

Testing, testing

Business



Albert Einstein once said, “ Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

” Even he saw the obvious fallacies in testing. The basic purpose of school is to equip us for success. That’s what teachers, principals, governments, and oceans of bureaucracy exist to do. But success is measured in so much more than just scantron bubbles and fill-in-the-blank questions. A person’s morals and character play a far greater part in personal achievement than knowing trivial facts. Testing results in kids forgetting what they’ve learned.

As contradictory as this sounds, I have firsthand experience of its truth. The only reason high school students learn is to ace the test. As soon as we step out of the classroom, we dump the information to create space. We then repeat the process. Even the honors kids do not retain much by the end of the year.

And for the all-important finals, we reteach ourselves as much of the material as possible. Furthermore, testing is not an efficient measure of intelligence. How well someone can memorize notes is not an indicator of smarts. Intelligence has more to do with comprehending material and the accompanying curiosity that results in students wanting to learn more. You cannot coerce someone into learning. But the biggest injustice kids have to deal with is the biased, agenda-ridden concept of standardized testing.

Some exams in my state are designed to grade the school. I believe that these do not further the learning process. Tests that are presented under the pretext of learning are actually used to brand a school and its kids as satisfactory or sub-par. These tests only have to do with funding, following

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the great fallacy of the No Child Left Behind Act. Schools must have adequate test scores in order to receive government funding, despite the fact that schools with lower scores are the ones that need the help most. Consequently, schools with slashed funding turn to drastic measures of “teaching to the test” and cutting classes like creative writing, art, and even science - subjects that encourage the deeper thinking and reasoning so critical to personal development.

I hope that in the future, testing will become just another tool in the arsenal of teaching, not the savior of the educational system.