

Opinion: The ‘lunacy’ of standardized tests for kids

By Nancy Creech

Have you ever given young children a standardized test?

Kindergartners are 4 to 5 years old and this is what happens: Some of them cry. Some get stomach aches. Many of them, all of a sudden when instructions are being explained, have to go to the bathroom or get a tissue. Some draw all over the paper. They talk. They shout out answers, as they have been taught to care for one another and help one another.

Race to the Top put us on the data bandwagon and Education Secretary Arne Duncan has now called for more “formative assessments.” Even though Michigan did not win Race to the Top money, we are nevertheless answering the call for data for data, data, and more data, for children in kindergarten.

I am spending so much time recording “formative” assessments that I don’t have time to evaluate the meaningful assessments and plan for instruction, much less time to actually teach!

I now have to give a total of more than 27,000 check marks or grades for my class of 25 students per year. This is not counting the stars, stickers or smiley faces I put on their work each day.

Nancy Creech is a kindergarten teacher in Michigan.

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