Career Portfolio

Giuseppe Di Mario

Sandy Creek Central School

Software Engineer

"Intelligence is the ability
to avoid doing work,
yet getting the work done."
- Linus Torvalds - writer of the Linux kernel

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Letter of Introduction

Dear Reader:

This portfolio contains most of the essential information and documents for a possible employer to get an idea of who I am professionally. You will find that I'm quite a technology enthusiast, as my main career focus is in computer science and mathematics. In fact since I was little I was known for my curiosity of the subject, and a the years had passed that curiosity kept growing.

As the saying goes, "Find a job you love and you will never work a day," and to me programming is exactly that. Nowadays I mainly work in a GNU/Linux environment using Emacs for fifty percent of the computing I do. I also upload all of my work on github.com through repositories I maintain in my machine with git.
Other than that I have a great interest in literature and linguistics, which has led me to pursue an in-depth study of the English language, and improve my knowledge of my mother-tongue languages - Albanian and Italian. I'm also currently learning French, and I plan to get official language certificates soon.

After I graduate from highschool I plan to pursue an Undergraduate Degree in Pure Mathematics, and hopefully continue to my Masters Degree. I would also like to learn more functional programming languages than I already know, my particular interest being Lisp.

As you read this portfolio I hope you'll find the right characteristics that can make me a valuable candidate for your available position.

Sincerely,

Giuseppe Di Mario
Po Box 297
Sandy Creek, NY 13145

Resume

9 Marion Avenue, Pulaski
+1 (315) 364-1766
contact@gidm.info

Giuseppe Di Mario

Objective

Seeking a position as a Haskell and C programmer, where I can apply my excellent coding and administrator skills with my previous programming experience on open-source projects.

Education

Liceo Mattei; Vasto, Italy   *September 2014 to July 2017*
- ▪ Science and technology major
- ▪ Courses in mathematics, physics, IT and technical drawing

Greenheart Foreign Exchange Program   *September 2017 to present*

Sandy Creek High School; Sandy Creek, New York   *September 2017 to present*
- ▪ Calculus class with an average of 92
- ▪ Honor Roll

Work Experience

Software Engineer   *October 2017 to present*
- ▪ Write various scripts to automate my work
- ▪ Apply mathematical algorithms
- ▪ Debugging

Skills/Abilities

- ▪ Fluent in Italian, Albanian and English
- ▪ In-depth knowledge of the GNU/Linux operating system
- ▪ Advanced Emacs configuration
- ▪ Good knowledge of the version control system git, especially related to Github

Cover Letter

May 23, 2018

Mr. Archer Sloane
University of Columbia
230 Jesse Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

Dear Mr. Sloane:

I'm writing this letter to let you know I would like to apply for an assistant position teacher at the Department of Mathematics at your university, as recommended to me by Professor John Williams, with whom you have collaborated in the past.
I will be awarded my Master's Degree in Pure Mathematics by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology just at the start of next month. Because of that I see this position as a perfect opportunity to apply the skills I have gained during the numeros years I have studied for my Ma degree, as I'm sure would benefit both of us.
I come from a very diverse background: my mother is from Albania and my father is from Italy, and I was born in the latter. Because of that - and my father's job as an international engineer for the firm Pilkington - I have travelled very often since I was little, and that has given me very strong adaptability skills. During my senior year of high school I also applied for an International Exchange School Program, which has given me the right attitude to lead a very efficient independent life. However, that doesn't mean I lack the ability of eloquent communication and interaction with other people. On the contrary, I have financed my post-graduate studies mainly by assisting Professor Williams with his students and taking over a couple of his classes. That has given me a close relationship with many undergraduate students who view me as a sort of a mentor.
I look forward to your response. I'll contact you again shortly to make sure that your department has fully received my application. In case of any particular question I'm available at contact@gidm.info or +1 (315) 364-1766.

Sincerely,

Giuseppe Di Mario
Po Box 297
Sandy Creek, NY 13145

Thank You Letter

June 5, 2018

Mr. Archer Sloane, Professor
University of Columbia
230 Jesse Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

Dear Mr. Sloane:

I am writing this letter to personally thank you and all the Department of Mathematics of Columbia University for the time you took interviewing me for the assistant teacher position.

Since I came in this country I have held with very high esteem your university and all the astonish research that has been done there. In a way I can say that all the amazing discoveries and possibilities that those research have brought up, have inspired me to pursue a career in this field - as I'm sure have inspired many others.

As we agreed, I'll be back at the department next Thursday to hear your final decision. I look forward to that meeting and our collaboration.

Sincerely,

Giuseppe Di Mario
Po Box 297
Sandy Creek, NY 13145

Letter of Recommendation

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been a great pleasure having Giuseppe Di Mario in my Calculus class this year. Giuseppe is a very talented mathematics student who will surely be successful in his future studies. I look forward to seeing him develop into an outstanding mathematician. Giuseppe has had a successful year in Calculus. His attendance is superb and he is always prepared. Giuseppe's work is well organized, legible and done with great care. Throughout the course of the year, it has become clear that the Italian mathematics curriculum does not rely on technology the way that our New York State curriculum does. As a result, Giuseppe's understanding of functions is much stronger than his classmates. This is a great benefit to him as the study of calculus relies greatly on a deeper understanding of how functions behave. Giuseppe is often successful in solving authentic math problems; he is fluent at modeling real life mathematics problems with calculus.

Giuseppe is a very personable and pleasant young man. He is very well mannered and kind. He is willing to work with others, share is ideas, and receive constructive criticism in return. These qualities paired with his international experience and vast intellect will make him an outstanding candidate for universities and career opportunities. I look forward to seeing where his studies at Sandy Creek Central School lead him next. I am very appreciative of the opportunity to teach Giuseppe and proud to say that he is a Sandy Creek Student.

Sincerely,
Katie Soluri

Student Achievements

124 Salisbury Street
PO Box 248
Sandy Creek ,NY 13145

OFFICIAL DOCUMENT
Valid Only If Signed
ACT/CEEB: 335030

Name: DiMario, Giuseppe	**Student ID:** 639001294	**Class Rank:**
Gender: Male	**DOB:** 10/16/2000	**Weighted GPA** 92.30
Address: PO Box 297 Sandy Creek, NY 13145	**Graduation Date:**	**Credits Earned:** 0.50
Parent(s):	**Diploma Type:**	**Counselor:** Danielle James

2017-2018 Grade:12 Sandy Creek High School   Abs:8 Tdy:1   GPA:94.00   Credits:0.50

Course Name	Local	Regents	Final Avg	Credits
*CALCULUS			(89)	0.00
ENGLISH 12			(94)	0.00
PHY ED HS 09-10			(98)	0.00
PHYSICS			(92)	0.00
PUB SPEAKING	95		94	0.50
PUBLICATIONS			(97)	0.00
SOC STUD 11			(94)	0.00
STUDIO ART 1			(89)	0.00

Testing Information
SAT Test Scores

Date	Exam	Score
11/17	SAT EBRW	650
11/17	SAT Math	560
12/17	SAT EBRW	660
12/17	SAT Math	630

Activities

Course Code Keys:
AUD = Audit
P = Pass
F = Fail
W/P = Withdrew Passing
W/F = Withdrew Failing
* = Weighted Course
** = Out of District
Exam Codes:
ABS = Absent
UNS = Unscoreable
EX = Exempt

NOTES:
Course Grades appearing in (Parenthesis) are not yet final course grades, but are "In Progress" grades.

_____
Signature

June 05, 2018
_____
Date

CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH
Language Assessment
Part of the University of Cambridge

THE QUEEN'S AWARDS
FOR ENTERPRISE:
2015

Cambridge English Level 2 Certificate in ESOL International (Advanced)*

This is to certify that

GIUSEPPE DI MARIO

has been awarded

Grade B

in the

Certificate in Advanced English

Council of Europe Level C1

Overall Score	**194**
Reading	193
Use of English	196
Writing	183
Listening	200
Speaking	196

Saul Nassé
Chief Executive

Date of Examination	JUNE 2017
Place of Entry	TERMOLI (CB)
Reference Number	176IT3130002
Accreditation Number	500/2598/3

* This level refers to the UK National Qualifications Framework

Date of Issue 20/07/2017
Certificate Number A4216843

Regulated by

Ofqual

For more information see http://register.ofqual.gov.uk

Corff dyfarnu cydnabyddedig
CYMWYSTERAU CYMRU
QUALIFICATIONS WALES
Recognised awarding body

02057750

Essays

Here you will find a series of essays written by me. They are not specifically related to

the topic of my profession and are shown simply as a demonstration of my writing skills.

Argumentative essay

Prompt #6: "Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?"

"The world is changing, music is changing, even drugs are changing".
Since the first time I had heard this quote in "Trainspotting", I've been fascinated by its meaning.
We live our lives taking too many things for granted, things that would have been impossible to even imagine in the past. Do you need a fast way to travel from one place to another? Take a plane. Do you need to do quick research? Just use a search engine. Something big has happened and you want to know more? Just wait ten minutes and some major tv/web company will have already covered the event. As I said, those things would have been almost unthinkable in the past, and, although you might think that what I'm saying is the most obvious thing in the world, we don't really seem to notice that.
We don't really seem to acknowledge the fact that everything around us is in constant change and to keep up with that, we must change too.

This concept of personal growth is what inspired me to leave almost everything behind and come to the United States for my last year of high school. I have chosen this country because I dare to say that my knowledge of the English language is fairly good, and, most importantly, because its portrayal had always captivated me. The so-called "American Dream", the opportunity of turning your life upside-down has inspired me and so many other people of all races and nationalities to come here to achieve their goals, but what exactly is mine? My goal, as you may have anticipated, is to change and inspire change in others. I want to be able to express my opinions as creatively as possible, while still being credible. Some people consider creativity and credibility as separate, even opposite subjects. However in my experience, I've found that the most credible people are the ones who are able to reach to your emotions in the most creative way possible. The moment I realized that, was the moment my passion for journalism began. In journalism I found the best method of, as I would say it, describing the subjective as objectively as possible. Some people may recognize some journalists only from their writing style, and this greatly contributes to prove my point that no matter

how objective you try to be, you will always leave your creative stamp on your works. I've decided that I want to become one of them, one of those authors who get recognized simply by their style. A very ambitious goal I must admit, but not an impossible one. My interest in journalism has also been greatly influenced by another one of my passions, photography, especially the now-old thirty-five millimeters cameras.

Freeze reality and then build a story around that moment. That is the essence of what I want to do, but what's the point of writing a story if there are no readers? That's when journalism perfectly mixes with my needs. I will write for everyone who wants to read, for everyone who wants to see, who wants to have confirmation of a change in his or her own life. Before that, of course, I need to improve my journalistic skills, and I think the most secure way I'd be able to do that is by studying the subject in college. The decision to come to the United States has turned into the launch pad of what is going to be the longest journey of my life, and only by giving the best of my abilities can I try to reach the end.

Narrative essay

Love Letters

To Jane Bouvier
23 Groening Street
Albany, NY

Everyone's an addict. You might think you aren't but I know for a fact that you are. Don't worry, I myself hadn't realised I was one too. I was addicted, as many people other than me, to the ordinary. This is the story of how I kicked out this habit of mine.
Nothing special was happening at the station so I decided to go out for a quick cigarette. I had just put the cigarette in my mouth when Francis, a colleague, grabbed my shoulder and whispered in a very embarrassed voice : "Oi mate, we just received a phone booth call, *suggesting us*, to check on an apartment on Steven Martin street…"
"Oh come on! It's probably just another one of those kids trying to make a prank call!" I complained.
"Yeah… But what can I tell you? It's the procedure, I'll write you the full address" he replied.
And so I got in the car and started driving there. Who could have guessed that after four years of criminal justice school and two months of police academy I'd end up in this forgotten place called Pungkhaw just to occasionally help the same old ladies cross the streets and play along with some kids who have nothing better to do than prank call a police station? Oh well, that's just how life goes I guess. Anyway, I finally get to this place - a relatively small pink house in the suburbs of the town - and to get done with this as quickly as possible I immediately tried ringing the bell. No answer, so I tried opening the door in case it wasn't locked and, not to my surprise, it wasn't (it's such a small town that no-one keeps their house locked). However as soon as I was turning the door handle a not-so-pleasant smell invaded my nostrils. Inside the house was completely dark, if it wasn't for the light coming from the door I'd probably not be able to see a thing, but *thanks god* policemen have flashlights. I turned it on and started walking around the house, but the smell was getting unbearable, almost to the point of vomiting, fortunately a radio call distracted me from it. It was Francis, just calling to check that everything was alright.
"I've got a bad feeling about this," I told him, trying to imitate Ewan McGregor's voice in a vain attempt to downplay what was happening. "But I'll let you know," I concluded without even noticing if he'd replied or not.
After a couple of minutes of just wandering around the house hopelessly trying to find what the source of that unpleasant odor was, my eyes glanced on a piece of a paper laying on the floor. I immediately pick it up and I quickly notice that there was something written on it. Not wanting to read it under the flashlight light, I went outside and slowly read its content:

Dear whoever is going to read this letter, respectable police officer of the town of Pungkhaw,

by the time you read this you'll probably be able to feel a very distinctive smell haunting the house. If you haven't already checked under the restroom sink, you'd find out, lying down there, is the corpse of Michael Burroughs. Now you might ask how do I know such a thing, but frankly, the answer is quite simple: I, *Simon Curtis*, am the murderer. But Before we start getting into details of that tragic (and glorious) moment, I feel some kind of moral obligations to let you know some of the backgrounds of this story.

Since I can remember I had always been that 'attention-seeking' kid that desperately keeps trying to get approved by everyone, but now as an adult I had stopped caring about such things, probably a little bit too much, to the point I completely rejected human contact. At least until about three months ago. It was the 13th of November, it's already been over a year that I have lived here, but still haven't made anything even remotely close to a friend. I thought I didn't need one. Some weird music coming from my new neighbor apartment - he moved here on the 11th - caught my ears. It was almost hypnotic, so I decided to do the unthinkable. I decided to knock on their door. A young lad greeted me at the door and after I had politely introduced myself as the new neighbor he invited me to come inside. I did the unthinkable again, and accepted. Behind that door were guys and girls playing instruments that ranged from a piano to a sitar, all surrounded by pink, red, and purple light just flashing around the room. That guy, which I later learned he was called Michael, asked me if I could play any instrument. As soon as I said that I play the bass, he handed me a six-string fretless one. I was petrified, I didn't know what to say, but without me even realising I was already sitting near the members of this absurd band, having fun. Some hours had passed and most people were gone by now, except for me, Michael, and a guy sleeping on the couch. We still kept on playing for I don't know how many hours until we started asking each other a series of personal questions for no particular reasons, as though we were very good friends that hadn't seen each other in years. I knew exactly what kept me going. I was fascinated by this man, by its manners, by its voice and by the way he kept me entertained. For the first time in years I liked someone.

I kept visiting every time I could to the point of turning myself back to a kid. I desired his attention, I craved it as it w something I couldn't live without, but I kept this feeling to myself, until that one night. He had invited me and a couple of other friends over to his to house to play some music, but - I have no idea why - I was the only one who showed up. After a while we just got tired of repeating the same notes over and over again, so we decided to put on a movie. I suggested that we watch 'A Clockwork Orange' since I had just happened to finish the book the night before. During the scene where Alex is forced to keep his eyes open, we both instinctively looked away from the television, evidently we didn't like the feeling of watching a metallic thing going inside someone's eyes. By doing that, our glances met, and we discovered that, in fact, we *do* like each other's eyes. So this time we didn't look away. We kept on staring to the point it began to feel embarrassing, until of course, we kissed. In that moment,something really close to love was growing inside of me. However mine wasn't love, it was obsession. Obsession with everything he did, everywhere he went and everyone he was with. I began to think that that single, meaningless kiss, entitled me to be in control of him, and I still believe that, the only problem was, he didn't.

I started checking his phone when he wasn't looking, using a binocular to spy on his house, keep track on a journal of every single thing that he did, even the smallest, so that I could always have an excuse to just randomly show up to his house when he less expected me, so that we'd a chance to always be together. Me and him, nobody else, like I know we *both* wanted to. Do you know how he thanked me for that? Do you have any idea of what I received for him as a 'thank you, Simon, for all you've done'? A text message - yeah right, a stupid text message - just saying "stop it or I will tell the police." Here we are then, I'm telling the police, are you happy Michael? But you're dead, aren't you? Are you happily dead at least? I bet you are, so let's go back to the night I killed you, just to prolong our reader's entertainment.

I showed up at your door crying, and you didn't even have the decency to open the door. I had to break a window, what other choice did I have? I was happy to see that you were waiting for me, with a kitchen knife in your hand. However as soon as I did just a single step towards you, you threw it, hitting my leg. You couldn't move, and for a moment I couldn't either, but I managed to pick up the knife and just keep staring at it, for about a minute. Everything froze for an entire minute. You could have run away, as far as possible from me, but you didn't. You still desired me right? However you can't just switch side whenever you want to, you know? So I did it. A simple cut down your throat, that's all it took. Funny how simple it is to end a human life if you think about it. Now, at the very end, you might wonder why did I even write this letter? What's the point of even admitting to have committed such a crime? The point is, dear reader, I wanted to take credit for it. From the moment that we kissed he became mine, and I *and only I* had the right to choose if he lived or died.

Best regards,
        Simon Curtis.

P.S. Just a friendly advice, don't even waste your time trying to find me, I'd probably be dead anyway.

I kept staring at this piece of paper for almost five minutes, terrified of the possibility of its content being even remotely true. I got back to reality as soon as I noticed a police car coming my way. It was Francis. He probably came here because I ignored the radio. As he got out of his car and was approaching me he shouted: "What's your problem mate? Is everything alright?"
I remained silence.
"What's with this awful smell?" He continued anyway. "Come on Will is everything okay?".
I didn't answer, instead I just gave him the piece of paper without even looking at him. Now more officers and even the sheriff came at the scene but I still couldn't do anything. You might think that I shouldn't be impressed by such a thing because of my profession, and I thought that too. I wanted more out of it, but when it finally arrived, I wasn't prepared.

I was exactly like Simon, I desperately wanted to get out of the ordinary that when it finally happened I completely lose my mind. However I didn't want to become like him, so I had to act fast. I quitted my job the next day and just ran away, as far as possible from anything that I could consider usual.

Now, after fifteen years, nobody has ever found Simon nor his body, and nobody has found me either.

That's why I'm writing this letter, dear mother. To let at least someone know that I'm still alive and to expose the reasons of my departure, but ,most importantly, I want you to share my story so that anyone could read it, and learn by my unusual experience.

Yours truly,
William Simpson

P.S.
I'm sorry I've never contacted you after that day, I hope you understand.

Research essay

Outline
The Flaws of Standardized Testing and How They Should Be Fixed
Thesis: Although standardized testing is a very great tool to measure the performance of a big group on a specific subject, it is not quite so effective when evaluating single individuals.

I. Introduction: Standardized testing as a way of quickly and efficiently evaluate someone.
   A. What is standardized testing?
   B. Tests can be trusted more than a single teacher's judgment.
   C. Introduction of the thesis: why it needs improvement.
II. Since when, and why are we using standardized tests.
   A. History and traditions.
   B. Benefits of this method
   C. First criticism: even though this method might be very useful, nothing is really ultimately good for everyone
III. Second criticism: Monopolies and Privacy.
   A. You have no control on how test organizers treat your personal information.
   B. You have no real choice on what test to take.
   C. It is relatively difficult to request not to share your information, and it can be done only after they are initially shared.

IV. Possible alternative and why standardized testing cannot simply be replaced.
   A. The alternatives are usually too subjective and less efficient.
   B. Standardized testing is too widely used and there is no other evaluation method as efficient for a large number of people.
   C. Instead of replacing it, we should opt for improvement.
V. Proposed Solution and Conclusion.
   A. More oral testes.
   B. The European model.
   C. Give power back to the schools and not private organizations.

The Flaws of Standardized Testing and How They Should Be Fixed

Introduction

Standardized testing is everywhere. From first to twelfth grade, from school to work, and from America to Europe. It is so common that almost anyone in the United States has had in some point of their life, a standardized test. Even so, to fully understand its popularity, we have to start from its definition. What exactly is standardized testing? In layman's term, as the name might suggest, standardized tests (in school) are a form of evaluation which has been proven by a trusted organization to be effective in calculating a student's performance. For example, let's just pretend that there's a college who has two scholarship candidates, but only one scholarship to give. The first candidate has

never taken any standardized test and, as proof of his abilities, has only a couple of tests his chemistry teacher gave him. On the other hand, the other person has taken both the SAT and ACT (two of the most popular college admission tests). Regardless of the results or their individual ability, there's a very good chance that the college is going to pick the second one, even if the first one might have gotten better skills than the second. "Why is that?", you might ask. The answer is relatively easy: one can prove his ability, the other cannot. In other words, what are they going to trust? A couple of tests from a teacher no one's heard of, or some examinations from the biggest organizations regarding college entrance in the country? Of course, they are going to trust the latter. The point of this heavy reductio ad absurdum is to illustrate the great benefit of efficiency that standardized tests give, and which make them so popular. On paper, it all sounds like a great idea, but in reality, although standardized testing is a very great tool to measure the performance of a big group on a specific subject, it is not quite so effective when evaluating single individuals.

History and Main Problem

Before getting into the details of the problem, let's go back in time and see when and why was standardized testing so widely adopted. Lelac Almagor, in his article titled *The Good in Standardized Testing*, writes that before the 2001 mandatory introduction of standardized testing in schools, students didn't have any way of testing their abilities compared to other children in the states. In other words, what happened is that even though you might have been the best student in your entire class, got straight As, have a perfect attendance and all those other things that are used to define a good pupil, you might have gotten a very low score on - using the author's example - an entrance examination for an elite magnet high school. Why is that? The unfortunate answer is that without an imposed standard, schools had total control over what they taught and, unfortunately, very often it wasn't enough. It all changed when President George W. Bush passed the No Child Left Behind act in 2001, which made standardized testing compulsory for every school. Compared to what we had prior to this law, this was a major improvement, but definitely not a flawless one. The biggest issue is that it assumed, and still assumes, that every student is the same, and that every student is fully evaluated by the exact same test. On one hand, some might argue that it is, in fact, true because if the test is the same, then there aren't any advantages for anyone. This reasoning, however, still assumes that everyone approaches these tests the same way everybody else does, and the only reason that someone might get a low or high grade, is the effort or study they put in it. That is simply not true. As of many great writers can be terrible public speakers, many students have different methods of expressing their abilities. Adding to that, a study described in *Working Within The System: The Effects of Standardized Testing on Education Outreach and Community Writing*, an article by Elizabeth Parfitt and Stephen Shane, how student's approach to those test is usually very different from how they might have already learned in school. For example, another article titled *The Emphasis of Student Test Scores in Teacher Appraisal Systems*, by William C. Smith and Katarzyna Kubacka, argues that the main influence teacher have on their students, in relation of standardized test performance, is how they praise them

for their results. This means that even something as variable as this, can have a big influence on someone's performance. On top of that, another simple, more obvious criticism, is that sometimes it can all just depend on luck. Without getting much into details, it is a fact that in multiple-choice questions (which usually give 4 options), you have a ¼ chance of getting the answer right, and that is a relatively high possibility.

Second Problem

Another main problem of modern standardized testing is the monopoly that some organization have on them, and especially how they treat your data. For example, an article written by *Zan Crowder and Stephanie Konle, called Gumbo Ya-Ya* or, What Pearson Can't Hear, exposes this problem in relation to Pearson, one of the biggest companies in school books and standardized testing. They write that during the time of a PARCC exam in New Jersey, Pearson was compulsory checking students' profile on social-medias and monitoring their online conversation to keep them from passing newly aligned Common Core standardized tests. Their excuse is that they are required by law, for security reasons, to do as such, however, these exact measures remain "proprietary secret" in some states, contributing to defend their lack of transparency as if "they were state secrets." However, you might say that, ethical dilemmas aside, if you don't like the way they treat your privacy, just don't take the exam, or take another one. That sounds so simple and immediate, but the reality is much more complicated than that. First of all, the PARCC is mandatory in some states, so you don't really have any choice, but even ignoring that, let's look at some non-mandatory (or at least, not in the full extent of the definition) examinations, such as the SAT and the ACT. Although you don't have to take them in order to apply for a college, they've managed to create such a huge monopoly that they are required by almost every college or university. That means that they can practically do anything with their tests or their participants, and you have to stick with it, simply because you have no concrete alternative. On top of that, they don't really treat your personal information any way better than Pearson does. For instance, they sell a great deal of your personal information through their "Student Search Service," mainly to not-so-known colleges. Using a personal life anecdote, I found it really unpleasing, or should I say, irritating, when a lot of colleges, especially smaller and very distant ones, started sending me emails with a list of precompiled information about myself. Apparently, there is a way to block those emails, but it is not immediate and not easily accessible to everyone.

Possible Solution and Why It Is Not Possible to Just Get Rid of Standardized Testing

 With that said, some people believe that we should just opt out of standardized testing in favour of an even more reliable and efficient system. One of these people is Patricia Carini, who, as described in *Descriptive Inquiry as an Alternative to Standardized Testing: Patricia Carini and Her Progressive Philosophy*, an article by Yoshie Kittaka, believes in "Descriptive Inquiry, an educational approach to children based on a progressive philosophy." In short, this method is "a general term for a set of inquiring

processes which share a common structure. Processes that comprise Descriptive Inquiry include but are not limited to the Descriptive Review of the Child, the Descriptive Review of Children's Works, the Descriptive Review of Curriculum, and the Descriptive Review of Teacher Practice." The problem with this kind of evaluation, however, is that it can be extremely subjective, and not really efficient (especially timewise) when evaluating a large group of students. That is why standardized testing, cannot, and probably will never be replaced. It is then quite obvious that the solution to this system's flaws, can't be resolved by just eliminating the problem in the first place. Instead, the most reasonable solution is that of gradually changing it, to always improve its precision on an even larger group of people.

Proposed Solution and Conclusion

The questions now are: "what can we do to achieve that?", and "how can we make the change gradual?" A big improvement that could really benefit standardized testing in the United States is the use of more oral tests. Most classes in school hardly ever rely on this method, even though being able to verbally express your ideas should be an essential skill, instead of just crossing one of four option. Another major improvement, which would be the best way to make a change, is to give power back to schools. In 2001 George W. Bush with the No Child Left Behind act, had fundamentally executed a good idea, but his biggest flaw was that he gave the power to control standardized testing not to schools, but to third-party, private companies. On the other hand, across the Atlantic Ocean, most European countries have already given full control of testing to their school, and with government regulation and control, they have successfully set a nation's standard. Following this model, the United States educational system would gain a huge improvement, both economically (everything would happen in the same place and by the same people running the school) and performance wise. The smartest - and most obvious- thing to do, would then be to shift the control of standardized testing back to schools.

Annotated Bibliography

Almagor, L. "The Good in Standardized Testing." *Boston Review*, 2016, pp 6-9.
    In this piece, the author, Lelac Almagor, discusses what are the actual benefits that make standardized testing so widely used today. Using a mixture of his experience as a student and his teaching career, Almarog delivers a very effective argument in favour of the use of this quite controversial testing method. I will use this article as a proof of the effectiveness of standardized testing.

Crowder, Z., & Stephanie, K. "Gumbo Ya-Ya or, What Pearson Can't Hear: Opt-Out, Standardized Testing, and Student Surveillance." *The High School Journal*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
    This article, by two professors from the University of Carolina, explores a very uncommon topic regarding standardized testing, that of Pearson Publishing digitally spying on children to prevent them from passing along Common Core standardized test questions and to discredit the "opt-out of standardized testing

movement." This could be a very interesting source to help explain a not-really-known subject to most readers.

Kittaka, Y. "Descriptive Inquiry as an Alternative to Standardized Testing:Patricia Carini and Her Progressive Philosophy." *Teaching & Learning*, The University of Tokyo, vol. 29, no. 1, 2016, pp. 30-40.
Standardized testing is continuously being criticised for being a flat and mechanical way of evaluating a person, yet it seems like there isn't a more efficient way to do such a thing. However, Yoshie Kitakka might disagree: she believes in *Descriptive Inquiry*, "an educational approach to children based on a progressive philosophy." This is belief is based on the idea that every human is different, so there is no way that a standardized alternative could be really efficient for everyone. This article might be helpful when listing the pros and cons of standardized testing.

Parfitt, E., & Shane, S. "Working within the System: The Effects of Standardized Testing on Education Outreach and Community Writing." *Community Literacy Journal,* vol. 11, no. 1, 2016, pp. 118-126.
Sometimes, a thing may be considered bad simply because of people approaching it in the wrong way. The authors seem to think that the same thing may have happened to standardized testing. In fact, Emerson College students were asked to tutor 10th graders from Boston Public School, and in doing that, they completely changed students' approach to standardized writing tests by making them recognize their own writing as an empowered and meaningful political form of social action. I'll be able to use this source as a proof that standardized testing isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Qaqish, B. "An Analysis of Homeschooled and Non-Homeschooled Students' Performance on an ACT Mathematics Achievement Test." *Home School Researcher*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2007, pp. 1-12
Homeschooling, especially nowadays, has been and is a very controversial topic of discussion. However, putting opinions aside, the author of this article has decided to verify the effectiveness of this method of education by analyzing the results of homeschooled children on an ACT Mathematics Achievement Test. I can use this article in order to address the "home-schooling" part of my paper.

Smith, W. C., & Kubacka, K. "The emphasis of student test scores in teacher appraisal systems". *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 2016.
Standardized test is not just a tool to easily evaluate a student's performance on a subject, it is also a way for teachers to give some kind of feedback to their pupils. However, the authors argue that although this might seem a very immediate and effective method, it could actually lead students to a more stressful state of mind: that is why I am going to use this article in relations to the "students under stress" subtopic.

Wright, G. P., Endacott, J. L. "Historical Inquiry and the Limitations of the Common Core State Standards." *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, Elsevier, 2015
The authors, scholars from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Arkansas, discuss the differences when inquiry methods of instruction are employed and a rubric designed for CCSS standardized

assessment is used in evaluation. I'm going to use this source in relation to the "national education standards" subtopic.

Art Club

Art, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is "the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power." However a simple flat definition can't describe what the art club here at Sandy Creek High School is. This club is coordinated by our school art teacher, Mr Scoville who, inspired by his previous teaching experiences in other institutes, wanted to "create a culture where anyone interested in art can join and feel part of a bigger cohesive group." It was first established in 2003 when he first started to teach in our town, and since then things have remained almost the same.

Every other Thursday the club meets in the art room where its members are free to use any equipment to be as creative as they want. Some would just simply take a pencil and start drawing, some others would go a step further and utilise paint, while other people would even try to make a clay sculpture. Its current members are Emily Ward, Ruby Scoville, Evelyn Bice (from ninth grade), Roselyne Sprague (from tenth grade), Jadyn Mullin, Jordyn Mullin, Colbyn Dinehart, Jonas Fizette, Margery Yousey, Violet Carkey, Caleigh Rosenbaum, Eric Kennedy, Violet Graf (from eleventh grade), Gavin James, Giuseppe Di Mario, Clarice Miller, Trace Clark, Madalin Vescera, Ethan Graf (from twelfth grade). Violet Carkey told us she "really enjoys the concept of the club" and has offered her "a great opportunity to do what I enjoy while feeling like a part of a bigger group."

In preparation for Halloween the club organised a "Bad Movie Night," where people could come and purposely watch a terrible movie - Night of the Lepus - just for the pure enjoyment of having fun while criticising it. By selling some sodas and popcorn that night they started fund raising some money for the upcoming Boston trip that the club will do later this year. On this matter Erik Kennedy commented: "I really look forward to this trip as I'm sure it's going to be a fantastic opportunity to see different places and learn new things."

Choice of Work

DWM Configuration

```c
1   /* See LICENSE file for copyright and license details. */
2
3   /* appearance */
4   static const char *fonts[] = {
5           "monospace:size=10"
6   };
7   static const char dmenufont[]       = "monospace:size=10";
8   static const char normbordercolor[] = "#444444";
9   static const char normbgcolor[]     = "#222222";
10  static const char normfgcolor[]     = "#bbbbbb";
11  static const char selbordercolor[]  = "#005577";
12  static const char selbgcolor[]      = "#005577";
13  static const char selfgcolor[]      = "#eeeeee";
14  static const unsigned int borderpx  = 1;        /* border pixel of windows */
15  static const unsigned int snap      = 32;       /* snap pixel */
16  static const int showbar            = 1;        /* 0 means no bar */
17  static const int topbar             = 1;        /* 0 means bottom bar */
18
19  /* tagging */
20  static const char *tags[] = { "1", "2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7", "8", "9" };
21
22  static const Rule rules[] = {
23          /* xprop(1):
24           *      WM_CLASS(STRING) = instance, class
25           *      WM_NAME(STRING) = title
26           */
27          /* class       instance    title       tags mask    isfloating   monitor */
28          { "Gimp",     NULL,       NULL,       0,           1,           -1 },
29          { "Firefox",  NULL,       NULL,       1 << 8,      0,           -1 },
30  };
31
32  /* layout(s) */
33  static const float mfact     = 0.55; /* factor of master area size [0.05..0.95] */
34  static const int nmaster     = 1;    /* number of clients in master area */
35  static const int resizehints = 1;    /* 1 means respect size hints in tiled resizals */
36
37  static const Layout layouts[] = {
38          /* symbol     arrange function */
39          { "[]=",      tile },    /* first entry is default */
40          { "><>",      NULL },    /* no layout function means floating behavior */
41          { "[M]",      monocle },
42  };
43
44  /* key definitions */
45  #define MODKEY Mod4Mask
46  #define TAGKEYS(KEY,TAG) \
47          { MODKEY,                       KEY,      view,           {.ui = 1 << TAG} }, \
48          { MODKEY|ControlMask,           KEY,      toggleview,     {.ui = 1 << TAG} }, \
49          { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             KEY,      tag,            {.ui = 1 << TAG} }, \
50          { MODKEY|ControlMask|ShiftMask, KEY,      toggletag,      {.ui = 1 << TAG} },
51
52  /* helper for spawning shell commands in the pre dwm-5.0 fashion */
53  #define SHCMD(cmd) { .v = (const char*[]){ "/bin/sh", "-c", cmd, NULL } }
54
55  /* commands */
56  static char dmenumon[2] = "0"; /* component of dmenucmd, manipulated in spawn() */
57  static const char *dmenucmd[] = { "dmenu_run", "-m", dmenumon, "-fn", dmenufont, "-nb", normbgcolor, "-nf", normfgcolor, "-sb",
58  static const char *termcmd[]  = { "st", NULL };
59  static const char *qbrowser[] = { "qutebrowser", NULL };
60  static const char *emacs[]    = { "st", "-e", "emacs", "-nw", NULL };
61  static const char *ranger[]   = { "st", "-e", "ranger", NULL };
62  static const char *emacsgui[] = { "emacs", NULL };
```

```
63
64  static Key keys[] = {
65          /* modifier                    key            function        argument */
66          { MODKEY,                       XK_p,          spawn,          {.v = dmenucmd } },
67          { MODKEY,                       XK_Return,     spawn,          {.v = termcmd } },
68          { MODKEY,                       XK_b,          togglebar,      {0} },
69          { MODKEY,                       XK_j,          focusstack,     {.i = +1 } },
70          { MODKEY,                       XK_k,          focusstack,     {.i = -1 } },
71          { MODKEY,                       XK_i,          incnmaster,     {.i = +1 } },
72          { MODKEY,                       XK_d,          incnmaster,     {.i = -1 } },
73          { MODKEY,                       XK_h,          setmfact,       {.f = -0.05} },
74          { MODKEY,                       XK_l,          setmfact,       {.f = +0.05} },
75          { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             XK_Return,     zoom,           {0} },
76          { MODKEY,                       XK_Tab,        view,           {0} },
77          { MODKEY,                       XK_q,          killclient,     {0} },
78          { MODKEY,                       XK_t,          setlayout,      {.v = &layouts[0]} },
79          { MODKEY,                       XK_f,          setlayout,      {.v = &layouts[1]} },
80          { MODKEY,                       XK_m,          setlayout,      {.v = &layouts[2]} },
81          { MODKEY,                       XK_space,      setlayout,      {0} },
82          { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             XK_space,      togglefloating, {0} },
83          { MODKEY,                       XK_0,          view,           {.ui = ~0 } },
84          { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             XK_0,          tag,            {.ui = ~0 } },
85          { MODKEY,                       XK_comma,      focusmon,       {.i = -1 } },
86          { MODKEY,                       XK_period,     focusmon,       {.i = +1 } },
87          { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             XK_comma,      tagmon,         {.i = -1 } },
88          { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             XK_period,     tagmon,         {.i = +1 } },
89          TAGKEYS(                        XK_1,                          0)
90          TAGKEYS(                        XK_2,                          1)
91          TAGKEYS(                        XK_3,                          2)
92          TAGKEYS(                        XK_4,                          3)
93          TAGKEYS(                        XK_5,                          4)
94          TAGKEYS(                        XK_6,                          5)
95          TAGKEYS(                        XK_7,                          6)
96          TAGKEYS(                        XK_8,                          7)
97          TAGKEYS(                        XK_9,                          8)
98          { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             XK_q,          quit,           {0} },
99          { MODKEY,                       XK_w,          spawn,          {.v = qbrowser } },
100         { MODKEY,                       XK_e,          spawn,          {.v = emacs } },
101         { MODKEY,                       XK_r,          spawn,          {.v = ranger } },
102         { MODKEY|ShiftMask,             XK_e,          spawn,          {.v = emacsgui } },
103 };
104
105 /* button definitions */
106 /* click can be ClkLtSymbol, ClkStatusText, ClkWinTitle, ClkClientWin, or ClkRootWin */
107 static Button buttons[] = {
108         /* click              event mask      button        function        argument */
109         { ClkLtSymbol,        0,              Button1,      setlayout,      {0} },
110         { ClkLtSymbol,        0,              Button3,      setlayout,      {.v = &layouts[2]} },
111         { ClkWinTitle,        0,              Button2,      zoom,           {0} },
112         { ClkStatusText,      0,              Button2,      spawn,          {.v = termcmd } },
113         { ClkClientWin,       MODKEY,         Button1,      movemouse,      {0} },
114         { ClkClientWin,       MODKEY,         Button2,      togglefloating, {0} },
115         { ClkClientWin,       MODKEY,         Button3,      resizemouse,    {0} },
116         { ClkTagBar,          0,              Button1,      view,           {0} },
117         { ClkTagBar,          0,              Button3,      toggleview,     {0} },
118         { ClkTagBar,          MODKEY,         Button1,      tag,            {0} },
119         { ClkTagBar,          MODKEY,         Button3,      toggletag,      {0} },
120 };
121
```

Self Reflection

I will always remember my first day of high school. In fact I had three of those particular - yet scary - experiences.

As of today, I'm writing this document as an exchange student in Sandy Creek High School, but my scholastic career has started across the Atlantic Ocean, all the way to a little town on the Italian east coast. I had done both elementary and middle school in my very small hometown, to then start high school in the very same place. After half of the 9th grade had already passed, I decided that I was done. I couldn't bear to spend another school year in the same place I've been for fourteen year: so I applied to a different school in a different town for 10th grade. Everything initially was exciting and such, but after a while it simply got back to that usual, boring "normality."

All this taught me - or at least I thought so - that I must have certainly been doing something wrong, so I figured that since going to school in a different town hadn't worked out so well, I should just try to change continent. And here I am, thousands of mile away from home enjoying this experience, but has something really changed? Of course, something must have changed. I met new people, visited interesting places, survived the winter, etc, etc… Yet, when it comes down to school, fundamentally, nothing much has changed.

So, what's the problem here? Should I just drop school and go around the world in some kind of crazy romantic adventure, just to break out of the routine and never be bored again? It might seem logical, but the answer is no, for two reasons. The first is that it would be way too impractical for me to attempt such a thing, and the second is that it probably won't be the best solution.

"The best solution to a problem, is usually the easiest one," and in fact, in this case, it is. It might seem obvious or a little cliche, but the answer to all my problems, was not to change my surroundings, but to change my attitude: even if one moves to a different town, makes new friends and have new experiences, nothing will change until he realises that nothing will change, until he first changes himself.