



PRESS RELEASE:

Testing for Thinking

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The NAPLAN results have been released and the assessment of those results has drawn attention to the writing task. ACARA, in our view, has an approach to testing that encourages thinking. By not revealing the nature or genre of the writing task prior to testing, the NAPLAN testing regime has become, arguably for the first time, a proper assessment of literacy.

ATA CEO Mohan Dhall said, "In any robust form of national assessment for literacy and numeracy, there should always be a mix of predictable test items and also unpredictable test items. Both are useful in assessing the skill, competency and understanding of students."

That some students did not attempt the written task indicates a very important factor. Teaching students to take academic risks by attempting questions is, of itself, an important task.

Of course, all assessments 'test' the students, those who teach and also the actual assessors – thus a cogent understanding of the implications of the new approach to NAPLAN is very important."

The ATA takes the view that the results from the NAPLAN tests should be used to make informed decisions about the use of supplementary accredited tutors who can fill skills and knowledge gaps.

The ATA would like specialised funding for one-to-one tutoring support for kids at literacy and/or numeracy risk as identified by the NAPLAN results. Accountable tutoring intervention would work best when schools work closely with tutors in the interest of students. This requires a close connection between parent groups, tutors, principals and the teaching unions.

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