

**Evaluation of the
2000 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7
Testing Program**

Final Report



**QUEENSLAND
SCHOOL
CURRICULUM
COUNCIL**

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Acknowledgments

The following Council officers participated in the evaluation: Christopher Dean (evaluation manager and survey design), Andrew Lockhart (data management and analyses), and Robin Thomas, Rhondda Kretschmann and Claire Clifforth (analyses of selected responses and provider of additional information and comments on specific 2000 Testing Program items and tasks). Ted Hobbs, from EdData consultancy, undertook analyses of selected responses and prepared the final report.

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Executive summary and conclusions

This final report presents the findings of the evaluation of the 2000 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program in Literacy and Numeracy (hereafter called the 2000 Testing Program or Program). The evaluation was conducted by means of a survey of all schools that participated in the Program.

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

How do schools rate the 2000 Testing Program materials?

Summary

All of the materials were rated highly by most of the schools.

The Years 3, 5 and 7 tests themselves were rated highly by most of the schools. Among the actual ratings (excluding no answer or 'Don't Know') the combined 'Poor' and 'Very Poor' ratings were 7% or less for any test. Combined 'Good' or 'Very Good' ratings ranged from 62% for the Year 3 Numeracy test to 76% for the Year 7 Literacy test.

The materials accompanying the tests – the wall chart, the brochure for parents/caregivers, the *Information for Schools* booklet and the test administration handbooks – were rated even more highly. Of the actual ratings, 81% to 90% were 'Good' or 'Very Good'. Highest ratings were given to the *Information for Schools* booklet and the test administration handbooks. The strength of the ratings is an indicator of the effectiveness of the materials.

Conclusion 1

The wall chart, the brochure for parents/caregivers, the *Information for Schools* booklet and the test administration handbooks were highly effective.

Conclusion 2

The Years 3, 5 and 7 tests were rated as good or very good by most of the schools.

Focus Question 2

Do schools support major changes to the Testing Program in 2000?

Summary

Four major changes from the 1999 Program all received the approval of most of the schools.

The use of a wall chart instead of an information brochure was supported by 66% of the schools that responded, mainly because it was seen as easy to refer to, easy to follow and having good visual impact. Those that did not support the wall chart had no knowledge of it, had nowhere to display it, believed that staff did not see it, wanted each teacher to have a copy or thought that the chart format is not easily copied, distributed or carried.

The inclusion of both Literacy and Numeracy tests in a single booklet was supported by 89% of the schools. The most common reason for non-support was related to security. A way needs to be found to guard against the possibility that a few students might change their answers on one test while working on the other. Schools could benefit from the introduction of additional precautions to simplify the task of supervision.

The requirement for test booklets to be returned for all students, including absentees and exempt students, was supported by 88% of the schools, with most finding the new practice to be more efficient and easier for checking. Only a few schools preferred the previous practice (the return of an Exemptions and Absences sheet).

Clearly, schools find class reports to be valuable and worthwhile documents with 92% of Year 3 schools with Year 3 students supporting the provision of such reports for the Year 3 tests.

Conclusion 3

Most of the schools support the major changes to the Testing Program that were made in 2000. The high levels of support justify making these changes standard practice in future Programs.

Conclusion 4

The use of a single test booklet was supported by 89% of the schools, but consideration should be given to changes in format or procedures to help schools ensure that students are working on the correct test.

Conclusion 5

The full effectiveness of the wall chart requires that all schools display it prominently and draw attention to it.

Focus Question 3

What are schools' opinions about the test administration procedures?

Summary

In general, the test administration procedures evoked highly favourable responses. Far more likes than dislikes were entered by the survey respondents, with 64% of the schools listing one or more procedures that worked well. The instructions in the Test Administration Handbook were specifically mentioned by 20% of the schools. Clearly, the handbook is simple, easy to follow and highly effective. Other approving comments were made in relation to:

- The practice materials
- The summary timetable page in the Test Administration Handbook
- The inclusion of the Literacy and Numeracy tests in a single test booklet
- The supply of necessary materials such as pencils and measurement tools

The most common dislikes related to the time taken by the tests, difficulties for small schools or schools with multi-age classes, provision for special groups, organisation of the writing task and the filling in of the front covers of the tests, but any one of these dislikes was listed by no more than 4% of the schools.

The position in relation to small schools or multi-age classes could well be reviewed. The *Information for Schools* booklet does include suggestions for principals of small schools, including stretching the overall time frame for the testing, but either this was not noticed by some principals or it did not solve their problems. The relevant section should be reviewed for content and feasibility then made more prominent in the set of materials.

The issue of consideration for students with special needs also needs to be kept under constant review. The *Information for Schools* booklet contains guidance for schools in this matter, but again, the relevant section should be reviewed and made more prominent.

Conclusion 6

The test administration procedures for the 2000 Testing Program worked well.

Conclusion 7

The Test Administration Handbooks were highly effective in explaining to teachers how to administer the tests.

Conclusion 8

Test administration procedures for small schools and students with special needs should be kept under review. Relevant sections in the information manual should be re-examined and made more prominent in the set of materials.

Focus Question 4

Which test items, test tasks or stimulus materials did schools like or dislike and why?

Summary

In the Year 3 Numeracy Test, the press-out shapes stimulated a response from 18% of the relevant schools (those that had conducted the Year 3 tests). Many liked the concrete nature of the shapes or the challenge of the associated tasks, but others reported that children did not think that they could turn the shapes over because the colour was different on the back. As a result they were unable to solve the kite problem. The complaint about the colour of the press-out shapes seems valid and may justify further exploration with the same item in a future test.

Five other Year 3 Numeracy items were notable in being seen as too difficult by 4% to 7% of the relevant schools (Questions 13, 34, 35, 36 and the mental calculations).

In the Year 3 Literacy Test, the dictation and writing tasks each produced similar proportions of likes and dislikes (2% of the relevant schools liked or disliked the dictation, 4% the writing task). Various reasons were given for liking the dictation, but the most common reason for dislike was a perception that the spelling words were too difficult. Many of those liking the writing task mentioned the genre or the stimulus material and activities. The most common reason for dislike was the choice of writing topic. The stimulus material was seen as too difficult by 7%, but liked by 3%. One of the stimulus pages on the second paper (*Relax Max*) was seen as too difficult by 4% of the relevant schools.

In the Year 5 Numeracy Test, the measurement mats and the mental calculations prompted the greatest response. Some (5% of the relevant schools) liked the measurement mats because they were simple, easy to use and practical. Some (6%) disliked the mental calculation items because they were seen as too difficult or beyond the Year 5 syllabus. The calculator items in general were disliked by 6% because the time allowed was seen to be insufficient. Five other Year 5 Numeracy items were seen as too difficult for Year 5 by 1% to 3% of the relevant schools: Items 10, 11, 16, 39 and 42.

Three of the Year 5 Numeracy items were seen by 2% to 3% of the relevant schools as confusing or misleading for children: Question 30 because of the phrase "1 to 4", Question 38 because a set of coins illustrated as change did not add to the total amount tendered, and Question 42 because the answer required students to match maps that had been rotated in reference to each other. However, students' success rates on these items were respectively 73%, 45% and 77%, and alternative wordings may have made the questions overly simple.

Most responses to the Year 5 Literacy Test related to the stimulus reading material (*Read About It*) and the writing task. *Read About It* generated positive comments from 7% of the relevant schools, with many writing that it was attractive, colourful, interesting and relevant to students. Page 3 (*Advertisements*) was specifically mentioned as realistic and interesting by some (1%). Page 4 (*Fancy 'Fido the Quoll' for a Pet?*) was seen as too difficult or boring by some (1%).

The Year 5 writing task prompted responses from 12% of the relevant schools. These were split fairly evenly between like and dislike. The most common reasons for liking the writing task related to the stimulus material and the choice of topic or genre. The most common reasons for disliking the writing task related to the topic (thought to be unsuitable or boring) or the time allowed (perceived as insufficient).

Dictation in the Year 5 test was indicated as liked by 1% and disliked by 2%. Proofreading was indicated as liked by 2% and disliked by 3%. Some saw the Year 5 proofreading and dictation sections as too difficult, but others saw them as too easy. Some schools objected to the proofreading for showing words spelled incorrectly.

In the Year 7 Numeracy Test the measurement mat and protractor prompted the largest number of comments – some saw the mats as easy to use, practical or concrete (1% of the relevant schools), but others saw them as inaccurate or unfamiliar (1%). The circular protractor drew criticism from 2% of the schools as being unfamiliar to students who usually use semi-circular protractors.

Several Year 7 Numeracy items were seen by around 1% of the relevant schools to be difficult or beyond Year 7 work to date: the mental calculations, the calculator questions, Question 39 and Question 44. Items seen to be confusing, misleading or badly worded by at least 1% of the relevant schools were Questions 6, 13, 17, 27, 37 and 43. Two items are particularly notable:

- Question 17 was seen as confusing by 4% of the relevant schools because the area measure on the measurement mat did not exactly match the area to be estimated. Some thought that the question wording should have specified approximate area. Success rate was reasonable at 46% and some incorrect answers may have been due to the wording, but if the mat is placed correctly on the shape, the correct answer is quite clear.
- Question 27 was seen as misleading or confusing by 3% of the relevant schools because the word "all" in the question suggested there would be more than one triangle with the specified attributes. The success rate was reasonable at 50%, and alternative wordings may have made the question misleading and overly simple.

In the Year 7 Literacy Test the writing task generated the largest number of comments with 6% of the relevant schools approving and 8% disapproving. The most frequent comments related to the:

- Topic (seen as uninteresting or limiting by some but appropriate by others)
- Stimulus material (stimulating)
- Genre (restrictive)
- Time allowed (insufficient)

The Year 7 Literacy stimulus reading material (*What's New?*) was praised by 8% of the relevant schools for its interest level, good variety and attractive layout.

The dictation in the Year 7 test was liked by 2% of the relevant schools and disliked by 1%. Some schools thought the dictation was appropriate to the Year level, but others complained that students who had studied government before the test would have an advantage. Opinion was divided on the proofreading, which was indicated as liked by 2% and disliked by 2%. It was liked for its interest or relevance for children, the appropriateness of its level or its attractive layout. Some maintained it was not really proofreading because the incorrect words were indicated. Some said the test was too easy.

Consideration of the stated likes and dislikes for all of the tests indicates that:

- The reading and viewing stimulus materials in the Literacy tests prompted much favourable comment. These booklets were widely appreciated for their attractive layout and interesting content. The quality of the Literacy tests was enhanced by the quality of the booklets.
- Many of the comments were in reference to the topic for the writing task (a recount about your best day at school). Regrettably, a number of schools commented that the topic was uninteresting for many children because they did not like school. On the other hand, a frequent comment was that the presentation of the task was quite stimulating for children. No definite conclusion seems worth making in the case of the writing task, in spite of the relatively high level of comment about it.

- The measurement tools used in the Numeracy tests were generally very well received, but some worried that the tools, especially the circular protractors, were unfamiliar to children. On balance, a reasonable conclusion is that the supply of such tools is a very good strategy.
- Several items in the Years 3, 5 and 7 Numeracy tests were thought to be too difficult by some schools. In some cases the wording of the item was seen as unclear or confusing. In a few cases, the per cent correct figures tend to support the schools' opinions. In most cases the percentages of students that answered correctly to the items formed a reasonable distribution, considering that the test was intended to incorporate a wide range of difficulty.
- A few items on the Numeracy tests were claimed by some to be misleading or deliberately tricky for students. On face examination of these items, the wording can be interpreted as requiring students to think in the process of arriving at their answers. Of course, such thinking is expected to be part of the testing process, and the questions seem to be legitimate. It may be necessary to communicate the intent of such items to schools in published explanations of the tests.

Conclusion 9

The Reading and Viewing stimulus materials contributed greatly to the quality of the Literacy tests.

Conclusion 10

The supply of measurement tools was a successful feature of the Numeracy tests.

Conclusion 11

Several items on the Numeracy tests were thought to be too difficult. In a few cases, the wording may have contributed to the difficulty.

Conclusion 12

The inclusion in the Numeracy tests of valid items that require more than just rule application is not understood by a few schools. The value of such items needs to be explained. Provision of a bank of practice items of this type may help.

Focus Question 5

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

Summary

The survey indicated that:

- For two-thirds of schools, the dates for the 2000 Testing Program were suitable. No clear alternative dates emerged from the survey. The timing was not the most appropriate for approximately one-third of the schools, but consideration of an alternative date seems unlikely to lead to a better result.
- An allowance of at least 30 minutes is required for the writing task, but consideration should be given to allowing 40 minutes.
- The supply of equipment (measurement tools, press-out shapes) in the Numeracy tests was supported by the great majority of the schools: 78% of schools supported the equipment for Year 3, 87% for Year 5 and 86% for Year 7.
- Most of the schools indicated that the practice materials were either of 'some help' (58%) or of 'great help' (24%). Schools that saw the practice materials as a 'great help' said that practice reduces anxiety, demonstrates the testing procedures, shows how to answer the questions or overcomes lack of experience with testing. Schools that saw the practice materials as only of 'some help' or 'no help' often said they were too easy and did not give a true indication of the actual tests.
- Very few of the schools (4%) had accessed the Testing section of the Council website, but most of those that had rated it as 'average' or 'good'. Suggestions for the website

included practice items, previous tests, results, test answers and justification for aspects of the tests and Testing Program.

- A request for general comments that might assist in improving the testing program brought out the extent and nature of schools' concerns. Administrative issues were mentioned most frequently. Also, a concern over duplication of items in the Years 5 and 7 tests was high on the list.

Conclusion 13

The timing of the Testing Program should continue as a permanent arrangement at set dates corresponding to those used for the 2000 Program.

Conclusion 14

Concrete materials should continue to be a feature of the Numeracy tests.

Conclusion 15

Council should consider providing a more extensive range of practice items and test materials to schools to help them prepare students for the testing situation.

Conclusion 16

The Testing section of the Council website should feature practice materials including tests as well as discussion of answers to previous test items. Consideration should also be given to including a forum for the explanation and discussion of the Testing Program and its components.

Conclusion 17

Council should consider expanding the dialogue with schools on the Testing Program to explain and discuss the nature of the Program as well as the value of its various strategies and features.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This final report presents the findings of the evaluation of the 2000 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program in Literacy and Numeracy (hereafter called the 2000 Testing Program or Program).

The 2000 Testing Program comprised tests in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy — sample tests in Year 3 and census tests in Years 5 and 7. The aspects of Literacy and Numeracy were:

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

The Program was administered in all state and most non-state Queensland primary schools in August 2000.

1.2 Evaluation focus

The overall purposes of the evaluation were to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the 2000 Testing Program.

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

- 1. How do schools rate the 2000 Testing Program materials?**
- 2. Do schools support major changes to the Testing Program in 2000?**
- 3. What are schools' opinions about the test administration procedures?**
- 4. Which test items, test tasks or stimulus materials did schools like or dislike and why?**
- 5. What views are held by schools on the nature and form of future testing programs?**

1.3 Evaluation approach

In August 2000, all schools participating in the 2000 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program were sent an evaluation survey form with the test materials. The form is reproduced in Appendix.

The purpose of the survey was to gather information to improve Queensland's State-based testing programs.

The survey covered:

- Background information
- Overall opinions on 2000 Testing Program materials
- Opinions on major changes to the Testing Program in 2000
- Opinions on test administration procedures required in schools
- Feedback on test items, test tasks and stimulus materials
- Opinions that will assist planning of future testing programs

One survey questionnaire was sent to each school and the Principal was requested to complete the survey in collaboration with the teachers who participated in the 2000 Testing Program.

Altogether, 1039 schools returned the surveys, of which:

- 192 schools participated in the Year 3 Tests (81% of the total)
- 974 schools participated in the Year 5 Tests (71% of the total)
- 950 schools participated in the Year 7 Tests (69% of the total)

Survey Item 1 asked for the school's postcode. Display 1 shows the distribution of postcodes in the survey returns. At least 50 schools were represented in each main postcode area.

Display 1: Distribution of Postcodes in Survey Returns

Postcode	Count
40xx	107
41xx	114
42xx	59
43xx	148
44xx	64
45xx	103
46xx	95
47xx	124
48xx	174
Missing	51

1.4 Evaluation reporting

An interim report for this evaluation was provided to the Queensland School Curriculum Council in November 2000, containing a summary of results available then.

The present document is the final report of the evaluation and includes results from all parts of the survey. The final report is organised around the five Focus Questions:

- Section 2 presents schools' ratings of the 2000 Testing Program (Focus Question 1).
- Section 3 presents the degree of support for major changes in the Testing Program (Focus Question 2).
- Section 4 presents schools' opinions of the test administration procedures (Focus Question 3).
- Section 5 analyses what schools liked and disliked about the items, tasks and stimulus materials (Focus Question 4).
- Section 6 presents opinions on future testing programs (Focus Question 5).

In respect of Focus Q 4, regarding specific questions or tasks that were liked or disliked by schools, data such as empirical difficulty or documentation on curriculum references to the items were taken into account.

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

2 Opinions on pre-test information and test materials

Focus Question 1

How do schools rate the 2000 Testing Program materials?

2.1 Schools' ratings of the Program materials

The survey asked schools to rate, overall, various aspects of the Program. Display 2 summarises the schools' ratings.

Display 2: Ratings of 2000 Testing Program Materials

What	N	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Don't know	No Answer
Wall chart	1039	<1%	<1%	11%	29%	23%	15%	20%
<i>Information for Schools</i> booklet	1039	<1%	<1%	8%	40%	37%	1%	13%
Brochure for parents/caregivers	1039	<1%	1%	10%	38%	30%	2%	18%
Year 3 Numeracy Test	192	2%	7%	28%	33%	15%	<1%	15%
Year 3 Literacy Test	192	2%	6%	23%	34%	16%	<1%	19%
Year 5 Numeracy Test	974	<1%	4%	22%	41%	20%	1%	10%
Year 5 Literacy Test	974	1%	4%	20%	43%	20%	1%	11%
Year 7 Numeracy Test	950	<1%	3%	19%	46%	21%	1%	9%
Year 7 Literacy Test	950	<1%	3%	17%	47%	21%	1%	10%
Test Administration Handbooks	1039	<1%	1%	7%	37%	44%	<1%	10%

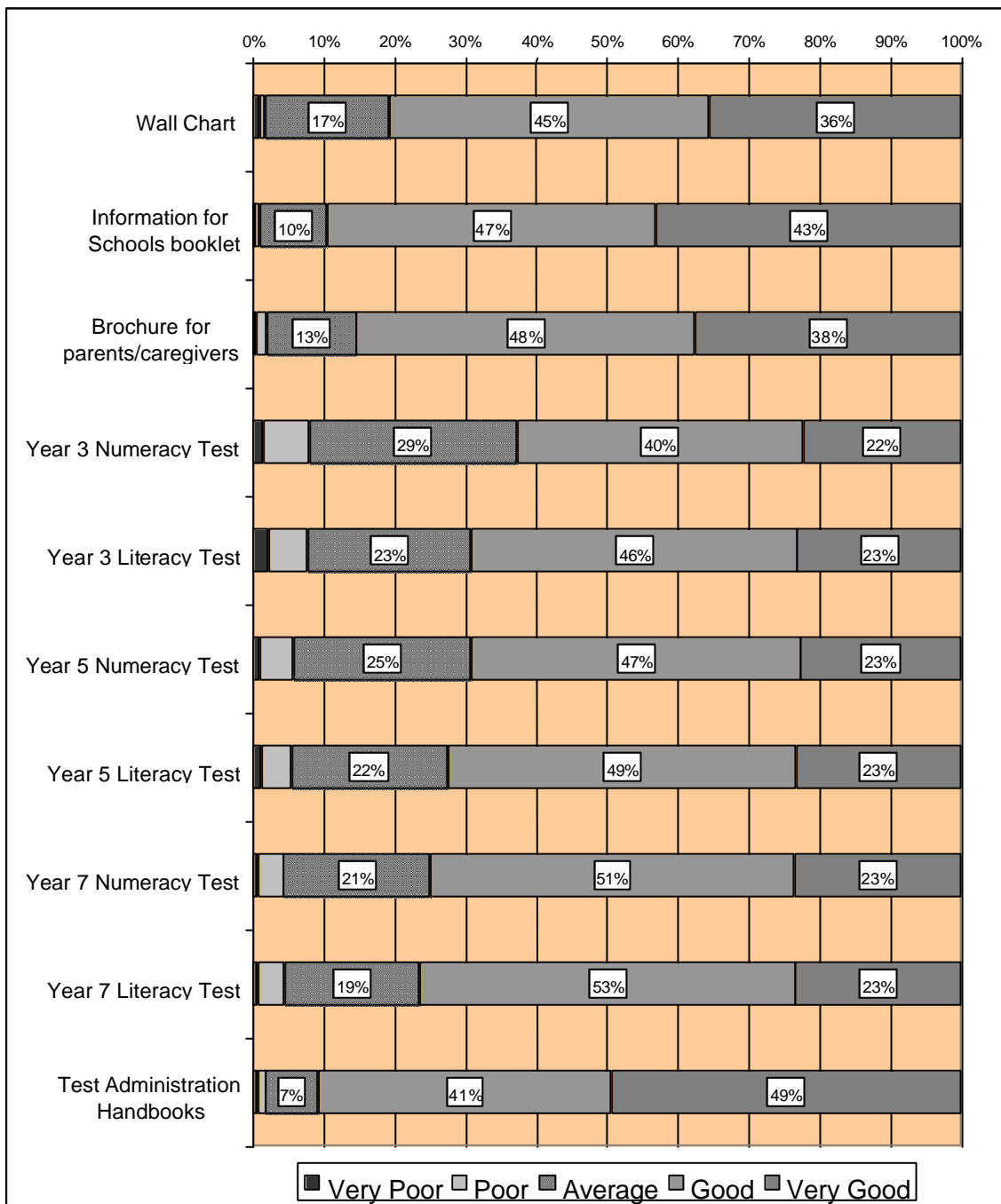
Very few ratings are 'Poor' or 'Very Poor', but the responses for the wall chart indicate that around one-third of the schools responded 'Don't know' or did not answer. This suggests that the chart was not circulated or displayed prominently in many of those schools. Some of the schools may not have known what particular item was referred to by "wall chart".

Display 3 illustrates the results excluding the 'missing' and 'Don't Know' responses.

Display 3 indicates that the information materials (wall chart, information booklet, brochure and test handbooks) were more highly rated overall than the tests themselves, with 81–90% of the actual ratings either 'Good' or 'Very Good'. The comparable figures for the tests themselves ranged from 62% for the Year 3 Numeracy test to 76% for the Year 7 Literacy. Very few of the actual ratings were 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' (between 5% and 7% of the ratings). The Year 3 Numeracy tests were not rated as highly as the other tests, with 37% of the actual ratings being 'Average', 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

Overall, most schools rated the tests and materials as 'Good' or 'Very Good', with the test administration handbooks receiving the highest ratings.

Display 3: Ratings of 2000 Testing Program Materials (missing & don't know excluded)



2.2 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 1

Focus Question 1
How do schools rate the 2000 Testing Program materials?

2.2.1 Summary

All of the materials were rated highly by most of the schools.

The Years 3, 5 and 7 tests themselves were rated highly by most of the schools. Among the actual ratings (excluding no answer or 'Don't Know') the combined 'Poor' and 'Very Poor' ratings were 7% or less for any test. Combined 'Good' or 'Very Good' ratings were 41% or more for any test.

ratings ranged from 62% for the Year 3 Numeracy test to 76% for the Year 7 Literacy test.

The materials accompanying the tests – the wall chart, the brochure for parents/ caregivers, the *Information for Schools* booklet and the test administration handbooks – were rated even more highly. Of the actual ratings, 81% to 90% were 'Good' or 'Very Good'. Highest ratings were given to the *Information for Schools* booklet and the test administration handbooks. The strength of the ratings is an indicator of the effectiveness of the materials.

2.2.2 Discussion and Conclusions

Although the wall chart was rated highly by those survey respondents who had seen it, up to one-third of the respondents appeared to be unaware of it. No response was given by 20% of the schools and another 15% responded 'Don't Know'. Some of those who responded 'Don't Know' may not have recognised what was meant by the reference to "wall chart". Further information on the wall chart is provided by survey question 4, discussed in the next section of this report. Nonetheless among the actual ratings, 81% were 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

The ratings were high for all of the materials, but especially for the material that accompanied the tests. The high ratings are an indication that these support materials were highly effective.

Conclusion 1

The wall chart, the brochure for parents/caregivers, the *Information for Schools* booklet and the test administration handbooks were highly effective.

The Years 3, 5 and 7 tests were rated highly by most of the schools, with the Year 3 Numeracy receiving the highest ratings and the Year 7 Literacy the highest. At each Year level, the Literacy test rated higher than the Numeracy test.

Conclusion 2

The Years 3, 5 and 7 tests were rated as good or very good by most of the schools.

3 Support for major changes from 1999

Focus question 2

Do schools support major changes to the Testing Program in 2000?

Schools were asked to indicate whether they supported four major changes to the 2000 Testing Program from 1999:

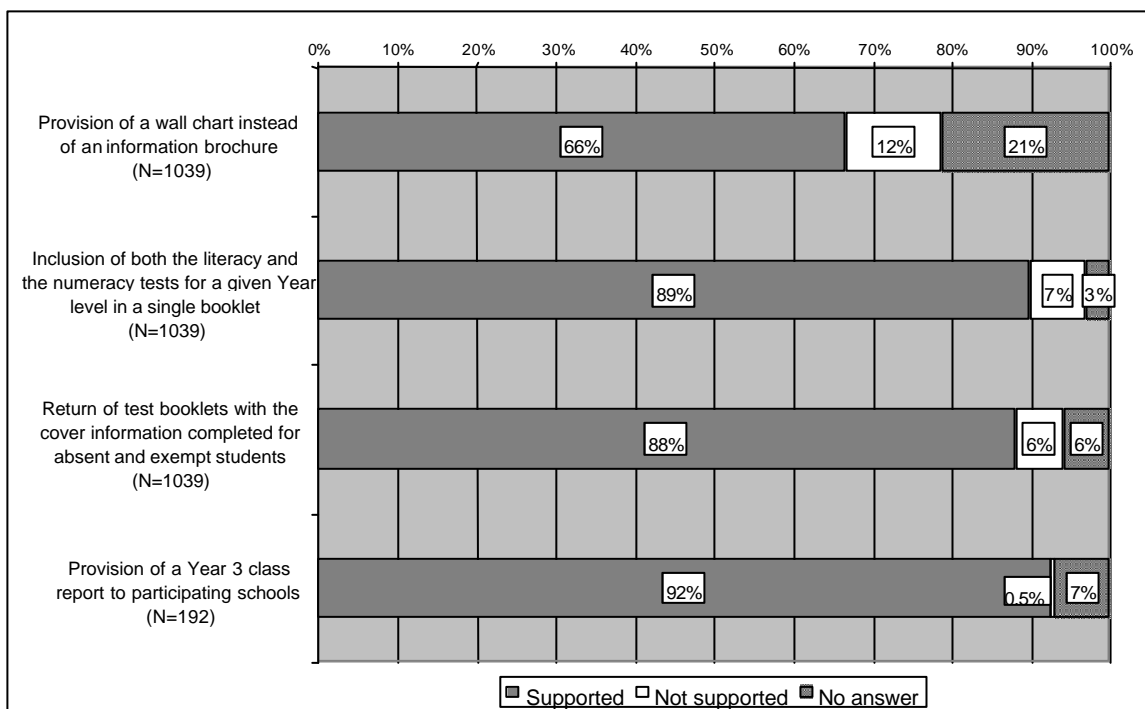
- Provision of a wall chart instead of an information brochure (expected to be more accessible)
- Inclusion of both the Literacy and the Numeracy tests for a given Year level in a single booklet (expected to reduce the need for teachers to enter cover details twice and to keep all test components for a given student together)
- Return of test booklets with the cover information completed for all eligible students, including absent and exempt students (to enable data for all students to be calculated more easily and replace the need for schools to complete an Exemptions and Absences sheet)
- Provision of a Year 3 class report to participating schools (to provide participating schools with student performance information)

In each case, schools were requested to indicate a reason for the responses.

3.1 Levels of Support

Display 4 summarises the levels of support:

Display 4: Schools' Support for Changes to the Testing Program



The great majority of the schools supported the single test booklet, the return of booklets for all eligible students and the provision of class reports for Year 3. The wall chart found less support, with a high proportion of non-responses.

The reasons given for these responses are summarised in Sections 3.2 to 3.5.

3.2 Wall Chart

Most of the comments that accompanied support of the wall chart, 125 in all, fell into three categories:

- Easy for people to refer to (34)
- Easy to read or follow (26)
- Provides good visual impact (19).

Some schools (11) wanted more copies of the chart.

Many of the comments that accompanied non-support for the wall chart, 90 in all, fell into six categories:

- Not received or not seen (29)
- Each teacher should have a copy (8)
- Nowhere to put a chart (8)
- Staff don't see it (7)
- Not easily copied, distributed or carried (6)
- Not relevant or needed (5)

The nine comments from schools that did not indicate yes or no to this item all indicated that the wall chart had not been received or seen.

To summarise, the wall chart was supported by two out of three schools that responded, mainly because it is easy to refer to, easy to follow and has good visual impact. Those that did not support the wall chart had no knowledge of it, had nowhere to display it, believed that staff did not see it, wanted each teacher to have a copy or thought that the chart format is not easily copied, distributed or carried.

3.3 Single test booklet

Most of the comments that accompanied support for the single booklet, 266 in all, fell into five categories:

- Easier to manage or handle (66)
- Saves time or paperwork (44)
- More convenient or efficient (22)
- Less risk of loss (8)
- Easier to administer (6)

Most of the other comments accompanying support (24) were generally positive, for example, "very practical", but a few (7) noted security problems based on the need to ensure that children did not change answers on the first test while working on the second.

Most of the comments that accompanied non-support for the single booklet, 76 in all, referred to security:

- Students can check or change Numeracy answers (24)
- Students can see the Literacy items in advance of the test (15)
- Security is a problem (11)

- Increased teacher workload because extra supervision required (9)
- Teachers see the Literacy items in advance of the test (3)

Clearly, the inclusion of both Literacy and Numeracy tests in a single booklet is widely supported, with the main concern being related to security. A way needs to be found to help schools to guard against the possibilities for students to discuss answers to one test during a break, or change their answers to the first test while working on the second. Council could explore additional precautions that may help supervising teachers to deal with the security issue.

3.4 Fill out covers for absent and exempt students

A total of seventy-three comments accompanied support for the use of covers instead of separate forms for absentees and exemptions. A majority of these fell into three categories:

- More efficient (22)
- Easier to check (14)
- Less paperwork (9)

A majority of the comments that accompanied non-support for the change, fifty-four in all, fell into three categories:

- Preference for the sheets (15)
- More work with the new practice (11)
- Concern over waste of paper (5)

Considering the results in Display 4, this change seems to be well supported with only a few schools finding the previous practice to be more efficient.

3.5 Class reports for Year 3

Of the fifty-four comments that accompanied support for class reports for Year 3, most fell into five categories:

- Feedback is seen as useful or valuable (20)
- Teachers, parents or students want to know or should know (14)
- Gives purpose to the testing (6)
- Absence of feedback in 1999 was disappointing (6)
- Reports are useful for local monitoring purposes (5)

Clearly, schools find class reports to be valuable and worthwhile documents.

3.6 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 2

Focus Question 2

Do schools support major changes to the Testing Program in 2000?

3.6.1 Summary

The four changes from the 1999 Program all received the approval of most of the schools.

The wall chart was supported by 66% of the schools that responded, mainly because it is easy to refer to, easy to follow and has good visual impact. Those that did not support the wall chart had no knowledge of it, had nowhere to display it, believed that

staff did not see it, wanted each teacher to have a copy or thought that the chart format is not easily copied, distributed or carried.

The inclusion of both Literacy and Numeracy tests in a single booklet was supported by 89% of the schools. This strategy was seen as easier to manage and more efficient. The most common reason for non-support was related to security. A way needs to be found to guard against the possibility that a few students might be able to change their answers on one test while working on the other. Schools could benefit from the introduction of additional precautions to simplify the task of supervision.

The requirement for test booklets to be returned for all students, including absentees and exempt students, was supported by 88% of the schools, with most finding the new practice to be more efficient and easier for checking. Only a few schools preferred the previous practice (an Exemptions and Absences sheet).

Clearly, schools find class reports to be valuable and worthwhile documents, with 92% supporting the provision of such reports for the Year 3 tests.

3.6.2 Discussion and Conclusions

Generally, the changes were very well supported and should become standard practice.

Conclusion 3

Most of the schools support the major changes to the Testing Program that were made in 2000. The levels of support justify making these changes standard practice in future Programs.

While the change to a single test booklet was well supported, some teachers expressed concerns about the associated security issue. Simple ways to assist teachers with this issue should be explored.

Conclusion 4

The use of a single test booklet was supported by 89% of the schools, but consideration should be given to changes in format or procedures to help schools ensure that students are working on the correct test.

The wall chart drew high levels of support (66%) but considerably less than the other changes (all around 90%). As discussed in Section 2, some of the survey respondents apparently had not seen the wall chart. When the chart arrives in the school, arrangements have to be made to display it in a suitable location. Apparently, this did not happen in some of the schools. Even if the chart is displayed, some people may not see it or read it. Nonetheless the introduction of the wall chart was supported by most of those who were aware of it.

Conclusion 5

The full effectiveness of the wall chart requires that all schools display it prominently and draw attention to it.

4 Test administration procedures

Focus Question 3

What are schools' opinions about the test administration procedures?

The school survey asked schools to say what procedures to administer the tests in schools worked well and should be retained; and what procedures didn't work well and should be changed. Responses were to be written into a two-line space.

4.1 Procedures that worked well

A total of 665 responses resulted, representing 64% of the schools. These were analysed into twelve main categories. Some responses included comments in more than one category resulting in a total of 705 categorised comments. Close to 30% of the schools either stated that all procedures worked well or indicated general approval of the procedures.

Display 5 summarises the categories and shows the number of comments in each category.

Display 5: Test Administration Procedures that Worked Well (N=1039)

Category	No.	%
Handbook instructions	209	20.1
All worked well	192	18.5
General approval	112	10.8
Practice materials	56	5.4
Timetable/summary page in info book	24	2.3
Equivocal approval	22	2.1
Single test booklet	21	2.0
Supply of materials (pencils, measurement tools)	13	1.3
Special considerations	8	0.8
Difficulties for special groups	6	0.6
Writing Task scaffolding	7	0.7
Prior notification of WT genre	3	0.3
Other comments (unclear, various)	32	3.1
Total comments	705	—

High levels of approval resulted from this survey item, especially for the instructions in the Test Administration Handbook, mentioned by 20% of the schools. Some examples of comments on the handbook instructions were:

- *Test administration handbook is clear and concise.*
- *The administration procedures were excellent. It was simple so the students participating understood and had no problems.*
- *Saying the instructions in a structured way keeps students' attention.*

Clearly, the handbook is simple, easy to follow and highly effective.

Other approving comments were made in relation to:

- The practice materials
- The summary timetable page in the Test Administration Handbook
- The inclusion of the Literacy and Numeracy tests in a single test booklet
- The supply of necessary materials such as pencils and measurement tools

4.2 Procedures that didn't work well

Responses to the question "What procedures required to administer the test in schools didn't work well and should be changed?" yielded a total of 371 responses. These were analysed into fifteen main categories. Some responses included comments in more than one category resulting in a total of 380 categorised comments.

Display 6 shows the categories with the number of comments in each category.

Display 6: Test Administration Procedures that Didn't Work Well (N-1039)

Category	No.	%
General approval (sic)	75	7.2
Time allowance	42	4.0
Organisation difficult in multi-age or small schools	40	3.8
Practice test	27	2.6
Handbook instructions (unclear, wordy, inconsistent)	21	2.0
Difficulties for special groups (more consideration, clearer instructions, more exemptions)	21	2.0
Writing task organisation	17	1.6
General disapproval	15	1.4
Front cover of tests	13	1.3
Break during test	12	1.2
Organisation for absentees	10	1.0
Problems with pencils	9	0.9
Security	7	0.7
Testing dates (schedule at different time of year)	6	0.6
Single test booklet	6	0.6
Other comments (unclear, various)	59	5.7
Total comments	380	—

The most common dislikes related to the time allowed, difficulties for small schools or schools with multi-age classes, difficulties for special groups, organisation of the writing task and the filling in of the front covers of the tests. No more than 4% of the schools indicated a dislike in any one of these categories.

Time allowance

The forty-six mentions of time allowance could be divided into four sub-categories:

- The tests took too long for the children (23 responses)
- The tests should be spread over a longer period (11)
- The instructions should include an allowance of time for instructions (5)
- Some flexibility should be given in the time allowed (3)

Small schools, multi-age classes

Some of the small schools or schools with multi-age classrooms found it difficult to administer the test to the two or three Year levels in the two days stipulated. Some comments were:

- *For one-teacher school need extra people to administer and keep rest of class working.*
- *In a small school we have to administer a Year 5 and Year 7 test and supervise other children. Is it possible to have the Year 5 and 7 tests on different days?*
- *In a multi-age class very difficult to accommodate other Year levels while trying to do the test.*

Practice items and practice materials

Most of the comments here were that it was not necessary to have practice items on the actual test day in addition to the practice materials:

- *No need to have practice questions in the test as class had already completed a practice test prior and were familiar with procedures.*
- *Practice tests better prior to test day so feedback can be given. Should not be part of actual test.*

Some said the practice materials should include introduction to the measurement tools:

- *Need for measurement questions that allow the children to use practice materials (plastic maths mat) before the test.*
- *If measurement mat is to be used children need to be familiar with their use.*

Some said the practice materials were too easy:

- *As a Yr 7 teacher I feel the practice tests are too easy and give a false idea about the upcoming tests.*
- *Practice materials were misleading in that they were too simple.*

Handbook instructions

The twenty-one dislikes for the handbook instructions were offset by the far greater number of respondents who liked the instructions. Typical comments were that the instructions were too wordy, unclear or inconsistent.

Difficulties for special groups

Some schools encountered problems administering the tests to students with special needs:

- *Torres Strait children needed every question read to them (Numeracy).*
- *Children on learning support and support a reader need help for both tests.*
- *It can be very difficult/impossible to administer the test to ASD children with high support needs - there needs to be exemptions in this category.*
- *Children with learning disabilities should not be required to do these tests! Very traumatic!*

The *Information Booklet for Schools* (Section 7) sets out guidelines for exemption of students in special circumstances. The guidelines indicate that the test should not be a traumatic experience for students. Students who may be validly exempted are listed as:

- Those for whom English is not their first language and who have poor language skills in English according to defined criteria set out in the Booklet
- Students with intellectual impairment ascertained at levels 5 or 6

The guidelines provide that professional judgment should be exercised when considering test exemptions. Decisions should be made in consultation with specialist and support staff within the principles of social justice, equity and inclusivity.

Other

Various comments (under 20 in each case) were made about other aspects of the test administration procedures including:

- How the writing task was administered (18)
- Front cover of tests (14)
- Organisation for absentees (catch-up difficult to arrange) (10)
- Break during test (not needed or not well timed) (9)
- Single test booklet (6)
- Problems with pencils (breaking) (5)
- Security (instructions give advance knowledge of test content) (5)
- Testing dates (other times preferred) (5)

4.3 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 3

Focus Question 3

What are schools' opinions about the test administration procedures?

4.3.1 Summary

The school survey asked schools to say what procedures to administer the tests worked well and should be retained; and what procedures didn't work well and should be changed.

High levels of approval resulted from this survey item, with 64% of the schools listing one or more procedures that worked well. The instructions in the Test Administration Handbook were specifically mentioned by 20% of the schools. Clearly, the handbook is simple, easy to follow and highly effective.

Other approving comments were made in relation to:

- The practice materials
- The summary timetable page in the Test Administration Handbook
- The inclusion of the Literacy and Numeracy tests in a single test booklet
- The supply of necessary materials such as pencils and measurement tools

The most common dislikes related to the time taken by the tests, difficulties for small schools or schools with multi-age classes, provision for special groups, organisation of the writing task and the filling in of the front covers of the tests, but any one of these dislikes was listed by no more than 4% of the schools.

Dislikes related to time allowance were related to perceptions that:

- The tests took too long for the children
- The tests should be spread over a longer period
- The instructions should include an allowance of time for instructions

- Some flexibility should be given in the time allowed

Some small schools or schools with multi-age classrooms found it difficult to administer the test to the two or three Year levels in the two days stipulated.

Most of the comments on the practice materials and items were that it was not necessary to have practice items on the actual test day. Some thought the practice items were too easy. Some said the practice materials should include introduction to the measurement tools.

Some schools encountered problems administering the tests to students with special needs.

4.3.2 Discussion and Conclusions

In general, responses to the test administration procedures were highly favourable. Far more likes than dislikes were entered by the survey respondents. This indicates that the procedures worked well. Approval was expressed for the Test Administration Handbooks, the practice materials, the summary timetable page in the handbooks, the single test booklet, the supply of pencils and the measurement tools.

Conclusion 6

The test administration procedures for the 2000 Testing Program worked well.

The Test Administration Handbooks were praised by many of the schools. They were seen as clear, simple and effective.

Conclusion 7

The Test Administration Handbooks were highly effective in explaining to teachers how to administer the tests.

The most common dislikes related to the time taken by the test, difficulties for small schools or schools with multi-age classes, provision for special groups, organisation of the writing task and the filling in of the front covers of the tests.

The *Information for Schools* booklet does include suggestions for principals of small schools, including stretching the overall time frame for the testing, but either this was not noticed by some principals or it did not solve their problems. The relevant section should be reviewed for content and feasibility then made more prominent in the set of materials. The issue of consideration for students with special needs is one that needs to be kept under constant review. The *Information for Schools* booklet contains guidance for schools in this matter, but again, the relevant section should be reviewed and made more prominent.

Conclusion 8

Test administration procedures for small schools and students with special needs should be kept under review. Relevant sections in the information manual should be re-examined and made more prominent in the set of materials.

5 Feedback on test items, test tasks and stimulus materials

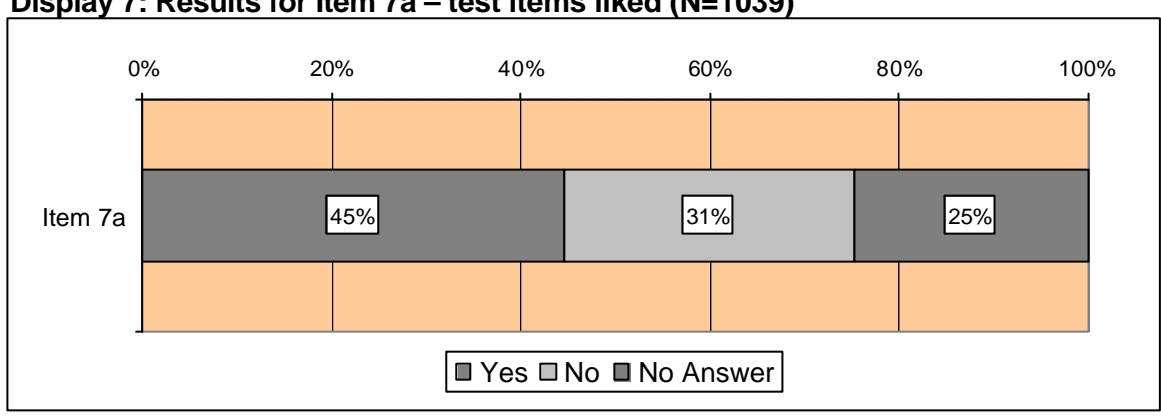
Focus Question 4
Which test items, test tasks or stimulus materials did schools like or dislike and why?

5.1 Likes and Dislikes – General

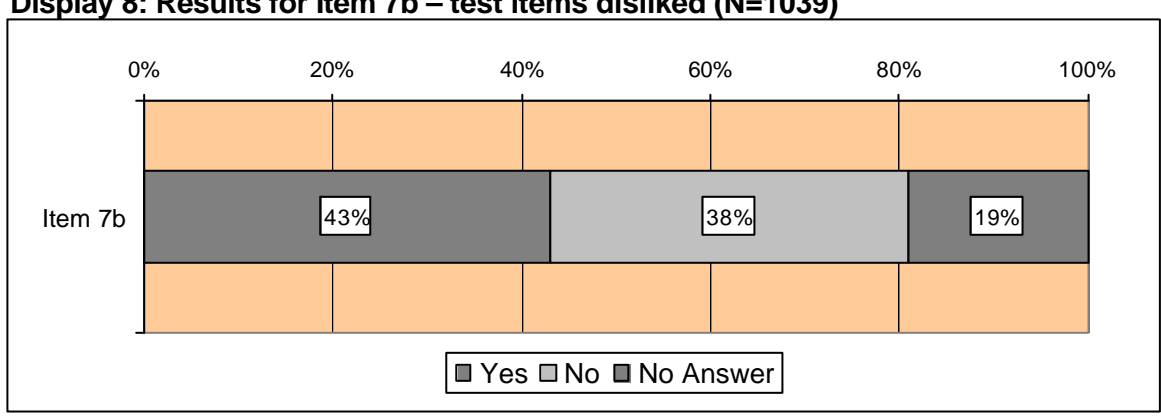
Survey Item 7a asked if there were any test items, test tasks or stimulus materials in any of the tests that the school particularly liked. Item 7b asked if there were any test items, test tasks or stimulus materials that the school particularly disliked.

The results are shown in Displays 7 and 8.

Display 7: Results for Item 7a – test items liked (N=1039)



Display 8: Results for Item 7b – test items disliked (N=1039)



5.2 Likes and Dislikes – Specific Items

Item 7c asked schools to list items, tasks or stimulus materials that were particularly liked or disliked and provide reasons.

Schools referred to a very wide variety of items, but only the more frequently listed items are reported in this section. "Notable" test items, tasks or stimulus materials are reported in the displays below if the following conditions are met:

- For Year 3 if four or more of the relevant schools (approximately 2% or more) listed the item, task or stimulus material
- For Year 5 and 7 if ten or more of the relevant schools (approximately 1% or more) listed the item, task or stimulus material

Relevant schools are those in which the particular tests were conducted. The numbers of relevant schools were 192 for Year 3, 974 for Year 5 and 950 for Year 7.

The condition for the Years 5 and 7 Tests is different from Year 3 because these were census tests and prompted more responses in the survey.

Percentage figures shown in the displays are calculated on a base of the total survey returns for that Year level. Only some of the surveys (555 of 1039) contained responses to item 7c, which was an open-ended question. Percentages should therefore be interpreted with care.

Before proceeding to the displays, it is important to note 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 2000 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
- Were 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 appropriately based on item analysis statistics obtained from trials

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 or not 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 2000 Testing Program
- The percentage of students who answered the item or task correctly, as recorded in the 2000 Testing Program data files
- An interpretive comment, based on information provided by Literacy and Numeracy project officers employed in the Council's 2000 Testing Program

5.2.1 Year 3 Numeracy Test

The Year 3 Numeracy Test generated comments by 135 schools (70%).

Among the notable items, one item was liked and six items disliked, as indicated in Display 9:

Display 9: Year 3 Numeracy Items Liked and Disliked

Item	Paper	Liked ¹	Disliked ¹
Press-outs	1 & 2	7%	11%
Item 14	1 & 2		5%
Item 34	1		4%
Item 35	1 & 2		7%
Item 36	1 & 2		7%
Mental calculations	1 & 2		4%

¹ Figures are percentages of total survey returns for that Year level

Most dislikes in the Year 3 Numeracy Test were related to perceptions of excess difficulty.

A more notable response resulted from the press-out shapes. Many (7%) liked the concrete nature of the shapes or the challenge of the associated tasks. Many (11%) reported that children did not think that they could turn the shapes over because the colour was different on the back. As a result they were unable to solve the kite problem. The complaint about the colour of the press-out shapes seems valid and may justify further exploration with the same item in a future test.

Reasons for liking or disliking notable items are shown in Display 10.

Display 10: Year 3 Numeracy – Reasons for Liking or Disliking Items

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Press-outs	Coloured cardboard press-out shapes [Both papers 1 & 2]	<i>Syllabus</i> : Plane shapes, p. 24, Area, p. 25 <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 246–9 <i>SSD</i> : p. 40.	36 (Q10)
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 7% of respondents indicated a liking for these materials, particularly the concrete nature of the shapes and the challenge of the task		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 11% of respondents indicated a dislike of these materials, many stating the shapes needed to be turned over for the kite problem (Q10).		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The reason for dislike related to Q10 may be valid for Year 3 and amendment may be warranted if the item is used in a future test. The other three questions did not generate any notable comments.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 14	Calculator problem to fill in gaps in number pattern (Strand N) [Same item both papers 1 & 2]	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers – operations p. 15; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 130–1; <i>SSD</i> : p. 181; <i>Number Development Continuum</i> : Phase E.	40
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 5% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being that it was considered too difficult for Year 3 students.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The use of calculators to investigate number patterns is part of the Year 3 Mathematics syllabus. 40% of students were successful.		

Display 10 Continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 34 Paper 1	Recognise the coins left after deducting the cost of three items (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Money, p. 18; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 165–87; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 12, pp. 287–8.	15%
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 4% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being that it was considered a confusing or misleading item relating to the illustration.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Students may have assumed that the coins in the illustration added to \$2.00. If they did they would still be able to respond correctly. Whether students were distracted by the fact the amount illustrated was not \$2.00 and did not attempt the item is a question for further exploration.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 35	Subtraction, two 3-digit numbers (Strand N) [Same item both papers 1 & 2]	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers – operations, p. 15; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 105–7; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 7, pp. 156, 168.	23
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 7% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being the item was considered too difficult and outside the Year 3 syllabus.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : This item required students to use simple decomposition subtraction with three digit numbers. It is expected that this skill be covered in Year 3 (see syllabus references noted above). The use of three-digit number is in line with the numeration skills also taught at this year level. This item was placed at the end of the test and would be expected to be challenging for higher achieving students. 23% of students correctly answered this item.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 36	Fill in missing addend in addition of three numbers (Strand N) [Same item both papers 1 & 2]	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers – operations p. 15; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : p. 90; <i>SSD</i> : p. 146.	10
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 7% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being it was considered too difficult and complex and outside the Year 3 syllabus.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : It is assumed that students in a Year 3 program will have worked with two digit and three digit numbers and have experience of problem solving involving addition. The combination of the two skills makes this item more challenging, however, it is not outside the scope of work covered by the students and its placement at the very end of the test paper provides an item for high achieving students.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Mental calculations	Series of mental calculations (Strand N) [Both papers 1 & 2]	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers – operations: p. 15; <i>Year 2 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 88–98, 69–87; <i>Yr 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 69, 92, 111–3 <i>SSD</i> : pp. 52, 54, 67, 84-5, 168. <i>Number Development Continuum</i> : Phases C, D, E.	28-96
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 4% of respondents indicated a dislike for these items, the major reason being that some were considered too difficult.		

Interpretive comment:

The mental calculations were ordered from least difficult to most difficult. This range is provided to test the abilities of all students. The items were selected from work that is covered in the first three years of schooling. The hardest mental calculation was successfully answered by 28% of students.

5.2.2 Year 3 Literacy Test

The Year 3 Literacy Test generated comments by 94 schools (49%).

Among the notable items, three items were liked and four disliked as shown in Display 11.

Display 11: Year 3 Literacy Items Liked and Disliked

Item	Paper	Liked ¹	Disliked ¹
Dictation	1 & 2	2%	2%
Stimulus Material	1 & 2	3%	7%
SM-5	2		4%
Writing Task	1 & 2	4%	4%

¹ Figures are percentages of total survey returns for that Year level

In the Year 3 Literacy Test, the dictation and writing tasks each produced similar proportions of likes and dislikes.

Various reasons were given for liking the dictation, but the most common reason for dislike was the claim that the spelling words were too difficult.

Many of those that liked the writing task mentioned the genre or the stimulus material and activities. The most common reason for dislike was the choice of writing topic.

Reasons for liking or disliking notable items are shown in Display 12.

Display 12: Year 3 Literacy – Reasons for Liking or Disliking Items

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Dictation	Students fill in missing words in transcript of passage dictated by teacher (spelling test). (Strand S) [Both papers 1 & 2]	<i>Syllabus</i> : pp. 33–4; <i>A Guide to Teaching in English</i> : pp. 35, 44–51.	31–95
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 2% liked this task for differing reasons.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 2% indicated a dislike for this task, the major reason being that the dictation items were considered too difficult.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Eight of the eleven words were selected from the core lists of commonly used words suggested for Year 3, contained in <i>A Guide to Teaching in English</i> . Per cent correct figures for the eleven items indicated that eight items were answered correctly by 50% or more of the cohort, that is, 65, 73, 76, 76, 80, 85, 89, 95 per cent. The per cent correct for the other three items was 31, 33, 36, indicating that the item coverage was appropriate for a range of abilities.		

Display 12 Continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Stimulus Material	Magazine style booklets forming the stimulus for reading and viewing questions (Strand: R & V) [Both papers 1 & 2]	Various	N/A
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> 3% liked the stimulus magazines, the major reasons being that the material was considered interesting and appropriate for the year level.		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 7% indicated a dislike of the magazines, the major reasons being that the material was considered too complex or difficult for Year 3.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> Both Magazine 1 and 2 contained a range of text types, including a book cover, a chart and illustrations of logos and symbols. A diary entry, a group of four short Letters to the Editor and a narrative excerpt were more complex. This selection was necessary to ensure appropriate curriculum coverage and items to test a wide range of abilities. For Paper 1, sixteen of twenty-six items were answered correctly by more than 40% of students, and for Paper 2, twenty-three out of twenty-seven items were answered correctly by 40% or more.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
SM-5 (Paper 2)	Narrative fiction 'Relax Max' and associated items 11–16	<i>Syllabus:</i> pp. 33, 35; <i>A Guide to Teaching in English:</i> p. 53.	23–69
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 4% indicated a dislike for this stimulus material, the major reason being that it was considered too difficult for Year 3.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> <i>Relax Max</i> was expected to be one of the more difficult stimulus pieces, as it was common to both Year 3 and Year 5 papers. <i>The Guide to Genres in English</i> identifies narrative as an appropriate genre for both year levels. The full page of text was presented in the same format as the original book, and included illustrations of the book cover and one of the characters to provide a suitable context. The material was placed near the end of the test between less complex Viewing items. The per cent correct for the six items, 45, 69, 60, 33, 54, 23, represents a range of difficulty expected for such material.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Writing Task	Write a recount about your best day at school (Strand N) [Both papers 1 & 2]	<i>Syllabus:</i> p. 29; <i>A Guide to Genres in English</i> pp. 23, 24	N/A
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> 4% liked the writing task, the major reasons being that the genre was appropriate or the stimulus was good.		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 4% indicated a dislike for the task, the major reason being the choice of writing topic.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> <i>My Best Day at School</i> was selected because the school experience was common to all students in the State. It was considered that the numerous activities experienced by students at school would provide a range of choices to accommodate the diversity of Queensland students.		

5.2.3 Year 5 Numeracy Test

The Year 5 Numeracy Test generated comments by 546 schools (56%).

Among the notable items, one item was liked and ten disliked, as indicated in Display 13.

Display 13: Year 5 Numeracy Items Liked and Disliked

Item	Liked ¹	Disliked ¹
10		3%
11		1%
16		1%
30		2%
38		3%
39		3%
40		3%
42		1%
Calculator		2%
Measurement mat	5%	
Mental calculations		6%
General	2%	3%

¹ Figures are percentages of total survey returns for that Year level

In the Year 5 Numeracy Test, the measurement mats and the mental calculations prompted the greatest response.

Many schools (5%) liked the measurement mats because they were seen to be simple, easy to use and practical. Some comments were:

- *Easy to use for the children - very practical.*
- *Gave every student an equal chance.*
- *Very practical and easy to use.*
- *Great idea. Easy to use and read mat.*

Many schools (6) disliked the mental calculation items because they were seen as too difficult or beyond the Year 5 syllabus. Some comments were:

- *Too difficult without being able to jot down working out.*
- *Too much info to remember.*
- *Too difficult for most students.*
- *Too hard in comparison with Yr 7.*
- *Mentals were VERY HARD!*

Five items were seen as too difficult for Year 5: Questions 10, 11, 16, 39 and 42.

Three items were seen as confusing or misleading for children: Questions 30, 38 and 40:

- Question 30 – Instructions not clear. Phrase "1 to 4" may have presented problems.
- Question 38 – Some thought students expected the set of coins illustrated to sum to \$2.00.
- Question 40 – Need to rotate the map seen as confusing or misleading.

The calculator items in general were disliked because the time allowed was thought to be insufficient.

Reasons for liking or disliking notable items are shown in Display 14.

Display 14: Year 5 Numeracy – Reasons for Liking or Disliking Items

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 10	Solve a problem involving addition and subtraction (calculator available) (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Whole numbers – operations p. 15; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook:</i> pp.129–30; <i>SSD:</i> Chapters 6 & 7.	28
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 3% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being the perceived difficulty of the item and the testing of skills beyond calculator use.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> Calculators, as cited by the Mathematics syllabus, 'have an important role to play as tools in problem solving'. This item was written as a problem to be solved and the calculator was to be used to do the mechanical computation. 28% of students were successful.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 11	Solve a two-step problem involving a decimal fraction (calculator available) (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Whole numbers – operations p. 15; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook:</i> pp.129–30, 133; <i>SSD:</i> Chapters 6 & 7.	19
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being that it was considered too difficult for Year 5 students.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> Calculators, as cited by the Mathematics syllabus, 'have an important role to play as tools in problem solving'. This item was written as a problem to be solved and the calculator was to be used to do the mechanical computation. As this item was the last calculator item it would be expected to be the most difficult. To provide for the full range of student abilities some difficult items are placed on the paper for higher achieving students.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 16	Use the measurement mat to calculate the area of an irregular shape (Strand M)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Area p. 25 <i>Year 5 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 199–210; <i>SSD:</i> p. 408.	33
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being it was considered too difficult or confusing for students.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> The item was marked correct if students answered within a 4 square unit range. Teachers may have felt it was difficult as they were not aware of this answer range prior to the test. There was a 33% success rate among Year 5 students.		

Display 14 Continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 30	Order spinners from most likely to least likely to give a specified result (Strand M)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Probability p. 21; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : p. 149; <i>SSD</i> : p. 551.	73
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 2% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being that the instructions were considered unclear		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Students during their schooling have probably sequenced events, pictures and numbers, on worksheets in normal classroom work. The fact that 73% of students were successful indicates that for most students, the wording of this item was not unclear.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 38	Recognise the coins left after deducting the cost of three items (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Money p. 18; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 165–187; <i>SSD</i> : 287–88.	45
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 3% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being that the item was considered confusing or misleading in relation to the illustration.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The students may have assumed that the coins in the picture added to \$2.00. If they did assume this, they would still be able to respond correctly by indicating the 15 cents change. Whether students were distracted by the fact the amount illustrated was not \$2.00 and did not attempt the item is a question for further exploration.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 39	Compare and order common fractions (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Fractions p. 16; <i>Year 4 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 163–97; <i>SSD</i> : p. 243.	18
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 3% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being that the item was considered too difficult and beyond Year 5 work.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : According to the syllabus reference students begin comparing and ordering common fractions in Year 4 and continue in Year 5. The item required students to select the correct answer from four possibilities. 59% of students were drawn to the second largest numerator, not second largest fraction.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 40	Match a top-view map to its real-life scene (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Primary Social Studies p. 25; <i>SSD</i> : p. 492.	46
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 3% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being the rotating of the map was considered confusing or misleading.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Students are involved in mapping activities from Year 1. This item was written to test students' ability to match a view of a room with a simple map.		

Display 14 Continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 42	Compare time intervals from given starting and finishing times (Strand M)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Time p. 17; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 121–2; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 16.	37
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being the item was considered too difficult and beyond the syllabus for Year 5.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Students should be familiar with comparing and calculating times (see syllabus reference above). This item requires both skills to be combined thus making it a challenging problem. This item is placed at the end of the test indicating it is a more difficult item. To provide for the full range of students' abilities some difficult items are placed on the paper for higher achieving students.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Calculator items	Items 7–11: solve problems with calculator available (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers operations p. 15; <i>Year 3 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 165–87; <i>Yr 5 Sourcebook</i> pp. 131–133, 100–9, 129–30; <i>SSD</i> : p. 280, Chapter 12, pp. 246–47, Chapters 6 & 7, Chapters 6 & 7.	19–89
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 2% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being that the items were considered too difficult and beyond the syllabus for Year 5.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The items for the calculator section are placed in order of difficulty, with the hardest being last. Students are given problems that are in line with work from the current syllabus for Year 5 (see references above). To provide for the full range of students' abilities some difficult items are placed on the paper for higher achieving students.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Measurement mat	Transparent plastic measuring instrument including ruler, centimetre grid and fraction circles (Strands M and N)	<i>Syllabus</i> : p. 16, Area p. 25, Length p. 25; <i>Yr 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 95, 206–207, 193–195; <i>SSD</i> : pp. 243–244, 411, and 383–386.	32–75
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 5% of respondents indicated a liking for these materials, the major reasons being that they were considered simple, easy to use and practical.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The use of equipment in tests should be continued.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Mental calculations Items 1–6	Series of mental calculations (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers operations p. 15; <i>Year 4 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 139–54; <i>Yr 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 60–2, 51–4, 131, 29; <i>SSD</i> : pp. 105–6, Chapter 12, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 12, Chapter 1.	37–68%
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 6% of respondents indicated a dislike for these items, the major reasons being that the items were considered too difficult and beyond the syllabus for Year 5.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The items for the mental calculations section are placed in order of difficulty, with the hardest being last. Students are given problems that are in line with work from the current syllabus for Year 5 (see references above). To provide for the full range of students' abilities some difficult items are placed on the paper for higher achieving students.		

5.2.4 Year 5 Literacy

The Year 5 Literacy Test generated comments by 456 schools (47%).

Among the notable items, five items were liked and four disliked as indicated in Display 15.

Display 15: Year 5 Literacy Items Liked and Disliked

Item	Liked ¹	Disliked ¹
Dictation	1%	2%
Proofreading	2%	3%
Stimulus material	7%	
SM-3	1%	
SM-4		1%
Writing Task	6%	7%
General	1%	2%

¹ Figures are percentages of total survey returns for that Year level

The greatest number of responses related to the stimulus reading material (*Read About It*) and the writing task.

Read About It generated seventy-three positive comments (7%). Many saw the booklet as attractive, colourful, interesting and relevant to students. Page 3 (*Advertisements*) was specifically mentioned as realistic and interesting by some (1%). Page 4 (*Fancy 'Fido the Quoll' for a Pet?*) was seen as too difficult or boring by some (1%).

The writing task prompted 120 responses: fifty-six (6%) approved and sixty-four (8%) disapproved.

The most common reasons for liking the writing task related to:

- The stimulus material (especially the photographs of the markers and their comments)
- The choice of topic or genre (relevant to children)

The most common reasons for disliking the writing task related to:

- Choice of topic (unsuitable or boring for many)
- The time allowed (not enough)

Dictation was indicated as liked by 1% and disliked by 2%. Proofreading was indicated as liked by 2% and disliked by 3%. Some saw the proofreading and dictation sections as too difficult, but others saw them as too easy. Some schools objected to the proofreading for showing words spelled incorrectly.

Reasons for liking or disliking notable items are shown in Display 16.

Display 16: Year 5 Literacy – Reasons for Liking or Disliking Items

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Dictation	Write down correctly spelled missing words from passage dictated by teacher (Items 1–9) (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Word structure p. 34, Composing written language p. 33; <i>A Guide to Teaching English</i> : p. 35, pp. 44–51.	33–87
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 1% indicated liking the task, the major reason being that the spelling items were considered appropriate for Year 5.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 2% indicated a dislike for the task, the major reasons being that the items were considered either too easy or too difficult for Year 5.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Seven of the nine words were selected from the core lists of commonly used words suggested for Year 5, contained in <i>A Guide to Teaching in English</i> . The per cent figures for the nine items were respectively 75, 82, 64, 82, 46, 33, 48, 71, 87. These figures indicate a range of difficulty and do not support the comment that the items were too difficult.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Proof-reading	Write correctly spelled words for words marked in passage as incorrectly spelled (Items 10–16) (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Word Structure p. 34; <i>A Guide to Teaching English</i> : p. 35, pp. 44–51;	31–89
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 2% liked the task, the major reason being that the level of difficulty of the proofreading items was considered appropriate for the year level.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 3% indicated a dislike for the task, the major reasons being that the items were considered too difficult and that showing incorrectly spelled words is confusing for children.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Given the nature of the task, showing the incorrect spelling is unavoidable. The incorrect responses were based on error patterns of students of this age group and the incorrect words were circled. The teacher-led instructions included the reading of the passage three times, so that any possible cause for confusion was eliminated as the students heard what the incorrectly spelt word was representing. The per cent correct for the nine items were respectively 80, 86, 53, 31, 89, 49, indicating a range of difficulty experienced.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Stimulus material	Stimulus material in magazine format for reading and viewing items (Strands R & V)	various	N/A
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 8% indicated that they liked the magazine as it was attractive, colourful, interesting and relevant to students.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The importance of selecting stimulus material that is engaging for such a diverse student population cannot be underestimated.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
SM-3	Advertisements with associated items (13–16) (Strand V)	<i>Syllabus</i> : pp. 30–5; <i>Media curriculum guide</i> : p. 7, <i>A Guide to Genres in English</i> : pp. 73–5.	31–89
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 1% indicated that this material was realistic and interesting.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The use of authentic material mirrors good classroom literacy practice.		

Display 16 continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
SM-4	"Science News" passage titled <i>Fancy 'Fido the Quoll' for a pet?</i> with items 17–21 (Strand R)	<i>Syllabus</i> : pp. 30–3. 35; <i>A Guide to Teaching English</i> : pp. 53–4.	26–69
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : Text was considered too difficult or beyond Year 5.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : <i>Fancy 'Fido the Quoll' for a pet?</i> was expected to be one of the more difficult stimulus pieces, as it was common to both Year 5 and Year 7 papers. <i>The Guide to Genres in English</i> identifies expository text as an appropriate genre for both year levels. The full page of text was presented in the same format as the web page, and included an illustration of the animal. Per cent correct figures for the five items were respectively 69, 67, 31, 26, and 39. It would be expected to find some more challenging items in link material, and the results support this expectation.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Writing Task	Write a recount about your best day at school (Strand W)	<i>Syllabus</i> : p. 29; <i>A Guide to Genres in English</i> : pp. 23–24	N/A
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 6% liked the task, the major reasons being that students reported liking the genre or topic, or that the stimulus material was considered good.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 7% indicated disliking for the task, the main reasons being that the writing topic was considered too boring or the time allowed was too short.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : <i>My Best Day at School</i> was selected because the school experience was common to all students in the State. It was considered that the numerous activities experienced by students at school would provide a range of choices to accommodate the diversity of Queensland students.		

5.2.5 Year 7 Numeracy Test

The Year 7 Numeracy Test generated comments by 410 schools (43%).

Among the notable items, three items were liked and twelve disliked as indicated in Display 17.

Display 17: Year 7 Numeracy Items Liked and Disliked

Item	Liked ¹	Disliked ¹
6		1%
Mental calculations	1%	1%
Calculator		1%
Measurement mat	4%	1%
13		1%
Protractor	1%	2%
17		4%
27		3%
37		1%
39		1%
43		2%
44		1%
General	3%	2%

¹ Figures are percentages of total survey returns for that Year level

The measurement mat and protractor prompted eighty-five comments (9%). Some saw the mats as easy to use, practical or concrete. Others saw them as inaccurate or unfamiliar. The circular protractor drew criticism as being unfamiliar to students who usually use semi-circular protractors.

Items seen to be difficult or beyond Year 7 work to date were the mental calculations, the calculator questions and Questions 39 and 44.

Items seen to be confusing, misleading or badly worded were Questions 6, 13, 17, 27, 37 and 43. Two of these items stand out:

- Question 17 was seen as confusing because the area grid on the measurement mat did not exactly match the area to be estimated. Some thought that the question wording should have specified approximate area.
- Question 27 was seen as misleading or confusing because the word "all" in the question suggested there was more than one triangle with the specified attributes.

Reasons for liking or disliking notable items are shown in Display 18.

Display 18: Year 7 Numeracy – Reasons for Liking or Disliking Items

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 6	Mentally work out a fraction of a decimal number (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Fractions p. 16; <i>Year 6 Sourcebook:</i> p. 69; <i>Yr 7 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 37–62; <i>SSD:</i> p. 264.	49
<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A			
<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being that the items were considered ambiguous and confusing.			
<i>Interpretive comment:</i> The items for the mental calculations section are placed in order of difficulty, with this item being the hardest. Students are given problems that are in line with work from the current syllabus for Year 7 (see references above), whereby fractions and decimals fractions are investigated. This item required the students to mentally process the calculation making the item more challenging. The number of students who were successful (49%) indicates that it was not an overly difficult or confusing item.			
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Mental calculations	Series of 6 mental calculations (Items 1–6) (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Whole numbers – operations pp. 14–15, Time p. 17, Money p. 18, Fractions p. 16; <i>Year 4 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 112–114; <i>Yr 5 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 45–56, 121–2; <i>Yr 6 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 29–31, 38, 69; <i>Yr 7 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 21, 27, 37–62; <i>SSD:</i> pp. 85, 110, Chapter 16, p. 29, pp. 290–1, p. 264.	49–88
<i>Reasons liked:</i> Unspecified			
<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 2% of respondents indicated a dislike for these items, the major reasons being that the mental calculations were considered too abstract or difficult.			
<i>Interpretive comment:</i> These items are directly matched to syllabus references for the Years 5 to 7 Sourcebooks. Student results indicate that the items were not overly difficult for this year level.			
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Calculator items	Series of calculations (7–11) with calculator available (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Whole numbers operations p. 15, Percentage p. 20, Fractions p. 16; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 100–9, 129–30; <i>Yr 6 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 60–1, 66; <i>Yr 7 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 50, 54–5, 37–62; <i>SSD:</i> pp. 246–6. Chapters 6 & 7, p. 189, p. 310, p. 254.	37–90
<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A			
<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for calculator items, the major reason being they were considered ahead of Year 7 work.			
<i>Interpretive comment:</i> These items are directly matched to syllabus references for the Years 5 to 7 Sourcebooks. Student results prove that the items were not overly difficult for this year level.			

Display 18 Continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Measurement mat	Transparent plastic mat incorporating ruler, centimetre grid and fraction circle used in items 12–15 & 17 (Strand N [12 & 14], M [13, 15, 17])	<i>Syllabus:</i> Percentage p. 20, Length p. 25, Fractions p. 16, Length p. 25, Area p. 25; <i>Year 4 Sourcebook:</i> p. 168–75; <i>Yr 5 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 98–9, 205; <i>Yr 6 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 53–6; <i>Yr 7 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 51, 104–5; <i>SSD:</i> p. 315, 387–8, 243, 419.	42–76
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> 4% of respondents indicated they liked the measurement mat, the major reason being they were easy to use, practical and/or concrete.		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 1% of respondents indicated a dislike of the measurement mat, the major reasons being that it was considered inaccurate or unfamiliar to the children.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> The measurement mat ensures that all students are measuring items on the test paper with the same instrument. The use of plastic overlay for measuring area is suggested in the Year 5 sourcebook (see reference above). It is possible that some students have not had experience using this type of measuring device.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 13	Measure the length of the diagonal of a drawing to within a millimetre (Strand M)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Length p. 25; <i>Year 7 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 104–5; <i>SSD:</i> 387–8.	42
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 2% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being perceived unclear wording and that the term 'diagonal' was unknown.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> This item is very similar to item 13 in the Year 5 paper, which did not generate any notable comments. The Mathematics syllabus uses the term 'diagonal' frequently and it is reasonable to assume Year 7 students understand the term. The item clearly states to measure the length of the diagonal of the front of the card in millimetres and students were given an answer range within 3 millimetres.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Protractor	Circular (360°) protractor for use in item 16 (Strand D)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Angle p. 26; <i>Year 6 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 103–21; <i>Yr 7 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 155–69; <i>SSD:</i> p. 449.	63
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> 1% of respondents indicated liking these materials for a variety of reasons.		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 2% of respondents indicated a dislike of the materials, the major reason being that a circular protractor was considered unfamiliar to students.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> From Year 6 onwards it is suggested in the sourcebook materials that students are familiar with both circular and semi-circular protractors. Results indicate that students could use the 360° protractor. However, the lines marked on the protractor are small and it may be necessary to review the layout of this type of material for future tests.		

Display 18 Continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 17	Use the measurement mat to estimate the area of a shape (Strand D)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Area p. 25; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook:</i> p. 205; <i>SSD:</i> p. 419.	46
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 4% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being that the centimetre grid did not exactly match the area to be measured and the wording which did not specify to approximate the area.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> If the centimetre grid was placed on the diagram, the correct answer is clear. However, students may have been distracted by the fact they were to use parts of the centimetre square to make it up to a whole centimetre square. If students used the ruler to measure the sides to calculate the area, they would have arrived at 18.06 cm ² , therefore, as it was not exactly 18 cm ² students may have been confused. The wording for this type of item may need to take these considerations into account in future testing programs.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 27	Identify a triangle that has only two angles equal in size (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Plane shapes p. 24, Angles p. 26; <i>Year 6 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 106–7; <i>SSD:</i> pp. 445, 472–3.	50%
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 3% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being that the item was considered misleading or badly worded with the word 'all' suggesting that there was more than one triangle.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> Alternative wording may have made the item leading and overly simple. 50% of students were successful.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 37	Describe the movement of a given shape using the words slide and rotate (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus:</i> Plane shapes p. 24; <i>Year 6 Sourcebook:</i> 115–6; <i>Yr 7 Sourcebook:</i> pp. 165–6; <i>SSD:</i> pp. 538–9.	37
	<i>Reasons liked:</i> N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked:</i> 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reason being that it was considered unclear or confusing.		
	<i>Interpretive comment:</i> Year 7 students should be familiar with the terms slide and rotate. This item may have been clearer if students actually moved the shape with concrete materials. Maybe this type of item could benefit with the use of concrete aides in future tests.		

Display 18 Continued

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 39	Colour a grid to show the reflected image of a given shape (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Plane shapes p. 24; <i>Year 6 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 115–20; <i>Yr 7 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 161–2; <i>SSD</i> : p. 544.	38
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being it was considered too difficult and not within the student's work to the time of the test.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The concept of symmetry is begun in the Mathematics syllabus from the beginning years onwards. The sourcebooks suggest similar activities to the one used on the test paper, especially the Year 6 sourcebook. It is quite legitimate to expect students to be familiar with this type of item by Year 7.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 43	Recognise a drawing of a 3-D object given a description in geometric language (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Three-dimensional shapes p. 24; <i>Year 5 Sourcebook</i> : pp. 181–9 <i>SSD</i> : pp. 496–7.	37
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 2% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being that the diagram or wording was considered unclear.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The diagrams for this item could be difficult for some students to interpret, however, further investigation would be necessary to check this.		
Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Item 44	Follow a rule to complete a number pattern (Strand N)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Whole numbers operations p. 15; <i>Year 6 sourcebook</i> : p. 42; <i>SSD</i> : Chapter 1.	24
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 1% of respondents indicated a dislike for this item, the major reasons being the item was considered too difficult or the wording was hard to understand.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : This item was well within the scope of the work of Year 7 (see syllabus reference above). Students may have had difficulty understanding the item, however, 24% did successfully answer this item. The item was designed to be difficult, and the placement of this item at the end of the test paper indicates it was one of the most difficult for Year 7. Difficult items are included on the test paper to provide for the range of student abilities.		

5.2.6 Year 7 Literacy Test

The Year 7 Literacy Test generated comments by 421 schools (44%).

Among the notable items, five items were liked and three disliked as indicated in Display 19.

Display 19: Year 7 Literacy Items Liked and Disliked

Item	Liked ¹	Disliked ¹
Reading & Viewing	1%	
Dictation	2%	1%
Proofreading	2%	2%
Stimulus material	8%	
Writing Task	5%	8%
General	1%	1%

¹ Figures are percentages of total survey returns for that Year level

Writing Task

The writing task generated the largest number of comments with 127 responses (13%), of which fifty-three (6%) liked the task and seventy-four (8%) disliked it. The most frequent categories of comments related to the:

- Topic (7 liked, 25 disliked)
- Stimulus material (14 liked, 6 disliked)
- Genre (4 liked, 8 disliked)
- Time allowed (1 liked, 10 disliked)

Some saw the topic as uninteresting or limiting but others thought it appropriate. Some comments were:

- *Surely a more interesting and enlightening topic could have been put forward.*
- *Best day at school was a disliked topic by all students.*
- *Topic chosen was inappropriate for Year 7 boys (or girls) who disliked school.*
- *Not at all stimulating or interesting.*
- *Boring topic!*
- *Writing task topic very suitable for most students.*
- *Topic was general enough for this year - a good story/recount starter.*

The stimulus items for the writing task, especially the photos of the markers, were seen as stimulating by some but not by all. Some comments were:

- *Liked photos and comments from markers of what they were looking for.*
- *Stimulus for writing task very well presented.*
- *Pictures provided good stimulation.*
- *Stimulus pictures lacked clarity.*
- *Vague, unstimulating pictures, not relevant to city kids.*

Some schools saw the chosen genre as restrictive:

- *Too restrictive. A narrative gives more scope to write imaginatively.*
- *Thought the recount was probably too simple a genre to use.*
- *Not much scope for students to get passionate.*

Some thought insufficient time was allowed for the writing task.

- *25 minutes is too short a time frame for such a piece of writing.*
- *Time allocation to discuss, stimulate, plan is totally inadequate!*
- *More time needed.*

Stimulus Material

The stimulus reading material (*What's New?*) was praised by seventy-five schools (8%) for its interest level, good variety and attractive layout. Some comments were:

- *Appropriate to age level and interest.*
- *Articles colourful – students have to look for meaning.*
- *Colourful, engaging to students.*
- *Colourful and informative and user friendly.*
- *Good stimulus, age appropriate.*
- *Good selection of items relevant for the age group.*

Dictation and Proofreading

Some schools (2%) thought the dictation was appropriate to the Year level, but others (1%) complained that students who had studied government before the test would have an advantage.

Opinion was divided on the proofreading, with some (2%) commenting favourably on its interest or relevance for children, the appropriateness of its level or its attractive layout. On the other side, some (2%) said the test was too easy or that the exercise was not really proofreading because the incorrect words were indicated.

Reading and Viewing

The reading and viewing items in general drew praise for the variety in the content and skills tested. Some comments were:

- *Good range of questions covered, tested the students' reading and comprehension skills quite thoroughly.*
- *Well designed tasks to make students reason without being beyond slower learners.*

Reasons for liking or disliking notable items are shown in Display 20.

Display 20: Year 7 Literacy – Reasons for Liking or Disliking Items

Item	Description	Qld Curriculum links	% Correct
Dictation	Write correctly spelled words missing from transcript of passage dictated by teacher (Items 1–12) (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Word Structure p. 34, Composing Written Language p. 33, Comprehending written language p. 33; <i>A Guide to Teaching English</i> : p. 35, pp. 44–51.	33–90
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 2% liked the task, the main reason being that the spelling items were considered appropriate for Year 7.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 1% indicated a dislike for the task, the major reason being that students who had not covered the unit on government may have been disadvantaged.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : Seven of the twelve items were selected from the core lists of commonly used words suggested for Year 7, contained in <i>A Guide to Teaching in English</i> . The per cent figures for the twelve items were 90, 74, 77, 70, 54, 87, 47, 54, 50, 81, 77, 94. While the subject matter of the dictation passage was about government, there were only two spelling items that could be considered to be specific content words related to government. The per cent results for these words were 74 and 81.		
Proof-reading	Write correctly spelled words for words marked in passage as incorrectly spelled (Items 13–17) (Strand S)	<i>Syllabus</i> : Word Structure p. 34, Composing Written Language p. 33, Comprehending written language p. 33; <i>A Guide to Teaching English</i> : p. 35, pp. 44–51.	46–71
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 2% liked this task, the main reasons being its perceived relevance for students, appropriateness of level or attractive layout.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 2% indicated a dislike for the task, the major reasons being that the task was considered not really proofreading (as the incorrect words were identified), or that it was too easy.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : For scoring purposes it would be difficult to present this task without identifying the incorrect words as students may 'correct' correct words in the passage. The per cent correct figures were respectively 46, 71, 52, 68, 60. More difficult items could have been included.		
Stimulus material	Stimulus material in magazine format for reading and viewing items (Strands R & V)	Various	N/A
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 8% indicated that they liked the magazine as it was interesting, contained a good variety of material and had an attractive layout.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : N/A		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : The use of authentic stimulus material that is engaging for students mirrors good classroom practice.		
Writing Task	Write a recount about your best day at school (Strand W)	<i>Syllabus</i> : p. 29; <i>A Guide to Genres in English</i> : pp. 23–24.	N/A
	<i>Reasons liked</i> : 5% liked the writing task, the major reason being that students reporting liking the stimulus material.		
	<i>Reasons disliked</i> : 8% indicated a dislike for the task, the major reasons being that the writing topic was considered limited or boring, or the time allowed was too short.		
	<i>Interpretive comment</i> : <i>My Best Day at School</i> was selected because the school experience was common to all students in the State. It was considered that the numerous activities experienced by students at school would provide a range of choices to accommodate the diversity of Queensland students.		

5.3 Summary, discussion and conclusions regarding Focus Question 4

Focus Question 4

Which test items, test tasks or stimulus materials did schools like or dislike and why?

5.3.1 Summary

Year 3 Numeracy

In the Year 3 Numeracy test, the press-out shapes stimulated a response from 18% of the relevant schools. Many liked the concrete nature of the shapes or the challenge of the associated tasks, but others reported that children did not think that they could turn the shapes over because the colour was different on the back. As a result they were unable to solve the kite problem. The complaint about the colour of the press-out shapes seems valid and may justify further exploration with the same item in a future test.

Five other Year 3 Numeracy items were notable in being seen as too difficult by 4% to 7% of the relevant schools (Questions 13, 34, 35, 36 and the mental calculations).

Year 3 Literacy

In the Year 3 Literacy test, the dictation and writing tasks each produced similar proportions of likes and dislikes (2% of the relevant schools liked and disliked the dictation, 4% the writing task). Various reasons were given for liking the dictation, but the most common reason for dislike was a perception that the spelling words were too difficult. Many of those liking the writing task mentioned the genre or the stimulus material and activities. The most common reason for dislike was the choice of writing topic. The stimulus material was seen as too difficult by 7%, but liked by 3%. One of the stimulus pages on the second paper (*Relax Max*) was seen as too difficult by 4% of the relevant schools.

Year 5 Numeracy

In the Year 5 Numeracy test, the measurement mats and the mental calculations prompted the greatest response. Some (5% of the relevant schools) liked the measurement mats because they were simple, easy to use and practical. Some (6%) disliked the mental calculation items because they were too difficult or beyond the Year 5 syllabus. The calculator items in general were disliked by 6% because they thought that insufficient time was allowed. Five other Year 5 Numeracy items were seen as too difficult for Year 5 by 1% to 3% of the relevant schools: Questions 10, 11, 16, 39 and 42.

Three items were seen by 2% to 3% of the relevant schools as confusing or misleading for children: Question 30 because of the phrase "1 to 4", Question 38 because a set of coins illustrated as change did not add to the total amount tendered, and Question 42 because the answer required students to match maps that had been rotated in reference to each other. However, students' success rates on these items were respectively 73%, 45% and 77%, and alternative wordings may have made the questions overly simple.

Year 5 Literacy

Most responses to the Year 5 Literacy test related to the stimulus reading material (*Read About It*) and the writing task. *Read About It* generated positive comments from 7% of the relevant schools, with many writing that it was attractive, colourful, interesting and relevant to students. Page 3 (*Advertisements*) was specifically mentioned as realistic and interesting by some (1%). Page 4 (*Fancy 'Fido the Quoll' for a Pet?*) was seen as too difficult or boring by some (1%).

The writing task prompted responses from 12% of the relevant schools. These were split fairly evenly between like and dislike. The most common reasons for liking the writing task related to the stimulus material and the choice of topic or genre. The most common reasons for disliking the writing task related to the topic (unsuitable or boring) or the time allowed (not enough).

Dictation was indicated as liked by 1% and disliked by 2%. Proofreading was indicated as liked by 2% and disliked by 3%. Some saw the Year 5 proofreading and dictation sections as too difficult, but others saw them as too easy. Some schools objected to the proofreading for showing words spelled incorrectly.

Year 7 Numeracy

The Year 7 Numeracy test generated comments by 410 schools.

The measurement mat and protractor prompted the largest number of comments – some saw the mats as easy to use, practical or concrete (1% of the relevant schools), but others saw them as inaccurate or unfamiliar (1%). The circular protractor drew criticism from 2% of the schools as being unfamiliar to students who usually use semi-circular protractors.

Items seen by around 1% of the relevant schools as difficult or beyond Year 7 work to date were the mental calculations, the calculator questions, Question 39 and Question 44.

Items seen to be confusing, misleading or badly worded by at least 1% of the relevant schools were Questions 6, 13, 17, 27, 37 and 43. Two items are particularly notable:

- Question 17 was seen as confusing by 4% of the relevant schools because the area measure on the measurement mat did not exactly match the area to be estimated. Some thought that the question wording should have specified approximate area. Success rate was reasonable at 46% and some incorrect answers may have been due to the wording, but if the mat is placed correctly on the shape, the correct answer is quite clear.
- Question 27 was seen as misleading or confusing by 3% of the relevant schools because the word "all" in the question suggested there would be more than one triangle with the specified attributes. The success rate was reasonable at 50%, and alternative wordings may have made the question misleading and overly simple.

Year 7 Literacy

The Year 7 Literacy test generated comments by 421 schools.

The writing task generated the largest number of comments with 6% approving and 8% disapproving. The most frequent comments related to the:

- Topic (seen as uninteresting or limiting by some but appropriate by others)
- Stimulus material (stimulating)

- Genre (restrictive)
- Time allowed (insufficient)

The stimulus reading material (*What's New?*) was praised by 8% of the relevant schools for its interest level, good variety and attractive layout.

The dictation was liked by 2% of the schools and disliked by 1%. Some schools thought the dictation was appropriate to the Year level, but others complained that students who had studied government before the test would have an advantage.

Opinion was divided on the proofreading, which was indicated as liked by 2% and disliked by 2%. It was liked for its interest or relevance for children, the appropriateness of its level or its attractive layout. Some argued it was not really proofreading because the incorrect words were indicated. Some thought the test was too easy.

The Reading and Viewing items in general drew praise for the variety in the content and skills tested.

5.3.2 Discussion and Conclusions

Much favourable comment was prompted by the Reading and Viewing stimulus materials in the Literacy tests. These booklets were widely appreciated for their attractive layout and interesting content. The quality of the Literacy tests was enhanced by the quality of the booklets.

Conclusion 9

The Reading and Viewing stimulus materials contributed greatly to the quality of the Literacy tests.

Many of the comments were in reference to the topic for the writing task (a recount about your best day at school). Regrettably, a number of schools commented that the topic was uninteresting for many children because they did not like school. On the other hand, a frequent comment was that the presentation of the task was quite stimulating for children. No definite conclusion seems worth making in the case of the writing task, in spite of the relatively high level of comment about it.

The measurement tools used in the Numeracy tests were generally very well received, but some worried that the tools, especially the circular protractors, were unfamiliar to children. On balance, a reasonable conclusion is that the supply of such tools is a very good strategy.

Conclusion 10

The supply of measurement tools was a successful feature of the Numeracy tests.

Several items in the Years 3, 5 and 7 Numeracy tests were thought to be too difficult by some schools. In some cases the wording of the item was seen as unclear or confusing. In a few cases, the per cent correct figures tend to support the schools' opinions:

- Year 3 – Item 34 (Paper 1) and 36 (both papers)
- Year 5 – Item 39 (below chance level)

Other items may need rewording if they are to be used again.

Conclusion 11

Several items on the Numeracy tests were thought to be too difficult. In a few cases, the wording may have contributed to the difficulty.

A few items on the Numeracy tests were claimed by some to be misleading or deliberately tricky for students. On face examination of these items, the wording of the items can be interpreted as requiring students to think in the process of arriving at their answers. Of course, such thinking is expected to be part of the testing process, and the questions seem to be legitimate. It may be necessary to communicate the intent of such items to schools in explanations of the tests.

Conclusion 12

The inclusion in the Numeracy tests of valid items that require more than just rule application is not understood by a few schools. The value of such items needs to be explained. Provision of a bank of practice items of this type may help.

6 Opinions to assist planning of future testing programs

Focus Question 5

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

The school survey contained a series of ten items canvassing opinions on future testing programs. These related to:

- The timing of the Testing Program
- The time allowed for the writing task
- The equipment supplied for Numeracy tests
- The practice time
- The QSCC website
- Other feedback

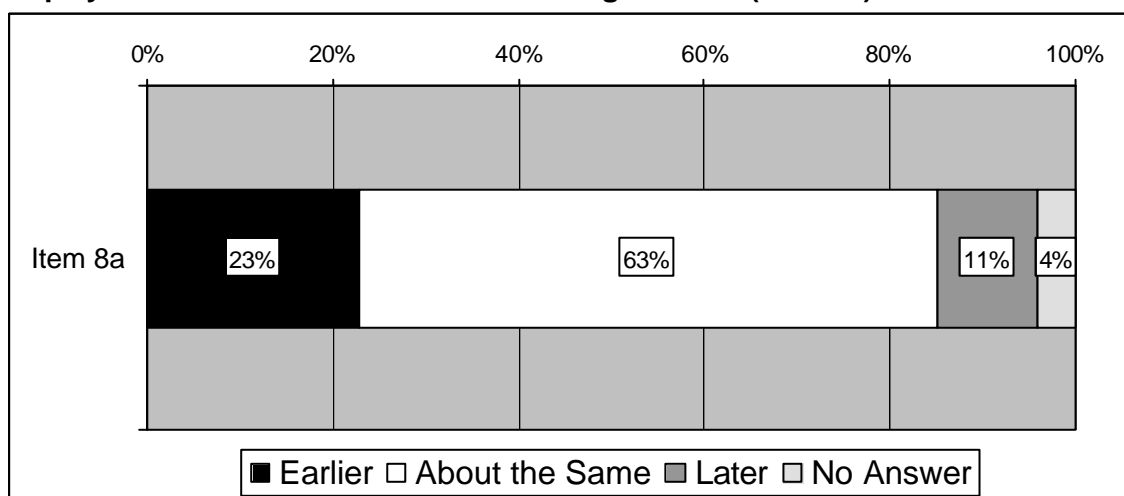
The responses under each of these headings are set out and discussed below.

6.1 Timing of 2001 Testing Program

Survey Item 8a asked schools when tests should be administered in 2001 – earlier, about the same time or later than in 2000.

The results are shown in Display 21.

Display 21: Results for Item 8a – Test Timing for 2001 (N=1039)



Item 8b asked schools that indicated earlier or later to suggest how many weeks earlier or later.

Of the 234 schools that indicated a preference for earlier than in 2000, more than three-quarters (179) indicated up to ten weeks earlier. The three most frequent responses were:

- 4 weeks earlier (45)
- 10 weeks earlier (30)
- 6 weeks earlier (22)

Of the 179 schools that indicated a preference for later than in 2000, more than three-quarters (88) indicated up to eight weeks later. The three most frequent responses were:

- 2 weeks later (28)
- 6 weeks later (16)
- 4 weeks later (15)

The results on Items 8a and 8b, taken together, indicate that for most schools the timing was suitable. No clear alternative timing emerged from the survey. Of those schools that preferred a different timing, about twice as many would have preferred an earlier than a later date. This information, together with that in Section 6.6, indicates that the timing is not the most appropriate for approximately one-third of the schools, but consideration of an alternative date would not be likely to improve this situation.

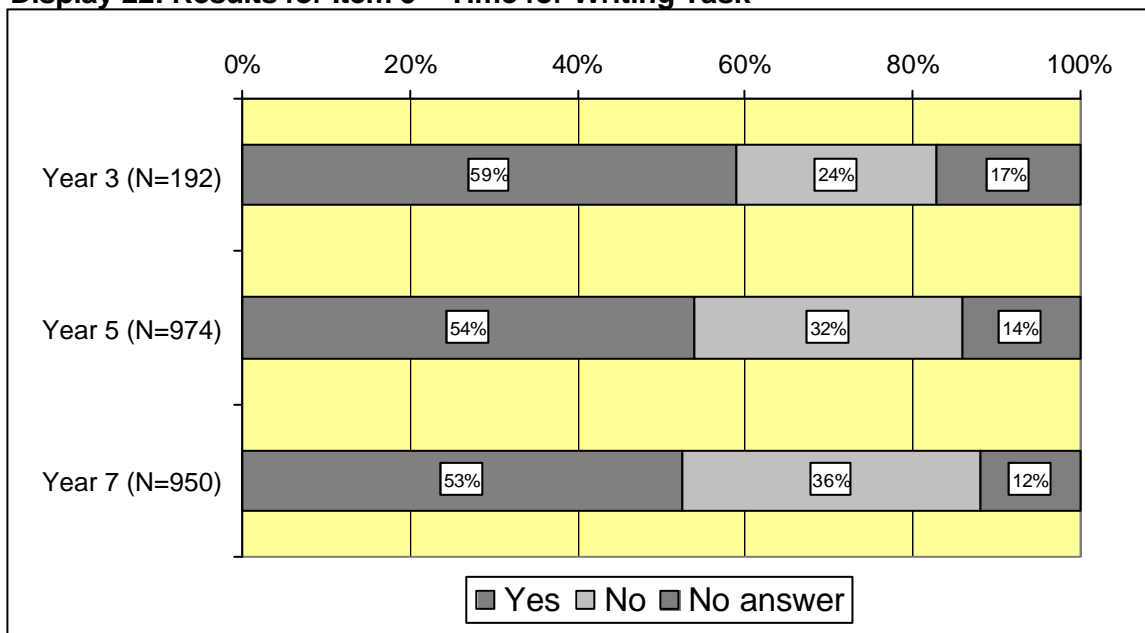
6.2 Writing Time

Item 9 sought, for each Year level tested, opinions on the length of writing time allowed for the writing task. The Question was:

For the 2000 Testing Program the **total writing time** allocated was **30** minutes, comprising 25 minutes writing and 5 minutes proofreading and editing. Is **30** minutes about the **right amount** of writing time that needs to be allocated?
If No, what total writing time should be allocated?

The results are shown in Display 22.

Display 22: Results for Item 9 – Time for Writing Task



The most frequently indicated alternative times that accompanied "No" responses were 40 and 45 minutes:

- For Year 3, 28% indicated 40 minutes, 44% indicated 45 minutes
- For Year 5, 38% indicated 40 minutes, 38% indicated 45 minutes

- For Year 7, 40% indicated 40 minutes, 40% indicated 45 minutes

Comments were invited and 170 schools responded. The most frequent types of comments were:

- Some students needed more time (25)
- More time was needed for planning, proofreading, editing etc. (19)
- The time was adequate for the topic and genre (but may not be for others) (16)
- There was enough time for most children (14)
- Flexibility in timing should be allowed (11)
- Good writers need more time to show their ability (10)
- It would be a better test if more time were allowed (9)
- The time is adequate to give a good indication of what students can do (6)
- Special needs children should have a different time allowance (5)
- More time would not help (4)

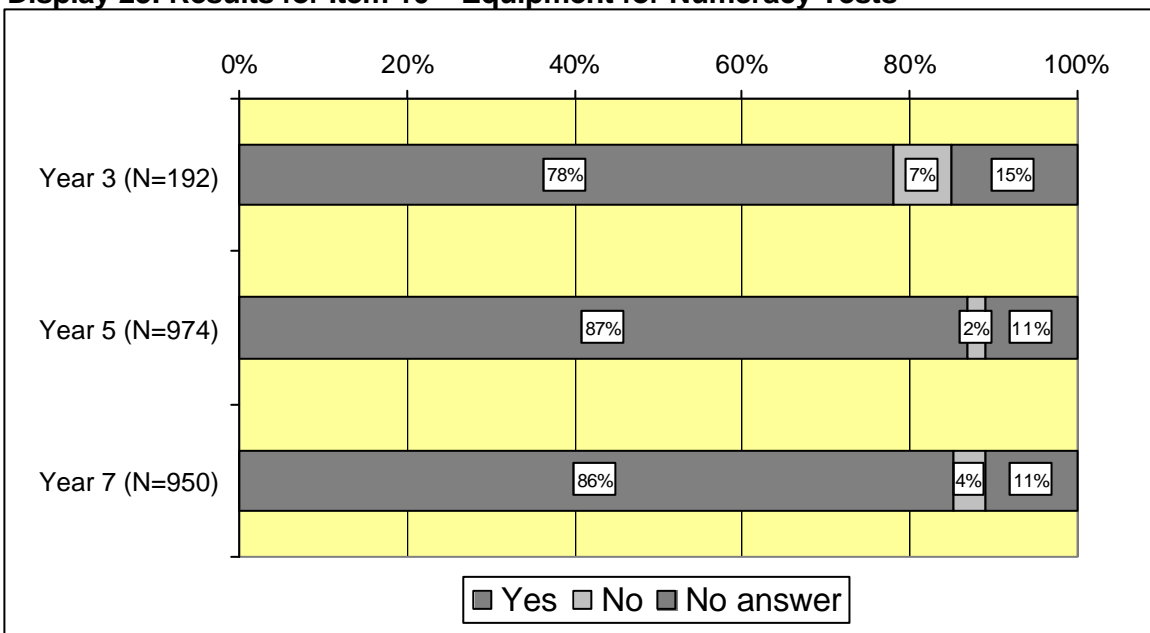
The results indicate that an allowance of at least 30 minutes is required for the writing task, but consideration should be given to allowing 40 minutes.

6.3 Equipment in Numeracy tests

Survey Item 10 asked schools if they believed that equipment should continue to be used in Numeracy tests. (In 2000, equipment included press-out shapes for Year 3, measurement mats for Years 5 and 7 and 360° protractors for Year 7.)

Separate responses were requested for each Year level. The results are shown in Display 23.

Display 23: Results for Item 10 – Equipment for Numeracy Tests



The supply of equipment was clearly very well supported.

Reasons were requested for the responses. The reasons for approval of the equipment were categorised as follows (N=215):

- Support with reservation – if quality is good or practice allowed (53)
- Allows consistency in testing (40)
- Concrete, hands-on or realistic (36)
- Tests a range of skills (34)
- Compatible with mathematics, the syllabus or teaching processes (30)
- Convenient for test administration (25)
- Interesting for children (22)
- Easy to use (19)
- Useful (18)
- Necessary to test measurement (13)
- Caters for different learning styles (12)
- Other (36)

This list of reasons provides an excellent set of justifications for the provision of the equipment.

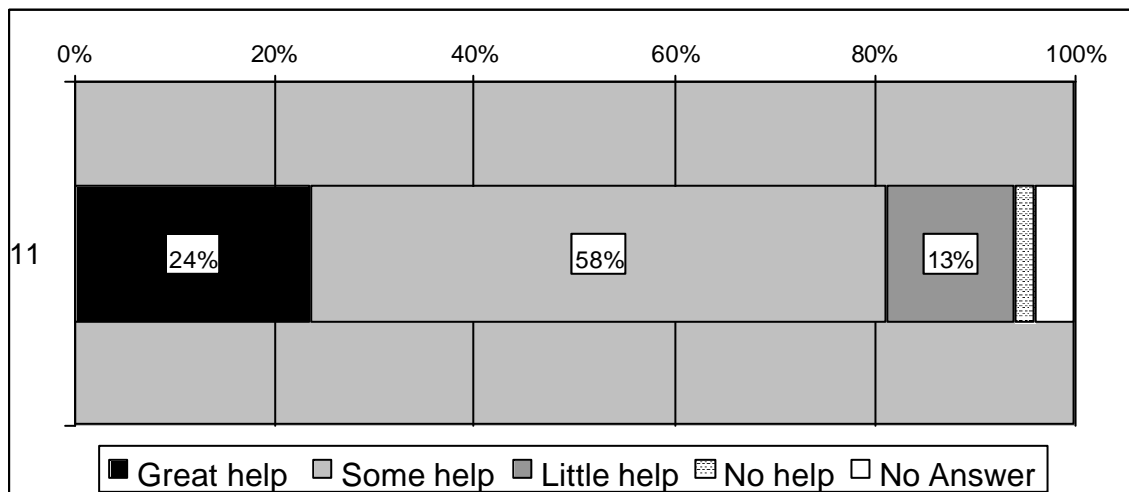
Reasons for not supporting the supply of equipment were few, but most related to the claim that the equipment was unfamiliar to the children, especially the 360° protractors in Year 7, although use of a 360° protractor is within the syllabus.

6.4 Practice materials

Survey Item 11 asked schools to indicate how helpful the practice materials were in preparing students for the 2000 Testing Program.

The results, shown in Display 24, were somewhat equivocal, but 82% of the schools indicated they were of 'some help' or of 'great help'.

Display 24: Results for Item 11 – Practice Materials (N=1039)



Schools were asked to give reasons for their responses. These are explored below.

Great help

Among the schools indicating that the practice materials were of 'great help', the more common specific reasons were that practice reduces anxiety, demonstrates the testing procedures, shows how to answer the questions or overcomes lack of experience with testing. Many made vague reference to "familiarity" or "preparation". The results are summarised below (N=183):

- Reduce anxiety (30)
- Demonstrate testing procedures (20)
- Show how to answer (19)
- Tests like this are not in children's experience (12)
- Show question types (9)
- Make actual test more efficient (7)
- Vague – "prepares" or "makes familiar" (67)
- Other: isolated instance or hard to interpret (19)

Some help

Among the schools indicating that the practice materials were of 'some help', by far the most common specific reason was that the practice materials were too easy and did not give a true indication of the actual tests. Some said the practice should include the measurement tools or the writing task. Some said more practice material is needed, others that there was too much. Otherwise, reasons were similar to those listed above for 'great help'.

The results are summarised below (N=368):

- Too easy (131)
- Show how to answer (35)
- Reduce anxiety (25)
- Show how to follow instructions (13)
- Show question types (9)
- Should include practice with measurement tools (8)
- Should include practice with writing task (4)
- Tests like this are not in children's experience (7)
- Made actual test more efficient (2)
- Not enough (22)
- Too much (6)
- Not needed (9)
- Vague – "prepares or makes familiar" (61)
- Other: isolated instance or hard to interpret (36)

Little or no help

Among the schools indicating that the practice materials were of 'little help' or 'no help', by far the most common reason was that the practice materials were too easy and did not give a true indication of the actual tests. Other reasons were that the practice materials were too short or not enough like the actual tests. Some thought the practice was not needed for their students.

The results are summarised below (N=155):

- Too easy (94)
- Not enough (20)
- Not enough like actual test (9)
- Not needed (9)
- Other: isolated instance or hard to interpret (23)

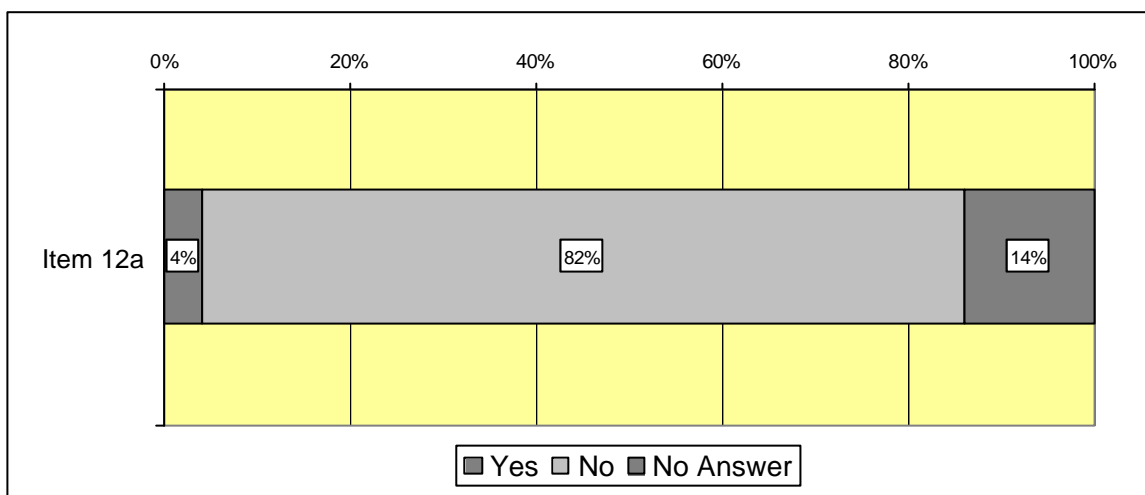
The schools' responses need to be interpreted in terms of the purpose of the practice materials. They were not designed to be the same difficulty as the test. The purpose of the practice materials was for every student to practise each item type. They were not intended to represent a "dry run" for the actual test.

6.5 Council website

Survey Item 12a asked if schools had accessed the testing section of the Council's website and, if so, how they rate it.

Results, shown in Display 25, revealed that very few of the schools had accessed the Testing section of the website.

Display 25: Results for Item 12a – Website Accessed (N=1039)



Most of the forty-four yes respondents rated the section as average or good.

The survey item also requested schools to indicate what information about the Testing Program they would wish to see on the Council's website.

Only eighty-nine comments were entered by eighty-five schools, reflecting a low level of interest in the website. These comments were grouped as follows:

- Sample or practice tests (22)
- Explanation or justification of the tests and the Testing Program (13)
- Previous tests (9)
- Results of tests (8)
- Details of procedures, dates etc. (5)
- Criteria for marking (4)
- Advance information on tests (4)
- Answers to test items (3)
- Teaching suggestions (3)
- Forms to download (1)
- Access to school's results (1)
- Costs of the program (1)
- Other – not sure, don't know etc. (15)

This list represents a set of ideas to be considered in future development of the website. There is a desire for practice test items and previous tests.

6.6 Other feedback

Survey Item 13 invited other feedback that might improve the Testing Program.

Responses were made by 385 schools (37%). In some cases, responses included comments on two or more issues. In all, 406 comments were assigned to the following categories:

- Administrative processes, including the timelines and procedures for the return of tests, the filling out of covers, the difficulties experienced in small schools and composite or multi-age classes and problems with pencils (81)
- Comments on items, often that they were too difficult or confusing (41)
- Timing of program especially clashes with other school activities (38)
- Questioning, often with some vigour, of the inclusion of common items on both the Year 5 and 7 tests (required for equating across Year levels) (32)
- Perceptions that some items were too early in the year or beyond the curriculum for the Year level, especially in the Numeracy test (27)
- Perceptions that the language level of the tests was too high or that Numeracy tests depended too much on language comprehension (26)
- Questioning of the value or validity of the Testing Program for children from special groups, especially Indigenous children (other groups mentioned include ESL, low-SES, disabled, hearing impaired, children from remote areas or learning disabled children) (24)
- Perceptions that the tests were too difficult in general, placing too much emphasis on higher level cognitive skills (24)
- Test conditions including the total time and stress of the Year 3 testing (23)
- General approval of the Program (18)
- Practice testing, often seen as too easy (10)
- The value of feedback to schools on results (10)
- Concerns about security and consistency related to the use of a single answer booklet for both Numeracy and Literacy or the possibility of schools using the test administration procedures or advance knowledge of the tests to advantage school results (9)
- Doubts about the value of testing of this type (9)
- Other (isolated instances or hard to interpret) (34)

Most of the issues that emerged from this survey question have been addressed in other parts of this report. One interesting finding is that administrative issues were mentioned most frequently. Another is that concern over the duplication of items in the Years 5 and 7 tests was high on the list. Comments on the general difficulty level or complexity of the tests were also relatively frequent.

6.7 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?

6.7.1 Summary

For two-thirds of all schools, the dates for the 2000 Testing Program were suitable and no clear alternative dates emerged from the survey. The timing is not the most appropriate for approximately one-third of the schools, but consideration of an alternative date seems unlikely to lead to a better result.

The schools' responses to the survey indicate that an allowance of at least 30 minutes is required for the writing task, but consideration should be given to allowing 40 minutes.

The supply of equipment (measurement tools, press-out shapes) in the Numeracy tests was supported by the great majority of the schools. The reasons given for this support provide an excellent set of justifications for the provision of the equipment. Reasons for not supporting the supply of equipment derived mostly from a belief that the equipment was unfamiliar to the children, especially the protractors used in the Year 7 test. But, the use of 360° protractors is within the syllabus.

Survey Item 11 asked schools to indicate how helpful the practice materials were. The results were somewhat equivocal, but most of the schools indicated they were either of some help or of great help. Schools that saw the practice materials as a 'great help' said that practice reduces anxiety, demonstrates the testing procedures, shows how to answer the questions or overcomes lack of experience with testing. Schools that saw the practice materials as only of 'some help' or 'no help' often said they were too easy and did not give a true indication of the actual tests. We note here that the purpose of the practice materials was for every student to practise each item type. They were not intended to represent a "dry run" for the actual test.

Very few of the schools had accessed the Testing section of the Council website, but those that had rated it as 'average' or 'good'. Suggestions for the website included practice items, previous tests, results, test answers and justification for aspects of the tests and Testing Program.

A request for general comments that might assist in improving the Testing Program brought out the extent and nature of schools' concerns. Many of these have been covered in other parts of this report. An interesting finding is that administrative issues were mentioned most frequently. These included the timelines and procedures for the return of tests, the filling out of covers, problems with pencils and the difficulties reported by small schools and schools with composite or multi-age classes. Another concern related to the extent to which items were duplicated in the Years 5 and 7 tests, a necessity for the purpose of equating across Year levels. Some questioned the value or validity of the Testing Program for children from special groups, especially Indigenous children. The level of difficulty of items and the level of demand for higher cognitive skills were also mentioned often.

6.7.2 Discussion and Conclusions

Setting the dates for the Testing Program will always be difficult. Holidays and special activities vary from place to place. The current timing seems to be satisfactory to most of the schools, and the others are split approximately two to one on whether the time should be earlier or later. There seems to be little in the survey results to indicate that the dates should change and it would probably be better to continue with the present situation so that schools can plan around what can be expected to continue as an annual event. If any change is made, it should probably be earlier rather than later.

Conclusion 13

The timing of the Testing Program should continue as a permanent arrangement at set dates corresponding to those used for the 2000 Program.

The supply of equipment for the Numeracy test was widely supported, with some concerns about the circular protractor. This practice should definitely continue.

Conclusion 14

Concrete materials should continue to be a feature of the Numeracy Tests.

The practice materials are clearly appreciated by schools. The main criticisms are that more are needed and they should reflect the actual tests in difficulty and extent. It should be noted, however, that the practice materials have not been designed to reflect the same difficulty as the tests. If this were so, not every student would be able to practise each item type, which is the purpose of the practice materials.

Conclusion 15

Council should consider providing a more extensive range of practice items and test materials to schools to help them prepare students for the testing situation.

The Testing section of the Council website had been accessed by very few of the schools. This lack of interest probably applies to the website generally. Whether this situation changes over time remains to be seen. The survey generated a very good set of suggestion for the website section. Some schools suggested including sample and practice tests or test items. Since there seems to be a demand for these items, the website may be an effective and efficient way to make them available. Discussion on the answers to the test questions may also prompt greater levels of access. Another possibility might be a forum for explanation and discussion of the Testing Program and its components.

Conclusion 16

The Testing section of the Council website should feature practice materials including tests as well as discussion of answers to previous test items. Consideration should also be given to including a forum for the explanation and discussion of the Testing Program and its components.

The final question of the survey asked for feedback that would assist in improving the Council's testing programs. This item generated a high level of response. Perhaps not unexpectedly, administrative aspects of the Program were the subject of many of

the comments. Others questioned necessary or desirable features of the tests, such as the use of common items across Year levels, the use of items with a range of difficulties, and items calling on higher level thinking skills.

These results seem to indicate a need for continued dialogue with schools, including explanation and discussion, on the nature of the Testing Program, the structure of the tests, the test development processes, the value of a wide difficulty range, the need for common questions at different Year levels, and the importance of testing cognitive skills above recall and simple application of rules.

Conclusion 17

Council should consider expanding the dialogue with schools on the Testing Program to explain and discuss the nature of the Program as well as the value of its various strategies and features.

6.8 Appendix: School Survey



QUEENSLAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM COUNCIL

2000 QUEENSLAND YEARS 3, 5 AND 7 TESTING PROGRAM SCHOOL SURVEY FORM

Dear Principal

Thank you for your school's participation in the 2000 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program (2000 Testing Program).

The purpose of this survey is to gather information to improve Queensland's state-based testing programs.

The survey covers:

- background information;
- overall opinions on 2000 Testing Program materials;
- opinions on major changes to the Testing Program in 2000;
- opinions on test administration procedures required in schools;
- feedback on test items, test tasks and stimulus materials;
- opinions that will assist planning of future testing programs.

It is of particular importance that you complete this survey in collaboration with the teachers in your school who participated in the 2000 Testing Program. Only **one** completed survey is requested from each school.

Please tick the appropriate box/es or write on the lines provided, and **return to Hermes Precisa Pty Ltd with the test materials by 25 August 2000.**

All survey data will be treated confidentially. No individual schools will be identified in the survey report.

Survey results will be posted in the evaluation section of the Council's website in due course. The Council's website is located at <http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au>.

Feedback from your school will be most helpful in planning future testing programs. I appreciate the time taken to complete this survey.

Yours sincerely

J E Tunstall
Director

July 2000

BACKGROUND AND TEST PARTICIPATION

1. In what postcode area is your school located? _____
2. Which of the following year levels in your school participated in the 2000 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program? *(Please tick the appropriate box/es.)*
- Year 3 Year 5 Year 7

OVERALL OPINIONS OF TESTING PROGRAM MATERIALS

3. **Overall**, how does the school rate the following 2000 Testing Program materials?
(Tick one box for each.)

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Don't know
Wall chart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Information for Schools</i> booklet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brochure for parents/caregivers (<i>Important note</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3 Numeracy Test (answer if school participated)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3 Literacy Test (answer if school participated)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 5 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 5 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 7 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 7 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Test administration handbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

OPINIONS ON SOME MAJOR CHANGES

4. The 2000 Testing Program contained a number of **major changes** to the 1999 Testing Program. Does your school **support** the changes listed below?
- A wall chart replaced an information brochure. [It was felt that the wall chart would be more accessible.]
 Yes (supported) No (not supported) Reason? _____
 - One test booklet contained both the Literacy and Numeracy tests instead of there being two separate booklets. [The one booklet reduces the need for teachers to enter cover details twice and ensures that, for each student, all the components of the tests are kept together.]
 Yes (supported) No (not supported) Reason? _____
 - Test booklets with the covers completed correctly were required to be returned for all eligible students, including those students who were absent or exempt. [This enables data for all students to be calculated more easily and replaces the need for schools to complete an Exemptions and Absences sheet.]
 Yes (supported) No (not supported) Reason? _____
 - A Year 3 class report will be provided to participating schools. [It was felt that schools participating in the sample Year 3 Tests should receive some student performance information. No reports were provided in 1999.]
 Yes (supported) No (not supported) Reason? _____

OPINIONS ON TEST ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

The following two questions refer to the test administration procedures contained in the Information for Schools booklet and the various test administration handbooks.

5. What **procedures** required to administer the tests in schools **worked well** and should be **retained**?
- _____
- _____
6. What **procedures** required to administer the tests in schools **didn't work well** and should be **changed**?
- _____
- _____

OPINIONS ON TEST ITEMS, TEST TASKS AND STIMULUS MATERIALS

7a. Were there any **test items, test tasks or stimulus materials** in any of the tests that the school particularly **LIKED**?

Yes No

7b. Were there any **test items, test tasks or stimulus materials** in any of the tests that the school particularly **DISLIKED**?

Yes No

7c. If you answered 'Yes' to Q7a and/or Q7b, please detail in the tables below the items, tasks or stimulus materials that you particularly liked and/or disliked (up to five likes and five dislikes):

- In Column 1, please **circle** the Year Level of the test (3, 5 or 7);
- In Column 2, please **circle** the Test Type – Literacy (Lit) or Numeracy (Num);
- (For Year 3 Tests only) In Column 3, please **circle** the Year 3 Test Paper number (1 or 2)
- In Column 4, please **write** the task, item or stimulus material particularly liked/disliked. Use the following codes:
 - Use **Q** for a question followed by the number of the question eg **Q6**;
 - Use **WT** for the writing task, **D** for the dictation task, or **P** for proofreading task;
 - Use **SM** for the Literacy stimulus magazine followed by the page number on which the stimulus appears e.g. **SM5**.
- In Column 5, please **write** a brief reason for your answer in Column 4.

Test Items, Tasks and Stimulus Materials LIKED:

Column 1 Year Level	Column 2 Test Type	Column 3 Paper No (Yr 3)	Column 4 Item, Task or Stimulus LIKED	Column 5 REASON for LIKING Item, Task or Stimulus
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		

Test Items, Tasks and Stimulus Materials DISLIKED:

Column 1 Year Level	Column 2 Test Type	Column 3 Paper No (Yr 3)	Column 4 Item, Task or Stimulus DISLIKED	Column 5 REASON for DISLIKING Item, Task or Stimulus
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		
3 5 7	Lit / Num	1 2		

OPINIONS TO ASSIST PLANNING

The questions below ask your opinions on a number of issues that will assist in planning future testing programs.

8a. In administering the 2000 Testing Program on 22 and 23 August, the test contractor has indicated that it will be able to despatch student, class and school reports to schools by 10 November (about 11 weeks after the administration of the Tests). Earlier despatch of test reports would require earlier testing dates. In respect of your school's testing and reporting requirements, when should tests be administered in 2001? (Please tick one box.)

- Earlier than in 2000 About the same time as in 2000 Later than in 2000

8b. If you answered earlier or later, please suggest how many weeks earlier or later than in 2000: _____ weeks

9. For the 2000 Testing Program the total writing time allocated was 30 minutes, comprising 25 minutes writing and 5 minutes proofreading and editing. Is 30 minutes about the right amount of writing time that needs to be allocated?

For Year 3 students? Yes No If No, what total writing time should be allocated? _____ minutes

For Year 5 students? Yes No If No, what total writing time should be allocated? _____ minutes

For Year 7 students? Yes No If No, what total writing time should be allocated? _____ minutes

Comment if you wish: _____

10. Do you believe that equipment should continue to be used in Numeracy tests? (In 2000, equipment included press-out shapes for Year 3, measurement mats for Years 5 and 7 and 360° protractors for Year 7.)

Use equipment for Year 3? Yes No Reason? _____

Use equipment for Year 5? Yes No Reason? _____

Use equipment for Year 7? Yes No Reason? _____

11a. How helpful were the practice materials in preparing students for the 2000 Testing Program?

- Of no help Of little help Of some help Of great help

11b. Please give your reason for the above response: _____

12a. Has the school ever accessed the Testing section of the Council's website? Yes No

12b. If 'Yes', how would you rate the Testing section of the Council's website?

- Very poor Poor Average Good Very good

12c. What information about the Testing Program would you wish to see on the Council's website?

13. Is there any other feedback which the school wishes to provide that would assist in improving Council's testing programs? If so, please provide below.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Please return to Hermes Precisa Pty Ltd with the test materials by 25 August 2000.

Evaluation and Review Report Series

1997 Year 6 Test: Report on School Survey

Evaluation of 1998 Queensland Years 3 and 5 Testing Program: Results of Principal and Teacher Surveys

Evaluation of 1998 Queensland Years 3 and 5 Testing Program: Results of Principal and Teacher Surveys (Inclusivity Issues)

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

Evaluation of the Queensland 1998 Year 3 Test Resource Kit: Final Report

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

Evaluation of the Years 1 to 10 Technology Curriculum Development Project: Report 2

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

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

Evaluation of the Years 1 to 10 The Arts Curriculum Development Project: Report 2

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

Review of Queensland Literacy and Numeracy Testing Programs, 1995 to 1999

Review of Queensland Literacy and Numeracy Testing Programs, 1995 to 1999 (Issues Paper)

Review of the Form and Nature of the Queensland Year 3 Test

Evaluation of the 2000 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Final Report

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