

NUMERACY AND LITERACY TEST RESULTS SHOULD BE BASED ON EVIDENCE NOT CONJECTURE

The Australian Council of Deans of Education welcomes the initial results of the trial literacy and numeracy test for teacher education students, which should give the public confidence that our future teachers are being taught well.

The ACDE acknowledges that some students will continue to require additional support so they can meet the numeracy and literacy standards before registering as teachers.

However, the ACDE is concerned about the perception that the test was undertaken by students who had already graduated when, in reality, the 5000 students tested in August and September 2015 were still studying in various stages of their teacher education courses.

As it is important for data to be based on evidence, rather than conjecture, the ACDE also does not support speculation about whether the pilot, which involved volunteer students, reflects the likely outcomes of the compulsory test still to be introduced.

“It’s important to remember that 92 per cent of teacher education students passed this year’s pilot literacy test and 90 per cent passed the numeracy test, which puts those students in the top 30 per cent of the population for personal numeracy and literacy skills,” ACDE President, Professor Tania Aspland, says.

“We would, of course, prefer perfect scores, but we know that there are students who require additional support during their studies.

“Some of these students are from disadvantaged backgrounds or have disabilities and we Deans are committed to providing what is needed to ensure that Australia has an inclusive teacher workforce, which reflects our diverse community needs,” Professor Aspland, says.

“For this reason the ACDE has been actively working to increase the number of teacher education students from groups that are currently under-represented, most notably Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.”

The ACDE does not believe that Australia’s future interests are well served by repeated factual distortions about teacher quality that deter potential teacher education course enrolments, as shown by the recent declines in teacher education enrolments.

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