

Parents read Naplan results the wrong way. The public high schools in my area all suffered due to the poorly presented data on the my school website. Conversations with parents in this area result in parents being worried about sending their child to a school due to the poor Naplan results - when the results only comment on the students already at the school not what the potential students are able to achieve at the school. In other words, parents believe that the Naplan results outline the potential achievement of their child rather than are an average of performance across the school for a certain cohort of students. While in school we use Naplan as one piece of data (which we predict pretty accurately before the results finally get to us) to find areas of need, in the community they are now seen as the equivalent to year 12 results.

The Naplan tests do not test what they set out to test. They test endurance, willingness to try, self confidence, previous success or failure, experience in tests and state of mind on the day rather than really being an indicator of literacy and numeracy skills. Having supervised several different classes through these tests there are some classes that go about the task with initial confidence but weary and question the need as the day goes on. Other classes begin in a state of rebellion, not appreciating the change to their daily routine or the challenge of demonstrating their skills. Some of these students expend ten minutes worth of effort and then submit. The class is disrupted from the start.

How about moderating genuine, authentic pieces of literacy and numeracy created by the students during their learning and sampling progressively through a year? I suspect unwillingness to spend money prevents a genuine assessment process.