What is this research about?
This study examined the relationship between report card grades and student scores on the Educational Quality and Assessment Office (EQAO) tests in grades 3 and 6 for the 2007-2009 school years.

More specifically, this study was guided by three main research questions:

a) What is the level of agreement between report card grades and EQAO scores?
b) Do factors such as gender, subject area, student achievement, or grade level impact the level of agreement between these two indicators student achievement?
c) How well do report card grades predict the likelihood of success on the standardized assessments?

What did the researchers do?
The researchers collected EQAO and report data from grades 3 and 6 for three years from 2007-2009, for a total of six student cohorts:
A- grade 3, 2009;  
B- grade 3, 2008;  
C- grade 3, 2007;  
D- grade 6, 2009;  
E- grade 6, 2008;  
F - grade 6, 2007.

What you need to know:
This study examined the relationship between report card grades and student scores on the Educational Quality and Assessment Office (EQAO) tests in grades 3 and 6 for the 2007-2009 school years. Results indicated that teachers tended to give higher report card grades than EQAO results warranted. However, report card grades from previous years were strong predictors of students' achievement on EQAO, correctly assigning EQAO levels approximately 75% of the time.
The researchers randomly selected 2% of the students from each cohort for a total sample size of 15,942 students. The entire sample was statistically analyzed to answer research question 1.

To answer research questions 2 and 3, the researchers selected 10 schools from the 48 largest school districts in Ontario and gathered the 2009 EQAO results of 10 students from each school, for a sub-set of EQAO and report card data from 2271 grade 3 and 2623 grade 6 students. Statistical analysis of the sub-set was performed to generate results.

What did the researchers find?
Results from this study indicated that teachers tended to give report card grades that were higher than students’ EQAO scores. However, the relationship between the two assessments did vary according to grade and subject area. Specifically, report card grades were more aligned with EQAO scores in grade 6 than in grade 3 and in writing more so than in reading or mathematics.

The researchers also found that report cards were strong predictors of the level of student success on EQAO, with previous years report card grades (grades 1 and 2 for those in the grade 3 cohort and grades 4 and 5 for those in the grade 6 cohort) correctly predicting the EQAO achievement of students approximately 75% of the time. The researchers identify this as the key finding of the study.

How can you use this research?
The researchers recommend that administrators and school boards may wish to consider the following:

- Support professional development for teachers that highlights the relevance of external assessments.
- Continue efforts to develop report cards that separate academics from behaviour, employ consistent rating scales, and use parent-friendly language.

About the researchers:
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About this summary  
The Ontario Education Research Exchange (OERE) is a project of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research, an Ontario network promoting the use of research in education. The OERE’s clear language summaries of academic research aim to support this mandate.

This summary has been adapted from the ResearchSnapshot series developed by York University and ResearchImpact and has been developed according to writing and design principles unique to OERE. For more information about this summary or the OERE network please contact oere.knaer.oise@utoronto.ca.

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