

Problem Based Learning and Standardized Testing

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Standardized Testing

- Current Era started with No Child Left Behind in 2001
- Raised accountability of schools and created standards and assessments
- Designing curriculum to match standardized tests increased

Teaching for the Test

- Emphasize curriculum that appears frequently on standardized tests
- Does not focus on concepts that will benefit students
- Does not take into account student interest

Problem Based Learning

- Incorporates open-ended questions with realistic application and student input
- Teaches transferable skills such as communication, research, technology, and critical thinking
- Increases intrinsic motivation by having relevance to real-world scenarios

Affect on Standardized Tests

- Overall ACT scores changes were not statistically significant
- Less correlation between low test scores and lower socio-economic status
- No statistical significance between race and test scores

Student and Teacher Roles

- Educators tend to struggle with creating new assessments that use real-life application and challenge students
- Students need to have more freedom in their learning, but need to be responsible with their freedom
- Students need to be willing to collaborate and have the maturity to work independently and or with other students
- Students need to focus on the success of a group rather than their individual grade

Conclusion:

Problem based learning should be looked as resource that can give students meaningful curriculum and applicable skills while maintaining the excellence needed for standardized testing, with the correct implementation and student participation.