

A standardized mess

Business



Try to imagine coming home one day and getting the mail from the mailbox. You flip through the mail, and you see a letter regarding your standardized test scores.

You open it up, and see your child's name. You can't wait to find out what they got. You look down the line looking at all the scores of the different sections. You see 63/100 on math. By the next year, your child moves down from advanced math to the lowest math class.

You know this only happened because they were distracted by their grandma's death. Their future, restricted from learning what they can achieve, all because of a standardized test. Some may argue that standardized tests the best way to put every student on the same level. Standardized tests should not be used in schools because they cause too much pressure for everyone, they narrow the curriculum, and they haven't helped students the way they should have. The first reason standardized tests shouldn't be used is how they put too much pressure on everyone involved.

According to Gregory J. Cizek, an education researcher, testing “ produces gripping anxiety in even the brightest students, and makes young children vomit or cry, or both” (“ Pros and Cons”). Standardized testing can determine a student's immediate and far future a lot of the time. This causes stress and worry which is bad for young children. Pressure can also drive schools to do illegal and wrong things.

An Arizona State University study from June 2009, showed that schools feeling the pressure of NCLB's (“ No Child Left Behind”) proficiency

<https://assignbuster.com/a-standardized-mess/>

requirement are hacking the system to raise test scores to make them seem like a better school (“Pros and Cons”). In other countries, doing well on standardized tests is crucial for their future. Derrick Meador, a school administrator, has visited other schools in foreign countries where a single 5-day exam can determine the rest of a student’s life (Meador). Standardized exams make almost everyone involved very stressed. Another reason that standardized tests shouldn’t be used is the way they narrow a school’s curriculum. A national 2007 study by the Center on Education Policy reported that since 2001, 44% of school districts reduced time spent on science and social studies by 145 minutes per week to try to get ahead and prepared for standardized exams (“Pros and Cons”).

Some of this time goes toward reading and math, two common sections on standardized tests, but some of it also goes to test practice. Critics are concerned that teachers are spending less time on subjects that are on the curriculum to prepare for standardized tests (“Issues to Consider”). This takes out important learning time. Also, a standardized test is supposed to test what students already know. Does it make sense to practice for a test that is supposed to assess students’ knowledge from typical schooling? The answer is no.

Standardized tests also narrow the parts of the curriculum that assess other forms of intelligence and social skills. Gerald W. Bracey, PhD some things that tests can’t measure are “creativity, critical thinking, resilience, motivation...” and many more (“Pros and Cons”). Standardized tests don’t measure alternative forms of intelligence of which can be very important to adult life. A school’s curriculum is formed to be best for students, and

<https://assignbuster.com/a-standardized-mess/>

standardized testing narrows this structure. Finally, standardized tests are useless because they haven't helped students in any way.

“ Standardized testing has not improved student achievement” (“ Pros and Cons”). One of the main goals of standardized tests was to help to improve student achievement. However, the US slipped from 18th to 31st place in math in the world in 2009 based on the PISA assessment (“ Pros and Cons”). This means that student achievement just got worse, and standardized testing proved that. Sometimes improvements do come up, though. The problem with this is that they often don't last.

2001 study by the Brookings Institute found that 50-80% of year-to-year testing improvements were temporary and caused by small and temporary shifts (“ Pros and Cons”). This means that most of the improvements caused by standardized tests were short-lived. According to a May 2011 study done by the National Research Council, “ Despite using them for several decades, policymakers and educators do not yet know how to use test-based incentives to consistently generate positive effects on achievement and to improve education” (“ Pros and Cons”). After all this time, standardized test makers still don't know how to use tests to the advantage of students. Standardized tests haven't helped students the way they should have.

Some may say that standardized tests help to put everyone on the same level, so people know how students are doing. However, not all standardized tests are really standardized. For example, the PARCC, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (“ PARCC Home”) is a new standardized test that is supposed to be universal, and in some ways it is.

One main way is that most states are using this, but, different students get different questions, readings, and essays. This means that all the students are not being assessed on the same skills. For example, a student might get an essay to compare and contrast different readings, but the person sitting next to them might have an essay about explaining the main idea of a different reading.

This makes it no longer standardized, eliminating the purpose of a standardized test. Overall, standardized tests can be unhelpful, and potentially harmful for students. They cause too much pressure, they narrow the school's learning curriculum, and they haven't done their job of helping out students. Also, they don't always live up to the name of being standardized. This is an important topic to discuss because it is a topic with controversy all of the world, and could potentially hurt students.

If your future was ruined because of how you scored on a simple, single standardized test, how would you feel? Works Cited " Home." PARCC. Pearson, n. d. Web.

21 Mar. 2015. . Meador, Derrick. " Pros and Cons of Standardized Testing.

" About Education. N. p., n. d. Web.

11 Feb. 2015. . " Standardized Tests – ProCon. org.

" ProConorg Headlines. N. p., 7 Mar. 14.

Web. 06 Mar. 2015. . " State Standardized Test Scores: Issues to Consider." GreatSchools.

<https://assignbuster.com/a-standardized-mess/>

N. p., n. d. Web. 02 Mar.

2015..