

While colleges are slowly moving away from using standardized scores as predictors of achievement and success, high schools are still quite locked into the standardized testing mill (which became an industry when computer software design was in its infancy, and punch card readers became the fashionable opportunity to discriminate and isolate data sets).

Having been in education a long time, my particular bias is this: one repeated error is state and local governments' use of standardized test scores to judge school or teacher effectiveness. It never has worked, and one would be hard pressed to see any actual school improvement based on this method, so I ask that readers of this information take it for what it's worth.

That is standardized tests are only one indicator of hundreds we can . All one has to do to offset the standardized mind-set is read Todd Farley's *Making the Grades: My Misadventures in the Standardized Testing Industry*-- an interview with Farley can be found by clicking on <http://scholasticadministrator.typepad.com/thisweekineducation/2010/01/some-people-who-tell-all-about-the-industry-they-worked-in-are-greeted-as-brave-whistleblowers-and-embraced-by-the-media-and.html>, or *The Case Against Standardized Testing: Raising the Scores, Ruining the Schools* by Alfie Kohn, or *Learning Outside The Lines*, by Mooney and Cole written from the perspective of two Ivy League students with learning disabilities whose K-12 schooling was disastrously ineffective (in their narratives, they swear quite a bit, so their frank testimonies aren't for the squeamish). Furthermore, even when specific programs, like computer-based mathematics tutorials supplement instruction, there is room to suggest that standardized tests do not accurately capture student ability (suggested in the discussion page of Johns Hopkins University research, thebee@bestevidence.org).

With these caveats in mind, standardized testing is still a reality (whether it truly tells us anything about a learner besides the capability to perform well on standardized tests) and comforting for parents to know that schools do endeavor to arm students with the skills and knowledge necessary to perform as well as possible on these tests.

While the whole enterprise is questionable, there's no real reason to subscribe to such testing unless results are analyzed. Analysis of standardized tests, of course, has limited value but can shine some light on student performance and aids teachers in considering their methods or serve as a catalyst to consider an individual student's needs. In the past months, Hanson faculty have been asked to analyze standardized test results to better determine trends in student performance and have been directed to incorporate standardized test formatting into their midterm and final exams so that the format itself does not cause undue stress in students during test taking. One teacher commented that while the material was being thoroughly covered and students were performing well on teacher-constructed tests, students' inability to perform well on a different (standardized) format was an awakening.