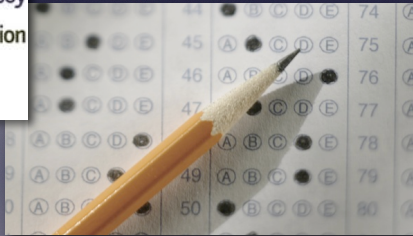


## Spiritual Gifts and Standardized Testing *Don't Mix*



Barry R. Hill  
Lebanon Valley College



## So, what's the problem?

- Increasing focus on standardized test scores.
- All students must meet common standards.
- Scores & grades = self-worth.
- We accept that this is normal.
- But we're left with stressed out kids (and parents) who can't possibly understand what God's plan for them might be.

## What does “smart” mean?

## Are you smart? Take the IQ test to find out.

- Alfred Binet developed the IQ test to identify children who needed additional help in school - a very good thing.
- Terman (Stanford Univ) revised it, mainly to identify people who were sub-standard and could never achieve success in life - the eugenics movement - a very bad thing.



- Carl Brigham invented the SAT (he was also a eugenicist), but rejected this philosophy (and the test) five years later.
- Too late—universities had already adopted it for admissions screening. Another very bad thing.
- The IQ test scales are reset every 15 yrs or so because scores rise 25pts or so every generation.

## School “smart” =

- Read well
- Memorize well
- Test well

But only in a few “academic” subjects.

## Other ways to be smart

- Arts - music, art, creative writing, etc
- Physical stuff - sports, dancing, etc
- Street-smart
- Relationships / self-awareness
- Emotionally smart
- Creative/innovative
- and lots of others...

## The education system

- Students must:
  - Take the same curriculum
  - Meet the same standards
  - Achieve comparable scores

*What could be bad about this?*



One size does *not* fit all.



One size does *not* fit all.

Except in the classroom



Education is too much about retention of information.

It ought to be about development of skills and abilities in a field *each child is interested in*.

We are educating kids for jobs and careers that  
*do not exist today.*



Ever wonder why you study  
trigonometry in school?

Ever wonder why you study  
trigonometry in school?

- Core academic subjects determined by Harvard Univ president...in 1892.
- Why? Different purpose for college.
- Industrial age model.
- Then came Sputnik.

Think about it...before the SATs came along,  
people were actually able to:

- Build Rome
- Harness electricity and nuclear power
- Build flying machines
- Rocket to the moon
- Transplant hearts, livers, and other gooey things.
- Maybe a few other innovative ideas...

What do education standards and  
Disney Imagineers have in common?



## Not a thing!

- Education standards require all students to look the same.
- Disney looks for a wide variety of people who bring differences to the table.

*But, don't you think God had that idea first?*

## Spiritual Gifts

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. *1 Pet. 4:10*

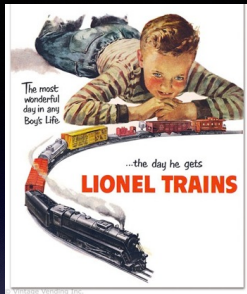
Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. *Romans 12:4-6a*

From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. *Ephesians 4:16*

How many of you know what  
your real gifts/talents are?

How many of you are using these  
in your work?





Children and youth have gifts.  
We usually call them “talents”.



Sometimes we dismiss their  
interests as diversions or fun stuff -  
but not serious enough for a career.

## So what do we do about it?

Finding their “thing”

A few stories...

- Gillian
- Paul
- The Copy King

## Help your kids find their “thing”

- Clues are often right in front of you.
- Provide lots of different experiences - they can't discover interests if they never see them.
- Find ways to show how these can relate to God's plan.

## Get involved in church ministries

- See if their interests match activities in the church: video production, sound, music, dance, drama, carpentry (set construction), money, organizing events, etc.
- Can't expect them to magically know how to do this when they're adults - they need learning opportunities.
- Apprentice model is best.



- Don't fall into trap of "encouraging" kids into "safe" careers.
- Everybody can find a way to turn an interest into a career.
- Mother to daughter "Please take care of Herbie since artists cannot make a living."

*Who was Herbie?*



Herb Ryman - master Disney artist and Imagineer who helped draw the master layout for Disneyland and countless other projects.

## Please...

Tell your children that grades do not define who they are! We want them to work hard at everything they do, but whether they get good or not-so-good grades, it *does not reflect* on their worth, abilities, smarts, or their role in God's plan.

Yes, school is important. But following God's will for their lives is far more important.