio-historical context of public schooling in the United States; an account of standards-based education and high stakes testing as key to school reform, and sustainability within a challenging socio-economic climate, ramifications of public school assessment policy, and consideration of alternatives, future direction, and ‘possibility’ for U. S. education.

Socio-historical context of public schooling in the United States

Talk of the free world today is intertwined with talk of economic competitiveness, technology, and power. Talk of personal freedom refers to self-dependence and self-determination; it has little to do with connectedness or being together in a community. Americans assume that they were born free. If they can function with any degree of effectiveness, they feel entitled to do as they please, to pursue their fulfilments on their own. To be autonomous and independent: this seems to many to be the American dream. Given the climate of the time, there should be celebrations of that dream coming true. Yet on all sides, official voices speak of irresponsibility, illiteracy, relativism, unethical behaviour. The sound of those voices intensifies an uneasiness underlying everyday life, an uneasiness that focuses more and more frequently on education. (Greene, 1988, p. 1)

In the United States responsibility for educating its citizens falls to the states: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people” (10th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, n.d.). All fifty states have independently established compulsory education laws for school attendance, ages 6-18 (with minor variations). In the states generally most of the governance and funding for education has been delegated by the state to local communities, where stakeholders continue to place exceptional value on local control of their schools. This arrangement most generally entails a system of school districts with locally elected school board members.

A significant, and often contentious, dialectic exists in regards to education at the local, state, and federal levels. In the latter case, the creation of the U. S. Department of Education itself in 1979 remains controversial in some sectors of the electorate (On education in the United States, n.d.; Public Broadcasting System, n.d.; Ravitch, n.d.). This relationship is most exacerbated in the case of federal assistance, and related ‘federal intervention,’ into public education; states’ rights issues are regularly raised in the current political environment.

Equity and Excellence: Teaching in a Culturally Pluralistic Society (2011), is a university course title representative of similar offerings in all fully accredited teacher licensure programmes in the U. S. today. This use of the terms ‘equity’ and ‘excellence’ represent two distinguishing and intertwined sets of ethos operating within the public education system in and across all three levels of governance: 1) *equal educational opportunity* as route to upward social mobility, especially as pertains to minorities, urban youth, and the poor; and 2) academic achievement, particularly targeted to address the ‘achievement gap’ in reference to those same groups, en route to increased global competitiveness. Both, the equity argument and the excellence mandate—thread actively through contemporary initiatives aimed at school reform, and in the role of educational assessment to attain it. This occurs within the traditional K-12 public schooling establishment, and in the additional entities under the more recently broadened definition of the ‘public’ in public education (see further discussion to follow.). The *equity and excellence* arguments are very much present for the public as business leaders and government officials look outward at comparative data worldwide—TIMMS, PISA, NAEP—which suggest “that many countries that compete economically with the United States (have) outperformed U. S. students...” consistently, over subject, level, and other indicators of academic achievement (Hambleton, Sireci, & Smith, 2009: 391).

Standards-based Education Reform

Preceded by release of *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform: A report to the nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education*, as early as 1983 (United States, National Commission on Excellence in Education) and successive appeals to the electorate as regards the academic achievement of U. S. students through the latter decades of the 20th century, for example, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (2001) — the movement towards greater accountability from the U. S. education establishment culminated in the advent of ‘NCLB’ at the start of this 21st century.

With ‘NCLB’ has come a new level of educational engagement with multiple stakeholders at the national level for a country historically eschewing federal government controls over education. The *No Child Left Behind Act* was signed by President George W. Bush at the very beginning of his presidency in 2001, and was passed into law with bi-partisan Congressional support in 2002. This law applies to all public schools across the fifty states accepting federal funds for various programmes, and requires testing of student academic achievement at designated grade levels in specified subject areas. States set their own

standards, develop assessments, and apply consequences to schools not meeting ‘AYP’ (Adequate Yearly Progress). Key provisions of the bill include:

- A sequence of penalties and related options applied to schools which do not perform up to expectations
- ‘Highly qualified teacher’ requirement
- Access to student contact information for military recruiters
- And, more specifically—linking state academic content standards with student outcomes, to include:
 - Annual standardized testing in reading and maths in grades 3-8, and in high school
 - Detailed report cards for parents on AYP performance and requirements for ‘highly qualified teachers’; and, public disclosure of testing outcomes by school and district (*No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; No Child Left Behind Act, n.d.*)

Ten years into NCLB the fifty states continue to engage in framing, and re-framing, educational standards and testing protocols to meet various goals and deadlines—in partnership with the public, in response to political initiatives, in compliance with government programmes out of the U. S. Department of Education, and in collaborative activity within the professional education community (e.g., Ohio Department of Education (a), 2011; GreatSchools, 2011).

Elmore’s categorization of a ‘new’ accountability in 1996 continues to provide a succinct view of three core elements in U. S. education today: 1) comparison of student and school performance across school districts and states with the use of standardized testing — emphasis on basic skills, 2) criterion-referenced measurements against “ostensibly rigorous ‘world class’ learning standards,” and, (consequently), 3) creation of incentives and sanctions connected to testing outcomes — for students and their teachers (Anagnostopoulos, 2007: 121).

School and Classroom: Teacher Effectiveness

Teacher work has been, and continues to be, extensively examined and appraised, from within and outside of school and classroom. Teacher efficacy and identity related to a re-scaling of alignment of the relationships between the global, national, and local has created in some sectors of the polity a dialectic perceived as a dichotomous relationship between the ‘teaching and learning’ and ‘teaching to the test’ in framing contemporary school and classroom cultures. This has impacted, among other things, teacher attrition or retention, threat of school closures or district take-overs, and in the effects of ‘efficiency’ and challenge to teacher ‘identity work,’ such as that noted in the Anagnostopoulos study of Chicago Public Schools (2007: 122).

In the United States students and teachers work in any of a variety of schooling situations mirroring the community life and socio-cultural conditions of which they are a part. A major message of proponents of NCLB and related supports is the intention to close the ‘achievement gap’ in school performance between rich and poor, minority and non-minority, urban/rural and suburban, etc. The query: How does one view, and compare, student performance and teacher effectiveness in relation to the varying needs of diverse student populations and consequent test outcome scores?

For this purpose models are used to estimate teacher and school effectiveness based on student gains, and take the form of judging teacher competence based on average test score gains for students in the teacher’s classes, as compared with similar students in similar schools. This model is used widely in

current research, evaluation, and accountability plans for teacher performance (Henry et al., 2011; Hill, 2011).

Relating student growth directly to teacher performance has raised questions, and has now generated widespread use of value-added measures of educational assessment.

For instance, in a study comparing “24 middle school mathematics teachers’ value-added scores, derived from a large (N=222) district data set, (analysis of) survey- and observation-based indicators of teacher quality, instruction, and student characteristics”... found teachers’ value-added scores correlated with their mathematical knowledge and quality of instruction, but also followed the demographics — by correlating as well with the varying student populations where teachers teach (Hill, 2011: 794).

Recently researchers have begun to revise an earlier enthusiasm, and have questioned the validity of current and proposed uses of value-added scores for measuring teacher performance (Papay, 2011; Hill, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2011). Papay suggests that the data questions use of value-added measures for attributing student achievement to specific teachers and to rewarding ‘high-performing’ teachers in high-stakes testing for states and districts. He concludes, in regards to a more appropriate use of such data, “On average, teachers whose students perform well using one assessment also perform well using alternate tests. Thus, particularly in combination with other measures, value-added estimates may contribute both to program evaluation research that combines estimates across a wider sample of teachers and to formative uses for improving teacher performance in schools” (Papay, 2011: 188).

“Many open questions remain concerning the reliability and validity of teacher value-added effects as causal estimates of a teacher’s productivity” (Papay). Outcome and outcome choice appear to be gaining attention as essential components of assessment models intending to link student performance to teacher effectiveness (Papay; Polikoff et al., 2011). A recent set of studies provides evidence that the outcome specified is central to its use, that “outcome choice produces substantially more variation in teacher effects than decisions about model specification,” and that further attention to the measures themselves is warranted (Papay, 190).

Polikoff and co-authors have addressed the issue of outcome selection based on a study using data from a large, urban school district — from 3 separate achievement tests and contend that

Whether student achievement tests are to be used for high-stakes decisions, such as hiring and firing of teachers, or lower-stakes decisions, such as curriculum revision, it is important that the tests accurately reflect student knowledge of the domain the tests are intended to assess. To have assessments that are not well aligned to the standards that are the foundation of the U. S. curriculum is unfair to teachers and students (Polikoff *et al.*, 2011: 993).

The concerns of the investigators in this study focused on “the coherence of standards-based reform’s key instruments using the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum, i.e., what teachers are actually teaching (as opposed to the Intended Curriculum). Analyzing 138 standards-assessment pairs spread across grades and the three *No Child Left Behind* tested subjects, the authors found “substantial misalignment of test content, level of cognitive demand, and topics not mentioned in the corresponding standards” (Polikoff *et al.*, 2011: 965). The three NCLB tested subjects are: mathematics, science, and *ELAR* (English, Language Arts, and/or Reading).

In another look at outcome, Henry et al. used a statewide database of North Carolina Public School (NCPS) teachers of students in grades 3-5 (2005-2009) and grades 6-12, middle school and high school (2004-2009), linked to their students’ test performance, over the first five years of employment for

evidence of ‘returns to teacher experience’ with a selected timeline of potential teacher development. Conclusions included the general observation that

...less effective teachers ... tend to exit NCPS (and) the capacity for fairly rapid on-the-job teacher development suggests that policies to identify ineffective teachers and remove them from the profession (teacher de-selection) may be less effective in increasing student test scores than policies directed at improving early-career teacher effectiveness (Henry *et al.*, 2011 : 279).

To that effect the authors have recommended further consideration of such interventions as comprehensive induction programmes, reduced teaching loads initially, high-quality mentoring, intensive collaboration between teachers, advice for teacher preparation programmes, and greater in-school experience for teacher candidates (Henry *et al.*, 2011 : 278).

Headed by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Common Core State Standards Initiative is a states-led effort to establish consensus on expectations for student knowledge and skills that should be developed in Grades K-12. By late 2010, 36 states and the District of Columbia had adopted the standards (Phillips & Wong, 2010; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). These standards are poised to be widely adopted and will be framed within state education policies (E.g., Ohio Department of Education (c), 2011).

The first Common Core State Standards, in mathematics and English language arts and literacy, aim to align instruction and are intended to help more students meet the requirements of “college and career readiness.” They are explicit in their focus on what students are to learn, i.e., “the content of the intended curriculum.” Both sets of standards claim to be, among other things, internationally benchmarked with high-achieving countries around the world (Porter et al., 2011: 103).

Of particular interest and significance at this time of escalating adoption is the observation to come out of the Porter study that these common core standards: 1) will be calling for substantial change from the content and assessment strategies associated with current state standards, 2) reveal substantial differences from the currently “enacted curriculum,” i.e., what teachers are actually teaching at the present time, 3) are different from the standards of those countries whom they seek to emulate, and 4) that those high-performing countries’ emphasis on “perform procedures” is in contrast to the greater U. S. emphasis on “higher order cognitive demand” (Porter et al., 2011: 114).

University teacher education: preparing effective teachers

Although not new, since the ‘80s “the quality and qualifications of public school teachers have come under increased scrutiny from the public, policymakers, and the profession...” (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005: 157). As indicators of teacher performance in the classroom became more important in the public eye, education researchers turned more attention to the attributes of ‘highly qualified teachers’—and by extension, to teacher education. In addition to previous emphasis on the verbal ability and content knowledge of teachers, it was suggested by the re-issuance of Title II in 2002 that evidence was also needed to demonstrate “the contribution of a variety of factors including quality indicators that reflect the added value of teacher education programs, workplace factors, teacher dispositions and personality traits” (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005: 187).

The traditional practice of teacher certification (licensure) in university colleges of education began to receive more attention in this era of school reform and teacher effectiveness. It became challenged by multiple stakeholders and levels of government to become more accountable for teachers prepared in these institutions. Some critics of the education establishment have described traditional approaches to teacher certification as obstructionist and bureaucratic obstacles to real change in U. S. education. They have called for streamlined requirements and an assortment of alternative routes to certification (licensure). Normative issues were raised:

- What should certified teachers know and be able to do?
- Who should make these decisions?
- What should be the purposes of accountability? (Wilson & Youngs, 2005).

According to Ornstein's summarization, pre-service teacher preparation emphasizes those continuing imperatives to foster school improvement through focus on at-risk students and schools, inner-city poverty, concentrated rural poverty, the need for effective education, and the contemporary focus on application of 'effective schools' research to practice (2011: 497). Today university colleges of education are actively engaged in preparing pre-service and in-service teachers and administrators to meet routinely changing state accountability standards for K-12 schools. They modify programme and course content, focus extensively on assessment and measurement as an aspect of professional practice and area of academic research, assist in the development of state standards and assessments themselves, and mirror this movement in K-12 education in those regularly renewed standards, and related assessments, for teacher education (e.g., Ohio Department of Education (d), 2011).

Teacher educators are working within the system observing long-held recognition of their social responsibility, applying educational precepts fostering human growth and development to their practice, and, crafting new work to meet the needs of the public as interpreted by its critics and the legislated mandates which support it. Outside the existing infrastructure states continue to open the door to a wide array of shortened and less credential-dependent routes to teacher licensure. This begs the question, a normative one, and opens debate, as to what is that 'high quality teacher' (No Child Left Behind Act)?

This is a sample out of a profusion of national organizations with varying political and professional identities, currently vying for public attention to answer this question by providing information on state assessment and accountability practices directed at creating effective teaching in the country: Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE, n.d.); Achieve (Achieve, n.d.); National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE, n.d.); and, particularly current in the case of teacher education, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ, n.d.; Sawchuk, 2012).

Kenneth Zeichner (2011), in an invited essay for the upcoming 2012 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, writes as an advocate for university teacher education on how to improve teacher education in the United States. He contends:

There is no reason to believe from the poor performance of deregulation and markets in any other sector of society or from the experience of other countries with strong records of student achievement in their public schools that the current trend to dismantle college and university-based teacher education and replace it with a market economy will result in anything positive for the nation. Continuing on this path will only serve to widen the inequalities in public education that now exist (Zeichner, 2011: 13-14).

Opportunity for real school improvement, according to Zeichner, is through substantial investment in the redesign of the college and university system of teacher education in the U. S., and in the preparation of ‘professional career teachers’ for everyone’s children.

Privatization and accountability

There are numerous variations in application of, and departure from, the main agenda of standards-based education as the basis of national educational reform in the United States today. A major strategy employed by stakeholders both within and outside the traditional schooling establishment in the U. S. is ‘opting out.’ In the case of the standards-based educational reform agenda of NCLB, there has been a barrage of concerns and interest in ‘opting out’ of that ‘voluntary’ government-sponsored initiative—although to do so is perceived as being at great cost. In response to a nascent movement in this direction by some of the states, President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan have announced some modification of expectations put on the states with things like adjustment of timetables for accomplishing specified levels of academic achievement, and consideration for differential treatment of particular student populations in reporting test results. A recent announcement from the White House has addressed some portion of these issues by relieving states of the “2014 deadline for all students to be proficient in maths and reading/language arts,” and noting changes in other areas of contention. But it re-affirms and elaborates on other aspects, such as linking teacher evaluations to student performance (McNeil & Klein, 2011).

At the same time, there is enhanced effort to push more for results from the standards-based movement of educational reform under the NCLB umbrella. Consonant with the precepts and philosophy underlying NCLB as motivator for academic performance in the country, the Department of Education has raised the stakes for potential winners and losers in what has become a national education competition—with a *Race to the Top* (pun based on the ‘*Race to the Bottom*’ indictment of U. S. policy on the economy since the early ‘80s). This article byline appeared in autumn 2011 as part of ongoing education news coverage on that theme for a national publication, *Education Week*:

Winners of the \$4 billion Race to the Top jackpot (11 states and the District of Columbia in this second round of the competition) committed to grand goals in using the federal grants to raise student achievement, as measured by higher test scores, narrowed achievement gaps, and increased graduation and college-going rates—all in four years (McNeil 2011).

The RTT competition adds to what has been labelled as a historic record of federal funding for education in the country. This newer initiative is intended to hasten the desired school improvement.

Qualifications for receiving an RTT award include some rather controversial criteria to be met in the form of promises by states such as to not allow a cap on the burgeoning numbers of charter schools (for-profit and non-profit) in their state.

Another is the requirement that states must put limits on teacher unions, and make guarantees of their partnership as part of a contractual agreement. The recent experience of one state award recipient represents some of the challenges and trade-offs for applicants, and consequent recipients of these funds. An article byline in the local newspaper goes: “Unresolved dispute with teachers over improved teacher evaluations, performance-based pay, and equitable distribution of highly qualified personnel blocks plans” (Vorsino, 2011). Endangered receipt of the contracted funding brought both sides together in a later settlement with hopes it would satisfy the grant’s mandate.

With often partisan-laden baggage, school choice has expanded in a variety of ways since those early '80s initiatives. Currently, among numerous initiatives and entrepreneurial enterprises, the charter school movement in particular has expanded to the degree that reference to public education in the country has become inclusive of charter schools. The current administration refers to it in this way, and protects it through recent national policy initiatives (see discussion of federal funding/RTT above). 'Public Education' in the United States, then, has been re-defined to include charter schools.

The charter schools are privately run operations contracted with the state and supported with taxpayer dollars. In this situation state funding follows the student out of the traditional school district and into the chartered school. This phenomenon occurs at a time when public funding, other than these targeted federal initiatives, is dire. Taken as a whole, school consolidations and closings, reduced teaching force, new limitations on academic and extra-curricular programme offerings, etc. are widespread and have become a regular part of the evening news.

Currently 'charter universities' are emerging as contemporary alternatives to traditional taxpayer-supported higher education. They are just beginning to gain momentum, often in partisan electoral processes. The situation of the traditional public school and public higher education across the states share many of the same broader issues — loss of funding for public institutions accused of supporting 'a culture of failure'; application of a systemic formula for promoting their demise; and, consequent reduction of salary, benefits, and threat to collective bargaining for government employees.

In critiquing the current standards-based reform movement in K-12 education, Anderson and Herr (2011) take a contrarian view of what is needed to promote the kind of teaching and learning needed in U. S. schools at this time. They recommend 'authentic inquiry' and professional learning communities (PLCs) to re-culture schools to respond to the current top-down mentality of 'evidence-based practice' and the increasing demands of a burgeoning 'education industry' in addressing the Common Core State Standards emerging across the nation. They contend:

Evidence-based practices are antithetical to a culture of inquiry, because the inquiry has already been done by others — mainly through quasi-experiments — and the practices must be replicated with fidelity rather than through the processes of 'mutual adaptation' (citing McLaughlin, 1976) that program-implementation scholars described decades ago (Anderson & Herr, 2011: 288).

Anderson and Herr have suggested the education community can make better decisions based on 'data-supported inquiry' (underlining added) than with the current emphasis on a mechanistic application of 'data-driven inquiry' (underlining added) to improve student test results through the use of "costly test databases." Departing again from the nation's standards-based model of educational reform, they join with others who also question the closely-linked growth of an expanding 'Education Industry' providing a multitude of ancillary products intricately tied to the movement. In this regard, they offer two examples of mega-initiatives already working with this newly emerging Common Core that will be providing the textbooks, curriculum materials, assessment instruments — and, the research to support it:

- 1) The Gates Foundation has partnered with the Pearson Publishing Company to "develop new technology-based instructional approaches aligned with the Common Core."
- 2) "Also aimed at alignment with the new Common Core (is) the College Board, and its extensive and costly lobbying efforts with legislators and government officials to adopt policies and requirements requiring others to use their services. In 2007 this 'non-profit'

reported \$55 million dollars in profits ...the most recent data available at the time of publication” (p. 288).

In the case of the College Board, others such as the Americans for Educational Testing Reform (2011) have noted serious concerns in regards to the scope and impact of this legally identified ‘non-profit’ exercising extensive and increasing control over U. S. education through its many subsidiary enterprises — ETS (Educational Testing Service), a well-known giant worldwide, being only one of its many entities exercising influence on educational policy (_____, 2011; Educational Testing Service, 2012).

Ramifications of Assessment Policy: Future Directions

“While I was sleeping...” begins Thomas Friedman’s best-selling book (*The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*, 2005), as he looks outward in alerting the country to the realities of change in the world. He draws for the U. S. public a picture of the United States in a world that is growing in productivity, advancing in the sciences and technology, raising standards of living, and, attending to the education of its children. He addresses a U. S. polity on education:

I cannot tell any other society or culture what to say to its own children, but I can tell you what I say to my own. The world is being flattened. I didn’t start it and you can’t stop it, except at a great cost to human development and your own future. But we can manage it, for better or for worse. You can flourish in this flat world, but it does take the right imagination and the right motivation. While your lives have been powerfully shaped by 9/11, the world needs you to be forever the generation of 11/9 (opening of the worldwide economy due to the fall of the Berlin Wall and a critical mass of IBM PCs and its windows operation system, p. 52) — the generation of strategic optimists, the generation with more dreams than memories, the generation that wakes up each morning and not only imagines that things can be better but also acts on that imagination every day(Friedman, 2005: 469).

Working within such a vision of a nation’s educational future turns out to be quite problematic. In the field of education in the United States today there is a tremendous internal struggle and self-examination by a nation trying to find itself and its place in the world. Questioning the status quo, multiple polities are vying for input/control over what the educational system will look like. For instance, Stanford University Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, education advisor to President Barack Obama during the transition between his 2008 election and 2009 inauguration, has reversed her position on the nation’s standardized test-based school reform policies. She now directs research projects aimed at school restructuring, educational equity, and a more complex evaluation system applied for the purpose of enhancing teacher quality (2010; 2011). Others speak to the often-overlooked complexity of educational reform, measurement of teacher effectiveness, and values-laden perspectives as applied to the purpose(s) of school improvement. Renewed voices continue to point out what Jester observed in 2006 that a look at the nation’s sociocultural history suggests the dual models of democratic education multicultural education and standards-based reform — are in conflict (Jester, 2006). Condrón (2011) calls attention to high educational performance in countries with less inequality in the economic system and offers to a U. S. polity the observation that “egalitarianism and educational excellence are compatible goals for affluent societies” (2011: 47).

Pasi Sahlberg, director general of the Centre for International Mobility, or CIMO, at the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, in Helsinki, explains the history and accomplishment of the Finnish education

system and its high-achieving students over the past decade. He describes their successes, ironically for a U. S. audience, as follows:

By rejecting standardized testing and concomitant school and teacher accountability measures, Finland has instead charted its own path by focusing on equity, professionalism, and collaboration. Much as Finland has learned from the United States, Canada, Germany, England, Sweden, and other nations about pedagogy and curricula, Finland may now be looked to for lessons about educational policy. American educators should look at Finland not to import elements of its school system, but as a place where great American educational theories and inventions are practiced system-wide every day (2012).

Kamens and McNeely (2010) bring forward their perspective on the future of education and educational assessment in the U. S. with the following:

In this global environment, it is difficult to imagine what forces would restrain the urge among national elites to assess and test. World polity culture will continue to spread, even in the face of global economic downturn. This perspective privileges education as integral to democracy and human rights, stimulating demands for both educational expansion and educational accountability. Thus, the drive to assess and test is built into modern education, and both assessment and testing are likely to increase as more countries become more fully integrated into the world polity (2010: 22).

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