Washback effect refers to the impact of testing on curriculum design, teaching practices, and learning behaviors.

Google definition.
The **backwash effect** (also known as the washback effect) is the influence that a test has on the way students are taught (e.g. the teaching mirrors the test because teachers want their students to pass).

> The washback effect is the outcome of a test or an examination which results either in positive or in a negative way.
In other words: The influences of testing can be found in the choices of learners and teachers: teachers may teach directly for specific test preparation, or learners might focus on specific aspects of language learning found in assessments.
Swain (1985) states the prevailing opinion: "It has frequently been noted that teachers will teach to a test: that is, if they know the content of a test and/or the format of a test, they will teach their students accordingly" (p. 43).

Tests contain what students must learn and therefore what must be taught, given that the tests in many cases represent the language hurdle students must clear before continuing their academic careers.

As noted by (Chapelle & Douglas, 1993, p. 16)

There is a natural tendency for both teachers and students to tailor their classroom activities to the demands of the test, especially when the test is very important to the future of the students, and pass rates are used as a measure of teacher success. This influence of the test on the classroom (referred to as washback by language testers) is, of course, very important; this washback effect can be either beneficial or harmful. (stated by Buck 1988, p. 17)

Washback can also be *positive* or *negative* in that it either maintains or hinders the accomplishment of educational goals.

In **positive washback**, teaching the curriculum becomes the same as teaching to a specific test.

**Negative washback** occurs in situations where there may be a mismatch between the stated goals of instruction and the focus of assessment; it may lead to the abandonment of instructional goals in favor of test preparation...
Positive

If teachers use tests to get their students to pay more attention to lessons and to prepare more thoroughly, it is positive washback...

E. g: man (men) or mans (test feedback)
Positive washback

- Tests induce teachers to cover their subjects and complete their syllabi within the prescribed time limits.

- Tests motivate students to work harder to have a sense of accomplishment and thus enhance learning.
Negative

If teachers fear poor results and the associated guilt which might lead to the desire for their students to achieve high scores in tests, it might be a reason for teaching to the test.

Consequently, **teachers narrow the curriculum** and produce negative washback...
Negative washback

- Students were practicing exam techniques rather than language learning activities.
- Tests may fail to reflect the learning principles or the course objectives.
- Students may not be able to learn real-life knowledge, but instead learn discrete points of knowledge that are tested.
Finally, tests have impact on what teachers teach but not on how they teach.”
Thanks!

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