

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to make a few observations about Naplan Testing for the Senate Inquiry. Since I have experience teaching overseas, I think I can make some pertinent points.

1. The excess of National testing in Britain has warped the curriculum there-teachers teach to the endless tests; teachers are very aware that poor test results will result in the closing of their school/replacement with a private "charter school". All this leads to a loss of teacher collegiality and the teaching of higher order thinking goes out the window! A similar situation exists in the United States. There have been many cases of cheating on these tests. Teachers and Principals in the U.K. have now taken action against the distortion of these tests and the publication of League Tables of schools. The net result of all this has seen the U.K. and the U.S.A. slip down the rankings of OECD countries in educational standards. Far better to follow the No. 1 in the OECD rankings-Finland-which relies on superb resources and support for teachers and does not have a testing regime or League Tables.

2. In my time teaching in Canada in 2009, testing regimes were coming in and every month there was much teaching to the next monthly test and extra concern amongst teachers what the results in basic skills tests would mean for their school and their positions. So much time was spent preparing for the tests that more inventive teaching was put on hold and the curriculum was much too narrow to prepare students for 21st century life!

Please take my experience into consideration when discussing Naplan Testing and League Tables and the long-term effects on the narrowing of the curriculum, loss of teacher collegiality and the loss of our high educational standard in the international community.

Yours Sincerely

Steve Dewar, teacher Belmont High School