



5 Minutes with Data Quality Campaign on Assessments

On today's episode, we are joined by Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger, the President and CEO of the Data Quality Campaign (DQC). Jennifer answered a few questions we had on summative assessments, including if and how schools should administer them and how these assessments can affect learning outcomes. She emphasized the importance of providing students, teachers, and families with information on students' performance quickly. As we've learned from the past year, students may experience learning loss and if it's not assessed, we may not have an accurate image of just how much, and wouldn't be able to act. The goal is positive learning outcomes for all students.

Mentioned Resources:

DQC Blog post: <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/kitchen-tables-week-of-december-21/>

Education Post blog:

https://educationpost.org/without-data-we-cant-fight-for-our-students-futures/?utm_source=brighthouse+Master+List&utm_campaign=6a668191b3-hatc_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6bb7d2d2db-6a668191b3-266735857

Op-ed in The 74:

<https://www.the74million.org/article/analysis-spring-exams-are-the-best-shot-state-leaders-have-at-knowing-whats-happening-with-their-students/>

Coalition letter to Secretary Nominee Cardona on assessments:

<https://edtrust.org/press-release/joint-letter-to-dr-miguel-cardona-urging-rejection-of-waivers-to-annual-state-wide-assessment-requirements-for-the-2020-21-school-year/>

Recent addition of monthly assessment news coverage:

<https://dataqualitycampaign.org/assessment-update-iv-using-data-to-support-students-during-covid-19-recovery/>

Listen to this episode wherever you listen to podcasts:

Spotify: <https://spoti.fi/3i7KnV5>

Apple: <https://apple.co/392dzK5>

Google: <https://bit.ly/38YBLx0>

Transcript of the podcast episode:



Gabrielle Oates: Well hello everybody and welcome back to the Educating All Learners Alliance podcast. I am excited to welcome Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger, who is the President and CEO of the Data Quality Campaign, or DQC, as we call it. As people can see from the title, we want to talk about assessment.

Why is summative assessment important and then similarly, how can schools use data to then transform learning outcomes for students. I know we're starting off with a big one, so.

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger: Well, thank you for that. And you know, assessments are so important, especially right now. Because assessments - summative assessments or state assessments - as we often refer to them as, they really can provide state leaders and educators, with the only comparable information about how students have performed in math and reading across schools in their state. And that is really important. Without those state assessments, leaders are really leaving themselves, and their students, in the dark about what happened during this very unprecedented time.

And once we get those results back, schools, districts, and states can make important decisions about where to direct resources that will best support their students through the pandemic and, of course, through the recovery.

Gabrielle Oates: Like I mentioned, with the change of the nature of the school year, what are some ways that assessment should be different?

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger: The most important part, and even acknowledged last week in the US Department of Education when they when they stated that states really do need to administer these assessments, is to really think about how they are administered. Tests shouldn't be a burden for educators to administer, for parents to help their students at home if they're on remote learning and, most importantly, for students to take. So while schools and students have had different experiences this year, it's really important that how students are assessed really reflect how they have been learning.

And these assessments should be - the administration should be approached in a very practical common sense way to administering these tests. So thinking about, depending on the state, that could mean you know shortening the assessment or changing the timeframe for when tests are administered. Really thinking about how can we make these assessments work best for students and for teachers and really think very carefully about that administration.



Gabrielle Oates: There's a lot of factors to consider and so those are good points. That it doesn't need to be how the status quo has always been there is some opportunity to be flexible, just like this year has made a be flexible. What are some of the pieces of data that they should be collecting?

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger: Regardless, districts and states really must have a data point for each student. That is either when we're talking about a state assessment either a result from the state assessment or a specific reason why a student didn't take the test. And it's not just yes or no, did they take the assessment, but really asking questions. Is it because they lacked access to the Internet? Did they make other decisions? Were they not were they not in attendance that day? So really understanding why or why not students took the test. And then, taken together, the information can provide really important insights to state and local leaders about what happens where and to whom. Families and school leaders should have the information right away, so that they can start addressing gaps and opportunities for learning.

Gabrielle Oates: So in terms of you know all this information regarding assessment well where can people go to know more specifically about DQC, and then just some of the information you shared.

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger: For information about the Data Quality Campaign, I invite you to go to our website and we have many resources that can really, that can really help and are thoughtful to kind of help help help others think through the issues around assessment. And then for learning more about assessments in your states, I would encourage your listeners to go to the state your own state's website, because that will give you the most up to date information about what's, what are the plans for administration in your respective states.

Gabrielle Oates: Thank you again for joining us! We really hope you listeners found this helpful. Check out educatingalllearners.org. Subscribe to Educating All Learners YouTube Channel and follow us on Twitter @educateall_org. Until next time, this is the Educating All Learners Alliance podcast!