

## **Editorial: "I love the smell of NAPLAN in the morning"**

NAPLAN (The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy) is an annual Australia-wide testing regime in years 3, 5 7 and 9. It is one of a number of national and international testing schemes currently in operation. This issue of the journal is also being published in the context of an emerging National Curriculum in Australia. At such times, and at all times, it seems, we tend to focus on what we want our students to know and be able to do at the end of a certain period or learning experience. These are fine quest(ion)s. A more fundamental question, one that risks being lost in the mix of this, however, is, 'what kind of people would we like our students to be at the end of and as a result of their learning-time with us, their teachers?'

The pushes for numeric-scale testing are many. It is only natural that parents want to know how their child is faring against a (difficult to define, or imagined?) mean or norm. Similarly, it is tempting for principals and teachers to compare 'their' students to others, and for politicians to do likewise, nationally and internationally. Many children, too, are keen to know if they are 'keeping up'.

Excellence in literacy and numeracy is an admirable end. Mathematical miscalculations can be the makings of all manner of catastrophe. And while apostrophe indiscretions and the like are less prone to have such dire consequences, the message, arguably, cannot be better than the medium that delivers it. Poorly-expressed English is a distraction to the communication at hand. Associated tests can serve a noble purpose if used for diagnosing individual or systemic problems, or in identifying schools that appear to help their students 'perform' (a rather artless term?) above expectation, and then inviting such schools to share what they feel is contributing to these results.

Returning to the question of the kind of person we want to grow from our teaching: You might want to contemplate now some adjectives that describe such a person, in the context of a fractured and getting-faster-dangerously world. You might also initiate some water-cooler conversations on the topic. You could reflect, too, on the aspects of your teaching that engender such qualities in (your) students.

The question "what kind of person do we want to produce?" is a rather arrogant one. It is arguably no more presumptuous than asking what kind of ABCs and guzinters they need to know and be able to produce on demand, however. It is also, for my money (and after all, it is my money, and yours) a nobler question to ask. It is ultimately an essential question to ask, as the next generations write the planet's and its people's future.

In this issue we present seven articles from three continents of our planet, the first of which takes up on the issue of what open space classroom environments may have to offer modern day teaching practices. Alterator presents teacher reactions to changes in learning environments which have a positive effect on their professional work. In the second article, we remain focusing on the teaching but shift our attention to the higher education tutoring environment. Calma reports on what tutors see as important in a

professional development program, highlighting that peer learning and interaction with more experienced tutors in the program. In the third article, Cheema takes up the issue of measuring self-efficacy in mathematics in the U.S. and questions the value in applying different methods of measurement to indicate effect. He found that a variation in methods from simple to complex measurements made no difference on effect. Staying on the theme of professional learning in the fourth article, Gardiner, Cumming-Potvin and Hesterman report on transformational multiliteracy development among primary school teachers. The authors report on teachers forming communities of practice around a book club model using multidimensional literacy practices. In the fifth article, Mackenzie, Scull and Munsie take a close look at changes in first year students' early writing samples. The authors provide examples of "discrete, yet related, areas that might improve teaching practice to affect pedagogical reform" and offer implications for influencing teaching decisions around early writing assessment. Ryan, Schruder and Robinson report on their Canadian study on values orientations among pre-service teachers, in article six. They conclude, not surprisingly, that teaching is not neutral and give implications for informing pre-teacher trainers about value clarifications. The last article in this issue by Weiss and Kiel looks at what motivates students to choose the teaching profession in Germany. The authors guard against allowing for "overly idealistic patterns of motivation" in students' choice of occupation in the early stages of their university career and advocate for increased reflective components in the teacher education curriculum to allow for informed choices to be made.

We hope that these articles provide good moments of reading and thinking around education, its purpose, and its global participants.

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