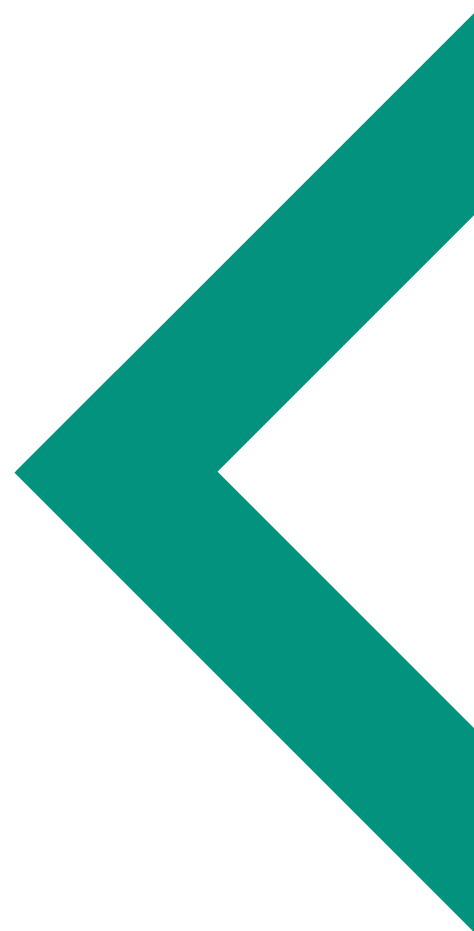


**Evaluation of 1999
Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7
Testing Program**

Final Report



QUEENSLAND
SCHOOL
CURRICULUM
COUNCIL

October 2000

Acknowledgments

The following officers participated in this evaluation: Christopher Dean (evaluation and survey design, data management, analysis and report writing), Heidi Berger-Bartlett (data management and analysis) and Andrew Lockhart (graph generation). Additional information on specific 1999 Testing Program items and tasks was provided by Claire Clifforth and Rhondda Kretschmann.

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Executive summary and conclusions

This final report presents the findings of the evaluation of the 1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program in literacy and numeracy (hereafter called the 1999 Testing Program or Program).

The evaluation focuses on three periods of the 1999 Testing Program:

- August 1999, when the tests were administered in schools. At this time, an evaluation survey was distributed to schools with the test materials, just prior to the test dates;
- November/December 1999, when the student report was distributed to parents/caregivers by schools. A brief evaluation survey was sent home with each student's report;
- January/February 2000, when schools had had an opportunity to examine the student, class and school reports distributed in November/December 1999. An evaluation survey was distributed to schools in mid-January 2000.

The evaluation asked five major questions. A summary of the responses to these questions, together with the conclusions based on the findings, appears below.

Focus Question 1

Overall, how appropriate and effective are 1999 pre-test information and 1999 Testing Program materials?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 1, the evaluation found the following:

- 1.1 Overall, a total of 80% of schools rated the *Information for Schools* booklet as 'good' or 'very good', and 75% rated the parent brochure *What You Need to Know* similarly.
- 1.2 Just over one half (55%) of parents/caregivers indicated that they received a parent brochure while 43% of parents/caregivers answered 'No' or 'I don't know'. Of those who said they received the brochure, most (85%) felt that it was 'generally' or 'completely clear'.
- 1.3 Overall, the Testing Program materials were received relatively positively by schools participating in the respective tests. Those considering the test 'good' or 'very good' ranged from 48% to 78% while those considering the tests 'poor' or 'very poor' ranged from 2% to 15%.
- 1.4 A majority (51%) of schools indicated that there were some questions or tasks in the Year 3 Numeracy Test that caused them concern, while in respect of the other tests, it was a minority ranging from 25% to 40%. The Year 3 tests recorded the most frequent concerns while the Year 7 test recorded the least.
- 1.5 In respect of each of the six tests administered (literacy and numeracy for each of Years 3, 5 and 7), a minority of schools (ranging from 0.4% to 31%) provided examples of items or tasks that they felt appeared to be one or more of the following: tricky or confusing; unaligned to the Queensland syllabus; making too high literacy/language demands; not inclusive of all students; and too difficult for students at that year level.
- 1.6 An analysis of specific items or tasks reported by schools as causing concern indicated that the:
 - Year 3 Numeracy Test had items or tasks that were most frequently perceived to be tricky or confusing (by 31% of schools), too difficult for students (by 15% of schools) or not aligned with the Queensland syllabus (by 22% of schools);
 - Year 3 Literacy Test had items or tasks that were most frequently perceived to make too high literacy/language demands (by 16% of schools);

- Year 5 Literacy Test had items or tasks that were most frequently perceived to not be inclusive of all students (by 8% of schools).

Conclusion 1

Overall, the 1999 *Information for Schools* document and parent brochure were appropriate and effective, but the presentation and distribution of the parent brochure warrants further investigation.

Conclusion 2

Overall, in the context of the 1999 Testing Program's remit, the 1999 Testing Program materials were appropriate and effective, but the perceived concerns expressed by some schools warrant further scrutiny of test items and tasks to ensure that any perceived concerns are minimised.

Conclusion 3

In respect of pre-test and test materials, the positive findings of the evaluation of 1999 Testing Program materials are relatively consistent with the positive findings of the evaluation of the 1998 Testing Program.

Focus Question 2

What specific questions or tasks in the 1999 Testing Program materials caused concern to schools, if any?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 2, the evaluation found the following:

- 2.1 The percentages of schools that found individual items or tasks of particular concern were relatively low. Overall, these percentages ranged from zero to 11% of schools with most notable* items ranging between 1 and 3% of schools.

* Definitions of 'notable': A Year 3 item or task was defined as notable if four or more schools (approx. 2% or more of schools) listed the item or task as a particular concern. A Year 5 and 7 item or task was defined as notable if 10 or more schools (approx. 1% or more of schools) listed the item or task as a particular concern. (The definition for the Years 5 and 7 Tests is different to Year 3 because these were census tests and therefore had a larger number of respondents to the survey.)

- 2.2 The following items or tasks were notable (see definition above) for causing particular concerns for schools:
- Year 3 Numeracy Test: Test Paper 1: Q5, Q12, Q30; Test Paper 2: Q6, Q18.
 - Year 3 Literacy Test: Test Paper 2: Q15; Test Paper 3: Q12.
 - Year 5 Numeracy Test: Q4, Q6, Q12, Q14, Q16, Q22, Q25, Q27, Q34, Q44.
 - Year 5 Literacy Test: Q3, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q17, Q18, Q30, Q34, Writing Task.
 - Year 7 Numeracy Test: Q40.
 - Year 7 Literacy Test: Q11, Q24, Q26, Writing Task.

Conclusion 4

Overall, particular concerns about specific items or tasks were noted by a relatively small percentage of schools. On balance, it may be concluded that most 1999 Testing Program items or tasks met the Council's pre-specified criteria for their selection; however, there are a number of aspects worthy of further consideration in the development of future test items or tasks. (These aspects are discussed in Section 3.4.)

Focus Question 3

How appropriate and effective are the 1999 student, class and school reports?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 3, the evaluation found the following:

- 3.1 Schools rated the student report, class report, school report and *Guide to Reports* very positively, with between 74% and 78% of schools rating the reports 'good' or 'very good'.
- 3.2 Parents/caregivers rated the student report positively with 68% rating it 'good' or 'very good'. This rating is a little less than the rating of 78% given by schools.
- 3.3 Most parents/caregivers (74%) felt that the amount of information provided in the student report was 'about right' and most (89%) felt that it was of 'some' or 'great' help in assisting in an understanding of their child's learning progress.
- 3.4 Most parents/caregivers and schools (between 76% and 94%) wished the various aspects of the student report listed in the survey to be retained. The aspects listed were: the graphs, item descriptions, item numbers, item order, spelling words, writing criteria and layout. At the opposite end of the extreme, item numbers were the most frequently ticked aspect desired to be removed (by 8% of parents/caregivers), and the most frequently ticked aspects of the student report desired to be amended were: item description (by 10% of parents/caregivers), writing criteria (by 9% of parents/caregivers) and item numbers (by 7% of parents/caregivers). (Examples of the suggested amendments are provided in the main body of the report.)
- 3.5 Altogether, 19% of parents/caregivers and 5% of schools indicated that they wished to have something added to the student report. The most frequently requested addition was from the 4% of parents/caregivers who wished to have test papers provided or examples of the questions asked. (Other suggested additions are provided in the main body of the report.)
- 3.6 Most schools (between 91% and 94%) wished the various aspects of the class report, school report and *Guide to Reports* listed in the survey to be retained. The aspects listed were: the tabular format and explanations of the class report; the graphical format and explanations of the school report; and the introduction, report in information and marking guides in the *Guide to Reports*. Fewer than 1% of schools wanted an aspect removed and between 1% and 5% wanted amendment. (Examples of suggested amendments are provided above.)
- 3.7 Between 2% and 4% of schools indicated that they wished to have something added to the class report, school report and *Guide to Reports*. There was no discernible pattern to the suggested additions. (Examples of suggested additions are provided above.)
- 3.8 The preferred format for providing all reports was print, with 78% of schools giving this their first priority. Floppy disk, secure Internet and other formats (e.g. CD-ROM) were other listed options.

Conclusion 5

Overall, the student, class and school reports and the *Guide to Reports* were appropriate and effective, and the suggestions made regarding amendments and additions are worthy of consideration in any effort to improve the reports.

Conclusion 6

In the near future, all reports should continue to be provided in print format, but continued monitoring of school opinions in this area and further investigation of future complementary or alternative report formats is warranted.

Conclusion 7

In respect of student reports, the positive findings of the evaluation of 1999 Testing Program materials are relatively consistent with the findings of the evaluation of the 1995 Year 6 Test (the only other year in which evaluation data on the student report have been collected).

Focus Question 4

How do schools plan to use the data included in student, class and school reports, particularly the Year 7 reports?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 4, the evaluation found the following:

- 4.1 Most schools (94%) planned to use the data included in student, class and school reports.
- 4.2 The most frequently noted planned uses for the reports were: assisting in the diagnosis of individual student needs (97% of schools) and assisting school improvement (84%), while assisting school accountability reporting was also a frequent response (74%). The least frequently noted planned use was assisting secondary schools (37% of schools).
- 4.3 The most frequently expressed unsolicited comment on the survey was connected with the late distribution of the reports and, in some cases, errors in the initial reports distributed.

Conclusion 8

Schools planned use of the data in the reports indicates that the reports have high expected utility, particularly in relation to student diagnosis and school program improvement. This utility was reduced through the late distribution of the reports and, in some cases, the errors in the initial reports.

Conclusion 9

Further investigation is warranted of ways in which the *Guide to Reports* might assist schools to use the Year 7 reports.

Focus Question 5

What views are held by schools on the nature and form of future testing programs?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 5, the evaluation found the following:

- 5.1 The most preferred purposes of state-based literacy and numeracy testing programs were diagnosis of individual student needs and school program improvement. The diagnosis purpose was given first priority by 52% of schools.
- 5.2 The most frequently preferred form of testing for Years 3, 5 and 7 was a census test. A census Year 3 test was preferred by 45% of schools, a Year 5 census test by 67% of schools and a Year 7 census test by 67% of schools. The next preference was for a sample test followed by no test.
- 5.3 About one-quarter of schools (25%) wished to have other aspects of literacy and numeracy tested, the most frequently favoured being Listening.
- 5.4 About one-fifth (20%) of schools favoured the introduction of some form of state-based testing of other aspects of the curriculum, the most frequently favoured being Science (by 15% of schools).

Conclusion 10

Schools prefer a census test over a sample test and resource kit combination; and only a small minority favour 'no test'. This finding is consistent with other Council evaluations.

Conclusion 11

Before any future decisions are made about additions to state-based testing (either additional strands to literacy and numeracy tests or new tests in other key learning areas), further exploration of school views in this area would be beneficial.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This final report presents the findings of the evaluation of the 1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program in literacy and numeracy (hereafter called the 1999 Testing Program or Program).

The 1999 Testing Program comprised a sample Year 3 test, a census Year 5 test and a census Year 7 test in aspects of:

- Literacy (*Reading, Viewing, Spelling and Writing*);
- Numeracy (*Number Sense, Measurement and Data Sense, and Spatial Sense*).

The Program was administered in all state and most non-state Queensland primary schools on 24 and 25 August 1999.

1.2 Evaluation focus

The overall purposes of the evaluation were to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the 1999 Testing Program.

In fulfilling these purposes, the evaluation asked the following focus questions:

1. **Overall, how appropriate and effective are 1999 pre-test information and 1999 Testing Program materials?**
2. **What specific questions or tasks in the 1999 Testing Program materials caused concern to schools, if any?**
3. **How appropriate and effective are the 1999 student, class and school reports?**
4. **How do schools plan to use the data included in student, class and school reports, particularly Year 7 reports?**
5. **What views are held by schools on the nature and form of future testing programs?**

1.3 Evaluation approach

The main focus of the evaluation was to elicit responses from a school and parent perspective. The evaluation focuses on three periods of the 1999 Testing Program:

- August 1999, when the tests were administered in schools. At this time, an evaluation survey was distributed to schools with the test materials, just prior to the test dates;
- November/December 1999, when the student report was distributed to parents/caregivers by schools. A brief evaluation survey was sent home with each student's report;
- January/February 2000, when schools had had an opportunity to examine the student, class and school reports distributed in November/December 1999. An evaluation survey was distributed to schools in mid-January 2000.

One copy each of both the August and January/February school surveys were sent to all schools participating in the 1999 Testing Program. In respect of the parent survey, a 4% random sample of schools, stratified by Queensland postcode, were asked to distribute one parent survey with the student report.

The response rates to the three surveys were as follows:

Survey	Number distributed	Number returned	Response rate
August 1999 (re Focus Qs 1, 2 and 5)	1360	870	64%
November/December 1999 (re part of Focus Q 3)	Stratified random sample of 4% of schools (57 schools, involving approx. 4400 students)	547	Approx. 13%
January/February 2000 (re Focus Q 5 and part of Q 3)	1360	569	42%

The above percentages should be regarded as approximate because:

- the exact number of parent surveys actually distributed by schools is unknown;
- there was evidence a small number of schools returned more than one survey. These, however, were received in good faith and all returned questionnaires were included in the analysis.

An analysis of the postcode origin of the surveys (the only identifier used) indicates that there was a fair representation of respondents from across the state. The very clear trends in the survey responses gives confidence that these trends would be similar if more surveys had been returned.

In respect of Focus Q 2 (regarding specific questions or tasks in the 1999 test materials that caused the concern of schools), additional analyses were undertaken of information produced during the test development process e.g. documentation on curriculum references to the items. This information was used alongside the survey perception data on school concerns.

1.4 Evaluation reporting

Two interim reports were prepared for this evaluation. Interim Report 1 was provided to the Queensland School Curriculum Council in November 1999 and Interim Report 2, in February 2000.

This is the final report of the evaluation. The remainder of the report comprises the following:

- Section 2 Opinions on pre-test information and test materials (Focus Q 1);
- Section 3 Specific test questions or tasks causing concern (Focus Q 2);
- Section 4 Appropriateness and effectiveness of reports (Focus Q 3);
- Section 5 School plans to use report information (Focus Q 4);
- Section 6 Opinions on future testing programs (Focus Q 5).

The Executive Summary provides a succinct summary of the evaluation findings.

2 Opinions on pre-test information and test materials

Focus Question 1

Overall, how appropriate and effective are 1999 pre-test information and 1999 Testing Program materials?

2.1 Description of pre-test information and test materials

Display 1 lists pre-test information provided to schools by the Queensland School Curriculum Council. The evaluation sought opinions on the two documents bolded in the display, the most important pre-test information provided to schools.

Display 1: Pre-test information provided to schools (N=1363 schools)

Publication	Distribution date	Purpose
Memorandum to schools	November 1998	To inform schools of the dates for the administration of the 1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.
Memorandum to schools	March 1999	To confirm the dates for the administration of the 1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.
<i>Information Statement</i> (pamphlet)	June 1999	To inform schools of the overall purposes of the 1999 Testing Program.
Letters to schools regarding Year 3 sample tests and 1999 Equating Study	June 1999	Letters to all schools to inform them of their involvement in the Year 3 sample tests or the 1999 Equating Study.
1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Information for Schools (booklet)	August 1999	To provide information to assist schools in their preparation for the administration of the 1999 tests.
1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: What You Need to Know (parent brochure)	August 1999	To provide test information to parents/caregivers of students participating in the 1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.
<i>1999 Queensland Equating Study: What You Need to Know</i> (parent brochure)	August 1999	To provide test information to parents/caregivers of students in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 participating in the Equating Study.

Display 2 lists the test materials provided to schools. The evaluation sought opinions on the documents bolded in the display, the main body of test material for the 1999 Testing Program.

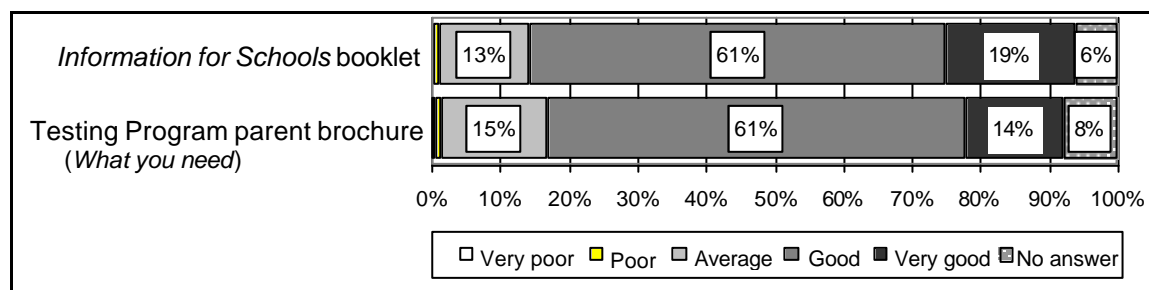
Display 2: Test materials provided to schools participating in tests (N=1363 schools)

Publication	Distribution date	Purpose
Practice materials for the 1999 Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7 Tests in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy	August 1999	To provide material that allows the students to practise filling in the cover page and to become familiar with the format of the test papers.
Literacy and Numeracy Tests and colour magazines of stimulus material for Years 3, 5 and 7	August 1999	To assess the students' abilities in aspects of literacy and numeracy.
Administration handbooks for the 1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program	August 1999	To provide instructions for the teachers administering the tests.
1998 Literacy and Numeracy Tests and colour magazines of stimulus materials for students in Years 3 and 5 participating in the 1999 Equating Study	August 1999	To enable the results of tests taken in 1999 to be placed on the Queensland common scale.
Administration handbooks for the 1998 Literacy and Numeracy Tests for teachers of students in Years 3 and 5 participating in the 1999 Equating Study	August 1999	To enable the results of tests taken in 1999 to be placed on the Queensland common scale.
1999 Literacy Tests for students in Years 4 and 6 participating in the 1999 Equating Study	August 1999	To enable the results of the writing tasks taken in different year levels to be placed on the Queensland common scale.
Administration handbooks for the 1999 Literacy Tests for teachers of students in Years 4 and 6 participating in the 1999 Equating Study	August 1999	To enable the results of the writing tasks taken in different year levels to be placed on the Queensland common scale.

2.2 Opinions of 1999 pre-test information and test materials

At the time of administering the 1999 Testing Program (August 1999), schools were asked to rate the *Information for Schools* booklet and the 1999 Testing Program parent brochure in assisting their preparation for the 1999 Testing Program. Display 3 summarises these ratings and shows that the provided pre-test information was regarded very highly by schools. Overall, a total of 80% rated the *Information for Schools* booklet as 'good' or 'very good' and 75% rated the parent brochure similarly.

Display 3: School ratings of pre-test information (N=870 schools)

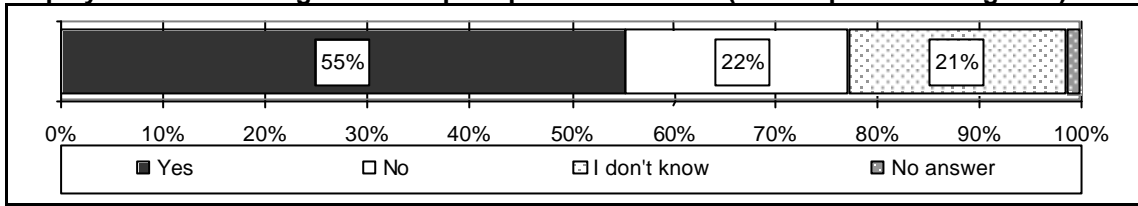


In November 1999, parents/caregivers were also asked to rate the 1999 Testing Program parent brochure that schools were requested to distribute prior to their child sitting the Program.

Parents/caregivers were first of all asked whether they had received the brochure. As can be seen from Display 4, the majority said that they received the brochure and a large minority

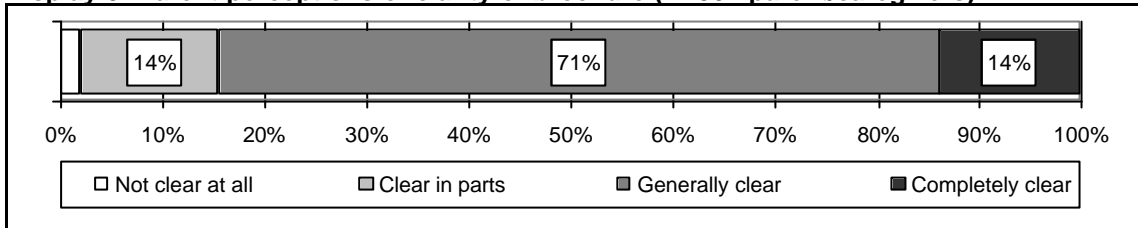
said either 'No' or 'I don't know'.

Display 4: Parents/caregivers receipt of parent brochure (N =547 parents/caregivers)



Those parents/caregivers who indicated that they had received the parent brochure were asked how clear it was in explaining the 1999 Testing Program. Display 5 shows that most of these parents/caregivers (85%) felt that the brochure was 'generally' or 'completely clear'.

Display 5: Parent perceptions of clarity of brochure (N=304 parent/caregivers)

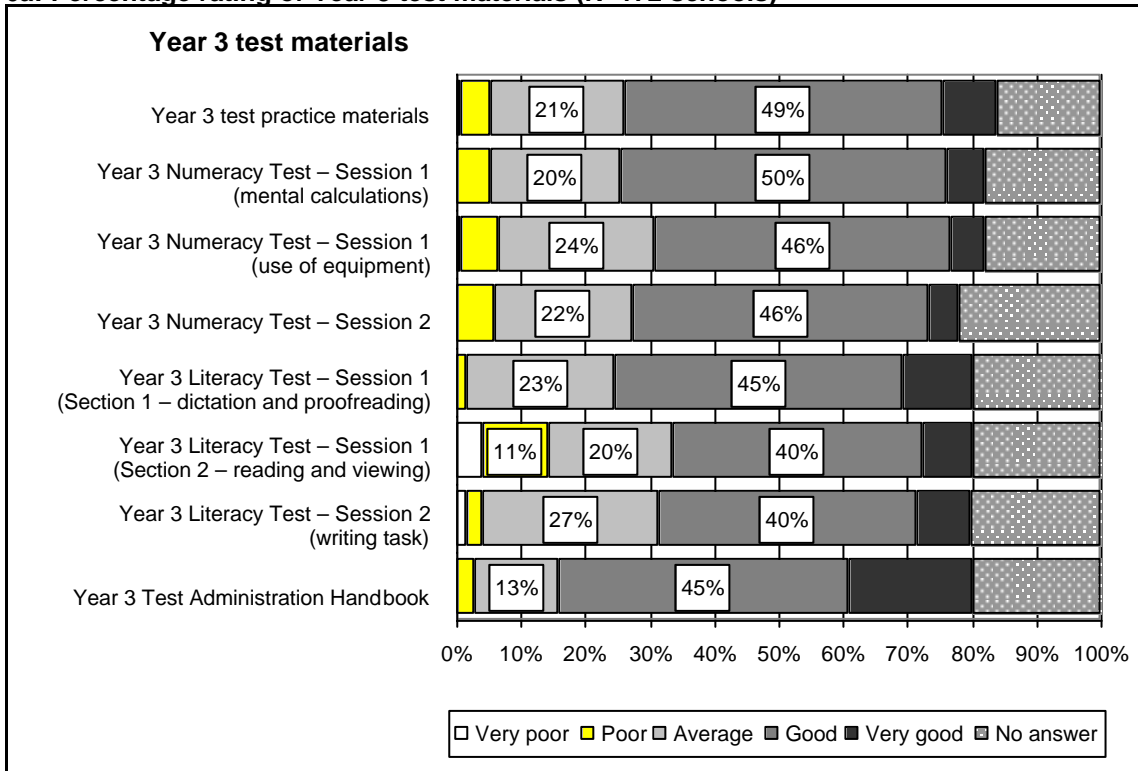


2.3 Overall opinions of Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials

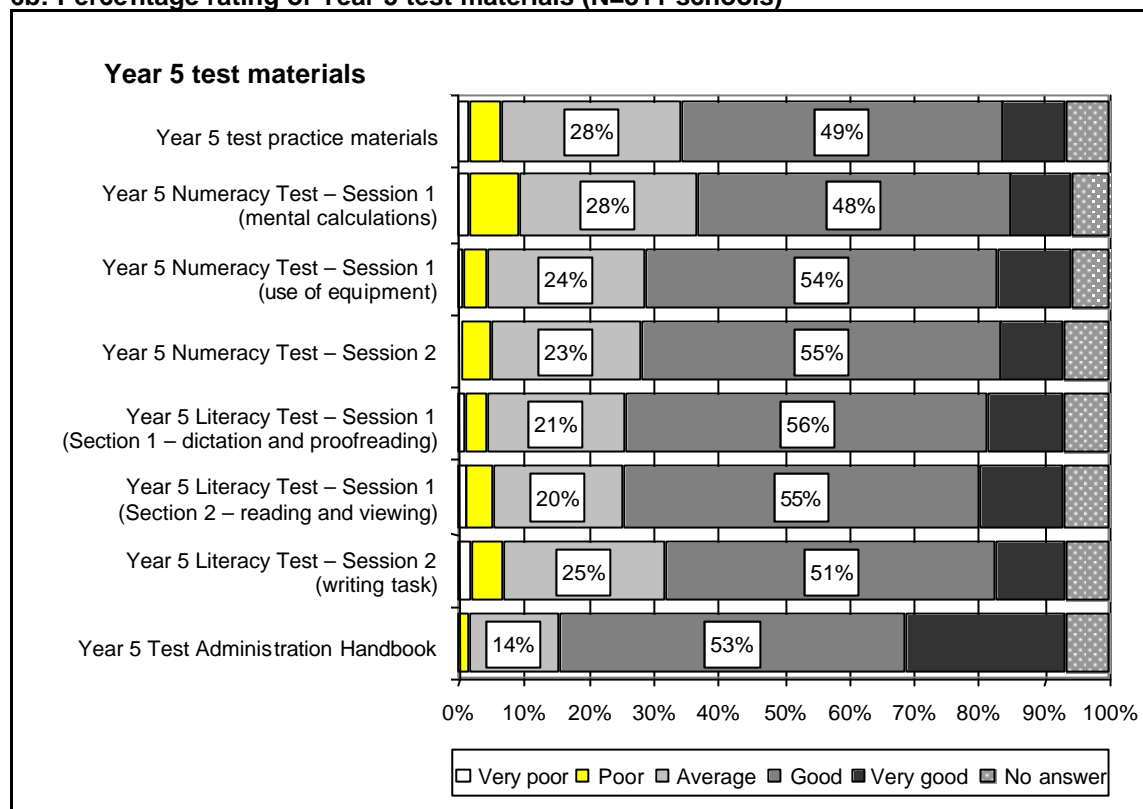
Schools who participated in administering the respective Years 3, 5 and 7 tests were asked to rate the test materials. Display 6 summarises the responses.

Display 6: Percentage opinions of participating schools in Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials

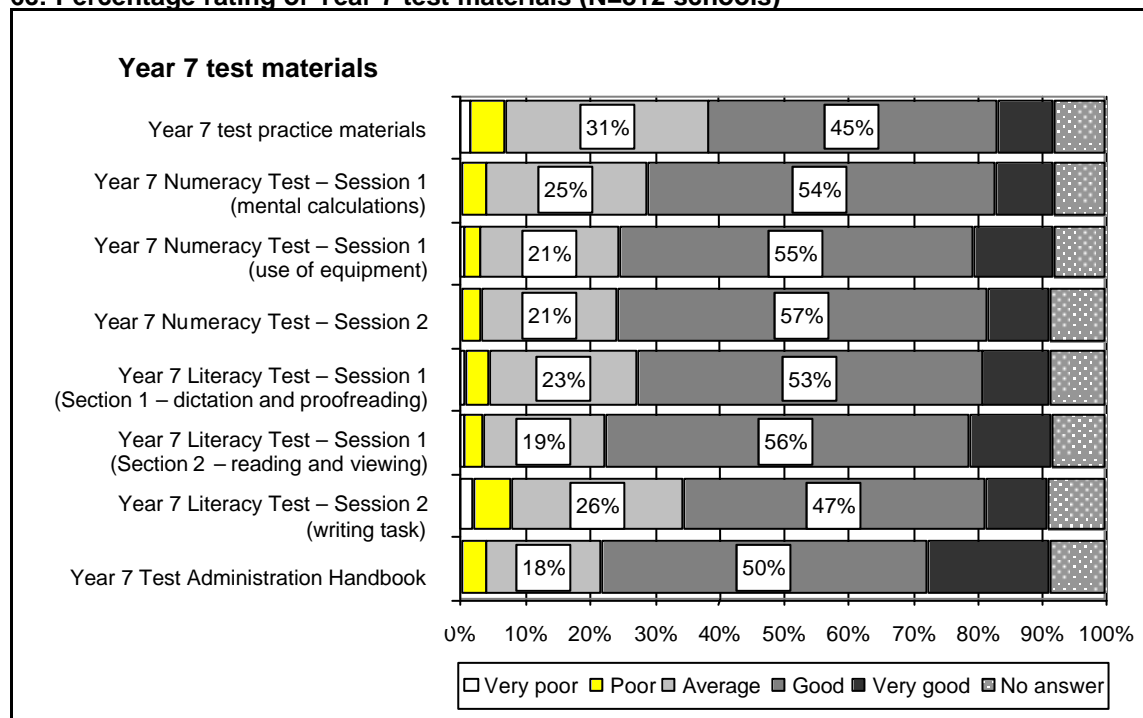
6a: Percentage rating of Year 3 test materials (N=172 schools)



6b: Percentage rating of Year 5 test materials (N=811 schools)



6c: Percentage rating of Year 7 test materials (N=812 schools)

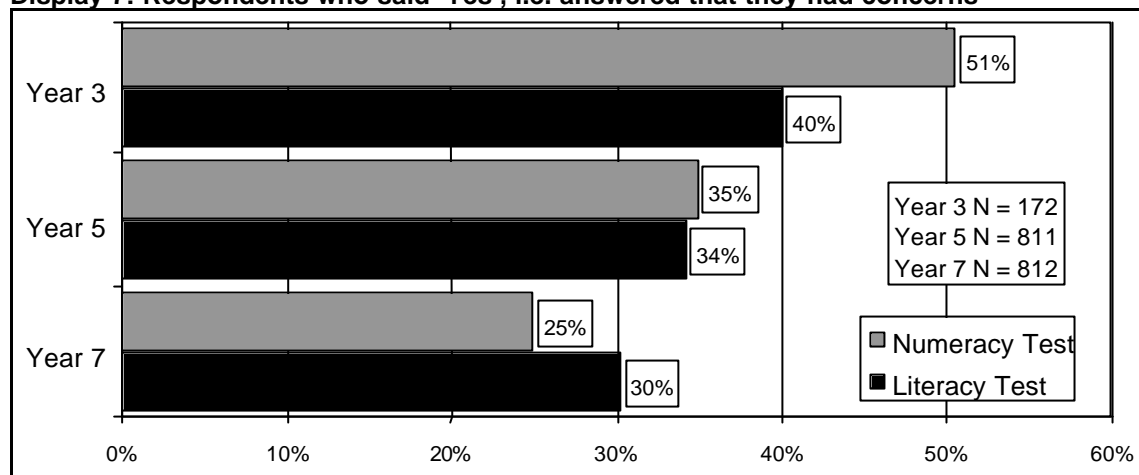


As can be seen, all test materials were generally received positively by schools participating in the respective tests. Years 5 and 7 materials were rated a little higher than the Year 3 materials although there was a higher 'No answer' rate for Year 3 test respondents which accounts for the difference.

2.4 Overall school concerns with test questions or tasks

As well as asking schools to rate the materials, schools were asked whether there were any questions or tasks in the tests that had caused them concern. Display 7 summarises those respondents who answered 'yes'.

Display 7: Respondents who said 'Yes', i.e. answered that they had concerns



As can be seen, a majority (51%) of respondents answered there were some questions or tasks on the Year 3 Numeracy Test that caused them concern, while in respect of the other tests it was a large minority (25% to 40%) of respondents. The Year 3 tests recorded the highest overall concern while the Year 7 tests recorded the least.

To elucidate the types of overall concerns about the questions or tasks, the survey contained a list of concerns reported by some schools about previous tests. Respondents were asked to consider whether they held this concern, and if they did, to indicate the specific question or task causing the concern. These specific questions or tasks are considered in detail in the next section; however, an analysis was also undertaken of the frequency of each listed concern, regardless of the specific question or task mentioned. In this analysis, a respondent was counted as having the concern listed if one or more specific questions or tasks were written beside the concern. Display 8 provides a summary of this analysis.

Display 8: Frequency of perceived concerns of schools

At least one question or task appeared to ...	Year 3 (N=172)		Year 5 (N=811)		Year 7 (N=812)	
	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy
be 'tricky' or confusing	31%	9%	18%	12%	9%	8%
be unaligned to Queensland syllabus	22%	1%	10%	1%	6%	1%
make too high literacy/language demands	5%	16%	3%	9%	0.4%	4%
not be inclusive of all students	1%	6%	1%	8%	1%	2%
be too difficult for students in Years 3, 5 or 7	15%	12%	12%	6%	1%	3%
be about other concerns	6%	5%	6%	9%	5%	9%

Display 8 indicates that:

- specific Year 3 Numeracy Test items or tasks were most frequently perceived to be tricky or confusing, too difficult for students or unaligned to the Queensland syllabus;
- specific Year 3 Literacy Test items or tasks were most frequently perceived to make too high literacy/language demands;
- specific Year 5 Literacy Test items or perceptions were most frequently perceived to be not inclusive of all students.

2.5 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 1

Focus Question 1

Overall, how appropriate and effective are 1999 pre-test information and 1999 Testing Program materials?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 1, the evaluation found the following:

- Overall, a total of 80% of schools rated the *Information for Schools* booklet as 'good', or 'very good', and 75% rated the parent brochure *What You Need to Know* similarly.
- Just over one half (55%) of parents/caregivers indicated that they received a parent brochure while 43% of parents/caregivers answered 'No' or 'I don't know'. Of those who said they received the brochure, most (85%) felt that it was 'generally' or 'completely clear'.
- Overall, the Testing Program materials were received positively by schools participating in the respective tests. Those considering the tests 'good' or 'very good' ranged from 48% to 78% while those considering the tests 'poor' or 'very poor' ranged from 2% to 15%.
- A majority (51%) of schools indicated that there were some questions or tasks in the Year 3 Numeracy Test that caused them concern, while in respect of the other tests, it was a minority ranging from 25% to 40%. The Year 3 tests recorded the most frequent concerns while the Year 7 tests recorded the least.
- In respect of each of the six tests administered (literacy and numeracy for each of Years 3, 5 and 7), a minority of schools (ranging from 0.4% to 31%) provided examples of items or tasks that they felt appeared to be one or more of the following: tricky or confusing; unaligned to the Queensland syllabus; making too high literacy/language demands; not inclusive of all students; and too difficult for students at that year level.
- An analysis of specific items or tasks reported by schools as causing concern indicated that the:
 - Year 3 Numeracy Test had items or tasks that were most frequently perceived to be tricky or confusing (by 31% of schools), too difficult for students (by 15% of schools) or not aligned with the Queensland syllabus (by 22% of schools);
 - Year 3 Literacy Test had items or tasks that were most frequently perceived to make too high literacy/language demands (by 16% of schools);
 - Year 5 Literacy Test had items or tasks that were most frequently perceived to not be inclusive of all students (by 8% of schools).

Discussion and Conclusions

The overall positive ratings of schools in relation to the *Information for Schools* booklet and the positive ratings from schools and parents/caregivers in respect of the parent brochure suggest a suitable positive conclusion regarding appropriateness and effectiveness. These positive findings, however, are reduced somewhat by other more specific findings.

First, the 'No' or 'Don't know' answers from a large minority of parents/caregivers in relation to receiving the parent brochure cast doubt on either the universal distribution of the brochure or

the ability of the brochure to impact on parents/caregivers' memory. While the survey was sent to parents/caregivers several months after the brochure, it might be expected that it would be remembered if it had had such a positive impact.

Conclusion 1

Overall, the 1999 *Information for Schools* document and parent brochure were appropriate and effective, but the presentation and distribution of the parent brochure warrants further investigation.

Second, the large number of schools who reported having concerns about some test items casts doubt on the ability of the test to cater for all schools and students. Of course, the remit of the 1999 Testing Program is to cover the whole range of student abilities and, consequently, it is likely that such a test will always cause some degree of concern, especially in relation to underachievers. Nevertheless, there is sufficient perceived concern by schools to warrant continuing efforts to devise tests that cover a wide range of performance while still possessing such characteristics as inclusivity, clarity, relevance and appropriateness. This is particularly so for the Year 3 tests which proportionately recorded more concerns than the other tests.

Conclusion 2

Overall, in the context of the 1999 Testing Program's remit, the 1999 Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials were appropriate and effective, but the perceived concerns expressed by some schools warrant further scrutiny of test items and tasks to ensure that any perceived concerns are minimised.

It is illuminating to compare trends over time and the findings of the evaluation of the 1998 Testing Program offer some advice in this area. In regard to overall ratings of pre-test and test materials, similar questions were asked and a similar positive response was received. This led to the following conclusions in the report, *Evaluation of 1998 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Results of Principal and Teacher Surveys* (page 18):

Conclusion 1

The *Information for Schools* document and the parent brochure were appropriate and effective. Most sections and subsections of the *Information for Schools* document worked well and should be retained. However, the suggestions for improvement made by principals and teachers are worthy of further consideration.

Conclusion 2

In general, the Year 3 test and Year 5 test materials were effective and appropriate. However, the varying comments and concerns of principals and teachers are worthy of noting and discussion.

Conclusion 3

In respect of pre-test and test materials, the positive findings of the evaluation of 1999 Testing Program materials are relatively consistent with the positive findings of the evaluation of the 1998 Testing Program.

3 Specific test questions or tasks causing concern

Focus Question 2

What specific questions or tasks in the 1999 test materials caused concern to schools, if any?

Note: Of necessity, this section contains specific details about items or tasks that caused concern to schools, and to some extent the section assumes some knowledge of the actual 1999 test forms. Although a reading of this section is essential for those who wish to gain detailed insights on the worth of the 1999 Testing Program, it is recognised that not all readers will require such detailed knowledge and may wish to proceed to the next section (on Focus Question 3), which is more general in nature.

In respect of Focus Question 2, schools gave a wide variety of responses. Because of this, only the more frequently listed items are reported in this section. Notable items or tasks are reported in the displays below if the following conditions are met:

- A Year 3 item or task is listed if four or more schools (approximately 2% or more of schools) listed the item or task as a particular concern;
- A Year 5 and 7 item or task is listed if 10 or more schools (approximately 1% or more of schools) listed the item or task as a particular concern. (The condition for the Years 5 and 7 tests is different to Year 3 because these were census tests and therefore had a larger number of respondents to the survey.)

Before proceeding to the displays, it is important to be mindful of the test development processes that led to the inclusion of an item or task on a final form of the tests. Discussion with the officers managing the 1999 Testing Program revealed that all test items and tasks were subject to lengthy reviews by panels comprising curriculum, technical and equity experts. These panels were charged with recommending for use only those items and tasks that:

- were clear and unambiguous (not tricky or confusing);
- were aligned to the Queensland syllabus;
- made appropriate literacy/language demands;
- were inclusive of all students;
- covered a wide range of difficulty levels, thus catering for all students within a particular year level;
- functioned correctly in a statistical sense. (Items and tasks were trialled by a sample of students and appropriate statistics were generated.)

Any items or tasks that were deemed to violate one or more of the above criteria were rejected prior to the compilation of the final test forms. It should be noted, however, that due to national developments at the time of developing the 1999 Testing Program, some additional items were required to be inserted at a late stage. In respect of the Reading strand of the Year 3 Literacy Test, there was a requirement to include three additional stimuli with their accompanying sets of items. These items were common across state/territory testing programs. A consequence of this inclusion in the 1999 Testing Program was the creation of a third (TP3) Year 3 Literacy Test paper.

The titles of the three additional stimuli to the Year 3 Test Reading strand were *Infarmation*, *Mud* and *Gumtrees*. The *Infarmation* items were also placed in the Year 5 Literacy Test to facilitate linking the results of the two year levels. The three stimuli and accompanying items were developed in New South Wales and therefore did not proceed through Queensland's literacy panel review process. Although it would be expected that New South Wales had its own review processes in place, it is true that the *Infarmation* stimuli in particular caused some concern in Queensland schools. This is reported below.

The school survey sought details of school concerns on specific items or tasks by pre-listing concerns, the responses to which reveal school perceptions about the degree to which the criteria listed above had been met. The exception was the last dot pointed criterion (statistical functioning of the items). This was not included in the survey and schools were not in a position to provide an opinion on this aspect.

Of course, it is to be expected that there will not be universal agreement on which items or tasks are of concern to schools, and whether these concerns are justified. To assist readers to make their own judgments on matters of item or task appropriateness, the following information is provided below about each item or task:

- an item description, strand type (Viewing, Number, etc.) and curriculum reference. This information is drawn from the Council's *Guide to Reports* document and also includes information provided by literacy and numeracy project officers employed in the Council's 1999 Testing Program;
- the percentage of students who answered the item or task correctly, as recorded in the 1999 Testing Program data files;
- an interpretative comment, based on information provided by literacy and numeracy project officers employed in the Council's 2000 Testing Program.

Unfortunately, specific items or tasks cannot be reproduced here because of their possible use in equating 2000 test results to 1999 test results. The equating exercise will occur later in 2000.

Specific questions or tasks perceived to cause concern are reported separately for each year level. It will be seen that, overall, the percentages of schools that found individual items or tasks of particular concern were, in most cases, relatively low. This is in keeping with the overall positive reception of the test reported in the previous section.

3.1 Year 3 test materials: Specific questions or tasks that caused concern

Display 9 lists those notable items or tasks that schools felt caused concern.

Display 9: Year 3 test: Notable* items perceived by schools to cause a particular concern (N=172 schools)

These questions/tasks appeared to...	Yr 3 Numeracy Test items/tasks and % of schools noting it*	Yr 3 Literacy Test items/tasks and % of schools noting it*
be 'tricky' or confusing	Q30 TP1 11%	Nil
be unaligned to Queensland syllabus	Q12 TP1 7% Q18 TP2 7% Q5 TP1 4% Q6 TP2 5%	Nil
make too high literacy/language demands	Nil	Q15 TP2 3% Q12 TP3 3%
not be inclusive of all students	Nil	Nil
be too difficult for students In Year 3	Q6 TP2 3% Q18 TP2 2%	Nil
be about other concerns	Nil	Nil

Key: TP1 = Test Paper 1; TP2 = Test Paper 2; TP3 = Test Paper 3.

*A **notable** item or task is defined as having been listed as a particular concern by four or more schools (approx. 2%).]

Note: In interpreting this display, it should be noted that in providing a response, a number of schools did not indicate the Year 3 test paper number (TP1 or 2 for Numeracy and TP1, 2 or 3 for Literacy) when listing questions or tasks that caused them concern. While these responses were counted for the purposes of calculating overall frequencies (presented in the previous section of this report) it is obviously not possible to include them in this current display.

Year 3 Numeracy Test

Display 9 shows that there were five notable items of the Year 3 Numeracy Test that caused a particular concern. Information on these items is provided in Display 10 below:

Display 10: Information on notable Year 3 Numeracy Test items perceived by schools to cause concern

Item/ task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 3 students % correct
Q5 TP1	N	Add two amounts with a calculator involving dollars and cents.	<i>Syllabus</i> : pp.15, 18; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp.167, 182–184; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 12 p. 280.	76%
	<p><i>Comment:</i> Perceived school concern was 'unaligned to Queensland syllabus' (4% of schools). In the <i>Years 1 to 7 Mathematics Syllabus Support Document</i> (SSD) p. 280, it indicates that students should use estimation or calculators for problems involving operations which require decimal notation of dollars. The inclusion of this item allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of the addition algorithm within a real life context with the aid of a calculator. Three-quarters of students answered the item correctly.</p>			
Q12 TP1	N	Complete a two digit by one digit multiplication item using the multiplication symbol.	<i>Syllabus</i> : p. 15; <i>Guidelines</i> : p. 17; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : p. 65, p. 131; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 8 pp. 181–182	29%
	<p><i>Comment:</i> Perceived school concern was 'unaligned to Queensland syllabus' (7% of schools). By Year 3 students have been introduced formally to the multiplication sign. Activities to investigate the concept further are provided as well as the development of thinking strategies to recall the multiplication facts to 9 X 9. This item required students to apply problem-solving strategies to assist them in calculating the answer.</p>			
Q30 TP1	N	Group objects in tens and ones to indicate the number 24.	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers: number study p. 14 <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : p. 23; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 1 pp. 13–14.	28%
	<p><i>Comment:</i> Perceived school concern was 'tricky or confusing' (11% of schools). It is possible that some students were confused by the different objects used in the picture as many classroom grouping activities use like concrete materials i.e. all straws, paddle pop sticks, or counters etc. The inclusion of this item may alert teachers to the need to allow students many experiences grouping all types of mixed objects to represent numbers.</p>			
Q6 TP2	N	Use calculator to work out a multiplication problem (Students could also use a repeated addition method)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers: operations p. 15, money p. 18; <i>Guidelines</i> : p. 17; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 8 pp. 176, 181, 186, 188.	30% Link item Yr 5: 61%
	<p><i>Comment:</i> Perceived school concerns were 'unaligned to Queensland syllabus' (5% of schools) and 'too difficult for students in Year 3' (3%). It is suggested in the <i>Years 1 to 7 Mathematics Syllabus Support Document</i> (SSD) p. 176 that student development in the multiplication algorithm should simultaneously include mental computations, calculators and the written form. With this item Year 3 students could demonstrate their understanding of the multiplication concept beyond their mental and written capabilities with access to a calculator.</p>			

Display 10 cont.

Item/task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 3 students % correct
Q18 TP2	N	Extend a known multiplication number fact.	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers: operations p.15; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 8 pp.182–183, 187.	45%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was ‘unaligned to Queensland syllabus’ (7% of schools) and ‘too difficult for students in Year 3’ (2%). By Year 3, students have had learning experiences with the multiplication concept including use of the symbol in the lead-up work to the multiplication algorithm. Students will have begun formal memorisation activities to recall the basic number facts, including the five facts, i.e. 3 x 5; 10 x 5. While the problem, 13 x 5, may have been perceived as unaligned to the Queensland syllabus, its inclusion provided an opportunity for students to apply their knowledge and understanding to a problem. Its inclusion fits within the syllabus requirements.</p>			

Key: N= Number; SSD = *Years 1 to 7 Mathematics Syllabus Support Document*

Year 3 Literacy Test

Display 9 above also shows that there were two notable items of the Year 3 Literacy Test that caused a particular concern. Information on these items is provided in Display 11 below:

Display 11: Information on notable Year 3 Literacy Test items perceived by schools to cause concern

Item/task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 3 students % correct
Q15 TP2	V	Understand the meaning of words in the topic, comprehend visual language and consider the relationship between visual and verbal components of a text. Stimulus: <i>Flying through the Air</i> , text with photograph.	<i>Syllabus</i> : mode and medium p.31, deploying and interpreting p.33, comprehending visual language p.35.	48%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was ‘too high literacy/language demands’ (3% of schools). The question stem contains some vocabulary that may be considered more challenging than what is in the stimulus material and in the four responses. This may have contributed to this concern for some schools. To answer Q15 correctly students needed to have synthesised the main ideas contained in the written text and then select the answer to match the photograph.</p>			
Q12 TP3	R	Understand vocabulary and comprehend visual codes by matching a particular word to a graphic representation. Stimulus: <i>Infarmation</i> , a procedure – directions	<i>Syllabus</i> : deploying and interpreting p.33, comprehending visual language p.35; <i>Media Curriculum Guide</i> : semiotics p.6.	30%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was ‘too high literacy/language demands’ (3% of schools). For statistical reasons, this item was excluded from the calculation of scale scores. This means that the item didn’t perform as had been intended.</p>			

Key: R = Reading; V = Viewing

3.2 Year 5 test materials: Specific questions or tasks that caused concern

Display 12 lists the notable items or tasks schools felt were a particular concern.

Display 12: Year 5 Test: Notable items or tasks perceived by schools to cause a particular concern. (N=811 schools)

These questions/tasks appeared to...	Yr 5 Numeracy Test items/tasks & % of schools noting it*	Yr 5 Literacy Test items/tasks & % of schools noting it*
be 'tricky' or confusing	Q16 4% Q12 3% Q25 3% Q34 3% Q22 2% Q14 2%	Q18 3% Q7 2% Q30 1% Q34 1%
be unaligned to Queensland syllabus	Q44 3% Q4 3% Q16 2%	Nil
make too high literacy/language demands	Nil	Q17 2% Q7 2% Q5 2%
not be inclusive of all students	Nil	Q7 4% Q6 3% Q5 3% Q3 2%
be too difficult for students in Year 5	Q44 4% Q6 4% Q4 3% Q14 2% Q34 1% Q27 1%	Q18 2% Q17 2%
have other concerns	Nil	WT 5%

Key: WT = Writing Task

*A **notable** item or task is defined as having been listed as a particular concern by 10 or more schools (approx. 1%).

Year 5 Numeracy Test

Display 12 shows that there are 10 notable items of the Year 5 Numeracy Test that were listed as causing a particular concern. Information on these items is provided in Display 13:

Display 13: Information on notable Year 5 Numeracy Test items perceived by schools to cause a particular concern

Item/ task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 5 students % correct
Q4	N	Recognise and use simple common fractions.	<i>Syllabus</i> : fractions p. 16; <i>Guidelines</i> : p. 20 <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : p. 99; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 11.	29%
	<p><i>Comment</i>: Perceived school concerns were 'unaligned to Queensland syllabus' (3% of schools) and 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (3%). The item was the third most difficult item on the Numeracy Test. Fractions are not commonly used to express division number facts. It is possible that this was the reason for teachers to perceive it to be unaligned to the syllabus.</p>			
Q6	N	Mentally divide a 2-digit money amount by a single digit number.	<i>Syllabus</i> : fractions p. 16 and Money p. 18; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : p. 131; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 11 p. 245.	39%
	<p><i>Comment</i>: Perceived school concern was 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (4% of schools). It is possible that the verbal language demand of the problem caused this concern for some schools.</p>			
Q12	M	Use a ruler or a centimetre grid to find a pair of irregular shapes with the same perimeter.	<i>Syllabus</i> : length p. 25; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : p. 195; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 18.	29% Link item: Yr 7 41%
	<p><i>Comment</i>: Perceived school concerns were 'tricky or confusing' (3% of schools). The item was an equal third most difficult item of the test. It is possible that students were distracted by the shapes and inappropriately worked out the area rather than the perimeter as there were two distracters that had the same area as well as two distracters that had the same perimeter. It could also indicate student confusion with the concepts of 'area' and 'perimeter'.</p>			
Q14	M	Use a centimetre grid to estimate the area of an oval shape.	<i>Syllabus</i> : area p.25; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 204, 205; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 19 p. 419.	35%
	<p><i>Comment</i>: Perceived school concerns were 'tricky or confusing' (2% of schools) and 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (2%). This item used an overlay and it is possible that students may not have had experience using one. This use of the overlay in test conditions could have further enhanced the concern. It is noted that the use of overlays were not included as an item type in the practice session. It may be a future consideration to include measurement mats in the practice session.</p>			
Q16	N	Use a fraction circle to work out a fraction of a circle.	<i>Syllabus</i> : statistics p. 22 and Fractions p.16; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 98, 156-157; <i>SSD</i> : Chapters 11 pp. 262, 265.	53% Link item: Yr 7: 71%
	<p><i>Comment</i>: Perceived school concerns were 'tricky or confusing' (4% of schools) and 'unaligned to Queensland syllabus' (2%). It is possible that some students were not familiar with fraction circle overlays and thus caused concern for some schools.</p>			

Display 13 cont.

Item/ task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 5 students % correct
Q22	S	Use a scale to mark a feature on a map.	<i>Syllabus</i> : angles p. 26; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 228, 229; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 21.	59%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'tricky or confusing' (2% of schools). The item required students to both interpret a simple scale and use a compass point. This two-step problem could have confused some students in understanding the item and thus caused concern for some schools.			
Q25	S	Match faces of an object with parts of its net.	<i>Syllabus</i> : 3D shapes p. 24; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 184-189; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 24 p.505.	50%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'tricky or confusing' (3% of schools). It is possible that the item caused concerns for some schools because the stem of the question was in two parts. The second part of the stem includes a visual. This visual may have not been seen by the students as part of the question and perhaps just a decoration etc. on the page. If students did not realise the inclusion of the visual in the question stem they would not be able to answer correctly.			
Q27	S	Predict which one of a group of shapes will not tessellate.	<i>Syllabus</i> : area p. 25; <i>Year 4 Sourcebook</i> : p. 334; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 117, 206, 207; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 19.	32%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (1% of schools). It is possible that students who are not able to visualise the shapes presented in the item would find the tessellation activity too hard. Having the shapes in front of them to be able to experiment would allow them to demonstrate their understanding of the item.			
Q34	S	Interpret a drawing to work out how many extra blocks are needed to complete a 3D shape.	<i>Syllabus</i> : 3D shapes p. 24; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 187-188; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 24.	18% Link item: Yr 7 39%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (1% of schools). This item was a linked item with the Year 7 paper. The item asked for the minimum number or extra blocks needed to complete the solid shape. It is possible that students may have counted all the blocks needed to make the shape instead of the extras.			
Q44	N	Select the most reasonable estimate for the multiplication of two decimal numbers.	<i>Syllabus</i> : fractions p. 16; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : p. 104; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 11.	17%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (4% of schools). This item was the third last item on the test (i.e. recognised as a difficult item) and was found by Year 5 students to be the most difficult item. It is possible that the number of decimal places given in the distracters confused students not fully familiar with decimals. It is necessary to place several very difficult items on the test to measure the abilities of high achieving students.			

Key: N = Number; M = Measurement and data; S = Space; SSD = *Years 1 to 7 Mathematics Syllabus Support Document*

Year 5 Literacy Test

Display 12 above also shows that there are nine notable items or tasks of the Year 5 Literacy Test that were listed as causing a particular concern. Information on these items is provided in Display 14 below:

Display 14: Information on notable Year 5 Literacy Test items or tasks perceived by schools to cause a particular concern

Item/ task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 5 students % correct
Q3	R	Match the illustration and label on a web page. Stimulus: <i>Infarmation</i> , comprising mainly a graphic of a web page. The focus of the stimulus was on testing procedure – directions.	<i>Syllabus</i> : comprehending relationships between visual and verbal components: page 35; <i>Media Curriculum Guide</i> : understanding codes used in computer software pp. 6, 9.	93% Link item: Yr 3 73%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'not inclusive of all students' (2% of schools). Although the graphic was part of a web page display, the questions did not require prior use of web pages. The item was a picture-matching exercise. The information needed to answer the questions was presented in the stimulus. For example, the web address was labelled 'ADDRESS' and the web index was labelled 'INDEX'.</p>			
Q5	R	Infer the meaning of figurative language from the written and visual context in which it occurs. Stimulus: <i>Infarmation</i> (see Q3 above).	<i>Syllabus</i> : deploying and interpreting: vocabulary and cohesion p. 33.	61% Link item: Yr 3 42%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concerns were 'make too high literacy/language demands' (2% of schools) and 'not inclusive of all students' (3%). The introductory information in the stimulus provided information on the <i>Infarmation</i> website, but some students may not have understood the meaning of the word 'tangled', a requirement to answering the item correctly.</p>			
Q6	R	Use keywords to locate information in a graphic text. Stimulus: <i>Infarmation</i> (see Q3 above).	<i>A guide to genres in English</i> pp. 45-47.	86% Link item: Yr3 57%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concerns was 'not inclusive of all students' (3% of schools). The item did not require prior use of the web pages. The item asked about the Internet address in the graphic, but the address was labelled 'ADDRESS' and required students to follow a direction rather than having prior knowledge of websites or Internet addresses.</p>			
Q7	R	Reading and recognise the meaning of an unfamiliar word by interpreting the visual image it represents. Stimulus: <i>Infarmation</i> (see Q3 above).	<i>Syllabus</i> : deploying and interpreting: vocabulary p.33, comprehending visual language p. 35.	34% Link item: Yr 3 30%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concerns were 'tricky or confusing' (2% of schools), 'too high literacy/language demands' (1.5%) and 'not inclusive of all students' (4%). For statistical reasons, the item was excluded from the calculations of scale scores. This means the item did not perform as it had been intended.</p>			
Q17	V	Interpret the message implied by the framing of a picture. Stimulus: <i>Countrylink</i> , an exposition (display advertisement).	<i>Syllabus</i> : comprehending visual language p. 35; <i>Media Curriculum Guide</i> : understanding technical codes p. 7.	59% Link item: Yr 7: 79%

	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concerns were 'too high literacy/language demands' (2% of schools) and 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (2%). The interpretation of visual codes is part of comprehending visual language. It is expected that students at Year 5 would be becoming familiar with a range of printed and visual texts as they learn to use their knowledge about patterns of textual features to compose and comprehend. Three-fifths answered the item correctly.</p>
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Display 14 cont.

Item/task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 5 students % correct
Q18	V	Recognise the message implied by placing two images together. Stimulus: <i>Countrylink</i> , an exposition (display advertisement).	<i>Syllabus</i> : Comprehending visual language p. 35; <i>Media Curriculum Guide</i> : codes and conventions p. 9.	61% Link item: Yr 7: 74%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concerns were 'tricky or confusing' (3% of schools) and 'too difficult for students in Year 5' (2%). It is possible that students who are not used to decoding this type of viewing material may have had difficulty in using the codes to select the best answer. Three-fifths answered the item correctly.</p>			
Q30	R	Recognise the poetic use of repetitive vocabulary. Stimulus: <i>Puffer Fish</i> , a narrative poem.	<i>Syllabus</i> p. 33; <i>A Guide to Teaching English</i> p. 53; <i>A Guide to Analysing Texts in English</i> Chapter 6.	50%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'tricky or confusing' (1% of schools). The item required a synthesis of the text and an understanding of the cohesive links.</p>			
Q34	R	Infer information from the blurb on a book cover. Stimulus: <i>Radical Reads</i> , an advertisement.	<i>Syllabus</i> : Deploying and interpreting: cohesion p. 33; <i>A Guide to Teaching English</i> p. 53.	34%
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'tricky or confusing' (1% of schools). This item was the third most difficult item on the Literacy Test and as such may have caused concern for some schools.</p>			
WT	W	WT (Writing Task) was a narrative based on a stimulus picture with the caption 'It all began when someone left the door open'.	<i>A Guide to Genres in English</i> : pp. 10–17.	N/A
	<p><i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was noted in the 'other' category (5% of schools). An analysis of this category indicated that while many different aspects were specified, the time of the writing task was frequently mentioned. It was felt by a number of schools that the time to write the narrative (25 minutes) was not enough.</p>			

Key: R = Reading; V = Viewing; W = Writing

3.3 Year 7 test materials: Specific questions or tasks that caused concern

Display 15 lists the notable items or tasks that schools felt were a particular concern.

Display 15: Year 7 test: Notable items or tasks perceived by schools to cause a particular concern (N=812)

These questions/tasks appeared to...	Yr 7 Numeracy Test items/tasks and % of schools noting it*	Yr 7 Literacy Test items/tasks and % of schools noting it*
be 'tricky' or confusing	Nil	Q26 2% Q24 2% Q11 2%
be unaligned to Queensland syllabus	Q40 4%	Nil
make too high literacy/language demands	Nil	Nil
not be inclusive of all students	Nil	Nil
be too difficult for students in Year 7	Nil	Q26 1%
be about other concerns	Nil	WT 6%

Key: WT = Writing Task

*A **notable** item or task is defined as having been listed as a particular concern by 10 or more schools (approx. 1%).

Year 7 Numeracy Test

Display 15 shows that there is one notable item of the Year 7 Numeracy Test that was listed as causing a particular concern. Information on this item is provided in Display 16 below:

Display 16: Information on notable Year 7 Numeracy Test items perceived by schools to cause concern

Item/task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 7 students % correct
Q40	M	Interpret information contained in a diagram.	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole Number p. 15; <i>Year 7 Sourcebook</i> : p. 32; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 3.	69%
	<p><i>Comment:</i> Perceived school concern was 'unaligned to Queensland syllabus' (4% of schools). It is possible that teachers perceived this item as unaligned to the Queensland syllabus as it appears like a Venn diagram. Teaching of this type of diagram was part of the PIM (Program in Maths) syllabus but was not included in the <i>1987 Year 1 to 10 Mathematics Syllabus</i>. More than two-thirds of students answered the item correctly.</p>			

Key: M = Measurement and Data; SSD = *Years 1 to 7 Mathematics Syllabus Support Document*

Year 7 Literacy Test

Display 15 above also shows that there are four notable items or tasks of the Year 7 Literacy Test that were listed as causing a particular concern. Information on these items or tasks is provided in Display 17 below:

Display 17: Information on Year 7 Literacy Test items perceived by schools to cause a particular concern (N=812)

Item/ task	Strand	Description	Qld Curriculum links	Yr 7 students % correct
Q11	V	Recognise the message implied by the framing of a picture. Stimulus: <i>Countrylink</i> , an exposition (display advertisement).	<i>Syllabus</i> : comprehending visual language p. 35; <i>Media Curriculum Guide</i> : codes and conventions p. 9.	74% Link item: Yr 5 61%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was 'tricky or confusing' (2% of schools). It is possible that students who are not used to decoding this type of viewing material may have had difficulty in using the codes to select the best answer. Three-quarters answered the item correctly.			
Q24	V	Interpret the setting and mood suggested by images in an advertisement. Stimulus: <i>Puppy Chow</i> , an exposition (display advertisement).	<i>Syllabus</i> : practices which characterise cultural groups p.30, deploying and interpreting: vocabulary p.33; <i>Media Curriculum Guide</i> : Comprehending visual language pp. 7–13.	40%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concerns were 'tricky or confusing' (2% of schools). It is possible that some students were not familiar with the contexts described in the item; however, these types of images (advertisement for dog food) occur fairly frequently in a variety of forms of the media.			
Q26	V	Recognise the effect of a feature in the composition of an advertisement. Stimulus: <i>Puppy Chow</i> , an exposition (display advertisement).	<i>Syllabus</i> : Technical codes pp. 34, 35; <i>Using visual texts in primary and secondary classrooms</i> : pp. 11–15.	60%
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concerns were 'tricky or confusing' (2% of schools) and 'too difficult for students in Year 7' (1%). The item required reflecting upon the selection and positioning of objects in an image, which is an appropriate task for Year 7 students. It is possible that some students may have been unfamiliar with the word 'pillars'; however their position was identified in the text as 'either side of the door'. Three-fifths answered the item correctly.			
WT	W	WT (Writing Task) was a narrative based on a stimulus picture of a notepad with the words ' <i>I think I've done it! Come over and see me.</i> ' written on it. Students were asked to write a narrative that includes this message.	<i>A guide to genres in English</i> : pp. 10–17).	N/A
	<i>Comment</i> Perceived school concern was noted in the 'other' category (6% of schools). An analysis of this category indicated that while many different aspects were specified, it was notable that a number of schools felt that the time to write the narrative (25 minutes) was not enough.			

3.4 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 2

Focus Question 2

What specific questions or tasks in the 1999 Testing Program materials caused concern to schools, if any?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 2, the evaluation found that:

- the percentages of schools that found individual items or tasks of particular concern were relatively low. Overall, these percentages ranged from zero to 11% of schools with most notable* items ranging between 1% and 3% of schools.
* Definitions of 'notable': A Year 3 item or task was defined as notable if four or more schools (approx. 2% or more of schools) listed the item or task as a particular concern. A Year 5 and 7 item or task was defined as notable if 10 or more schools (approx. 1% or more of schools) listed the item or task as a particular concern. (The definition for the Years 5 and 7 tests is different to Year 3 because these were census tests and therefore had a larger number of respondents to the survey.)
- the following items or tasks were notable (see definition above) for causing particular concerns for schools:
 - Year 3 Numeracy Test: Test Paper 1: Q5, Q12, Q30; Test Paper 2: Q6, Q18.
 - Year 3 Literacy Test: Test Paper 2: Q15; Test Paper 3: Q12.
 - Year 5 Numeracy Test: Q4, Q6, Q12, Q14, Q16, Q22, Q25, Q27, Q34, Q44.
 - Year 5 Literacy Test: Q3, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q17, Q18, Q30, Q34, Writing Task.
 - Year 7 Numeracy Test: Q40.
 - Year 7 Literacy Test: Q11, Q24, Q26, Writing Task

Discussion and conclusions

A detailed analysis of the various displays above leads to a number of points about the appropriateness of the Test items and tasks, as measured against the criteria for selecting items and tasks for inclusion in the 1999 Testing Program. These points are discussed below in respect of each criterion.

Criterion: Alignment to Queensland syllabus

It is clear from the curriculum information obtained both from the Program's *Guide to Reports* and from Council literacy and numeracy project officers that each item or task can be traced to some aspect of the Queensland syllabus. This is not surprising given the panel review process that was used for the 1999 Testing Program. While a reader might disagree with the extent to which some items reflect a particular curriculum reference (curriculum materials are always open to interpretation!), it is clear that the Queensland curriculum was a prime determinant of the content of the Queensland 1999 Testing Program. Given this situation, it is possible that the perceptions of some schools about some items being unaligned to the Queensland syllabus are a reflection of the degree to which some schools have detailed knowledge of the Queensland curriculum materials. It could also be a reflection on the degree of accessibility of these materials, both in terms of ready availability in schools and the amount of curriculum materials with which schools need to be familiar.

Criterion: A wide range of item difficulty levels

The percentage correct column in the displays attest to the wide range of item difficulty present in the 1999 Testing Program. Ironically, the fulfilment of this criterion was also a cause of school concern in respect of items being too difficult for a particular year level. An analysis of the notable items displayed above indicates that many of the 'lower percentage

correct' items met with this concern about difficulty. Two exceptions were Qs 17 and 18 of the Year 5 Literacy Test where three-fifths of Year 5 students answered the items correctly, yet some schools considered them too difficult for Year 5 students.

Criterion: Items to be clear and unambiguous (i.e. not 'tricky or confusing')

An analysis of the notable items presented in the displays above shows that this concern tended to be listed for difficult items. It is possible, therefore, that for some items, item difficulty prompted the perception of 'tricky or confusing'. (An exception was Q18 of the Year 5 Literacy Test which three-fifths answered correctly but was considered by some schools to be 'tricky or confusing'.) The interpretative comments provided by Council literacy and numeracy officers offer advice on why some items might have been 'tricky or confusing'. Particular mention should be made of some Viewing (V) items and also some Measurement and Data (M) items that required equipment manipulation. These two aspects of literacy and numeracy warrant further examination in respect of current classroom understanding and practice.

Criterion: Appropriate literacy/language demands

As can be observed in the above displays, concerns about too high literacy/language demands were connected with the following stimuli: *Flying through the Air* (Year 3), *Infarmation* (Years 3 and 5) and *Countrylink* (Years 5 and 7). The interpretative comments provided by Council literacy and numeracy officers offer advice on why some items testing these stimuli might have been perceived to be have inappropriate literacy/language demands. In a test which covers a wide range of students' abilities, it is inevitable that some stimuli will be deemed to have inappropriate literacy/language demands, but there needs always to be continuing effort to ensure that the literacy/language demands of the items themselves do not impede a student in demonstrating abilities to read or view such stimuli.

Criterion: Inclusive of all students

The above displays indicate that the notable items causing concern about non-inclusivity were connected with the *Infarmation* stimulus, a graphic containing a web page. Most comments were about the appropriateness of a web page being used as a stimulus. As noted in the interpretive comments about these items, all the information needed to answer items were provided in the stimulus and a reliance on knowledge of the web was not necessary. Nevertheless, concerns expressed about the use of this stimulus point to the need to remain sensitive to the many different groups of students sitting the tests. This will always be a challenge with tests that are required to be relevant to all students, regardless of background or abilities.

Criterion: Function correctly in a statistical sense

This criterion was not explored in the displays except to note that for statistical reasons, two notable items (Year 3 Literacy Test Q12 TP 3, Year 5 Literacy Test Q7) were excluded from the calculation of scale scores. Looking at all the test items (and not just the notable ones), a total of 9 literacy items and one numeracy item were dropped from analysis because they didn't function well statistically. Most items were trialled in Victoria prior to their inclusion on the final forms and the aforementioned 10 items did not function sufficiently well when administered in Queensland.

Conclusion 4

Overall, particular concerns about specific items or tasks were noted by a relatively small percentage of schools. On balance, it may be concluded that most 1999 Testing Program items or tasks met the Council's pre-specified criteria for their selection; however, there are some aspects worthy of further consideration in the development of future test items or tasks. (These aspects are noted in the Discussion section above.)

4 Appropriateness and effectiveness of reports

Focus Question 3

How appropriate and effective are the 1999 student, class and school reports?

Display 18 lists the 1999 Testing Program reports that were sent to schools.

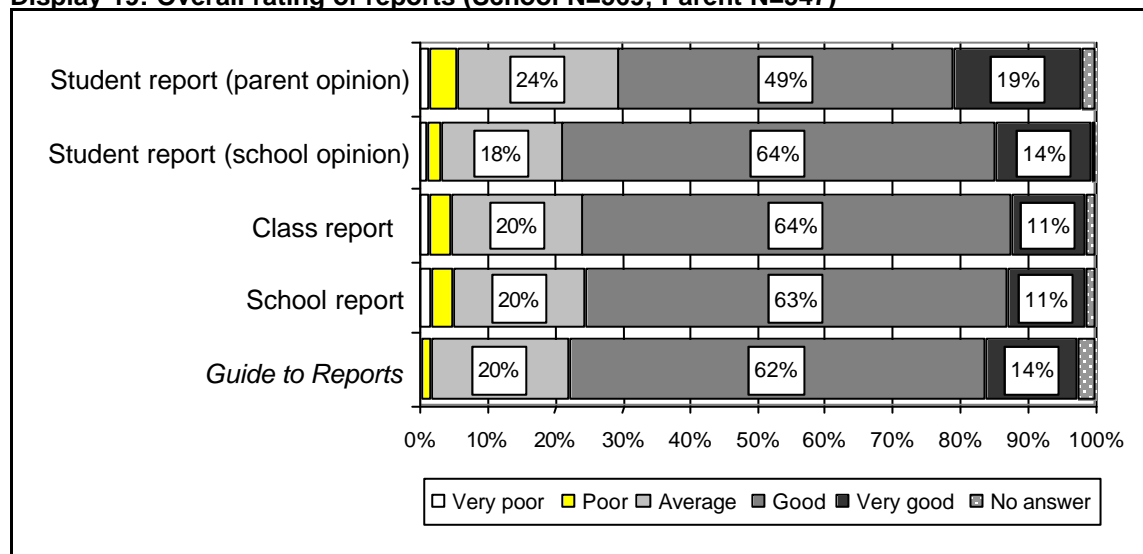
Display 18: Reports sent to schools

Report	Distribution	Purpose
Student, class and school reports for the Years 5 and 7 Tests	November, December 1999	To provide information about the students' performance in aspects of literacy and numeracy.
1999 Queensland Years 5 and 7 Tests: Guide to Reports	November, December 1999	To provide a guide to interpreting reports provided to schools for the 1999 Queensland Years 5 and 7 Tests in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy.

4.1 Ratings of 1999 reports

Schools were asked to give an overall rating of all the 1999 Testing Program Reports and *Guide to Reports*, and parents/caregivers were asked to give an overall rating of the student report. Display 19 presents the overall school and parent ratings.

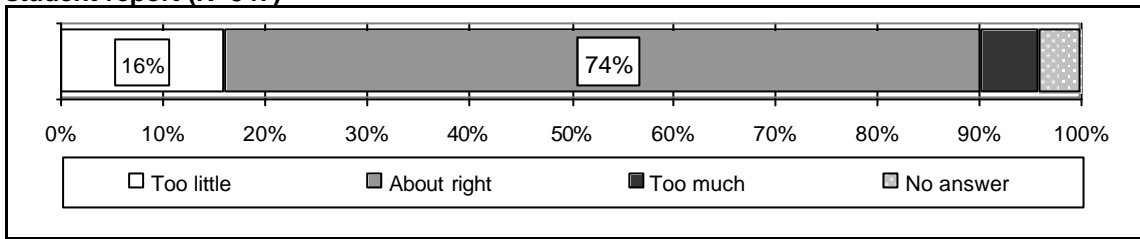
Display 19: Overall rating of reports (School N=569; Parent N=547)



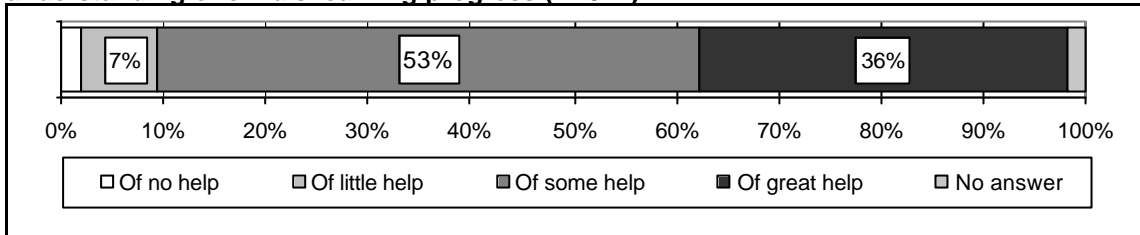
Display 19 shows that both parents/caregivers and schools rated the various reports positively with between 68% and 78% of respondents giving a rating of 'good' or 'very good'. In respect of the student report, parents/caregivers were slightly less positive than were schools.

To explore parent perceptions a little further, parents/caregivers were asked a question about the amount of information that was included in the student report and about the helpfulness of the student report in assisting parents/caregivers to understand their 'child's progress as a learner'. The responses are summarised in Displays 20 and 21. It can be seen that most parents/caregivers felt that the amount of information was 'about right' and that the student report had been of 'some' or 'great help'.

Display 20: Parent opinions on amount of information in student report (N=547)



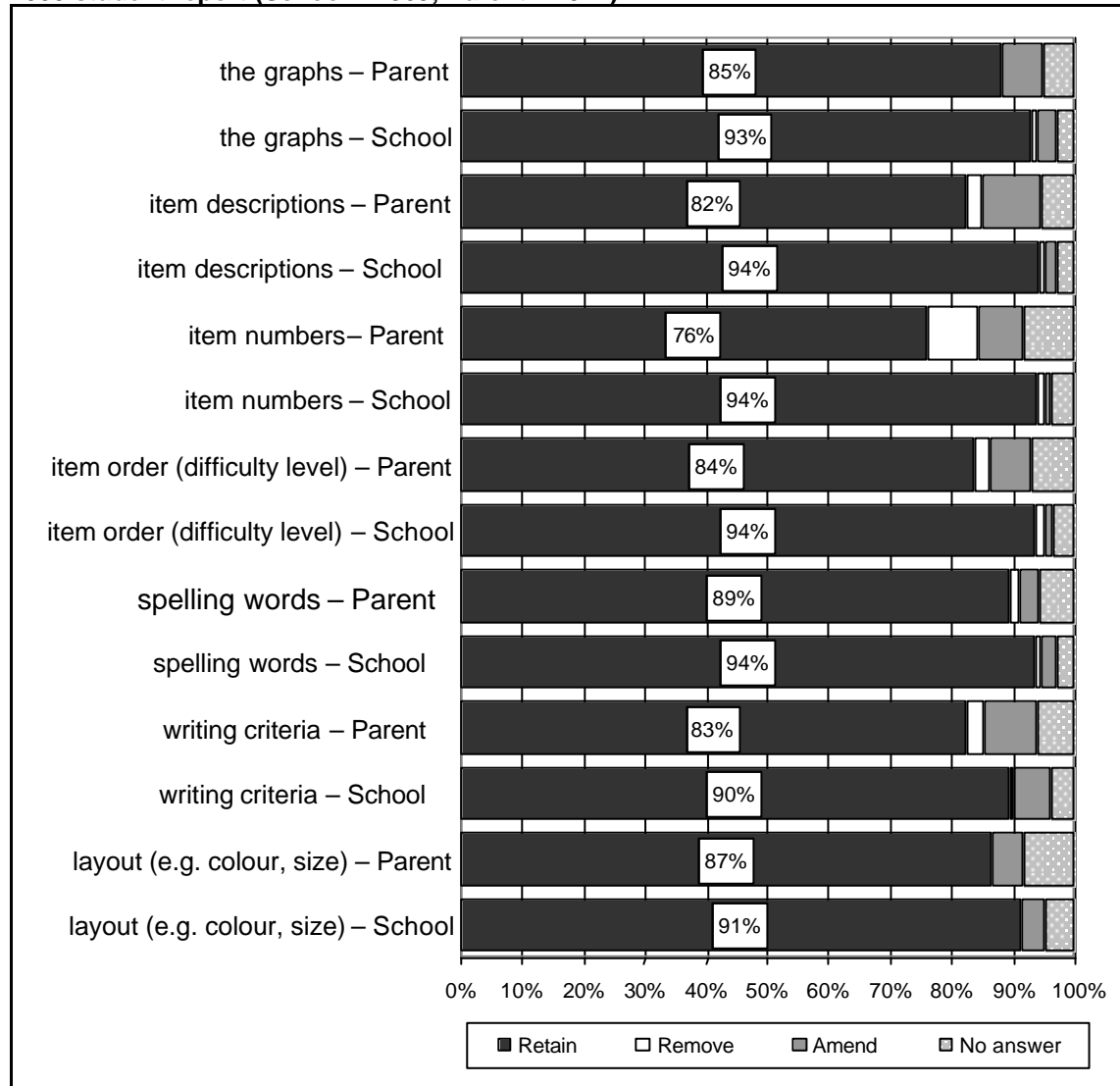
Display 21: Parent opinions on helpfulness of student report in assisting understanding of child's learning progress (N=547)



4.2 Opinions assisting planning of 'next year's' student report

Both parents/caregivers and schools were asked how various listed aspects of the student report should be treated in 'next year's' 2000 Testing Program (retain, remove or amend). Responses are summarised in Display 22.

Display 22: Opinions on how aspects of 1999 student report should be treated in 'next year's' 2000 student report (School N=569; Parent N=547)



As can be seen, most parents/caregivers and schools felt that the various listed aspects of the student report should be retained while a minority wanted removal or amendment. Overall, a higher proportion of parents/caregivers than schools wanted removal or amendments. Most notable were the:

- 8% of parents/caregivers who wished the removal of item numbers, and the 7% who requested their amendment;
- 7% of parents/caregivers who wanted amendments made to the graph;
- 10% of parents/caregivers who requested amendments to the item descriptions;
- 7% of parents/caregivers who wanted amendments to the item order;
- 9% of parents/caregivers and 6% of schools who wanted amendments to the writing criteria.

Display 23 provides notable examples of suggested amendments.

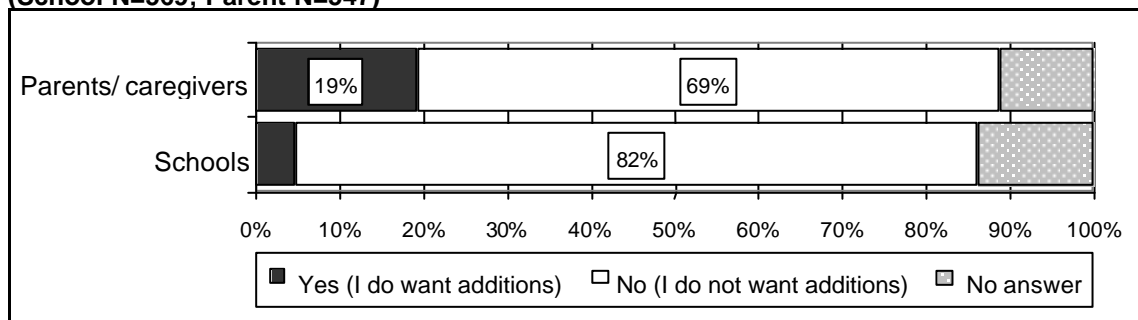
Display 23: Student report: Examples of suggested amendments

Aspects of student report	P or S*	Examples of suggested amendments
the graphs	P	Give more detailed or better explanations of graph.
	S	For students with all items correct, place bubble at the end of the graph. (Many respondents didn't view the graph as an 'excerpt' from a larger scale.)
item descriptions	P	Use more friendly language or more specific item descriptions. (A number felt that you would need to see the item to understand the description.)
	S	
item numbers (i.e. the item number on the original tests)	P	(Most parents/caregivers didn't know what the numbers meant. Others felt they were irrelevant if they didn't have a copy of the test.)
	S	--
item order (difficulty level)	P	Rank the items down page from easiest to most difficult (rather than the other way round.)
	S	
spelling words	P	(Most comments focused on the spelling themselves rather than the reporting of them. Some felt the spelling tasks too easy; others felt them too hard.)
	S	
writing criteria	P	Simplify text and make easier to understand. Make the use of the black dots consistent with the other Literacy strands. (In Writing, a black dotted criterion assumed the existence of all skills lower in the criterion list.)
	S	(Most suggestions were related to the Writing task, criteria and marking rather than to the reporting of Writing.)
layout (e.g. colour, size)	P	(Many suggestions focused on the use of colours that made the report more clear, particularly when photocopied.)
	S	

* P = parent/caregiver suggestions; S = school suggestions

In addition to being asked opinions on the 1999 student report, **parents/caregivers** and schools were asked whether there were any aspects that they wished to have **added**. Display 24 summarises the responses.

Display 24: Response regarding additions to student report (School N=569; Parent N=547)

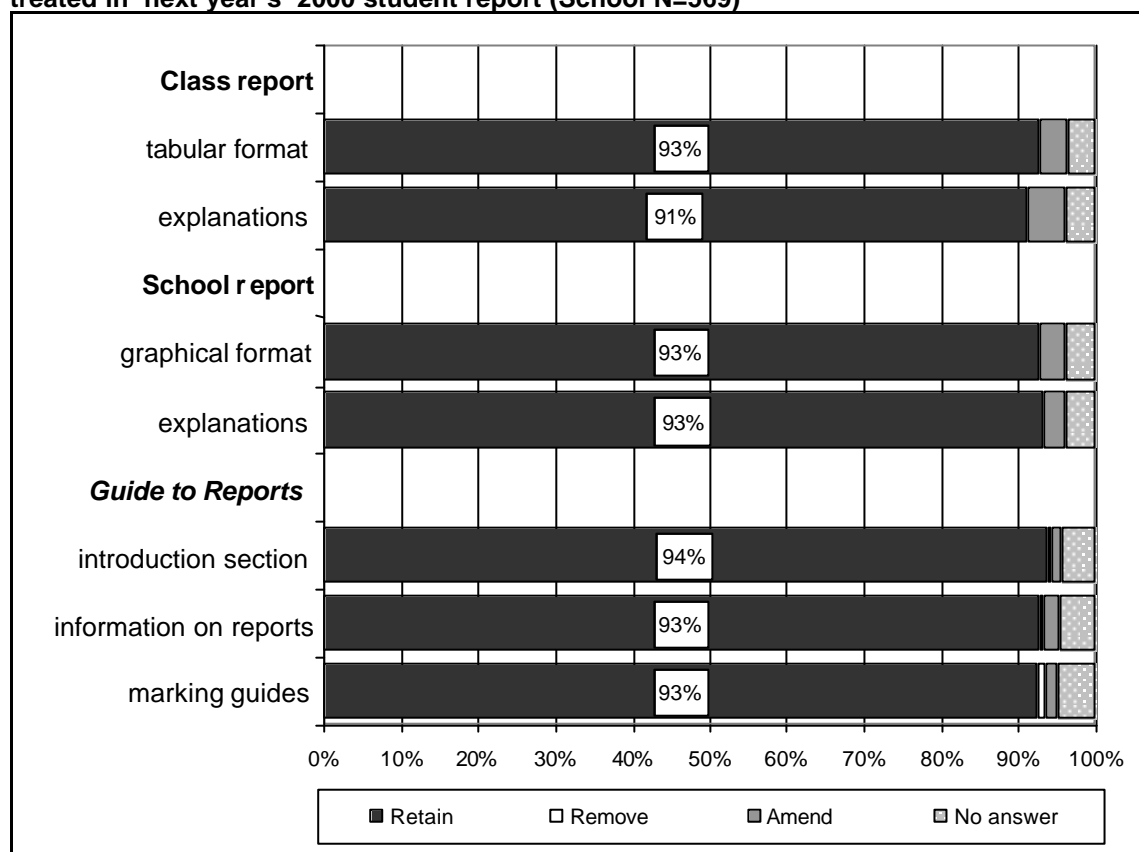


An analysis of the suggested additions revealed that there was no consistent pattern to the suggested additions with the exception that the most frequently requested additions were from the 4% of parents/caregivers that requested the provision of test papers or examples of the questions asked. Other additions less frequently suggested were related to the following: more explanations to assist understanding; information to allow comparison within school with peers; information on ranked position state-wide; information on the writing task; explanation of numbers in brackets; state average for item scores; percentages; information on viewing; information on student's strengths and weaknesses.

4.3 Opinions assisting planning of 'next year's' class and school reports and *Guide to Reports*

In respect of the three report documents distributed for use by schools, opinions were sought on how various listed aspects should be treated in 'next year's' 2000 Testing Program. The responses are summarised in Display 25.

Display 25: Opinions on how aspects of student report should be treated in 'next year's' 2000 student report (School N=569)



As can be seen, most schools (between 91% and 94%) felt that the various listed aspects of the report should be retained while a small minority wanted removal or amendment. An even smaller number provided suggested amendments.

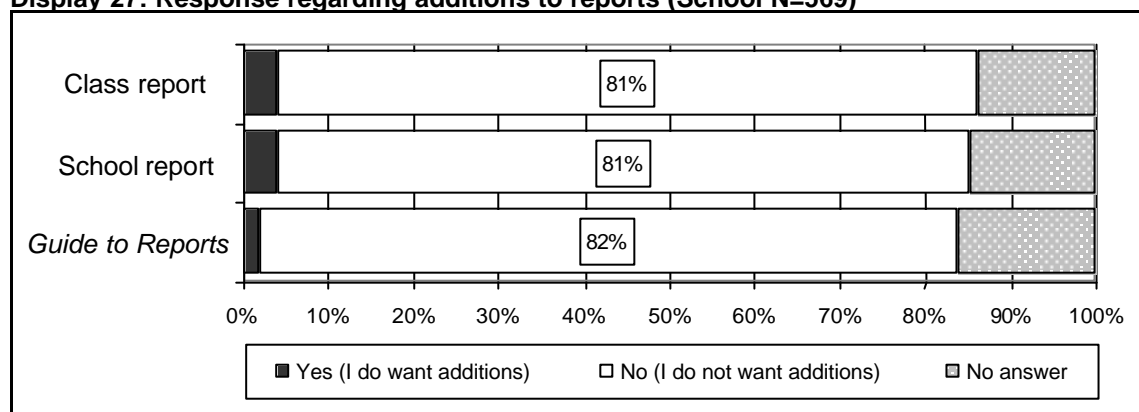
Display 26 summarises notable examples of suggested amendments.

Display 26: Student report: Examples of suggested amendments

Aspects of Reports	Examples of suggested amendments
Class report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tabular format • explanations 	Suggestions included making the report more readable, having bigger font sizes, identifying students needing support, and the wish to have greater clarity of explanations.
School report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • graphical format • explanations 	Suggestions included the inclusion of like-school comparisons and thresholds for intervention.
Guide to Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction section • information on reports • marking guides 	Suggestions included the use of simpler language, explanation of some similar items being used for Years 3 and 5 (link items), inclusion of a copy of an example of writing satisfying each level, and matching of marking guide numbers to strand heading orders.

In addition to being asked opinions on the current 1999 class report, school report and *Guide to Reports*, schools were asked whether there were any aspects that they wished to have **added**. Display 27 summarises the responses.

Display 27: Response regarding additions to reports (School N=569)



An analysis of the small number of suggested additions revealed that there was no consistent pattern to the suggestions, with any one suggestion being made by less than 1% of schools and with most suggestions being idiosyncratic. Examples of the suggestions included the following:

- *Class report*: Add cohort mean scores; highlight students identified for support; provide specific forms of questions; provide year level report inclusive of drafts;
- *School report*: Add benchmarking; provide like school averages; provide comparisons with previous years; include additional statistics, e.g. standard deviations for schools and state; provide comparison of Years 5 and 7 on same link items; supply percentage of students in each band – above, average, below; list students identified for support;
- *Guide to Reports*: Add information on processes to identify funding support; provide guide to data analysis to assist making meaning of the information; provide like school averages.

Finally, in relation to Focus Question 3, schools were asked to prioritise the format that should be used in the future to distribute report materials to schools. Schools were asked to write 1 for the most favoured format, 2 for the next favoured, and so on up to 4. Display 28 presents a summary of this prioritisation

Display 28: Summary of report distribution priorities (N=569)

Priority rank	Distribution format	Index of priority*	% respondents giving priority 1
1	print	1069	78%
2	floppy disk	2385	17%
3	secure Internet	2930	12%
4	other**	4622	4%

* The Index of priority was calculated by summing all respondents' priorities (1, 2, 3, 4). Nine was allocated for no answers.

** Most 'other' respondents specified CD-ROM

Display 28 shows that print was the most preferred format.

4.4 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 3

Focus Question 3
How appropriate and effective are the 1999 student, class and school reports?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 3, the evaluation found the following:

- Schools rated the student report, class report, school report and *Guide to Reports* very positively, with between 74% and 78% of schools rating the reports 'good' or 'very good'.
- Parents/caregivers rated the student report positively with 68% rating it 'good' or 'very good'. This rating is a little less than the rating of 78% given by schools.
- Most parents/caregivers (74%) felt that the amount of information provided in the student report was 'about right' and most (89%) felt that it was of 'some' or 'great' help in assisting an understanding of their child's learning progress.
- Most parents/caregivers and schools (between 76% and 94%) wished the various aspects of the student report listed in the survey to be retained. The aspects listed were: the graphs, item descriptions, item numbers, item order, spelling words, writing criteria and layout. At the opposite end of the extreme, item numbers were the most frequently ticked aspect desired to be removed (by 8% of parents/caregivers), and the most frequently ticked aspects of the student report desired to be amended were: item description (by 10% of parents/caregivers), writing criteria (by 9% of parents/caregivers) and item numbers (by 7% of parents/caregivers). (Examples of the suggested amendments are provided above.)
- Altogether, 19% of parents/caregivers and 5% of schools indicated that they wished to have something added to the student report. The most frequently requested addition was from the 4% of parents/caregivers who wished to have test papers provided or examples of the questions asked. (Other suggested additions are provided above.)
- Most schools (between 91% and 94%) wished the various aspects of the class report, school report and *Guide to Reports* listed in the survey to be retained. The aspects listed were: the tabular format and explanations of the class report; the graphical format and explanations of the school report; and the introduction, report in information and marking guides in the *Guide to Reports*. Fewer than 1% of schools wanted an aspect removed and between 1% and 5% wanted amendment. (Examples of suggested amendments are provided above.)

- Between 2% and 4% of schools indicated that they wished to have something added to the class report, school report and *Guide to Reports*. There was no discernible pattern to the suggested additions. (Examples of suggested additions are provided above.)
- The preferred format for providing all reports was print, with 78% of schools giving this their first priority. Floppy disk, secure Internet and other formats (e.g. CD-ROM) were other listed options.

Discussion and conclusions

The overall positive ratings given to the four reports reported above, and the suggested amendments and additions made, lead to the following conclusion.

Conclusion 5

Overall, the student, class and school reports and the *Guide to Reports* were appropriate and effective, and the suggestions made regarding amendments and additions are worthy of consideration in any effort to improve the reports.

School opinions on the preferred format of the reports lead to the following conclusion.

Conclusion 6

In the near future, all reports should continue to be provided in print format, but continued monitoring of school opinions in this area and further investigation of future complementary or alternative report formats is warranted.

This is the first time that the Testing Program reports have been evaluated since the trial Year 6 test in 1995. In the evaluation of the 1995 Year 6 test trial, data were collected only on the student report, not class and school reports. It is informative to quote from evaluation document, *Evaluation of Parent Reporting Related to the 1995 Diagnostic Net, Year 6 Test Trial, and Mathematics Student Performance Standards (SPS)*, (page 29):

Overall most principals (92%) and three-quarters of parents/caregivers (75%) considered that the written Year 6 Test Report was 'good' or 'very good'. The most frequent reason given by parents/caregivers for these opinions was that the report provided very good information, particularly on children's skill levels. Overall, 4% of principals and one-fifth of parents/caregivers (21%) felt that the Year 6 Test Report was 'poor' or 'very poor', the most frequent reasons given by parents/caregivers being that it was difficult for parents/caregivers to understand, was of little or no use, and did not provide a true indication of a student's abilities.

Findings such as these led to the following conclusion in the 1995 evaluation report: 'The written Year 6 Test Report was received positively by most parents/caregivers, with many finding it easily understood, informative and identifying where the student was at...'

Conclusion 7

In respect of student reports, the positive findings of the evaluation of 1999 Testing Program materials are relatively consistent with the findings of the evaluation of the 1995 Year 6 test (the only other year in which evaluation data on the student report has been collected).

5 School plans to use report information

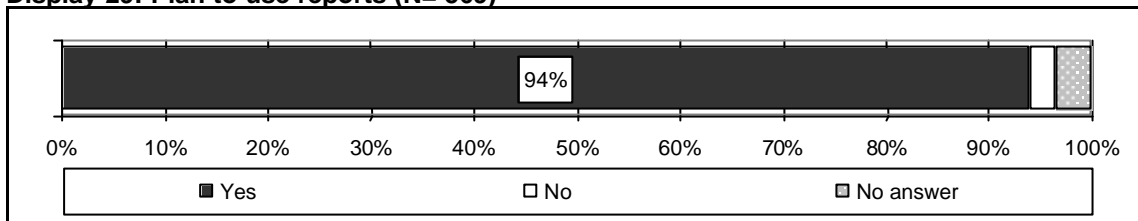
Focus Question 4

How do schools plan to use the data included in student, class and school reports, particularly Year 7 reports?

5.1 Planned use

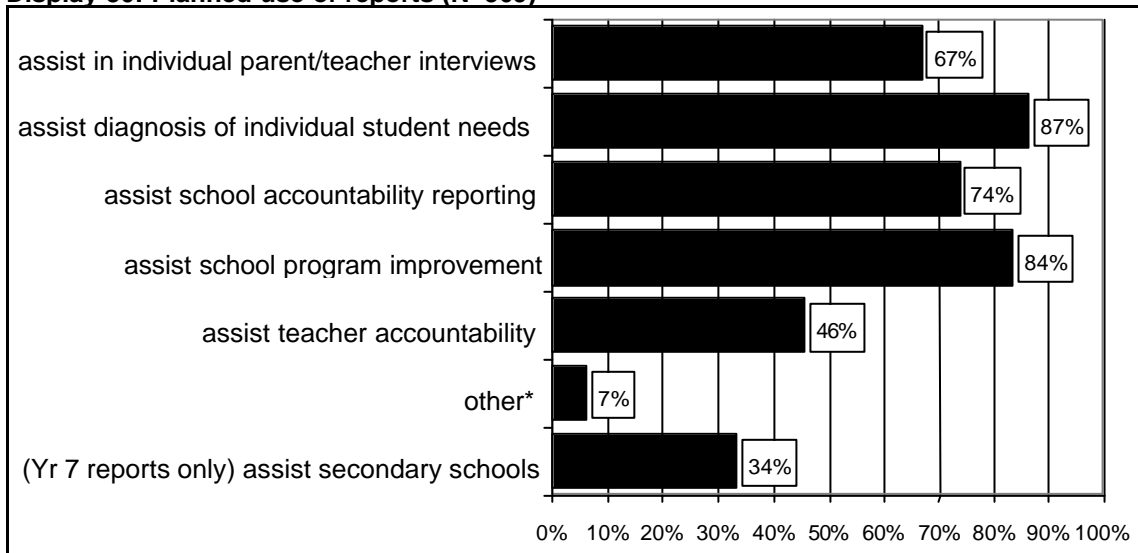
Display 29 presents a summary of school responses to the question 'Does the school plan to use the information in the reports in any way?' The majority planned to use the report data in some way.

Display 29: Plan to use reports (N= 569)



Display 30 indicates ways in which schools planned to use the information in the reports. As can be seen, individual student diagnosis and school program improvement were the most frequently reported planned uses for the reports while 'assist school accountability reporting' was a high frequent response. Display 30 also shows that 'assisting secondary schools' was the least frequently mentioned planned use (34% of schools). Further analysis showed that most planned assistance in this area focussed on the provision of student reports to secondary schools or on liaison with secondary staff.

Display 30: Planned use of reports (N=569)



*Some 'other' examples were: enhance special needs program; reporting to school communities; review of school literacy program

Finally in this section, it is important to note the most frequently expressed unsolicited comment that was included on the returned surveys. This comment was related to the late distribution of the reports to schools and in some cases, the existence of errors in the initial reports. Many schools commented that the reports arrived at a very bad time, sometimes in

the last week of school. Particular reference was often made to the need to have the Year 7 reports earlier. Typical comments included:

It is necessary to get the reports to schools in a timely manner. The last week at school is too late.

Year 7 results are too late in the year to be of assistance.

The timing, delays and errors in 1999 were exceptionally poor and must be addressed.

Year 5 and 7 test reports were received far too late in 1999 – too late even to be used to inform Semester 2 student report cards.

The issuing of reports needs to happen much earlier. December is far too late. Early November is much better for schools.

Any interpretation of the responses to the questions about the planned use of the reports needs to be undertaken within the context of the above comments.

5.2 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 4

Focus Question 4

How do schools plan to use the data included in student, class and school reports, particularly Year 7 reports?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 4, the evaluation found the following:

- Most schools (94%) planned to use the data included in student, class and school reports.
- The most frequently noted planned uses for the reports were: assisting in the diagnosis of individual student needs (87% of schools) and assisting school improvement (84%) while assisting school accountability reporting was also a frequent response (74%). The least frequently noted planned use was assisting secondary schools (34% of schools).
- The most frequently expressed unsolicited comment on the survey was connected with the late distribution of the reports and in some cases, errors in the initial reports distributed.

Discussion and conclusions

The above findings lead to the following conclusions

Conclusion 8

Schools planned use of the data in the reports indicates that the reports have high expected utility, particularly in relation to student diagnosis and school program improvement. This utility was reduced through the late distribution of the reports and, in some cases, the errors in the initial reports.

Conclusion 9

Further investigation is warranted of ways in which the *Guide to Reports* might assist schools to use the Year 7 reports.

6 Opinions on future testing programs

Focus Question 5

What views are held by schools on the nature and form of future testing programs?

6.1 Perceived purposes of state-based literacy and numeracy testing

Schools were asked what they believed should be the major purposes of state-based literacy and numeracy testing programs. Schools were asked to write 1 in the box with the most important purpose, 2 for the next important, and so on up to 8.

Display 31 presents a summary of this prioritisation. It is clear that the two highest desired priority purposes of state-based literacy and numeracy testing programs are diagnosis of individual student needs and school program improvement. Interestingly, these two aspects are the same as the most frequently reported planned uses of the 1999 Testing Program reports (see previous section).

Display 31: Summary of desired priorities regarding purposes (N=870)

Priority Rank	Desired purpose of state-based testing programs	Index of priority*	% respondents giving priority 1
1	Diagnosis of individual students needs	1940	52%
2	School program improvement	2280	13%
3	Individual student information for parents/caregivers	2930	14%
4	Teacher program improvement	2940	5%
5	System program improvement	2940	14%
6	School accountability	3570	5%
7	System accountability	3770	12%
8	Teacher accountability	4190	2%

* The Index of priority was calculated by summing all respondents' priorities (1–8). Nine was allocated for no answers.

6.2 Nature and form of future literacy and numeracy testing programs

Respondents were asked 'Given the fact that it is Government policy to conduct state-based literacy and numeracy testing programs, overall, what primary year levels should be included in testing programs and what form of testing do you favour?' The survey sought opinions for Years 3, 5 and 7 only.

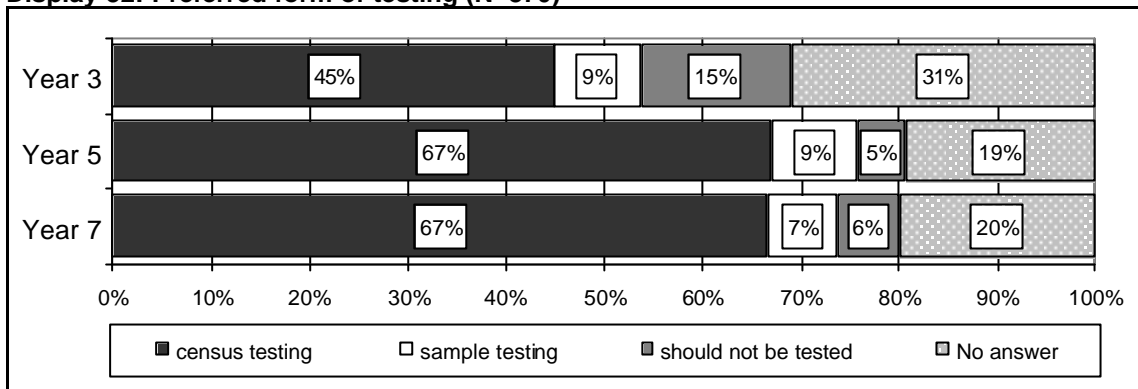
To assist respondents in giving an informed opinion, the survey contained the following defining information:

A census test involves all students. It allows test developers to generate individual student, class, school and state-based reports.

A sample test involves a small number of students. It allows test developers to generate state-based reports only. All schools, however, can administer a test themselves, if they so wish. This test is included in a complementary Test Resource Kit.

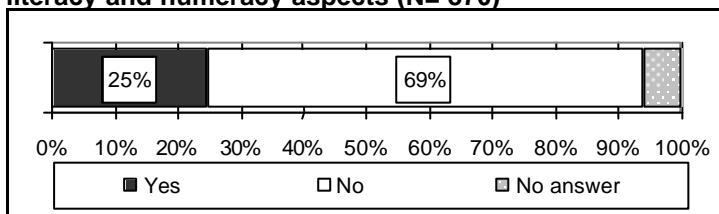
Display 32 below indicates that the majority of teachers involved in the 1999 Testing Program favour census testing for all three year levels.

Display 32: Preferred form of testing (N=870)



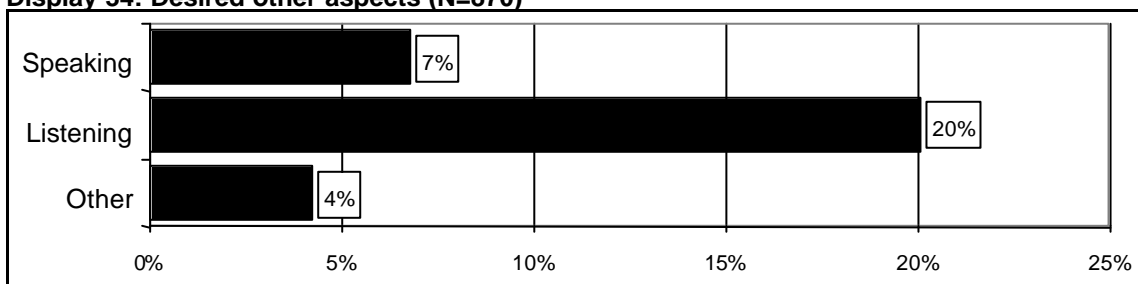
Display 33 presents a summary of responses to the question ‘The 1999 Testing Program covers the following aspects: Number Sense, Measurement and Data Sense, Spatial Sense, Writing, Spelling, Reading and Viewing. Are there other aspects of numeracy and/or literacy that you would wish to see covered in future testing programs?’

Display 33: Opinions on including other literacy and numeracy aspects (N= 870)



Schools that considered other literacy and numeracy aspects should be included opted for those aspects included in Display 34 below.

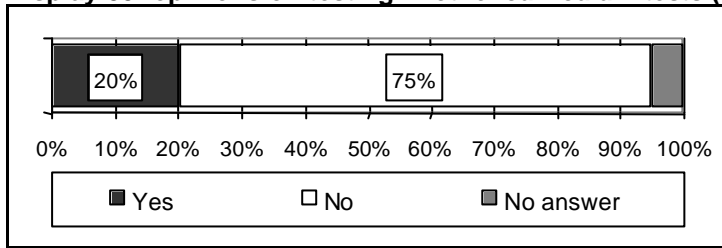
Display 34: Desired other aspects (N=870)



6.3 Opinions on future testing programs in other aspects of the curriculum

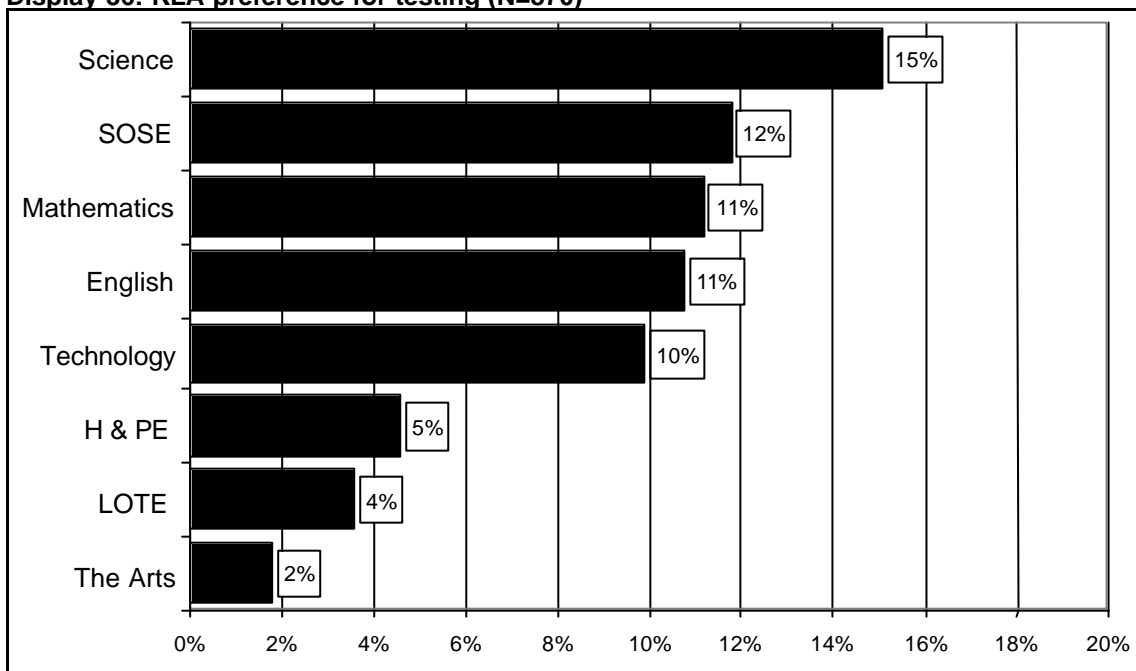
Display 35 presents a summary of responses to the following question: ‘In addition to a state-based literacy and numeracy program, do you favour the introduction of some form of state-based testing program in **other aspects of the curriculum** on an appropriate cyclical basis?’

Display 35: opinions on testing in other curriculum tests (N= 870)



Schools Key Learning Area (KLA) preferences for cyclical state-based testing are presented in Display 36 below. As can be seen Science was the most favoured KLA.

Display 36: KLA preference for testing (N=870)



6.4 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 5

Focus Question 5

What views are held by schools on the nature and form of future testing programs?

Summary

In response to Focus Question 5, the evaluation found the following:

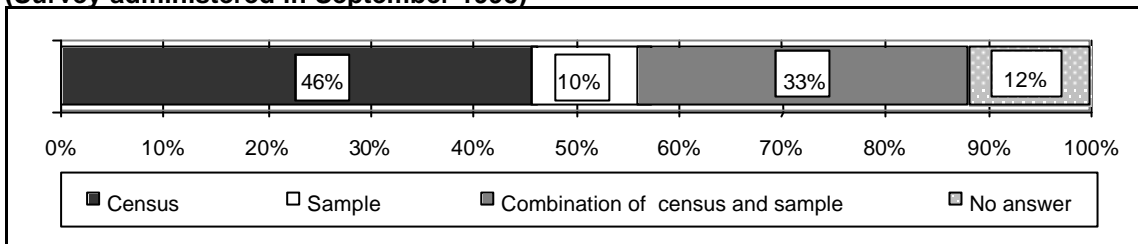
- The most preferred purposes of state-based literacy and numeracy testing programs was diagnosis of individual student needs and school program improvement. The diagnosis purpose was given first priority by 52% of schools.
- The most frequently preferred form of testing for Years 3, 5 and 7 was a census test. A Year 3 census test was preferred by 45% of schools, a Year 5 census test by 67% of schools and a Year 7 census test by 67% of schools. The next preference was for a sample test followed by no test.
- About one-quarter of schools (25%) wished to have other aspects of literacy and numeracy tested, the most frequently favoured being Listening.
- About one-fifth (20%) of schools favoured the introduction of some form of state-based testing of other aspects of the curriculum, the most frequently favoured being Science (by 15% of schools).

Discussion and conclusions

The finding in relation to census tests continues a trend which has been reported in other evaluations. It is helpful to be reminded of these findings.

In the evaluation of the **1998** Queensland Years 3 and 5 Testing Program, principals and teachers were asked 'Given the fact that it is Government policy to conduct statewide testing programs, overall, what form of statewide testing do you favour?' Display 37 provides a summary of principals' and teachers' responses (N=3669).

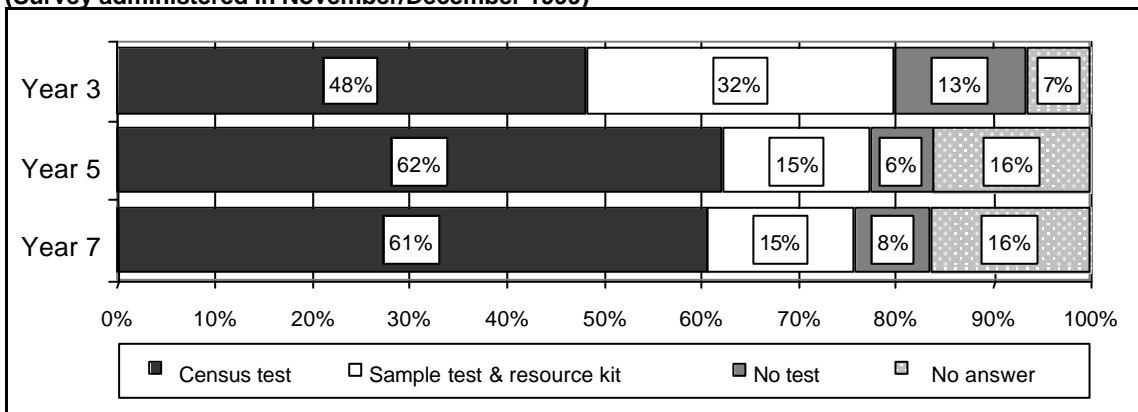
Display 37b: Preferred form of testing (N=3669)
(Survey administered in September 1998)



Ref: Queensland School Curriculum Council 1999, *Evaluation of the 1998 Queensland Years 3 and 5 Testing Program: Results of principal and teacher surveys*

Furthermore, in the evaluation of the Queensland Year 3 Test Resource Kit, respondents were asked what form of literacy and numeracy testing schools favoured for Years 3, 5 and 7, **in 2001**. Display 38 presents a summary of the form of testing favoured. As can be seen, the most frequently expressed preference was for a 'census test'. Only a minority wanted 'no test'.

Display 38: Preferred form of testing in 2001 (N=396)
(Survey administered in November/December 1999)



Ref: Queensland School Curriculum Council 2000, *Evaluation of the Queensland 1998 Year 3 Test Resource Kit*

To summarise, the results from three surveys (for this current evaluation and the two reported above) have revealed that the most frequently preferred form of testing has been census. This is despite the slightly different wording and format of the questions that were asked.

These findings lead to the following conclusions.

Conclusion 10

Schools prefer a census test over a sample test and resource kit combination; and only a small minority favour 'no test'. This finding is consistent with other Council evaluations.

In relation to the desire to test other aspects of literacy and numeracy and other aspects of curriculum, the findings show that this has the support of only a minority of schools (between one fifth and one quarter). These findings lead to the following conclusion:

Conclusion 11

Before any future decisions are made about additions to state-based testing (either additional strands to literacy and numeracy tests or new tests in other key learning areas), further exploration of school views in this area would be beneficial.

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Evaluation of 1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Final Report

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Evaluation of the Years 1 to 10 Technology Curriculum Development Project: Report 1

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Evaluation of the Years 1 to 10 Technology Curriculum Development Project: Report 3

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Copies of these reports are available from the Queensland School Curriculum Council website:
<http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au>