

Standardized Testing: the Bad and the Ugly

By Maddi Feen, Editor

TESTS. Sadly, this ugly word is not so uncommon anymore. Many states have adopted the testing mindset toward education, and Texas isn't staying behind. This overtesting has led to schools being forced to teach to the test, with narrow-minded curriculum, reducing children's drive to learn.

So many hours in class are wasted, just so that teachers can teach students to look for tricks in a test, reinforcing the idea that the tests were made to deceive students.

Many teachers in their own classes have said to their students that certain topics or ideas "don't matter," or that their students don't need to learn them, because it won't be covered on a test. Is this really what we've come to?

Nicky Hayes, editor of

Foundations of Psychology, states "Common responses to exam stress include disturbed sleep patterns, tiredness, worry, irregular eating habits, increased infections, and inability to concentrate." How do we believe it's ethical to use a system causing so much trouble, to gauge how our students and teachers are

doing?

Even elementary level kids are being affected. Professor Tim Urdan has observed that elementary students suffering "exam stress" have been more prone to wetting themselves, tantrums, and vomiting. Middle and high school age students "are more likely to show 'rebellious' responses: re-

fusal to participate, cutting class, and deliberately undermining the test by answering incorrectly on purpose."

We have been teaching the next generation that it doesn't matter if you understand a topic, only if you test well. Basing so much on test scores is adding a new level of competition among stu-

dents. Come to think of it, the tests are somewhat biased. Not all schools can afford the test prep and materials that other schools get, putting them at a disadvantage, even if their students know the curriculum well. Also, by including questions that don't apply to every single student, they put everyone at a disadvantage. If you are taking a math test, you should in no way be asked a question about football.

In short, the amount of pressure we place on tests, and the quantity of tests taken, isn't fair or even healthy for students. Raising children to believe that their worth in school is based on a piece of paper with an ego is not right. We need to find a better way to gauge knowledge, and soon. The future literally depends on it.



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