

NAPLAN is an important diagnostic tool for teachers in a particular school to use as part of their teaching and learning programs. It is also useful for parents as a snapshot of where their child is on one particular day.

It is not useful, however, as a tool for comparing students and schools as it is not based on a national curriculum and it has a very narrow focus.

It is a series of one hour tests on two days of the year. It does not show where individual students have made personal learning gains. It does not give students and schools opportunities to show the numerous other ways in which their school provides rich learning experience which expand student learning, development and personal growth. All our schools and students need to be acknowledged for all the ways in which they enrich and are enriched.

In some ways, by having the NAPLAN tests as the only public markers of where a child is at, the reports on students which are prepared twice a year by the child's school using a variety of ongoing assessment procedures and experiences are somewhat devalued.

By having the data about students and schools being presented in a form which makes the construction of league tables possible, what is perceived by parents and the community is what appears not to be happening in the particular school, rather than all of the rich teaching, learning and assessing experiences which are happening.

School Certificate and Higher School Certificate results are not as publicly available as the NAPLAN results. Is such public scrutiny of young children resulting in positive learning outcomes?

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