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## Taking on the Research on Standardized Testing

By Catherine Gewertz on June 23, 2011 9:15 AM | No comments | No recommendations

A website devoted to exploring the various sides of controversial issues [Tweet](#) has taken on a topic that just can't stop fueling debate: standardized testing.

[ProCon.org](#) is a California-based organization that describes itself as a "nonprofit nonpartisan public charity," a place that serves as an "online destination for free and unbiased research on controversial topics," with the aim of "promoting critical thinking, education, and informed citizenship." Its latest foray is into the question of whether standardized testing is improving education in the United States.

ProCon.org has created separate websites about more than 40 issues, including abortion, cellphones, gay marriage, illegal immigration, and health-care reform. There's one for [teacher tenure](#), too. In its second foray into education, the group set up a website about standardized testing: [standardizedtests.procon.org](#).

Among the resources on the site, aside from the "pro" and "con" sections detailing footnoted research, are a backgrounder, photos, and videos (two Stanford wonks debating standardized testing; George W. Bush defending NCLB; a short film giving voice to NCLB critics). It also lists intriguing tidbits about standardized testing such as this: 93 percent of studies have found testing of students to have a positive effect on achievement. That's from an analysis of testing research performed by a guy described as a "pro-testing scholar." (Phelps has shared his views in [commentaries](#), [letters to the editor](#) and such in *EdWeek*, too.)

My favorite tidbit from ProCon's testing site might be this one: Recognizing that testing jitters are common, one standardized-test packet comes with directions about what to do if a student vomits on the booklet.

'Nuff said.

I leave the rest to you. After reviewing stuff like this on the new ProCon website, can you resist sharing your thoughts in the comments section?

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