

I am a teacher in the NSW DET with 32 years of service. For the last 20 years I have been a teaching principal in rural NSW and I feel that I know how to effectively assess the attainments and future needs of the children in my care - certainly the "rich" data which I collect throughout the year provides me with much more useful information than the results of a "battery" of tests conducted over a 3 day period. The NAPLAN tests were designed as a diagnostic tool NOT as a means of comparing the performance of schools. It must also be pointed out that it is only one diagnostic tool - every teacher uses many different approaches to determine whether children have achieved a particular outcome and what their future learning needs are.

The pressure which is being placed on schools through the publication of NAPLAN results and the establishment of "League Tables" is, unfortunately, going to result in some schools concentrating on teaching to the test and not to the needs of the children in their care. The overwhelming results of research conducted in other countries which have emphasised the use of external testing models clearly shows this to be the case. If my job as a school principal is dependent upon the NAPLAN performance of the children in my care I am going to do everything I can (legally) to make sure that they reach the required standards - even if it means that the other Key Learning Areas (Science and Technology; Human Society and Its Environment; Creative and Practical Arts & Personal Development/Health/Physical Education) and extra curricula activities are neglected.

The schools which were compared to my school on the My School website are not "similar" to the degree which would provide valid statistical comparisons. But let's be honest, this was never the intention.

It is my opinion that the emphasis on NAPLAN results is a simplistic approach which is being used by politicians of all persuasions to denigrate the efforts of teachers in schools throughout Australia and to "force" their thoughts on education reform onto the general public. There are countless reasons why NAPLAN should not be used to compare schools and I would hope that the inquiry can make recommendations which will stop this happening.

When one takes into account my years spent at university, I have spent the last 36 years as a professional educator and I am becoming more and more disenchanted with the approach which is being taken in regards to the provision of Public Education by our political representatives. I find it personally and professionally insulting that there is an insinuation in all of this process that teachers aren't doing their job and the way to make them do their job and get children attaining the results which are expected is to force teachers to do their job through the process of "name and shame". As revolutionary as it may sound it is my belief that if there truly existed a desire for ALL children to achieve the "expected outcomes" then a good place to start would be a commitment to funding Public Education to an adequate level.