How Well Do Standardized Tests Measure the Abilities of a Student?

Standardized tests still play a major role when it comes to determining how intelligent a child is (within the school system). However, the question that has been asked more and more these days is whether intelligence can even be defined by exams.

A-levels and SATS are often among the requirements an applicant needs to demonstrate if he or she wishes to apply to a certain college or university. The problem is that taking a test is always a stressful experience. Some children are good at managing stress levels, and others are not. Yet, experiencing stress and failing a test because of that does not mean a child is unintelligent. It simply means that standardized tests should not be a universal method of measuring intelligence, as all children are different (The Telegraph).

One of the biggest problems with standardized testing is that it does not encourage a student to think outside the box. The main task is to provide exact answers to a list of questions. Yet, being intelligent means having the ability to find unusual solutions to problems no one expected to be solved. Testing fails to teach students how to do that. One needs to get more assignments that stimulate the ability to think originally and creatively. Examination is a very limited form of measuring someone's intelligence. Conventional learning can become quite boring for a lot of intelligent children. Thus, they will stop paying attention in classes and become disinterested in getting a traditional education.

So, what can be done to create measuring methods which would suit everyone? Even though it is highly unlikely for an educational institution to stop using standardized tests, there are a few things

they can do to make this process both better and more suitable to the needs of each student. For instance, the content of tests can be modified. To specify, the topics of the reading passages can be made more predictable (Forbes). This way, it will be possible to measure not only skills of a certain student, but also their understanding of the content covered during the course. Another great idea is to stop paying as much attention to test scores during the application process as we do these days. Students need to know that their chances to get enrolled into a preferred college or university are not dependent merely on their tests scores. It is vital to demonstrate that creativity and original thinking processes are both important when a decision is being made.

Taking everything into consideration, it is time to introduce significant changes in the educational system. Standardized tests are dominant in the majority of educational institutions. However, their effectiveness is rather questionable. Intelligence is not as easily defined as we consider it to be. That is why every student should have a number of tools at his or her disposal with the help of which it would be possible to measure his or her abilities. Standardized tests simply do not work for everyone.

Works Cited

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