

Stephens, J. M. (2007). *NCLB's effects on teachers' sense of efficacy.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Abstract

This study examines NCLB's effects on teachers' sense of efficacy. Seven teachers in a middle school that failed to meet NCLB mandates participated. The school was picked because the diverse student body created multiple AYP subgroups. The school had failed to meet state passing percentages in at least one subgroup for two consecutive years. During the study, the school was attempting to meet AYP to avoid reorganization from the state. Math and reading teachers with experience prior to NCLB were targeted, because these teachers had received two years of standardized test data on their students. The author begins by analyzing how NCLB works to silence teachers' pedagogical judgment through mandates and policies. The reliance on standardized test data as the sole means of assessing student achievement reduces student learning to one score reflecting work on one day. Teachers who fail to meet the state mandated percentage of students passing begin to question their ability to teach their students. Teacher's sense of efficacy is impacted when teachers consider their ability to meet the state mandated percentage of students passing. Teacher efficacy research has examined teachers' sense of efficacy in relation to personal and professional experiences; however, there has been very limited research on how state and federal mandates impact individual teachers' sense of efficacy. Findings in this study suggest that standardized test scores importance in determining teacher's sense of efficacy varies widely among teachers. Several teachers used standardized test scores as the sole means of establishing their effectiveness. Others used standardized test scores as one piece of information in determining their effectiveness. The use of data was identified as a particularly important change since the implementation of NCLB. The teachers had begun using short cycle assessments to determine student learning. All of the teachers identified different uses for this data. They all found the data to be important in making pedagogical decisions. All of the teachers in the study identified state standards as helpful in focusing what they taught in their classroom. None of the teachers felt the state standards and testing influenced how they taught.