

The Effects of Curriculum Reform on New York State High School Teachers

The objective of this research is to provide an opportunity for high school teachers to share perspectives that the press and commercial media have not focused on. This study is imperative because mainstream reporters tend to emphasize the views of policymakers, unintentionally excluding the experiences and expertise of teachers. This means that the public has access to only part of the current educational reality. Researchers collected information from New York State teachers regarding how instruction, assessment, and school working conditions (which are also students' learning conditions) have changed as a result of recent school reform movements. The era of emphasis includes the time period from 2000 to the present, which encompasses the federal programs *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top*. Investigators developed a survey asking a series of ten questions inquiring about teachers' experiences in their classrooms from their early careers to the present. After interviewing New York State public high school teachers, researchers constructed an oral history collection and used grounded theory to identify relevant patterns and themes. This ongoing project reveals how teachers perceive and narrate the effects of curriculum reform on teaching and learning. Examples of these effects include high levels of anxiety on teachers and students due to standardized testing, as well as deprofessionalization related to the implementation of the Common Core Standards. The study has uncovered evidence that teachers feel voiceless in the New York State education reform process. In addition, although interviewed teachers expressed the necessity for improvements in the education system, they described current reforms as more detrimental than helpful. Through this study, educators, policymakers, and historians of the future will have a record of a collective viewpoint that may help guide future plans.

Keywords: curriculum reform, policymakers, Common Core Standards, standardized testing, oral history, New York State, teachers