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A Comparison of Assessment Practices Between General and Special Education Teachers

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Running head: A COMPARISON OF ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine (a) the types of assessment formats that are being used in classrooms today,; (b) if a significant difference exists between general education and special education teachers' choices of assessment formats,; and, (c) if teachers' assessment training background correlated with the number or type of assessment formats chosen. One hundred thirty two middle school general and special education teachers from the state of Virginia were surveyed with a 22-item survey to determine how often each teacher used certain assessment formats in their classrooms.

Results showed that these teachers use a variety of assessment formats within their classrooms. However, the amount of training in assessment did not correlate with the number or types of assessment formats the teachers used. Although no significant difference was found between the five different categories of assessment formats and the type of teacher who uses them, a weak positive correlation was found between the use of a processed-focused assessment format and the amount of assessment training a teacher has received.

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I have truly been blessed to have so many wonderful people in my life and for this I am eternally grateful.

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A Comparison of Assessment Practices Between General and Special Education Teachers

Assessment refers to, "any systematic basis for making inferences about characteristics of people, usually based on various sources of evidence; the global process of synthesizing information about individuals in order to understand or describe them better." (Brown, 1983, p. 485). Educational tests are used to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers, curricula, and educational systems or programs, to identify trends in educational achievement, to determine the relative standings of school districts, states, or nations with respect to educational progress, and to aid curriculum planning and policy definition (Nickerson, 1989). Further, test results are used to make informed decisions about individuals regarding admittance to schools or educational programs and promotion within or graduation from programs. They are also used to identify needs for remedial education or opportunities for advanced or accelerated work, and to establish qualifications of teachers for licensure or certification. Testing can even be used to guide instruction, and occasionally to instruct. In short, testing serves many purposes in education and is conducted in a variety of contexts.

Assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning process. Without effective classroom assessment, it is virtually impossible for teachers to know if students are learning what they are being taught. Effective assessment is part of effective teaching and learning (Schafer, 1991). Consequently, teachers are faced with the challenge of choosing the most effective assessment to implement within their classrooms. Various categories of assessment are currently available from which a teacher can select. The two main categories of assessment are traditional assessment, which may also be referred to as standardized assessment and alternative assessment.

Standardized Assessment

Standardized tests fall under the category of norm-referenced tests. These norm-referenced tests are administered and evaluated under uniform conditions in order to compare any given student's results with that of other similar test-takers. For more than one hundred years, standardized assessments have been used in schools across the United States. According to Rudner (1987), standardized assessment is by far the most commonly accepted and used device to date. The 1980s 'Nation at Risk' reforms, driven by accountability concerns, expanded district and statewide

testing. As a result in the United States an estimated 100 million standardized tests are given each year. As the amount of standardized testing has increased, the use of these test scores and the stake of decisions influenced by these test scores have all increased dramatically (Haney & Madaus, 1989).

Standardized tests are popular for many reasons. By using these tests it provides a quick way to spot academic weaknesses among pupils. They are also capable of providing information that is useful to teachers for making instructional or diagnostic decisions. Standardized tests can be used in discovering student skills across a large number of domains in a relative short period of time. In addition, standardized testing is very attractive to teachers and school divisions because they are cost effective, extremely reliable and valid.

However, if we are to measure student growth, we need to rely less on traditional paper-and-pencil, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short-term memory tests. The use of alternative assessment tasks along with the traditional forms of assessment allows students to demonstrate their knowledge by using a wide variety of formats. Students engaged in this type of active learning and evaluation process can become lifetime learners.

Ferrara and McTighe (in press) presented a photographic analogy showing how we often take a candid photograph of a

person and no matter how unflattering and inappropriate that photo, it represents that person. Often that one time photo for a student is the standardized test. Despite the extraneous variables that may have beset the examinee, that score is often the determining factor to measure what the student has learned. This one time photograph could determine many aspects of the student's future. Is it fair to judge a student by a single photograph when a teacher could, in the words of Ferrara and McTighe, "construct a 'photo album' containing a variety of pictures taken at different times with different lenses, backgrounds, and compositions?" The classroom context offers a distinct advantage over large-scale assessments in that it allows teachers to take frequent samplings of student learning in these different contexts.

Many people question whether current standardized tests adequately represent important goals for student learning and development. Some criticisms include the narrowness of test content that concentrates specifically on basic skills in reading, language, and math; the mismatch between test content, curriculum, and instruction; the overemphasis on routine and discrete skills while neglecting complex thinking and problem-solving skills; and the limited

relevance of multiple choice formats to either classroom or real-world learning (Shepard, 1989).

Students often fail to see the relevance of materials when treated as "empty vessels" in which teachers store discrete bits of factual information (Darlington-Hammond, & Wise, 1985). This may possibly impede their ability to make connections between the material that is memorized and the application of the material to real life.

Alternative Assessment

This dissatisfaction with existing standardized testing has given rise to proposals for new assessment alternatives. Whether they are called performance testing, authentic assessment, portfolio assessment, process testing, exhibits, or demonstrations, the hope is that they will better capture significant educational outcomes than standardized tests. According to Archbald (1991), these strategies may be diverse, but they share a common vision: asking students to perform, create, produce, or do something; tapping higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills; using tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities; involving real-world applications; people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgement; and they require new instructional and assessment roles for teachers.

Furthermore, these assessments stress the importance of examining the processes as well as the products of learning. They encourage teachers to move beyond the "one right

answer" mentality and challenge students to explore the possibilities in open-ended and complex problems. Besides encouraging more thoughtful activities in the classroom, these alternative assessment approaches can "enhance teacher professionalism by enabling the classroom teacher to become more actively involved in developing and scoring the assessments (Rothman, 1988).

Alternative assessments may also help adjust for the learning styles of different students, multicultural differences, and learning and behavioral disabilities of students. These alternatives can enhance the curriculum by allowing students to have a choice in what they want to do and how they want to do it. This in turn will allow a teacher to match a students' learning styles, interests, and abilities to a task. Along with these assessments, students are expected to become responsible partners in documenting their learning (Wolf, LeMahieu, & Eresh, 1992).

Professionals must realize that there is no one right way to assess students. Although a strong case has been presented in the literature for these alternative assessments, one can't say that all assessments need to be this type, nor can one reject the use of multiple choice and other forms of selected-response tests. As assessment is considered less of a singular, isolated event, practitioners continue to seek a closer alignment between pupil evaluation and daily instruction. Alternative assessment may just be

the link that practitioners are seeking (Enright, Gable, & Hendrickson, 1988). Alternative assessments do offer appealing ways to assess complex thinking and problem-solving skills and are grounded in realistic problems that are potentially more motivating and reinforcing to students than are standardized tests (Linn, Baker, & Dunbar, 1991).

Alternative assessments may tell how well students can apply their knowledge, but multiple choice tests may be more efficient for determining how well students have acquired the basic facts and concepts. Furthermore, just because an assessment asks students to perform an interesting or complex activity does not make it a good assessment. Good assessments reliably measure something beyond the specific tasks that students are asked to complete. The results of a good assessment identify what students can do in a broad knowledge or skill domain. The skills that students exhibit in the assessment process should transfer to other situations and other problems.

Regardless of the purpose or format, quality assessments should meet certain common standards. The Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing along with Linn et al. (1991), have developed criteria that represent what should be included in the assessment device. First, professionals must determine consequences for each child whether they be positive or negative. Next, teachers must consider the cultural

background of the students taking the test and whether or not the assessment results can be generalized and accurately reflect the students capability. In addition, the assessment results must also be reliable across raters, cost effective, and require students to use complex thinking and problem-solving skills. Finally, the assessment device content should be consistent with the best current understanding in the field, aligned with the curriculum, and guarantee that students engage in meaningful tasks resulting in worthwhile experiences.

According to Wiggins (1989), historically the field of special education has used a number of assessment techniques that are consistent with the principles of alternative assessment. These include behavioral assessment, curriculum-based assessment, ecological assessment, naturalistic assessment, and functional assessment. Alternative assessment offers considerable promise as a means in conjunction with other methods to measure the learning achievements of students with disabilities more appropriately and validly. For some students with learning disabilities, alternative assessment may be the only acceptable choice. Students with learning disabilities often perform poorly, and are excluded from norm-referenced tests at the district, state, and national levels. New approaches are needed to achieve inclusion of students with disabilities, and to improve accountability of student

progress. The goal of alternative assessment within special education is to integrate curriculum and assessments, as well as tailor to individual needs and interests.

Teachers using alternative assessments encounter numerous challenges in implementing them at any level. The two biggest issues are cost and scoring. These assessments are costly to develop as well as to administer and score. The cost is not only a matter of money, but also the amount of time and effort can be considerable. In addition, the scoring is subjective, which raises the issue of training. Extensive training is often required prior to implementing alternative assessments, and such assessment entails a longer period of time to reveal student growth. Finally, the broad focus of alternative assessments provide fewer insights on how to improve particular instructional programs (Deno, 1985).

No guarantee comes with alternative assessments. Currently there are no nationally normed scores or grade-level equivalents for alternative assessments. Families often wonder if they are being cheated or if standards are being lowered because of some "new educational fad" (Wolf et al., 1992). Caution must be exerted in using alternative forms of assessment alone until a connection has been made between the assessment, teaching, and learning.

Assessment Training

In examining the assessment literacy of those who teach and fill positions of instructional leadership, the picture becomes almost frightening. A vast majority of the 50 states require no explicit training in assessment as a part of teacher certification. According to Stiggins (1991), most states simply require completion of an accredited teacher education program. A majority of these teacher education programs require no training in assessment for graduation. In a study conducted by Conklin and Stiggins on assessment and training requirements, the researchers found that of the 27 undergraduate and graduate teacher training programs that produce 75% of all teachers trained in the Pacific Northwest, only six programs required any type of assessment courses. Furthermore, according to Rudner (1987) even when assessment training is offered to teachers, it typically fails to provide the kinds of knowledge and skills needed to produce assessment literate people.

Another barrier to the spread of assessment literacy may be the fact that assessment training traditionally has been focused on a very narrow definition of assessment. For example, the large scale, standardized, paper-and-pencil test formats are the techniques of focus in training. Schafer and Lissitz (1987) argue that this limited focus has failed historically to meet the needs of our teachers. The result has been that those who set the agenda for teacher

training see assessment literacy as a waste of valuable credit hours and, therefore, eliminate it from most programs. To complete this picture, those trained to become administrators are often trained less well in basic assessment than are the teachers whose work they are supposed to supervise (Gullickson & Hopkins, 1987). The vast majority of administrator training and certification programs offer no training in assessment at all (Stiggins, 1991).

Another barrier, according to McNeil (1995), may be the perception that because the quality of the assessments are guaranteed in other ways, teachers don't need assessment training. For example, textbooks often come with tests for the material within that text. Teachers can use these tests without needing to know how to construct their own. Computerized test banks can provide test items and once again keep the teacher from having to make his / her own. As Stiggins (1991) states, given these sources of existing tests and test items, one could conclude that teachers are being "taken care of" and, therefore, they do not need training in assessment.

As a result of these issues, professionals are well into the 1990s and still do not understand the necessity and demands of assessment. Our nation continues to spend valuable resources to train teachers and administrators to produce learning and to put that training to work in

schools. However, if they are not sufficiently trained to assess the students' learning, how can progress be monitored? Without an introduction to and training in the various types of assessments, teachers are handicapped in choosing the most effective practices for their classroom.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to determine the types of assessment formats that are being used in classrooms. The researcher hypothesized that selected and constructed response assessment formats were being used more often than other assessment formats. The researcher further hypothesized that the types of assessment formats being used correlated with the amount of training the teachers had received in assessment. Lastly, the researcher hypothesized that special education teachers used a greater variety of assessment formats than did general education teachers.

Method

Participants

The participants used in this study were general and special education teachers in middle school settings across Virginia. Approximately 15% of the school districts were randomly selected from the 1996-1997 Virginia Education Directory.

Procedure

A letter was written to the appropriate administrative offices (See Appendix A) to gain permission to complete research in each of the school districts that were selected. The researcher followed up this permission letter with a phone call approximately ten days after mailing to ensure that the letter had been received and to answer any further questions about the research. Once permission was granted, the appropriate number of surveys were mailed to the contact person within each participating school district and distributed to the teachers. Each survey had a cover letter (See Appendix B) attached and gave specific instructions about the survey. Each teacher was then asked to complete a survey and return it directly to the researcher in the attached stamped pre-addressed envelope. The envelopes were coded by use of different stamps, only for the purpose of determining response rates. Once the response rate had been

determined each envelope was destroyed. Participation in this study was voluntary and subjects could withdraw from the study at anytime without fear of penalty. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous. No information which may have identified the teacher, school, or school district was disclosed.

Instrument

A self-developed survey (See Appendix D) drawing from a categorical listing of assessment formats detailed in Ferrara and McTighe (in press) was used in this study. The first part of the survey provided instruction for the participants as well as gathered demographic information (See Appendix C). The second part was composed of a Likert scale regarding how often a variety of assessment formats were used in the classroom setting. The subjects rated each assessment format based on the frequency of its use in their classroom. The frequency rating choices were: 1 for never; 2 for rarely; 3 for sometimes; 4 for often; and 5 for always. The 22 items on the assessment survey were listed in random order although Ferrara and McTighe (in press) had grouped them into five categories of assessment formats. The categories were: selected response, constructed response, product format, performance format, and process-focused assessment formats.

Data Analysis

After the results were collected the researcher developed composite format scores for each of the five categories of assessment formats. This was done by adding together the number of items that fell within the assessment format category of selected response (ie, 3), constructed response (ie, 5), product response (ie, 6), performance response (ie, 4), and process-focused response (ie, 4). The total number of assessment items comprising each category were then combined to attain a composite format score for each category. Next, mean ratings were calculated on the five format scores for both the general and special education teachers' ratings on the 22 items of the assessment survey. T-tests for independent samples were then conducted to compare the use of the assessment formats between both the general education teachers and the special education teachers.

Lastly, total composite scores were developed for the number of assessment classes the teacher had taken. This was done by combining the number of assessment classes taken during their undergraduate, graduate, and beyond graduate teacher preparation programs. The number of assessment classes taken through inservices was also included in this "total" assessment score. Means were then computed for both the general and special education teachers total number of

assessment classes taken. Correlation coefficients were then calculated for both general education and special education teachers total number of assessment classes taken and the five categories of assessment formats.

Results

Demographic Information

Fifteen letters were sent to superintendents of 15 school divisions across the state of Virginia requesting to use their respective divisions in the research. Of the 15 letters to superintendents, eight responded positively regarding the research. After receiving permission to conduct research, the research chairperson for each school division was contacted to determine the number of surveys to be distributed. Surveys were then mailed to the chairperson and they were asked to distribute the surveys equally between general and special education teachers in the eight participating school districts.

Of the 132 surveys sent out to school division staff, 94 (71%) were returned to the researcher. The total sample size was 94, which consisted of 58 (62%) general education teachers and 36 (38%) special education teachers. All the teachers within this study were middle school teachers of grades six through eight. Of the respondents, 85% (n=80) were female and 15% (n=14) were male. One hundred percent of the respondents had earned a Bachelor's degree. Thirty three percent of the respondents had earned a Master's degree. The group mean for years of teaching experience was 11 years. Respondents reported a mean of one inservice in the area of assessment while at their schools.

Instrument

From the assessment survey, subjects' responses were summed from each of the five assessment format categories to form one composite score for each format. Mean ratings were then calculated on each of the five format scores by comparing both the general education and special education teachers' ratings on the 22 items of the assessment survey. T-tests were then conducted on all five formats to compare the use of the mean assessment formats between both the general and special education teachers. A total composite score was then developed for the number of assessment classes taken. Correlation coefficients were then calculated for the total number of teachers (n=94), the total number of assessment classes taken, and the use of the five categories of assessment formats.

Data Analysis

The independent sample t-tests that compared the use of mean formats between general and special education teachers showed that there was no significant difference between the five assessment format categories and the type of teacher that used them (Refer to table 1). No correlations were found between the use of selected response, constructed response, product formats, and performance formats with the number of assessment classes taken (Refer to Table 2). However, a weak positive correlation (.2192) between the use of a process-focused assessment format and the number of

assessment classes taken exists. This means that as the number of assessment classes taken increases, the probability also increases that the teacher will use the process-focused format of assessment. Conversely, the fewer the number of assessment classes taken, the less likely the teacher will use the process-focused assessment format. The mean for the total sample of teachers' assessment classes taken was 2.6596. However, when means were computed between general and special education teachers separately, a small difference was noted. Special education teachers appear to have on average 1.5 more assessment classes than do general education teachers (Refer to Table 3).

Based on this information it appears that special education teachers have more training in the area of assessment. Apparently, based on the results of this study, this has no effect on the types of assessment formats that are used in classrooms. Both general and special education teachers in this study used a variety of assessment formats within their classrooms. On the assessment survey there was no section for "Comments"; however, many teachers justified their answers and made several notes regarding their ideals or the frequency of assessment items within their classrooms.

Discussion

The results of this study showed that teachers use a variety of assessment formats within their classrooms. Though some teachers may have more training in assessment techniques than others this appears to have no effect on the type of assessments that are used. This information is important because this tells us that teachers are not focusing on one specific type of assessment format. Instead they are using various assessment formats to meet their students' needs.

The results of this study were not consistent with Ferrara and McTighe's study (in press). They found that the most widely used approaches to classroom assessment were the selected response and constructed response format categories. In contrast, the teachers in the present study tended not to rely on one or two types of assessment formats but rather used each assessment format.

The results of this study were consistent with other studies in the variety of assessment techniques that are used in the field of education today. According to Wiggins (1989), special educators consistently use a variety of assessment formats. The results of this study do indeed show that special education teachers use a variety of formats, but general education teachers use a variety of assessment formats as well. Some states do not require any

assessment training as part of their teacher preparation training programs. The subjects in this study had attended colleges from seven different states. Among this sample both general and special education subjects had no prior assessment training (n=8). This is consistent with Stiggins (1991) who said that completing an accredited teacher education program doesn't guarantee that one will graduate with the assessment knowledge one may need.

Limitations

A few limitations must be noted in this study. The first limitation is that once the surveys were sent out to the contact person, the researcher had to rely on this contact person to distribute the surveys randomly and equally among both the general and special education teachers. Some teachers were required to return the surveys once they completed them to the school principal. This could have affected the way in which they answered some of the questions.

The sample population is another limitation within this study. Despite a 71% response rate, the sample size was still relatively small with respect to the entire population of teachers in Virginia as well as throughout the United States. Teachers in rural areas were surveyed more often than teachers in urban areas. Consequently, the choices of assessment formats from each teacher may have reflected the particular needs of the school district for which they work.

Subjects in this study were middle school teachers of various academic subject areas. This study did not control for the academic subject areas of the teachers and as a result, this may have affected the assessment format choices they made.

The researcher used a listing of five types of assessment formats from Ferrara and McTighe (in press) and developed a survey based on this listing. The validity and reliability of this instrument is questionable because it is not a standardized instrument. The length of time to conduct this research was quite limited. Some larger school divisions have very strict policies to gain approval to do research in their districts. This resulted in a smaller sample size than the researcher desired.

The instrument was not field tested prior to conducting the research. As a result, on the demographic survey at the point where the teachers were asked to specify if they were a general education or special education teacher, a mistake was made by having the two choices as general education teacher and regular education teacher. After being brought to the researchers' attention by a superintendent of a participating school division, the error was immediately corrected. However, surveys had already been mailed out to three participating school districts. Even with the mistake, the researcher was still able to determine which type of teacher returned the survey by a question that asked

only special education teachers to answer. Due to these limitations the results of this study are not generalizable.

Future Research Suggestions

Future research regarding assessment practices should include a much larger sample to make the study more generalizable. Additional time would also permit participation by some of the larger school districts in future studies.

It would be interesting to investigate elementary and high school teachers' use of assessment practices to determine if the obtained results are comparable with that of middle school teachers. For future studies, the researcher recommends sampling colleges throughout the state to determine the assessment training (ie, classes) required in the teacher certification programs for both general and special education teachers. The academic subject area of a teacher may have an affect on the assessment format choices they made. In the future one may want to control for the academic subject area of the teachers in the study.

Assessment is a controversial issue in the field of education. However, determining the type of assessments to use within the classroom is very important and these assessments must be selected based on the needs of the students. If educators fail to meet the students' needs concerning assessment then we should ask ourselves, "Are we assessing for the right reasons?"

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

LC Box 0000
Farmville, VA 23909

Superintendent
Any County or City School
P.O. Box 000
Anywhere, VA 00000

Dear Madame/Sir,

I am a graduate student at Longwood College currently enrolled in the Master's of Science program for Special Education. I am conducting research for my thesis in the area of assessment. This research involves a short questionnaire to be completed by both general and special education middle school teachers.

I am requesting permission to use your school division in my research. I assure you that your school division will not be named in this study, nor will any of the participants be identified. No personal contact with the teachers will be necessary. If you choose to allow me to conduct my research in your school district, please send me the approximate number of teachers that may participate from you district. In order to obtain the correct demographic information, please identify the eligible teachers as two separate groups: (1) General education teachers and (2) Special education teachers. If possible, I would like to have an equal representation of middle school teachers from both groups.

I have attached a copy of the survey for you to review. If you have any questions about the research or the survey, feel free to contact me at (804) 000-0000. Please let me know by September 18th if I may include your school division in my research. I will follow-up this letter with a phone call approximately 10 days after mailing to ensure that the letter was received and to answer any further questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Lee Orr, Jr.
Graduate Student

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO THE TEACHERS

Dear Sir/Madame:

I am a graduate student at Longwood College currently working on my Master's Degree in Special Education. I have obtained permission from your superintendent to conduct my research in your middle school. Please take the time to complete the attached survey. The information obtained will be used in my thesis on formal assessment practices. Please read the directions on the top of the next page before completing the survey. I realize that this is a busy time for you and your students, but your participation will be greatly appreciated. This is a very short survey and should take no longer than a few minutes to complete. Thank you and have a great school year!

Sincerely,

Richard Lee Orr, Jr.

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Do not put your name on any of the papers. Please answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. All of your answers will be confidential and anonymous. This survey involves two parts and should take five to ten minutes to complete. When you are finished, place the survey in the attached envelope and it will be mailed directly back to me. Thank you, your participation is greatly appreciated.

Gender: M____ F____

General Education Teacher _____ Special Education Teacher_____

Level of Education: B.A. or B.S.____ M.A. or M.S. ____

Other (please specify) _____

Total Years of Teaching

_____

Area(s) of Certification

_____

Grade Level Currently Teaching

_____

Subject(s) Currently Teaching

_____

Number of Students in each class

_____

Special Educators Only: Classroom Description

_____

[i.e. Self-Contained, Resource Room, Other(please specify)]

Number of assessment classes taken during B.A. or B.S.

_____

If applicable: Number of assessment classes during M.A. or M.S.____

If applicable: Number of assessment classes beyond M.A. or M.S.____

Number of assessment classes taken through inservices
_____

State in which you received your assessment training
_____

APPENDIX D

ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Using the scale below, please circle the number which you think best shows how often you use each type of assessment in your classroom.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5
	N	R	S	O	A
Multiple Choice	1	2	3	4	5
Fill in the Blank	1	2	3	4	5
Essay	1	2	3	4	5
Dramatic Performance	1	2	3	4	5
Oral Questioning	1	2	3	4	5
True and False	1	2	3	4	5
Labeling a Diagram	1	2	3	4	5
Poem (Construction)	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstration	1	2	3	4	5
Interview	1	2	3	4	5
Matching	1	2	3	4	5
Short Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Research Report	1	2	3	4	5
Debate	1	2	3	4	5
Think Aloud	1	2	3	4	5
Show Your Work	1	2	3	4	5
Journal	1	2	3	4	5
Oral Presentation	1	2	3	4	5
Concept Map	1	2	3	4	5
Science Fair Project	1	2	3	4	5
Learning Log	1	2	3	4	5
Portfolio	1	2	3	4	5

TABLES

Table 1: T-tests that compare the frequency of the assessment formats used by general and special education teachers.

Assessment Formats	Group	N	Mean	SD	t
Selected Response	Gen. Ed.	58	3.2759	.710	1.85
	Spc. Ed.	36	3.5556	.713	1.85
Constructed Response	Gen. Ed.	58	3.1862	.590	1.59
	Spc. Ed.	36	3.3944	.633	1.59
Product	Gen. Ed.	58	2.6810	.820	.02
	Spc. Ed.	36	2.6852	.771	.02
Performance	Gen. Ed.	58	2.7328	.635	.02
	Spc. Ed.	36	2.7361	.719	.02
Process-Focused	Gen. Ed.	58	2.9095	.800	1.03
	Spc. Ed.	36	3.0694	.691	1.03

Table 2: Correlation coefficients for the number of assessment classes taken and the types of assessment formats used.

Correlations	Select Resp.	Cons. Resp.	Prod.	Perf.	Proc.-Foc.
TOTAL (both gen. ed. and spec. ed.)	.0116	.0058	.0285	.0210	*.2192

* denotes a weak positive correlation

Table 3: Means for both general education and special education teachers' number of assessment classes taken.

	Mean	SD	Cases
Entire Population	2.6596	2.6823	94
General Education	2.1207	1.5792	58
Special Education	3.5278	3.7147	36

Biography of the Author

Richard Lee Orr, Jr. was born in Martinsville, Virginia in 1973. He was raised in this area; in a loving environment, by both his mother and grandmother. He was the only child in the family. He attended Stanleytown Baptist Academy for 10.5 years. Throughout his stay at Stanleytown, Lee knew what his career goal was: to be a teacher.

After graduating from Stanleytown, he decided to attend Patrick Henry Community College for 2 years and major in general studies while trying to find a school with a special education program. Lee's motto has been "To teach is to touch a life." In the fall of 1993 Lee entered Longwood in pursuit of his goal. In May of 1995 Lee graduated with highest honors with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. This too was just another step towards "the goal". On December 18, 1996 it was official. Lee graduated with a Master's Degree in Special Education. The goal has been met and now he can be called a teacher. In January of 1997, Lee began teaching in Henry County at Fieldale-Collinsville High School. He is a resource room teacher for 9th and 10th grade students with Learning Disabilities. In the future Lee hopes to continue his education and eventually obtain a position as a principal.