

From:
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As a classroom teacher in 2 country schools I am very concerned about the impact the gathering and publication of the NAPLAN data has on my colleagues AND ULTIMATELY OUR STUDENTS. I see all staff in these country schools put under unnecessary additional pressure. Each year I see the concern in their eyes, bodies and actions as the National Testing approaches.

No 1. There has to be a better way to gather data from our schools. Putting Grade 3 students under exam conditions is ludicrous. Exams do not indicate an accurate measurement of a students knowledge. A 'good' teacher does not sit her class down to take a test to gather data. A 'good' teacher gets them involved in activities that are relevant to their lives, that involves the gathering of resources and information, that involves the use of peers and experts to gain evidence and discover new knowledge, which all naturally results in the accumulation of rich data about each of these vastly different individuals. The NAPLAN tests are only 'examining' a very minute part of the individual childs capabilities. It shows nothing of how a school has assisted in the educational growth of that child.

No 2. The larger school that I have worked in looks after and nurtures many students from disadvantaged backgrounds - the staff work bloody hard at many aspects of the childrens lives. However due to the demographic of these students the school is constantly fighting to improve their data results. I have witnessed leaders having to turn their priorities towards a test rather than remaining focussed on student and staff well being and growth. I have also seen valuable and scarce resources used for a test rather than the benefit of the whole school and its community.

No 3. In the smaller schools I am very concerned about personal ethics being forcibly 'nudged' in the wrong direction. Tests like this can be manipulated. Good results ensure no extra work is created when they are published, as well as creating a favourable impression in the eyes of the community.

No 4. Honest and hardworking parents are also being put under pressure. Most parents endeavour to do the best for their children, however it can be very confusing when they can see the good and hard work being done for their children yet a government publication is showing that their school is 'bad'. One day a parent is happy and confident with their school and their choice, the next they are being shown that they have made a bad decision because a web site says so.

Please remember that the education of our children is not a competition where only the winners are considered valuable. We are not big business where only the ones making the most profit remain open. We are dealing with all children in our society - no matter who they are or where they come from. The result of one test should not determine their value - their value is determined by the expansion of their knowledge and how they use that knowledge. Data is and always will be important and we all need it to improve our practise no matter what we do. However, the importance placed on these one set of results has become ridiculously and disproportionately high. It has lead to schools being placed under additional and unnecessary pressure and has lead to staff having to shift their priorities towards one test result rather than the total and

more important educational needs of our students (teacher training, resources, professional support services, etc, etc, etc).

PLEASE TAKE THE EMPHASIS OFF THE TEST AND PLACE IT BACK WITH THE STUDENT.