

For Better or Worse?

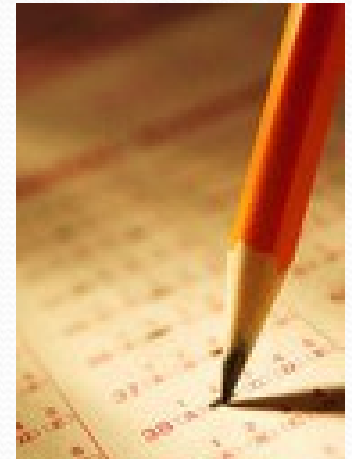
**Teacher's Perspectives on the Changing Role
of Standardised Assessment in Primary
Schools in Ireland**

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Area of Research: Educational Assessment*

What is *Standardised Testing*?

Key Features:

- Measures achievement in Mathematics and English reading
- Periodic testing from 1st Class – 6th Class
- The test instruments are standardised and norm-referenced
- Schools legally obliged to carry out this form of assessment. (Ireland. Department of Education and Skills, 2011)



Mathematics Assessment:



SIGMA-T

Standardised Irish Graded Mathematics Attainment Tests

LEVEL 5

Form A

Eugene Wall and Kieran Burke

Published by C J Fallon
Ground Floor – Block B
Liffey Valley Office Campus
Dublin 22

www.sigma-t.ie



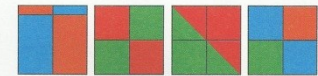
LEVEL 5

Examples Form A

A.

$$\begin{array}{r} 105 \\ + 384 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

B. Which shape is NOT $\frac{1}{2}$ coloured RED?



(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

C.

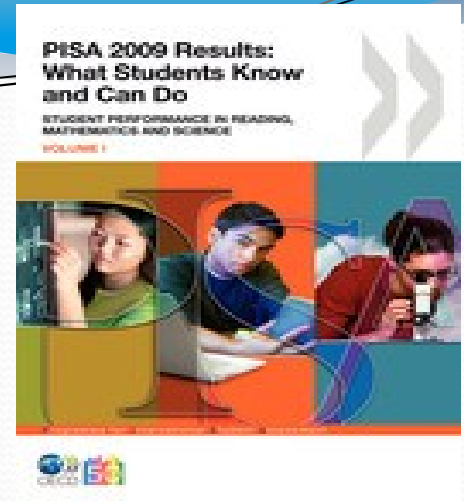
$$1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{\boxed{}}{4}$$

D. There are $\boxed{}$ times as many RED spots as BLUE spots.



Do not turn the page

PISA 2009: Impact on National Policy



- The results of PISA 2009 rank Irish students' Mathematics scores as **below** the OECD average.
- The performance of Irish students is similar to that of students in Sweden, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Luxembourg, the United States and Spain.

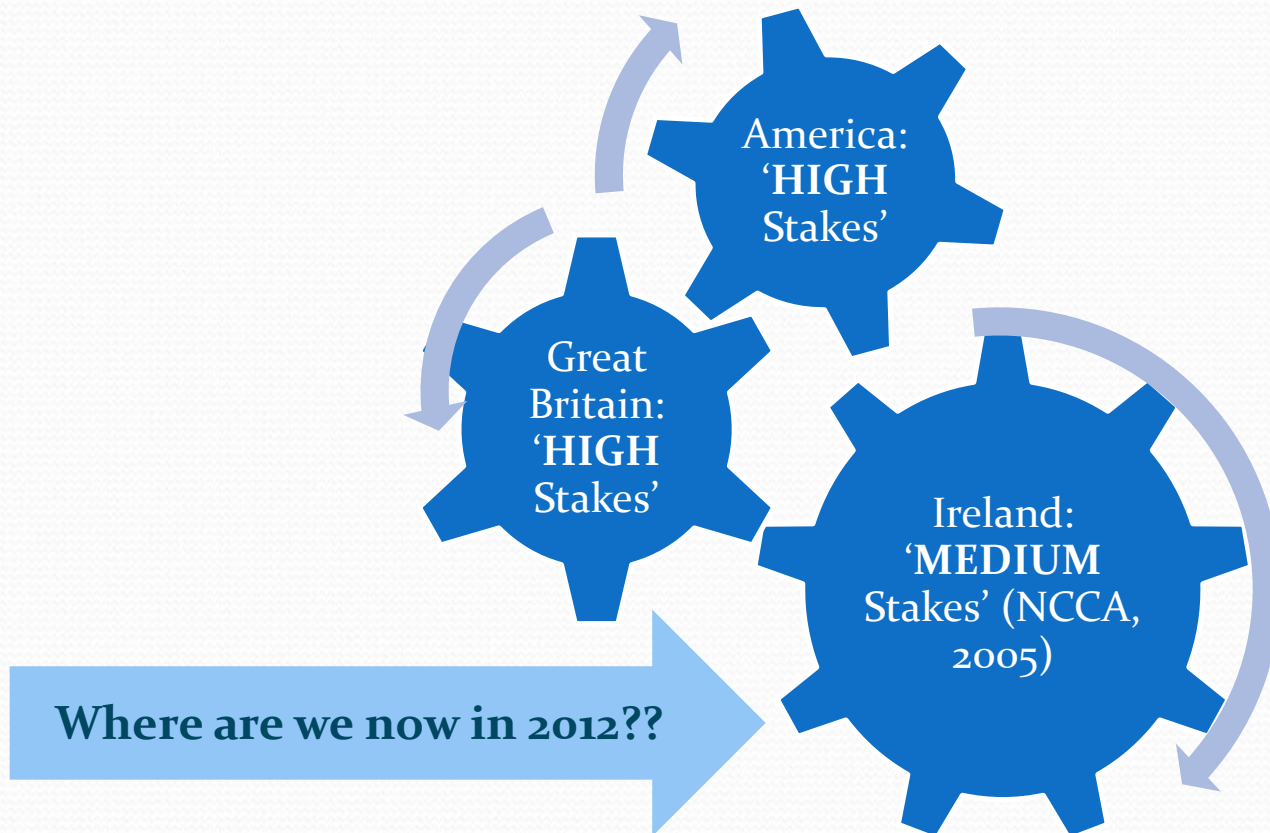
Government Strategy- 'Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, 2011'

Key Features:

- Standardised testing to take place in 2nd, 4th and 6th class in Summer term.
- Scores to be collected by the Department of Education in aggregated form
- Results to be shared with the B.O.M, as well as the parents and Inspectorate.
- 6th Class results to be passed on to Secondary School.



The Question of Stakes



“What is intended as ‘low stakes’ could quickly become ‘high stakes’ in the absence of other data on student progress and system effectiveness and quality” (NCCA, 2005)

Rationale: Why Standardised Assessment?

- Topical issue with the introduction of the new government strategy
- Lack of Irish research
- Practitioner in the Field
- Hidden Curriculum (Lynch, 1989)
- International Literature Review
- Findings from M.Ed study



Bridging the Gap between the M.Ed and Ph.D



- Exploring the enhanced role of standardised testing in the '*Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life*' strategy in primary schools.
 - Eg- '*Schools Like Ours*' initiative a good idea? How will teachers respond to the new strategy?
- Exploring the '*stakes*' involved in standardised assessment from the Irish perspective.
- Give teachers a voice.
- Contribute to recent limited Irish research.
- Compare International standardised testing trends with those observed in Ireland.

PhD Research Questions:



- What are teachers' views on the use of standardised test results as a tool of teacher accountability?
- How are teachers responding to the role allotted to the use of standardised assessment in the new literacy and numeracy strategy?
- How does standardised testing impact upon teachers' classroom practice?
- How do teachers believe standardised assessment impacts student learning?

Research Design:



- Paradigm- Interpretivist/ Constructivist
 - The “*Interpretivist/ constructivist researcher tends to rely upon participants views of the situation being studied and recognises the impact on the research of their own background and experiences*” (Mac Kenzie and Knipe, 2006, no page number)
- Research Design: Qualitative
 - “*Qualitative research has the aim of understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it*” (Sherman and Webb, 1988, p.7).

Methodology:

- Research Strategy: Social Survey
- Data Collection Methods: Multi-Perspective
 - *Semi-Structured Interview* method-
“two-person conversation initiated by the researcher for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by the research objectives” (Cannel and Khan, 1968, as quoted in Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.271)
 - *Expert Interviews* (Meuser and Nagle, 1991; Flick, 1998)- DES Inspector and NCCA executive.
 - Need for Questionnaires?...



Sampling Design: Expert Interviews



- Inspector:
 - Sampling Frame = DES Inspectorate database 2012/13
 - Sampling Technique: Purposive
- NCCA Executive:
 - Sampling Frame: NCCA Executive database 2012/13
 - Sampling Technique: Purposive

Sampling Design: Semi-structured Interviews

- Sampling Technique: Purposive
- Sampling Frame: DES Primary school database for Galway and Dublin 2012-13



Variables:

- Small (**S**) Vs. Large (**L**)
- Rural (**R**) Vs. Urban (**U**)
- DEIS School (**D**) Vs. General School (**G**)

SDR

SGR

SDU

SGU

LDR

LGR

LDU

LGU

**Principal, Testing Teacher
& Non-testing Teacher to be
interviewed in each site..**

- Possibly include NQT Vs. Experienced Teacher variable?
- Inclusion of Educate Together and Gaelscoileanna variables?

Data Analysis?

- Most likely, Techniques associated with Grounded Theory will be employed (Glaser and Strauss, 1967)
- Use of computer program 'Nvivo'
- Ultimately, data-dependant...





Thank you for your time...

*Any Questions, Suggestions,
Comments?*

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