teachers and tests changes in the new york state testing program

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Abstract

How do teachers change their pedagogical practices? While many current initiatives seek to raise educational standards and improve student academic performance, there is a curious gap in national and state reforms. Considerable attention is given to defining higher expectations for what students will know and be able to do, yet little attention is given to how teachers should learn new pedagogical ideas and practices. This exploratory study uses focus group interview data collected over two years to examine how cross-subject matter groups of elementary and secondary New York State teachers respond to one way of learning to change their classroom practices: state-level testing. Analysis of the data highlights three issues: the nature and substance of the tests, the professional development opportunities available to teachers, and the rationales for and consequences of the state exams.

Keywords

Educational Change; Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; Focus Groups; Professional Development; State Programs; Teacher Attitudes; Teachers; Test Use; Testing Programs

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Discussion

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The problem is, teacher testing is not a good indicator of teacher quality. An MIT study found "state mandated teacher testing is associated with increases in teacher wages, though we find no evidence of a corresponding increase in quality." Additional Resource:
http://www.habermanfoundation.org/. "Instead of beginning with ascertaining the job tasks of New York teachers, the two LAST examinations began with the premise that all New York teachers should be required to demonstrate an understanding of the liberal arts," Judge Wood wrote. Scholarly studies have found differences among four factors that influence teacher quality: subject-matter knowledge, academic ability, experience, and professional certification and training. Test results are then sent to the New York State Education Department. To earn an Initial Certificate in New York, you must pass: edTPA : This is a certification-specific teacher performance assessment that examines your level of preparedness as a teacher. Educating All Students Test (EAS) : This exam checks your level of proficiency in teaching diverse student populations, English language learners, and students with disabilities. However, if you completed a "substantially equivalent" out-of-state teacher education program, but didn't meet experience requirements, you must pass the EAS test and respective CST before teaching. If you hold a Conditional Initial Certificate, you can teach while completing your edTPA performance assessment. The testing trend, which is especially strong in the South, is closely tied to concern that the performance of students is declining, a concern that has been reflected in surveys by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is a Federal program to monitor the schools. More and more, teachers are being held responsible for what are perceived to be failures. Organizations representing teachers already employed have generally been able to turn back efforts for periodic on-the-job testing, leaving the movement to focus on new candidates for teaching positions. The New York State Board of Regents has proposed to extend throughout the state the testing programs for new teachers that are now confined to New York City and Buffalo. The Legislature must act on the proposal.