Respect, Responsibility, Learning, Co-operation and Participation

14 May 2014 No. 14 (Week 3 Term 2)

Educating Communities

I have borrowed from an opinion piece written in a state newspaper this week, as I think it provokes us to consider why we are going through the process of NAPLAN with Year 3 & 5 students this week and how we approach the tests.

If you know much about our philosophy at East Maitland, you will know that while we wish to give every child the best opportunity to succeed in this sort of test AND we will use the data gained to support our learning programs IT IS NOT by any means the be all and end all of our student assessment program. It is simply one test (or 2 or 3) on one day (or 2 or 3) that gives us a snapshot of how they may be going. It can be very accurate, and it can be very inaccurate – above all the teacher knows your child best and can tell you on any given day exactly what areas your child is achieving well in and what areas need development.

BUT we will give EVERY CHILD the BEST OPPORTUNITY to succeed by providing them with high quality teaching that is related directly to the curriculum and the skills they learn can be transferred to all styles of testing – including NAPLAN.

CHEATING at NAPLAN takes many forms, from teachers previewing the tests to coaching their students, through to manipulation of the students who sit the tests by selectively encouraging the parents of underperforming students to withdraw them from the testing program. Indeed, in similar testing in the US, the entire state of New York was caught manipulating their test results to give the impression of continual improvement. These actions have the aim of improving results without improving learning.

However, it is not cheating to prepare students for tests. One of the important aims of schooling is to teach students the skills and knowledge specified in the curriculum and also how to successfully demonstrate them in assessment.

It applies to any form of testing: NAPLAN, school-based or university assessment, TAFE certification, or driving tests. Test preparation can include instruction in areas such as the format of the test, strategies for responding to different types of questions, managing time during a test, and coping with examination nerves. If NAPLAN test preparation has the aim of improving learning and the results in the tests of that learning, then it is not only legitimate, but good teaching.

It is unfortunate that so many teachers, see preparation for NAPLAN tests only in terms of outdated methods such as test and drill and rote learning. Preparation for NAPLAN testing does not require that you stop teaching the curriculum. One teacher described how he had suspended the teaching of Romeo and Juliet to prepare his students for NAPLAN tests. Why not do both?

More than three-quarters of the marks for the NAPLAN writing test are awarded for good writing skills such as ideas, cohesion, structure, paragraphing, vocabulary, and spelling. These skills can be developed in any context – including writing about Romeo and Juliet. Reading Shakespeare is as good a form of preparation for the NAPLAN reading test as reading any other type of text. Shakespeare provided us with such a rich source of vocabulary that it is an obvious context for the teaching of vocabulary and its first cousin, spelling. Rephrasing Shakespearean English into contemporary language provides opportunities to explore the conventions of grammar and punctuation. These are just a few examples.

While they might require teachers to change how they teach, they do not affect what they teach, and they certainly should not require teachers to stop teaching the curriculum.

CHEATING at NAPLAN takes many forms, from teachers previewing the tests to coaching their students, through to manipulation of the students who sit the tests by selectively encouraging the parents of underperforming students to withdraw them from the testing program. Indeed, in similar testing in the US, the entire state of New York was caught manipulating their test results to give the impression of continual improvement. These actions have the aim of improving results without improving learning.

However, it is not cheating to prepare students for tests. One of the important aims of schooling is to teach students the skills and knowledge specified in the curriculum and also how to successfully demonstrate them in assessment.

It applies to any form of testing: NAPLAN, school-based or university assessment, TAFE certification, or driving tests. Test preparation can include instruction in areas such as the format of the test, strategies for responding to different types of questions, managing time during a test, and coping with examination nerves. If NAPLAN test preparation has the aim of improving learning and the results in the tests of that learning, then it is not only legitimate, but good teaching.

It is unfortunate that so many teachers, see preparation for NAPLAN tests only in terms of outdated methods such as test and drill and rote learning. Preparation for NAPLAN testing does not require that you stop teaching the curriculum. One teacher described how he had suspended the teaching of Romeo and Juliet to prepare his students for NAPLAN tests. Why not do both?

More than three-quarters of the marks for the NAPLAN writing test are awarded for good writing skills such as ideas, cohesion, structure, paragraphing, vocabulary, and spelling. These skills can be developed in any context – including writing about Romeo and Juliet. Reading Shakespeare is as good a form of preparation for the NAPLAN reading test as reading any other type of text. Shakespeare provided us with such a rich source of vocabulary that it is an obvious context for the teaching of vocabulary and its first cousin, spelling. Rephrasing Shakespearean English into contemporary language provides opportunities to explore the conventions of grammar and punctuation. These are just a few examples.

While they might require teachers to change how they teach, they do not affect what they teach, and they certainly should not require teachers to stop teaching the curriculum.

It is disingenuous to argue that no preparation is required for NAPLAN, particularly in light of the pressure on principals for improved NAPLAN results. As a result schools and teachers are struggling to reinvent the wheel, with varying degrees of success.

But if we fail to prepare students for NAPLAN tests then the people we cheat are the students.
School News

Banner Winners
Congratulations Amelia Burgess and Isahbella Threlfo

Cross Country
Last Friday two of our students, Josie Morley and Sebastian Rodet, travelled to Newcastle to compete in regional cross country. Both students ran the best that they could and represented East Maitland with great pride.
Josie came 15th in the 11yrs Girls while Sebastian came 7th in the Junior Boys. He is now 1st reserve to go to the State carnival.
Well done Josie and Sebastian

Swimming Presentation
This Thursday there will be a small presentation for the school swimming champions. The students have been notified and family members are welcome to attend.

Infants Athletics Carnival
Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 will hold their Athletic Carnival on Friday 23rd May at King Edward Park (next to East Maitland Bowling Club. The carnival will commence at 9:45am and finish by 2:30pm. Parents and grandparents are welcome to cheer on the students.
Sausage sizzle orders must be in by this Friday, 16th May.

P&C News

Banner Winners
Congratulations Amelia Burgess and Isahbella Threlfo

Cross Country
Last Friday two of our students, Josie Morley and Sebastian Rodet, travelled to Newcastle to compete in regional cross country. Both students ran the best that they could and represented East Maitland with great pride.
Josie came 15th in the 11yrs Girls while Sebastian came 7th in the Junior Boys. He is now 1st reserve to go to the State carnival.
Well done Josie and Sebastian

Swimming Presentation
This Thursday there will be a small presentation for the school swimming champions. The students have been notified and family members are welcome to attend.

Infants Athletics Carnival
Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 will hold their Athletic Carnival on Friday 23rd May at King Edward Park (next to East Maitland Bowling Club. The carnival will commence at 9:45am and finish by 2:30pm. Parents and grandparents are welcome to cheer on the students.
Sausage sizzle orders must be in by this Friday, 16th May.

If you have anything for discussion at the next meeting please contact the P&C via email eastmaitetlandpublicschoolpandc@gmail.com

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ASSISTED WITH THE MOTHER’S DAY STALL
This year we tried a pre order system for gifts, we had a number of new volunteers assist and we had a selection of quality items. The Children left the hall with smiling faces after selecting their gift.
The day was not without stress but I hope everyone enjoyed themselves and Mums were happy with their gifts received. Thank you to all the lovely ladies that assisted on this day – you all went above and beyond.

Please note - to manage events at a school with approximately 600 children it takes a lot of coordination and support from a number of people. The proportion of volunteers to children in the school is very low and it seems to be the same people each time assisting. If you are able to offer just an hour here and there to support the events in your school it would be greatly appreciated.

Communicating with the P&C
It is appreciated that if you have questions, concerns, or comments that they are directed to the P&C via our email address eastmaitetlandpublicschoolpandc@gmail.com. It is difficult to respond to comments, questions etc when information is received 3rd or 4th hand. If communication goes through multiple people before being received by those who can offer the answer or solution the original message can be lost and incorrect assumptions made. The P&C email address is checked on a regular basis by the President and Secretary and is the best form of communication to have your enquiry answered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th May</td>
<td>13th May</td>
<td>14th May</td>
<td>15th May</td>
<td>16th May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 3</td>
<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th May</td>
<td>20th May</td>
<td>21st May</td>
<td>22nd May</td>
<td>23rd May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 4</td>
<td>Debate vs Minmi</td>
<td>National simultaneous story time</td>
<td>Peer support Tennis Bond</td>
<td>Infants Athletics Carnival Multicultural Public Speaking Stage 2&amp;3 Tennis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Any problems please phone Jacki - School 4933 7524 or Home 4932 7226

19/5
20/5
21/5
22/5
23/5

Sick Bay Linen Roster

TERM 2

Canteen Roster

19/5   Philla Smythe   Jenni Blais
20/5   Megan Streeter   Julie Taylor
21/5   Josie Harring   Sue Ann Carroll   Jennifer Moir
22/5   Noelle Green   Jill Cridland   Joy Edwards
23/5   Sarah Davis   Tracey Van Tol   Kyle Potter

Any problems please phone Jacki - School 4933 7524 or Home 4932 7226

Sick Bay Linen Roster

TERM 2

16/5/14 - Donna Burton
23/5/14 - Jodi Smith
30/5/14 - Kimberely Taylor

UNIFORM SHOP
Reminder that the Uniform Shop is CASH or CHEQUE ONLY.
Please make your cheque payable to: East Maitland Public School P&C Association

Please note that the Uniform Shop is looking for additional Volunteers to assist in the shop. Please see Kerry in the shop on Thursday or email the P&C at eastmaitlandpublicschoolpandc@gmail.com.

We are looking to staff the Uniform shop on a Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning.

Remember you can order any time through the office using the order form available on the school website. Your order will be processed on Thursdays and given to your child to bring home or left at the office for you to collect. This service allows access to the uniform shop for everyone.
TAKE HOME A BIG BROTHER OR BIG SISTER!

Let's get organised early!

Give your children the wonderful opportunity to have an international big brother or big sister by hosting one of our exceptional international students arriving in Australia in July 2014 for their 5 or 10 month programs. Our international students from France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Japan, the U.S.A and Canada will live as a local, attend a local secondary school, arrive with their own spending money and comprehensive insurance cover – all arranged by Southern Cross Cultural Exchange. Call your local coordinator today on: 0429406126 to request our little booklets of international student profiles, and capture the spirit of family and friendship!