

# **EMPLOYING A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY APPROACH TO EXPLORE A FEW URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON NCLB AND ASSESSMENTS**

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## **Abstract**

This study has two research components (parts). The first component of the study explored and sought to understand a few African American math and science teachers' thoughts about the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and assessment issues. The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological inquiry approach and four teachers participated in the study. Two of the teachers taught science and two taught math. The teachers all taught within an urban school district in Central Maryland which was made up of primarily African American students. Findings of this component of the research revealed that 75% of those teachers interviewed felt that "constant testing was ineffective." Additionally, all of the teachers interviewed thought that the goals of the NCLB Act were "unrealistic" and did not take into account the "real" needs of inadequately prepared students. Most of the teachers also felt that the NCLB Act and the increase barrage of district and federally mandated tests brought about an increased pressure on them "to teach to the test." The aforementioned details all pertained to the first component of the research study. The second component of this study focused on a critiquing of the Maryland High School math and science exit examinations/assessments. The exams/assessments were analyzed/critiqued in the following areas: test design, readability, validity, reliability, use of appropriate rubric/performance measurements, test item types, and bias issues/cultural and language sensitivity. The study concluded with recommendations made for more state's tests critiques to take place and for more qualitative studies to be conducted with African American math and science teachers in other urban school districts in other U.S. states (e.g. Indiana) to examine these teachers' feelings/perspectives on NCLB and increase testing.

**Key Words:** NCLB and increase testing, high stakes exams, urban schools, and student achievement