

Welcome to the

2nd Language Testing & Evaluation Forum

Teaching and Testing :

Opportunities for Learning

 Hellenic American University



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Teaching and Testing:

Promoting Positive Washback

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(for all references)

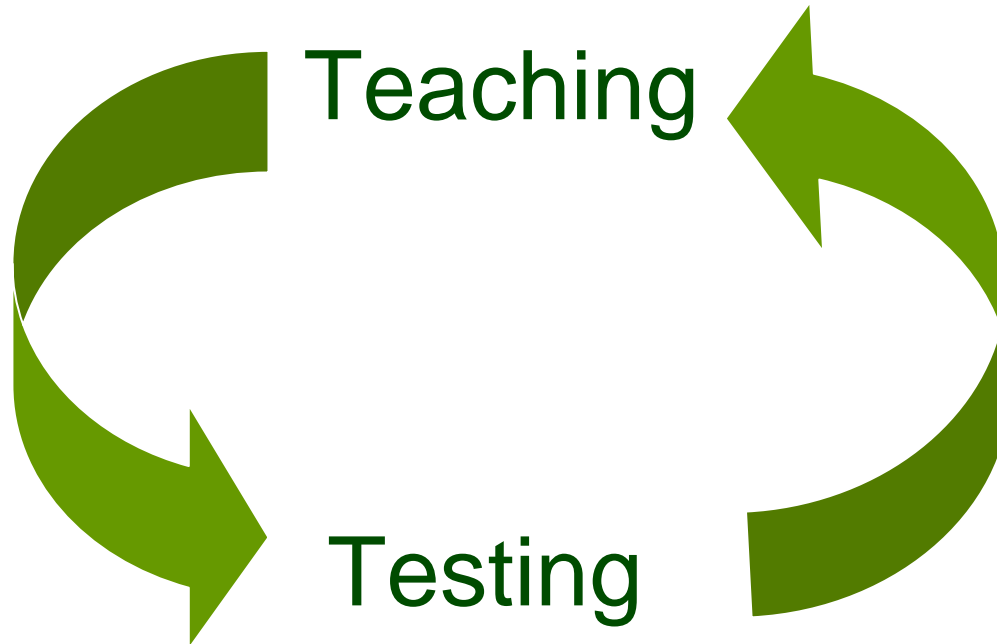
Part 1: Relationships Between Teaching and Testing

Teaching → Testing

Testing ← Teaching



Relationships Between Teaching and Testing



Relationships Between Teaching and Testing

Two Potentially Competing Goals

- Immediate goal: Achieve a certain test score
- Long-term goal: Increase language proficiency



Part 2: Definitions of Washback

- The effect a test has on classroom practice (Berry, 1994, p. 31).
- How assessment instruments affect educational practices and beliefs (Cohen, 1994, p. 41).

Definitions of Washback

The impact of a test on classroom pedagogy, curriculum development, and educational policy (Peirce, 1992, p. 687).



Other Key Terms

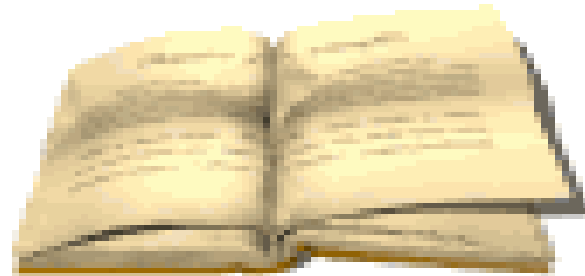
- **Measurement Driven Instruction**
- **Curriculum Alignment**
- **Systemic Validity**



Other Key Terms

Measurement Driven Instruction: the notion that tests should drive learning.

Curriculum Alignment: the connection between testing and the teaching syllabus.



Other Key Terms

Systemic Validity of a Test:

- the integration of a test into the educational system, and
- showing that introducing a new test can improve learning

(Shohamy, 1993a, p. 4).

Part 3: Characteristics of Washback

“Testing procedures can have both negative and positive effects on program and curriculum design and implementation....”



Positive Washback

“Test tasks should require the same authentic, interactive language use promoted in the classroom so that there is a match between what is taught and what is tested....”



Positive Washback

If a test has positive washback, “there is no difference between teaching the curriculum and teaching to the test.”

(Weigle and Jensen, 1997, p. 205).

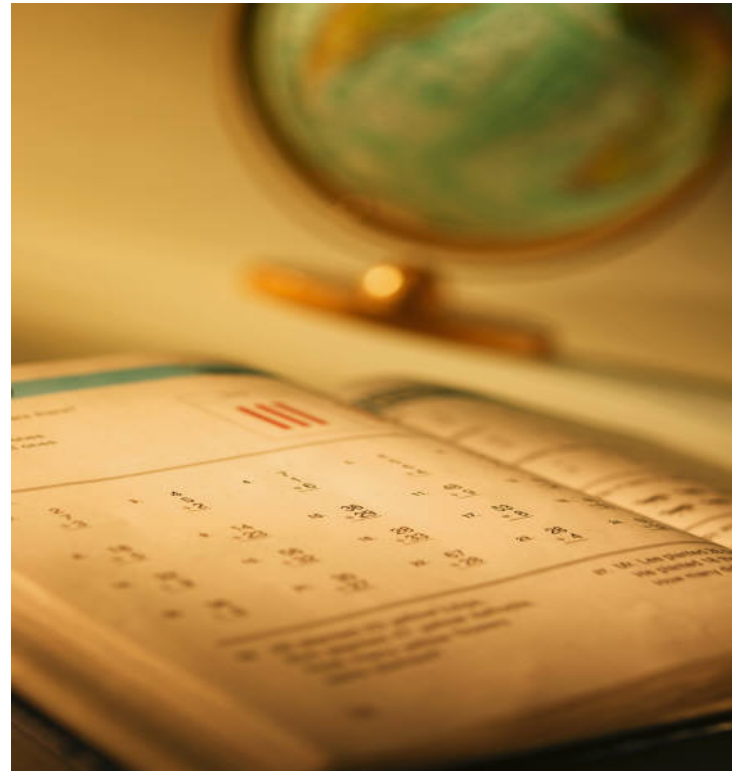
Positive Washback

For example,
if we teach
speaking
skills, we
should test
speaking
skills.



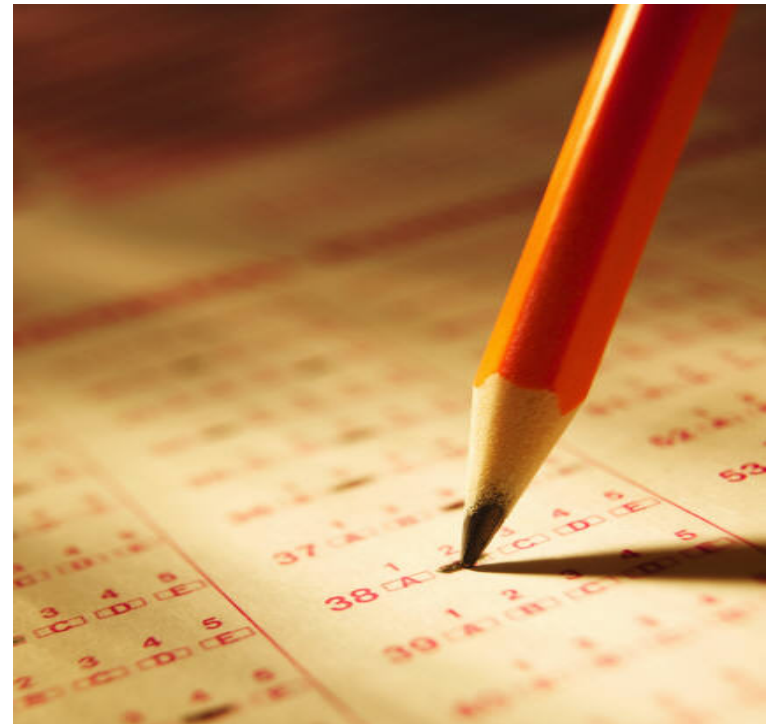
Negative Washback

“Negative washback occurs when there is a mismatch between the stated goals of instruction and the focus of assessment....”



Negative Washback

“...which leads to the abandonment of instructional goals in favor of test preparation (i.e., teaching to the test)....”



Characteristics of Washback

Washback can be:

- Positive or negative
- Narrow or broad
- Unintended or intended



Washback happens more with high-stakes tests than low-stakes tests.

It can have a short or a long period of influence (Watanabe, 1997).

Characteristics of Washback

Washback can:

- Have an individual (micro-level) impact and a social (macro-level) impact
- Involve both actions and perceptions
- Influence learners and influence programs (including teachers)

Part 4: Components of Washback

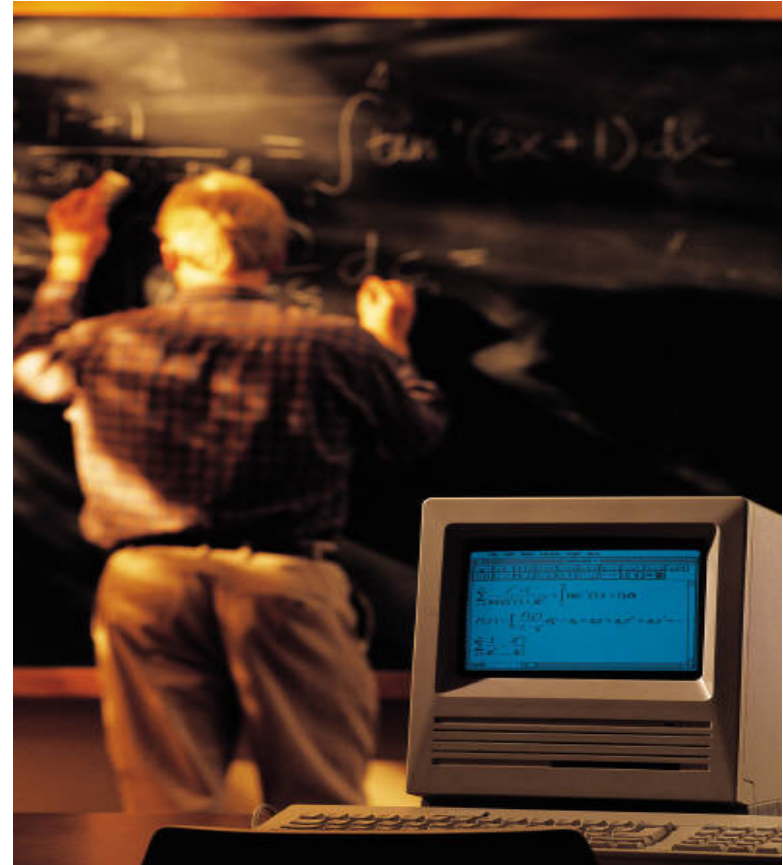
- Participants
- Processes
- Products



(from Hughes, 1993, and then Bailey, 1996; see handout)

Participants in Washback

- Students
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Parents
- Publishers
- Materials developers

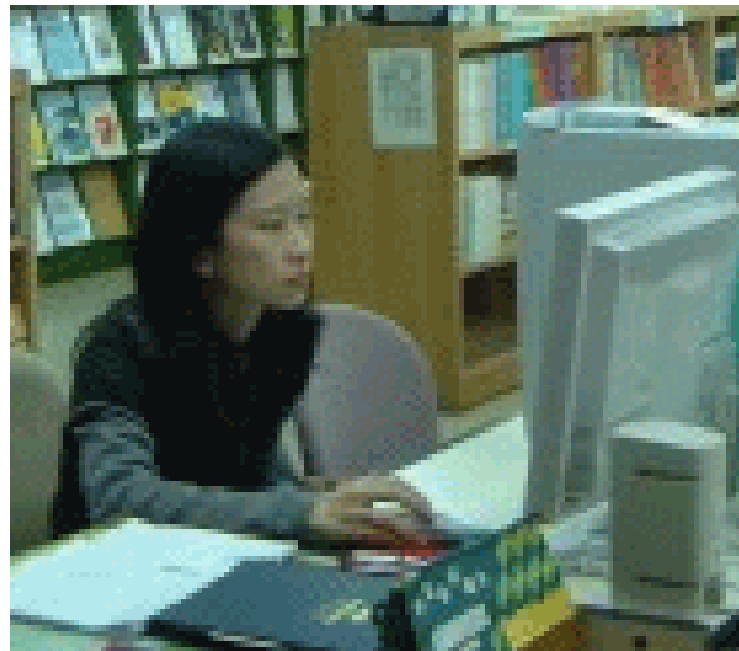


(from Hughes, 1993, and Bailey, 1996)

Processes of Washback

For students:

- Using the target language skills
- Studying
- Learning
- Memorizing
- Worrying
- Cheating?



Processes of Washback

For teachers:

- What we teach
- How we teach
- Intensity of
teaching
- Additional tutorials



Processes of Washback

For programs:

- Changing curricula
- Scheduling test preparation classes
- Using new materials
- Canceling classes



Products of Washback

- Changed teaching ... (hopefully)
- Leading to increased interaction and studying and better learning
- New materials
- New course syllabi



Part 5: Some Washback Research

Such research often involves

1. Gathering “baseline” data
2. Implementing a new exam
3. Gathering subsequent data
4. Comparing the baseline data and the subsequent data to see if the new exam led to any changes

Some Washback Research

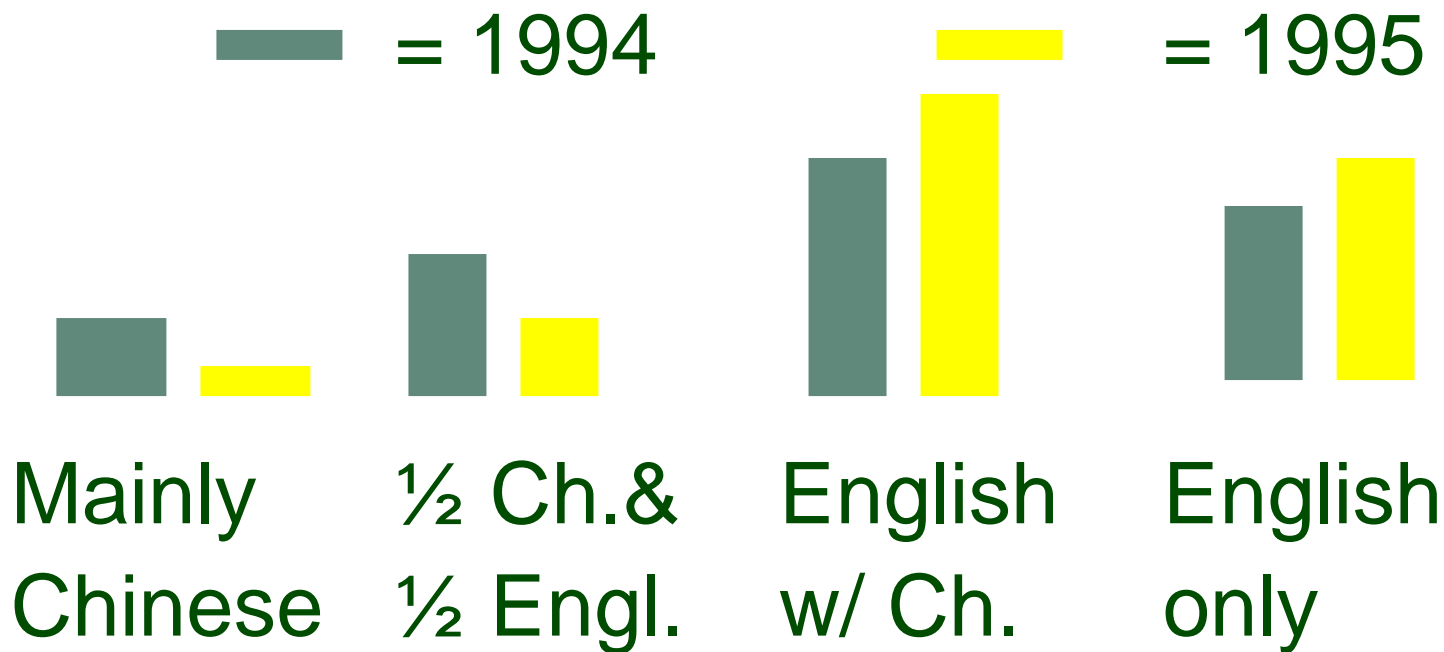
Data collection often involves

- Classroom observations
- Questionnaires
- Interviews



Some Washback Research

Research in Hong Kong (Cheng, 2005):
Teachers' English use before and after an
important new exam was introduced



Some Washback Research

Such research sometimes involves

Comparing exam preparation classes and regular language classes

- Students' behavior and attitudes
- Teachers' behavior and attitudes

Washback Hypotheses

Alderson and Wall (1993) asked,
“Does washback exist?”

- They conducted research in Sri Lanka.
- They stated 15 different propositions in the washback hypothesis.
- We will look at some hypotheses that deal with teachers and washback.

Washback and Teachers

What do you think?

- A test will influence teaching.
- A test will influence what teachers teach.
- A test will influence how teachers teach.

Research in Sri Lanka

1. A considerable number of teachers do not understand the philosophy or approach of the textbook.
 - Teachers have not received adequate training.
 - Teacher's Guides don't give enough guidance.

The Sri Lankan Impact Study...

2. Many teachers are unable, or feel unable, to implement the recommended methodology.
 - They lack the skills.
 - They feel factors in their teaching situation prevent them from teaching as they should.

The Sri Lankan Impact Study...

3. Many teachers are not aware of the nature of the exam.
 - They may never have received the official exam support documents.
 - They may not have attended training sessions.

The Sri Lankan Impact Study....

4. All teachers seem willing to go along with the demands of the exam (if only they knew what they were).
5. Many teachers are unable, or feel unable, to prepare students for all that might appear on the exam.

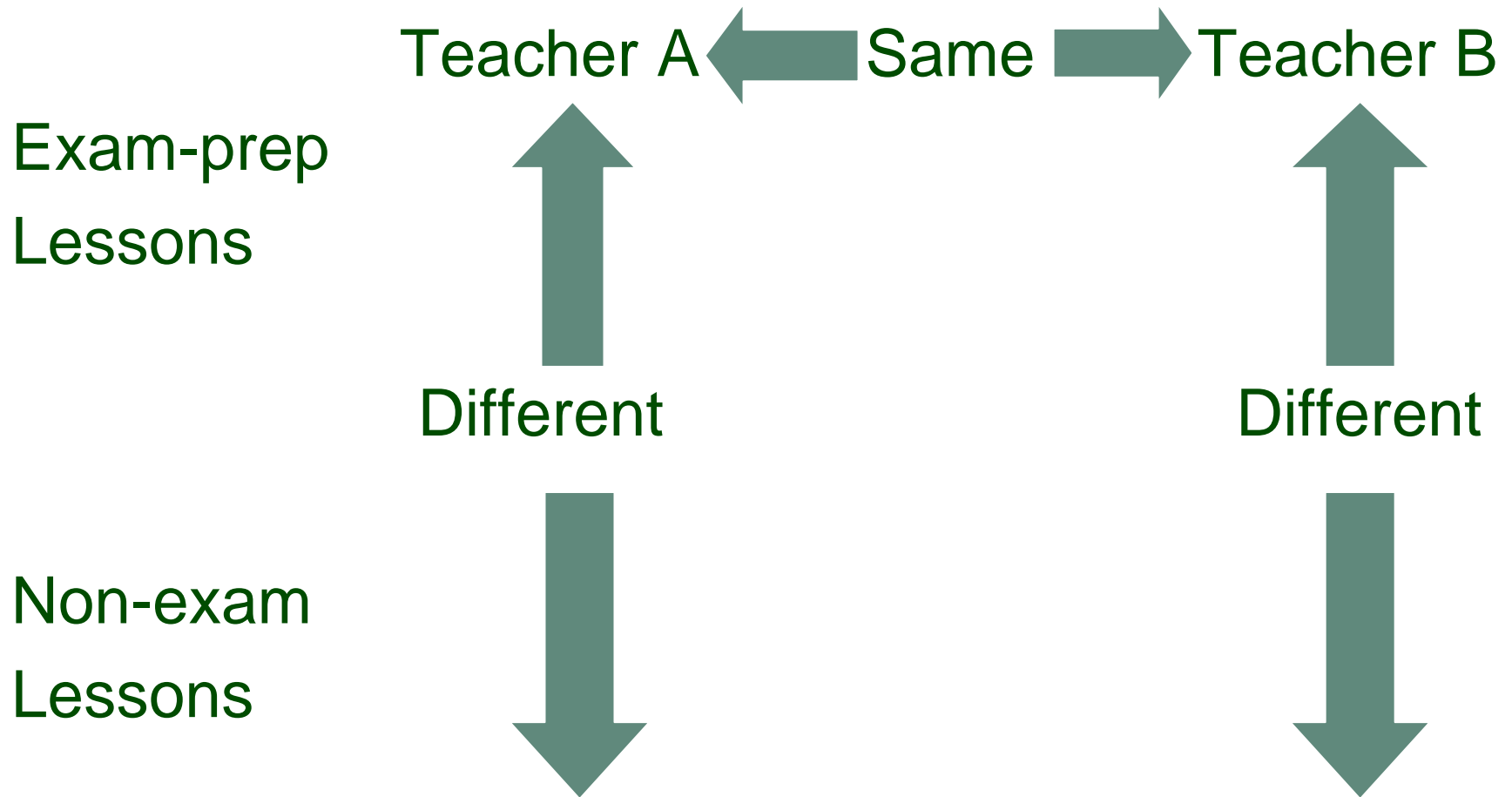
(from Alderson and Wall, 1993)

Exam Preparation Classes

Washback exists if

- Teaching is different in exam-preparation and non-exam-preparation classes taught by the same teacher.
- Teaching is similar in exam-preparation classes taught by different teachers (Watanabe, 2004, p. 28).

Same Teachers -- Different Classes



Research on TOEFL Prep Classes

Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996)
compared the same two teachers

- Teaching TOEFL Prep classes
- Teaching other classes



TOEFL and Non-TOEFL Classes

Test-taking is much more common in TOEFL classes.

Teachers talk more and students have less time to talk in TOEFL classes.

There is less turn-taking and turns are somewhat longer in TOEFL classes.

TOEFL and Non-TOEFL Classes

Much less time is spent on pair work [in TOEFL classes].

The TOEFL is referred to much more in TOEFL classes.

Metalanguage is used much more in TOEFL classes.

TOEFL and Non-TOEFL Classes

TOEFL classes are somewhat more routinized.

There is much more laughter in non-TOEFL classes.

(Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, 1996, pp. 288-289)

IELTS and Washback

Comparing 2 IELTS Preparation Classes in New Zealand

School A, Teacher A: 30 years experience, 2 years IELTS prep, IELTS examiner.

School B, Teacher B: 7 years experience, 3 years IELTS, not an IELTS examiner.

(from Hayes and Read, 2004)

IELTS and Washback

- School A, 4 weeks, 22 hours.
Course emphasized structure of IELTS and test-taking strategies.
- School B, 4 weeks, 28 hours.
Course emphasized test familiarization and language development.

School A: Pre- and Post-test Data

Student	Pre-test	Post-test
1	4	4.5
2	6	6
3	5.5	5
4	5.5	6
5	5	6
6	5	5
7	4.5	5
8	5.5	6
9	6.5	6.5

School A: Pre- and Post-test Data

Student	Pre-test	Post-test
1	4	4.5
2	6	6
3	5.5	5
4	5.5	6
5	5	6
6	5	5
7	4.5	5
8	5.5	6
9	6.5	6.5

School B: Pre- and Post-test Data

Student	Pre-test	Post-test
1	4.5	6
2	6.5	6
3	5	6.5
4	5	5.5
5	5.5	6
6	5	5
7	6	6
8	6	6

School B: Pre- and Post-test Data

Student	Pre-test	Post-test
1	4.5	6
2	6.5	6
3	5	6.5
4	5	5.5
5	5.5	6
6	5	5
7	6	6
8	6	6

IELTS and Washback

About laughter – on average:

At School A students laughed once a day in the IELTS prep class.

At School B students laughed 11 times per day in the IELTS prep class.

IELTS and Washback

Students laughed most often in group or pair activities, which were more common at School B.



Some Washback Research

We have learned much more about washback in the past two decades:

- *Language Testing* (1996), Volume 13
- Cheng, Watanabe and Curtis (2004), *Washback in Language Testing*
- Cheng (2005), *Changing Language Teaching through Language Testing*
- Downloadable reference list on my website

Some Washback Research

Positive washback  Negative washback

Narrow focus  Broad focus

Intended effects  Unintended effects

High-stakes  Low stakes

Some Washback Research

Individual impact
(micro-level)



Social impact
(macro-level)

Actions



Perceptions

Learner washback



Program washback

Part 6: Promoting Positive Washback

Two potentially competing goals:

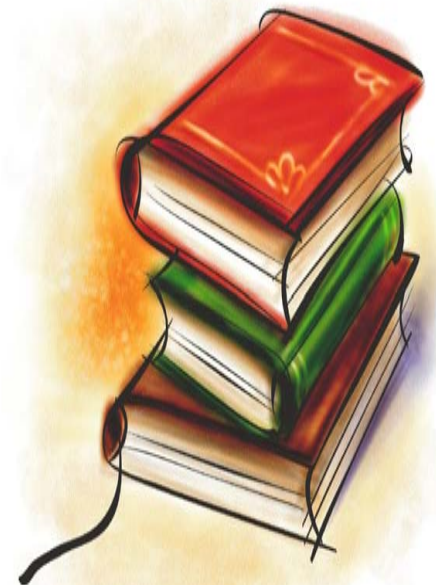
- Immediate goal: Achieve a certain test score
- Long-term goal: Increase language proficiency



Promoting Positive Washback

Classroom Practice: Actions that are the responsibility of individual teachers to their classes...

- Planning lessons
- Delivering instruction
- Managing interaction
- Assigning homework



Promoting Positive Washback

...and to individual students:

- Tailoring lessons
- Giving feedback
- Giving particular encouragement



Promoting Positive Washback

- Test the abilities you want to encourage
- Use direct testing (e.g., writing vs. an error editing task)
- Make sure the test is known and understood by students and teachers

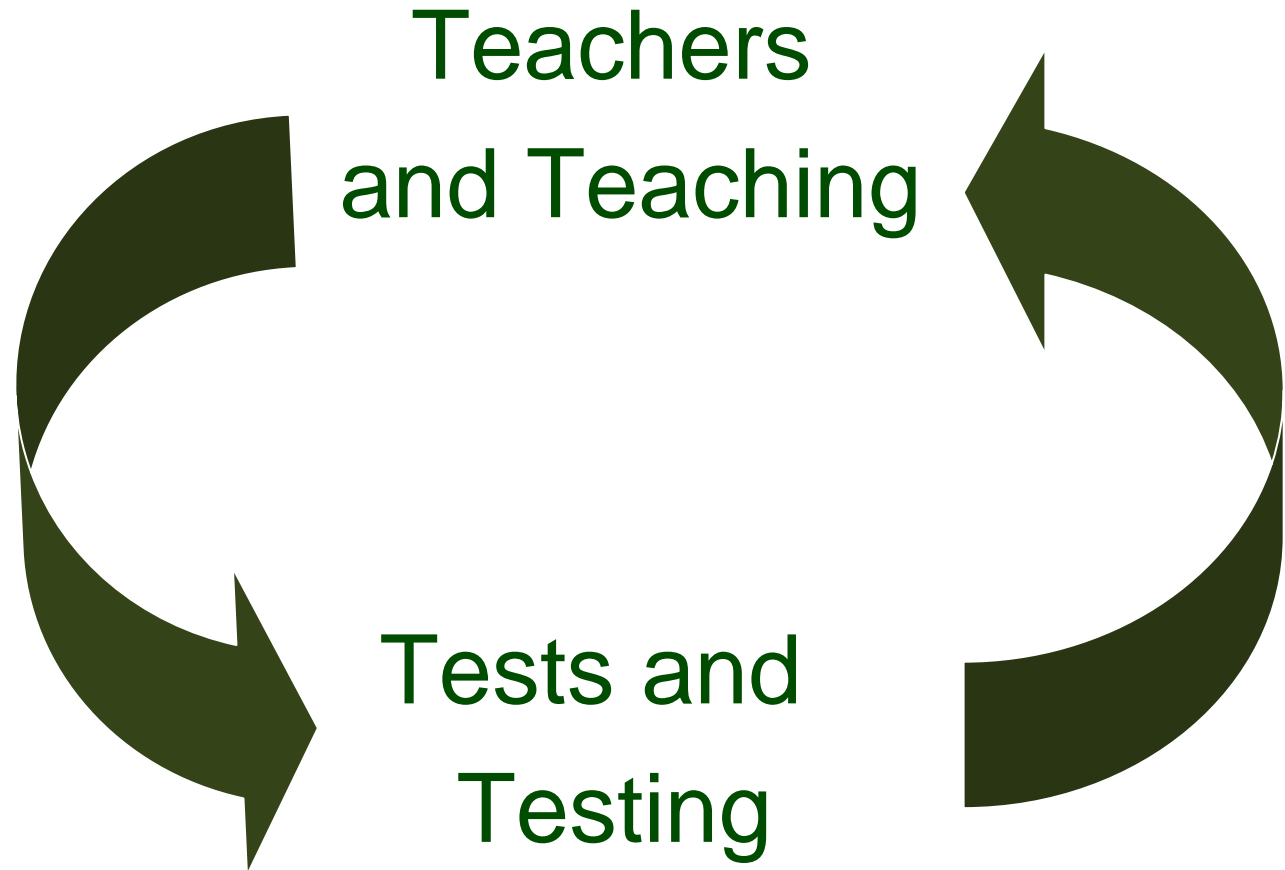
(from Hughes, 1989, pp. 47-44).

Promoting Positive Washback

As teachers, we can make sure we understand

- What tests are measuring
- What test methods are used
- How tests are scored
- How to explain test scores to students, parents and administrators

Promoting Positive Washback



Promoting Positive Washback

Understanding testing in general and washback in particular is important in

- Teaching
- Learning
- Advocating for our students
- Encouraging the development of appropriate tests (e.g., TSE and TWE)



References

For a list of references on Washback in a downloadable Word file, please go to

www.kathleenmbailey.com

Click on “Resources” and then go to “References” on the left side. Scroll down to the reference list on Washback.

Thank you for your time
and your attention!

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