

*The two excerpts below show a student moving from a second draft to a third draft in completing a formal assignment in a graduate course in Literacy Studies, EDR 605, taught by Professor Limor Pinhasi-Vittorio. (The second draft of this assignment was submitted for peer review but was not submitted to the professor for comments.) Note that the student revises the title to reflect a more narrow focus, and moves the thesis statement (that “outlying factors” raise questions regarding “the validity of standardized testing”) from the third paragraph to the first paragraph. The student has added sub-headings to organize the information presented and is incorporating direct quotations from relevant scholarly writing.*

Draft 1

### **What Do Standardized Tests Really Measure?**

It is generally agreed that literacy in the United States is a major problem. The ability to read and comprehend what is read is crucial to the well-being of both individuals and society as a whole. The job of an elementary school teacher is to give students the tools to succeed both academically and in life in general.

Assessments have been used for many years. Assessments are important to measure the growth of children as well as to drive the instruction for the students. One component of the No Child Left Behind Act was to incorporate standardized testing to ensure that all students are meeting grade level standards. These standardized tests hold both the teachers and students accountable for the students’ achievements. However, what are these standardized tests really measuring?

The validity of standardized tests comes into question when the outliers are added into the equation. When there is so much emphasis put into the results of these tests it causes many problems for both the teachers and students alike. The students have been conditioned that their academic future lies upon the results of standardized tests. Students are prepped for months in anticipation of the tests. By the time the day arrives the students and teachers are stressed. Can students work to the best of their ability under these conditions? When tests are given to the students they do not take into account modifications that should be put into place so some students. The tests are timed. This poses a big problem for some students. [...]

Draft 3

### **Are Standardized Tests a Valid Method for Assessing the American Educational System?**

Standardized assessment tests have been used for many years in the American educational system. Properly applied these assessments can be a useful tool for gauging the academic process of students as well as the effectiveness of teachers and curriculum. An essential component of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is the mandated use of standardized testing to ensure that all students are meeting grade level standards. These standardized tests hold both the teachers and students accountable for the students’ achievements. However, what are these standardized tests really measuring? The validity of standardized tests comes into question when outlying factors are added into the equation. Some factors that affect the validity of the assessment tests are discussed below.

#### **Excessive Emphasis on Test Results**

When there is so much emphasis put into the results of these tests it causes many problems for both the teachers and students alike. The students have been conditioned that their academic future lies upon the results of standardized tests. Students are prepped for months in anticipation of the tests. “Ethical practices are polluting if unevenly distributed. If one school district uses extensive test preparation programs on its students, is it valid to compare the test scores with those of a neighboring district where such test preparation does not take place? (Hass, Haladyna, Nolen, 1991, p. 5). [...]