



## Students object to standardized testing

### Sampling of articles supports using other learning measures

While many students take standardized tests to meet graduation requirements, or simply because they're told by adults that they must take the test, some conscientious objectors have emerged. This document summarizes their reasons, as reported in an admittedly unscientific sampling of newspaper articles from across the nation, all of which can be downloaded at: [http://www.educationevolving.org/studentvoices/links\\_standards\\_testing.asp](http://www.educationevolving.org/studentvoices/links_standards_testing.asp).

Among the common threads in the articles:

1. Students acknowledge that states have good reason to measure achievement objectively. But students are disappointed in adults' lack of imagination about ways to do this effectively.
2. Since alternative assessments are available, students don't believe there is a need to use standardized test outcomes to determine graduation.
3. Students perceive that the tests are not important for a number of reasons, including:
  - a. Tests can measure only narrow types of learning, via narrow methods (such as multiple choice questions and five paragraph essays which require regurgitation of facts).
  - b. Students can take tests multiple times. "And they make it easier each time. The theory that students won't fall through the cracks is bunk," said Ari Spool of Andover High School in Massachusetts (Groff).
4. Students view standardized tests as a waste of time. Test-taking distracts from the time they have for learning, and therefore disrespects the students' time. This goes for time spent preparing for the test, time spent taking the test, and the time taken away from their classes on testing days. Students from Chicago said they took over ten tests since they started high school (Tanzman).
5. Students believe that testing is affecting school culture, leaving no place for free thought and originality.
6. Students believe their test scores are too associated with them. It seems their whole lives can hinge on a score. Test scores are beside their names on rosters, causing teachers to make snap judgments of them (Tanzman). Students feel reduced to numbers (Tanzman). They must pass tests in order to graduate. "What do you think the kids are going to do if they don't pass the test?" asked Timothy Butler of Rainier Beach High School in Washington (Shaw).
7. Students who actively oppose the tests say they're doing so because someone needs to take a stand. The adults in their schools aren't protesting; much less proposing alternatives.

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#### WORKS CITED (You may download all articles at: [http://www.educationevolving.net/studentvoices/links\\_standards\\_testing.asp](http://www.educationevolving.net/studentvoices/links_standards_testing.asp))

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This publication is a product of the "Real Impact: Student Opinions for a Change" initiative of Education|Evolving. For more on the initiative, go to <http://www.educationevolving.org/studentvoices/>