



For the Whole of Their Life

The effectiveness of the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy

Terms of Reference

The effectiveness of the National Assessment Program "Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN),

With specific reference to:

- a) whether the evidence suggests that NAPLAN is achieving its stated objectives;

I do not think it is really achieving this. The main reason is that the information as a diagnostic tool is 6 months out of date by the time schools receive the information. If this could be addressed, then it would be more useful, especially if followed up with PD for teachers (and funded release time) to be able to use the data effectively.

- b) unintended consequences of NAPLAN's introduction;

Teachers teach to the test in order for the children to be best prepared for this specific test. It is limited in the skills it is testing and interrupts the regular numeracy and literacy programmes for NAPLAN drills. I have also heard numerous stories from teachers who have seen it unfairly administered (ie cheating) by some schools in order to manipulate the results. This is due to the public nature of the data and the fear that some schools have of this damaging their reputation.

- c) NAPLAN's impact on teaching and student learning practices;

I do not think this has improved teaching and learning. In fact it is an unnecessary interruption to our regular programmes in order to prepare students for the testing. It would be extremely stressful in the children and unfair to ask them to sit a test they had not practiced. I think that in school diagnostic tests (such as Dibels for literacy) give us much more useful data that is unthreatening to the students and provides no motivation for teachers to cheat.

- d) The impact on teaching and student learning practices of publishing NAPLAN test results on the MySchool website;

As mentioned above.

- e) Potential improvements to the program, to improve student learning and assessment;

Some way of administering NAPLAN so that students of different abilities can have different paths (much like the Dibels where students only go on to more challenging material if they have achieved a certain level already. Students who cannot achieve the easier questions do not have to go further in the test, or could maybe be given easier queries to determine where they are proficient already. Feedback needs timely for intervention to be tailored to the individual needs of students. It is almost useless 6 months data 6 months after testing.

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f) International best practice for standardised testing, and international case studies about the introduction of standardised testing;

In Finland there is no compulsory testing of numeracy and literacy. They consistently achieve the highest levels of numeracy and literacy internationally. Clearly it is not necessary to improve standards and I think the money could be much better used providing release time for Professional Development for teachers.

g) Other relevant matters.

No other relevant matters

Mrs Michelle Kelly
Principal

5 June 2013

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