2014 NAP – ICT literacy report shows a decline in ICT literacy

The 2014 National Assessment Program (NAP) – information and communication technology (ICT) literacy report has been released today by the Education Council.

The NAP – ICT literacy test assesses student ICT knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as students’ ability to use ICT creatively, critically and responsibly.

In October and November 2014, around 10,500 Year 6 and Year 10 students participated in the NAP – ICT literacy online test. Samples of students were randomly selected from over 650 government, Catholic and independent schools in metropolitan, rural and remote areas around the country.

The report shows a significant decline in the mean performance of Year 6 students in 2014, compared to the last assessment in 2011. Similarly, the mean performance of Year 10 students is significantly lower than the mean performance in all previous NAP – ICT literacy assessments (2005, 2008 and 2011). The report also shows that in each year level, there has been a reduction in the percentage of students meeting the NAP – ICT literacy proficient standards.

ACARA CEO, Robert Randall, says the proficiency standards set in this assessment are challenging but they are reasonable and attainable for Year 6 and Year 10 students. For example, Year 6 students were asked to search a website to find appropriate material, format a document, crop an image and create a short slide show. Students in Year 10 were asked to design an online survey, use software to add two new levels to an online game and create a short animated video.

“The decline in performance is of concern, and there is a need for a renewed focus on the teaching of digital technologies in schools,” says Mr Randall.

“Schools now have access to the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies, which covers the core aspects of ICT literacy that are vital for students to engage in a world dependent on these technologies for future employment and social interaction.

“We cannot expect students to reach the proficiency standard represented by the NAP – ICT literacy assessment on their own, through a personal use of technology. There is a need for explicit attention on the teaching and learning of knowledge, understanding and skills, which were the subject of this test and which are in the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies.”

From 2017, education ministers have determined that the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) will commence to move online. The familiarity that students have with technology, as observed in the survey results taken after the conclusion of the NAP – ICT literacy test, confirms the viability of the move to NAPLAN online. The NAP – ICT literacy results do not mean that the achievement of this goal has been compromised. The content of the NAP – ICT literacy test is focussed on higher order thinking and achievement of specific knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to a sophisticated use of information and communication technologies.

Read the full 2014 National Assessment Program (NAP) – information and communication technology (ICT) literacy report on the NAP website.