

Test Your Public Ed Savvy: Are you Ed Wise or Prey to Popular Myth?

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1. US international test scores aren't at the top of the world because:
 - a) we lack common standards and valid tests.
 - b) many teachers are not doing their job.
 - c) nearly 25% of American children live in poverty.
 - d) American children are not interested in hard study.
 - e) parents don't take an interest in children's education.

2. A notable feature of education in Finland, the country scoring highest on international tests, is:
 - a) universal pre-school emphasizes an early start in skill development.
 - b) children in grade school have a play break every 45 minutes.
 - c) a system of annual national standardized tests informs teachers of every child's skill attainment.
 - d) there are no teacher unions to cripple reform.
 - e) corporate leaders have taken a leadership role in school policy.

3. Middle class American students who attend well-funded schools
 - a) achieve high scores on international tests, among the highest in the world.
 - b) don't read as much as kids used to.
 - c) aren't learning enough math and science.
 - d) don't do enough analytical writing.
 - e) lack competitive drive.

4. 1.6 million children in the U. S.
 - a) have teachers who are not highly qualified.
 - b) are overweight.
 - c) live in single-parent families.
 - d) should be held back in school.
 - e) are homeless.

5. Children who live in poverty in the US
 - a) are protected by a comprehensive social welfare safety net.
 - b) need a very structured curriculum
 - c) are more likely to attend a school with poorly supported libraries than are middle class children
 - d) have the same chance for school success as other students—if their parents support education
 - e) need vouchers to attend better schools

6. Common Core Standards were developed because
 - a) parents worry that US children score far below other countries on international tests
 - b) teachers lack the skills to craft adequate curriculum and wanted help
 - c) state departments of education asked for them
 - d) of grass-roots concern that children need special tools to compete in the Global Economy
 - e) the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation paid for them

7. Common Core Standards in literacy were written by
 - a) classroom teachers
 - b) child psychologists
 - c) university researchers
 - d) business leaders
 - e) a lawyer who specializes in "standards-driven reform" and someone whose background is in Management Consulting, who once tutored children while studying at Yale,

8. The new Common Core tests
 - a) let the teachers know exactly what each student needs to learn next
 - b) give parents evidence teachers are doing their job
 - c) ensure that standards are being met
 - d) give principals a fair way to evaluate teachers
 - e) make fiscal demands many districts cannot meet

9. The new online feature of Common Core testing
 - a) will reduce administration costs
 - b) will streamline student evaluation
 - c) offers new opportunities for creativity
 - d) will lead to more individualized learning
 - e) means students will be tested many more times each year

10. Who said "Hurricane Katrina was "the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans. That education system was a disaster."
 - a) Rush Limbaugh
 - b) Pat Robinson
 - c) Editor at *The Onion*
 - d) Bill O'Reilly
 - e) U. S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan

ANSWERS

1. C
"Measuring Child Poverty," UNICEF, May 2012
http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc10_eng.pdf
2. B
"Finland Schools Flourish in Freedom and Flexibility," The Guardian, Dec. 5, 2010
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/finland-schools-curriculum-teaching>

3. A

“PISA 2009 Reading Test Results: The US does quite well, controlling for SES. And maybe American scores are “just right.”

http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/PISA_2009-US_Scores_Just_Right.pdf

4. E

<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/children.php?p=ts>

5. C

Di Loreto, C., and Tse, L. 1999. Seeing is believing: Disparity in books in two Los Angeles area public libraries. *School Library Quarterly* 17(3): 31-36; Duke, N. 2000. For the rich it's richer: Print experiences and environments offered to children in very low and very high-socioeconomic status first-grade classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal* 37(2): 441-478; Neuman, S.B. and Celano, D. 2001. Access to print in low-income and middle-income communities: An ecological study of four neighborhoods. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36, 1, 8-26.

6. C

“Is the Gates Foundation Involved in bribery,” July 23, 2010

<http://prorevnews.blogspot.com/2010/07/is-gates-foundation-involved-in-bribery.html>

“JoLLE Forum--Rotten to the (Common) Core,” Nov. 1, 2012

<http://www.susanohanian.org/core.php?id=364>

7. E

David Coleman bio; Susan Pimentel bio

<http://about.collegeboard.org/leadership/president>

http://www.nagb.org/who-we-are/members/bios/b_pimentel.html

8. E

“Federal Mandates on Local Education: Costs and Consequences--Yes, it's a Race, but is it in the Right Direction?”

http://www.newpaltz.edu/crreo/brief_8_education.pdf

9. E

“Common Core Assessments”

<http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-assessments/>

<http://dianeravitch.net/2012/07/25/stephen-krashen-how-much-testing/>

10. E

“Duncan: ‘Katrina was the best thing for New Orleans school system,’” Jan. 29, 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2010/01/duncan-katrina-was-the-best-thing-for-new-orleans-schools/>

BIOS

Susan Ohanian's essays on education issues have appeared in periodicals ranging from *Phi Delta Kappan* cover stories to commentary in *The Nation*, *Washington Monthly*, *The Atlantic*, and *USA Today*. Her books include *Why Is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools?* and *What Happened to Recess and Why Are Our Children*

Struggling in Kindergarten? Her website (susanohanian.org) received the George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contributions to Honest and Clarity in Public Language from the National Council of Teachers of English.

Stephen Krashen is Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Southern California. He is best known for developing the first comprehensive theory of second language acquisition, introducing the concept of sheltered subject matter teaching, and as the co-inventor of the Natural Approach to foreign language teaching. He has also contributed to theory and application in the area of bilingual education, and has done important work in the area of reading. He was the 1977 Incline Bench Press champion of Venice Beach and holds a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. He is the author of *The Power of Reading and Explorations in Language and Use*. His recent papers can be found at <http://www.sdkrashen.com>.