

I am a teacher who works in an isolated, rural town. My concerns about the misuses of the NAPLAN data are many but I will address the three areas of highest concern for my school, students and community. Firstly, I don't believe that a single test, on a particular day will demonstrate anything reliable. Many of my students said they didn't bother trying in the test because they are "sick of being tested". They obviously see no value in the test. They asked "What certificate will I get?" When I replied that there was no certificate, but there was a comprehensive report on what they could and couldn't demonstrate, as well as information about where they rate against the rest of Australia, they still didn't care. For me, what that does, is reflect straight back on me. I didn't know that they weren't going to try in the test until the results were out. I am not a teacher who believes in 'teaching to the test'. I think those that do are not being honest with themselves. I do like a benchmark but I don't want to be compared with other schools based on my students' results from one test.

Secondly, the publication of league tables from data posted on the My Schools website, as I have already stated, doesn't provide an accurate picture of my students' performance. Some of the schools that were compared to mine, in my eyes, were not comparable at all. Students in isolated and remote areas cannot be compared with students in city regions where they have opportunities to visit museums, live theatre productions and galleries (to name a few); they are not, in general, familiar with the diverse cultural experiences that students in larger areas just take for granted. I have taken students to Sydney who, by the age of 17, had never been to a city. These 'comparative' schools data is just a joke when you understand the complexities of our students. They have strengths that will never be recognised on My Schools website because they have skills that will make them decent, valued and active community members. Yes, we teach these things in school. Not just reading and writing and arithmetic!

Thirdly, the impact of the My Schools website on teacher morale has been significant. I do the absolute best that I can. I use the Quality Teaching Model to plan my lessons and assessment tasks. It is demoralising to see that, by our students not meeting national standards, we are named and shamed. Our workload has increased significantly over the past five years. It is demoralising for those who work hard, long hours to be publicly humiliated and it would test the best saint to find a positive.

And finally I believe that students, parents and teachers find the results for their students when compared to the rest of Australia, the only data that is required. The school, parent and student should be the ones to make a judgement about whether or not the school is 'pulling its weight'. Please stop this teacher/school bashing and let us get on with what we used to do best - teach!