

SESSION 5: Standardized Tests

Readings to complete before class:

- (1) Sadker, Myra and David Sadker. "Designing Tests" in "Test Dive." Chapter 6 in *Failing at Fairness*. New York, NY: Scribner, 1995. ISBN: 068480073X.
(The section starts on page 131 and continues until page 156.)
- (2) The College Board Office of Research and Development. "Research Summary: SAT and Gender Differences." *College Entrance Examination Board* (February 1998).
<http://www.collegeboard.com/research/abstract/3874.html>
- (3) Buck, Gary, Irene Koston, and Rick Morgan. "Examining the Relationship of Content to Gender-Based Performance Differences in Advanced Placement Exams." *College Entrance Examination Board* (2002). <http://www.collegeboard.com/research/abstract/20703.html>
(Only read pp.1-3 (until the "Method" section), and p. 18 ("Implications"). The rest can be skimmed or skipped – it goes into far more detail than we'll need.)
- (4) Dittman, M. "College Women Underperform on Tests When in the Minority." *Monitor on Psychology* 35, no. 1 (January 2004): 14. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan04/college.html>

Discussion notes:

- For the CollegeBoard articles, notice distinctly different "agendaization." However, in "Examining the Relationship," note on opening information page: "Researchers are encouraged to freely express their professional judgment. Therefore, points of view or opinions stated in College Board Reports do not necessarily represent official College Board position or policy." Do you think that's truly the case? Why or why not?
- SAT article. Very clear "SATs are good" message, almost defensive.
- AP article: Obfuscated concepts with technical terminology. Timidly asked for more research. Felt like researchers wanted to do a good job but toed the line of their higher-ups.
- Is it right to tailor questions to not be better for one group or another? Isn't *life* unavoidably different too?
- Very amusing, the origin of SATs with Columbia!
- "ETS suggests that the lower female scores are not a sign of test unfairness but rather the signal of a real educational problem. From the point of view of ETS, test critics are misguided; they are attacking the messenger because they do not like the message" (Sadker p. 156).