

Student Achievement Testing and Impact on Curriculum

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Teachers Teach What Is on the Test


Teachers Teach What is in the Textbook

- To what extent are either or both of these claims correct?



The Need for a Comparative Framework

- You can't understand the effects of testing on curriculum by looking just at tests.



Research on Teacher Decisions About What to Teach

- What is taught is a strong determinant of what students learn.
- Teacher content decisions vary enormously.
- What might influence teacher decisions about what to teach?



An Approach to High-Stakes Testing: A Theory for Standards Based Reform

- Specificity
- Consistency/alignment
- Authority: norms, law, expertise, charisma
- Power: rewards and sanctions
- Stability



Provisions of No Child Left Behind

Testing

- Annual assessments in grades 3 through 8 and once in grades 10 through 12 (2005-2006)
 - Math and reading
 - Aligned with state content standards
- Three levels of achievement standards: advanced, proficient, basic
- LEP students tested in their own language, except reading tested in English after three consecutive years of instruction in U.S.
- 95% of all students tested



Provisions of No Child Left Behind

School Accountability

- 100% of students proficient by 2013-2014
 - Data disaggregated: poverty, race, LEP, disability
- Schools must meet adequate yearly progress to bring all students to 100% proficient
 - Schools failing two consecutive years: students can transfer to another public school
 - Schools failing three consecutive years: students entitled to supplemental education services

What Are The Facts About High-Stakes Testing?

- Either positive or negative effects are possible, depending upon:
 - The setting
 - The approach

What Do We Know About the Effects of High-Stakes Testing on Student Achievement

- Many believe high-stakes testing has negative effects on student achievement
 - Narrows the curriculum
 - Dumbs down the curriculum
 - Replaces intrinsic motivation with extrinsic motivation
- Big positive effects when testing writing
- Positive effects on achievement gap in the 1970's when using minimum competency testing
- Results from NAEP long-term trend provide unclear picture



A Theory for Doing High-Stakes Testing

- Set a good target
- Make accountability symmetric
- Make the accountability system fair



Setting A Good Target

- ❑ Breadth of subjects
- ❑ Breadth of grades
- ❑ New parallel form each year
- ❑ Test all students
- ❑ Promoting the learning of worthwhile curriculum: alignment, performance assessment
- ❑ Reasonable performance goal and improvement targets

Symmetry

- Accountability for students
 - High school graduation
 - Grade to grade promotion
 - Test scores on transcript
- Accountability for schools
 - Choice
 - Supplemental service
 - Reconstitution
 - School and/or teacher bonuses
 - Distinguished educator



Developing A Fair System

- Supports for students
- Supports for schools
- Accuracy of the data
 - Standard errors; decision consistency
 - Reliability
 - Validity



NCLB Re-authorization in 2007

- Big Idea – Should we stay with a focus on outputs or go back to the old regulations concerning inputs

Setting a Good Target

- ❑ Test more subjects
- ❑ More testing at the high school level (e.g. end of course testing)
- ❑ More reasonable AYP targets; standardize the definition of proficient
- ❑ Better, more focused standards that are clear on what is and what is not to be taught
- ❑ Tests that are more tightly aligned to the standards
- ❑ Move away from a focus on percent proficient to an indicator that is a function of the achievement of all students



Symmetric

- Should NCLB address the issue of student accountability? If so, what form should it take and what should be the stakes?

Fair

- Is NCLB fully funded?
- Should there be some tightening up of the state decisions about disaggregated group size, confidence intervals and trajectory?
- Are the provisions for students with disabilities working (e.g. grade level alternate standards, testing accommodations, alternative assessments, the 1 and 2% rules)?
- Does there need to be some rethinking of supplemental educational services (e.g. insist on one-on-one tutoring)?
- Does there need to be a better definition of highly qualified teacher and the distribution of teachers to schools as a function of the percent of students from low income families?