

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Public Policy Forum to Examine Politics of Educational Testing

The politics of educational testing will be explored in an interdisciplinary panel discussion at UC Santa Barbara on Tuesday, May 9 at 3 p.m. in room 6220 of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building.

The public is invited to attend.

Lorraine McDonnell, UCSB professor of political science, will share the findings of her revealing book, "Politics, Persuasion, and Educational Testing" (Harvard University Press), where she examines the political struggles inspired by mass educational tests and analyzes the design and implementation of statewide testing in California, Kentucky, and North Carolina.

Commenting on the book will be Richard Duran, UCSB professor of education, and Robert Noel, UCSB professor emeritus of political science and a member of the Santa Barbara School District's board of education.

In the 1990s, according to McDonnell's book, educational reformers and political elites sought to use test results to influence teachers, students, and the public by appealing to their values about what schools should teach and offering objective evidence about whether schools were succeeding.

But mass testing mobilized parents who opposed and mistrusted the use of tests, leaving educators trying to mediate between angry citizens and policies that

educators may not have fully supported.

In the end, some testing programs were significantly altered.

Despite the risks inherent in relying on values to change what students are taught, the tests and the educational ideologies behind them have modified classroom practice.

The event is the third in a series of UCSB social science public policy briefings designed to bring pressing social, political, and economic issues to the community.

It is sponsored by Melvin L. Oliver, dean of the division of social sciences.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.