Research Developments

Newsletter of the Australian Council for Educational Research

• Australian students excel in international study
• Early literacy and numeracy achievement influences ENTER scores
• VET programs offer alternative pathways
• Testing overseas students
• Coach-based training doubles for young women
Australian students international study

Results indicate Australian 15-year-olds are among the best in the world in reading, mathematics and science.

Australian 15-year-olds achieved above the OECD average in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. Across 32 countries, only students in Finland clearly outperformed Australian students in reading, only in Japan did students have significantly higher levels of mathematical literacy, and only in Japan and Korea did students perform significantly better than Australia in scientific literacy.

These are among the findings of the first OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, conducted in 2000 and recently published world-wide.

PISA surveyed the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy skills of 265,000 students, including 6200 Australian students from 231 government, Catholic and independent schools. The survey’s main emphasis in 2000 was on the measurement of student outcomes in reading, whereas in 2003 mathematical literacy will be the major focus and in 2006, scientific literacy.

ACER Executive Director, Professor Geoff Masters, said the study provides unique information about how well Australia is preparing our young people for life after school.

“The findings are highly encouraging. There are very few countries anywhere in the world providing 15-year-olds with reading, mathematical and scientific literacy skills above those being achieved in Australia,” Professor Masters said.

Students in all Australian states and territories achieved results at or above the OECD average. Students in the ACT performed well in all three areas, and students in WA performed well in mathematical and scientific literacy, although differences between states often were small and not significant.

In all 32 countries, girls outperformed boys in reading. In mathematical literacy, boys outperformed girls in about half the participating countries, but there was no significant gender difference for Australian students in either mathematical or scientific literacy.

Australian students had more varied literacy levels than students in many other countries. In almost all Australian states and territories, the top 10 per cent of students in reading outperformed the top 10 per cent of students in even the highest-performing country, Finland (see graph).

In mathematical and scientific literacy, the top 10 per cent of students in the ACT and WA outperformed the top 10 per cent of students in Japan and Korea respectively. But the bottom 10 per cent of Australian students had literacy levels consistently below those of the bottom 10 per cent of students in these high-performing countries.

While Australian students did well, there are some aspects that are a cause for concern, including the relatively low performance of boys in reading, particularly in relation to narrative texts. Boys from disadvantaged backgrounds were twice as likely as girls from similar backgrounds to be in the lowest quarter of reading scores. It was found that boys were much less engaged in reading than girls.

Another area of concern was the relatively low performance of indigenous students. The report notes that indigenous students as a group will continue to need extra support to raise achievement levels, but PISA has shown that some indigenous students perform well and many have more than adequate literacy skills for participation in adult life.

The report also found that higher amounts of homework are associated with higher achievement in Australia and in many other countries surveyed. It emphasises the importance of schools and parents encouraging students to do homework as a way of enhancing their achievement.

Apart from the amount of homework, the most important school-level factors in Australia were teacher morale (as perceived by principals) and disciplinary climate and teacher support (as perceived by the students). These factors were associated with better student results in more than one area.

Students in Australia who came from a non-English speaking home background performed at an equivalent level in mathematical literacy to students whose home language was English, but at a lower level in reading and scientific literacy.
What is PISA?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, and began in 1998. PISA arose because there was a need for regular and reliable information on educational outcomes across countries, especially measures of students' skills. Because it is part of an ongoing program of reporting every three years, an aim of PISA is to monitor trends in performance over time.

What is assessed?

The learning domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy, together with some other areas such as students’ familiarity with computers, learning strategies and attitudes towards their schools are being assessed.

PISA focuses on young people’s ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life problems and situations, rather than on how much curriculum-based knowledge they possess.

In 2000, students undertook a pen-and-paper assessment in their school. Students also answered a 30-minute questionnaire about themselves, and their principals answered a 30-minute questionnaire about their schools. Students were asked about their home backgrounds, their attitudes to school and learning, and the strategies they used when studying. Principals were asked about the atmosphere and resources for learning at the school, and the kinds of programs the students were studying.

Who took part in PISA 2000?

Participants were aged 15 years and approaching the end of their compulsory schooling. National random samples of 4500 or more 15-year-old students were chosen from 150 or more schools in each country to participate in the assessment. Worldwide, 285,000 students from 32 countries were surveyed.

The countries that took part in PISA 2000 were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil*, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia*, Liechtenstein*, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation*, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States (*non-OECD nations).

Countries where assessment will be completed in 2002 are: Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, Indonesia, Israel, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Peru, Romania, Thailand.

OECD countries that will participate in PISA from 2003 onwards are: Slovak Republic, Turkey.

How is PISA managed?

PISA 2000 was implemented internationally by a consortium led by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Countries set up centres for collecting and processing their own country’s data, with the international consortium ensuring standards and protocols were met.

Funded by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, the Australian component of PISA 2000 was run by ACER and guided by a National Advisory Committee (NAC).
Early literacy and achievement influences

Achievement in literacy and numeracy in Year 9 has the strongest impact on the Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER), according to a recent ACER report.

The report, Tertiary Entrance Performance: The Role of Student Background and School Factors, investigated the relationship between ENTER scores and a variety of factors. It forms part of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) program that ACER manages jointly with the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

The report focused on a national cohort of more than 13,000 students who were in Year 9 in 1995 and examined their experiences up to 2001 as they moved from school into post-compulsory education, training and work.

Dr John Ainley, Deputy Director of ACER, said that the strongest influence on tertiary entrance scores is a student’s proficiency in literacy and numeracy in earlier years, which represents an accumulation of students’ skills in foundation areas of learning.

“Literacy and numeracy achievement reflects students’ capacity to read, interpret and process text and numerical information. Those skills provide the foundation for learning in their specialist studies in the final years of school,” Dr Ainley said.

“The second most important influence on tertiary entrance performance, according to the report, was the particular school a student attended. The report and other research suggests that school culture or environment, teaching practices, student confidence and motivation, organisation and resource use may contribute to differences among schools.

Socioeconomic background – parental education, wealth and occupational status – was the third most important influence on tertiary entrance performance.

“Students whose parents are professionals, and to a lesser extent, managers, exhibit higher ENTER scores. However, taking into account students’ levels of literacy and numeracy, the direct influence of socioeconomic background is somewhat weaker,” Dr Ainley said.

Closely following socioeconomic background as an influence on ENTER scores was school sector. Students who attended non-government schools outperformed students from government schools, even after taking into account socioeconomic background and achievement in literacy and numeracy.

The report lists a number of other factors that influence ENTER scores. They include gender, region and ethnicity.

Overall, gender differences in ENTER scores are relatively minor. On average, females achieve higher tertiary entrance scores.

Ethnicity also plays a small role in ENTER scores. The average ENTER score varies across ethnic groups. Some groups perform substantially higher than students with Australian-born fathers and some significantly lower. Students whose fathers were born in Asia showed higher ENTER scores than students whose fathers were born in Australia.

The report also found that some ethnic groups perform at higher levels than would be expected given their prior achievement levels and socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, the high performance of Asian students is not explained by differences in their socioeconomic background or prior achievement.


The full report is available on the ACER web site (go to www.acer.edu.au/vocational/lsay/reports/lsay22.pdf) or copies may be purchased from ACER Press Customer Service telephone (03) 9835 7447; fax (03) 9835 7499; email sales@acer.edu.au.
Numeracy

ENTER scores

ENTER scores explained

• For the majority of Australian Year 12 students, their Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) is the most important schooling outcome influencing their future.

• ENTER is a nationally equivalent measure developed as a selection tool to assist higher education institutions select applicants. All students in Australia who have successfully completed Year 12 study in tertiary entrance subjects receive an ENTER score.

• States and Territories differ in how they refer to this measure. In New South Wales and the ACT, it is the Universities Admissions Index (UAI). In Victoria, it is called the Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER). In South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, it is called the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER).

• ENTER is a number between 99.95 and zero that reports the rank position relative to all other students. It takes into account the number of students who sit the tertiary entrance subjects in any year and also the number of people of Year 12 schooling leaving age in the total population. The performance of a student with a TER of 70.00 is equal to or better than 70 per cent of the Year 12 school leaver age population.

• ENTER scores for each course and higher education institution vary, typically ranging from the high-90s for medicine and law to the mid-60s for arts and business.

• These scores are also important for students who don’t go on to higher education after Year 12. Employers may use ENTER scores to screen applicants.

Regional differences play a small role in ENTER scores
The report found that non-metropolitan students’ tertiary entrance performance is marginally lower than that of metropolitan students.
VET programs offer alternative pathways

Young Australians not inclined towards academic studies are turning to vocational education and training.

In the *Adelaide Declaration of National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments recognised the importance of Vocational Education and Training and strongly encouraged the participation of all students in VET at some point during their secondary education.

Young Australians are increasingly opting for a diverse range of pathways in their post-school years, and there has been a significant growth in participation in VET programs in recent times (see Figure 1).

The introduction of VET has provided real choices for students not inclined towards academic studies or for those students who wish to pursue a broader education. It also provides alternatives for those at risk of early school leaving.

Two recent ACER reports examine the participation of young Australians in vocational education and training programs during school and post-school years. The first analyses the levels of participation in VET in Schools.

The second investigates differences between those who participate in VET after leaving school and those who do not.

Both reports are based on data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) research program, which is jointly managed by ACER and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). LSAY follows the experiences of national cohorts of students as they move from school into post-compulsory education, training and work. It is the most up-to-date and detailed information on recent school leavers in Australia.

25 per cent of students participate in VET in Schools

The term VET in Schools refers to vocational programs that comply with the National Training Framework and which also form part of a senior secondary certificate. It includes programs incorporating structured workplace learning as well as a number of school-based vocational programs.

Participation in VET in Schools varies considerably depending on factors such as early achievement, socioeconomic status, school sector, region and ethnicity, according to the report *VET in Schools: Participation and Pathways*.

The report by ACER Senior Research Fellow, Dr Sue Fullarton, analyses the levels of participation in VET in Schools, the characteristics of the young people who take VET programs, and their work and study activities after leaving Year 12.

The report found that almost one-quarter of the student cohort had participated in some form of VET while at school. Fifteen per cent had undertaken some VET in Schools subjects at either Year 11 or Year 12, seven per cent had completed subjects in both Year 11 and Year 12, and more than one per cent had participated in a school-based new apprenticeship or traineeship.

Students who had low academic results were more likely to take up VET in Schools subjects than those who had achieved high results (37 per cent compared with 14 per cent). Participation rates were also lower among students whose family background was from a non-English speaking country (18 per cent) as compared to those with Australian-born parents (24 per cent).
The educational and professional background of parents also played an important role in VET in Schools participation. Of the students whose parents had completed only secondary school, 25 per cent participated in VET, compared to 14 per cent of those with tertiary educated parents. Similarly, of those students whose parents were employed in manual occupations, 27 per cent participated in VET, compared to 15 per cent with parents in professional occupations.

Regional differences played a minor role, with participation rates slightly higher in rural areas (26 per cent) than in metropolitan areas (21 per cent).

There were, however, significant differences among states. The highest level of participation in VET in Schools was found in Queensland (41 per cent) and the lowest in Victoria (12 per cent). South Australia had an 18 per cent participation rate, New South Wales 21 per cent and Western Australia 29 per cent.

The report also found notable differences between school sectors. Students from independent schools were less likely to participate in VET in Schools compared to those in government schools (14 per cent and 26 per cent respectively).

Dr Fullarton said that there is great variety around Australia both in the nature and extent of VET programs that are offered to students and in the extent to which students are able to access these programs.

37 per cent of Year 12 non-completers undertake VET

Approximately 37 per cent of those who did not complete Year 12 had undertaken some sort of VET study in their initial post-school years, according to the ACER report Participation and Achievement in VET of Non-completers of School by Katrina Ball and Stephen Lamb.

The report investigates differences between those who participate in VET after leaving school and those who do not. It also provides information on the characteristics and success rates of non-completers who participate in VET.

The report found that participation by non-completers in VET varied by background and there were clear differences according to gender, school sector and socioeconomic status.

Gender played a significant role, with higher participation rates for males than females (42 per cent compared to 30 per cent). School sector was also a factor, with the participation rate for non-completers from Catholic schools higher (44 per cent) than that for government schools (36 per cent) and independent schools (31 per cent). There was also a lower participation rate for non-completers from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds (35 per cent for the lowest quartile of socioeconomic status compared to 43 per cent for the highest quartile).

Participation also varied by type of VET course. Over 40 per cent of all non-completers enrolled in further study entered trade-related courses (preparatory or full trade courses). A quarter preferred non-trade skills courses.

Male non-completers (57 per cent) were more likely to enrol in a trade-related course, while females (82 per cent) were more likely to enrol in courses that teach other skills.

The study also found that not all non-completers are successful in their vocational education and training studies. While almost 60 per cent of modules undertaken by non-completers in the sample resulted in a successful outcome, 29 per cent were not successfully completed. Failure rates varied depending on the type of qualification, with the highest failure rates in the advanced courses (diploma level). Pass rates were highest in trade-related and similar level courses.


Both reports are available on the ACER web site (www.acer.edu.au) or copies may be purchased from ACER Press Customer Service telephone (03) 9835 7447; fax (03) 9835 7499; email sales@acer.edu.au.

Testing overseas students

A new test assesses the preparedness of overseas candidates for academic studies in Australia.

In recent years, Australia has developed an excellent reputation as a destination for international students, particularly those from Asia, who find the quality of education, its relatively low cost (compared to Britain and the US), and safe studying environment very appealing.

In 2001, about 140,000 international students were enrolled in Australian universities making education one of Australia’s boom exports and the second largest services export earner after tourism.

In 2001, international students comprised about 18 per cent of Australia’s university population and spent almost $1 billion on university tuition alone.

With the influx of thousands of students from a large number of nations, Australian universities have faced difficulties in interpreting the varied credentials and evidence presented in support of student applications.

An innovative test launched by ACER in September 2001 is assisting universities to tackle this issue.

The International Student Admissions Test (ISAT) is providing universities with a reliable and efficient way of testing students’ potential to succeed in Australian tertiary courses. It complements the existing English-language competency tests.

“While Australian universities have procedures for assessing English language proficiency, until now there has been no commonly accepted method of assessing the preparedness of overseas candidates for academic studies in Australia. ISAT addresses this concern by assessing cross-curricular academic abilities,” the Executive Director of ACER, Professor Geoff Masters, said.

ISAT requires students to answer 100 multiple-choice questions in three hours. The questions measure critical reasoning (using material from the humanities/social sciences) and quantitative reasoning (using material from science/mathematics) abilities which are considered important for coping with the intellectual demands of most tertiary courses. The emphasis is on thinking skills rather than curriculum-specific knowledge and English-language proficiency.

IDP Education Australia uses experienced test administrators and a wide network of offices in 65 countries to manage ISAT overseas. Students within Australia are able to apply to sit the test through most tertiary admissions centres.

ISAT candidates receive a copy of their results, which also are made available to Australian universities.

“ISAT provides universities with an indication of an applicant’s cognitive abilities which should be useful in validating their credentials, assisting with decisions about borderline applicants and guiding placement into particular programs or courses,” Professor Masters said.

“ACER has been encouraged by the response from universities in the successful national trials of ISAT. Universities have shown an interest in using the test for entrance into courses in 2002.”

Ms Susan Nankervis, ACER’s ISAT Project Director, said the trial population was quite varied and drew on international students in Australia and a number who sat the test in their home country.

“There was a good gender mix, an excellent range of English language proficiencies and an interesting diversity of nationalities represented in the trial test population, all of which gave ACER the information required to evaluate the validity of ISAT for international student admissions,” Ms Nankervis said.

The first test was conducted in November 2001. There will be at least four sittings of ISAT annually. For further information contact Ms Susan Nankervis on (03) 9277 5566 or nankervis@acer.edu.au.
Firm-based training doubles for young women

Young workers in Australia realise the benefits on-the-job training and education can have on their career.

Participation of young Australian women in formal and informal training programs provided by their employers as part of their work (firm-based training) has more than doubled between 1985 and 1997, according to a recent ACER report.

In 1997, 32 per cent of women aged 19 to 26 participated in external firm-based education and training, compared with 15 per cent in 1985. The incidence of in-house training also increased for young women – from 32 per cent in 1985 to 37 per cent in 1997. For young men there was little change in that period, increasing marginally from 28 per cent to 29 per cent for external training and 29 per cent to 32 per cent for internal training.

The report, Firm-based Training for Young Australians: Changes from the 1980s to the 1990s by Michael Long and Stephen Lamb, examined changes in the extent, pattern and outcomes of participation in short episodes of firm-based education and training by young Australians.

The study uses data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) project, which is jointly managed by ACER and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). It focuses on two national samples of young Australians, the most comprehensive available data to analyse the changes in training experienced by young workers over the period 1985 to 1997.

According to the report, the extent of formal firm-based education and training for young Australians is substantial, but uneven. As part of their work, 46 per cent of employees in the sample participated in formal training in 1994, receiving an average of 55.5 hours over the previous 12 months. However, the distribution of training time was skewed with a small proportion of individuals receiving extensive training and many receiving little training (the median amount of training was 17.2 hours per year).

Most of the firm-based education and training was provided by the worker’s own employer (76 per cent). Young women had a slightly higher incidence of formal training (49 per cent) than young men (44 per cent), but on average received fewer hours (73 hours for males over the previous 12 months, compared with 40 for females).

The report also found that workers with ‘better’ jobs (eg those who are in full-time jobs requiring more education, or in professional or managerial occupations) receive more training. Training tended to be higher in public administration and community service industry sectors and lower in agriculture and primary industry. Evidence also suggests that those who undertook in-house firm-based training received, on average, higher hourly wages.

Dr John Ainsley, Deputy Director of ACER, said the report highlighted the importance of ongoing training for employees to build on their initial skills.

"Training provided in the workplace is an important component of lifelong learning and helps to build a more skilled workforce," Dr Ainsley said.

Long, M., Lamb, S. (2002). Firm-based Training for Young Australians: Changes from the 1980s to the 1990s, LSAY Research Report No. 23, Melbourne: ACER. The full report is available on the ACER web site (see www.acer.edu.au) in pdf format. Copies may be purchased from ACER Press Customer Service telephone (03) 9835 7447, fax (03) 9835 7499, email sales@acer.edu.au.

Training tends to be higher in public administration and community service industry sectors and lower in agriculture and primary industry. Evidence also suggests that those who undertook in-house firm-based training received, on average, higher hourly wages.
Monash University – ACER

Conference papers available

The 2001 CEET Annual National Conference was held in Melbourne on 29 October. The conference theme was Linking Economics and Learning: VET for Innovation. The following conference papers can be downloaded from the CEET Website (details below).

Up the creek without a paddle? The misadventures of new industries in the VET system, Fran Ferrier, CEET.

Recent Commonwealth developments in VET, Colin Walters, DETYA.

Linking learning and work, Helen Praetz, Victorian Qualifications Authority.

Organisations for learning: structures for innovation, Rob Sadler, CEET.

Job growth and replacement needs in nursing occupations, Chandra Shah & Gerald Burke, CEET.

The education of enrolled nurses, Lisa McKenna, Monash University.

VET capacity to deliver leading edge and innovative work skills, Andre Lewis, ANTA.

Funding to support learning in the knowledge economy, Gerald Burke, CEET.

What is happening to training? A story of two surveys, Michael Long, CEET.

Australians working in a global economy, Leo Maglian, APEET & CEET.

Vale Ross Harrold 1939-2001, Phil McKenzie, ACER & CEET.

Recent CEET Working Papers (can be downloaded free from the website)


No. 38 – Learning through TAFE for voluntary and paid work: a survey of TAFE students, Chris Selby Smith & Sonnie Hopkins.

For further details on CEET’s work contact:

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Website: www.education.monash.edu.au/centres/CEET

ACER Press new titles

Spelling Recovery
Jan Roberts, A960BK, $27.50
Jan Roberts has drawn from her depth of knowledge and understanding of current learning theories, specifically the development of spelling skills, to produce this invaluable teacher resource which redresses the problem of inaccurate spelling by students, empowering them to become competent spellers.

One in Eleven: Teaching Students with a Language Learning Disability
Mandy Brent, Florence Gough, Susan Robinson, A494BK, $59.95
One in 11 students has a language learning disability (LLD). This book outlines a whole-school approach that identifies LLD students and offers suggestions for teaching and learning strategies to address this difficulty in various school contexts, especially in subject areas.

Special Education: A Matter of Choice?
Jo Jenkinson, A961BK, $39.95
This latest title in the Australian Education Review series examines the obligation of governments to ensure equitable access to education for students with a wide range of educational needs. Special education is indeed a matter of choice – but whose?

Teaching the Chinese Learner
Watkins and Biggs, A951BK, $38.50
The Chinese Learner, published in 1996, discussed how Chinese learners were clearly doing some things better than their Western counterparts; but how was this achieved in large classes and harsh educational environments? This follow-on text focuses on the work of teachers. It analyses the ways in which teachers in Hong Kong and China think about and conduct their teaching. Differences between Chinese and Western approaches to teaching are identified, and lessons are drawn for educational reform.

Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading, Revised Edition (PAT-R)
ACER, A000PAT, $130.00 (Specimen set)
The revised Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading – PAT-R Comprehension and PAT-R Vocabulary – are designed to help teachers assess the reading comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge of students from Year 3 to Year 9. PAT-R is a major revision of the highly popular testing program, first published in Australia in 1973. The PAT-R tests enable teachers to report on students’ individual and group levels of achievement. Achievement is reported on clearly defined scales and in relation to Australian norms.

The ACER Press catalogue, including prices, is now available on the internet (www.acerpress.com.au). Melbourne customers wishing to view the ACER Press product range in person should note that ACER Press is located at 347 Camberwell Road, Camberwell. Customer service staff can also be contacted on telephone (03) 9835 7447 or sales@acer.edu.au.
ACER offers a suite of professional development options for teachers, psychologists, parents, human resource professionals, researchers and policy makers.

Options for 2002 include:
- Selection from a generic calendar of professional development activities presented Australia-wide;
- Individual design of sessions for small or large groups;
- Customised series of sessions for schools or regions;
- Interactive workshops;
- Topic specific conferences; and
- Delivery in your workplace or at convenient locations throughout Australia.

ACER invites you to discuss the possibilities of professional development designed specifically to meet your needs.

Contact Kerry-Anne Hoad, Manager, Professional Development Unit, telephone (03) 9835 7402; fax (03) 9835 7499; email hoad@acer.edu.au

A sample of topics and presenters for 2002:

**EDUCATION**

**Bullying – A whole school approach**
Aim: to provide new insights into bullying behaviour and offer easy-to-implement procedures and strategies to handle the complex nature of school bullying.
Presenters: Amelia Suckling and Carla Temple

**Assessment Tools for the Primary Years**
Aim: to introduce a range of assessment tools with guidance on use and interpretation of data.
Presenters: John King and Barbara Smith

**Numeracy in the Early Years & Numeracy in the Middle Years**
Aim: Practical activities and instructional games which focus on the development of thinking processes and the concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
Presenter: George Booker

**Literacy - Sight words made simple**
Aim: to provide accelerated learning techniques to rapidly improve reading, increase fluency and develop comprehension through the explicit teaching of the magic 100 words.
Presenter: Marcella Reiter

**Social skills and behaviour guidance - Stop, Think, Do**
Aim: provide strategies to support social skill training in children, behaviour guidance and motivating children’s learning.
Presenter: Lindy Petersen

**PSYCHOLOGY/SOCIAL WELFARE**

**Safe Anger Release & Proactive Counselling for Children and Adolescents**
Aim: to provide practical ways for dealing with anger, frustration and acting out behaviour of children and adolescents. Exploring the tools of drawing, bioenergetics, emotional release exercises and relaxation.
Presenters: Mark Pearson and Helen Wilson

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator courses:**
**Qualifying Programs:**
**Step 1: MBTI & Careers counselling; MBTI & Team building:**
Aim: to identify Type preferences and explore how we prefer to use energy in life and work and how we like to interact with our environment in terms of space, time and deadlines.
Presenters: Peter Geyer and Jo Fleischer

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Test Administration Course**
Aim: to cover basic ethics in testing, introduction to psychometric tests, test administration practices, scoring tests, and test administration process, structure and rationale.
Presenter: Marian Power

**PARENT EDUCATION**

**Raising Real People**
Aim: to address some of the difficulties and dilemmas of parenting children and adolescents.
Presenter: Andrew Fuller

For workshop information and registration forms, see the ACER web page (www.acer.edu.au) or contact the Professional Development Unit Administration Officer, telephone (03) 9835 7403; fax (03) 9835 7499; email workshops@acer.edu.au

**ACER eNews**

ACER now has an electronic newsletter to keep you up-to-date with the latest information and research results. The newsletter is sent to subscribers six times a year.

To subscribe, send an email to mailserv@acer.edu.au with the words subscribe enews in the body of the message.
ACER opens Sydney office

ACER has opened an office in Sydney, located at 140 Bourke Road, Alexandria.

Executive Director, Professor Geoff Masters, said the new Sydney office would allow ACER to strengthen its expanding role as a major national and international provider of research-based information, products and services.

“The opening of an office in Sydney has been a priority of the ACER Board of Directors for the past 12 months. The existence of offices in both Sydney and Melbourne will allow us to provide enhanced services to the education community, not only in New South Wales and Victoria, but nationally and internationally,” Professor Masters said.

“Our long-term plan is to locate a wide range of ACER activities in our Sydney office, including policy research studies, assessment programs, and the provision of products and services to support the work of professional practitioners.”

The head of ACER’s Sydney office is Professor Jim Tognolini. The office can be contacted on telephone (02) 8338 6800 and fax (02) 9693 5844.

NSW HSC examination review

ACER Executive Director, Professor Geoff Masters, has reviewed the implementation of the new standards-referenced HSC examination and marking processes for the NSW Board of Studies.

The review follows the first full implementation of the Year 12 examination procedures recommended by Professor Barry McGaw.

Professor Masters reviewed processes for setting HSC examinations, developing marking guidelines, marking examinations, and determining the standard of achievement students have demonstrated.

The review also examined the quality assurance procedures established by the Board of Studies. Professor Masters consulted with a range of interest groups in New South Wales and presented his report in March 2002. Go to www.acer.edu.au to download the report.

Research Conference 2002

ACER’s annual Research Conference will be held at the Novotel, Brighton Le Sands in Sydney from 13-15 October 2002. The theme will be Providing World-Class School Education: What can Australia learn from international achievement studies?

Research Conference 2002 will review lessons being learned from Australian participation in international achievement studies. The questions to be addressed by conference speakers include: How well are Australian schools preparing young people for the world of the future? How does the standard of school education in Australia compare with standards in other countries? Are some countries doing a better job of equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, understandings, attitudes and values required for future national economic competitiveness and an enhanced standard of living? Are there lessons to be learned from other countries about ways of supporting young people to become informed and engaged citizens in a just and open society? Are some countries’ schools more effective than Australian schools in overcoming disadvantage? If so, how do they do this? What is world’s best practice – for example, in the use of ICT in classroom learning?

For further information, visit www.acer.edu.au or email conference@acer.edu.au.

International Test Users’ Conference

The International Test Users’ Conference will be held at the Rex Hotel in Sydney from 3-5 July 2002. The conference is highly relevant to test users in the areas of psychology, rehabilitation counselling, education, special education, human resources, recruitment, organisational psychology, career planning, research, health and government, and to developers and publishers of tests.

The conference will provide an opportunity for test users to keep abreast of recent developments, to network with other test users, and to become more informed and skilled in choosing and implementing tests and testing programs.

Presenters include experts in the field of testing, such as:

- Professor Dave Bartram, Research Director, The Psychological Corporation;
- Professor Geoff Masters, Executive Director, ACER;
- James C. Slaughter, President, IPAT; and
- Associate Professor John Briere, Psychiatry and Psychology, University of Southern California School of Medicine.

To register, contact the conference organiser on (03) 9380 1429; fax (03) 9380 2722; email: conorg@ozemail.com.au.