

This submission was written on behalf of Bundaberg North State School Staff, we ask that our personal details in this submission be kept confidential.

Since NAPLAN was introduced, there has been a change in the way teachers at our school teach and what is taught.

To begin with, we now teach to the test. Months before the test, we start teaching students in Years 2, 4 and 6 what they need to know to complete the written component of the test. Then when they get into Years 3, 5 and 7, they have to go through the same Genre again. In the last few years it has been the Narrative Genre, and because of this over teaching students become bored with writing and other genres are not taught.

Teaching and learning has become regimented and the opportunity to use spontaneous learning, the personalised, incidental learning which students enjoy, is lost. Allowing students to learn about topics they are interested in cannot happen because of timelines and demands.

The amount of time spent on practice tests instead of actual teaching is ludicrous. Students are now doing practice tests in Years 2, 3, and 6 and then again the following year. Less time is now being spent teaching the curriculum and more time spent learning how to complete a test. However, this is done because of what is at stakes: funding, schools' reputations and teachers' reputations.

The pressures that NAPLAN place on children with learning difficulties are unfair. Learning is a developmental process of which not all students develop at the same rate. By exposing them to this type of testing only encourages these students to perceive themselves as 'dumb' (this came from the mouth of a 9 year old when he sat a practise test in Year 4. The child was in no way dumb; he just needed more time and more experiences than the other students.

Assessment should be a tool used to help the students. NAPLAN does not do that. The children are tested in May and yet it is at least four months before their results and areas of concern are known. These areas of concern could have been addressed in that four months.

Children as young as 7 are being exposed to high stakes, media-dominated testing. The amount of attention that these tests are being given by the media and the Government would make any one think that the careers of these 7 years olds depended on them doing well in the NAPLAN. The fact is these children do not care for tests; they are just children, children who want to know about the world in which they live, children who want to play, investigate, and have fun while they learn. Yet some of these students become noticeably stressed and disengaged in the weeks leading up to the test because of the unreasonable pressure to do well put on them, not just at school, but at home when their parents turn on the news or read a newspaper only to see NAPLAN hype plastered all over it.

NAPLAN is a stress that children should not have to endure for the sake of DATA: data that is misused by the media; data that does not help with the students immediate learning; and data that tells the classroom teacher what they already know. As classroom teachers we do not need the NAPLAN to tell us where little Johnny is having trouble; we do not need to expose students to the stresses of NAPLAN, because we know our students - we work with them five days a week and can gather the information we need to improve learning, in a less stressful manner.

Composite classes become disadvantaged because they have to deal with NAPLAN and QCATS. The teachers of these classes find themselves spending most of the year teaching to tests. The curriculum becomes very narrow.