

The following comments are based on feedback of a number of teachers at our school.

Impact

- Time spent on practicing rather than delivering curriculum content aimed at the educational needs of the students (4 weeks in Year 5, 6-7weeks in Year 7)
- Spend 1 and a half terms covering one genre (which narrows the timeframe for deep understanding of other genres to be covered throughout the year)
- Feeling forced to abandon curriculum intent in order to focus on “content” and “processes” identified in previous NAPLAN tests thereby giving students the best opportunity to succeed.
- Impact of resourcing- sheer amount of photocopying that gets done for things such as practice tests, copies for student files. This in turn takes away for the provision of meaningful resources.

Time

- Practice tests – group marking and discussion to make it a valid educational experience are exceptionally time consuming, often 3 or 4 times as long as it takes to administer the test.
- Even though other quality teaching is taking place, it is still a term and a half of test preparation, where other areas are missing out and not being valued.

Narrowing

- Narrowing of the strands (etc number being the focus in mathematics)
- Despite your best efforts, English and maths become your main focus for a term and a half (as a result, the other subject areas and other educational priorities suffer).
- The test in its current form doesn't give children an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a variety of ways and assessment methods (i.e. you have to be good at pen and paper tests to perform well).
- In year 2, teachers felt they had to speed up the delivery of the maths curriculum in particular. Concepts which would be tested during NAPLAN but not necessarily taught by term 2 include addition and subtraction with regrouping, multiplication and numbers to 1000. As this curriculum is normally delivered over the course of the year our delivery of curriculum is really not teaching any of these concepts thoroughly enough for students to consolidate this knowledge by the time of the test. It also requires us to then go back and re-teach these concepts thoroughly at the expense of further curriculum time.

Demands from system to improve student performance

- Unreasonable mandate to improve outcomes by 4% from the Education Department (with no consideration of different cohorts, learning styles, learning support needs, disabilities, ESL, gender, etc)
- From year to year, it does not compare “apples with apples”. It does not take into account that each cohort of students are different.

Stress on students

- Anxiety levels high

- Children evidently stressed
- Unrealistic expectation of having students (especially for those in Year 3) sit and perform under test conditions for such a long period of time.
- Learning support students have feelings of failure (it is ridiculous that we spend so much scaffolding our curriculum for the students, building up their self esteem, only to shatter them and prove beyond a doubt that they are struggling).
- Media pressure has impacted on the children.
- Teaching of the maths curriculum in year 3 especially is crammed and doesn't allow for consolidation or allowance for developmental aspects of learning. Concepts such as 2 include addition and subtraction with regrouping, multiplication and numbers to 1000 are of particular issue.

Store put in tests' diagnostic capability

- Data may not be valid because it is only a point in time assessment
- Multiple choice answers may not be valid because sometimes students just guess (and then if they get them right, this increases their results unrealistically). This is especially the case if time is running short and there a number of answers left. Students are at times encouraged to "get an answer down."
- Over-exposure to the test genre (and many practice tests) makes students blasé and tired with the whole experience, which can result in a performance which is lower than they are capable of.

Transitions from Year 3 – 5- 7

2009 data- Enrolment continuity for 2009 indicated 88%. Student retention is relatively stable, although there is a noticeable increase of new students each year.

Are we looking at the actual child development or simply teaching to a test??????
Comparison between schools is not a level of playing field.

At times, it's difficult for people in the educational field to understand the results and statistics, therefore how can we expect parents / members of the wider community to interpret data fairly and make reasonable judgements.

There's no point in comparing our school, or rural and remote schools to city schools, or ones on other states such as Western Australia, or Brisbane (for example, Rolleston was linked to the "like school" of Nudgee).

Take out the green and red colours on the My School Website – it is an unfair comparison. There should be an option for schools to update their own schools information with the good programs that are happening. Many schools enrich students education and lives with a variety of extra curricular and pastoral care programs that are not reflected on the My School Website.

As stated before, this is a submission reflecting the views of a number of teachers and Union members at Emerald State School. I have posted it on behalf of the staff.

Kind regards

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