***“Standardized Frenzy”***

***by***

***Alyson Bradley***

***Characters***

* *Alfie Kohn as Keen Kong*
* *Herbert Walberg as Hubert Shame*
* *Daniel Dawer as Danny Fueler*
* *Derrick Meader as Dear Tick*
* *Alyson Bradley (myself) as Alyson A-Dub Wallace*
* *Sharon L. Nichols as Sharice Nickels*

**The following is a piece from the DC103 radio show at Gladiator Radio Studios on Tuesday, March 20,2012, as a part of the evening coverage show. The following conversation was recorded ON AIR as follows…**

*\*Alyson “A-Dub” is greeting radio listeners leading into a break from on air music play. She is about to begin the entertainment coverage segment of the evening show. \**

**Alyson:**

Alright DC, once again, good evening, I’m your host Alyson A-Dub Wallace and you’re listening to DC103 on this wonderful Tuesday. To all of you who may be traveling in the *crazy, crazy* traffic out there we will get back to the music momentarily - I have some requests and hot new stuff on the way for you but first I NEED to talk about this hot, new show that’s been gaining traction on ABC and all over Twitter! Yea you may know it but if you don’t you definitely need to get to know it! That’s right I’m talking about SCANDAL and all of its scandal-ousness

*(laughs)*

This show shadows a powerful, political DC fixer, Olivia Pope, played by Kerry Washington, who is having a slightly inappropriate relationship with the married president played by Tony Goldwyn. Guys I’m so serious if you have not yet checked out this show, YOU MUST!! You’ll overdose on juicy drama and steamy romance. And who doesn’t love that stuff and NO I’m not saying that just because I am a woman! Plus the stars of the show live-tweet with the fans on Thursday nights at 10pm when the show airs on ABC. So go ahead DC and get your much-needed dose of “dromance”! Tune in, set your DVRs, grab your wine and popcorn and enjoy this show because you definitely cannot afford to miss out!

*\*Cuts to paid advertisements\**

*\*Resumes on air music play for 20 minutes\**

*\*Alyson comes out of on air music play, once again leading listeners into a break and the educational coverage segment of the evening show. \**

*The following conversation took place at Gladiator Radio Studios ON AIR*

**Tuesday, March 20,2012, as a part of the evening coverage show on DC103**

*between host, Alyson “A-Dub” Wallace, renowned educational activist*

*and author, Keen Kong, well-known “standardized test-lover”, Hubert Shame,*

*well-known “standardized test-hater”, Danny Fueler, the ever so neutral, Dear Tick,*

*and last but not least, the wonderful, powerful and very opinionated Sharice Nickels.*

**Alyson:**

Alright, Alright, alright!! DC you know who it is, your host Aly “A-Dub” here this Thursday evening. You are listening to your very own DC103 as we wind down the evening. And we are now about to move into the educational coverage segment of our show tonight and I believe I have a very thought provoking topic for all of you students, parents and parents to be out there!

Standardized testing has become “ole faithful” for the educational system now. Schools seemingly have began to put our students through more hours of testing than schooling so what is the deal? What do these tests do for our students? Are these tests meaningless or are they actually helping? Should they be used to define and categorize the intelligence of our students? Are these tests even accurate representations of a students understanding in a course? Why are we so dependent on these things? And last but not least, are there any other methods to evaluation other than these standard tests? Americans want answers to this highly debated topic and we at DC103 are determined to inquire about this matter for our listeners and the American people.

I have here in the studio with me, renowned educational activist Keen Kong…

**Keen Kong:**

*(Sternly)*

Good evening.

**Alyson:**

… Hubert Shame, an avid standardized test supporter… Good evening sir…

**Hubert Shame:**

*(Authoritative)*

Evening.

**Alyson:**

**…** the wonderful, powerful and very opinionated Sharice Nickels… *(Laughs)*

**Sharice Nickels:**

*(Laughs)*

Helloooo!

**Alyson:**

... the handsome Danny Fueler…

**Danny:**

*(smiles)*

Why thank you Alyson and Good evening DC

**Alyson:**

*(smiles)*

…And lastly, in the studio I have the ever so neutral, peacekeeper Dear Tick.

**Dear Tick:**

(hysterically laughs)

Hahahaha Good Evening Everyone.

**Alyson:**

So with that said, let’s get on with the program and examine this “standardized frenzy occurring in our schools.” Would anyone like to begin?

**Dear Tick:**

Umm… yes Alyson I’ll head this discussion but let me first start off by saying thank you for allowing me to be here…

**Alyson:**

You’re very welcome.

**Dear Tick:**

Okay so the American people have grown quite inquisitive - as have you, yourself Alyson- as to the purpose of standardized testing and its contribution to the school systems as a whole. Let me first, start off by saying this... standardized testing is definitely not on its way out any time in the near future due to imposed state and federal standards, however, reform may be exercised. See, what many people do not understand is that standardized testing is not the bad guy nor is it the good guy -its just what it is- standardized testing. And like anything in this world it has benefits and drawbacks, pros and cons. However, that does not mean that it should be the sole answer in schools nor should it be written off as some bad plague in the system.

**Keen Kong:**

I see the point that you are trying to make Dear and, in some ways, I do agree with you. While standardized testing, in my opinion, has become the ONLY way in the school system, it is not only the tests that are all bad but also, also, the standards on which the tests are built upon-

**Hubert Shame:**

-And those standards are what Kong?

**Keen Kong:**

Well… before you interrupted sir I was going to go into more detail. Any who, standardized testing is much more than the 50 multiple choice questions that our children, much like ourselves in school, were forced to answer. Standardized testing is a state mandated process that is the result of the strict curriculum in schools and the “paint-by-the-numbers” learning methods and material enforced in the schools. With that said, Tick I think that even you have to admit that the so-called pros of standardized testing are overpowered by the cons. Strict curriculums based off of tests and “no-brainer” material along with 10 paged tests testing mere memorization are not the answer and no perpetual pros can override that major con.

**Alyson:**

Whew! Great point Kong! There is a major deficit in the pro/con department where standardized testing is concerned. The system seems to want people under the conception that the testing is helping more than it is hindering because it provides guidance in the classroom of what needs to be taught, however, all that I hear, more than anything else is that it aids in accurate comparisons between different schools, states and sub-groups or, in other words, other students! Comparisons? Sounds more like competition to me. It’s pressuring children to want to get higher scores so that they wont be classified as dumber than their peers or socially separated from those around them at the hand of those test scores but it is not motivating them to learn. These tests are becoming a mandated pain and I honestly don’t see how they are helping anything! And I think that the states know this but they have just grown so dependent on them to test the students in the system so that they won’t have to invest time and money into finding other ways to evaluate these students. Not to mention that standardized testing is VERY FAST AND EFFICIENT, which, to the system is a godsend, considering the microwave economy we live in now where everybody wants everything fast. Classic case of instant gratification.

**Dear Tick:**

I can’t say that I agree fully with your statements Alyson or even you Mr. Kong. I definitely feel as if standardized testing along with strict curriculum in the classroom can be beneficial. Strict curriculums not only keep the students focused on what matters but it also ensures that the teachers are teaching from a non-biased point of view. Teachers can be easily evaluated through the use of a strict curriculum partnered with testing because it allows the “people in control” to monitor performance in the classroom as this has brought down a lot of unproductive teachers and poorly ran schools. Also, comparison allows for improvement! It allows the Board to be able to sit down and evaluate the performance on these tests and brainstorm on ways to increase, both, understanding and scores.

**Hubert Shame:**

Thank you for pointing that out Dear because I have found that throughout all my years of work almost 99.999 % of people can only focus on the BAD in standardized testing. People do not understand that nothing is nowhere near perfect, however, I must say that standardized testing is as damn near it as we may ever get. Why are we at war against something that helps our children and us. Standardized tests hold teachers and students accountable in the classrooms and they help to measure progress in teaching and learning which is much needed these days when everything is monitored in some fashion.

**Danny Fueler:**

With all do respect Mr. Shame, just because EVERYTHING to hear you say it is monitored and accounted for in the current day does not mean that both our own as well our children’s intelligence and cognitive abilities can or should be thrust into that same exact pile. Students are human beings not robots or computers and neither their mental processes nor their intelligence can be defined by a Scantron sheet, a number two pencil and a series of vague questions. Students are not numbers, stats or animals and should not be treated as such. Because that’s basically what standardized testing is. A conjured method to place students in a hierarchal set-up where the “smartest students” who receive the highest scores indicate the best students and schools as opposed to the “supposed non-smart students” who receive the lowest scores thus indicating the less fortunate schools and students-

**Alyson:**

-Can I just interject at my own will and shed a little bit of my thoughts? Being both a part-time student and a mother myself I have always questioned the integrity of standardized testing and its effectiveness in the school system. I definitely do not feel as if it serves as an accurate representation of the cognitive abilities of students and I also feel as if it has adverse affects on the students taking these tests. The states say these tests motivate students to want to do well both in the class and on the assessments themselves, however, according to personal experience and after talking to my child, other children, and even adult students, I have found that these tests and strict curriculums subject these students to more STRESS than anything. Now in adults that may be feasible but in young children ?! They know what stress is already?! And it’s not because of their personal lives its because of school. The place that we as parents send our children to learn and grow but to also be children in their own right! I just don’t find that acceptable guys I am so sorry but I don’t!

**Sharice Nickels:**

You have nothing to apologize about Alyson! I definitely agree with you and I may take it to another level saying this but I think that this type of testing is actually beginning to corrupt schools-

**Hubert Shame:**

Ahhhhh!!! Object! You took it to the next century with that statement! That is just pure rubbish!

**Sharice Nickels:**

Say what you will but I feel as if there is nothing GOOD to come out of the institution of standardized testing. It utilizes pressure to motivate students for God’s sake! It is a toxic threat and incentive system that is providing more threat than incentive ! The crazy thing is that the state is convinced that they are doing right by these students when really they are not ! They are focusing more on what student can bubble in the right letters and gain the highest score moreso than they are focused on the method that the student executes in order to arrive at that right or wrong answer. And given the fact that people sometimes accidently bubble in the wrong letters when they know the right answers, wouldn’t that lead one to question- just as Alyson proposed- the accuracy of standardized testing?!

\**Phones begin to ring indicating callers into the station\**

**Alyson:**

Okay ! I’m sorry to interrupt but I think we are going to take a quick caller. So we have Caller #1. Caller One what’s your name and your thoughts on this discussion ?

**Caller One:**Hi Alyson, my name is Danielle and I am a freshman in college. I would first like to say that I feel like Hubert is being very rude ON AIR however that is beside the point. I’m definitely feeling what you and Sharice have to say about standardized testing. I have been taking standardized tests since before I remember honestly. And they all seemed the same-rushed and irrelevant. I was extremely stressed before and after the test and during it I was solely focused on getting it over with that I didn’t even really focus on doing well even though I knew all the material and how to apply it. The reason why I’m saying all of this is to show just how pointless I think that standardized testing is. I got a pretty bad score on that test and I was fairly embarrassed however, a week later in class review, I knew more than my peers did that passed. I think that this is the primary difference between memorization and actually learning material. Standardized testing definitely does not measure a students comprehension of a course it just measures how well a person tests and remembers essentially because that’s all I feel my peers did. Something definitely needs to be done about these testing methods!

**Alyson:**

I definitely agree with you there! Thank you so much for calling in Danielle! I think we have enough time to take one more caller to end our segment so Caller #2 what’s your name and questions or thoughts on the topic?

**Caller Two:**

Uh… yea. Hey DC103 its Josh here. I’m a single father of two and also a teacher at Shaw Elementary and I just want to know what are some of the alternatives to standardized testing? What else is out there?

**Alyson:**

Wow! Great question Josh! I feel as if there are plenty of other ways to evaluate students, their learning and their growth in schools. For example, based upon my own research I have found portfolio-based assignments to be a promising option. What do you all think?

**Danny Fueler:**

Well Alyson I see that you’ve been reading my articles

*(laughs)*

**Alyson:**

*(laughs)*

What can I say Danny? You’re a terribly good source for me.

**Danny Fueler:**

Well Josh, portfolio-based assignments are definitely an option. They are done through the compilation of samples of a student’s work and reflections upon that work into a portfolio over the course of a school year. This method gives teachers a deeper insight into the student’s progress in learning. Also though, you have something called performance exams that are not used that often. They require students to demonstrate what they’ve learned through hands-on application. This includes activities such as science fairs, debates and stimulation.

**Sharice Nickels:**

Definitely! Any kind of portfolio or project based assessment is the answer. They encourage students to be creative in their assessments and to reveal to their instructors what they really do know and understand and how they will apply this material in real life. In these assessments, the answers are not already there on the paper for the students- they have to create them and this is what’s most important, as it will benefit them throughout their years of school and problem solving.

**Dear Tick:**

I think that we are all in agreement that the portfolio and project based assessments are probably the best alternative methods to standardized testing. However, that still does not mean that standardized testing should not be used at all it should just be used in conjunction with these two other methods. Once again people, we have to focus on the fact that standardized testing is not the only bully here, but people are just making it seem that way- it still has some good to offer. But yes, the portfolio based assessments and application projects could also prove successful.

**Keen Kong:**

My suggestion is that we not solely focus on changing the institution of testing but also the strict curriculum that is imposed upon our students. We should reform the curriculum and refresh the material that we are teaching. New curriculum and material just may open new doors for our students and maybe even give them that little more of “push” they may need to succeed and even “motivate and interest” them in doing well in the classrooms!

**Hubert Shame:**

I honestly feel like the best alternative choice to standardized testing is STANDARDIZED TESTING! If it ain’t broke don’t fix it. There is nothing wrong with the institution of standardized testing. They help pinpoint students’ weaknesses so that educator may work even more diligently to improve these students’ performances through tutoring and alternative assignments. Saying NO to standardized testing is like saying no to a doctor’s diagnosis. Don’t work to get rid of the truth just because it’s not what you like or want to hear. Instead work to make the most out of the truth and IMPROVE performance.

**Alyson:**

Alright well that is all the time we have left for tonight ladies and gentleman. I would like to thank you all for coming to talk with me. I feel like you have all given me insight into the institution of standardized testing- the GOOD and the BAD – which is something that I really appreciate. Because of your taking the time to come out tonight to the station, the American people and I have gained some answers to our questions and expounded upon our curiosities as far as standardized testing is concerned. Thanks for coming through and providing scholarly opinions on this issue that I may apply this discussion to my arsenal of information as motivation to further inquire.

DC I am so sorry that we did not have time to answer all of the burning questions as far as this matter is concerned but my guests will be back next Tuesday at the same time if you are interested in joining us for the continuation of this conversation. I would like to also thank the listeners and callers for providing us with your opinions, questions and concerns. Once again, you are listening to DC103 “All Things You” and I am your host, Aly A-Dub Wallace. Have a great rest of the night, travel safe and put that phone down if you are driving!! Until next time, I’m signing off. Goodnight and God Bless. MIGHTY GLADIATORS – WE DO THIS!

*\*Music begins playing\**

***The END***