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Timss and Pisa: a Comparison of Philosophy and Methodology

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Abstract

A comparison of the philosophy and methodology of two major international educational research projects is carried out. These are: 1. TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), conducted by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement). 2. PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), conducted by the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). The similarities and differences between the two large-scale studies are presented on the basis of several comparison criteria. TIMSS is more classical and academically oriented, as well as strongly linked to the school curriculum for mathematics and sciences. In contrast, PISA also covers language and reading skills. In addition, PISA is more praxis-oriented and innovative. The undisputed importance of both studies for increasing the efficiency of the education system at the international and national levels is emphasized. However, the risk to the school system that inevitably arises from the fetishization of international country ratings and standardised tests is also highlighted. The authority of the two studies is partly responsible for the transformation of teaching into primitive training and adaptation to the test system.

Keywords: Assessment; Educational Achievement; International Comparison; Testing; Countries