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An analysis of elementary teachers' attitudes toward standardized achievement testing

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AN ANALYSIS OF
ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDES
TOWARD STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

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The School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

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Approved by:



Official Advisor

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DEDICATION

My husband, George, whose love, support, patience, and encouragement have helped tremendously.

My son, Blake, who has been patient when mommy was busy.

My parents, Jay and Ernestine, who have encouraged me to continue my education.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Purpose of the Study

During the last two decades the use of standardized testing has increased in our nation's schools. According to Pipho of the Education Commission of the States, "Nearly every large education reform effort of the last few years has either mandated a form of testing or expanded uses of existing testing." (Haney, Maudus, 1989 p. 684).

As the quantity of testing in schools has increased, complaints about standardized tests have intensified in volume and intensity (Haney, Maudus, 1989). Neil and Medina noted that "the billion dollar-a-year testing industry is governed by virtually no state or federal regulatory structures." (Neil, and Medina, 1989, p. 695).

Standardized tests are used to compare schools and to compare teachers. Standardized tests determine if students will be admitted to college, determine grade placement, evaluate pupil progress, group pupils for instructional purposes, and evaluate the progress of a student from year to year. Rayborn stated, "Currently,

the only practical way of comparing a school system's performance to a well-defined national standard is through the use of test scores." (Rayborn, 1989).

Because standardized testing has increased and is playing a larger role in education it has become a concern to students, parents, teachers, and educational leaders. Because standardized tests are in widespread use, it is important for educators to know what they are and how they can be helpful or harmful to the education process.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this project was to analyze elementary teachers attitudes' toward the use of standardized achievement tests.

Assumptions

This author assumed that the survey questions were valid. Another assumption was that the teachers were honest in completing the survey. It was assumed that the participants were interested and willing to complete the survey. It was assumed that the sample was representative of the general teaching profession.

Limitations

One fact which may have affected the internal

validity was that the teachers were from the same region. A small sample size was used which may affect the results. A final factor involving internal validity was that only elementary teachers were surveyed.

Definition of Terms

Attitude is state of mind behavior, or conduct, as indicating one's feeling, opinions, or purpose.

Elementary teachers are teachers who have a bachelors degree in elementary education (grades one through six or grades one through eight) and/or validation to teach kindergarten.

Likert scale is a simple and widely used self-report method for measuring attitude. It lists clearly favorable or unfavorable attitude statements and the subjects respond to each statement on the following five point scale: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Characteristics of Standardized Tests

There are many standardized tests available for use. There are standardized achievement, criterion referenced, individual subject, and skill tests. (Gronlund 1981)

The basic characteristics of standardized achievement tests were described by Gronlund (1981). Standardized achievement tests have a fixed set of test items designed to measure a clearly defined achievement domain. These tests will also have specific directions for administering and scoring. The test will also have norms based on representative groups of individuals like those for whom the test were designed.

Most standardized achievement tests include basic similarities. Most of the tests measure the basic skill areas of reading, language, mathematics, and study skills. The following subtests are typical of those used in each basic skill area:

- Reading
 - Decoding
 - Vocabulary
 - Comprehension

Language

Mechanics
Expression
Spelling

Study Skills

Library and Reference
Reading Maps, Graphs and Tables
(Gronlund 1981)

Rayborn suggested that all standardized tests had these basic characteristics in common.

1. Standardized achievement tests are designed to measure only some of the skills typically taught in schools, generally the skills considered basic or fundamental. No standardized achievement test measures every important skill; instead, test makers select samples of these skills.

2. Even the best standardized achievement test will not match a school system's curriculum exactly. Objectives or skills unique to a local school system aren't likely to be tested.

3. The process used to develop a standardized achievement test ensures coverage of what is taught in most textbooks.

4. The test items on a standardized achievement test are worded in such a way as to be consistent with the terminology used in most textbooks.

5. Scales used to compare scores on a standardized test are called norms; they allow for a comparison of scores with a reference group. This reference group typically is a sample of students or school systems whose ethnic, social, and regional makeup reflects that of the nation as a whole-not of a specific community.

6. Norms are developed during the year the test is developed and are not changed each year. As a result, changes in scores from year to year can be compared to the same benchmark. (Rayborn 1989)

Having established the characteristics of standardized tests the types of standardized tests will

now be reviewed.

Types of Standardized Tests

There are many different types of standardized tests available for use in evaluating students. Some of the widely used achievement tests were listed by Gronlund (1981). These tests include: California Achievement Tests, Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Sequential Tests of Educational Progress, S. R. A. Achievement Series, and Stanford Achievement Tests. (Gronlund 1981)

Having reviewed the types of standardized tests the purposes of standardized tests will be explored.

Purposes of Standardized Tests

Standardized achievement tests serve many purposes in the field of education. Education has entered an age of accountability. For the majority of educators testing is away of measuring accountability. Brown declared, "Almost everyone we talked to is determining educational success or progress on the basis of scores on commercial standardized norm-referenced tests". (1989 p. 31)

Education has greatly evolved during the last two decades. Brown stated,

The definition of literacy that sufficed

for an earlier generation and a different economy has been replaced by a higher list of literacies: computer, scientific, civic, cultural and so on.

(1989)

As a result of this change standardized testing has developed to gauge progress in the various literacies.

There is a need for justifiable and consistent standards for graduates and teachers. According to Wiggins, "Standardized testing evolved and proliferated because the school transcript became untrustworthy." (Wiggins a 1989 p. 31) What does an "A" really mean? What criteria determined this grade? Standardized testing is used as a reference of comparing achievement. (Wiggins a 1989)

The manner in which the United States educational system is controlled is another factor for the necessity of standardized achievement tests. In the United States the educational system developed with local control as opposed to central control. Because of this local control curriculum and achievement varies greatly in the United States. Because the achievement varies pressure from the media, parents, taxpayers, legislators, and businessmen have encouraged the use of standardized testing. In many European countries where education is centrally controlled there is no need for standardized testing. Standardized testing is virtually nonexistent in these countries. (Salmon-Cox 1981).

Now that the types and purposes of standardized tests have been presented concerns about the validity and reliability of standardized tests will be reviewed.

Criticism of Standardized Tests

The testing industry maintains that standardized testing is a reliable and objective method for evaluating the area covered by a specific test. This contention is generally supported by scientific data developed through accepted research processes. However, a number of sources have questioned the validity and reliability of both specific standardized tests and of the process in general. (Marzano and Costa, 1988)

A major area of concern relates to the fact that the industry is almost totally unregulated. There is no government or private agency which performs comprehensive reviews and evaluations of tests. Support data used to establish the reliability and validity of tests is normally developed and distributed by the test vendor. Questions have been raised about certain studies being inadequate either in terms of size and/or method. In many cases only selected edited backup data is released with the balance considered a trade secret. Purchasers of tests rarely have the resources to question data supplied by test vendors. If various

tests are evaluated, this information is normally only used internally by that organization in making a purchasing decision. Additionally many older tests have never been updated with more advanced research methods and results. (Neill and Medina, 1989) Neill and Medina concluded, "Since knowledge and language are culture-bound there is no reason to believe that a culture free test can be produced." (Neill and Medina, 1989, page 692) As a result while there are a multitude of questions about the data basis for standardized tests there is no effective review process readily available to educators.

Beyond the data many have questioned the basic assumptions on which standardized testing is founded. Much of this concern has centered around the test goal of converting the individuals knowledge, abilities, and skills into a sortable score or series of scores. Tests have usually been constructed based on an expected bell curve distribution of scores. Yet the bell curve is a statistical tool not a naturally occurring phenomenon. The effort to obtain these scores has generally focused on testing for specific facts, mechanical processes, and basic skills. The tests do not relate to complex information processing and utilization skills needed in modern society. (Marzano and Costa, 1988)

A criticism which has developed in recent years

relates to testing of members of low income and/or minority populations who as a group generally perform below average on most tests. Tests are usually prepared based on the language and culture of the middle and upper class white portion of the population. This has produced questions as to whether the tests are giving a realistic view of skills and abilities of the low income and minority populations. (Neill and Medina, 1989)

Assuming the tests are properly designed and tested the process remains open to criticism as it can be skewed by the methods of administration. The test vendor usually has no direct control over this phase of the process beyond recommendations contained in the test manual. The environment the test is presented in can do much to impact the results. The most obvious factors are the physical surrounding and the personnel administering the test. (Neill and Medina, 1989)

The characteristics, types, purposes, and criticisms of standardized tests have already been established in this paper. This researcher would like to focus on the uses and misuses of standardized tests in the next section.

Uses and Misuses of Standardized Tests

Standardized tests are used internally within the educational system to segment the student population.

This was the primary goal for which tests were originally developed and continues to be the purpose of most tests produced. The tests are intended to determine levels of achievement, competency, and basic skills. Screening is performed for a variety of purposes including selection for remedial programs, gifted programs, and specific skill proficiency (such as english or math). Some states require passing a standard test prior to graduation and high school dropouts are awarded their GED through a standardized testing process. Colleges and other post high school training institutions utilize standardized testing in reviewing applicants for entry to school and in many cases to particular courses of study. Tests are also used by many government agencies, including the military, and some private businesses to screen applicants for entry and then to match them with specific jobs. (Neill and Medina, 1989)

Increasingly in recent years the test results have also been used to evaluate the overall performance of various groups ranging from specific classrooms to entire states. School districts compare individual teacher performance by looking at results of specific classrooms or grades. Administrators are reviewed in terms of specific programs, buildings or the entire districts. Counties, regions, and states are compared

to each and other and to past performance. A similar process occurs at the national level with results for the entire country compared to other nations and to previous years. (Marzano and Costa, 1988)

Each of the uses of standardized tests has produced a related misuse and abuse. The number and type of standardized tests continues to increase. During the 1986-87 school year public schools in the United States administered 105 million standardized tests to 39.8 million students. This equals 2.5 tests per student per year, an average of 30 by graduation. The number of tests administered is increasing each year. Beyond the volume of tests concerns have been expressed regarding the targets of some of the testing. Districts with high minority and/or low income populations generally do more testing than other districts. Testing has also been used to screen and place preschool and pre-third grade students. Tests at this age/development level have been shown to have low reliability. Test results are also in certain cases used arbitrarily to include or exclude students from certain programs without allowing for any other input. Such actions can delay individual progress and contribute to students dropping out. (Neill and Medina, 1989)

Results of tests are in many cases being used in ways that the test developers never intended and for

which the tests were never deigned or researched. Tests designed to evaluate individuals are being used as the basis for decisions affecting entire schools, districts, states, and in many ways the entire nation. Curriculums are being narrowed to match the facts and basic skills covered by most testing and also to allow for the increasing amount of time consumed by testing. This has produced a negative attitude toward testing by many students, teachers, and administrators. Schools are compared based on the misguided concept that all student populations are equal to begin with and that all schools have the same resources to apply. Voters and political leaders expect "their school" to perform at or above average. Schools which fail are too frequently "punished" by reduced funding. All schools are encouraged to be above the average, which is a mathematical impossibility. (Neill and Medina, 1989)

A serious misuse of standardized testing is that many teachers are coaching their students on how to take the test. As a result, higher order thinking was ignored according to Neill and Medina. (1989)

Testimony was given at a 1981 National Institute of Education hearing on minimum competency testing. The testimony reported that students in New York City read dozens of short paragraphs with short answer questions. This was done to duplicate the form of the standardized

test that the students would be taking in the spring. The Virginia Department of Education observed that some teachers didn't teach adding and subtracting because Virginia's minimum competency test included questions on multiplication and division but excluded questions of addition and subtraction. (Neill and Medina, 1989)

Each of the articles or studies reviewed by this researcher show the multiple aspects of standardized testing and the impact they have on students who are our main focus. All educators that are involved in any aspect of standardized testing should fully understand the administration of the test. Educators should also understand and respect the limitations of standardized tests.

In the preceding material a thorough background has been presented on standardized testing. The research presented has given prospective to the characteristics, types, purposes, criticisms, uses, and misuses of standardized tests. This researcher would like to present attitudes toward standardized testing of participants in the process. The participants include not only teachers, students, and administrators who are directly involved in testing but also parents, elected officials, and the general public who consume the information produced and pay the costs incurred.

Attitudes of Participants Toward Standardized Tests

Because of the increase in standardized testing, the questions concerning reliability and validity of standardized tests, and the uses and misuses of the test results the attitudes of participants toward this process vary greatly.

Standardized testing has an impact on teachers in a personal way. The public views student performance on standardized tests as a significant factor reflecting the teacher's teaching methods and skills. Hence a teachers attitude may be reflected when a student takes a standardized test. When an instructor expresses a desire for the student to do well on the standardized test, the students will try to perform in a manner to please the teacher. When the teachers attitude reflects ambivalence or mistrust toward standardized tests, the students may not worry about their performance.

(Kirkland, 1971)

Bloom (1982) concluded that student attitudes could account for up to a twenty-five percent variance in performance on standardized achievement tests.

Karmos and Karmos were concerned about students' poor attitude toward achievement tests. They studied how these attitudes are related to actual test performance. They administered attitudinal surveys to students in grades 6-9 from three schools. Three

questions from the surveys directly related to the attitudes of educators and the school system. The survey questions: "My teachers want me to do well on achievement tests." and "My teachers think achievement tests are important." showed a weak correlation to test performance. "My school makes good use of achievement test results showed a stronger correlation to test performance. (Karmos and Karmos 1984)

Karmos and Karmos made the following recommendations after studying the results of their survey. It was recommended that schools clarify the use made of achievement test scores. Another recommendation was that teachers need to examine the kinds of attitudes that they convey toward standardized achievement tests. A final recommendation was to engage students in test anxiety reduction activities. (Karmos and Karmos 1984)

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Subjects

The subjects of this study consisted of elementary teachers from the county school system. Twenty-five teachers were surveyed. The teachers taught grades four, six, and eight. The years of teaching experience spanned from eleven to thirty-five years. All of the teachers surveyed had a bachelor's degree. Seventy-one percent of the teachers also held a master's degree. The class size ranged between twenty-one and thirty-six students.

The teachers had administered the California Achievement Test during the current school year. All of the standardized achievement testing had been completed in November. The tests were computer scored. The teachers had already reviewed the results of the tests when they completed the survey.

Setting

School. The school is a rural county system in southeastern Ohio. It has four small high schools housing grades nine through twelve and six elementary

schools housing grades kindergarten through eight. Both the high schools and elementary schools are fully accredited by the North Central Association.

Community. The community was originally settled by the French. The county sits on the banks of the Ohio River and borders the state of West Virginia. This area is considered to be part of the Appalachian Region.

The major industries include agriculture, meat processing plant, automotive parts manufacturing company, two coal fueled power plants, a manufacturer of small electric motors, and logging industry. Industry on the Ohio River includes shipping, and a repair station for barges and tow boats. The county also has a large medical facility, residential mental health complex, and a small university. Because of the county's scenic terrain and proximity to the Ohio River businesses relating to tourism and recreational activities are beginning to flourish.

The county also has several small museums, a restored historic theater and many churches and charitable organizations.

Data Collection

Construction of Questionnaire. The author researched nine articles and one book selection from two university libraries. This indepth study of material

provided the basis for the review of literature for this endeavor. After reviewing the literature, supervisors, college professors, and teaching colleagues were informally selected to be interviewed concerning their thoughts and concerns on the impact of standardized testing and the use made of the results. This information was compiled and a fifteen question survey was developed on the topic of standardized testing.

The Likert-style questionnaire was constructed on the topic of standardized tests and testing. The questionnaire was reviewed by nine colleagues and one professor. The questionnaire was field tested with two elementary teachers.

Administration of Questionnaire. The questionnaire was delivered to each teacher's mailbox by our inter-school mail system. The cover letter instructed the teacher to return the completed questionnaire the next day via the inter-school mail system. Twenty-five teachers were surveyed. Sixteen of the surveys were completed and returned. Three of the surveys were returned partially completed. The data from these particular surveys was not included in the findings. The surveys were distributed during the last week of the school year. The low return rate may be attributed to the inefficiency of the inter-school mail system or the amount of paperwork required of teachers at that particular time of the school year.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Presentation of Results

The results of this study can be found in Table One "Standardized Test Attitudes of Teachers Expressed as Percentile Scores".

The questions from the survey appear in the first column. Following are the responses to the questions for each of these categories: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. All numbers are expressed as percents and were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Eighty percent of the teachers indicated that they disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that all standardized tests are reliable. Fourteen percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Seventy-three percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that all standardized tests are valid. Thirteen percent agreed with the statement. Thirteen percent responded to undecided.

Ninety-three percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that a student's classroom abilities are more important than standardized test scores. Seven percent of the teachers were undecided and none of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Fifty percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that standardized tests are uniformly administered in their school system. Twenty-six percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Forty-seven percent of the teachers agree or strongly agree with the statement: Teachers "teach" material which they anticipate will be covered on standardized tests before students take these tests. Thirty-four percent of the teachers indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Forty percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that: Standardized test score abuse exists in your school system. Thirty-four percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Seventy-three percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that schools are compared with one another on the basis of standardized test results. Twenty percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Sixty-seven percent of the teachers disagreed or

strongly disagreed that teachers make use of standardized scores in a wise manner. Twenty-seven percent were undecided.

Forty percent of the teachers agree or strongly agree that teachers are involved in selecting tests in your system. Thirty three percent disagreed of strongly disagreed with this statement.

Forty percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that teachers' classroom performance are evaluated on the basis of their standardized test scores. Thirty-four percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Sixty-seven percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that teachers are given adequate instruction prior to administering standardized tests.

Ninety-three percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that parents understand standardized test scores. Zero percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Eighty percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that teachers are given adequate training prior to administering standardized tests. Thirteen percent of the teachers were undecided.

Fifty-three percent of the teachers disagreed with the statement that scores obtained from standardized tests are useful to the classroom teacher. Twenty-seven percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Sixty percent of the teachers responded that they disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that administrators make use of standardized test in a wise manner. Thirty-three percent of the teachers responded as undecided.

Discussion of Results

Most of the results from this questionnaire compare favorably with the results of other researchers and the researcher's teaching experience concerning attitudes toward standardized testing.

The majority of the teachers surveyed indicated that they have reservations regarding the reliability of standardized tests. Neill and Medina reported that, "The claims that standardized tests exhibit a high level of reliability are usually taken to mean that test results for a given individual will be similar in successive administrations." (Neill and Medina, 1989, p. 689) The type of reliability that is generally measured and reported for standardized tests is internal or

inter-forum reliability. "Consistency over time, is rarely measured and reported by test publishers," according to Neill and Medina (1989 p. 683). Reliability is much lower when it is administered to students below grade three.

The majority of the teachers responded that they question the validity of standardized tests. Neill and Medina reported that validity encompasses several levels: content validity, criterion validity, and construct validity. Many standardized tests only validate the content. The test developers that go beyond content validity generally rely on other tests to demonstrate criterion or construct validity. Neill and Medina also noted that standardized tests have not evolved with the changes in child growth and development studies. Because the tests have not evolved this may also make them invalid. (Neill and Medina 1989)

Most of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that standardized tests are uniformly administered. It has been the experience of this researcher that the tests are not uniformly administered. Some teachers test only in the morning while other teachers test during the entire school day. Some teachers give cues or pronounce words on the tests for students, while other teachers strictly follow the guidelines provided in the testing manual.

Many of the teachers agreed that teachers "teach" to the test. The opinion of researchers was divided regarding this issue. Some researchers viewed teaching to the test as a positive while others saw it as a negative.

There was also division as to the degree to which standardized tests results should be utilized in developing and refining course work. Genck promoted the idea of scrutinizing tests scores to locate weaknesses in the curriculum. He remarked that, "The best test scores I've seen were in school systems that did two things: analyzed test scores and conducted ongoing surveys of parent and teacher attitudes toward the school system." (Genck 1989 p. 28)

Cox (1981) indicated that a survey had revealed that teachers use standardized test information as a reflection on, or guide to instruction. The information is used in reshaping instructional content, shifting emphasis, or increasing instructional time in particular areas.

Wiggins approach suggests that, "The test is central to instruction" "Any tests and final exams inevitably cast their shadows on all prior work. Thus they not only monitor standards, but also set them." (Wiggins, 1989 b, p. 704)

Other researchers proposed that standardized testing

was establishing the curriculum. These researchers felt that changes made to curriculum relating to standardized testing would make education stagnant.

The majority of the teachers indicated that teachers do not use standardized test scores in a wise manner. Cox reported that when the classroom performance and the test performance are divergent that the teacher was likely to give more credence to the student's classroom performance than the standardized test score. When the test score is below the student's performance, the standardized test score tends to be discounted. When a student scores higher than was anticipated, it serves as a "red flag" to indicate that the teacher has missed something. (Cox 1981)

Lytle concluded, "Recent research holds the teacher's classroom judgments of students' abilities are as accurate as standardized test results." (Lytle 1988 p. 10) This correlates with the view of most teachers that their students classroom performance is of equal or greater importance than standardized test scores.

Many teachers thought that teachers' classroom performance are evaluated on the basis of their standardized test scores. Lytle disclosed that, "At times standardized tests are used for unintended purposes or functions such as to play a significant role in determining the fate of a teacher or a school."

(Lytle, 1988, p. 9)

The survey revealed that many of the teachers felt that they had not been adequately trained to administer the tests. The teacher's also disclosed that they felt they had not been given adequate instruction prior to administering the test. Standardized tests are popular because they are thought to be inexpensive, and easy to administer. However, the survey suggests that teachers feel uncomfortable about effectively administering these tests. Because they feel they lack the proper background may lead to a negative attitude toward the standardized tests.

The strongest response on the survey was that ninety-three percent of the teachers disagreed with the statement that parents understand standardized test scores. This researcher has experienced parents that become alarmed by a single low score. The parents seem to be unable to look at the set of scores as a composite. Other parents tend to become overly excited by one high score and tend to disregard the other scores. These scores are complex and must be viewed as a unit. Because decisions are made concerning a student based on standardized test scores a specific time should be appropriated to thoroughly discuss the test results with the parents.

Sixty percent of the teachers surveyed indicated

that administrators do not use test scores in a wise manner. Test scores are linked to the amount of operating funds allotted to schools. Standardized test scores are also required on grant proposal applications. The teachers however think that there are more practical applications which are being overlooked.

TABLE I
STANDARDIZED TEST ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS
EXPRESSED AS PERCENT SCORES

Question	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. All standardized tests are reliable: (the results of what the test measures are consistent).	7	7	7	40	40
2. All standardized tests are valid: (the test measures what it says it will measure).	0	13	13	53	20
3. A student's classroom abilities are more important than standardized test scores.	40	53	7	0	0
4. Standardized tests are uniformly administered in your school system.	13	13	13	27	33
5. Teachers "teach" material which they anticipate will be covered on standardized tests before students take these tests.	7	40	20	27	7
6. Standardized test score abuse exists in your school system.	13	27	33	20	7

Question	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. Schools are compared with one another on the basis of standardized test results.	33	40	7	13	7
8. Teachers make use of standardized test scores in a wise manner.	0	7	27	47	20
9. Teachers are involved in selecting tests in your system.	20	20	27	20	13
10. Teachers' classroom performance are evaluated on the basis of their standardized test scores.	7	27	27	33	7
11. Teachers are given adequate instruction prior to administering standardized tests.	7	13	13	40	27
12. Parents understand standardized test scores.	0	0	7	40	53
13. Teachers are given adequate training prior to administering standardized tests.	0	7	13	47	33

Question	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. Scores obtained from standardized tests are useful to the classroom teacher.	7	20	20	53	0
15. Administrators make use of standardized test scores in a wise manner.	0	7	33	27	33

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Researchers have reported that the use of standardized testing is increasing in our nation's schools. Standardized testing is playing a larger role in the lives of students, parents, teachers, and educational leaders. Because standardized tests are in such widespread use, it is important to know teachers' attitudes toward the tests. It is also important to know if the tests are viewed by teachers as helpful or harmful to the educational process.

The purpose of this study was to analyze elementary teachers attitudes toward the use of standardized achievement tests.

A Likert-style attitude questionnaire consisting of fifteen questions related to standardized achievement tests was given to a group of twenty-five elementary school teachers. The responses to this survey were collected and tabulated.

The researcher concluded that the majority of the teachers surveyed believe that some of the tests used are unreliable and not valid. This may be based on the fact that many teachers believe that they are

inadequately prepared and trained for administering standardized tests. The results indicated that the teachers feel that tests are administered in a nonuniform manner. The teachers find the test results to be of limited value and often prefer to judge a student by their classroom performance. The survey indicated that teachers believe that test results are not understood well by parents. The test results were thought to be unwisely used by other educators and administrators. The teachers have concluded that in many subject areas they are "teaching to the test". The teachers also believe that their school will be compared to others based on test results.

Conclusion

The researcher concludes that standardized testing plays a significant role in modern education. Standardized testing is often externally motivated by politicians and society. Teachers often ponder the reliability, validity, and appropriateness of standardized testing. Teachers also question the increase in unorthodox uses of test results. Elementary teachers do harbor some negative attitudes toward standardized tests; however the teachers related that when standardized tests are administered and used correctly they may offer valuable information about their students.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that teachers be supplied with complete information as to the planned use of test results both at the local and state levels.

Secondly, the researcher would recommend that the school system offer test and measurements training to teachers through inservices, workshops, or company sponsored seminars.

Additionally, the researcher would recommend that the school system provide individual conferences or a workshop to help parents understand their child's standardized achievement test results.

Finally, the researcher would recommend that the attitudes of teachers toward standardized achievement testing be studied further to determine if a shift in attitude has taken place.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Standardized Test Attitude Questionnaire

Directions: Read each statement. Circle the response that most accurately reflects your attitude toward the statement. The responses are: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.

1. All standardized tests are reliable: (the results of what the test measures are consistent).
SA A U D SD
2. All standardized tests are valid: (the test measures what it says it will measure).
SA A U D SD
3. A student's classroom abilities are more important than standardized test scores.
SA A U D SD
4. Standardized tests are uniformly administrated in your school system.
SA A U D SD
5. Teachers "teach" material which they anticipate will be covered on standardized tests before students take these tests.
SA A U D SD
6. Standardized test score abuse exists in your school system.
SA A U D SD
7. Schools are compared with one another on the basis of standardized test results.
SA A U D SD
8. Teachers make use of standardized test scores in a wise manner.
SA A U D SD

9. Teachers are involved in selecting standardized tests in your system. SA A U D SD
10. Teachers' classroom performance are evaluated on the basis of their standardized test scores. SA A U D SD
11. Teachers are given adequate instruction prior to administering standardized tests. SA A U D SD
12. Parents understand standardized test scores. SA A U D SD
13. Teachers are given adequate training prior to administering standardized tests. SA A U D SD
14. Scores obtained from standardized tests are useful to the classroom teacher. SA A U D SD
15. Administrators make use of standardized test scores in a wise manner. SA A U D SD

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