

A couple of days before the recent NAPLAN test I was standing at the printer at work when an unusual document came out. An embarrassed colleague came up explaining that it was a practice NAPLAN test. Her son was really worried about the test, in tears and feared he would do poorly. She was going to give him a practice run to make him feel more comfortable.

He was in Grade 3.

I always thought the prime purpose of primary school was to give children an enjoyment of learning.

The administration of this test has been crude; a stomping, heavy-booted intrusion into a complex and sensitive relationship. Schools have been bullied, principals made fearful for their reputations, teachers threatened with court. Its simple minded approach reduces communication between educators, learners and parents to a web page. It reduces education to a number. And it reduces children to tears.

It is shameful.