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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on ways in which one state policy for improving education--standard-setting through testing mechanisms--affects the classroom teacher-learner relationship. That uniform policy-making is problematic is clear from observations of 43 Mid-Atlantic school district teachers. Responding to three types of standards, 45 percent found minimum competency testing objectionable because a single measure cannot allow for student, resource, and goal differences. Likewise, standardized testing for decision-making about students was typically viewed as curriculum narrowing. The strongest reaction stemmed from competency-based approaches to teaching and learning that require test-passing for each discrete skill before moving on. Teachers generally found it difficult to adapt standard policies to the disparate needs of students, though many recognized the usefulness of a common educational direction. The need for dual accountability--to students and administration--is a problem that could be partially rectified through ensuring competency among teachers. Nonetheless, teachers familiar with the competency-based teacher certification idea recently advanced by policy-makers again tended to oppose it: like teaching itself, learning to teach is a complex activity requiring behaviors varying from student to student, an attitude research confirms. Paper and pencil competency tests were also viewed skeptically; 60 percent of teachers opposed tests for recertification. In sum, policymakers must realize the collective impact of such policies since they may make teaching less attractive and thus work against themselves. (KS)

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BEYOND STANDARDIZATION: STATE STANDARDS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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State policies intended to improve education generally try either to set educational standards or to shape the educational process. While states also seek to improve education through the allocation of funds, in recent years they have placed more emphasis on regulation--setting standards in the form of tests to be passed or educational procedures to be followed. Some policies are targeted on students; others on teachers. The policies, of course, also affect schools, school systems, and, in certain cases, schools of education. In this paper, however, we focus on how policies affect the teacher-learner relationship as it occurs in classrooms.

Policies intended to affect teaching and learning may seek to influence the goals, processes, or outcomes of education. In so doing, policymakers must make choices about who will enforce a law, how specific its guidance will be, and what penalties will accompany non-compliance. They must imagine what the direct and indirect consequences of alternative decisions will be. Is compliance technically feasible? Will compliance lead to attainment of desired goals? Will otner unintended effects occur? Will non-compliance be widespread?

When they seek to influence what goes on classrooms, state policymakers must also consider how their policies will be transmitted over the long distance from the state capitol to the local classroom. Laws, by their nature, must be general, uniformly applicable, and enforceable from a distance. In order to reach teachers or students, the laws must depend on specified procedures for implementing and monitoring policy intentions. These procedures are enforced by a bureaucratic chain that extends from the state's center of bureaucratic authority to teachers who implement the state's in the classroom.

Bureaucratic implementation of policies can work under certain circumstances that satisfy the assumptions of the bureaucratic model:

1. When the relationship between policy means and ends is appropriate--i.e., when the ends are attainable given the means, or when the means are reasonable given the ends;
2. When procedures designed to ensure conformity to norms are appropriate--i.e., when conformity can actually be achieved if the procedures are followed and when the procedures are, themselves, technically and politically feasible; and
3. When organizations operate rationally--i.e., when they can establish consensual goals, plan and coordinate activities to meet those goals, and ensure that the activities are carried out as intended.[1]

The first two conditions are prerequisites for effective policy design. Policymakers must know that a clear relationship exists between means and ends; they must know that the procedures specified will ensure conformity to the norms implicit in the policies. The third condition is a prerequisite for effective policy implementation. Policies can only be implemented if an organization has the capacity to control the political and technical aspects of its work. The organization must be able to define clear-cut goals that are politically acceptable and manage the technical work process according to clearly-specified procedures that ensure desired outcomes.

[1] Arthur E. Wise, Legislated Learning, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Educational policymaking at the state level is particularly problematic when it seeks to improve the quality of schooling by prescribing goals, processes, or outcomes related to the "production" of teaching or learning. This is because quite often the relation between educational means and ends is unknown, and the procedures for ensuring conformity to norms are politically or technically difficult to enforce. Educational policymaking is also problematic because school organizations do not always conform to the rationalistic model of organizations. They do not always have consensus on goals, values, and norms, and they cannot always specify techniques that will result in desired outcomes.

In short, schools do not operate as model bureaucracies because the nature of teaching and learning work is not sufficiently technocratic, nor the nature of schooling sufficiently apolitical, to allow them to do so. This means that state policymaking about educational productivity matters must take into account important questions of implementation. Policymakers must understand how general, uniform policies based on partial knowledge of ends, means, and norms will wend their way down to the classroom in different school districts.

In this paper we examine teachers' views of actual or proposed state policies intended to influence teaching and learning. We focus specifically on standard-setting as implemented through testing mechanisms. Because tests are increasingly the measure of goal attainment, it is important to understand how both the policy goals and these implementation tools affect teachers and students. With respect to students, we examine test-based standards as well as test-based

instructional processes. With respect to teachers, we examine test-based standards for entry and retention in the profession.

We begin with the assumption that state policies, if they are to actually affect or improve education, must be mediated by teachers. Thus, it is important to know how teachers react to these policies and what they perceive as the effects of the policies. How they perceive the policies will affect how they respond to efforts to implement the policies. How teachers perceive the effects of policies is one major source of data which, properly analyzed, can provide insights into policy design and redesign. Some data employed in this report are drawn from the authors' ongoing study of the Conditions of Teaching Work.

The data are drawn from in-depth interviews with a sample of 43 randomly selected teachers from three large school districts in the Middle Atlantic states. The major purpose of the study is to gain in-depth understanding of teachers' responses to policies that shape the conditions of their work. Thus, the sample is necessarily small and drawn from an even smaller number of districts so that district and state contexts can be better understood.

STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

Policies that set standards for students may take several forms. They may prescribe course requirements; they may specify learning sequences through which all students must pass; or they may establish outcomes levels that all students must achieve. In concrete terms, these policies may take the form of general or highly specific curriculum guides, broad outcome goals or particular tests that must be passed.

Standards directed at students are, of course, intended to influence the actions of teachers. Standard-setting is a means for rationalizing teaching by defining goals, methods for reaching the goals, and/or means for evaluating whether the goals have been achieved. Broadly speaking, standards are intended to improve the quality of education by focusing the attention of teachers and students on particular types of learning. Certain types of standards may focus attention on the required measurement tools rather than the policy's broad goals.

The effects of standard-setting policies on classroom teaching depend on how specifically the policies prescribe outcome measures, and on how relevant the measures are to the teaching context--the particular students, subject area, and school environment within which teachers operate. Teachers' responses to standards depend upon the degree to which the policies impose constraints on their ability to meet what they perceive to be the needs of their students. Their observations reveal a view of educational standards that is in some ways antithetical to the policymaking framework. The common meaning of a standard is that it provides a single, uniform measure of something. However, teachers' views of standards often depend on how multidimensional or flexible they perceive the standards to be.

Shulman addresses this seeming paradox in his discussion of the tensions between teaching and policy:

> Why is the juxtaposition of 'teaching' and 'policy' the statement of a problem? We are wont to think of teaching as a highly clinical, artful, individual act. Since instruction is interactive, with teachers' actions predicated on pupil responses or difficulties, it appears ludicrous in principle

> to issue directives regarding how teachers are to perform. . . . Teaching is the very prototype of the idiographic, individual, clinical enterprise. Policy connotes the remote, nomothetic, and unresponsive.[2]

His theoretical analysis is borne out by teachers' actual responses to educational policies. Their observations about the effects of test-based standards for students are most negative when their experience or expectations suggest inflexible application of policy tools. While many teachers support the establishment of generalized standards for students, they see dysfunctional consequences in the implementation of highly specified uniform approaches to teaching and learning. Below we examine teachers' responses to three types of standards: minimum competency testing, standardized testing used for decisionmaking about students, and competency-based approaches to teaching and learning.

Minimum Competency Testing

In the late 1970s, the leading state education policy initiative was minimum competency testing (MCT). MCT is a device for conditioning student promotion or graduation on test achievement. In a 1979 survey of over 1,700 teachers conducted by the National Education Association, only 14 percent of the teachers polled favored the use of standardized test scores for determining student promotions. In the three states in which our three districts are located, minimum competency testing had been proposed and trial-tested, but not yet used to deny promotion or high school graduation to students. Nonetheless, teachers had had opportunity to reflect on its significance for them and to begin to

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Lee Shulman, "Autonomy and Obligation" in Lee Shulman and Gary Sykes (eds.), Handbook of Teaching and Policy. NY: Longman, 1983, p. 488.

orient to it. In our sample, 30 percent of the teachers favored MCT, 25 percent favored it with qualifications, and 45 percent opposed it.

Those who favor MCT do so because it establishes a clear standard and places the onus for reaching it on the student.

> I think it is good because this takes some of the responsibility and places it on the student. The student knows that he is not going to have time to come to school and clown and act up if he is going to be prepared to take that test.

> I think it's a good idea in a sense. I think it's good to set some standards for all students to meet.

Some teachers gave the idea of MCT support, but conditioned their support on how MCT would actually operate. One teacher thought it would be beneficial if it operated in a sophisticated way:

> I see a lot of general value in it, if it is a fairly sophisticated program with a lot of variables built in other than specific achievement on one test. I would like very much to see some work experience involved in a graduation requirement. . . . I would like to see special projects being conducted under the supervision of a good teacher and let that be part of the requirement for graduation--not specifically a test score, but a broad range of things required before you can say that you have been graduated from high school.

For this teacher and many others, the appeal of MCT is that it establishes a standard. However, the standard is a broad set of requirements rather than a single test score. Other teachers condition their support on expectations that may be unrealistic:

> I can live with it. I don't think it determines the true quality of education, per se. It is always at a minimal level and it shows you where your greatest weaknesses are. [I can support it] as long as it doesn't put a rigidity in the curriculum because that is where the problem occurs. It if requires you to stop and teach something that is not part of

your normal curriculum design or your objectives, that would be the negative side.

This teacher favors MCT on the condition that it not interfere with the curriculum.

Those who oppose MCT do so for a variety of reasons:

I really hate to see a student's passing or not passing based on one test.

It's not as objective as it seems to be. It really depends on the child. A child . . . may just not be able to score well on this test because of things that are happening in their personal life, but maybe they know [the material]. I don't think that can be the entire evaluation.

I can see some students never passing each year and having a 15-year-old maybe in third grade. Wouldn't that be kind of devastating on society?

I don't think it's good. If you take this school district and compare it with district X or district Y, you don't have the same standards. Maybe you have the same materials, [but] you might not have as much extra help; you might not have as many activities or varied things for [students] to be associated with. I can't see how a state . . . can have a standardized test that is going to take into account all the individual differences they have in each district. Each district has different budgets, each district has different area managers or administrators. I just don't see how they can come up with a valid test to pass state wide for something like promotion. I really don't agree with that.

I would be opposed to it unless it was a very, very basic kind of thing. . . I would rather see it be under the leadership of a smaller group where they know their schools--a county rather than a state.

> I don't think they are all that effective or necessary. I think one of the difficulties is that you get into teaching for the test rather than accomplishing the same objective through other means.

Teachers' various objections to statewide minimum competency testing are based on a view that a single, uniform measure cannot adequately allow for the differences in student responses or abilities, nor can it take into account the variations in local resources and goals that exist in education. They do not want a standardized measure of the nonstandardization that results from local control of the schools. Some fear that because the connection between the test and what it seeks to measure is tenuous, the means will substitute for the ends: the test will serve as the goal of instruction rather than as a measure of instruction or learning.

The expectation that measures will become goals is well-founded. As we discuss below, standardized tests used in other contexts had important effects on teaching, particularly if they are used to guide decisionmaking about students or teaching.

Standardized Testing

Even teachers who have not yet had direct experience with minimum competency testing have had experience with other types of standardized testing. While standardized testing is not a discrete state policy, state accountability and evaluation requirements have caused increased use of standardized tests for making decisions about student placement and instruction. Standardized testing has been a powerful force shaping life in the classroom. In our sample, 60 percent of the teachers report that this increased emphasis has affected their teaching. More

significantly, when teachers were asked whether standardized testing affected other teachers, 95 percent report that standardized testing has had an effect. Thus, teachers perceive that the increased emphasis on standardized testing has affected the way they or their colleagues operate.

Our content analysis of the interview responses revealed that effects fell into five categories: altered curriculum emphasis; teaching students how to take tests; teaching students for the test (specific preparation for the test); having less time to teach; and feeling under pressure. The most common effect reported by teachers about their own behavior was that they altered their curriculum emphasis. Some viewed this change positively and others not. The most common effects reported about the behavior of their colleagues was that they taught for the test and felt pressured.

Some teachers value the increased emphasis upon standardized testing because it creates standards, expectations, and pressure. It causes them to change what they do in class in a direction they regard as valuable.

> In the areas where these tests are given, I feel it puts pressure on the teachers and I see it as a positive type of thing, good pressure, to teach and cover specific areas and to get that information across rather than waste their time on what they happen to feel is important. I feel that there is a certain body of knowledge that kids should leave school with, and that standardized tests, if they're written properly, ensure that teachers are going to teach that particular body of knowledge because they don't want to see all the kids fail in it.

> We go over those results very thoroughly in faculty meetings and look at all the areas that are either under expectancy for their IQ's or that are really lower than what we would expect, so that then we can give a little more emphasis to those

areas. Like one year capitalization and punctuation was extremely low and whether or not we had just missed it that year or what or whether it was just the kids that year, we do go back over the results and take a good look at them and see what happened. So, it might affect what we would do in the future more than what we have done in the past.

Thus, for some teachers, standardized tests are a means for ensuring that a body of knowledge is covered in the curriculum. In a broad sense, the use of tests helps them orient their instruction to important topics that might otherwise receive insufficient emphasis.

More typically, however, teachers report that the use of testing as a management control device causes a narrowing of the curriculum. When tests are used as measures of teaching effectiveness or as indices of student competence, incentives are created for teaching the precise content appearing on the test rather than the educational concepts underlying the test. Some report that the emphasis on standardized testing causes them to teach tested knowledge at the expense of untested knowledge and to teach skills as they are to be tested rather than as they are used in the real world.

I spend more time testing rather than teaching. It has eliminated time to do some of what a lot of teachers feel are frills. I do less science. I have always been very strong on science but you have got to meet the standards of those tests basically in math, reading and language arts.

We've been more or less pressured from the top down, starting with the superintendent and supervisors and principals. Therefore you teach to the test. You need to teach format of tests so that they understand the kind of test that they are gong to take. You teach similar types of problems that they are going to be faced with. There usually is a difference between the way it is taught in the classroom and the way it's tested on the test. For instance, in spelling you're taught to spell a word correctly. The test is a proofreading test. You find the word that is spelled wrong, or you look at a

> group of words and indicate that there are none wrong. This is not the normal way of teaching in my classroom anyway, nor most others either. When you're talking about spelling it's a difficult thing because if you take the standardized tests you don't have someone giving a word for them to spell correctly. They've got to pick it out.

> I've changed my teaching behavior. . . . I do not use as many essay tests as I did before, because I try to give them things which they are apt to meet on standardized tests. I feel that it is hurting the children, rather than helping them because they don't have to write their own sentences.

For these teachers, the need to ensure that their students perform well on the tests has meant de-emphasizing other important types of learning. One reports that she cannot spend time teaching science; another reports that she cannot spend time teaching writing skills; a third reports that she must teach proofreading rather than spelling.

It is worth noting that while teachers report these changes in the curriculum, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests have found increases in students' basic reading and mathematics scores counterbalanced by declines in science, writing, mathematical problem-solving and analytical reading.[2] A number of experts blame the emphasis on basic skills testing for these declines, noting that "a single-minded dedication to one goal--high scores on tests of minimal skills"[3] has changed what schools and teachers emphasize. "What can

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[2] National Assessment of Educational Progress, Reading, Thinking and Writing: Results from the 1979-80 National Assessment of Reading and Literature. Denver: NAEP, 1981; National Assessment of Educational Progress, Changes in Mathematical Achievement, 1973-78. Denver: NAEP, 1979; National Research Council, The State of School Science, Washington, D.C.: Commission on Human Resources, 1979.

[3] "Experts Link Low Test Scores to Back-to-Basics," Education Daily, October 24, 1979, p. 2.

be most easily tested and taught are now the teaching objectives in many schools," observed the National Council of Teachers of Matnematics president in hearings before the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational education.[4]

A recent Commerce Department study from the Office of Productivity, Technology, and Innovation goes further in claiming that innovation and creativity are being squelched by "the basic educational philosophy" which is better "at preserving convention than sparking invention, developing logical than conventional thinking, promoting risk aversion rather than acceptance of change."[5] Learning theorists have likewise claimed that teaching children to produce correct answers on basic tests of reading and arithmetic skills does not teach them to read or solve problems analytically. Indeed, some argue persuasively that test-based instructional strategies are counterproductive to the acquisition of practical knowledge.[6]

Many teachers observe that when they are pressured to teach-to-the-test, scores in the tested areas increase, but other types of learning suffer. The more tightly tests are coupled to instruction, the more teachers resist the use of tests. Tight coupling of tests and teaching can occur either because of pressures to ensure that students

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Office of Productivity, Technology and Innovation, Learning Environments for Innovation, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1980, pp. 23-24.

[6] See, for example, Anne M. Bussis, "Burn it at the Casket: Research, Reading Instruction, and Children's Learning of the First R," Phi Delta Kappan, December 1982, pp. 237-241; Constance Kamii, "Encouraging Thinking in Mathematics," Phi Delta Kappan, December 1982, pp. 247-251.

make a "good showing" or because the curriculum is designed to enforce a teaching-testing sequence for every skill area.

Many teachers find the practice of gearing instruction to standardized tests to be educationally unsound and professionally unethical. They describe how pressures to teach to the test occur:

> The principal made the teachers take [the test] and rewrite it so it wouldn't be exactly what the children were going to have, because he said he wanted the children to be sure they knew how to take the test. . . . Two teachers didn't do it, so he told them he was going to write them up and he said it would go in their personnel file. He wouldn't let them see a copy of it, and they called in the local teachers' association about it.

> Within a time frame of a couple of weeks before the standardized tests are given, we have booklets we are to present to the kids who are to be taking the tests and go over it with them. That takes time and energy out. That's what we are supposed to be doing. You can tell from my attitude that I don't particularly agree with it but that is what we are supposed to be doing.

> I see more of a trend 'to teach to test' so that your students will do well. Our administration says absolutely tests will not be used to blame but I don't believe it. I just can't believe that because they put in the newspapers the scores of different schools. A realtor in my community even showed me the test scores. . . . When parents come in, the realtor shows them the test scores of different schools when they want to buy a house in that community. . . . So those scores are used in all sorts of ways they were never intended to be used.

> Schools are very receptive to parents and so when parents demand, 'I want my son or daughter to do good on this test,' you have to meet those needs. I think some schools are very structured for these tests and they spend a lot of time working on the tests because that's the measure of achievement. You'd be foolish if you didn't.

> Teachers talk about not getting to something because they had to deal with what is going to be on the test. They do spend a lot of time teaching what is going to be on the test. I certainly think that it is a problem and yet this school system is a school system that has built a lot of little altars to those stanines and those standardized tests.

> Some it has put a great deal of pressure on because I don't think they are that confident about what they are teaching so they really teach to the test. There are others who have been infuriated by it because they are forced to do something that they don't particularly believe in. Many teachers do not like standardized tests at all and resent giving them to their students. I think it's a pretty well accepted idea that standardized tests are certainly different from tests given in most classrooms. You are more or less forced to teach the format of the test or you come up showing that your students haven't learned what you really feel they have learned.

> I think it is frustrating a lot of [teachers] because it does limit what you can do and how you do really interact with the kids. It limits your time. Your attention is shifting from the student to "will he pass this test?" Or how many will pass this test? Will a majority pass the test? What happens if they don't? How will this affect my job if they don't? That kind of thing. . . . It's just one more nail in the cofrin. It's driving a lot of would-be good teachers out of the profession.

Why do teachers feel that teaching to the test is undesirable? Many report that testing and test preparation take time away from teaching, as though teaching for the test is not <u>really</u> teaching, and another type of instruction is what they ought to be engaged in. While many school board members and administrators apparently believe that teachers' resistance to testing is based on accountability avoidance,[7] teachers describe other motivations for their views.

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[7] Herbert C. Rudman, "The Standardized Test Flap,2 <u>Phi Delta Kappan</u>, November 1977, pp. 179-185, 184.

Competency-Based Education

The strongest reactions to testing are in response to competency-based instructional approaches that tightly couple instruction to testing by requiring students to pass a test for each discrete skill before progressing to the next. Some teachers say that children who can perform practical tasks in the classroom cannot do so in the form required by the tests; others say that tests don't measure important areas of learning. Many worry that the type of thinking encouraged by test-based instruction is not conducive to stimulating interest and creativity.

> I've just found that I need to give more tests, to teach certain things that will probably be on a test [rather] than branching off into a variety of different areas that may interest the students more. But you know what's going to be on the test; you know certain things that they have to have so you have to limit that. And I feel that often that stifles the kids' creativity because there is only one answer--only one right answer. Whereas the way the kid thinks, there may be more than one right answer.

> The only problem with that is the fact that it tends to stifle a lot of creativity by the student. If it [testing] is used but creativity is allowed to flourish under it, then I think it can be good.

> It just seems deadly. It seems like a real end to all growth and development. I mean would we have electric lights? What if somebody hadn't said you should learn how to do this? Would we have new inventions? Would there be anybody going off in different directions? Wouldn't we end everything? If we programmed "this is what you are going to learn," who would go beyond that? No, I just think that would be deadly.

> In the first place, I don't know who is going to say what everybody needs in order to function in society--so that is going to be the hardest part: to set the objectives that they are going to have to know. But even if you did that, you are going to end up with just a mold of one kind of person. You are going to end up with a whole population of the same little mold and I don't think that that's what democracy is all about. I think it means to be an individual.

Whether these long-range fears are justified or not, inflexible implementation of test-based instructional strategies has visible short-term consequences.

Teachers who have worked in schools that use a competency-based curriculum often find its immediate effects troubling. One of our districts had implemented a mathematics curriculum that required computer-administered tests of each skill before a child could progress to the next. Teachers found the approach limiting for both slower students and faster students:

> I have kids that are stuck at like level G (which is third grade) and they can't progress until they can do those blocks [subtraction with cuisinaire rods] . . . They can do it on paper, but they can't pass it on the computer which would finish out that area.

> I have some children who still are on that same level that they started on in September. And if they try three times then that's it. After the third time you're not supposed to frustrate them so now they're stuck in that category and they won't be able to get out. . . . They've tried three times. Now they've had a couple of cases where they've said some children have had particular difficulty [so] they'd give them something else. But they tried three times and so they can't progress in that one category.

If a student could not pass the test in a category, the student could not be taught anything else in that category. Testing thus prevented

both teaching and learning. Students who could pass the tests created another problem:

> What they have done is that they have put down every objective that they want every child to learn from kindergarten through eighth grade. There are volumes of objectives--absolute volumes of objectives. Each child has to pass the objective at this level before he can pass the next objective. So when I tell you that I spend absolute hours testing these kids, I really feel like I have lost a lot of the math teaching time. I had the bright kids in the math--the top fifth and sixth graders in math. I was at the top so I had to get done [testing] everything that they were supposed to have passed. As the system operates now, I would throw it out. . . . for [the concept of] capacity, for measuring lengths and for weights and measures, what they really tested was whether or not a kid understood the decimal system. . . . It is expensive and their study shows that it makes no appreciable difference. Well, if it takes that much time and takes that much money and makes no difference, then I say throw it out.

Another district had begun to implement a competency-based curriculum for most subjects. In some schools, the use of the curriculum was not rigorously enforced. Teachers who could choose to ignore it often did. In others, textbooks and materials to accompany the curriculum were absent. Those who had attempted to implement CBC had mixed reactions:

> What I have done is gone through the manual, twice, just to see what I could do with it. . . .There were a lot of examples that I couldn't use in my class because of their learning levels. Some I found were too hard. Others I found were boring--not useful, really. In other words, I felt that I could do something better . . . that would get over better. Sometimes I would say well, this is set up for an ideal class but it doesn't all work in the real world.

One teacher who did not find CBC useful for her own teaching nonetheless thought it was a good management tool for helping or forcing less competent teachers to do their jobs:

> Let me mention this about CBC. I don't want you to think I'm totally against it, I'm not. For a beginning teacher and for many teachers who really are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, CBC is very good. Because it says what you should be teaching thus and so. If you're not, then you're shortchanging the kids. So I am not totally against CBC. I don't think it gives you enough flexibility. But I think it is good for a person just starting out, I think it is good for people who are not dong their jobs. But I think it should have more teacher input.

Another thought that the effort to establish a common curriculum was valid, but the CBC approach itself trivialized the educational process:

> I have no objection to some kind of definition of goals. . . . You know, one can go too far in the other extreme if you have no commonality, then you have chaos. In some ways it is not very politically or socially responsible to allow that to happen. . . . So I have no objection to some enunciation of goals or objectives. . . . But to assume that people are going to learn or that the goals are going to be accomplished if all of us adopt these particular techniques and these particular structures to me seems to be absolute idiocy. . . . If one has the notion that education is about learning pieces of knowledge or specific things to do in specific situations, if that is what one thinks education is, then education is headed for the down hill slide rather quickly. Whereas if you develop . . . some kind of system where students were encouraged to think on their own or to analyze a situation or to develop the alternatives, one would be much better off than trying to say, 'In this situation one does this or whatever.' For a lot of the very technical kinds of things, if one doesn't understand it, one can always look it up somewhere. So, the point becomes how does one express oneself, how does one write as opposed to knowing exactly how a gerund is used.

In schools where CBC is rigorously enforced, teachers feel torn between satisfying bureaucratic requirements and meeting the needs of their students:

> You're given a guideline and each day when the student comes to class you're supposed to have on the board behavioral objectives for the day and a list of instructional aids and what have you. You're supposed to accomplish a, b, c, whatever, in that day. The administrators come in and they

> evaluate it haphazardly. They check to see are your goals up, do you meet these goals this day, during this class period? That's really unrealistic because it depends on the class. It depends on how prepared the students come to class. If they come prepared with what you gave them the day before, and you can click it off one, two, three--fine. But if they haven't, man, you hae to go over the material from the day before. Then you have to structure what you want to do today and you may be way off from what your goal is. It just makes it kind of rigid. . . . A kid might have a question that is off the track. Do you say, 'Well, no, I can't answer that question right now because I have these goals that I'm supposed to meet, and I just don't have the time?' You have to deal with what they want to know when they want ot know it or you're going to lose their interest. But if your evaluator comes in and you have 'heredity' on the board but you're talking about ecology or evolution or something, well then they're going to mark you down, because you're not doing what you have on the board.

Some feel that their most valuable resources--teaching time and the ability to capitalize on children's interest in learning--are diminished by rigid curricular and recordkeeping requirements:

> So much of the teacher's time is spent in things otner than teaching: record keeping, the rigid curriculum guide, the pre- and post-testing . . . and the massive record system to keep tiny little bits of it: when it is presented, when it is mastered, when it is re-taught and reinforced and post-tested. It is just mammoth. A great deal of time and energy is spent with these sort of things and it limits sometimes taking off on a tangent of the interest of the children because you have a guide that isn't in that direction. You have to meet that guide because you know the children are going to have to take a test. You may really get into something that you don't want to leave, [but] you won't come back to that thing because the schedule demands x number of minutes for this and that. You can't always teach an integrated core. I like a core curriculum where you can really integrate everything into it. I think it has more meaning to kids. I have only been able to do that one year. I had to have special permission and that was the best year I ever had.

In sum, efforts to improve education by setting standards for students have various effects at the classroom level. Sometimes standards, by providing a common yardstick, direct attention to areas of

the curriculum that would otherwise be overlooked. At the same time, policy tools that try to closely link these yardsticks to the teaching-learning process can have dysfunctional consequences when other valuable objectives are abandoned in favor of those that are measured.

In the policies we have examined above, teachers reported problems of means-ends disjuncture, of inability to reconcile diverse educational goals, and of faulty implementation of policies. In general, their observations stem from the difficulty in adapting uniform educational approaches shaped by standard performance measures to the perceived needs of their clients. At the same time, many acknowledged the usefulness of the policies in providing a common direction or preventing abuse of discretion on the part of those less competent or committed than they.

This situation typifies the classic dilemma of the street-level bureaucracy described by Michael Lipsky. Street-level bureaucrats must be simultaneously accountable to their clients and the public agency they represent:

> The essence of street-level bureaucracies is that they require people to make decisions about other people. Street-level bureaucrats have discretion because the nature of service provision calls for human judgment that cannot be programmed and for which machines cannot substitute. Street-level bureaucrats have responsibility for making unique and fully appropriate responses to individual clients and their situations. . . . These considerations cannot be sensibly translated into authoritative agency guidelines, although it is on behalf of their agencies that street-level bureaucrats are accountable to clients. It is a contradiction in terms to say that the worker should be accountable to each client in the fashion appropriate to the presenting case. For no accountability can exist if the agency does not know what response it prefers, and it cannot assert a preferred response if each worker should be open to the possibility that unique and fresh responses are appropriate.[8]

Lipsky describes how efforts to exert management controls can ultimately subvert service quality by reducing workers' accountability to clients and to professional standards of conduct. This can occur, he points out, when goal clarification reduces the scope and mission of public services by de-emphasizing areas that are not the focus of performance measures. Teaching for the test can mean teaching narrowly defined skills rather than concepts and practical applications; it can also mean teaching decoding and computing instead of writing and science; sometimes it means treating topics superficially rather than taking time for indepth inquiry. Decreased service quality can also occur when procedural constraints result in inappropriate treatment of clients. Teaching all students in a standard fashion may mean that some with different needs or learning styles will not be appropriately taught.

Teachers are in an awkward position when they perceive problems with accountability standards. They recognize that some form of accountability is necessary, that without specification of goals and/or processes, a common educational experience may not occur. Performance goals and measures may be necessary to ensure that everyone is doing his or her job in a manner that is responsive to the public mandate. But when standardization constrains the teacher's efforts to meet the needs of some clients, or when accountability tools take time away from real instruction, their frustrations surface in requests for autonomy that seem to beg the question of accountability.

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[8] Michael Lipsky, Street-Level Bureaucracy, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1980, pp. 161-162.

> If we could get the administration to leave us alone and let us teach we'd be able to. Now of course I guess not all teachers would teach if they were left alone. Because you hear the stories of the teacher sitting at his desk with his feet up reading his newspaper and the kids aren't doing anything. But I guess basically if they'd let us teach, we could. We spend I would say probably a good 30 percent or more of our time doing paperwork. A good percentage of that completely unnecessary and another percentage is something that could be done by a teacher's aide or secretary. Time that we could and should be using to teach we're doing paperwork. Most of it is just a waste of time.

Paperwork, of course, is the means by which others in the school hierarchy keep tabs on what is happening in the classroom. This teacher implicitly recognizes that reports of attendance, test scores, and teaching objectives are meant to ensure that teachers are teaching and students are learning. But he considers it a waste of time because his conception of his job is client-oriented. His argument suggests that if teachers could be trusted to teach, the need for bureaucratic controls would diminish.

One resolution of the dual accountability dilemma is to ensure competent teachers, thereby reducing the need for bureaucratic controls designed to prevent incompetence. Although policymakers do not always regard standards for students and standards for teachers as substitutes for one another, the pressures for accountability in teaching are at least partly a result of mistrust in the capabilities of teachers. In the next section we consider state policies designed to upgrade the quality of teachers.

STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

Competency-based Teacher Certification

Over the last decade, the ideas of competency-based teacher education and teacher certification have been advanced as a way to upgrade training for and selection into teaching. Although full-fledged prototypes have yet to be developed, the ideas have been embodied in legislation in some states. While many teachers in our sample did not have direct experience with CBTE, they did have opinions about it. A definition of CBTE was contained in our question to them: "All the knowledge, skills and behaviors which they [schools of education] think a teacher must use are specified, and the prospective teachers must demonstrate them in order to pass." Of teachers in the sample, 21 percent favored the idea, 35 percent favored the idea in principle but qualified their support or voiced skepticism about its feasibility, and 41 percent opposed the idea. Those who were already familiar with the idea tended to oppose it.

Those who favored CBTE tended to interpret the definition as meaning good practice:

> I don't see anything wrong with it. If those are pretty much the things you need to know to go into teaching, it's better to know before you start the things you are strong in and the things you might need improvement in. And I guess that you might start out with better teachers. If you start out with that, it might delay your employment for a year or something. I guess that would be the only drawback. You might not get a chance to go ahead and start. But it might satisfy the community and the parents a lot more and then you wouldn't get all the flack that you get about public schools.

Those who gave the idea qualified support tended to adopt a wait-and-see attitude:

> I think it may be very helpful. I don't know, they didn't have anything like that when I was there. As I said, when I went into the classroom, I went in cold. So maybe this would be somewhat along the line of putting them into the classroom and letting them teach. Maybe by identifying these things, you have to show what they are and how to do them. So maybe that will cover the same thing that I was talking about. It doesn't sound like a bad idea, but so many sound so good and come out so bad when they get into the classroom. I'd like to see how it worked, and if it worked, fine.

Of those who opposed CBTE, some did so because they doubted that the skills could be compiled:

> Well, I think if anybody could write down all of the things to set up any kind of program like that, I would like to meet the person. I would think that it would be absolutely impossible to set down in some kind of curriculum all the things a teacher had to be able to do to be competent. That would be just such a mammoth job. Maybe it would be possible but to test somebody on all the things that you need to be able to do . . . I just don't see how it would be possible.

Others who opposed the idea did so because of the standardization of teaching implied:

> I think that it is absolutely ridiculous. I don't think that you can mold teachers into . . . It is not an area of skill like learning how to use a power saw. There is a difference between manual skills and working with people, and I don't think that you can mandate how a person is going to work with somebody and have it come out with a hundred people doing it all the same way.

One teacher had actually experienced competency-based teacher education. That teacher's observations are particularly telling:

> I am laughing because I went through something like that and this is the perfect example of what happened . . . we were trying to program to do this. It was supposed to be set up on a computer . . . this big design. You do the thing and they test you on it. Put it in the computer and you get the feedback. The only problem was that they never got it to the

computer to get the feedback on it. So, I have never seen one work. I don't know what competency-based teaching is. I don't even know what they are talking about. You talked about whether teaching was an art or a science--in its true form, I think it is an art. You have so many variables to deal with at any given time. Which variables are going to be most significant in a particular setting; the conditions change. When you do these kinds of things as far as philosophy of teaching, they are so narrow because they want to measure something specific. But human beings don't deal with problems that way. Human beings don't think linear, single thoughts. And so what are you doing? You're talking about, 'did this person do this at this time in a given situation?' And it is a very limiting kind of basis. Certainly, there is a place for that kind of instructional level in any kind of educational situation whether the students or the teachers are involved. But you have to recognize that that is a rather limited form. And I think that's probably the biggest failing with that . . . to say that it covers everything when it doesn't, in effect, do that. I can give you a perfect example--an audio visual course that I took once. You can learn step one, two, three . . . how to operate the projector and you can do a competency test and that's great. But that is not going to tell you how to give instruction with a film to a class of kids on a given topic.

In general, teachers' opinions of CBTE reflect the view that just as teaching itself is not a simple act easily reduceable to discrete skills or behaviors, learning to teach is also more complicated than demonstrating easily measurable competencies on discrete tasks. Competency-based teacher certification is based on a view of teaching that assumes the validity, stability, and generalizability of effective teaching behaviors. Teachers tend to see teaching as a context-specific activity that cannot be easily prescribed because appropriate teaching behaviors vary from one student or classroom to the next.

Research on teaching reinforces this conception of teaching work. Some efforts to link specific teacher characteristics or teaching behaviors to student outcomes have sought context-free generalizations about what constitutes effective teaching. Although this line of

research strongly suggests that what teachers do in the classroom does affect students, claims that discrete sets of behaviors consistently lead to increased student performance[9] have been undermined by inconsistent and often contradictory findings.[10] The most extensive process-product study of teacher effectiveness, the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study, conducted for California's Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing, found little support for linking teacher effectiveness to precise, uniform teacher behaviors. After that monumental effort, "(t)he researchers . . . concluded that linking precise and specific teacher behavior to precise and specific learning of pupils (the original goal of the inquiry) is not possible at this time. . . . These findings suggest that the legal requirement for a license probably cannot be well stated in precise behavioral terms."[11]

At best, the teaching performances advanced as having consistently positive effects on student achievement are relatively broad constructs rather than discrete, specific actions of teachers. As Centra and Potter[12] note, often-cited variables such as clarity, variability,

[9] B. Rosenshine and N. Furst, "Research on Teacher Performance Criteria," in B. O. Smith (ed.), Research in Teacher Education: A Symposium, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1971; J. A. Stallings, "How Instructional Processes Relate to Child Outcomes," in G. D. Borich (ed.), The Appraisal of Teaching: Concepts and Process, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1977; D. M. Medley, "The Effectiveness of Teachers," in P. L. Peterson and H. J. Walberg (eds.), Research on Teaching, McCutchan, Berkeley, CA, 1979.

[10] W. Doyle, "Paradigms for Research on Teacher Effectiveness," in L. S. Shulman (ed.), Review of Research in Education, Vol. 5, F. E. Peacock, Itasca, IL, 1978; M. J. Dunkin and B. J. Biddle, The Study of Teaching, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, NY, 1974; R. Shavelson and N. Dempsey-Atwood, "Generalizability of Measures of Teacher Behavior," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 46, 1976, pp. 553-612.

[11] R. Bush, The Generator, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1979; see also F. J. McDonald and P. Elias, Executive Summary Report: Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study, Phase II, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, 1976.

[12] J. A. Centra and D. A. Potter, "School and Teacher Effects: An Interrelational Model," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 50, No. 2, 1980, pp. 273-291.

enthusiasm, task-orientation, use of student ideas, and questioning[13] are undoubtedly important, "but few of them could be usefully considered 'basic teaching tasks.'"[14]

Furthermore, subsequent research on these variables has found that the effectiveness of particular teacher behaviors often depends on the teaching context. Effective teaching behaviors have been found to vary for students of different socioeconomic, mental, and psychological characteristics.[15] and for different grade levels and subject areas.[16] Some teaching behaviors exhibit a distinctly curvilinear relation to achievement. That is, a behavior that is effective when used in moderation can produce significant and negative results when used too much[17] or--as others have found--when applied in the wrong circumstances.[18] This kind of finding also makes it difficult to

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[13] Rosenshine and Furst, op. cit.

[14] Centra and Potter, op. cit., p. 282.

[15] L. J. Cronbach and R. E. Snow, Aptitudes and Instructional Methods: A Handbook for Research on Interactions, Irvington, New York, 1977; J. E. Brophy and C. Evertson, Process-Product Correlations in the Texas Teacher Effectiveness Study: Final Report, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, Austin, Texas, 1974; and J. E. Brophy and C. Evertson, "Teacher Behavior and Student Learning in Second and Third Grades," in G. D. Borich (ed.), The Appraisal of Teaching: Concepts and Process, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1977.

[16] McDonald and Elias, op. cit.; N. L. Gage, The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching, NY: Teachers College Press, 1978.

[17] K. Peterson and D. Kauchak, Teacher Evaluation: Perspectives, Practices and Promises, Center for Educational Practice, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 1982; R. S. Soar, Follow Through Classroom Process Measurement and Pupil Growth, Institute for Development of Human Resources, College of Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1972.

[18] See, e.g., McDonald and Elias, op. cit.; H. Coker, D. Medley, and R. Soar, "How Valid Are Expert Opionions About Effective Teaching?", Phi Delta Kappan, 1980, pp. 131-149.

develop rules for teaching behaviors that can be generally applied.

The conversion of teacher effects research findings to rules for teacher behavior is a cornerstone of many competency-based teacher education and certification models. These models implicitly assume that the rules are generalizable because student outcomes are determined primarily by particular uniform teaching behaviors. By implication, the models assume either that other contextual influences on student outcomes are relatively unimportant, or that these other influences do not call for different teaching behaviors in order for teaching to be effective. But, taken as a whole, research on teacher effectiveness lends more support to a context-specific view of appropriate teacher behavior in which judgment plays a large role than to a view which presumes that specific teaching techniques or behaviors can be uniformly applied. Based on their many years of research on teaching, Brophy and Evertson describe the teaching act as an interactive, highly judgmental process:

> [E]ffective teaching requires the ability to implement a very large number of diagnostic, instructional, managerial, and therapeutic skills, tailoring behavior in specific contexts and situations to the specific needs of the moment. Effective teachers not only must be able to do a large number of things; they also must be able to recognize which of the many things they know how to do applies at a given moment and be able to follow through by performing the behavior effectively.[19]

Teachers' skepticism about competency-based teacher education results from their feeling that the most meaningful aspect of teaching--the ability to make appropriate judgments about what to do in specific

[19] J. E. Brophy and C. M. Evertson, Learning from Teaching: A Developmental Perspective. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1976, p. 139.

instances--cannot easily be reduced to a set of discrete, observable, and measurable behaviors. Their intuitions are supported by research on teacher effectiveness

While only a few states have attempted to institute elaborate systems of competency-based teacher education or certification, a much larger number have attempted to upgrade teacher quality by requiring paper and pencil competency tests for teacher certification.

Testing for Certification

Testing of a potential teacher's knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy as a condition for certification is a recent state initiative. Technically, it is easy to devise a test of subject matter; it is more difficult to devise a test of pedagogy. Nonetheless, the imposition of such a test is far less expensive than competency-based certification. At least 16 states have enacted laws or rules requiring standardized tests as a means to raise the standards for entry to teaching. Teachers are divided in their views about the usefulness of competency tests for certification. In the 1979 NEA survey, 41 percent of teachers favored statewide tests for certification. In our sample of teachers, 33 percent favor the idea, 29 percent favor the idea with qualifications, and 38 percent oppose the idea.

Those who supported the idea felt that the test would screen out those who were not well-prepared and would help to create the image of a profession:

> It probably is a good means of evaluating teachers' experience or ability to start teaching. . . . I know in other professions, for example, lawyers have to take a test, doctors have to take tests. Other professional people do, so perhaps teachers, to be considered in full rights by many other people who are professionals, as professionals, maybe that is a thing we need to institute.

Many who gave the idea of the test qualified support did so because they believe that a test of subject matter is both feasible and desirable, but they are skeptical of tests of pedagogy:

> I certainly think that if you are going to teach a subject, you ought to be able to pass the basic requirements. . . . As far as the philosophy and everything, I don't think that being able to pass a test in that is to mportant.
>
> A lot of the things that indicate a good teacher are not [susceptible to] standardized testing. . . . I feel again that it is easy for a person to play a game with standardized tests and come up with a good score. It is easy to say on paper what you might do and in fact you won't.

Those who opposed the test do not believe that a paper and pencil test can adequately predict performance as a teacher:

> I think the proof of the pudding is seeing what the teacher is doing, observing the teacher and seeing what the children are learning.

Some even believe that schools of education would focus unduly on preparation for the test.

> There again you get to a situation where teacher institutions are going to train their teachers to meet those competency standards and that's it. They will feel like they have done their job if they have done that. There is too much of that that goes on as it is. There is far too much teaching of those minimum standards in colleges and universities to teachers right now. And I would hate to see it become dignified through state law.

In sum, substantial support does exist for a test of subject matter knowledge which is seen as guaranteeing that teachers know what they will teach. Many teachers see such a requirement as a prerequisite if not a guarantee of good classroom performance. However, substantial

skepticism exists with regard to the feasibility and practicality of a test of pedagogy. For many of the same reasons that they doubt the usefulness of a competency-based approach to teacher education, teachers doubt the validity of a paper-and-pencil test of pedagogical knowledge.

Testing for Recertification

Most teachers in our sample (60 percent) oppose the use of tests for recertifying teachers every few years. Opposition to testing for recertification is stronger than that to testing for certification primarily because a practicing teacher has a track record which can be examined; a test is seen as largely unrelated to performance in the classroom.

Those who support the idea of testing for recertification see it as a mechanism to ensure that teachers remain current in their teaching field:

> I think this is good especially in their major field. It keeps them abreast of the new currents, the current trends. it keeps them abreast not only in the current trends but it helps them individually. Teaching is a growing process just like learning is a growing process.

Some who gave the idea qualified support distinguished between a test of subject matter and a mechanism to assess pedagogical skill:

> If you have stayed in the field and haven't kept up, something is wrong. As long as it is testing what is needed to be tested, i.e., being tested on the level that you are teaching. . . . I think the weeding out should be done more by administrative observation in some way rather than continued pedagogical testing.

Those who opposed the idea stressed the importance of assessing classroom performance:

> If you can somehow rate a teacher's effectiveness and rate him on that . . . as my background being in economics . . . the way of testing output is to find out how many barrels go through the machine. You can't do that very well in a classroom. That is what you want, but I don't know how you go about getting it. Testing a teacher because of his knowledge in math and because of what he knows about how to teach, is not going to ensure that he is a good teacher at all.
>
> I distinguish between understanding and performance. What you know, I think, can be tested in a standardized way. What you can do has to be evaluated personally.

The distinction between test performance and on-the-job performance is an apt one. Although these tests are meant to screen out incompetent teachers, studies have not found any consistent relationship between scores on teacher competency tests and measures of teacher performance in the classroom.[20] This should not be too surprising since the act of test-taking is quite different from the act of teaching. "Knowing" the answer to a question that asks for a definition of a pedagogical principle does not necessarily mean that one knows how or when to apply that principle in the classroom in the midst of competing pedagogical demands. Indeed, not knowing the answer to such a question may not preclude the ability to respond appropriately in the classroom setting.

Although the existence of tests may raise the status of the teaching profession in the eyes of the public, they will not completely answer the question of how to upgrade the quality of teaching that occurs in classrooms. They may reveal what a teacher knows about a

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[20] J. B. Ayers and G. S. Qualls, "Concurrent and Predictive Validity of the National Teacher Examinations," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 73, No. 2, December 1979, pp. 86-92; J. W. Andrews, C. r. Blackmon, and J. A. Mackey, "Preservice Performance and the National Teacher Examinations," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 61, No. 5, January 1980, pp. 358-359; T. J. Quirk, et al., "Review of Studies of the Concurrent and Predictive Validity of the National Teacher Examination," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 43, 1973, pp. 89-114.

subject but will not reveal whether he can teach it and, if he can, whether he will.

SCHOOL REALITY AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The picture we have painted about the potential for improving teaching and learning by setting performance standards is not a promising one for state policymakers. In one sense, it is a picture that can be easily dismissed by those whose faith in bureaucratic accountability tools is strong. Their faith may be unshaken by the skepticism of those being regulated. After all, discretion and autonomy can as easily be codewords for incompetence or nonperformance as they can be conditions for competent performance.

In another sense, though, the observations of teachers must be considered. Teaching is a profession which is increasingly less able to attract and retain talented people in its ranks. If the normally tenuous psychic rewards of teaching work are further diminished by impediments to good performance as teachers' themselves perceive it, many among them will leave. A vicious cycle may be created by policies that in the aggregate make teaching less attractive. They lower the quality of the teaching force, thereby increasing the perceived need for more regulation to improve education.

Some might argue that those teachers who voice skepticism about accountability policies are among the least competent. Very likely some teachers complain about standards because they find them too demanding. Equally likely there ae others who find them inadequate to the complexities of teaching work. However, most object to the standardization which results from the policies rather than the standards contained in the policies.

The most powerful appeal which student standards have for teachers is that they symbolize the importance of education. In recent years, many perceive that schools have experienced a deterioration of educational standards. Many teachers welcome the reestablishment of educational standards as a reaffirmation that education is important. This reaffirmation of standards is an indirect reaffirmation of the worth and work of teachers.

The symbolic importance of standards is, of course, associated with the actual establishment of standards. This gives students, teachers, and the community at large a clearer understanding of at least the minimum goals of schooling. Some teachers welcome a clear external standard because it places the onus of achieving it on the student while lightening the onus on the teacher. They welcome what they see as the positive pressure on students. The teacher does not have to struggle with the establishment of standards and avoids internal and social conflict over how easy or how hard to make the standards.

But teachers worry about the standardized test as an appraisal mechanism. They are concerned that the multiple-choice format is too limiting, that it cannot assess all the things which they teach. They are concerned about the results of a test being used to contravene their own judgment about what students should and do know. They wonder whether the test matches their conception of the curriculum.

More poignant, though, are the effects of standardized testing upon curriculum and teaching. Teachers see the tests as altering the curriculum, somewhat by inadvertance. Some of the effects are obvious: testing takes time; preparation for testing takes even more time; there

is less time to teach and there is the pressure (perceived as both good and bad) on students and teachers to perform. Less obvious are the distortions introduced in the curriculum. Some teachers begin to emphasize the content which they know will appear on the test. They begin to teach in a format that will prepare students to deal with content as it will be tested. Some teachers will even teach students the precise items which will appear on the test.

The increased emphasis on test-oriented content means, of course, that other curriculum content is deemphasized. Teaching as if there is always a right answer is thought by some teachers to stifle creativity. More generally, that which is not being tested is not being taught. In the minds of some teachers, the path from establishing standards to standardized testing to standardized curriculum and standardized teaching is short. One characterization of the effects of very prescriptive teaching policies is consonant with the perceptions of teachers:

> Administratively mandated systems of instruction not only hinder teachers' responsiveness to students but over time discourage teachers from learning to be responsive, from developing sensitivity to individual differences, and from broadening their repertoire of approaches. Ultimately such systems become self-fulfilling prophecies: routinized instruction, and the attendant loss of autonomy, makes teaching unpalatable for bright, independent-minded college graduates and fails to stimulate the pursuit of excellence among those who do enter. Over the long run, then, the routinization of instruction tends to deprofessionalize teaching and to further discourage capable people from entering the field.[21]

Or as teachers put it:

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[21] Gary Sykes, "Public Policy and the Problem of Teacher Quality," in Lee Shulman and Gary Sykes (eds.), Handbook of Teaching and Policy, New York, 1983, p. 120.

> I feel sorry for any teacher who is interested in teaching. It is going to be much worse in the years to come. For those who like the record keeping, and there are plenty of them; pathetic teachers but great record keepers, this would be a way of them moving up the ladder. It will help them. It won't help the good teachers. It will help the people who teach by the book (because) it is safe and it doesn't require any imagination.
>
> The only thing that would make me leave teaching is if they ever computerize all these objectives and I have to sit there and check off forms for 38 kids and 250 different objectives. I think if it got down to that, I would simply resign because I would feel like I was spending more time on forms than on kids.

Standards for teachers are a somewhat different matter. The rhetoric of CBTE has a certain attractiveness to it. Teachers should be competent; their competence should be tested rather than undetermined; competence should be ascertained as a condition of graduation or certification rather than left to chance. Because the rhetoric of competency is so attractive, many teachers and others support the idea of CBTE. In fact, some see its standard-setting aspect as the definition of good teaching practice. But others see a large gap between the idea and the techniques necessary to make it work. Those opposed to the idea or the technique or both tend to see them as a mechanistic approach to education. In any case, the difficulties of implementing CBTE have largely prevented its actual use.

Testing for certification currently has more widespread appeal. It is seen as making teaching somewhat more like the professions of law and medicine where a test external to one's educational institution determines whether one is certified to practice. Many teachers, as many members of the public, perceive that unqualified people have been admitted to teaching. The test is seen as a way of screening out unqualified candidates.

Many teachers favor testing for subject matter knowledge which they see as ensuring that a prospective teacher has a sufficient grasp of the subjects to be taught. Knowledge of subject-matter is viewed as a necessary but not sufficient condition for teaching. How a teacher will perform is a function of many other conditions including a teacher's mastery of pedagogical skills. Almost universally, however, teachers are skeptical of the ability of tests to assess pedagogical skills. Consequently, the test endorsed by teachers does not reveal whether a person has the skills necessary to teach.

Testing for recertification is less well regarded by teachers. In this instance, teachers are more inclined to believe that classroom performance is a better measure of whether a teacher should be certified. Prior to initial certification, a teacher does not have a job and cannot exhibit actual on-the-job performance. Testing, while a less than perfect indicator of competence, may be the only measure possible. However, when a person has actually performed in the classroom, the idea of a test to measure subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical skills strikes teachers as irrelevant at best. Even if a test validly measures knowledge and skills, it does not measure how or whether a teacher actually applies them to the conduct of a class.

Thus, while some standards for students and teachers may be desirable and even necessary to prevent incompetence or slothfulness, the more fine-grained the standards are, the more they attempt to specify in detail what are desirable learnings or teachings, the more likely they are to miss the mark and even cause damage to some of the professed beneficiaries. Tom Green puts it this way:

> Public policy is a crude instrument for securing social ideals. We would not use a drop-forge to quarter a pound of butter or an axe to perform heart surgery. Public policy is the drop-forge or the axe of social change. It is not the knife or scalpel. That is to say, public policy deals with gross values. It deals with the common good, not with my good in particular or my neighbor's or even with the good of us both together. Policy deals always with what is good in general, on the whole, and for the most part. . . . But the tools of policy are limited in another way. They are best construed as aimed not at the advancement of specific benefits, but at the prevention of specific evils. Injustice is always present to our conscience with more definiteness than justice. Injustices are nearly always specific. Justices seldom are. It is true that government can't do everything we desire, and therefore, it is equally true that public policy is not the rit instrument to secure all our desires. For example, even if we knew what is needed to make every school excellent and every teacher a paradigm of wisdom in the care of children, it would remain doubtful that we could express this knowledge in public policy and thus secure the good we seek. . . . Minimizing evil is a proper aim of public policy. Maximizing good is probably not. The latter assumes that we may shape the axe into a scalpel.[22]

If one accepts this analysis, the best policies are those that try to do the least; the most useful standards are those that provide general guidance to prevent gross injustices without exceeding their own capacity to erfect change. State policies, especially, should be reticent in nature since they rely on technical and political implementation through many layers of a bureaucracy. In this view, course requirements for students are preferable to highly specified performance measures; teacher competency tests limited to knowledge of subject matter are preferable to tests of pedagogical skill. Where technologies are uncertain and means-end connections are tenuous, the use or an axe to perform heart surgery may kill the patient.

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[22] Thomas Green, "Excellence, Equity, and Equality," in Handbook of Teaching and Policy, pp. 322-323.

Put somewhat differently:

> Educational policies must be designed as a shell within which the kernal of professional judgment and decision making can function comfortably. The policymaker can no longer think of any given mandate as a directive which bears continuing correspondence to teacher actions at all times. Instead, policies represent moral and political imperatives designed with the knowledge that they must coexist and compete with other policies whose roots lie in yet other imperatives. Federal and state policies profess a prevailing view, orienting individuals and institutions toward collectively valued goals without necessarily mandating specific sets of procedures to which teachers must be accountable.[23]

Of course, we come full circle to the accountability question. How will we know whether the street-level bureaucrat is violating policy intentions without specific performance measures that can be examined by those in authority?

The roots of the answer lie in the reason for the question. Policymakers adopt performance measures as a means for exerting remote control over the educational process because they are suspicious about the adequacy of teacher supervision. They fear that supervision does not take place or that the judgments rendered by supervisors are inaccurate. And studies of teacher evaluation practices suggest they are largely right.[24] Highly-developed and perceptibly effective teacher evaluation systems are rare in American education. The time and expertise of traditional supervisors are often inadequate to the task of critiquing, assisting, and monitoring the performance of teachers in a serious, concerted fashion. Indeed, the mistrust of teachers which

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[23] Shulman, "Autonomy and Obligation," p. 501.

[24] Linda Darling-Hammond, Arthur E. Wise, and Sara R. Pease, "Teacher Evaluation in the Organizational Context: A Review of the Literature," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 53, No. 3, Fall 1983.

leads to standardization through policies extends to principals, their traditional supervisors, as well.

It is here that the school improvement movement offers a ray of hope for disentangling the accountability dilemma. By drawing attention to the role of the school principal as instructional leader, to aspects of school climate including norms of collegiality, and to the importance of shared schoolwide goals, the proponents of "effective schools" approaches point indirectly to a means for achieving responsible autonomy. Although there is room to quarrel with the specifics of particular school improvement plans (especially when they are couched as prescriptions), the central notion that schools are units of decisionmaking with their own incentive structures is important. The implicit view that professional interactions among principals and teachers can affect the quality of education is hopeful.

The effective schools research upon which school improvement approaches rely is often criticized for being too general. What is meant by strong instructional leadership, high expectations, or school climate? It is instructive to examine a description of what an effective principal does to create a client-oriented environment that supports the work of teachers.

In a recent article in the popular press entitled "Inner City Schools Lift Standards with Help of Strong Principals,"[25] two principals in Baltimore were highlighted as having dramatically increased their school's achievement test scores and having created not only an orderly climate but an academically exciting one. What did they do? Both established and enforced rules of discipline and class

[25] Wall Street Journal, February 23, 1983.

attendance. Beyond that, the first--who is considered "a bit of a renegade who often ignores bureaucratic procedures"--brought in master teachers to guide other teachers and to find special teaching materials, and she brought in innovative, creative teachers while encouraging effective teachers already in the school and getting rid of poor ones. The second principal believes in giving teachers "a disruption-free environment" and then a great deal of latitude in how to teach. He says "there is no single method of effective teaching." He does try to encourage teaching that increases students' "ambition, curiosity, and reasoning power."

The concepts of collective autonomy and responsibility guided by high standards of client treatment undergird their approaches. Lipsky's suggestions for resolving the seemingly impossible tensions between accountability and autonomy share certain of these concepts. He proposes that "decentralized units given full responsibility for practice" can "[make] the most of the reality that street-level bureaucrats primarily determine policy implementation."[26] As part of this approach, he suggests that we must "develop in street-level bureaucracies supportive environments in which peer review is joined to peer support and assistance in working out problems of practice."[27] His approach includes peer assessments in the provision of services, worker contributions to determining assessment criteria, and ongoing consultation between workers and supervisors to provide systematic qualitative evaluations of actual practice.

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[26] Lipsky, op. cit., p. 207.
[27] Ibid., p. 206.

Policies that would support this conception of quality control and improvement include staff development support for peer review and assistance processes and professional development models that allow interchange among analytic, supervisory, and service delivery roles for teachers. In this approach state policymaking is confined largely to providing incentives for professionalizing the practice of teaching. This type of solution will require a more serious investment in teacher recruitment, through student aid and higher salaries; teacher preparation, through more intense and practice-oriented teacher education; and teacher retention, through improved financial and professional working conditions coupled with serious evaluation and supervision.

The approach is risky for policymakers. It relies on people, and it relies on judgments. It places more weight on the development of client-responsive practices than on the definition of standardized practice. It assumes that those unable or unwilling to develop competence will be weeded out of the profession rather than have their damage controlled by prescriptions for performance. It assumes that others will become more capable by engaging in the joint construction of goals, definition of standards of good practice, mutual criticism, and commitment to ongoing inquiry. It assumes that investing in staff development, career incentives, and evaluation, i.e., in the street-level bureaucrats themselves, will improve the quality of service delivery.

The risks on the side of prescriptive policymaking, though, are at least as great. We have learned that many state policies have a short

life, are vague, and tend to be based on uncertain technologies. Of the once-popular policies reviewed in this paper, only teacher competency tests remain at the top of state agendas. As the true, expensive, and bureaucratic implications of policies like CBE and CBTE emerge, the popularity of the policies begins to recede. Minimum competency testing, while still in its implementation phase (and only this year for the first time used to deny diplomas in one state), no longer enjoys the prominence which it was receiving. Early in its history, it was seen as coming to cover the spectrum of high school graduation requirements; now it has been relegated to basic reading and arithmetic skills.

While these prescriptive policies may or may not achieve their intended effects, they always have other unintended and cumulative consequences. These additional effects must be weighed as one assesses the costs and benefits of a specific policy. In particular, attention must be paid to the collective impact of policies upon the role of classroom teachers--policies that in the aggregate may make teaching less attractive, thus lowering the quality of the teaching force which, in turn, causes policymakers to regulate in an effort to improve education.