

Our thoughts on the NAPLANS from two Grade Three teachers

We are two senior teachers who do not have an issue with the NAPLAN testing perse. However, assessment cannot be conclusive through implementation of a single “closed” test. Our concerns outlined below, and the potential for the misuse of results in grading schools are troubling to us.

- **Spelling-** The nature of the test is such that the type of error made by the student is not analysed. A mark of “right” or “wrong” is NOT an effective method of assessing a child’s spelling development.

The section where students had to identify a spelling error was both confusing and also confronting for a young child. Some of the errors chosen were reasonable errors for a developing speller.

We have grave concerns that the formulation of this spelling test was not informed by latest research and best practice.

- **Writing-** The topic of “What a mess” did not engage the students and the layout of the “stimulus” page was confusing for Grade Three students. The timeframe given for a narrative is unrealistic, (5minutes planning, 30 minutes writing and 5 minutes editing) and left many students unable to perform to their proven capacity.
- **Reading-** This year there was a new section added where children had to identify the humorous aspect and reflect on its effectiveness. This task was inappropriate due to the piece of text chosen. We are confident from our assessment of and discussion with our students that they are able to identify and reflect on the effectiveness of humour in text.
- We are concerned that results published in this way will coerce schools into teaching to the test. (This seems to be happening already.)
- We do not want our students to be diverted from their required curriculum tasks by continued practise of these tests. Much time is spent on planning and implementing a worthwhile and engaging program and this testing could be the start of a worrying trend.