NAPLAN
Australia’s National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy

Dr John Cresswell
NEQMAP Capacity Building Workshop
Bangkok, September, 2014
Question

- What does a computer company, a tree and an Australian research organisation have in common?
They all have the same name

Acer: Computer company

Acer: genus of trees, eg *acer palmatum*

ACER: Australian Council for Educational Research
And don’t forget!

ASER: Annual Status of Education Report
Overview

• Australian education
• National assessment – NAPLAN
  – The test
  – The target
  – The data
  – The reporting
• Analysis case study – South Australia
Education in Australia

- Australia is a federation with a federal government and eight separate states and territories each with their own government.
- Each of the states and territories has their own system of education.
- These separate systems have evolved independently and are different in structure (for example in some systems secondary schooling starts at grade 8 and in others it starts at grade 7) and curriculum.
While the states have direct control of education, the federal government can influence policy – often through funding arrangements.

In Australian there are also different sectors of education – government and non-government.

Approximately 30% of students across the country attend non-government schools.
Education in Australia

- The federal and state governments provide funding to the non-government schools according a complex formula which takes into account some aspects of a school’s socioeconomic standing.
- The non-government sector is made up of Catholic and independent schools.
Education in Australia

- The national assessment program is relatively new – the first assessment was in 2008.
- Australia is, only now, moving towards having a national curriculum.
- The assessment came before the curriculum and has been a stimulus for change.
NAPLAN – the test

- Four domains
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Language conventions (grammar & punctuation, spelling)
  - Numeracy
NAPLAN – the target

- All students in four grades
  - Grade 3
  - Grade 5
  - Grade 7
  - Grade 9
NAPLAN provides benefits from the ground up for students, schools and Australian education systems.

**STUDENT**

You're not alone...

1 MILLION STUDENTS sit the NAPLAN test.

**SCHOOL**

Test Domains:
- Reading
- Writing
- Language Conventions
- Numeracy

**WHO BENEFITS?**

Students and parents: Discuss progress with teachers and compare performance against national peers.

**STUDENT**

Students take the test in years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

No pass. No fail. Familiarisation is important. Drilling and excessive practice is unnecessary.

- 3
- 5
- 7
- 9
NAPLAN – overview

**WHO BENEFITS?**

**TEACHERS:** Help teachers to challenge higher performers and identify students needing support.

**SCHOOLS:** Map student progress, identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching programs and set goals.

**AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

**EQUITY:** A fair go for all Australian students.

**KNOWLEDGE:** Open conversation about the important skills of literacy and numeracy.

**NATIONAL STANDARDS:** Comparable data about literacy and numeracy standards.

**WHO BENEFITS?**

School systems and governments: Valuable data to support good teaching and learning, and school improvement.
NAPLAN – the data

- National scale for each domain
  - Comparability across year levels & over time within a domain but not across domains
  - Numerical scales (approx from 0 ⇒ 1000)
  - Described in terms of proficiency bands
NAPLAN - the data

- **Status** at a given time
- **Improvement** over time
  - For a year level in a group of schools
- **Gain**
  - For a cohort moving to a later year level
    (e.g. from Year 3 to Year 5)
- **Growth**
  - For a cohort over a longer term trajectory
    (e.g. Year 3 to Year 5 to Year 7...)
NAPLAN – the reporting

• To students/parents
• To schools
• To the public
  • Preliminary report (September same year)
  • Final report (by gender, by geolocation, by indigenous status, language background, parental education & occupation)
• Myschool website
Case Study – South Australia

• Further analysis was carried out by the South Australian Department of Education to compare their students to students of other states.

• This allowed them to identify their students’ strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to design policy changes to bring about improvement.
### At or Above National Minimum Standard

Improvement noted for 80% of Aspects

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## Comparison of Means

### Improvement for 60% of Aspects

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Proficiency Band Distribution

### Year 7 Writing

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**Bar Chart**: Proficiency Bands Year 7 Writing

- **Legend**:
  - Light blue: 2009 SA
  - Dark red: 2009 Aust
National Overview

• South Australia’s achievement is generally
  – lower than NSW, Victoria and the ACT
  – similar to WA, Tasmania and Queensland
  – higher than the NT

• Further analysis looked at the areas of need.
National Overview

2013 National Assessment Program
Literacy and Numeracy
Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy
National Report for 2013

http://www.nap.edu.au/