

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)

**ACEReSearch**

---

[ACER eNews Archive](#)

[ACER Archives](#)

---

5-2010

## ACER eNews 05 May 2010

ACER

Follow this and additional works at: [https://research.acer.edu.au/enews\\_archive](https://research.acer.edu.au/enews_archive)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

ACER, "ACER eNews 05 May 2010" (2010).  
[https://research.acer.edu.au/enews\\_archive/37](https://research.acer.edu.au/enews_archive/37)

This Article is brought to you by the ACER Archives at ACEReSearch. It has been accepted for inclusion in ACER eNews Archive by an authorized administrator of ACEReSearch. For more information, please contact [repository@acer.edu.au](mailto:repository@acer.edu.au).

Published May 2010

In this issue:

- [University students lacking staff contact](#)
- [Turning up and tuning in key to Indigenous education](#)
- [ACER UPDATE](#)

## University students lacking staff contact

The largest ever survey of current higher education students in Australia and New Zealand has revealed worrying findings about interactions between students and their teachers.

The 2009 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) involved over 30,000 students from 35 higher education institutions. A public report on the results was released by ACER on 17 May. AUSSE reports on the time and effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities and on students' perceptions of other aspects of their university experience including interactions with university staff.

"Research shows us that the contact students have with staff are among the strongest influences on positive learning outcomes," said ACER Principal Research Fellow and director of the AUSSE Associate Professor Hamish Coates.

"When students have the opportunity to speak with their teachers about their performance, their grades, or ideas from their classes, particularly outside of the classroom, and engage with their teachers on an individual level, students tend to be more engaged with learning," he said.

AUSSE 2009 reveals that:

- A small, but still significant proportion of students (12.5 per cent of first year and 9.8 per cent of third year students) say they 'never' receive timely feedback on their academic performance from their teachers.
- Many Australasian students do not ever discuss their grades (32 per cent), ideas from classes (46.7 per cent) or career plans (52.6 per cent) with their teachers.
- Being supported by teaching staff plays a dramatic role in keeping students involved, particularly in first year, and in the quality of education.
- A very large proportion of students (more than 70 per cent) have 'never' worked with teaching staff outside of coursework requirements.

"Universities need to measure engagement to inform improvement," Associate Professor Coates said. "AUSSE provides data that universities can use to attract, engage, retain and graduate students."

**Published May 2010**

“We need to look at how students are learning and the outcomes they are achieving to help universities identify what really counts in terms of quality.”

The AUSSE is a collaboration between ACER and participating universities. Around 45 institutions are participating in 2010. The full report, *Doing More for Learning: Enhancing engagement and outcomes*, and further information on AUSSE is available from <http://ausse.acer.edu.au>

Published May 2010

## Turning up and tuning in key to Indigenous education

Indigenous students are performing well below the Australian average in international tests and student attitudes, behaviours and backgrounds could provide some of the keys to understanding this, according to a report launched on 19 May by ACER.

The report is based on findings from all three completed cycles of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is managed nationally by ACER.

Indigenous students on average have reported lower levels of access to home educational resources, such as a desk, textbooks and a quiet place to study, and also generally have parents with lower levels of experience of education than non-Indigenous students.

This report focused on the psychological factors that can affect student achievement, and found that while Indigenous students on average have lower levels of confidence, less interest in learning, lower levels of motivation and engagement with reading and higher levels of anxiety about education than non-Indigenous students, they still put in as much effort and reported similar levels of persistence with learning, and felt similar levels of general engagement with school, as their non-Indigenous peers.

However, the report also found that Indigenous students are less likely to attend pre-school, and are more likely to be late to school on a regular basis, to miss consecutive months of schooling and to change school several times.

Some absences may be due to ceremony and Sorry business (Indigenous bereavement rituals); however, as PISA shows a link between consistent school attendance and better student performance, ways must be found to minimise the disadvantages to Indigenous students through missing school.

These factors contribute to Indigenous students' underperformance in international tests of educational achievement.

"Indigenous students are lagging well behind both the Australian and the international averages, and the gap is not closing," report co-author Dr Sue Thomson said.

"More than a third of Indigenous students do not meet the basic proficiency levels in maths, reading and science considered necessary to face the challenges of life beyond school.

"Our report shows that programs to improve Indigenous education should address students' attitudes, engagement, motivation and beliefs.

"It also suggests that funding to schools with high numbers of Indigenous students could allow for a higher level of resources to help counteract the lack of resources in their own homes.

**Published May 2010**

“As well, it is vital that there is an understanding that students need to attend school regularly in order for them not to fall behind,” Dr Thomson said.

The report, Contextual factors that influence the achievement of Australia’s Indigenous students: Results from PISA 2000–2006, by Lisa De Bortoli and Sue Thomson, is available from [www.acer.edu.au/ozpisa/reports/](http://www.acer.edu.au/ozpisa/reports/)

Published May 2010

## ACER UPDATE

### New research database on distance and online education

The Cunningham Library is now producing a new research database on distance and online education. This searchable web database contains details of 6,167 books, articles, conference papers and reports from publishers in Australia and overseas and is updated monthly. Material in the database is drawn from the Australian Education Index, also produced by Cunningham Library, with additional material sourced from a variety of international organisations and publishers.

The database contributes to the Distance Education Hub, a research consortium between the University of New England, Charles Sturt University, Central Queensland University, the University of Southern Queensland, and Massey University in New Zealand. Please visit <http://cunningham.acer.edu.au/dbtw-wpd/textbase/drde/drde.html> For enquiries please email [communications@acer.edu.au](mailto:communications@acer.edu.au) (JavaScript must be enabled to view this email address)

### Copyright © Australian Council for Educational Research 2015

All rights reserved. Except under the conditions described in the Copyright Act 1968 of Australia and subsequent amendments, no part of this electronic publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without written permission. Please address any requests to reproduce information to [communications@acer.edu.au](mailto:communications@acer.edu.au)

[Subscribe](#)

Australian Council for Educational Research  
Private Bag 55, Camberwell, Victoria Australia 3124  
Tel: + 61 3 9277 5555  
Fax: + 61 3 9277 5500  
Web: [www.acer.edu.au](http://www.acer.edu.au)

