RACE, CLASS, AND EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION: OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

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Standardized tests are being universally used to assess not only students, but teachers and schools as well. For example, the SAT is used nationally to determine college placement, and although scholarly students may do well in school, they are often sorted purely based on their SAT score. Locally, the Utah State Government has instituted the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT) for the use of determining graduation status. If a student fails to pass the UBSCT after a number of attempts, that student may not be eligible for graduation. Through our involvement in the volunteer program at the Midvale Boys and Girls Club, we have been able to observe the difficulties that low-income families face. Even though many of the students we have worked with show excellent intellectual capabilities, they continue to perform poorly on standardized tests. Our observations have revealed potential limitations of standardized testing, such as language barriers, testing content, and aptitude versus assessment. We will present the findings of our qualitative research as participant observers at the Boys & Girls Club within the context of other qualitative and quantitative research regarding the use of standardized tests.