SESSION 5: Standardized Tests

Readings to complete before class:


(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.)


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).