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ASSESSMENT IN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS: BRIEF HISTORY AND MODERN CONDITION

Avchinnikova H.D.
c.p.s., as. prof.
ORCID: 0000-0003-0507-4888
Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, Uman, Sadova, 2, 20300

Abstract. *The article delves into the multifaceted landscape of assessment in American high schools, tracing its evolution from standardized tests to performance-based assessments and digital tools. It explores the historical influences, types of assessments (including standardized tests, state assessments, classroom assessments, and performance-based assessments), and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on assessment practices. Additionally, the role of artificial intellect (AI) in assessments is examined, highlighting its potential in personalized learning, adaptive testing, automated grading, data analysis, plagiarism detection, and proctoring solutions. The article underscores the importance of addressing equity issues, ethical considerations, and the need for a holistic approach to assessment to support student learning and success in the modern educational landscape.*

Keywords: *assessment, American high schools, evolution, standardized tests, performance-based assessments, digital tools, COVID-19 pandemic, artificial intellect (AI), personalized learning, adaptive testing, automated grading, equity, ethical considerations, student success, educational landscape.*

Introduction.

Assessment in American high schools is a multifaceted process that serves various purposes, including evaluating student learning, guiding instruction, and informing educational decisions. From standardized tests to classroom assessments, the landscape of assessment in American high schools is diverse and complex. In this article, we will explore history and different types of assessments used in American high schools, their purposes, strengths, weaknesses, and their impact on students and the educational system as a whole. Also the role of artificial intellect (AI) in assessment process will be defined.

Main text.

Assessment in American high schools has undergone significant evolution over the years, reflecting changes in educational philosophy, policy, and technology. A brief analysis of history of assessment in American high schools will help us understand its modern aspects.

Early 20th Century: In the early 1900s, assessment in American high schools was primarily focused on standardized tests designed to measure students' basic skills and knowledge. These tests, often in the form of written exams, were used to determine students' readiness for graduation and college admission (Stake, 1999).

Mid-20th Century: During the mid-20th century, the use of standardized testing expanded in American high schools, driven by the growing emphasis on accountability and educational reform. The SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) became widely used for college admissions, while state-level standardized tests were introduced to assess student achievement and school performance.

Late 20th Century: In the latter half of the 20th century, concerns grew about the

limitations of standardized testing and its potential to perpetuate inequality. Critics argued that standardized tests were biased and failed to capture the full range of student abilities and knowledge. As a result, alternative forms of assessment, such as performance-based assessments and portfolio assessments, gained popularity.

Late 20th to Early 21st Century: The passage of federal legislation, such as the "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLB) in 2001 and the "Every Student Succeeds Act" (ESSA) in 2015, further shaped assessment practices in American high schools. These laws mandated annual testing in reading and math for all students in grades 3-8 and once in high school, with the goal of holding schools accountable for student achievement and closing achievement gaps (Fuchs & Woessmann, 2007).

21st Century: Nowadays, technological advancements have transformed assessment practices in high schools in the USA. Computer-based testing, online assessments, and adaptive testing platforms have become increasingly common, offering more flexibility and personalized feedback for students and educators. We would like to look closer at changes in assessment during the pandemic period for it was a great challenge for the assessment system and learning as a whole.

The COVID-19 pandemic period, has had a profound impact on assessment practices in American high schools and it has influenced it in different ways.

First of all, there was a shift to remote learning: with the widespread closure of schools during the pandemic, many high schools transitioned to remote or hybrid learning models. This shift necessitated changes in assessment practices, as traditional in-person exams and assessments were often not feasible in a remote setting. Teachers and schools had to adapt quickly, implementing alternative assessment methods such as online quizzes, projects, essays, and presentations.

Also, emphasis on digital assessment tools was made: the pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital assessment tools and technologies in American high schools. Educators increasingly relied on learning management systems (LMS) and online assessment platforms to administer and grade assessments remotely. These tools provided opportunities for more flexible and efficient assessment practices, allowing students to complete assessments asynchronously and receive timely feedback from teachers.

Unfortunately, some challenges with equity and access had place: the shift to remote learning and assessment during the pandemic highlighted existing inequities in access to technology and resources among students. Not all students had reliable internet access or access to necessary devices, such as computers or tablets, to participate in remote assessments. This disparity in access raised concerns about the fairness and validity of remote assessments and their potential to exacerbate existing achievement gaps.

Of great importance was that the pandemic prompted a reevaluation of standardized testing practices in American high schools. With many standardized tests canceled or postponed due to the pandemic, there was increased scrutiny of the role and utility of standardized tests in education. Advocates argued that the pandemic underscored the limitations of relying solely on standardized tests for accountability and college admissions decisions, while critics called for a more holistic and equitable approach to assessment.

Not underestimated should be the fact that the pandemic highlighted the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) and the need to assess students' well-being and socio-emotional skills alongside academic achievement. Many high schools incorporated SEL assessments and initiatives to support students' mental health and social-emotional development during the challenging times brought on by the pandemic.

Overall, the pandemic period has led to significant shifts and adaptations in assessment practices in American high schools. While the challenges presented by the pandemic have been considerable, they have also spurred innovation and reflection in how assessment is conducted and how student learning is evaluated in the modern educational landscape.

We should admit that our research would be not complete if we don't analyze the role of AI in assessment in American high schools. Currently AI has started to influence assessment practices in American high schools in several significant ways.

Personalized Learning: AI-powered educational platforms can provide personalized assessments tailored to individual student needs. These platforms use algorithms to analyze student performance data and deliver targeted instruction and assessment, allowing educators to better meet the diverse learning needs of students in high schools.

Adaptive Testing: AI-driven adaptive testing platforms adjust the difficulty of assessment questions based on students' responses, ensuring that each student receives a tailored assessment experience. Adaptive testing can provide more accurate and efficient assessments of student knowledge and skills, allowing educators to identify areas of strength and weakness more effectively.

Automated Grading: AI technology enables automated grading of assessments, including multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and essays. Automated grading systems use natural language processing (NLP) algorithms to analyze and evaluate student responses, providing instant feedback to students and freeing up teachers' time for more personalized instruction and support.

Data Analysis and Insights: AI tools can analyze large volumes of assessment data to identify patterns, trends, and insights related to student performance and learning outcomes. Educators can use these insights to inform instructional decisions, identify areas for improvement in curriculum and instruction, and track student progress over time.

Plagiarism Detection: AI-powered plagiarism detection software can identify instances of plagiarism in student work, including essays, reports, and projects. These tools compare student submissions against a database of existing content to identify similarities and potential instances of academic dishonesty, helping educators uphold academic integrity standards in high schools.

Proctoring Solutions: AI-driven proctoring solutions enable remote monitoring and surveillance of students during online assessments. These tools use facial recognition, eye-tracking, and other biometric technologies to deter cheating and ensure the integrity of online assessments, particularly in the context of remote learning environments.

While AI has the potential to enhance assessment practices in American high

schools by providing personalized learning experiences, improving efficiency, and offering valuable insights into student performance, it also raises important ethical and privacy considerations. Educators and policymakers must carefully consider the implications of AI-driven assessment tools and ensure that they are used responsibly and ethically to support student learning and success.

Now we can see that throughout its history, assessment in American high schools has been influenced by a variety of factors, including educational theory, social and political movements, technological innovation, and changing conceptions of student learning and achievement. While standardized testing remains a prominent feature of assessment in American high schools, there is ongoing debate and experimentation regarding the most effective and equitable approaches to assessing student learning and progress.

It important to understand that there are different types of assessments in modern American high schools:

1. Standardized Tests: Standardized tests such as the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and ACT (American College Testing) are commonly used in American high schools to measure students' academic proficiency in core subjects like mathematics, reading, and writing. These tests are typically administered on a statewide or national level and are often used for college admissions.
2. State Assessments: Many states require high school students to take standardized assessments in core subjects to measure proficiency and compliance with state educational standards. These assessments may include end-of-course exams, standardized achievement tests, or assessments aligned with state-specific curricula.
3. Classroom Assessments: Classroom assessments, including quizzes, tests, projects, essays, and presentations, are used by teachers to gauge student learning and progress in specific courses. These assessments provide valuable feedback to both teachers and students and help guide instructional decisions.
4. Performance-Based Assessments: Performance-based assessments require students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through real-world tasks, projects, or simulations. Examples include science experiments, research papers, art portfolios, and oral presentations. These assessments assess higher-order thinking skills and application of knowledge.

Also assessment in American high schools serves several purposes, including:

- Evaluating student learning and academic achievement;
- Guiding instructional planning and curriculum development;
- Identifying areas of strength and weakness in student performance;
- Informing educational policies and decision-making at the school, district, and state levels;
- Providing data for accountability purposes, including teacher and school evaluations.

Standardized tests offer a standardized measure of student achievement and facilitate comparisons across schools and districts. However, they have been criticized for their narrow focus on academic content and their potential to promote teaching to the test. State assessments provide valuable data on student proficiency

and help ensure accountability but may vary in rigor and alignment with educational standards.

Classroom assessments offer more immediate and targeted feedback to students and teachers, allowing for personalized instruction and support. However, they may be subject to bias or inconsistency in grading and may not always align with standardized measures of achievement. Performance-based assessments allow students to demonstrate their skills in authentic contexts but can be time-consuming to administer and assess (Tucker, 2010).

In conclusion, some important aspects have been considered. The evolution of assessment in American high schools reflects a dynamic landscape shaped by historical, technological, and educational developments. From early reliance on standardized tests to the emergence of performance-based assessments and digital tools, the assessment practices have evolved to meet the changing needs of students and educators.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for significant shifts in assessment practices, prompting a rapid transition to remote learning and the adoption of digital assessment tools. This period of challenge also highlighted the importance of addressing equity issues in access to technology and resources for all students.

The integration of artificial intellect (AI) in assessment processes has brought about personalized learning experiences, adaptive testing, automated grading, data analysis insights, plagiarism detection, and proctoring solutions. While AI offers numerous benefits in enhancing assessment practices, it also raises ethical considerations that must be carefully navigated by educators and policymakers.

Were received insights into the importance of addressing equity issues, ethical considerations, and the need for a holistic approach to assessment to support student success in the educational system.

Overall, the assessment landscape in American high schools continues to evolve, driven by a commitment to improving student learning outcomes, addressing equity concerns, and leveraging technology to enhance educational practices. By embracing innovation, reflecting on best practices, and prioritizing student well-being, the educational system can continue to adapt and thrive in the ever-changing landscape of assessment.

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