The Impact of Yearly Standardized Tests on Teacher Attitudes and Curriculum

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirement for The Degree Master of Arts in the Graduate School of Marietta College
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*****
Marietta College
2005

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Abstract

In recent years, school districts throughout the United States have used standardized tests as an assessment tool to evaluate student achievement, teacher ability, and administrative success. With these test scores comes the issue of accountability. Students are afraid of failure and not graduating from school, teachers are concerned about job security, and administrators fear the district will lose funding or be put on probation because of low-test scores. Due to the expense of standardized testing, many school districts administer the tests only three or four times within a student’s 12 years of schooling. St. Mary’s Catholic School, which is governed by the Diocese of Steubenville and the State of Ohio, has administered standardized tests yearly for many years. This study investigates the yearly use of standardized tests and how it impacts the teachers’ attitude toward teaching the curriculum. The implications of the results of this survey and questionnaire will be discussed.
Chapter 1
Introduction

Standardized tests have been part of the educational process in the United States for over 100 years. In the last three decades these tests have been used to make decisions in education for which they were not originally intended. In many school districts standardized test scores can dictate the hiring or firing of teachers and administrators, the rewarding or punishing of schools and the people who work in them, and even funding for school districts. In recent years with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, school districts are being continually pressured to improve their performance on standardized tests. In school districts where there is a high student mobility rate, frequent staff changes, or very low socioeconomic conditions; school districts can be threatened with the possibility of being put on probation or loss of funding because of low-test scores. The purchase and evaluation of these tests is costly for a school district so a student could be tested only three or four times within twelve years of schooling. Due to the infrequency of taking the test, students are unfamiliar with the format and may feel stress or a sense of failure because of low-test scores. Teachers express anxiety in giving the tests, stating they have had little or no
schooling in this area. Are standardized tests the answer to improving our children’s education?

Statement of the Problem

Many school districts are putting the pressure on the teacher to change the curriculum and teach to the test in order to improve the scores without regard to the needs of the students including those who are in gifted or special education programs. The purchase and evaluation of these tests are costly for a school district so students are tested only three or four times within twelve years of schooling. There are some schools, however, that test their students yearly in order to evaluate their progress. There is plenty of research evaluating the teachers’ attitudes toward standardized tests, but nothing involving schools that test all grades on a yearly basis. St. Mary’s Catholic School in Marietta, Ohio does use a standardized test to evaluate their students on a yearly basis. This study investigates the yearly use of standardized tests and how it impacts the teachers’ attitude toward teaching the curriculum.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to determine in what ways teachers change the curriculum to impact test results, to what degree, and in what specific way is it done? Does yearly testing increase or decrease this change and why?
The objectives of this study are: 1. To determine in what specific ways teachers change curriculum to improve test scores. 2. To determine to what degree teachers change curriculum to improve test scores. 3. To determine if yearly testing is beneficial or detrimental in improving test scores. 4. To determine if there is no need to change curriculum to improve test scores.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

1. The participants are certified teachers in grades K through eight at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Marietta, Ohio.
2. The study consists of 15 questions using a Likert Scale and two short answer questions.
3. The questions were the only data gathered.
4. The results of the study may apply only to this select group.
Definition of Terms

1. Standardized test: A test that has been constructed in accord with detailed specifications, one for which the items have been selected after tryout for appropriateness in difficulty and discriminating power, one which is accompanied by a manual giving definite directions for uniform administration and scoring, and one which is provided with relevant and dependable norms for score interpretation.

2. Likert Scale: A scale that requires the subjects to respond to the statements by using a numerical indication of the strength of their feeling toward the object or position described in the statement.

3. Curriculum: A school’s course of study.

4. Norm-reference test: A test that indicates how the pupil’s performance compares with that of other pupils in some appropriate reference group.

5. High-stakes schools: A school with low test scores each year.

6. Low-stakes schools: A school with high test scores each year.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Standardized tests have been part of the educational process in the United States for over 100 years. In the last three decades school systems have used these tests to provide norm-referenced scores of a student’s scholastic knowledge in relation to other students of the same age or grade level. The school might have tested the students only three or four times within the child’s twelve years of schooling. In 2001 President Bush introduced the No Child Left Behind Act requiring states to be accountable for each child’s education with mandatory standardized testing and statewide yearly testing in reading and mathematics for grades three through eight by the 2005-06 school year (Reality Check 2002 (2002) with yearly testing in all grades by 2010 (US Department of Education, 2001).

The companies developing standardized tests try to create an assessment instrument that will provide norm-referenced interpretations of a student’s strengths and weaknesses across subject areas and show a student’s growth over time. These tests are designed to give an evaluation of a student’s knowledge compared to other students nationally. It is not designed to evaluate the quality of a student’s education. This information about a student can be important to the parents to assist at-home studying and
in helping the teacher to guide the student in classroom
instruction (Popham 1999).

Standardized tests are designed to present general
information since curriculum requirements differ from state
to state. First, there are questions on the test that
students haven’t learned about in school because it is not
in their course of study. Second, not all students have the
same intellectual abilities to be able to answer questions
on the test because of the way it is presented. Third,
these tests are trying to assess what students have learned
outside of school. Children from higher socioeconomic
environments do better on the test than children who are
from a lower socioeconomic status. Because of this, test
scores should not be used to evaluate a state, a district,
a school, or a teacher (Popham).

In recent years, especially with the passage of the
No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, more and more pressure is
being put on the teachers and administrators to improve
student scores. These standardized scores are being used to
assess teacher and administrator performance, school
district accountability, and state success or failure in
education. (Popham). As a result, districts are demanding
better scores each year, teachers are threatened with job
and salary security if the class does not improve, and
schools are changing the curriculum to improve test
results. Schools are publicly judged against each other and
even threatened with probationary status and loss of state
funds if student scores do not improve. (Bickham, Burns, & Monahan, 2001).

In a study investigating the effect state testing has on a teacher’s classroom practices, Moon, Brighton, and Callahan (2003) found that regardless of the class ability level, teachers reported spending substantial time, up to 98% of classroom time, in preparation for state-mandated tests, and a sharp decrease in use of these types of activities after the tests. The majority of the teachers reported they omitted subject information from the curriculum because of time needed to prepare for state tests. They felt they must teach to the whole class to help the below average and average students, which took time away from the above average students who didn’t need the test practice. They also felt they needed to prepare the lower level academic students for the state tests because of pressure to show improved scores within the school system. Teachers reported increased use of worksheets, test-taking strategies, review and practice of state-released test items, and practice on the types of item formats found on the state tests, before the state tests, with a significant decrease in use after the tests (Moon et al.).

A survey by Herman, Abedi, and Golan (1994) investigated the effect of standardized testing on 48 schools across the United States. They found that teachers felt less pressure from parents and the community in lower
socioeconomic areas, but more pressure from administration. Students were exposed to a more meager curriculum with little attention to science, art, thinking skills, or anything not included in the standardized tests. The teachers were under greater pressure to improve test scores, so were more inclined to teach test content and test preparation in their instructional programs (Herman et al.)

Urdan, & Paris, (1994) conducted a survey with 300 Michigan teachers who attended two different reading seminars, concerning teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding standardized tests. The data showed that teachers had a negative perception of these tests. Three-fourths of the teachers felt the tests were bad and not worth the time and money spent on them. Less that 10% felt that the tests reflect what students learn in school and only 5% believed that the tests are accurate for minority and limited English speaking students. Less than one-third of the teachers felt that their districts provided adequate training for administration and interpretation of standardized tests and test results (Urdan et al.) Teachers of minority students spent more time preparing for the tests than teachers of white students. The majority of the teachers believed that other teachers teach to the test, and more than half of the teachers felt that parents use the test scores to grade the quality of the school. Only 1% of the teachers felt the parents could understand and use
the test scores appropriately. Nearly all of the teachers said they always spend time preparing their students for standardized tests, and 13% said they practice with the previous year test. Some of the teachers said they help the students during the test administration (Urdan et al.).

Winkler (2002) conducted a year long study with six teachers in five Virginia Schools in the elementary, middle, and secondary levels concerning the difference in attitudes of new and veteran teachers toward standardized tests. The three veteran teachers saw standardized tests as a loss of professionalism and power in choosing how or what to teach in the classroom. They felt that they had to use the “teach to the test” or “one test for all” approach. They complained of increased paperwork, more documentation, and tedious paperwork on individual students. The teachers had to discontinue yearly activities because they did not fit into the testing guide curriculum. They were no longer able to choose instructional strategies based on student needs, as it didn’t fit into the chronological order of the pacing guide for the curriculum. These teachers felt that the standardized tests imposed a narrow and rigid view of education from the standpoint of their educational philosophies (Winkler).

The three new teachers saw the standardized tests as a gain instead of a loss. They felt working with the other teachers in the department on a weekly basis was an asset to the teachers and the students. They liked having the
structure of knowing what material must be covered and that all the students are learning the same information. These new teachers did not have the wealth of resources the veteran teachers had acquired over the years, so they felt comfort in having a strict curriculum to follow. Finally, the new teachers felt there was enough flexibility to teach in a way they wanted within the required pacing and content guidelines. The new teachers did not feel that they were teaching to the test, rather to a set of guidelines that are necessary for the students to know (Winkler).

The data from the survey showed that the strict curriculum guidelines provided a way for the teachers to get organized and focused, showed the parents that their children were really learning something, and proved that the administrator and the teachers were following the rules (Winkler).

Karanja (1999) conducted a survey with 20 teachers from two Connecticut school districts, one suburban and the other urban. According to the findings, the teachers’ attitudes toward standardized tests were negative. They felt the tests were not a reliable or valid measure of student achievement, but did represent to some degree student ability. They felt test scores should not be part of a teacher’s evaluation as the student achievement scores were beyond their control. The survey showed the teachers felt they did not receive enough schooling to understand
the value, vocabulary, or procedures of the test to use it in appropriate ways to benefit the students (Karanja).

Ballengee (2000) conducted a survey to determine the relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward standardized tests and how these tests influence their instructional program. The participants were 20 elementary teachers employed at Hutchinson Elementary School in Herndon, Virginia. The school is located in a suburban area close to Washington D.C. with a student body representing over 30 countries from working and middle class families. The results of the survey found that the majority of the teachers felt the test was not reliable or valid due to the large number of immigrants, ESL (English as a second language), transient, and impoverished students at Hutchison. All the teachers agreed that ongoing student achievement evaluation within the classroom was more important than the test scores. They felt that test scores were not provided within a time frame that was useful for the teacher, since the test was given in May and the results were returned during the summer after the school year was over. All the teachers said they spend time preparing students for the test at least 4 weeks in advance, and used up to half of the day using drills and games and teaching test-taking skills to prepare the students for the test. All the teachers eliminated or cut back on classroom activities or subject matter not included on the test in order to cover the testable material. Three-
fourths of the teachers felt the parents did not understand the test scores, and more than half of the teachers felt the administration did not use the score results wisely. Almost all of the teachers felt that there was too much emphasis put on standardized test scores and that the schools should not be compared on the basis of the scores. (Ballengee).

A study by Abrama, Pedulla, and Madaus (2003) researched attitudes of teachers working in high and low-stake schools. Teachers in high-stake schools admitted to sacrificing content instruction in order to teach to the test, giving up field trips and creative projects to spend more time on test preparation, being forced to compromise their teaching beliefs, and increasing pressure from administration to improve test scores. A much lower percentage of teachers in low-stake schools expressed the same concerns (Abrama et al.).

Summary

Most teachers have a negative attitude towards standardized tests. They feel this type of assessment does not give an accurate picture of student abilities since the test is not able to give a score for problem solving and creativity. The teachers feel threatened by the administration and parents to improve student scores even though they believe it is not within the teacher’s control to do this. They also feel they have not had enough
schooling to understand how to read the scores or to properly administer the test. Considerable research has been done evaluating teacher attitudes of periodic standardized testing, but research on teacher attitudes toward yearly standardized testing is limited in this paper.
Chapter 3
Method

Research Site

The survey was conducted at St. Mary’s Catholic Elementary, a private parochial school supported by the St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Marietta, Ohio. The State of Ohio and the Diocese of Steubenville accredits the school, which provides educational needs for children from preschool through the eighth grade. A half-day Montessori preschool program is available for three and four year olds, while five and six year olds attend a full day kindergarten program. There are 34 accredited teachers and aides on staff to accommodate 250 students. The numbers of students range from 15 to 25 per class. Surveys were sent to accredited teachers who have administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills yearly at St. Mary’s School. Some type of yearly standardized test has been administered at St. Mary’s School for at least 30 years.

Subjects

The participants in the study were kindergarten through eighth grade teachers who are certified by the state of Ohio and have yearly administered the Iowa Test of Basic
Skills at St. Mary’s Catholic School. There were 11 teachers who received the survey and 10 were returned. Of the surveys returned, four were from teachers who had taught at the school for more than 10 years and the remaining six were teachers who had taught at St. Mary’s within the past two to five years.

Surveys

The survey included 15 questions using a Likert Scale and two short answer questions. The teachers were asked to indicate their opinions of yearly standardized testing using a 5-point scale (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Usually, 5=Always). The short answer questions were designed to find out if teachers change the curriculum to accommodate standardized test results, and if so, to what degree and specifically in what way. A copy of the survey can be found on pages 39, 40, and 41 of the appendix.

Potential Ethical Issues

The researcher obtained permission from the principal at St. Mary’s School to distribute the survey packets. The anonymity of the participants in the study was protected by not requiring a name or number on the survey. The
researcher was the only person with access to the data. The surveys were destroyed after the responses were tabulated.

Procedure

The researcher contacted the principal in March of 2005 at St. Mary’s School to obtain permission to conduct a survey with the accredited teachers. Once this was done, a letter was sent to the principal explaining the research accompanied by a consent form allowing the teachers to participate in the study. The researcher then sent letters in April of 2005 to each of the teachers explaining the research, the survey, and a consent form agreeing to be part of the survey. All materials were distributed in person. The consent form and survey were returned to a mailbox in the school office. Ten of the 11 surveys were returned within a week. The researcher first manually tabulated the data from the surveys before using the SPSS program.
Interpretation of the Findings

Eleven surveys were distributed in person to the teachers at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Marietta, Ohio. Ten surveys were returned to a mailbox in the office. The findings from the teacher surveys were tabulated using the SPSS version 11.5. The return rate was 99 percent.

The survey was designed using a five point Likert scale using the evaluations of 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Usually, 5=Always.

Below are the questions that were included in the teacher survey.

1. I prepare my class for yearly standardized testing by providing class work and tests in the same format as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

2. I use old standardized tests in the classroom to give the class practice before they take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

3. I adjust the subject content in my classroom to match the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

4. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores give a good picture of a student’s knowledge.
5. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores give a good picture of a student’s abilities.

6. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores rate our school’s success in the community.

7. I am evaluated by the results of my students’ Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores.

8. I feel I am confident in knowing how to administer the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to my students.

9. My students are nervous about taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

10. The information on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills represents what I as teaching in the classroom.

11. I receive pressure from administration to improve the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

12. I feel yearly standardized testing is beneficial to our school success.

13. I use the Iowa Test of Basic skills scores to adjust my course of study for the following year.

14. I use the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores to make a plan of instruction for my students.

15. I use the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores to make instructional decisions concerning teaching the curriculum within the classroom.
The participants were asked two questions concerning curriculum. They were asked in what specific way do they adapt the curriculum to improve standardized test scores, and how does yearly standardized testing increase or decrease curriculum change and why.

The following table and figure present the mean scores of each question in the survey.
Table 1
Means Scores of Teacher Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prepare Class for Testing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Use Old Tests</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adjust Subject Content</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students Knowledge</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students Abilities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rate School Success</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Score Results</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Administering Tests</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nervous About Tests</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tests Match Teaching</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Administration Pressure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>School Success</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Adjust Course of Study</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Plan of Instruction</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Instructional Decisions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1
Mean Scores of Teacher Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Averages</th>
<th>Prepare Class for Tests</th>
<th>Use Old Tests</th>
<th>Adjust Subject Content</th>
<th>Student’s Knowledge</th>
<th>Student’s Abilities</th>
<th>Rate School Success</th>
<th>Score Results</th>
<th>Administering Tests</th>
<th>Nervous About Tests</th>
<th>Tests Match Teaching</th>
<th>Administration Pressure</th>
<th>School Success</th>
<th>Adjust Course of Study</th>
<th>Plan of Instruction</th>
<th>Instructional Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5
Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the yearly use of the standardized test, Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and how it impacts teacher attitudes toward teaching the curriculum. The data was compiled from a survey administered to 10 accredited teachers employed by St. Mary’s Catholic School in Marietta, Ohio. The participants used a Likert Scale of 1=Never to 5=Always to answer the survey questions.

Effect on Class Work

The survey results indicated that five of the teachers rarely provided class work or tests in the same format as the ITBS. Nine of the teachers have never used old tests to give the students practice before the students took the ITBS. Nine of the teachers never, rarely, or sometimes adjusted the subject content to match the ITBS. Nine of the teachers felt the information on the ITBS sometimes and usually represented what they were teaching in the classroom. Four of the teachers never and 5 teachers sometimes or usually use the ITBS scores to adjust the course of study for the following year. Three teachers
never and six teachers sometimes or usually use the ITBS scores to make a plan of instruction for their students. Three teachers never and seven teachers sometimes or usually use the ITBS scores to make instructional decisions concerning teaching the curriculum within the classroom. When asked in what specific ways they adapt the curriculum to improve standardized test scores, five of the teachers said they follow the curriculum and the state standards while four teachers said they use class scores to improve weak subject areas for the next year, and one teacher said the textbook was already geared toward standardized testing. Nine of the teachers always felt confident administering the ITBS.

Curriculum Change

Five of the teachers felt ITBS testing is usually beneficial, while the remaining five teachers felt testing is rarely or sometimes beneficial to the school’s success. When asked how yearly standardized testing increased or decreased curriculum change and why, seven of the teachers said the testing does not create a curriculum change. Three of the teachers felt it did change how they approach a concept or task or where to begin or continue to teach a subject the following year.
Seven of the teachers felt the ITBS sometimes or rarely and 3 usually give a good picture of a student’s knowledge. Seven of the teachers felt the ITBS sometimes and 3 usually gave a good picture of a student’s abilities. Eight of the teachers felt that the students were sometimes and usually nervous about taking the ITBS.

Accountability

Eight of the teachers felt the ITBS sometimes or usually rated the school’s success in the community. Eight of the teachers felt the administration evaluated them in some degree from the test results. Seven of the teachers felt they never, rarely, and sometimes received pressure from the administration to improve the ITBS scores.

Summary

The findings of this study indicate that the participants felt confident giving the ITBS. They were confident that the curriculum and state standards are adequate so there is no need to teach to the test or provide practice to use the test format before giving the ITBS. They felt that the ITBS does represent what they are teaching in the classroom. Most of the teachers felt the ITBS scores sometimes gave a good picture of a student’s
abilities and knowledge. All the teachers felt that the school’s success is rated in some way by the yearly ITBS scores. They also felt they did receive some pressure from administration to improve test scores and were evaluated in some degree by the test results.

The participants requested to receive the results of this case study. The results will be discussed at a lunch provided by the researcher.

One limitation identified is that the study consisted of only 10 teachers from one parochial school. Future studies would benefit from a larger pool of participants, such as all Catholic schools participating in yearly standardized testing in the Diocese of Steubenville.

The research findings were not consistent with previous studies in the review of literature. The teachers at St. Mary’s School were not concerned about teaching to the test or providing practice tests, as were the teachers in previous studies. The researcher feels this could be due to the fact that the students have taken yearly-standardized tests since kindergarten so they are knowledgeable of the test format and the type of questions they are to answer. The teachers have seen the test every year and realize that the curriculum and the state standards match the test. In previous studies the test was given to select grades, which
made test time stressful for the teacher and the students of those grades. This will change soon as in 2006 the No Child Left Behind Act will require all schools to test in grades 3 through 8 and by 2010 every grade is to be tested yearly. The St. Mary’s teachers use the test scores as a guideline to help a class or student improve in weak subject areas, not as a testament of what students know or don’t know. The researcher was surprised to find that the teachers felt some pressure from administration to improve test scores and in some degree they felt they were being evaluated by the results of the test scores.

Future research is needed to determine if yearly testing is a benefit for the teacher in order to adjust the curriculum to suit a class or student on a yearly basis. Testing may remove some stress for the teachers as they have the advantage of reviewing each class’s scores from the previous year. Yearly testing could stop the process of teaching to the test since there would be yearly evaluations for each child. These scores could create accountability for the teacher and the student from year to year. The administration and the community might be less critical if there were yearly test scores available to indicate individual student academic growth from year to year. Teacher’s attitudes toward yearly testing may improve
if they saw positive results from yearly standardized testing.
References


APPENDIX

Letters, Consent Form, and Survey
Principal
St. Mary’s School
320 Marion Street
Marietta, Ohio 45750

Re: Master Thesis Survey

Dear Principal,

As you know, I am presently in the process of completing my master thesis at Marietta College that will look at teachers’ attitudes toward the use of yearly standardized tests.

Since I work at St. Mary’s School and our school meets the above criteria, I want to ask your consent to conduct this survey with all certified teachers in grades K through eight. This survey will consist of approximately 15 questions using a Likert scale and two short answer questions. Upon receipt of your written consent, I will proceed to send a consent letter with an explanation outlining the survey purpose and request they return the signed consent form to me.

In order to keep the information confidential, the teachers will not sign the survey. Envelopes will be provided for the survey and consent form, and returned to me via my school mailbox.

The teachers will be informed of the purpose of the research by a letter and consent form, which will be enclosed with the survey. The letter will also explain that the information is confidential and the survey sheets will be destroyed. They will receive the results of the information from the survey.

Sincerely,

Rhea J. Russell
Teacher
St. Mary’s School
320 Marion Street
Marietta, Ohio 45750

Re: Master Thesis

Dear Teacher,

I am presently in the process of completing my master thesis at Marietta College that will look at teachers’ attitudes toward the use of yearly standardized tests and how it impacts curriculum. One of my requirements is to conduct a survey of teachers in a school that administers yearly-standardized tests.

Since I work at St. Mary’s School and our school meets the above criteria, I want to ask your consent to participate in this survey. It will consist of approximately 15 questions using a Likert scale and two short answer questions. If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form enclosed with this letter and place it in my school mailbox. In order to keep the information confidential, no teacher will sign the survey.

The information in the survey is confidential and the survey sheets will be destroyed. You will receive the results of the information from the survey. Please return your completed survey to me in the enclosed envelope provided by placing it in my mailbox.

Sincerely,

Rhea J. Russell
February___, 2005

I ___________________________ agree to participate in a study conducted by Rhea J. Russell involving a survey for the purpose of completing a Master’s Degree in Education.

____________________________
Signature
Teacher Survey

Please choose the answer that best indicates your opinion to the following questions. Your answers will only be used for research purposes. I appreciate your support. Thank you. Rhea Russell

1. I prepare my class for yearly standardized testing by providing class work and tests in the same format as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I use old standardized tests in the classroom to give the class practice before they take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

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<td>Never</td>
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</table>

3. I adjust the subject content in my classroom to match the Iowa Test of basic skills.

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4. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores give a good picture of a student’s knowledge.

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5. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores give a good picture of a student’s abilities.

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6. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores rate our school’s success in the community.

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7. I am evaluated by the results of my students’ Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores.

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8. I feel I am confident in knowing how to administer the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to my students.

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9. My students are nervous about taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

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10. The information on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills represents what I am teaching in the classroom.

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11. I receive pressure from administration to improve the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores.

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12. I feel yearly standardized testing is beneficial to our school success.

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13. I use the Iowa Test of Basic skills scores to adjust my course of study for the following year.

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14. I use the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores to make a plan of instruction for my students.

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15. I use the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores to make instructional decisions concerning teaching the curriculum within the classroom.

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16. In what specific way do you adapt the curriculum to improve standardized test scores?

17. How does yearly standardized testing increase or decrease curriculum change and why?