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Wiggins, Grant. "Why We Should Stop Bashing State Tests." *Educational Leadership* 67.6 (2010): 48-52. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 5 Nov. 2016.

In his article, "Why We Should Stop Bashing State Tests," Grant Wiggins shames the bashing of state standardized assessments and instead highlights their way of depicting gaps in student's understanding and plights in the U.S.'s schooling systems. The author begins by citing specific examples of comprehensive results from Massachusetts and Florida state tests which demonstrate how swaths of students fail on inference based questions. Wiggins stresses the importance of inference reasoning for students ascending to adulthood, and then furthers his argument by giving specific examples of how children also fail in math when application skills are needed, outside of "plugging and chugging" simple equations. The writer summarizes that the youth struggle on tests because they have become so narrow minded in "meeting standards" that they struggle with simple questions which require "interpretation and transfer," which is surely the point of such standards to begin with. And from this, Wiggins suggests that the issues of struggling state tests could be solved by more in-depth teaching, better local tests, and more transparent standardized test score reports. In conclusion, the author establishes state tests as an effective indicator of the failures of local teaching systems across the country, and that avoiding "test-prep 'teaching'" will better help students succeed on assessments and in academics as a whole.

As I read "Why We Should Stop Bashing State Tests," an article by Grant Wiggins, I forced myself to bury deep the bias I held towards the subject, and appreciate the author's claim that tests provide valuable information. It's difficult to distance myself from such a topic, having faced 4 ACTs, 3 SATs, the OGT, years of OATs and OAAs, Explore tests, the PSAT, and even the ASVAB, it's as though I'm becoming numb to the fact that my life will be defined by inconsequential numbers gathered during long, tedious mornings spent in a testing center. But

what this article states is that we shouldn't bash state tests because of what they reveal about how students perform on specific types of test questions. I believe that the failures which Wiggins 'exposes' are cyclical and institutionalized, merely representing troubled areas in regards to the silly standards which such exams place on educators and learners alike.

Throughout the article, Wiggins cites specific flaws in student's understanding, and attributes them to "test-prep 'teaching'" which he says is the wrong way to go about standardized tests, specifically saying, "Better teaching and (especially) better local testing would raise state test scores. Teaching for greater understanding would improve results, not threaten them — as both common sense and the research indicate." Unfortunately, this logic, while theoretically sensible, does not take into account the fact that teachers are almost required to teach 'by-the-test' in order to maintain their jobs and success. Indeed, recently teachers have become just as evaluated by the tests that us students take as the students themselves, only lending to the pitfall that is 'textbook teaching' and common core objectives. Wiggins statements about "teaching better" are short-sighted in that they place the blame on the quality of nationwide teachers, and not on the legislation that they are held to. Logically, if teachers were "test-prep 'teaching'", would they not be asking their students extremely similar questions as to what is on the state tests? Would they not be providing the students with the ability to succeed with the materials they are given, for the benefit of the student and the teacher? No, I believe that a divide lies in the alignment of mandated curriculum and the state tests, which would provide the sub-par scores the author plentifully cites.

Wiggins claims that teaching and 'local testing' are to blame for for poor understanding demonstrated by state tests falls flat when rebutted with the fact that teachers have mandated curriculum and standards they must hold. The author attempts to defend state testing's revelations, but cannot deny the effects it has on teaching staff, especially when such educator's jobs and pay rely heavily on the scores of such tests. And with that burden, any discrepancies between the actual teaching and the test results, should be seen as failures of the institution's curriculum and the restrictions it has placed on educators around the nation. State tests provide people with a better understanding of state tests, but not with a better understanding of a

student's whole comprehension, especially when they can't be blamed for what they haven't been taught.