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National Survey of Information and Communications Technology Literacy

The Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) through its Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce (PMRT) has commissioned ACER to conduct a national sample assessment of information and communication technology literacy commencing in October 2005. The assessments will be conducted at Year 6 and Year 10.

The study began in May 2004 and is intended to determine how well progress is being made towards meeting one of the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century that specifies that when students leave school they should: be "confident creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society."

ICT literacy is defined "as the ability of individuals to use ICT appropriately to access, manage, integrate, and evaluate information, develop new understandings, and communicate with others in order to participate effectively in society."

ACER has been involved in studies of ICT in schools since its work with the Sunrise Schools began in 1988, continuing through to its involvement in the Second Information Technology in Education Study (SITES) and to other projects such as the use of ICT in the teaching of social studies in Year 5 classrooms. Although ICT has been embraced with enthusiasm by Australian schools there is relatively little experience in measuring the development of ICT literacy by students.

Assessment instruments have been developed and pilot studies began in late 2004. There will be a field trial in April of 2005 and the national sample survey assessments of students in Year 6 and Year 10 will occur in October 2005. The national samples will consist of approximately 260 schools and up to 4000 students at each year level. Fifteen students from each school will be selected randomly to take part in the study.

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The assessment will consist of a background questionnaire, a general skills test and six core modules, four of which will be undertaken by both Year 6 and Year 10 students, one that will be undertaken by Year 10 students only and one that will be taken by Year 6 students only. Each student will complete two of the core modules.

The study will provide a comprehensive picture of the standards of ICT literacy of Australian students. Reporting of student achievement will be in terms of bands of proficiency and two of these bands will be identified as the performance standard, one for Year 6 and a second for Year 10. ICT literacy will be reported at a national level for all students; males and females; indigenous and non indigenous; LBOTE and non LBOTE; geographic locations of metropolitan, provincial and remote; and socio economic status categories. Within each state ICT literacy will be reported for all students and for males and females.

A detailed report on the survey is due to be published in May 2006.

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ACER UPDATE

Indigenous education researcher appointed

ACER has appointed Alison Stone to the position of Research Fellow, Indigenous Education. Alison is the first researcher appointed by ACER to specialise in research into Indigenous education. Since joining ACER in late 2004 Alison has worked on a range of projects including the recent evaluation of the Indigenous youth magazine, *Deadly Vibe* and the ongoing Indigenous Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study.

Prior to joining ACER, Alison was a teacher in the Department of Education in Tasmania. During her time in three high-poverty Tasmanian schools, Alison proved to be particularly talented in literacy, ICT and behaviour management. Before becoming a teacher Alison worked in child care. Alison recently conducted a workshop on behaviour management for the University of Tasmania's education faculty and is currently completing a PhD looking into how universities prepare undergraduates for teaching to teach Indigenous children. Alison's research interests include high poverty schools, Indigenous education, leadership and inclusion.

ACER appointed distributor of Sigma Assessment Systems

ACER has been appointed the exclusive distributor in Australia and New Zealand for Sigma Assessment Systems, Inc. psychometric assessment instruments. Sigma is a founding member of the Association of Test Publishers, and has been providing products and services to human resource professionals, counsellors, and psychologists for over 30 years. Sigma publishes a variety of psychological instruments, including measures of ability, personality, and career interest. Clients include NASA, Intel, DaimlerChrysler, Lucent Technologies, Nokia, and AT&T. ACER Press has produced an introductory catalogue of the Sigma assessments. They cover a wide range of applications including recruitment and selection, ability and personality, clinical and counselling, and careers interests. Most of the instruments in the catalogue are available for online administration. To obtain a copy of the catalogue or to discuss your requirements, please contact ACER Press by phone on (03) 9277 5447 or email [. \(JavaScript must be enabled to view this email address\)](#)

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Student Well-Being and Resilience Survey (Secondary Schools)

The Australian Principals' Associations Professional Development Council has commissioned ACER to undertake a national survey of secondary schools, to gather information on school policies, programs and practices concerned with health promotion and their support of student well-being. The results of the survey have the potential to make an important impact on policy and the depth and kinds of future support available for health promotion in schools. The survey will have a fairly broad scope in what it seeks to find out from schools. In line with a whole school approach to mental health promotion, questions will encompass curriculum, teaching and learning, school ethos and environment, and the partnerships and services which schools might use to support its practice. However the survey instrument will focus particularly on those measures schools take to stimulate and foster their students' resilience in the face of the various challenges to well-being and mental health they face as adolescents and young adults.

Monitoring and evaluation of secondary science program

ACER's International Institute has been working with Melbourne University Private to deliver training to a group of 14 senior administrators from Pakistan on Monitoring and Evaluation of secondary science programs. Between 14 February and 5 March ACER staff presented a program on Monitoring and Evaluation in secondary science for the group from the provinces of the Punjab, Balochistan and North West Frontier Province. The program was very successful with a final evaluation indicating significant growth in understanding of the principles and practices of Monitoring and Evaluation as well the development of practical plans for the application of this knowledge in each province.

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