



**PISA 2018**

**Australian  
15-year-old  
students living in an  
integrated world**

Lisa De Bortoli  
Catherine Underwood  
Sarah Richardson

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# Key findings

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international comparative study of student performance directed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). PISA measures the cumulative outcomes of education by assessing how well 15-year-olds, who are nearing the end of their compulsory schooling in most participating educational systems, are prepared to use the knowledge and skills in particular areas to meet real-life opportunities and challenges.

The OECD chooses an interdisciplinary 21st century competency to incorporate into the assessment in each cycle. The goal is to gain a more well-rounded and comprehensive understanding of students' readiness for adult life. In PISA 2018, the innovative domain was global competence, which assessed students' ability to thrive in an interconnected world.

Global competence is defined in PISA as a multidimensional capacity that encompasses the ability to examine issues of local, global and cultural significance; understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others; engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures; and take action for collective well-being and sustainable development (OECD, 2020).

This report focuses on aspects of the global competence module in the PISA 2018 Student Questionnaire and the School Questionnaire. It examines aspects of data collected from student and principal self-reports from the Australian perspective. This report focuses on the similarities between students in Australia and a number of participating countries and economies, referred to as comparison countries, and similarly differences between principals in Australia and comparison countries. It also focuses on differences between students and in Australian states and territories, and between students from different demographic groups, regarding their attitudes, learning opportunities at school. The report also covers aspects of global competence from the perspective of schools and how schools promote global competence.

## Results in an international context

### Examining local, global and intercultural issues

- ▶ Australian students reported a greater awareness of global issues than students in Singapore, Estonia, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Korea, Macao (China), and students across OECD countries, while they reported less awareness of global issues than Canadian students.
- ▶ Australian students reported a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than students in Ireland, New Zealand, Estonia, Scotland, Macao (China), and students across OECD countries, while they reported less self-efficacy regarding global issues than students in Germany, Korea, Singapore, Canada, and Poland.

### Understanding and appreciating the perspective and world views of others

- ▶ Australian students reported greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than students in New Zealand, Scotland, Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), and students across OECD countries, while they reported less ability to understand the perspectives of others than students in Canada, Ireland, Chinese Taipei, Singapore and Korea.

- ▶ Australian students reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than students in Germany, Scotland, Korea, Hong Kong (China), and Ireland, while they reported less interest in learning about other cultures than students in Macao (China), Estonia, New Zealand, Canada, Poland, Chinese Taipei, Singapore, and students across OECD countries.
- ▶ Australian students reported greater respect for people from other cultures than students in Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), Poland, Estonia, Chinese Taipei, Singapore, and students across OECD countries, while they reported less respect for people from other cultures than students in Scotland and Canada.
- ▶ Australian students reported greater ability to adapt to new situations referred to as cognitive adaptability than students in Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), Chinese Taipei, Korea, Scotland, Singapore, Poland, Germany, and students across OECD countries, while they reported less ability to adapt to new situations than Canadian students.
- ▶ Australian students reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than students in Poland, Estonia, Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), Germany, and students across OECD countries, while they reported less positive attitudes towards immigrants than students in Chinese Taipei, Korea, and Canada.

### Ability to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures

- ▶ Australian students reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in Scotland, Macao (China), Poland, Estonia, and students across OECD countries, while they reported less awareness of intercultural communication than students in Korea, Singapore and Chinese Taipei.
- ▶ Australian students reported having more contact with people from other countries in four different contexts<sup>1</sup> than students in Macao (China), Poland, and across OECD countries, while they reported having less contact with people from other countries in three of the four environments than students in Canada, Germany, Ireland, and New Zealand.
- ▶ Approximately two-thirds of Australian students reported having contact with people from other countries *in their family, at school and in their circle of friends* and almost half of Australian students reported having contact with people from other countries *in their neighbourhood*.
- ▶ Thirty-eight per cent of Australian students reported that they speak two or more languages well enough to converse with others, which was similar to the proportion of students in Scotland, higher than the proportion of students in Korea, and lower than the remaining comparison countries and the OECD average.
- ▶ Sixty-four per cent of Australian students reported that they do not learn a foreign language, which was similar to the proportion of students in New Zealand and Scotland and higher than the remaining comparison countries and the OECD average (12%). Twenty-eight per cent of Australian students reported that they learn one foreign language, which was lower than the OECD average (38%). Eight per cent of Australian students reported that they learn two or more foreign languages which was lower than the OECD average (50%).

### Taking action for collective well-being and sustainable development

- ▶ Australian students reported a greater sense of global-mindedness than students in Germany, Estonia, Poland, Scotland, Macao (China), Ireland, and students across OECD countries, while they reported a less sense of global-mindedness than students in Hong Kong (China), Canada, Chinese Taipei, Singapore and Korea.

1 *in their family, at school, in their neighbourhood and in their circle of friends*



- ▶ A lower proportion of Australian students reported taking action with various global issues than students from across OECD countries.
- ▶ Over half of the Australian students reported taking action by *keeping informed about world events via Twitter or Facebook*, which was lower than the proportion of students in the remaining comparison countries, with the exception of Macao (China) and Germany.
- ▶ Approximately one-third of Australian students reported taking action by *participating in activities promoting equality between men and women*, which was higher than seven comparison countries, including Germany, New Zealand, Scotland and Singapore, and lower than five comparison countries including Canada, Hong Kong (China) and Korea.

## Education for living in a global world

- ▶ The most common global competence activity Australian students engaged in at school was *learning about different cultures* (80%), which was lower than students in Singapore, Chinese Taipei, and across the OECD, while the least common global competence activity Australian students engaged in was *I am often invited by my teachers to give my personal opinion about international news* (43%), which was lower than students in Singapore, Canada, Korea, Poland, Hong Kong (China), Germany and across the OECD.
- ▶ More than 95% of Australian teachers, as reported by principals, included the following intercultural learning activities in their lessons: *In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in my country; In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in other countries; In our school, students learn about the cultures (e.g. beliefs, norms, values, customs or arts) of diverse cultural groups that live in my country; In our school, students learn about different cultural perspectives on historical and social events; and Our school supports activities that encourage students' expression of diverse identities (e.g. national, religious, ethnic or social identities).*
- ▶ Generally, lower percentages of students in Australia attended schools in which principals reported that global issues were taught in year 10 than in most comparison countries.
- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students attended schools in which principals reported *respect for cultural diversity* is covered in the curriculum than students in Estonia, Hong Kong (China) and New Zealand.

## Developing global competence at school

- ▶ Australian principals reported more positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals in Macao (China), Estonia, Chinese Taipei, Korea and Hong Kong (China), while they reported lower multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals in Singapore, Ireland, Scotland, and Poland.
- ▶ Australian students reported a less discriminatory school climate as it related specifically to students perceptions of their teachers' attitudes towards people from other cultural groups, than students in Chinese Taipei, Poland, Estonia, New Zealand, Hong Kong (China), Germany, and students across the OECD countries, while they reported a greater discriminatory school climate than students in Korea, Ireland, and Scotland.

## Results for the states and territories

### Examining local, global and intercultural issues

- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales reported a greater awareness of global issues than students from across the OECD.
- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia reported a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues, while in Tasmania reported less self-efficacy regarding global issues than the OECD average.

### Understanding and appreciating the perspective and world views of others

- ▶ Students in New South Wales and Victoria reported greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than students from across the OECD.
- ▶ Students in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania reported less interest in learning about other cultures than the OECD average.
- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories, with the exception of Tasmania, reported greater respect for people from other cultures than students from across OECD countries.
- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories, with the exception of Tasmania and the Northern Territory reported greater cognitive adaptability than the OECD average.
- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories, with the exception of the Northern Territory, reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than students from across OECD countries.

### Ability to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures

- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students from across the OECD.
- ▶ There were more students in all Australian states and territories who reported having contact with people from other countries across the four different environments (*in the family, at school, in my neighbourhood, in my circle of friends*) than Tasmanian students.
- ▶ There were more students in all Australian states and territories who reported speaking two or more languages well enough to converse with other than Tasmanian students.

### Taking action for collective well-being and sustainable development

- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, and Western Australia reported a greater sense of global-mindedness than students from across OECD countries.

### Education for living in a global world

- ▶ Between 77% of students in Queensland and Tasmania and 86% of students in the Australian Capital Territory reported that they engaged in *learning about different cultures*, and between 63% of students in Tasmania and 77% of students in the Australian Capital Territory reported *learning how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues*.
- ▶ A lower proportion of students in the Northern Territory than in every other Australian jurisdiction attended schools in which principals reported that each of the global issue topics were covered in the year 10 curriculum.

- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported intercultural learning activities were covered in the year 10 curriculum was lower in the Northern Territory than in all other jurisdictions for four of the five intercultural learning activities.

## Developing global competence at school

- ▶ Principals in all Australian states and territories with the exception of Queensland and Western Australia reported more positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals from across OECD countries.
- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories with the exception of the Northern Territory reported a lower perception of discrimination by most of their teachers than students from across OECD countries.

## Results for female and male students

- ▶ Male students reported a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than female students.
- ▶ Female students reported a greater ability to understand the perspectives of others, a greater interest in learning about other cultures, a greater respect for people from other cultures, more positive attitudes towards immigrants, a greater awareness of intercultural communication, and a greater sense of global-mindedness than male students.

## Results for socioeconomic background

- ▶ The more advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report a greater awareness of global issues, a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues, a greater ability to understand the perspectives of others, greater interest in learning about other cultures, a greater respect for people from other cultures, a greater ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability, more positive attitudes towards immigrants, a greater awareness of intercultural communication, and a greater sense of global-mindedness.

## Results for geographic location

- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported a greater awareness of global issues, a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues, a greater ability to understand the perspectives of others, a greater ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability, more positive attitudes towards immigrants, and a greater sense of global-mindedness than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported a greater interest in learning about other cultures, a greater respect for people from other cultures, and a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in provincial and remote schools, and in turn, students in provincial schools reported a greater interest in learning about other cultures, a greater respect for people from other cultures, and a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in remote schools.
- ▶ There were more students in metropolitan schools (72%) who reported having contact with people from other countries *in their family* than students in remote schools (56%).

## Results for Indigenous background

- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported a greater awareness of global issues, a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues, a greater ability to understand the perspectives of others, a greater ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability, more positive attitudes towards immigrants, and a greater awareness of intercultural communication than Indigenous students.

## Results for immigrant background

- ▶ First-generation students and foreign-born students a greater awareness of global issues, a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues, a greater ability to understand the perspectives of others, a greater respect for people from other cultures, a greater ability to adapt to new situations, and a greater sense of global-mindedness than Australian-born students.
- ▶ First-generation and foreign-born students reported a greater interest in learning about other cultures and more positive attitudes towards immigrants than Australian-born students, while foreign-born students reported a greater interest in learning about other cultures and more positive attitudes towards immigrants than first-generation students.
- ▶ First-generation students reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than Australian-born students.
- ▶ There were more foreign-born (75%) who reported speaking two or more languages well enough to converse with others than Australian-born students (20%).

# Reader's guide

## Target population for PISA

This report uses '15-year-olds' as shorthand for the PISA target population. In practice, the target population was students aged between 15 years and 3 (complete) months and 16 years and 2 (complete) months at the beginning of the assessment period, and who were enrolled and attending an educational institution full-time or part-time. As the majority of students are 15-year-olds, it has become the default shorthand for the population.

## Standard errors, confidence intervals and significance tests

PISA assesses a subset or sample of 15-year-olds so that inferences about the entire population of 15-year-olds can be obtained, but this design introduces a source of uncertainty. The use of confidence intervals based on the standard errors provides a way to take into account the uncertainty associated with the sampling design.

The calculation of confidence intervals can indicate the precision of a sample average as a population average. Confidence intervals provide a range of scores within which we are confident that the population average actually lies. In this report, each sample average is presented with an associated standard error. The confidence interval, which can be calculated using the standard error, indicates that there is a 95% chance that the actual population average lies within plus or minus 1.96 standard errors of the sample average.

Throughout the report, significance tests were undertaken to assess the statistical significance of the comparisons made.

## Statistical significance

Tests for statistical significance indicate whether observed differences between results occur because they are 'real' or if they have occurred because of sampling error, or chance. An 'insignificant' or 'not significant' result should be ignored because it may not reflect real differences, while a 'significant' result refers to the statistical nature of the difference and indicates the difference is worth noting.

Significance does not imply any judgement about absolute magnitude or educational relevance. It is not to be confused with the term 'substantial', which is qualitative and based on judgement rather than statistical comparisons. A difference may appear substantial but not statistically significant (due to factors that affect the size of the standard errors around the estimate, for example) while another difference may seem small but reach statistical significance because the estimate was more accurate.

The term 'significant' is used to describe a difference that meets the requirements of statistical significance at the 0.05 level, indicating that the difference is real, and would be found in at least 95 analyses out of 100 if the comparisons were to be repeated.

In this report, all reported differences and changes are statistically significant, unless specifically stated otherwise. References to no difference or no change mean that the statistical requirement for significance was not met.

## OECD average

An OECD average was calculated for each assessment domain and metacognitive construct, and is presented for comparative purposes. The OECD average corresponds to the arithmetic average of the respective country estimates, and can be used to compare a country on a given indicator with a typical OECD country.

## PISA indices

The measures that are presented as indices, summarise student and school principal responses to a series of related items constructed on the basis of previous research. In describing students in terms of each characteristic (e.g. student awareness of global issues) scales were originally constructed on which the OECD average was given an index value of zero, and about two-thirds of the OECD population were given between -1 and +1 (the index has a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1).

Negative values on an index do not necessarily imply that students responded negatively to the underlying items. Rather, a student with a negative score responded less positively than students on average across OECD countries.

The indices are based on all categories for each item, whereas the reported percentages are collapsed into fewer categories. Due to this and the weighting of responses, a ranking based on the value of the indices will sometimes not exactly correspond to one based, say, on the average of the percentages.

Information about school characteristics was collected through the School Questionnaire, which was completed by the principal. In this report, responses from principals were weighted so they are proportionate to the number of 15-year-olds enrolled in the school.

## Rounding of figures

Because of rounding, some numbers and percentages in figures may not exactly correspond to the totals reported in the text. Totals, differences and averages are always calculated on the basis of exact numbers and are rounded only after calculation. When standard errors have been rounded to one or two decimal places and the value 0.0 or 0.00 is shown, this does not imply that the standard error is zero, but that it is smaller than 0.05 or 0.005 respectively.

## Sample surveys

PISA is a sample survey and is designed and conducted so that the sample provides reliable estimates about the population of 15-year-old students. The PISA 2018 sample was a two-stage stratified sample. The first stage involved the sampling of schools in which 15-year-old students could be enrolled.

The second stage of the selection process involved randomly sampling students within the sampled schools. The following variables were used in the stratification of the school sample: jurisdiction; school sector; geographic location; sex of students at the school; and a socioeconomic background variable (based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, which consists of four indexes that rank geographic areas across Australia in terms of their relative socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage).

## Definition of background characteristics

A number of definitions used in this report are particular to the Australian context, as well as many that are relevant to the international context. This section provides an explanation for those that are not self-evident.

## Jurisdictions

Collectively, Australian states and territories are also generally referred to as jurisdictions.

## Indigenous background

Indigenous background data were derived from the Student Questionnaire, which asked students whether they identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. For the purpose of this report, data for the two groups are presented together under the term 'Indigenous students'.

## Socioeconomic background

Socioeconomic status is a broad concept that summarises many different aspects of a student, school or school system. In PISA, a student's socioeconomic status is typically measured by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS). The ESCS is a composite score built by the indicators of three indices via principal component analysis:

- ▶ the highest occupational status of parents (HISEI)
- ▶ the highest educational level of parents in years of education (PARED), and
- ▶ home possessions (HOMEPOS).

As no direct income measure is available from the PISA data, the availability of household possessions is used as a proxy for family wealth.

The values of the ESCS scale are standardised to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 for the population of students in OECD countries, with each country given equal weight. The ESCS index makes it possible to draw comparisons between students and schools with different socioeconomic profiles. The higher the value of ESCS, the higher the socioeconomic status. It must be noted that there have been some adjustments to the computation of ESCS over the PISA cycles.

For the purposes of this report, ESCS is used to distinguish among students who are:

- ▶ disadvantaged students: whose values on the ESCS are among the bottom 25% within their country
- ▶ socioeconomically average: students whose values on the ESCS are among the middle 50% within their country
- ▶ advantaged students: whose values on the ESCS are among the highest 25% within their country.

## Geographic location

In Australia in 2018, participating schools were coded with respect to the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Schools Geographic Location Classification (Jones, 2004), as reported in previous cycles of PISA.

For reporting purposes, only the broadest categories of the MCEETYA Schools Geographic Location Classification have been used:

- ▶ metropolitan – mainland capital cities or major urban districts with a population of 100 000 or more (e.g. Queanbeyan, Cairns, Geelong, Hobart)
- ▶ provincial – provincial cities and other non-remote provincial areas (e.g. Darwin, Ballarat, Bundaberg, Geraldton, Tamworth)
- ▶ remote – areas with very restricted or very little accessibility to goods, services and opportunities for social interaction (e.g. Coolabah, Mallacoota, Capella, Mount Isa, Port Lincoln, Port Hedland, Swansea, Alice Springs, Bourke, Thursday Island, Yalata, Condingup, Nhulunbuy).

In addition, schools were coded using the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure, (ABS, 2011). However, only the MCEETYA Schools Geographic Location Classification has been used for reporting results by geographic location in this report.

## Immigrant background

Immigrant background is derived from students' self-report of the country in which they and their parents were born. For the analysis in this report, immigrant background is defined by the following categories

- ▶ Australian-born students – students born in Australia with both parents born in Australia
- ▶ First-generation students – students born in Australia with at least one parent born overseas
- ▶ Foreign-born students – students born overseas with both parents also born overseas.

## Language background

Language background is derived from students' self-report of the language they speak at home most of the time. For the analysis in this report, language background has been defined as:

- ▶ students who speak English at home
- ▶ students who speak a language other than English at home.

## Reporting of country results

Seventy-nine countries and economic regions participated in PISA 2018. Economic regions are required to meet the same PISA technical standards as participating countries, although results for an economic region are only representative of the region assessed and not of the country. For convenience, this report refers to these economic regions as countries (see Chapter 1 for further detail).

However, this report does not include results for all countries that participated in PISA in 2018. The selection of countries was based on those countries who participated in the global competence questionnaire and those countries who performed either similarly to, or better than, Australia in reading literacy in the 2018 cycle of PISA. The average across all OECD countries (referred to as the OECD average) has also been reported for added comparison.

For the purposes of international comparisons with Australia on various student and school characteristics, 13 countries have been reported (9 OECD countries; 4 partner countries). The comparison countries include OECD countries: Australia, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Korea, New Zealand, Poland, and Scotland (United Kingdom)<sup>2</sup>; and the partner countries: Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), and Singapore.

The global competence data for Germany and Scotland (United Kingdom) did not meet the PISA technical standards. The sample coverage for Germany was at least 50% but less than 75%, and the same coverage for Scotland (United Kingdom) was less than 50%. The OECD nevertheless deemed both countries' data to be accepted as largely comparable with that of other participating countries, therefore data for Germany and Scotland (United Kingdom) have been included in this report.

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<sup>2</sup> The United Kingdom participated in the core assessment of PISA 2018, however only Scotland (and not England, Northern Ireland and Wales) participated in the global competence questionnaire.



# An introduction to PISA

## What is PISA?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international comparative study of student performance directed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). PISA measures the cumulative outcomes of education by assessing how well 15-year-olds<sup>3</sup>, who are nearing the end of their compulsory schooling in most participating educational systems, are prepared to use the knowledge and skills in particular areas to meet real-life opportunities and challenges.

In Australia, PISA is managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and is jointly funded by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments.

## What are the main goals of PISA?

PISA tries to answer several important questions related to education:

- ▶ How well prepared are young adults to meet the challenges of the future?
- ▶ What skills do young adults have that will help them adapt to change in their lives? Are they able to analyse, reason and communicate their ideas effectively?
- ▶ Are some ways of organising schools and school learning more effective than others?
- ▶ What influence does the quality of school resources have on student outcomes?
- ▶ What educational structures and practices maximise the opportunities of students from disadvantaged backgrounds?
- ▶ To what extent does a student's performance depend on their background? How equitable is education for students from all backgrounds?

## What does PISA assess?

PISA 2018 is the seventh cycle of PISA since it was first conducted in 2000 and measures students' skills in the core areas of reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. In PISA,

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<sup>3</sup> Students who were aged between 15 years and 3 (complete) months and 16 years and 2 (complete) months at the time of the assessment.

'literacy' refers not only to the capacity of 15-year-old students to apply knowledge and skills in key subject areas, but also to students' ability to analyse, reason and communicate effectively as they pose, solve and interpret problems in a variety of situations.

PISA also assesses additional domains in each cycle, including an innovative domain, which assesses an interdisciplinary 21st century competency that, in addition to the core assessment domains, provides a more comprehensive outlook on students' 'readiness for life'.

## The PISA global competence assessment framework<sup>4</sup>

The PISA assessment framework for global competence is the conceptual foundation of the assessment. It defines the construct and what it means to be competent in this assessment domain.

### How is global competence defined in PISA?

Global competence is defined in PISA as a multidimensional capacity that encompasses the ability to:

1. examine issues of local, global and cultural significance
2. understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others
3. engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures; and
4. take action for collective well-being and sustainable development.

The inclusion of global competence in PISA 2018 was intended to reflect the fact that contemporary students live in an interconnected, diverse and rapidly changing world. To help students prepare to navigate this context as adults, there is increasing emphasis on how education systems can best support them. This includes a focus on enabling students to gain the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them thrive in their future lives.

Figure 1.1 shows that in PISA, global competence is defined as a combination of four interdependent dimensions and are supported by four core components (specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and values).



**FIGURE 1.1** The dimensions of global competence

<sup>4</sup> Details about the PISA 2018 global competence assessment framework have been assembled from the PISA 2018 *Results (Volume VI): Are students ready to thrive in an interconnected world?* (OECD, 2020).

## **The four dimensions of global competence**

This section provides a general description of the four dimensions that were selected by the OECD to comprise the notion of global competence. It is important to note that this is a contested domain in which there is much debate about what 'global competence' means, and which elements comprise it. This means that there is not uniform agreement among scholars on the four dimensions that were included to measure global competence in 2018.

### **Examine issues of local, global and cultural significance (Dimension 1)**

Globally competent people are able to combine knowledge about the world and critical reasoning whenever they form their own opinion about a global issue. They use higher-order thinking skills and critical thinking to develop a position concerning local, global or cultural issues.

### **Understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others (Dimension 2)**

Globally competent people are capable of considering global problems and other people's perspectives and behaviours from multiple viewpoints. Through acquiring knowledge about other cultures history, values, communication styles and beliefs, individuals can recognise their own perspective and behaviours from others.

### **Engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures (Dimension 3)**

Globally competent people are able to understand the cultural norms, interactive styles and degrees of formality of intercultural contexts, and they can adapt their behaviour and communication accordingly. This dimension encompasses appreciation for respectful dialogue, the desire to understand others and efforts to include marginalised groups. It emphasises individuals' capacity to interact with others across differences in ways that are open, appropriate and effective.

### **Take action for collective well-being and sustainable development (Dimension 4)**

Globally competent people are active and responsible members of society. They are able to create opportunities to take informed, reflective action and have their voices heard, and they are engaged to improve living conditions in their own communities and to build a more just, peaceful, inclusive and environmentally sustainable world.

## **The four core components of global competence**

The four dimensions are underpinned by four inseparable components: knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. For example, examining a global issue such as climate change requires a good knowledge of that particular topic, the skill to transform this awareness into deeper understanding, the ability to reflect on this issue from multiple cultural perspectives and the willingness to take action for sustainability and collective well-being.

### **Knowledge about the world and other cultures**

Knowledge about issues of global and local significance and about similarities, differences and relations between cultures helps young people to engage critically in everyday situations, challenge disinformation and stereotypes about other cultures and counter oversimplified views of the world.

### **Skills to understand the world, communicate with others and take action**

Skills are defined as the capacity to carry out a complex and well-organised pattern of thinking (in the case of a cognitive skill) or behaviour (in the case of a socio-emotional skill) in order to achieve a particular goal. Living in interconnected and multicultural societies requires numerous skills,

including reasoning, communication in intercultural contexts, perspective taking, conflict resolution and adaptability.

### **Attitudes of openness, respect for people from different cultural backgrounds and agency regarding global issues**

The ability to thrive in multicultural settings is both composed of and propelled by key dispositions or attitudes. Attitudes refer to the mindset that an individual adopts towards a person, a group, an institution, an issue, a behaviour or a symbol. This mindset integrates beliefs, evaluations, feelings and tendencies to behave in a particular way. Living with others requires an attitude of openness towards people from other cultural backgrounds, an attitude of respect for cultural differences and agency regarding global issues (i.e. that one is a citizen of the world with commitments and obligations towards the planet and others, irrespective of their particular cultural or national background).

### **Valuing human dignity and diversity**

Valuing human dignity and cultural diversity helps people live together because both are critical filters through which individuals process information about other cultures and decide how to engage with others and the world. Individuals who cultivate these values become more aware of themselves and their surroundings and are strongly motivated to fight against exclusion, ignorance, violence, oppression and war.

## **Global competence – an essential 21st skill**

The Covid-19 pandemic has underlined two inescapable truths about the contemporary world. On the one hand humans are irrevocably interconnected. No country has been spared the impact of the pandemic. National borders have proved porous and attempts to 'lock down' regions within countries have been undermined by the persistent movement of people.

At the same time, global interdependence has been reinforced in several different ways. The development of Covid-19 vaccinations has been made possible by decades of globally integrated research and a worldwide community of scientists. Our reliance on global supply chains has been magnified in the scramble for vaccine doses. Advice from the World Health Organisation has influenced political communications worldwide. Together, these combine to underscore the interconnectedness of all countries and peoples of the world.

As students finish school and commence their lives as adults, the ability to succeed in globally interconnected business, social and employment contexts is essential. This is reflected in the focus of the PISA Global Competence dimensions on knowledge about the world (Dimension 1), the ability to consider a range of perspectives (Dimension 2) and the skill to engage in respectful dialogue that takes cultural differences into account (Dimension 3).

While the pandemic has highlighted human's interdependence, it has also underscored the negative impact of inequalities. Distinctions in wealth, quality of healthcare and scientific capacity have led to profound divides between countries. In some countries, good vaccination coverage and financial support from government has enabled the continuation or resumption of close to normal life. In the best cases, economic growth is once again on track and communities have continued to thrive.

At the same time, and sometimes in close geographical proximity, other countries remain ravaged by a health and economic disaster like no other, with no end in sight. Deaths from Covid-19 go unrecorded and graves unmarked. The toll of the pandemic on lives, livelihoods and communities may never be known, but can only be counted in millions and billions.

As young adults evolve to become leaders of the future, they will need to tackle a range of emerging issues. These include the increasingly rapid transformation of the climate, growing shortages of fresh water, a build-up of pollutants in the atmosphere and an ever-growing human population. All of these will require humanity to pull together to find solutions that benefit all. This need is reflected in the PISA Global Competence focus on acting for collective wellbeing and sustainable development

(Dimension 4). It draws directly from the notion of active citizenship and includes working towards a fairer, more inclusive and peaceful world.

In PISA, as in other assessment activities, the traditional focus has been on a combination of skills and knowledge. These are certainly reflected in the notion of Global Competence used by the OECD in PISA 2018. The ability to thrive in an interconnected world requires more than skills and knowledge alone, however. The inclusion of values and attitudes in the definition of Global Competence used by the OECD reflects this. It includes the need to understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others (Dimension 2), to self-reflect on their own attitudes (Dimension 2), a desire to understand others (Dimension 3).

These affective elements are the least amenable to assessment and the hardest to gather data on. Nevertheless, it is important that they are included here. In an interconnected world in which humans need to join forces to address significant challenges, it is ever more important for young people to be able to build bridges with those different to themselves. To recognise their shared humanity. To recognise their mutual dependence, and to value the rich heterogeneity that the diverse populations of the world have to offer.

Additional dimensions of global competence that were not explicitly included in the OECD's take on global competence are also important. These include empathy, openness and compassion. They are, however, intangible and are likely to be resistant to the shaping and moulding that education systems tend to focus on. Hence, it makes sense that they were not given much attention, with instead a greater emphasis on elements that can be taught and that are of greatest relevance to preparation for the world of work.

Employers increasingly expect those they hire to be equipped with the aptitudes and skills to cooperate in real or virtual teams that transect time zones, languages, and cultural differences. The increasing normality of cross-border interconnectedness in areas as diverse as commerce, education, finance, healthcare and the law are driving this focus. PISA specifically targets students towards the end of their compulsory education and hence emphasising elements that will facilitate successful careers, in addition to lives as community members and leaders, is a clear influence on the way in which global competence has been defined for PISA 2018.

## The global competence assessment

The PISA 2018 global competence assessment involved two instruments:

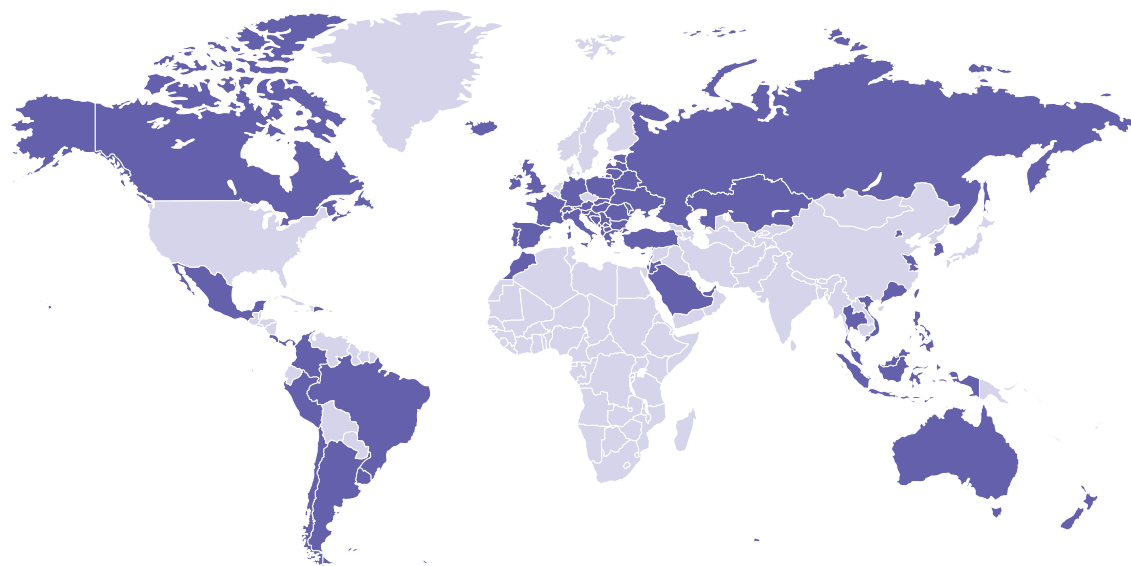
- ▶ a **cognitive test** which focused on the cognitive aspects of global competence, including knowledge and cognitive skills of three dimensions of global competence (examining issues of local, global and cultural significance; understanding and appreciating the perspectives and worldviews of others; and taking action for collective well-being and sustainable development).
- ▶ a **set of questionnaire items** collecting self-reported information on students' awareness of global issues and cultures, skills (both cognitive and social) and attitudes, which covered all four dimensions of global competence.

Students participating in PISA completed a two-hour cognitive test which included the three core assessment domains (reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy). Cognitive items on global competence were included for those countries who participated in the cognitive assessment of global competence.

In addition to the cognitive data collected, students also completed a suite of three questionnaires. The set of questionnaire items on global competence was incorporated into the Student Questionnaire. A small set of questionnaire items global competence were also included in the School Questionnaire, which was completed by the principal.

## Countries participating in the global competence assessment

In 2018, 79 countries and economies<sup>5</sup> (all 37 OECD countries and 42 partner countries and economies) participated in the PISA assessment. Sixty-six countries, including Australia, participated in the global competence questionnaire, with 27 of these countries also participating in the global competence test (Australia did not participate in the global competence test).



OECD countries			Partner countries/economies		
<b>Australia</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>Albania</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Hong Kong (China)</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Philippines</b> <sup>†</sup>
<b>Austria</b>	<b>Iceland</b>	Norway	<b>Argentina</b>	<b>Indonesia</b> <sup>†</sup>	Qatar
Belgium	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Baku (Azerbaijan)</b>	<b>Jordan</b>	<b>Republic of</b>
<b>Canada</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Israel</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>North Macedonia</b>
<b>Chile</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Slovak Republic</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</b>	<b>Kosovo</b>	<b>Romania</b>
<b>Colombia</b> <sup>†</sup>	Japan	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Russian Federation</b> <sup>†</sup>
Czech Republic	<b>Korea</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Spain</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Brunei Darussalam</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Macao (China)</b>	<b>Saudi Arabia</b>
Denmark	<b>Latvia</b> <sup>†</sup>	Sweden	B-S-J-Z (China) <sup>*</sup>	<b>Malaysia</b>	<b>Serbia</b> <sup>†</sup>
<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Lithuania</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Malta</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Singapore</b> <sup>†</sup>
Finland	Luxembourg	<b>Turkey</b>	<b>Chinese Taipei</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Moldova</b>	<b>Thailand</b> <sup>†</sup>
<b>France</b>	<b>Mexico</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b> <sup>***</sup>	<b>Costa Rica</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>United Arab Emirates</b>
<b>Germany</b>	The Netherlands	United States	<b>Croatia</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Morocco</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Ukraine</b>
<b>Greece</b> <sup>†</sup>			<b>Cyprus</b>	<b>Panama</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>Uruguay</b>
			<b>Dominican Republic</b>	<b>Peru</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>
			Georgia		

Notes: Countries and economies that participated in the global competence questionnaire are in bold.  
 Countries and economies identified with a '†' participated in the global competence test.  
<sup>\*</sup> B-S-J-Z (China) refers to the four PISA participating provinces: Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang.  
<sup>\*\*</sup> Scotland participated in the global competence questionnaire, while England, Northern Ireland and Wales did not.

**FIGURE 1.2** PISA 2018 countries and economies and participation in the global competence questionnaire

In this report, a number of participating countries are used to provide international comparisons with Australia. The comparison countries include OECD countries: Canada, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Korea, New Zealand, Poland and Scotland (United Kingdom); and the partner countries: Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Macao (China) and Singapore.<sup>6</sup>

5 For ease of reading, from this point forward, economies are referred to as countries.  
 6 For more information about the comparison countries, please refer to the Reader's Guide.

## **The focus of this report**

This report focuses on the innovative domain for PISA 2018, global competency, and reports the findings from students' and principals' self-reports from the global competence questions in the questionnaires. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to PISA and the global competence assessment. Chapters 2 to 5 present the results for the global competencies needed to live in an integrated and changing world.

The focus for each chapter is based on one of the four dimensions of global competence (examining local, global and intercultural issues, understanding and appreciating perspectives and world views of others, the ability to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures, and taking action for collective well-being and sustainable development). Chapter 6 explores how schools and teachers cultivate students' ability to live in an integrated world.

## **Further information**

Further information about PISA Australia is available from the national PISA website:

<https://www.acer.org/au/pisa>.

# Examining local, global and intercultural issues

This chapter focuses on the first dimension of global competence, which describes the way in which globally competent students are able to effectively combine their knowledge about the world with critical reasoning in order to form their own opinion about a global issue (OECD, 2020, p. 70).

This chapter examines the similarities and differences between countries, Australian jurisdictions and different demographic groups in relation to student awareness of, and self-efficacy regarding, global issues.<sup>7</sup>

## Student awareness of global issues

This construct acknowledges the value of students having a deep understanding of local or global issues that may impact them.

### How is student awareness of global issues measured in PISA?

Student awareness of global issues was measured by asking students to indicate how informed they felt they were about the following global issues:

- ▶ *Climate change and global warming*
- ▶ *Global health (e.g. epidemics)*
- ▶ *Migration (movement of people)*
- ▶ *International conflicts*
- ▶ *Hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world*
- ▶ *Causes of poverty, and*
- ▶ *Equality between men and women in different parts of the world.*

For each of the issues identified, students were asked to respond on a four-point scale (*I have never heard of this; I have heard about this but I would not be able to explain what it is really about; I know something about this and could explain the general issue; and I am familiar with this and I would be able to explain this well*).

<sup>7</sup> For more information about the demographic group definitions, please refer to the Reader's Guide.



An index of student awareness of global issues was then constructed using the student responses to these global issues. Higher values on the index indicate that students expressed a greater average awareness of the global issues identified than average students across OECD countries, while lower values indicate that students expressed less awareness of global uses than an average student across OECD countries.

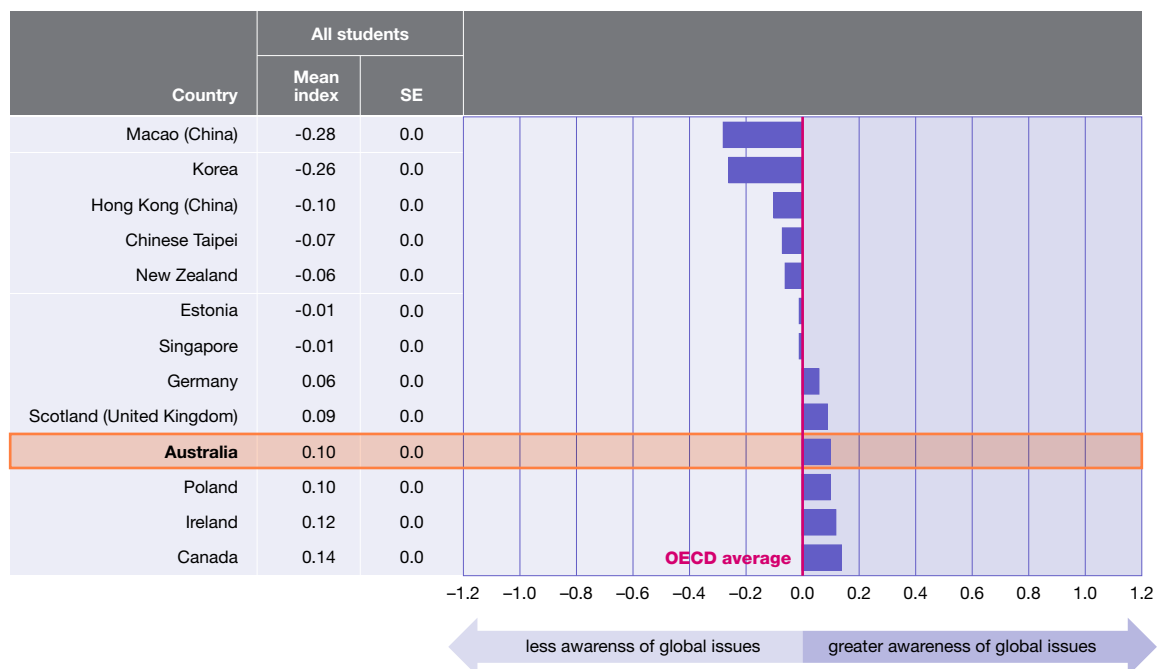
## Student awareness of global issues in an international context

Before looking at the findings it is worth considering what these are likely to reflect. A strong awareness of global issues among students indicates that they are included in curricula, most likely in the humanities and social sciences. Beyond this, if students have a good awareness of global issues, this suggests that they have access to, and are encouraged to engage with, media that provides a solid coverage of international news. Awareness of global issues may also suggest that students are part of, or in contact with, communities of mixed cultural backgrounds. In turn, strong skills in critical reasoning suggest that this is a skill that is both included in the curriculum and also explicitly taught.

Figure 2.1 presents the mean index scores on the index for student awareness of global issues for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ a greater awareness of global issues than students across OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.10 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of 0.01 for the OECD average.
- ▶ a greater awareness of global issues than students in Singapore, Estonia, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Korea, and Macao (China).
- ▶ similar levels of awareness of global issues to students in Germany, Poland and Ireland.
- ▶ less awareness of global issues than Canadian students.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the awareness of global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.1** Student awareness of global issues index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 2.2 shows the percentage of students who reported that *I know something about this and could explain the general issue*, and *I am familiar with this and I would be able to explain this well* in relation to each of the global issues, for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.<sup>8</sup>

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *climate change and global warming*, *migration*, *causes of poverty* and *equality between men and women in different parts of the world* than students across OECD countries.
- ▶ A similar proportion of Australian students and students across the OECD reported that they know about, or are very familiar, with *global health*, *international conflicts*, and *hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world*.
- ▶ A similar proportion of students in Australia, Canada and Ireland reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, the *equality between men and women in different parts of the world*, while all other comparison countries reported less familiarity.
- ▶ Students in New Zealand, Macao (China) and Korea reported less familiarity with most of the global issues than Australian students.

Country	Percentage of students who know about or are very familiar with the following topics						
	Climate change and global warming	Global health (eg. epidemics)	Migration (movement of people)	International conflicts	Hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world	Causes of poverty	Equality between men and women in different parts of the world
Macao (China)	87	67	64	57	76	73	74
Korea	88	57	61	54	66	64	82
Hong Kong (China)	91	81	65	66	79	84	81
Chinese Taipei	86	77	72	74	81	74	84
New Zealand	81	58	76	62	73	77	83
Estonia	81	63	79	76	80	80	82
Singapore	89	64	79	66	76	74	77
Germany	83	57	83	70	80	82	85
Scotland (United Kingdom)	78	59	79	65	75	87	85
<b>Australia</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>87</b>
Poland	75	71	85	81	85	76	81
Ireland	87	57	86	63	78	80	88
Canada	87	71	77	68	78	79	87
OECD average	78	65	79	66	78	78	83

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the awareness of global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.2** Percentage of students who reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, the various global issues, for Australia and comparison countries

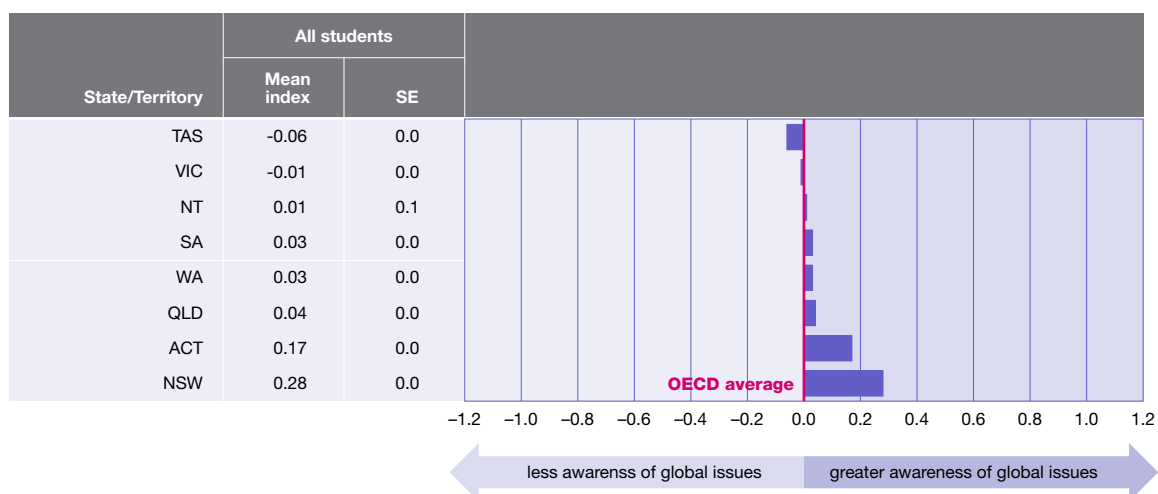
## Student awareness of global issues in a national context

Figure 2.3 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the index for student awareness of global issues

- ▶ Students in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory reported a greater awareness of global issues than students from across the OECD, while students in the other jurisdictions reported similar levels of awareness of global issues to the OECD average.

<sup>8</sup> For ease of reading, from this point onward 'I know something about this and could explain the general issue, I am familiar with this and I would be able to explain this well with the various global issues' will be referred to as 'that they know about, or are very familiar with'.

- ▶ The mean index scores for student awareness of global issues ranged from -0.06 in Tasmania to 0.28 in New South Wales.
- ▶ Students in Tasmania, Victoria, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia reported similar levels of awareness of global issues.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the awareness of global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.3** Student awareness of global issues index, by state and territory

Figure 2.4 shows the percentage of students in each jurisdiction who reported that they know about or are very familiar with the identified global issue. Most students across the jurisdictions reported that they are very familiar with the identified global issues.

- ▶ The proportion of students that reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *climate change and global warming* ranged from 77% of students in Tasmania to 87% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *global health* ranged from 61% of students in Victoria to 71% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *migration* ranged from 78% of students in Western Australia to 85% of students in New South Wales
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *international conflicts* ranged from 63% of students in the Northern Territory and Victoria to 72% of students in the Australian Capital Territory
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world* ranged from 73% of students in Victoria to 82% of students in New South Wales
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *causes of poverty* ranged from 75% of students in Tasmania to 84% of students in New South Wales
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, *equality between men and women in different parts of the world* ranged from 85% of students in Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland to 90% of students in the Australian Capital Territory

State/Territory	Percentage of students who know about or are very familiar with the following topics						
	Climate change and global warming	Global health (eg. epidemics)	Migration (movement of people)	International conflicts	Hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world	Causes of poverty	Equality between men and women in different parts of the world
TAS	77	63	79	65	75	75	85
VIC	79	61	79	63	73	77	88
NT	81	65	80	63	77	76	86
SA	81	63	81	66	77	78	86
WA	86	63	78	65	77	81	85
QLD	80	62	80	65	77	77	85
ACT	87	71	83	72	80	83	90
NSW	87	71	85	70	82	84	87

Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the awareness of global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.4** Percentage of students who reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, the various global issues, by state and territory

## Student awareness of global issues for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 2.5 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the index for student awareness of global issues.

- ▶ Male and female students reported similar levels of awareness of global issues.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report a greater awareness of global issues.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported a greater awareness of global issues than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported a greater awareness of global issues than Indigenous students.
- ▶ First-generation students and foreign-born students reported a greater awareness of global issues than Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 2.5** Student awareness of global issues index, for different demographic groups

Figure 2.6 shows the percentage of students who reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, the various global issues for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ **Gender:** The largest differences were found between male and female students, in their familiarity with *global health*, with a gap of 12 percentage points, and *international conflicts*, with a gap of 11 percentage points, both in favour of male students.
- ▶ **Socioeconomic background:** The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their familiarity with *global health*, with a 20 percentage point difference, and *climate change and global warming*, with an 18 percentage point difference, both in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ **Geographic location of schools:** The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their familiarity with *international conflicts*, with a 12 percentage point difference, and *migration*, with an 11 percentage point difference, both in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ **Indigenous background:** The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in their familiarity with *causes of poverty*, with a gap of 12 percentage points, and *equality between men and women in different parts of the world*, with a gap of 10 percentage points, both in favour of non-Indigenous students.
- ▶ **Immigrant background:** The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students were found in their familiarity with *climate change and global warming* and *migration*, each with a 5 percentage point difference in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who <i>know about</i> or <i>are very familiar</i> with the following topics			
	Climate change and global warming	Global health (eg. epidemics)	Migration (movement of people)	International conflicts
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	82	59	82	61
Males	83	71	80	71
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	74	55	73	57
Socioeconomically average students	83	65	82	67
Advantaged students	91	75	87	74
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	84	66	82	67
Provincial	79	62	77	64
Remote	74	59	72	55
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	74	59	74	59
Non-Indigenous	83	65	81	67
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	81	64	79	65
First-generation	85	67	83	68
Foreign-born	85	66	84	66

Demographic group	Hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world	Causes of poverty	Equality between men and women in different parts of the world
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	80	82	91
Males	76	77	83
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	70	70	79
Socioeconomically average students	78	80	87
Advantaged students	85	88	93
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	79	81	88
Provincial	76	75	83
Remote	73	77	83
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	72	68	77
Non-Indigenous	78	80	87
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	76	78	86
First-generation	81	83	88
Foreign-born	78	80	87

**FIGURE 2.6** Percentage of students who reported that they know about, or are very familiar with, the various global issues, for different demographic groups

## Student self-efficacy regarding global issues

*Self-efficacy relates to students' confidence in their ability to achieve control over their motivation and behaviour to complete tasks successfully. In PISA, self-efficacy was assessed by asking students about their general sense of self-efficacy regarding global competence tasks. Students who have a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to approach difficult tasks as a challenge, while students who lack self-efficacy tend to avoid difficult tasks and lack the perseverance to continue to achieve their goal (OECD, 2020, p. 77).*

## How is student self-efficacy regarding global issues measured in PISA?

Student self-efficacy regarding global issues was measured by asking students to report on the extent they believed that they could perform the following tasks on their own:

- ▶ *Explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change.*
- ▶ *Establish a connection between prices of textiles and working conditions in the countries of production.*
- ▶ *Discuss the different reasons why people become refugees.*
- ▶ *Explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change than others.*
- ▶ *Explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy.*
- ▶ *Discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the global issue tasks on a four-point scale (*I couldn't do this, I would struggle to do this on my own, I could do this with a bit of effort, I could do this easily*).

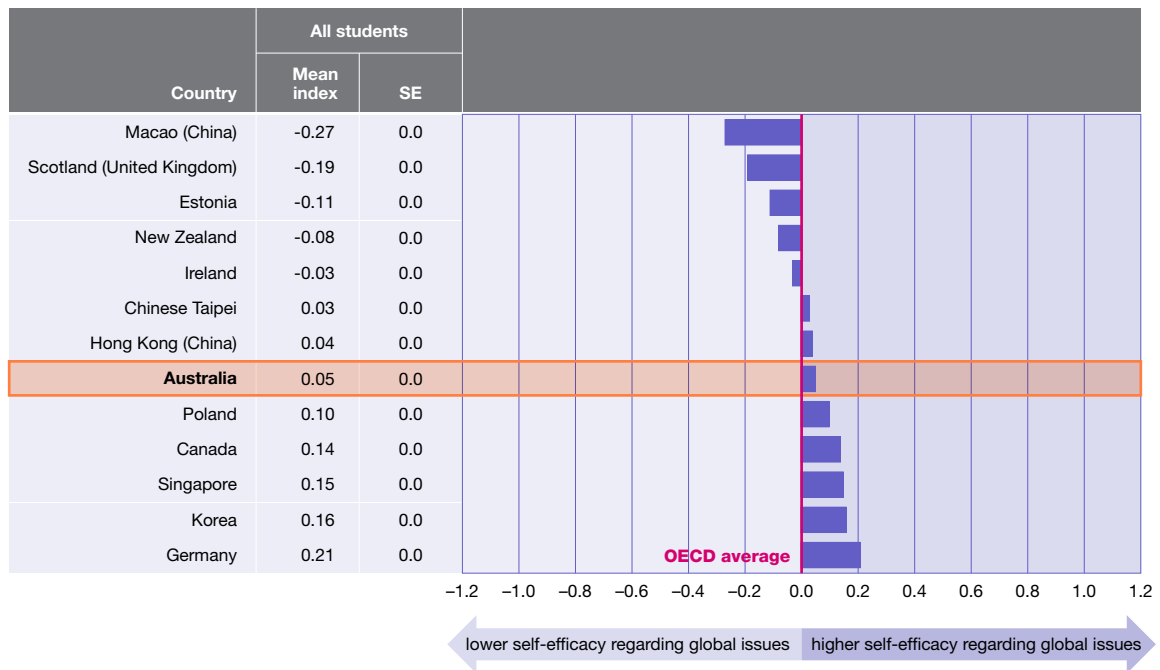
An index of student self-efficacy regarding global issues was constructed using the student responses to these global issues. Higher values on the index illustrate students having expressed a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than on average across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate students expressed less self-efficacy regarding global issues than on average across the OECD countries.

## Student self-efficacy regarding global issues in an international context

Figure 2.7 presents the mean index scores on the student self-efficacy regarding global issues index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than students across OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.05 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of 0.00 for the OECD average.
- ▶ greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than students in Ireland, New Zealand, Estonia, Scotland and Macao (China).
- ▶ similar levels of self-efficacy regarding global issues to students in Hong Kong (China) and Chinese Taipei.
- ▶ less self-efficacy regarding global issues than students in Germany, Korea, Singapore, Canada, and Poland.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the self-efficacy regarding global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.7** Student self-efficacy regarding global issues index, for Australia and comparison countries

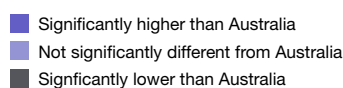
Figure 2.8 shows the percentage of students who reported that *I could this with a bit of effort* and *I could do this easily* with the various global issue tasks, for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.<sup>9</sup>

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported that they *could easily or with some effort explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change, discuss the different reasons why people become refugees, and explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change than others* than students across OECD countries.
- ▶ A similar proportion of Australian students and students across the OECD reported that they *could easily or with some effort discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment*.
- ▶ A lower proportion of Australian students reported that they *could easily or with some effort establish a connection between prices of textiles and working conditions in the countries of production and explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy* than students across OECD countries.
- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported that they *could easily or with some effort perform all of the global issues tasks* than students in Macao (China) and Scotland.
- ▶ A lower proportion of Australian students reported that they *could easily or with some effort explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change than others, explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy, and discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment* than students in Canada, Singapore and Korea.

<sup>9</sup> For ease of reading, from this point onward '*I could this with a bit of effort* and *I could do this easily*' will be referred to as '*could do the task easily or with some effort*'.



Country	Percentage of students who think they can perform the following tasks <i>easily</i> or <i>with some effort</i>					
	Explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change	Establish a connection between prices of textiles and working conditions in the countries of production	Discuss the different reasons why people become refugees	Explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change than others	Explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy	Discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment
Macao (China)	61	36	57	57	44	49
Scotland (United Kingdom)	61	46	79	68	52	51
Estonia	60	53	72	69	55	64
New Zealand	69	48	78	75	54	60
Ireland	72	54	80	76	52	60
Chinese Taipei	77	54	75	75	66	70
Hong Kong (China)	79	55	74	75	63	70
<b>Australia</b>	70	54	82	76	58	65
Poland	63	63	83	74	60	73
Canada	73	55	80	78	63	67
Singapore	85	52	72	81	69	72
Korea	81	59	78	79	70	74
Germany	61	72	88	77	60	69
OECD average	63	58	77	72	61	65



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the self-efficacy regarding global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.8** Percentage of students who reported they could perform various tasks easily or with some effort, for Australia and comparison countries

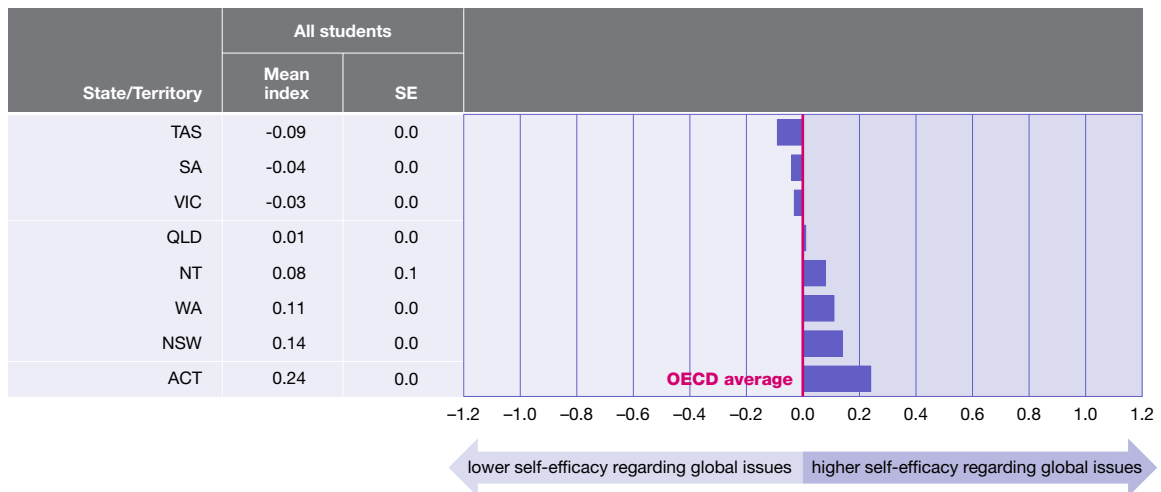
It is interesting to note that knowledge of global issues as reported above and self-efficacy in global issues as reported here are not as clearly correlated as could be expected. For example, students in Korea reported some of the lower levels of awareness of global issues among comparison countries but some of the highest levels of self-efficacy regarding global issues. Inversely, students in Ireland reported some of the highest levels of awareness of global issues but also some of the lowest levels of self-efficacy regarding global issues.

This may suggest different approaches to teaching students about global issues in different countries. As the next section illustrates, these contradictions are not seen in Australia, with clearer correlations between awareness of global issues and self-efficacy regarding global issues.

## Student self-efficacy regarding global issues in a national context

Figure 2.9 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the index for student self-efficacy regarding global issues.

- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia reported greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than students from across the OECD, while students in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia reported similar levels of self-efficacy regarding global issues to the OECD average. Students in Tasmania reported less self-efficacy regarding global issues than the OECD average.
- ▶ The mean index scores on student self-efficacy regarding global issues ranged from -0.09 in Tasmania to 0.24 in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia reported a greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than students in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.
- ▶ Students in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia reported similar levels of self-efficacy regarding global issues.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the self-efficacy regarding global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.9** Student self-efficacy regarding global issues index, by state and territory

Figure 2.10 shows the percentage of students who reported that they could perform the various global issues tasks easily or with some effort for the jurisdictions. At least half of all students across every jurisdiction reported they could perform the various global issues easily or with some effort.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they could easily or with some effort *explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change* ranged from 65% of students in Tasmania to 77% in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they could easily or with some effort *establish a connection between prices of textiles and working conditions in the countries of production* ranged from 51% of students in South Australia and Victoria to 63% in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they could easily or with some effort *discuss the different reasons why people become refugees* ranged from 80% of students in Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania to 87% in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they could easily or with some effort *explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change than others* ranged from 69% of students in Tasmania to 81% in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they could easily or with some effort *explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy* ranged from 54% of students in Tasmania to 66% in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they could easily or with some effort *discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment* ranged from 60% of students in Victoria to 71% in the Australian Capital Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who think they can perform the following tasks <i>easily</i> or <i>with some effort</i>					
	Explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change	Establish a connection between prices of textiles and working conditions in the countries of production	Discuss the different reasons why people become refugees	Explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change than others	Explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy	Discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment
TAS	65	52	80	69	54	62
SA	68	51	83	74	55	62
VIC	66	51	82	73	55	60
QLD	68	53	80	73	58	67
NT	69	57	81	81	60	61
WA	75	56	80	80	63	68
NSW	73	58	84	78	60	67
ACT	77	63	87	77	66	71

Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the self-efficacy regarding global issues index.

**FIGURE 2.10** Percentage of students who reported they could perform various tasks easily or with some effort, by state and territory

Figure 2.11 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic group, and the OECD average on the index for student self-efficacy regarding global issues.

- ▶ Male students reported greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than female students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report greater self-efficacy regarding global issues.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than Indigenous students.
- ▶ First-generation students and foreign-born students reported greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 2.11** Student self-efficacy regarding global issues index, for different demographic groups

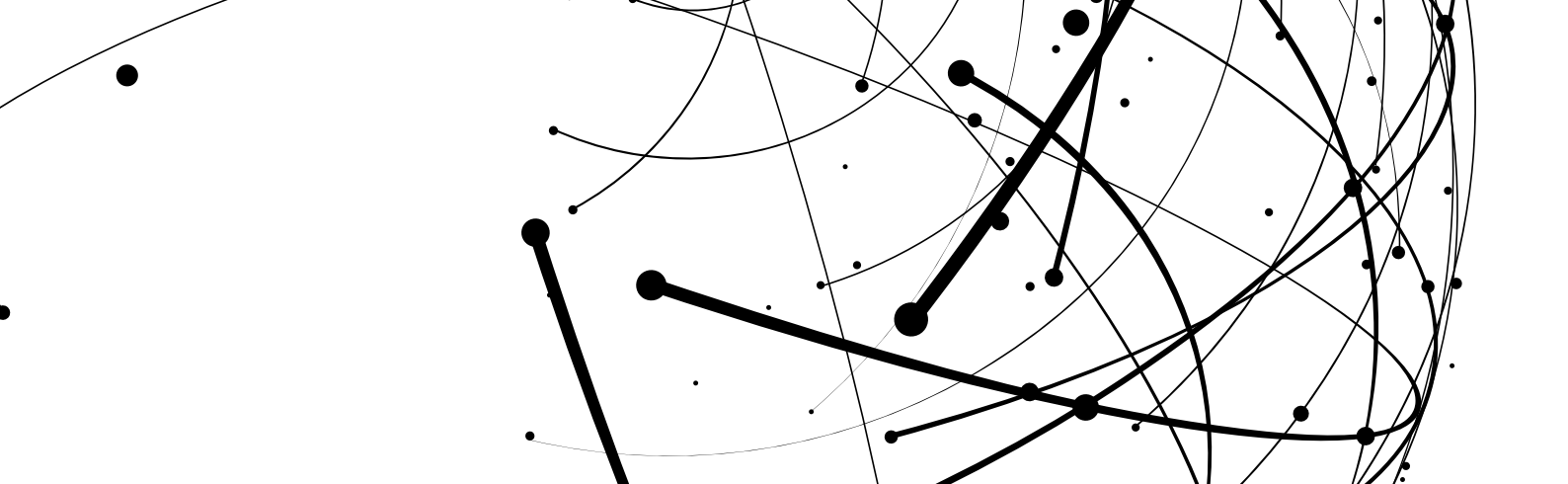
Figure 2.12 shows the percentage of students who reported that they could perform the various global issues tasks easily or with some effort for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ **Gender:** The largest differences were found between male and female students in their ability to *explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy* with a gap of 8 percentage points, and in their ability to *explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change*, with a gap of 6 percentage points, both in favour of male students.
- ▶ **Socioeconomic background:** The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their ability to *explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change*, with a 20 percentage point difference, and their ability to *establish a connection between prices of textiles and working conditions in the countries of production* and to *discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment*, each with a 21 percentage point difference, all in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ **Geographic location of schools:** The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their ability to *explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy* and *discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment*, each with a 12 percentage point difference, and their ability to *explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change*, with an 11 percentage point difference, all in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ **Indigenous background:** The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, in their ability to *discuss the different reasons why people become refugees*, with a gap of 15 percentage points, and in their ability to *explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change*, with a gap of 13 percentage points, both in favour of non-Indigenous students.

- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest difference between Australian-born students and foreign-born students was found in their ability to *explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change* than others with an 8 percentage point difference, in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported they could perform various tasks <i>easily or with some effort</i>		
	Explain how carbon-dioxide emissions affect global climate change	Establish a connection between prices of textiles and working conditions in the countries of production	Discuss the different reasons why people become refugees
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	67	53	83
Males	73	56	81
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	59	45	73
Socioeconomically average students	70	53	82
Advantaged students	81	66	90
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	72	56	84
Provincial	63	50	77
Remote	62	48	74
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	59	51	67
Non-Indigenous	70	55	83
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	67	52	80
First-generation	72	57	84
Foreign-born	68	59	85
Demographic group	Explain why some countries suffer more from global climate change than others	Explain how economic crises in single countries affect the global economy	Discuss the consequences of economic development on the environment
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	75	54	62
Males	76	62	67
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	67	50	55
Socioeconomically average students	76	57	64
Advantaged students	84	67	76
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	78	60	67
Provincial	70	54	60
Remote	70	47	55
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	70	49	59
Non-Indigenous	76	59	65
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	72	56	62
First-generation	79	59	67
Foreign-born	80	63	70

**FIGURE 2.12** Percentage of students who reported they could perform various tasks easily or with some effort, for different demographic groups



# Understanding and appreciating the perspective and world views of others

This chapter examines the second dimension of global competence which focuses on student understanding and appreciation of the perspectives and world views of other people.

According to the OECD, this dimension highlights that globally competent people are willing and capable of considering global problems and other people's perspectives and behaviours from multiple viewpoints. As individuals acquire knowledge about other cultures' histories, values, communication styles, beliefs and practices, they acquire the means to recognise that their perspectives and behaviours are shaped by multiple influences, that they are not always fully aware of these influences, and that other people have views of the world that are profoundly different from their own (OECD 2018, p. 9).

This chapter examines the similarities and differences between countries, the Australian jurisdictions and different demographic groups, focusing on student ability to understand the perspectives of others; student interest in learning about other cultures; student respect for people from other cultures; student cognitive adaptability, which refers to student ability to adapt to new situations; and student attitudes towards immigrants.

## Student ability to understand the perspectives of others

*As reported by the OECD, the ability to see the world from the perspective of others who might differ in their cultural backgrounds, beliefs, attitudes and practices depends on self-awareness and understanding of one's own perspective, as well as those of others. It depends on knowing and understanding the assumptions that underlie one's own perspective, understanding how one's worldview is shaped by one's own cultural affiliation and experiences and, in turn, how these affect one's judgements and reactions to other people (OECD 2020, p. 92).*

## How is student ability to understand the perspectives of others measured in PISA?

In 2018, PISA asked students to report on their ability to understand other people's perspectives by responding to the following five statements about themselves:

- ▶ *I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.*
- ▶ *I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.*

- ▶ *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.*
- ▶ *Before criticising somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.*
- ▶ *When I'm upset at someone, I try to take the perspective of that person for a while.*

Students were asked to respond to each of these statements on a five-point scale (*not at all like me, not much like me, somewhat like me, mostly like me, very much like me*).

An index of student ability to understand the perspectives of others was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate greater ability to understand and take different perspectives than the average student across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate students reported less ability to understand and accept different perspectives than students on average across the OECD countries.

The previous chapter focused on awareness of global issues and self-efficacy regarding global issues. Both of these are amenable to being impacted through a focus within curricula in schools. In contrast, this chapter focuses on student understanding and appreciation of the perspectives and world views of other people. This is something that is influenced by affective dimensions regarding students' feeling and emotions. The influences of schools, teachers and peers on affective dimensions are much more complex than on skills and knowledge.

Students can certainly be taught to view issues from a range of different points of view, and to critically reflect on their own assumptions. Beyond this, however, many other factors are likely to influence the ability of students to consider perspectives and behaviours from a range of viewpoints. These include the extent to which students are exposed to people from a range of different backgrounds, either in their own families and communities or at school.

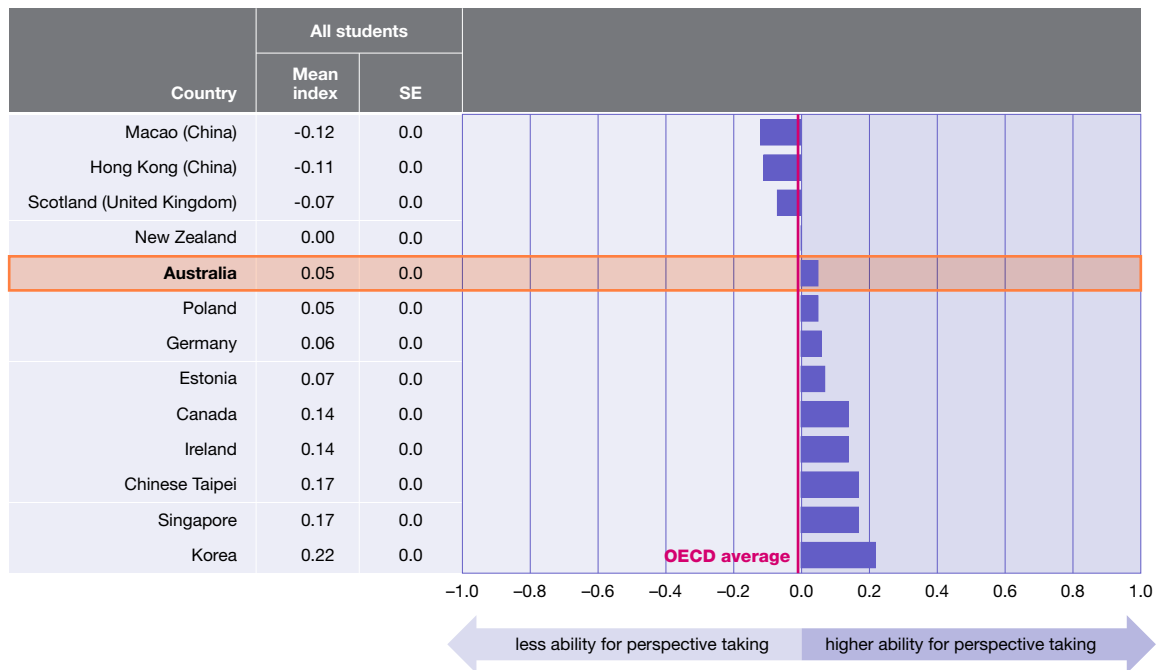
Another factor may be the extent to which students have engaged in travel to countries with different cultures. A broader societal focus on multi-culturalism, and the celebration of cultural diversity, is certainly likely to influence students' attitudes. Beyond these, an important aspect is the extent to which students are open to engagement with difference, their levels of empathy and their levels of compassion.

## **Student ability to understand the perspectives of others in an international context**

Figure 3.1 presents the mean index scores on the student ability to understand the perspectives of others index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than students across the OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.05 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of -0.01 for the OECD average.
- ▶ greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than students in New Zealand, Scotland, Hong Kong (China) and Macao (China).
- ▶ similar level of ability to understand the perspectives of others than students in Poland, Germany and Estonia.
- ▶ less ability to understand the perspectives of others than students in Canada, Ireland, Chinese Taipei, Singapore and Korea.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student ability to understand the perspectives of others index.

**FIGURE 3.1** Student ability to understand the perspectives of others index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of students who responded to each statement with either *very much like me* or *mostly like me*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as ‘like me’ or as having the ability to understand the perspectives of others.

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students than students across the OECD countries reported *I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before making a decision, I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both, I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective, and When I’m upset at someone, I try to take the perspective of that person for a while.*
- ▶ Students in Australia, Estonia and Ireland reported similar levels of perspective taking for the statement *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.* An equal proportion of students from across the OECD countries reported either significantly higher or significantly lower ability for perspective taking for this statement.
- ▶ Students in Hong Kong (China), Macao (China) and Scotland reported that they were less able to understand the perspectives of others for most of the statements than Australian students.



Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>				
	I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision	I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both	I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective	Before criticising somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place	When I'm upset at someone, I try to take the perspective of that person for a while
Macao (China)	54	61	62	61	39
Hong Kong (China)	54	60	61	56	44
Scotland (United Kingdom)	57	58	62	66	34
New Zealand	61	63	63	62	38
<b>Australia</b>	62	64	66	57	43
Poland	68	70	70	63	37
Germany	64	69	69	65	35
Estonia	62	69	66	48	52
Canada	67	69	70	56	44
Ireland	66	76	67	62	38
Chinese Taipei	72	71	74	39	61
Singapore	66	71	73	48	52
Korea	70	68	71	47	53
OECD average	59	63	64	60	40

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

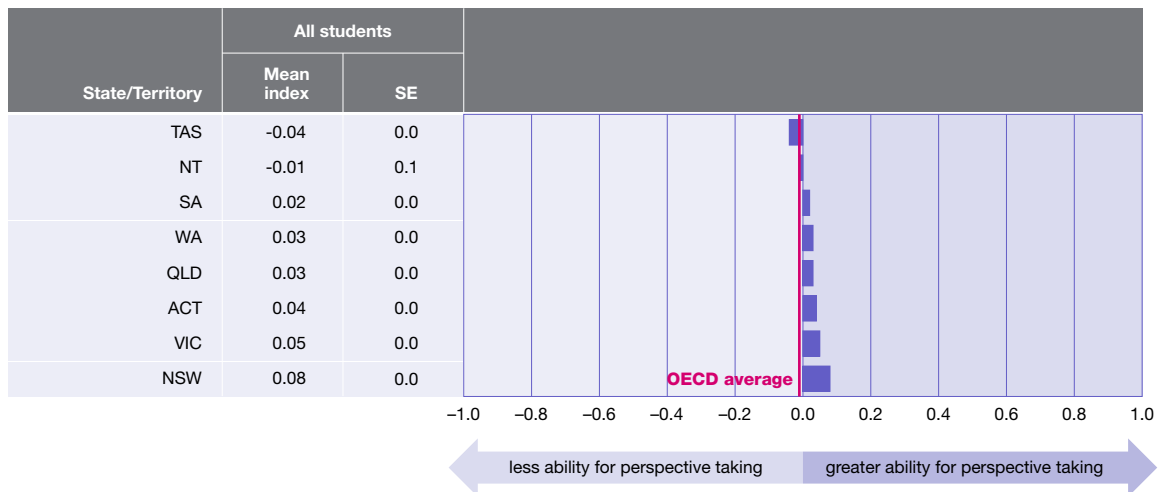
Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student ability to understand the perspectives of others index.

**FIGURE 3.2** Percentage of students who reported having the ability to understand the perspectives of others, for Australia and comparison countries

### Student ability to understand the perspectives of others in a national context

Figure 3.3 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the student ability to understand the perspectives of others index.

- ▶ Students in New South Wales and Victoria reported greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than students from across the OECD, while students in the other jurisdictions reported similar levels of perspective taking ability to the OECD average.
- ▶ The mean index scores on student ability to understand the perspectives of others ranged from -0.04 in Tasmania to 0.08 in New South Wales.
- ▶ Students in New South Wales and Victoria reported greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than students in Tasmania.
- ▶ Students in the Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales reported similar levels of ability to understand the perspectives of others.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student ability to understand the perspectives of others index.

**FIGURE 3.3** Student ability to understand the perspectives of others index, by state and territory

Figure 3.4 shows the percentage of students who reported having the ability to understand the perspectives of others, for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions reported they had the ability to understand the perspective of others.

- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision* ranged from 60% of students in Tasmania to 63% of students in the Northern Territory and Victoria.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both* ranged from 60% of students in the Northern Territory to 65% of students in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective* ranged from 61% of students in Tasmania to 69% of students in Victoria.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *Before criticising somebody, try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place* ranged from 54% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 58% of students in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *When I'm upset at someone, I try to take the perspective of that person for a while* ranged from 40% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 46% of students in New South Wales.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>				
	I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision	I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both	I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective	Before criticising somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place	When I'm upset at someone, I try to take the perspective of that person for a while
TAS	60	61	61	55	41
NT	63	60	63	55	43
SA	61	63	65	57	43
WA	62	64	66	56	43
QLD	62	63	65	56	42
ACT	62	64	63	54	40
VIC	63	64	69	57	41
NSW	62	65	66	58	46

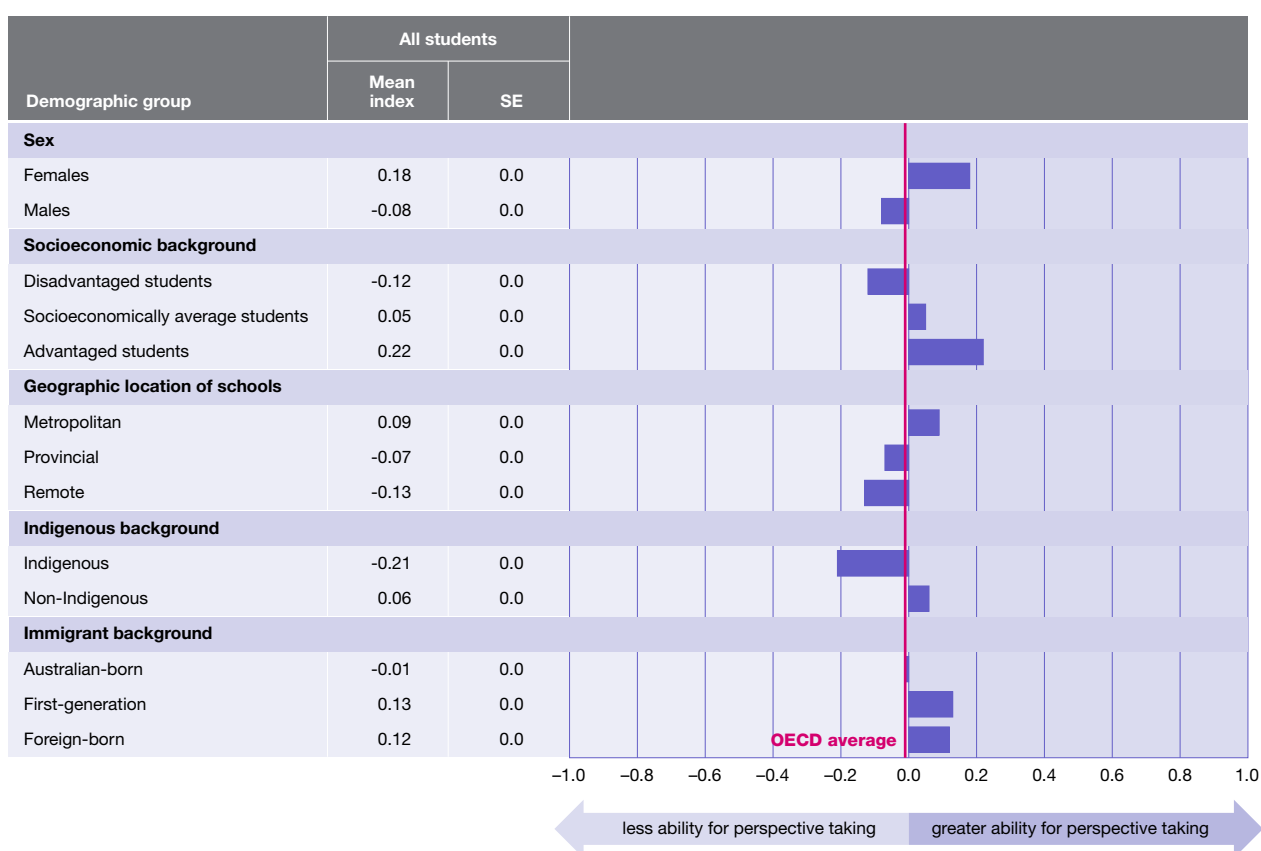
Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student ability to understand the perspectives of others index.

**FIGURE 3.4** Percentage of students who reported having the ability to understand the perspectives of others, by state and territory

## Student ability to understand the perspectives of others for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 3.5 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the student ability to understand the perspectives of others index.

- ▶ Female students reported greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than male students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged that students were, the more likely they were to report greater ability to understand the perspectives of others.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than Indigenous students.
- ▶ First-generation students and foreign-born students reported a greater ability to understand the perspectives of others than Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 3.5** Student ability to understand the perspectives of others index, for different demographic groups

Figure 3.6 shows the percentage of students who reported having the ability to understand the perspectives of others, for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students in their ability to understand the perspectives of others for the statements *Before criticising somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place* with a difference of 15 percentage points, and *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective*, with a difference of 11 percentage points, both in favour of female students.

- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their ability to understand the perspective of others for the statements *I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision*, and *I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both*, each with a 14 percentage point difference, and both in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their ability to understand the perspectives of others for the statements *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective* with a 17 percentage point difference, and *I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision*, with a 12 percentage point difference, both in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in their ability to understand the perspectives of others for the statements *I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision*, with a 13 percentage point difference, and *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective* with a 10 percentage point difference, both in favour of non-Indigenous students.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students were found in their ability to understand the perspectives of others for the statements *I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision*, *I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both*, and *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective*, each with a 5 percentage point difference, all in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>				
	I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision	I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both	I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective	Before criticising somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place	When I'm upset at someone, I try to take the perspective of that person for a while
<b>Sex</b>					
Females	66	67	72	64	47
Males	58	61	61	49	39
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>					
Disadvantaged students	55	56	60	53	39
Socioeconomically average students	62	65	67	57	43
Advantaged students	69	70	72	61	47
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>					
Metropolitan	64	66	68	58	44
Provincial	58	59	61	52	39
Remote	52	58	51	55	43
<b>Indigenous background</b>					
Indigenous	49	57	56	53	40
Non-Indigenous	63	64	67	57	43
<b>Immigrant background</b>					
Australian-born	60	62	64	55	42
First-generation	65	66	69	60	45
Foreign-born	65	67	69	58	46

**FIGURE 3.6** Percentage of students who reported having the ability to understand the perspectives of others, for different demographic groups

## Student interest in learning about other cultures

*Interest focuses on the willingness to engage with cultures, beliefs and worldviews other than a person's own. It relies on attitudes like curiosity and willingness to learn about new cultures and on sensitivity towards people from different backgrounds. It also requires an ability to not make judgements about people's beliefs or question their values and practices (OECD 2020, p. 95).*

### How is student interest in learning about other cultures measured in PISA?

In 2018, PISA asked students to report on their interest in learning about other cultures by responding to the following statements about themselves:

- ▶ *I want to learn how people live in different countries.*
- ▶ *I want to learn more about the religions of the world.*
- ▶ *I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world.*
- ▶ *I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a five-point scale (*not at all like me, not much like me, somewhat like me, mostly like me, very much like me*).

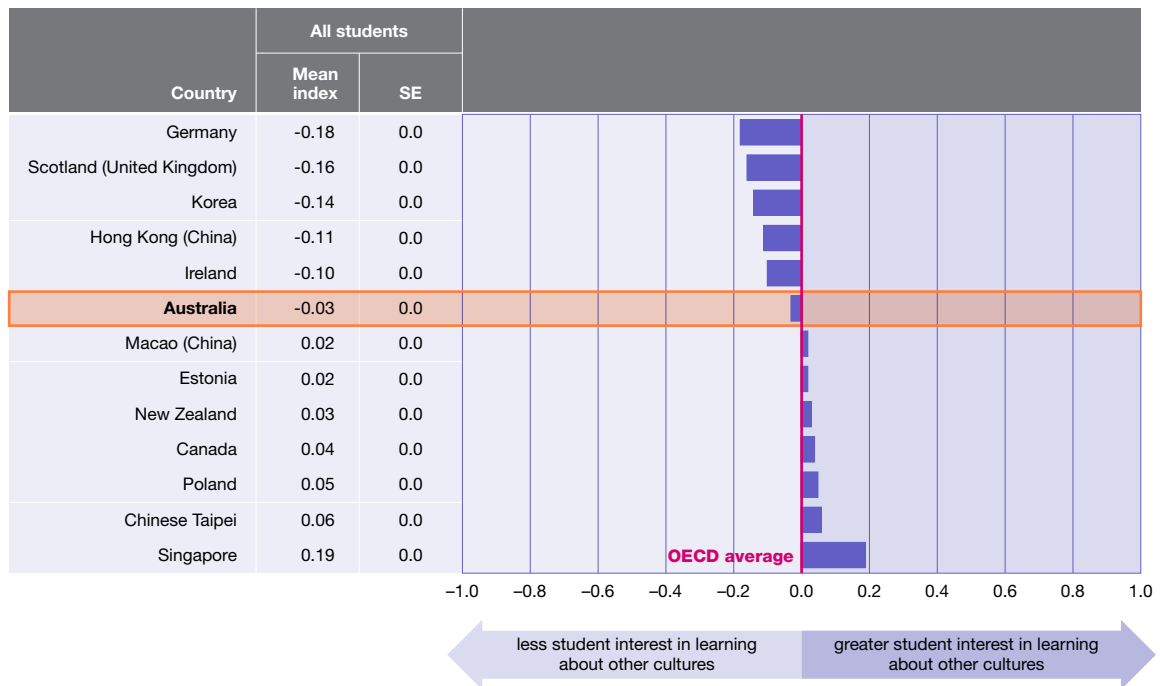
An index of student interest in learning about other cultures was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate greater interest in learning about other cultures than the average student across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate students reported less interest in learning about other cultures than students on average across the OECD countries.

### Student interest in learning about other cultures in an international context

Figure 3.7 presents the mean index scores on the student interest in learning about other cultures index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ less interest in learning about other cultures than students across the OECD countries. The mean index score of -0.03 for Australia was lower than the mean index score of 0.00 for the OECD average.
- ▶ greater interest in learning about other cultures than students in Germany, Scotland, Korea, Hong Kong (China) and Ireland.
- ▶ less interest in learning about other cultures than students in Macao (China), Estonia, New Zealand, Canada, Poland, Chinese, Taipei, and Singapore.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student interest in learning about other cultures index.

**FIGURE 3.7** Student interest in learning about other cultures index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 3.8 shows the percentage of students who responded to each statement with either *very much like me* or *mostly like me*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as ‘like me’ or as having interest in learning about other cultures.

- ▶ A similar proportion of Australian students and students across the OECD countries reported *I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world* and *I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures*.
- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported *I want to learn more about the religions of the world* and *I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world* than students in Germany, Scotland, Korea, Hong Kong (China), and Ireland.
- ▶ Students in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and Canada reported similar levels of interest in *learning how people live in different countries*, while students from the across the OECD countries reported significantly greater interest.
- ▶ Overall, students in Germany, Scotland, and Hong Kong (China) reported less interest in learning about other cultures than for the Australian students. In contrast, students in Singapore, Poland, Canada, and Macao (China) reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than for Australian students across the four statements.

Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>			
	I want to learn how people live in different countries	I want to learn more about the religions of the world	I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world	I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures
Germany	50	31	50	47
Scotland (United Kingdom)	52	29	49	48
Korea	58	27	48	45
Hong Kong (China)	53	30	50	48
Ireland	57	29	52	52
<b>Australia</b>	56	37	54	53
Macao (China)	58	33	58	56
Estonia	63	41	56	53
New Zealand	57	40	57	55
Canada	57	43	58	56
Poland	66	46	56	57
Chinese Taipei	60	37	59	57
Singapore	64	51	63	59
OECD average	59	40	55	54

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

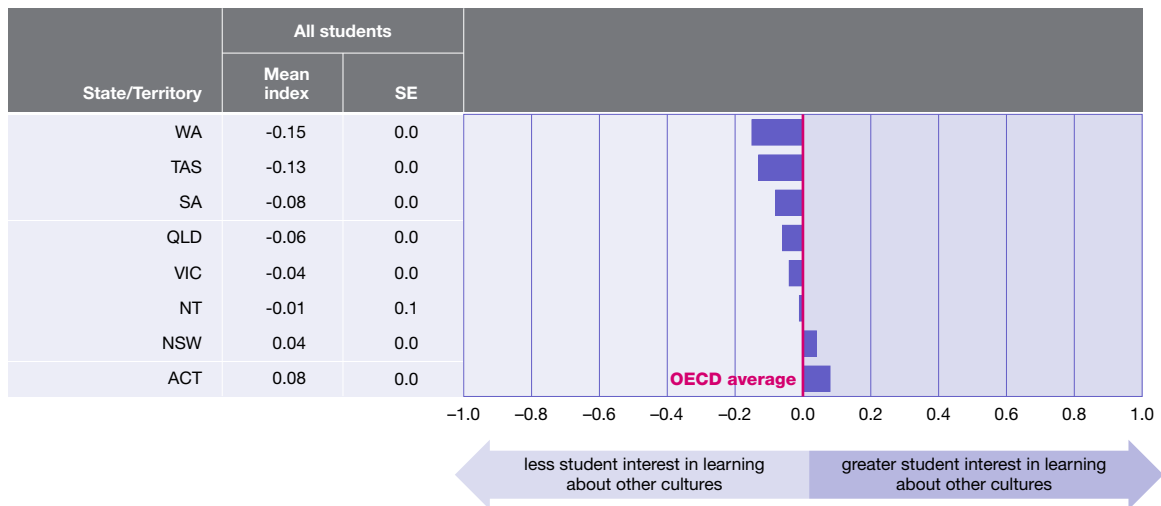
Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student interest in learning about other cultures index.

**FIGURE 3.8** Percentage of students who reported having interest in learning about other cultures, for Australia and comparison countries

## Student interest in learning about other cultures in a national context

Figure 3.9 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the student interest in learning about other cultures index.

- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than students from across the OECD countries, and students in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania reported less interest in learning about other cultures than the OECD average.
- ▶ The mean index scores on student interest in learning about other cultures ranged from 0.08 in the Australian Capital Territory to -0.15 in Western Australia.
- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory reported a significantly greater interest in learning about other cultures than students in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia.
- ▶ Students in Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, reported similar interest in learning about other cultures.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student interest in learning about other cultures index.

**FIGURE 3.9** Student interest in learning about other cultures index, by state and territory

Figure 3.10 shows the percentage of students who reported having interest in learning about other cultures for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions reported they had interest in learning about other cultures.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I want to learn how people live in different countries* ranged from 58% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 52% of students in Western Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world* ranged from 58% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 51% of students in Western Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures* ranged from 58% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 49% of students in Western Australia and South Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I want to learn more about the religions of the world* ranged from 42% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 33% of students in Western Australia and South Australia.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>			
	I want to learn how people live in different countries	I want to learn more about the religions of the world	I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world	I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures
WA	52	33	51	49
TAS	53	35	52	50
SA	54	33	52	49
QLD	56	35	53	53
VIC	56	36	55	53
NT	56	36	55	56
NSW	57	41	56	55
ACT	58	42	58	58

Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student interest in learning about other cultures index.

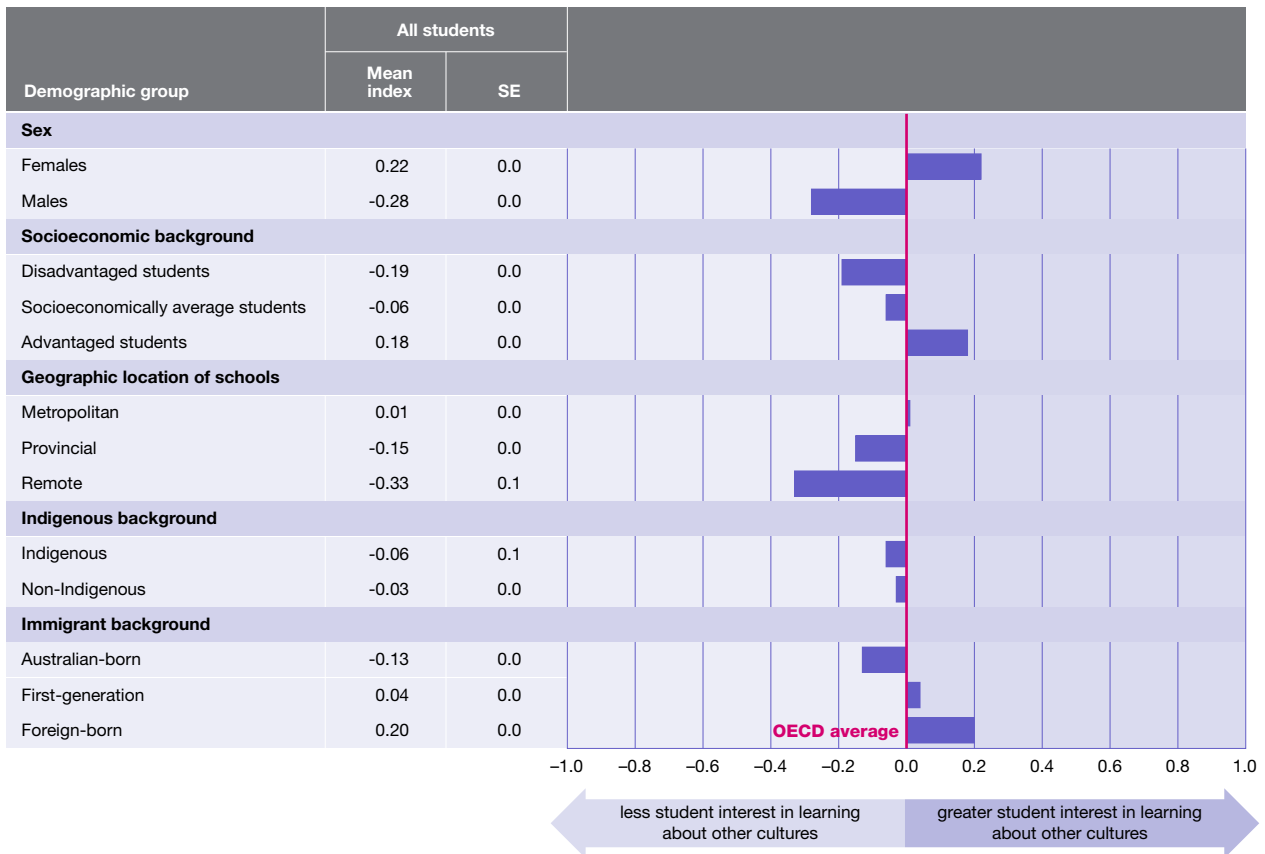
**FIGURE 3.10** Percentage of students who reported having interest in learning about other cultures, by state and territory



## Student interest in learning about other cultures for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 3.11 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the student interest in learning about other cultures index.

- ▶ Female students reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than male students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report greater interest in learning about other cultures.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than students in provincial and remote schools, while students in provincial schools reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than students in remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students and Indigenous students reported similar interest in learning about other cultures.
- ▶ First-generation students and foreign-born students reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than Australian-born students, while foreign-born students reported greater interest in learning about other cultures than first-generation students.



**FIGURE 3.11** Student interest in learning about other cultures index, for different demographic groups

Figure 3.12 shows the percentage of students who reported having interest in learning about other cultures for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students in their interest in learning about other cultures for the statements *I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures* with a difference of 22 percentage points, and equally for the statements *I want to learn how people live in different countries*, and *I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world* with a difference of 21 percentage points, all differences in favour of female students.

- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their interest in learning about other cultures for the statement *I want to learn how people live in different countries*, with an 18 percentage point difference, and *I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures*, with a 17 percentage point difference, all differences in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their interest in learning about other cultures for the statement *I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world* with a 17 percentage point difference, and a 12 percentage point difference equally for the statements *I want to learn how people live in different countries*, and *I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures*, both in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: No significant differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' interest in learning about other cultures for each statement.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students in their interest in learning about other cultures were for the statements *I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures*, *I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world* and *I want to learn more about the religions of the world*, with a 14 percentage point difference all in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me or mostly like me</i>			
	I want to learn how people live in different countries	I want to learn more about the religions of the world	I am interested in how people from various cultures see the world	I am interested in finding out about the traditions of other cultures
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	66	45	65	64
Males	46	29	44	42
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	48	34	45	45
Socioeconomically average students	55	36	54	53
Advantaged students	66	43	64	62
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	57	38	56	55
Provincial	51	33	50	49
Remote	45	32	39	42
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	54	41	50	53
Non-Indigenous	56	37	55	53
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	53	33	51	49
First-generation	58	39	56	55
Foreign-born	63	47	64	63

**FIGURE 3.12** Percentage of students who reported having interest in learning about other cultures, for different demographic groups

## Student respect for people from other cultures

*One important form of respect in the context of cultural diversity is the respect shown to people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations or different opinions and beliefs. Such respect assumes that all human beings have the same intrinsic dignity and enjoy an absolute right to choose their own affiliation, beliefs, practices and opinions (OECD 2020, p. 98).*

## How is student respect for people from other cultures measured in PISA?

In 2018 PISA asked students to report on the extent to which they respect people from other countries by responding to the following five statements:

- ▶ *I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings.*
- ▶ *I treat all people with respect regardless of their cultural background.*
- ▶ *I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves.*
- ▶ *I respect the values of people from different cultures.*
- ▶ *I value the opinions of people from different cultures.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a five-point scale (*not at all like me, not much like me, somewhat like me, mostly like me, very much like me*).

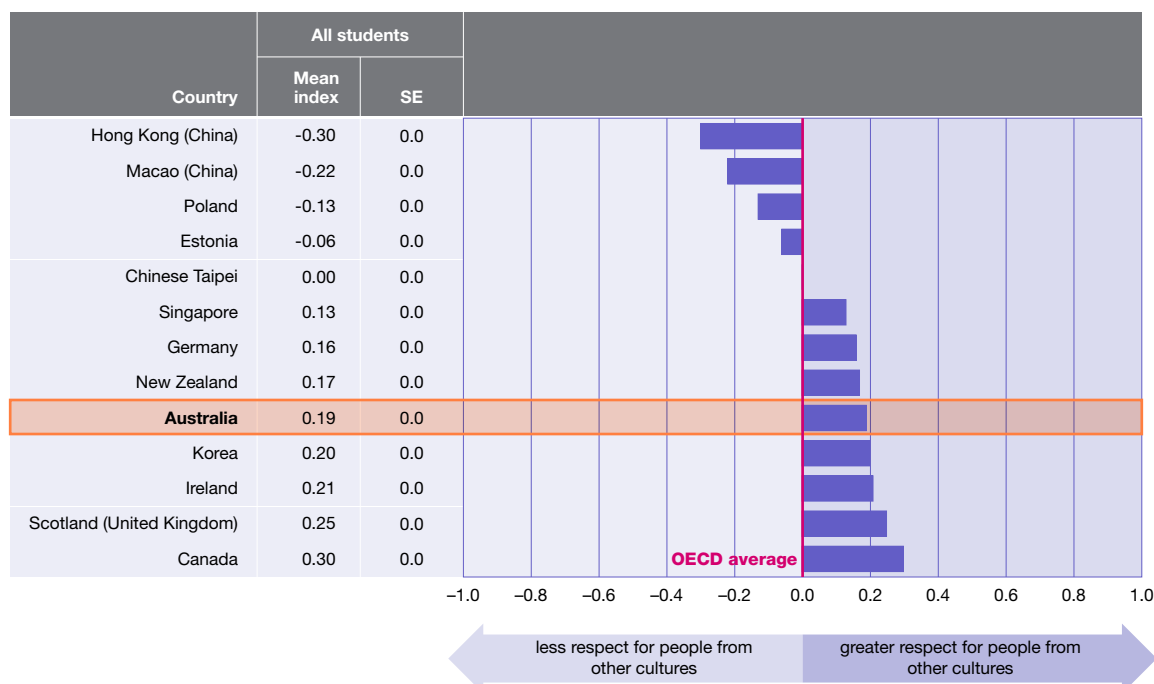
An index of respect for people from other cultures was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate greater respect for people from other cultures than the average student across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate students reported less respect for people from other cultures than on average across the OECD countries.

## Student respect for people from other cultures in an international context

Figure 3.13 presents the mean index scores on the respect for people from other cultures index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ greater respect for people from other cultures than students across the OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.19 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of 0.00 for the OECD average.
- ▶ greater respect for people from other cultures than students in Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), Poland, Estonia, Chinese Taipei and Singapore.
- ▶ less respect for people from other cultures than students in Scotland and Canada.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the respect for people from other cultures index.

**FIGURE 3.13** Respect for people from other cultures index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 3.14 shows the percentage of students who responded to each statement with either *very much like me* or *mostly like me*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as ‘like me’ or as having respect for people from cultures.

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported having respect for people from other cultures, as measured by each of the five statements, than students across the OECD countries.
- ▶ Similar proportions of students in Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Singapore reported *I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings*, and *I treat all people with respect regardless of their cultural background*.
- ▶ Students in Canada reported greater respect for people from other cultures across each of the five statements than reported by Australian students.
- ▶ Students in Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), Poland, and Estonia reported less respect for people from other cultures than reported by Australian students.

Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>				
	I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings	I treat all people with respect regardless of their cultural background	I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves	I respect the values of people from different cultures	I value the opinions of people from different cultures
Hong Kong (China)	76	73	73	73	71
Macao (China)	80	78	76	77	74
Poland	80	78	76	77	73
Estonia	82	80	79	79	78
Chinese Taipei	87	80	85	85	84
Singapore	89	88	86	88	86
Germany	87	86	83	83	81
New Zealand	89	88	84	86	85
<b>Australia</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>
Korea	86	84	85	86	83
Ireland	91	89	83	87	85
Scotland (United Kingdom)	87	86	85	85	85
Canada	91	90	87	88	86
OECD average	82	81	78	79	78

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

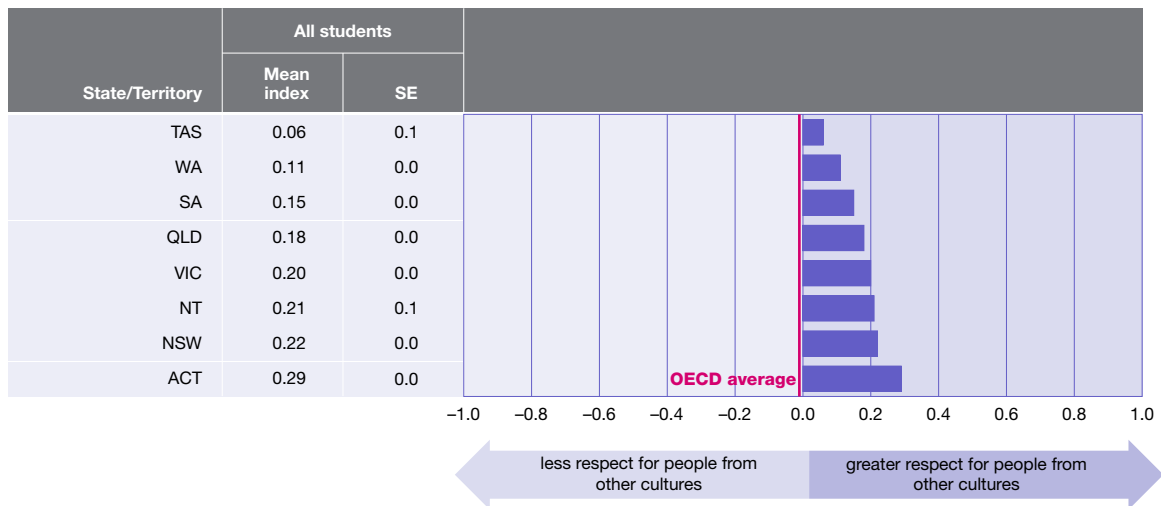
Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the respect for people from other cultures index.

**FIGURE 3.14** Percentage of students who reported having respect for people from other cultures, for Australia and comparison countries

## Student respect for people from other cultures in a national context

Figure 3.15 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the respect for people from other cultures index.

- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories, with the exception of Tasmania, reported greater respect for people from other cultures than students from across the OECD countries.
- ▶ The mean index scores on respect for people from other cultures ranged from 0.06 in Tasmania to 0.29 in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory reported a greater respect for people from other cultures than students in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania.
- ▶ Students in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia reported similar respect for people from other cultures.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the respect for people from other cultures index.

**FIGURE 3.15** Respect for people from other cultures index, by state and territory

Figure 3.16 shows the percentage of students who reported having respect for people from other cultures for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions reported they respected people from other cultures.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings* ranged from 84% of students in Tasmania to 90% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I treat all people with respect regardless of their cultural background* ranged from 84% of students in Tasmania to 90% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves* ranged from 79% of students in Tasmania to 85% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I respect the values of people from different cultures* ranged from 80% of students in Tasmania to 88% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I value the opinions of people from different cultures* ranged from 80% of students in Tasmania to 88% of students in the Northern Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>				
	I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings	I treat all people with respect regardless of their cultural background	I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves	I respect the values of people from different cultures	I value the opinions of people from different cultures
TAS	84	84	79	80	80
WA	87	85	82	83	82
SA	87	87	82	85	84
QLD	88	87	83	85	82
VIC	89	88	82	86	84
NT	88	89	84	86	88
NSW	89	87	85	87	85
ACT	90	90	85	88	87

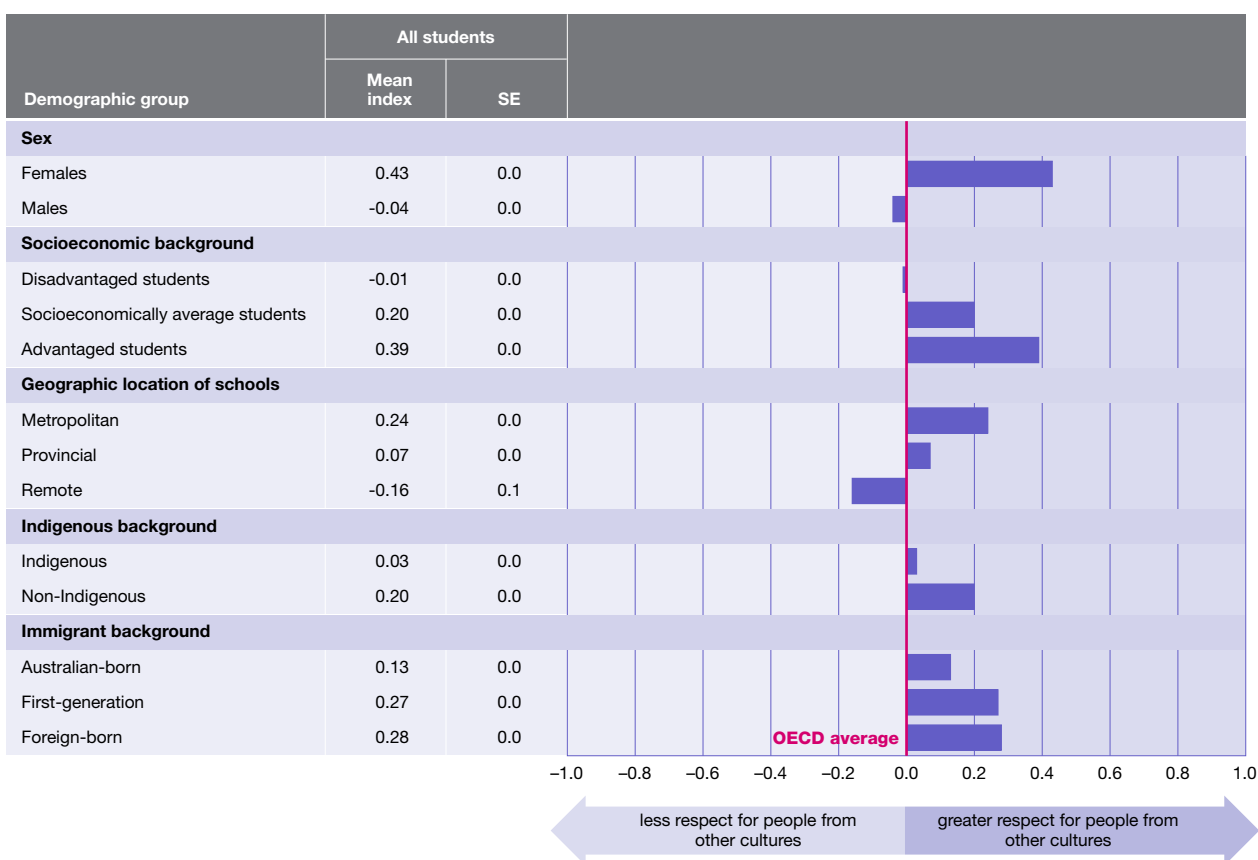
Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the respect for people from other cultures index.

**FIGURE 3.16** Percentage of students who reported having respect for people from other cultures, by state and territory

## Student respect for people from other cultures for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 3.17 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the respect for people from other cultures index.

- ▶ Female students reported greater respect for people from other cultures than male students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report greater respect for people from other cultures.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported a greater respect for people from other cultures than students in provincial and remote schools, while students in provincial schools reported greater respect for people from other cultures than students in remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported greater respect for people from other cultures than Indigenous students.
- ▶ First-generation students and foreign-born students reported greater respect for people from other cultures than Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 3.17** Respect for people from other cultures index, for different demographic groups

Figure 3.18 shows the percentage of students who reported having respect for people from other cultures for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students in their interest in learning about other cultures for the statements *I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves*, *I respect the values of people from different cultures* and *I value the opinions of people from different cultures* each with a difference of 13 percentage points, all differences in favour of female students.

- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their respect for people from other cultures for the statements *I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves*, with a 13 percentage point difference, and *I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings* and *I respect the values of people from different cultures*, each with an 11 percentage point difference, all differences in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their respect for people from other cultures for the statements *I respect the values of people from different cultures*, with a 17 percentage point difference, and *I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves*, with a 16 percentage point difference, all differences in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences in reporting respect for people from other cultures were found in favour of non-Indigenous students for the statements *I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings*, and *I value the opinions of people from different cultures*, each with a 7 percentage point difference, and *I treat all people with respect regardless of their cultural background*, and *I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves*, each with a 6 percentage point difference.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest difference between Australian-born students and foreign-born students in their respect for people from other cultures was for the statement *I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves*, with a 6 percentage point difference in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me or mostly like me</i>				
	I respect people from other cultures as equal human beings	I treat all people with respect regardless of their cultural background	I give space to people from other cultures to express themselves	I respect the values of people from different cultures	I value the opinions of people from different cultures
<b>Sex</b>					
Females	93	93	90	92	90
Males	84	82	77	79	77
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>					
Disadvantaged students	83	82	77	79	77
Socioeconomically average students	89	88	83	86	84
Advantaged students	94	92	90	91	90
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>					
Metropolitan	90	89	84	87	85
Provincial	85	84	80	83	81
Remote	74	74	69	69	66
<b>Indigenous background</b>					
Indigenous	81	82	77	80	78
Non-Indigenous	89	88	83	86	84
<b>Immigrant background</b>					
Australian-born	87	86	81	84	82
First-generation	91	90	86	88	86
Foreign-born	90	89	86	88	86

**FIGURE 3.18** Percentage of students who reported having respect for people from other cultures, for different demographic groups

## Student cognitive adaptability from other cultures

The OECD refers to cognitive adaptability as the ability to adapt one's thinking and behaviour to the usual cultural environment or to novel situations and contexts that might present new demands or challenges. Individuals who acquire this skill are able to handle the feelings of "culture shock", such as frustration, stress and alienation in ambiguous situations in new environments. Adaptable learners can more easily develop long-term interpersonal relationships with people from other cultures, and remain resilient in changing circumstances (OECD, 2020, p. 100).

### How is student cognitive adaptability from other cultures measured in PISA?

In 2018 PISA asked students to report on their ability to adapt to new situations, referred to as cognitive adaptability, by responding to the following six statements:

- ▶ *I can deal with unusual situations.*
- ▶ *I can change my behaviour to meet the needs of new situations.*
- ▶ *I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure.*
- ▶ *I can adapt easily to a new culture.*
- ▶ *When encountering difficult situations with other people, I can think of a way to resolve the situation.*
- ▶ *I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a five-point scale (*not at all like me, not much like me, somewhat like me, mostly like me, very much like me*).

An index of cognitive adaptability was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate greater ability to adapt to new situations than the average student across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate less ability to adapt to new situations than the average student across the OECD countries.

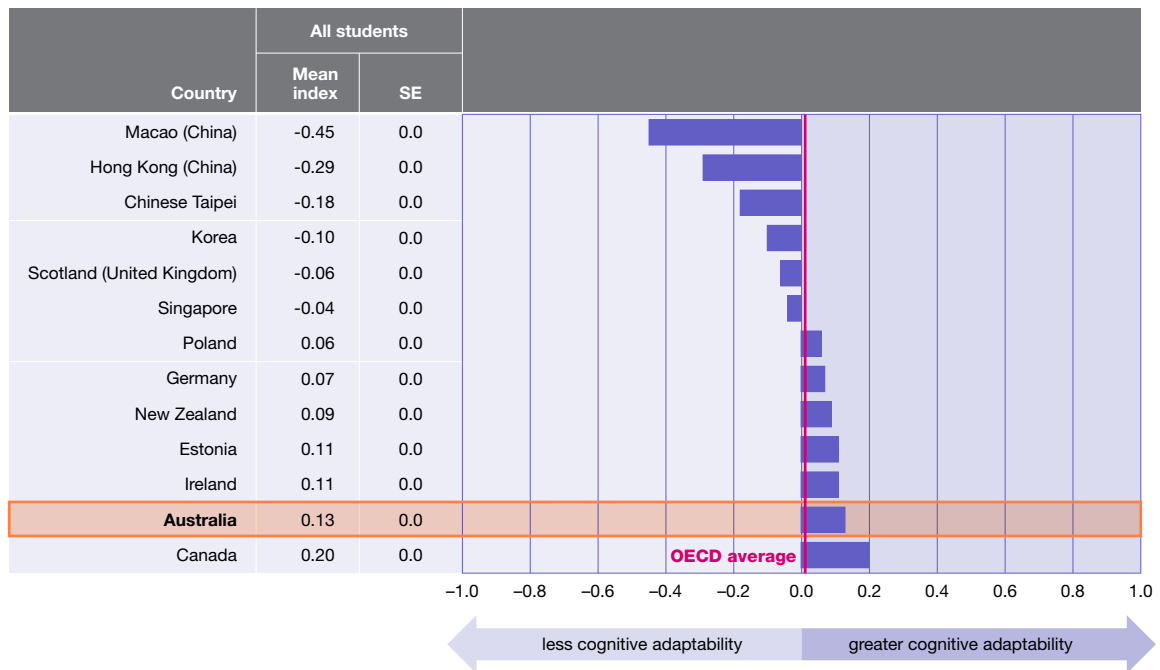
### Student cognitive adaptability in an international context

Figure 3.19 presents the mean index scores on the cognitive adaptability index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ greater ability to adapt to new situations than students across the OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.13 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of -0.01 for the OECD average.
- ▶ greater ability to adapt to new situations than students in Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), Chinese Taipei, Korea, Scotland, Singapore, Poland and Germany.
- ▶ similar ability to adapt to new situations as students in New Zealand, Estonia and Ireland.
- ▶ less ability to adapt to new situations than students in Canada.





Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the cognitive adaptability index.

**FIGURE 3.19** Cognitive adaptability index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 3.20 shows the percentage of students who responded to each statement with either *very much like me* or *mostly like me*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as ‘like me’ or as having ability to adapt to new situations or having cognitive adaptability.

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported cognitive adaptability as measured by each of the six statements than students across the OECD countries.
- ▶ Similar proportions of students in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and Germany reported *I can deal with unusual situations, I can change my behaviour to meet the needs of new situations and I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure.*
- ▶ Students in Poland, Estonia and Canada reported greater cognitive adaptability when responding to the statement *I can deal with unusual situations,* than Australian students.
- ▶ Students in Australia reported greater cognitive adaptability when responding to the statement *I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures* than students in all countries except Canada. Overall, students in Canada reported the greatest cognitive adaptability in contrast to Macao (China) and Hong Kong (China).

Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>					
	I can deal with unusual situations	I can change my behaviour to meet the needs of new situations	I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure	I can adapt easily to a new culture	When encountering difficult situations with other people, I can think of a way to resolve the situation	I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures
Macao (China)	38	54	41	43	38	37
Hong Kong (China)	43	53	46	49	49	47
Chinese Taipei	48	65	49	52	60	45
Korea	52	61	43	53	60	57
Scotland (United Kingdom)	57	69	56	45	56	55
Singapore	50	68	55	50	58	61
Poland	67	73	61	55	63	60
Germany	62	74	62	52	61	65
New Zealand	62	73	63	54	60	63
Estonia	65	76	63	57	60	62
Ireland	62	75	65	49	62	63
<b>Australia</b>	62	74	64	54	62	65
Canada	65	75	66	55	67	67
OECD average	59	67	57	49	59	58

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

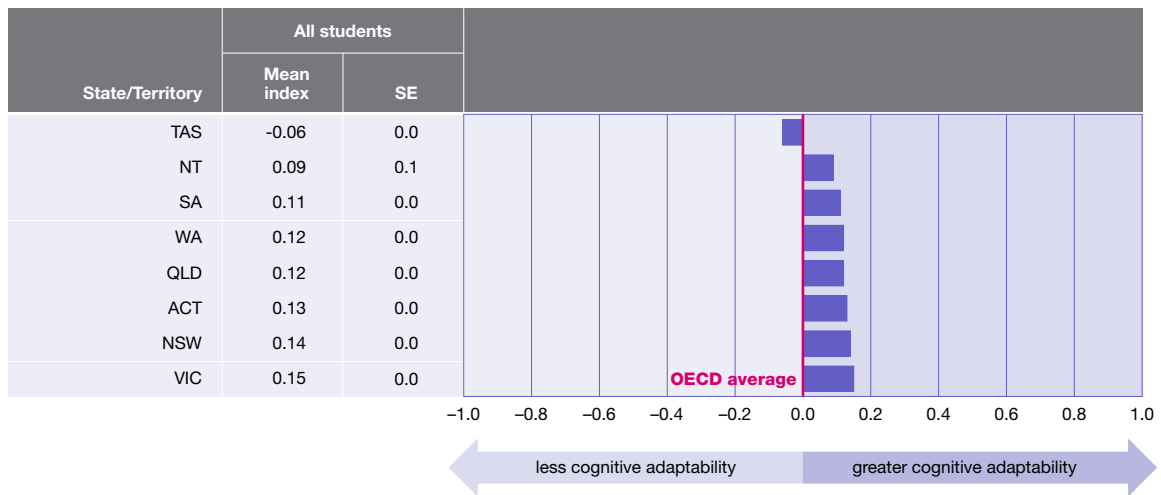
Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the cognitive adaptability index.

**FIGURE 3.20** Percentage of students who reported having cognitive adaptability, for Australia and comparison countries

## Student cognitive adaptability in a national context

Figure 3.21 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the cognitive adaptability index.

- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories reported greater cognitive adaptability than the OECD average, except in Tasmania and the Northern Territory, where students reported similar cognitive adaptability to students across the OECD.
- ▶ The mean index scores on cognitive adaptability ranged from -0.06 in Tasmania to 0.15 in Victoria.
- ▶ Students in Victoria reported greater cognitive adaptability than students in Tasmania, and similar cognitive adaptability to students in all other states and territories.
- ▶ Students in Tasmania reported similar cognitive adaptability to students in the Northern Territory.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the cognitive adaptability index.

**FIGURE 3.21** Cognitive adaptability index, by state and territory

Figure 3.22 shows the percentage of students who reported having cognitive adaptability for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions reported they had the ability to adapt to new situations.

- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I can deal with unusual situation* ranged from 57% of students in Tasmania to 63% of students in Victoria.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I can change my behaviour to meet the needs of new situations* ranged from 64% of students in Tasmania to 75% of students in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure* ranged from 56% of students in Tasmania to 65% of students in Victoria.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *When encountering difficult situations with other people, I can think of a way to resolve the situation* ranged from 57% of students in Tasmania to 63% of students in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I am capable of overcoming difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures* ranged from 56% of students in Tasmania to 69% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>					
	I can deal with unusual situations	I can change my behaviour to meet the needs of new situations	I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure	I can adapt easily to a new culture	When encountering difficult situations with other people, I can think of a way to resolve the situation	I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures
TAS	57	64	56	50	57	56
NT	60	71	59	51	60	66
SA	61	73	64	53	63	63
WA	61	75	62	53	60	64
QLD	62	75	64	53	63	65
ACT	59	74	64	58	62	69
NSW	61	72	64	55	63	65
VIC	63	75	65	56	63	67

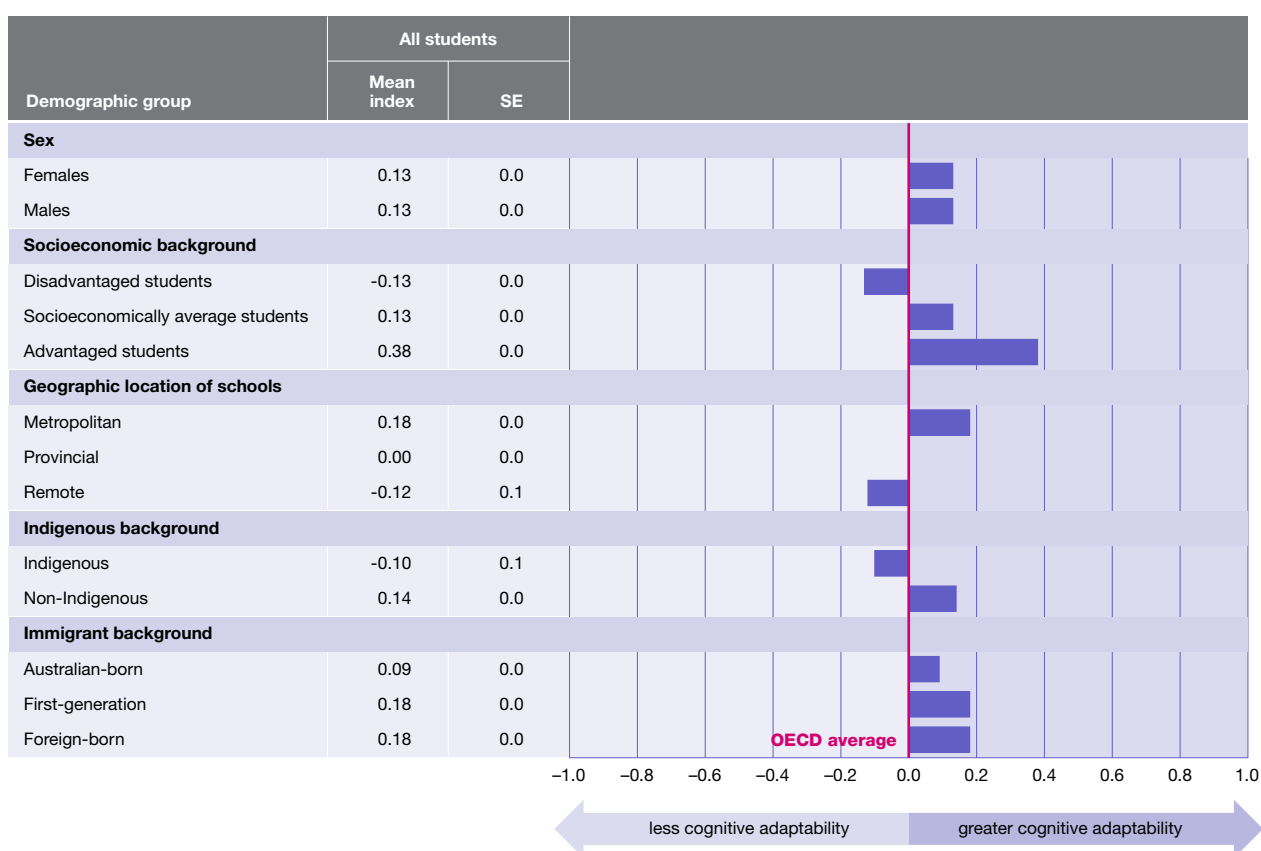
Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the cognitive adaptability index.

**FIGURE 3.22** Percentage of students who reported having cognitive adaptability, by state and territory

## Student cognitive adaptability for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 3.23 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the cognitive adaptability index.

- ▶ Male and female students reported similar ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report greater ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported greater ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported greater ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability than Indigenous students.
- ▶ First-generation students and foreign-born students reported greater ability to adapt to new situations than Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 3.23** Cognitive adaptability index, for different demographic groups

Figure 3.24 shows the percentage of students who reported having ability cognitive adaptability, for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students in their ability to adapt to new situations demonstrating cognitive adaptability for the statements *I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures*, with a 5 percentage point difference in favour of female students, and *I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure* with a difference of 3 percentage points in favour of male students.

- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their ability to adapt to new situations for the statements *I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures*, with a 22 percentage point difference, and *when encountering difficult situations with other people, I can think of a way to resolve the situation*, with a 21 percentage point difference, and a 19 percentage point difference for the statement *I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure*. All differences were in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their ability to adapt to new situations for the statement *when encountering difficult situations with other people*, with a 15 percentage point difference, and *I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures*, with a 14 percentage point difference, all differences in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences in reporting student ability to adapt to new situations were found in favour of non-Indigenous students for the statements *I can change my behaviour to meet the needs of new situations*, with an 11 percentage point difference, *I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure*, and *when encountering difficult situations with other people, I can think of a way to resolve the situation*, each with a 10 percentage point difference.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest difference between Australian-born students and foreign-born students in reporting student ability to adapt to new situations was for the statement *I can adapt easily to a new culture*, with an 8 percentage point difference, followed by a 5 percentage point difference for the statement *I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures*, both differences in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me</i> or <i>mostly like me</i>		
	I can deal with unusual situations	I can change my behaviour to meet the needs of new situations	I can adapt to different situations even when under stress or pressure
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	60	75	62
Males	63	72	65
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	52	64	53
Socioeconomically average students	62	74	65
Advantaged students	70	82	73
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	63	75	65
Provincial	58	70	59
Remote	56	64	57
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	55	64	54
Non-Indigenous	62	74	64
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	61	72	63
First-generation	63	76	65
Foreign-born	61	77	66
Demographic group	I can adapt easily to a new culture	When encountering difficult situations with other people, I can think of a way to resolve the situation	I am capable of overcoming my difficulties in interacting with people from other cultures
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	56	62	68
Males	53	63	63
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	46	52	55
Socioeconomically average students	54	62	65
Advantaged students	64	73	77
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	56	64	67
Provincial	50	57	60
Remote	43	49	53
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	51	53	56
Non-Indigenous	55	63	66
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	52	62	63
First-generation	57	64	68
Foreign-born	59	62	68

**FIGURE 3.24** Percentage of students who reported having cognitive adaptability, for different demographic groups

## Student attitudes towards immigrants

The OECD note, a number of hypotheses have been advanced on what influences opinions about immigrants, ranging from economic interests of the native-born population to cultural concerns about integration and identity and immigrants' ability to integrate or assimilate into their host societies and on how such processes affect native identity. The extent to which these hypotheses are influential in a society depends on many factors, including the cultural differences between immigrants and host societies and the attitudes, values and skills of both immigrant and host populations. Attitudes might be influenced by openness, interest in and respect for other cultures, the ability to understand different perspectives, and knowledge and understanding of other cultures (OECD, 2020, p. 105).

### How are student attitudes towards immigrants measured in PISA?

In 2018, PISA asked students to report on their overall attitudes towards immigrants by responding to the following four statements:

- ▶ *Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have.*
- ▶ *Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections.*
- ▶ *Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle.*
- ▶ *Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a four-point scale (*strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree*).

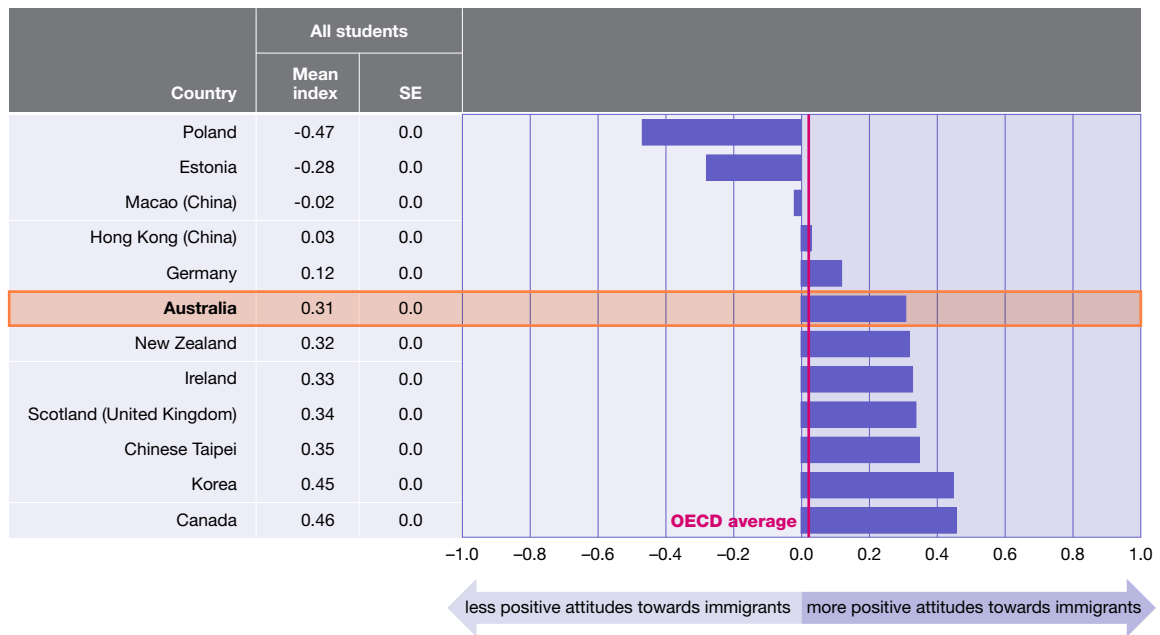
An index of attitudes towards immigrants was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate more positive attitudes towards immigrants than the average student across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate less positive attitudes towards immigrants than the average student across the OECD countries.

### Student attitudes towards immigrants in an international context

Figure 3.25 presents the mean index scores on the index for attitudes towards immigrants for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ more positive attitudes towards immigrants than students across the OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.31 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of 0.02 for the OECD average.
- ▶ more positive attitudes towards immigrants than students in Poland, Estonia, Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), and Germany.
- ▶ similar positive attitudes towards immigrants as students in New Zealand, Estonia and Ireland, and Scotland.
- ▶ less positive attitudes towards immigrants than students in Chinese Taipei, Korea and Canada.



Notes: Data not available for Singapore. Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student attitudes towards immigrants index.

**FIGURE 3.25** Attitudes towards immigrants index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 3.26 shows the percentage of students who responded to each statement with either *agreed* or *strongly agreed*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as ‘agreed’ or as having positive attitudes towards immigrants.

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported positive attitudes towards immigrants as measured by each of the four statements than students across the OECD countries.
- ▶ Similar proportions of students in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and Germany reported positive attitudes towards immigrants when responding to the statements *Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have*, *Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in election*, and *Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has*.
- ▶ Students in Australia reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants when responding to the statement *Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have* than students in Poland, Estonia, Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), Germany and students across the OECD countries.
- ▶ Students in Chinese Taipei, Korea and Canada reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants when responding to all the statements than Australian students.



Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>			
	Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have	Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections	Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle	Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has
Poland	80	54	63	64
Estonia	86	61	70	74
Macao (China)	90	79	90	83
Hong Kong (China)	90	87	90	88
Germany	86	74	73	83
<b>Australia</b>	91	85	85	89
New Zealand	92	85	88	88
Ireland	91	85	86	89
Scotland (United Kingdom)	91	85	87	87
Chinese Taipei	95	90	94	94
Korea	97	91	91	95
Canada	92	88	88	91
OECD average	85	72	76	80

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Notes: Data not available for Singapore.

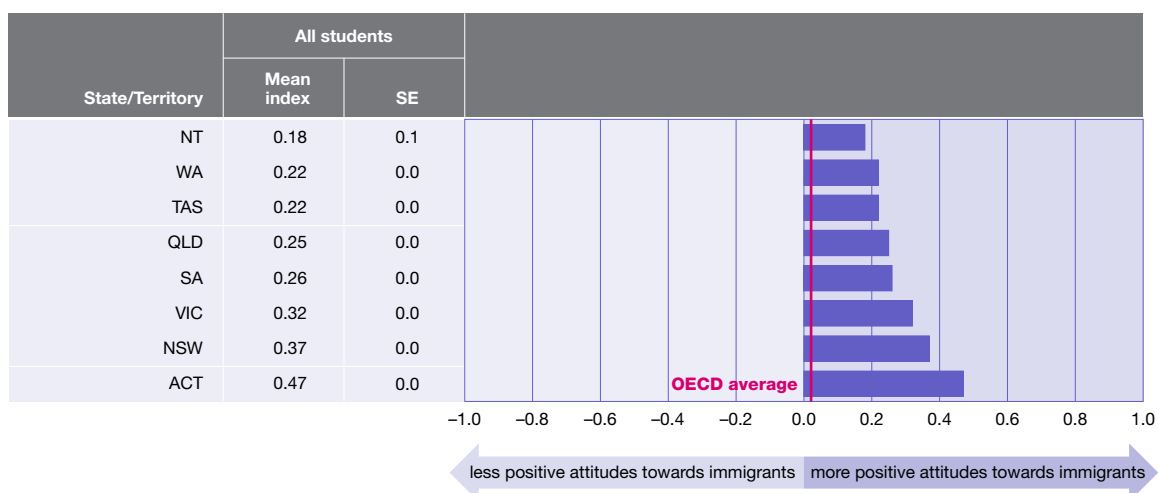
Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student attitudes towards immigrants index.

**FIGURE 3.26** Percentage of students who reported having positive attitudes towards immigrants, for Australia and comparison countries

## Student attitudes towards immigrants in a national context

Figure 3.27 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the attitudes towards immigrants index.

- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories, with the exception of the Northern Territory, reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than students from across the OECD countries.
- ▶ The mean index scores on attitudes towards immigrants index ranged from 0.18 in the Northern Territory to 0.47 in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ Students in Victoria reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than students in Western Australia.
- ▶ Students in South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory reported similar attitudes towards immigrants.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student attitudes towards immigrants index.

**FIGURE 3.27** Attitudes towards immigrants index, by state and territory

Figure 3.28 shows the percentage of students who reported having positive attitudes towards immigrants for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions reported positive attitudes towards immigrants.

- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have* ranged from 89% of students in the Northern Territory to 94% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections* ranged from 80% of students in the Northern Territory to 89% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *Immigrants should have the same opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle* ranged from 84% of students in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria to 90% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has* ranged from 85% of students in the Northern Territory to 91% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>			
	Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have	Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections	Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle	Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has
NT	89	80	84	85
WA	91	82	84	88
TAS	90	86	87	86
QLD	91	84	84	88
SA	92	85	84	87
VIC	92	85	84	89
NSW	92	86	87	90
ACT	94	89	90	91

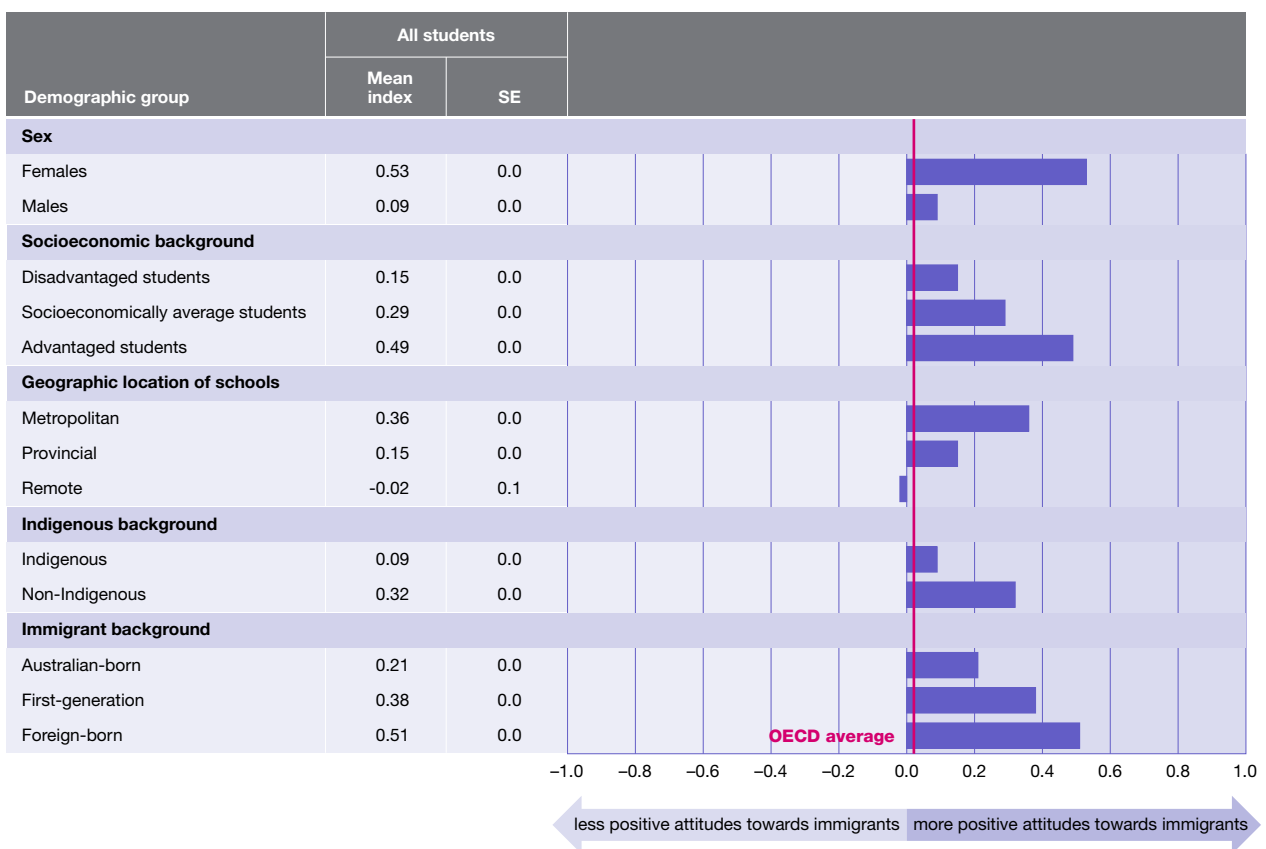
Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student attitudes towards immigrants index.

**FIGURE 3.28** Percentage of students who reported having positive attitudes towards immigrants, by state and territory

## Student attitudes towards immigrants for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 3.29 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the attitudes towards immigrants index.

- ▶ Female students reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than male students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report more positive attitudes towards immigrants.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than reported by Indigenous students.
- ▶ Foreign-born students and first-generation students reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than reported by Australian-born students, while foreign-born reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants than first-generation students.



**FIGURE 3.29** Attitudes towards immigrants Index, for different demographic groups

Figure 3.30 shows the percentage of students who reported having positive attitudes towards immigrants for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students in positive attitudes towards immigrants for the statements *Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections*, and *Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle*, both with a 9 percentage point difference in favour of female students.

- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in positive attitudes towards immigrants for the statements *Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections*, with a 6 percentage point difference, and *Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have*, and *Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle*, both with a 5 percentage point difference. All differences were in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in positive attitudes towards immigrants for the statements *Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have*, with an 8 percentage point difference, and *Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has*, with a 7 percentage point difference, all differences in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences in reporting positive attitudes towards immigrants were found in favour of non-Indigenous students for the statements *Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have*, with a 6 percentage point difference, and *Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections*, with a 5 percentage point difference.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest difference between Australian-born students and foreign-born students in reporting positive attitudes towards immigrants was for the statement *Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle*, with an 8 percentage point difference, followed by a 7 percentage point difference for the statement *Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has*, both differences in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>very much like me or mostly like me</i>			
	Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have	Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections	Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle	Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	95	90	90	92
Males	88	81	81	85
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	89	82	83	87
Socioeconomically average students	92	85	85	89
Advantaged students	94	88	88	91
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	92	86	86	90
Provincial	90	82	82	86
Remote	84	81	80	83
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	86	80	82	85
Non-Indigenous	92	85	85	89
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	91	83	83	87
First-generation	92	86	87	90
Foreign-born	93	89	91	93

**FIGURE 3.30** Percentage of students who reported having positive attitudes towards immigrants, for different demographic groups



# Ability to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures

CHAPTER

# 4

This chapter focuses on the third dimension of global competence, which describes what globally competent students can do when they interact with people from different cultures. They “*understand cultural norms, interactive styles and degrees of formality in intercultural contexts and can adapt their behaviour and communication to suit every situation. They appreciate the importance of respectful dialogue, strive to understand others and make an effort to include marginalised groups*” (OECD, 2020, p. 118).

This chapter examines the similarities and differences between countries, the Australian jurisdictions and different demographic groups in students’ awareness of intercultural communication, their contact with people from other cultures and multilingualism.

## Student awareness of intercultural communication

*In PISA, intercultural communication relates to students’ ability to clearly communicate in a range of situations. They are able to recognise different forms of expression and the subtleties of cross-cultural communication, and they should be able to modify their behaviour in order to effectively communicate with others (OECD, 2020, p. 118).*

## How is student awareness of intercultural communication measured in PISA?

Student awareness of intercultural communication was measured by asking students to firstly, imagine the scenario that *they are talking in their native language to people whose native language is different from theirs*, and then rate their level of agreement on different behaviours related to aspects of awareness of intercultural communication:

- ▶ *I carefully observe their reactions.*
- ▶ *I frequently check that we are understanding each other correctly.*
- ▶ *I listen carefully to what they say.*
- ▶ *I choose my words carefully.*
- ▶ *I give concrete examples to explain my ideas.*
- ▶ *I explain things very carefully.*
- ▶ *If there is a problem with communication, I find ways around it (e.g. by using gestures, re-explaining, writing etc.)*

Students were asked to respond to the statements on a four-point scale (*strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree*).

An index of student awareness of intercultural communication was constructed using the student responses to these statements. Higher values on the index illustrate students having expressed a greater awareness of intercultural communication than the average student across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate students expressed less awareness of intercultural communication than the average student across the OECD countries.

Similarly to the previous two chapters, this dimension of global competence focuses on elements that are likely to be influenced by both learning activities in school as well as experiences gained out of school. While the focus is on intercultural competence, in fact all of the aspects included here relate to communication skills in general. The ability to listen, be empathetic and to explain things clearly are the foundations of good communication skills, regardless of the context.

Schools can certainly exert influence over many of these, for example in helping students learn how to better structure their communications or to check for mutual understanding. Beyond this, students' family contexts are likely to exert a strong influence, in terms of the communication skills that they see modelled in their homes and communities. The importance of the broader social culture can also not be understated. Cultures that emphasise respectful listening are likely to be those in which many of the aspects included in the PISA 2018 definition of cross-cultural interaction are strengthened.

Specific skills in communicating with people whose native language is different from theirs are built through practice. This means that students who live in multi-lingual homes or communities, or who have had the experience to undertake international travel, are likely to be well-practiced in the type of communication strategies used in these situations. Another factor that is likely to influence skills in cross-cultural communication is experience being a non-native speaker of a language trying to make themselves understood. This is something that language learning and subsequent travel or conversation practice is likely to strengthen.

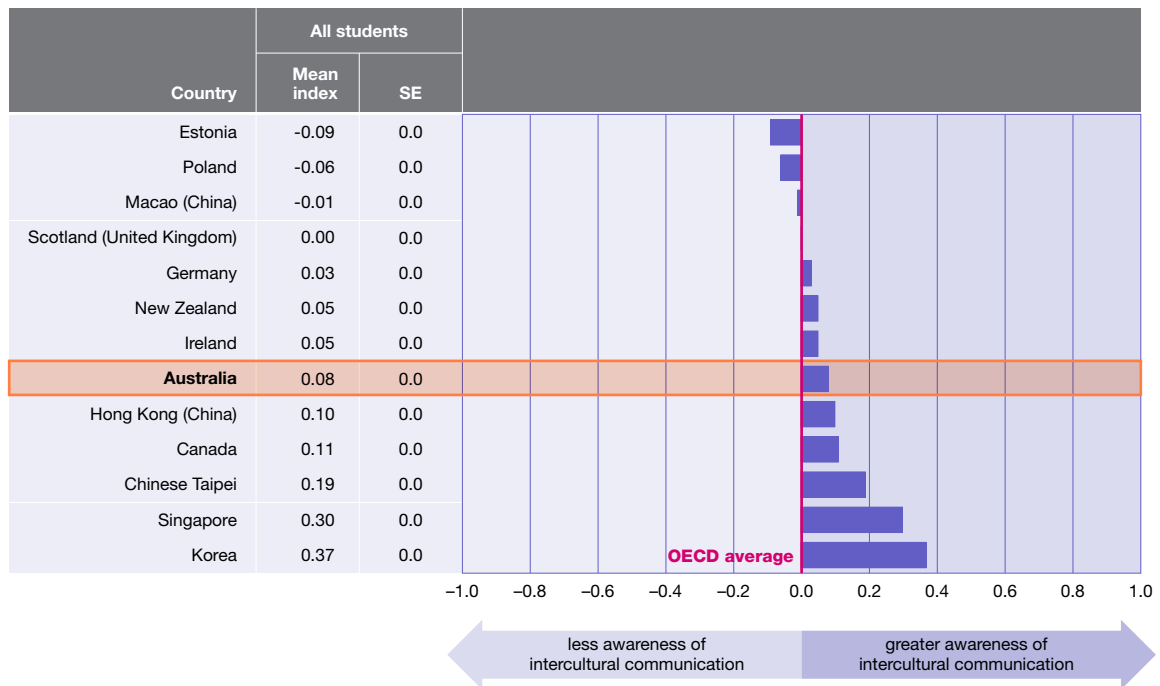
Beyond communication skills per se, it is also important to note that the ability to communicate with others from different linguistic backgrounds requires motivation as well as skill. This implies a degree of openness, a willingness to engage with difference and a valuing of diverse perspectives. This motivation may be partly innate, and partly influenced by life experiences – both at school and at home.

## **Student awareness of intercultural communication in an international context**

Figure 4.1 presents the mean index scores on the student awareness of intercultural communication index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students across OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.08 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of 0.00 for the OECD average.
- ▶ a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in Scotland, Macao (China), Poland and Estonia.
- ▶ similar levels of intercultural communication to students in Canada, Hong Kong (China), Ireland, New Zealand, and Germany.
- ▶ less awareness of intercultural communication than students in Korea, Singapore and Chinese Taipei.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student awareness of intercultural communication index.

**FIGURE 4.1** Student awareness of intercultural communication index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of students who reported their agreement on different behaviours related to aspects of awareness of intercultural communication, for Australia, the comparison countries and the OECD average.

- ▶ A similar proportion of Australian students reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they *give concrete examples to explain my ideas* than students across OECD countries, while a higher proportion of Australian students reported that they agreed with all other statements about intercultural communication than the OECD average.
- ▶ A lower proportion of Australian students reported that they agreed with the statements about intercultural communication than students from Chinese Taipei, Singapore, Korea, and Hong Kong (China).
- ▶ A similar proportion of students in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and Canada reported that they agreed that they *carefully observe their reactions, frequently check that we are understanding each other correctly, and they choose their words carefully*.

Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>						
	I carefully observe their reactions	I frequently check that we are understanding each other correctly	I listen carefully to what they say	I choose my words carefully	I give concrete examples to explain my ideas	I explain things very carefully	If there is a problem with communication, I find ways around it (e.g. by using gestures, writing)
Estonia	82	83	91	81	80	77	86
Poland	82	86	88	80	85	77	86
Macao (China)	90	83	93	83	82	78	90
Scotland (United Kingdom)	85	85	91	83	82	82	85
Germany	76	82	87	77	78	73	83
New Zealand	86	88	92	85	79	82	87
Ireland	87	87	93	85	80	86	88
<b>Australia</b>	87	88	91	86	82	83	88
Hong Kong (China)	91	91	93	87	85	88	92
Canada	86	87	90	83	83	82	88
Chinese Taipei	92	91	93	87	88	85	90
Singapore	93	92	95	89	85	86	92
Korea	95	93	95	85	87	86	95
OECD average	82	85	88	80	81	78	85

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the student awareness of intercultural communication index.

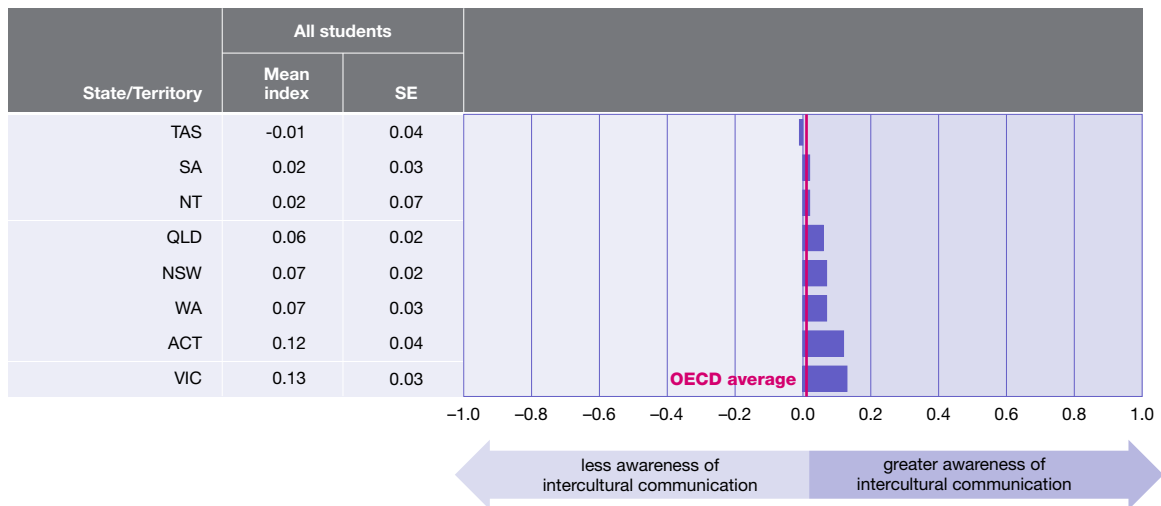
**FIGURE 4.2** Percentage of students who reported their agreement on aspects of awareness of intercultural communication, for Australia and comparison countries

## Student awareness of intercultural communication in a national context

Figure 4.3 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the jurisdictions on the student awareness of intercultural communication index.

- ▶ Students in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students from across the OECD, and students in the other jurisdictions reported similar levels of awareness of intercultural communication to the OECD average.
- ▶ The mean index scores on student awareness of intercultural communication ranged from -0.01 in Tasmania to 0.13 in Victoria.
- ▶ Students across all jurisdictions reported similar levels of awareness of intercultural communication, except for Victoria, who reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, and for the Australian Capital Territory who reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in Tasmania.





Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student awareness of intercultural communication index.

**FIGURE 4.3** Student awareness of intercultural communication index, by state and territory

Figure 4.4 shows the percentage of students who reported their agreement on different behaviours related to aspects of awareness of intercultural communication for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions (80% or higher) reported their agreement with the statements about intercultural communications.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that they *frequently check that we are understanding each other correctly* ranged from 87% of students in New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory to 90% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that they *give concrete examples to explain their ideas* ranged from 80% of students in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia to 85% in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that *if there is a problem with communication, I find ways around it (e.g. by using gestures, writing etc.)* ranged from 86% of students in Tasmania to 91% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported agree or strongly agree						
	I carefully observe their reactions	I frequently check that we are understanding each other correctly	I listen carefully to what they say	I choose my words carefully	I give concrete examples to explain my ideas	I explain things very carefully	If there is a problem with communication, I find ways around it (e.g. by using gestures, writing)
TAS	88	87	91	84	81	82	86
SA	86	87	91	84	80	82	88
NT	87	87	91	85	81	83	87
QLD	87	88	91	85	83	82	88
NSW	86	87	91	85	82	83	88
WA	88	88	92	86	80	83	89
ACT	89	90	92	84	85	83	91
VIC	88	89	92	86	80	84	88

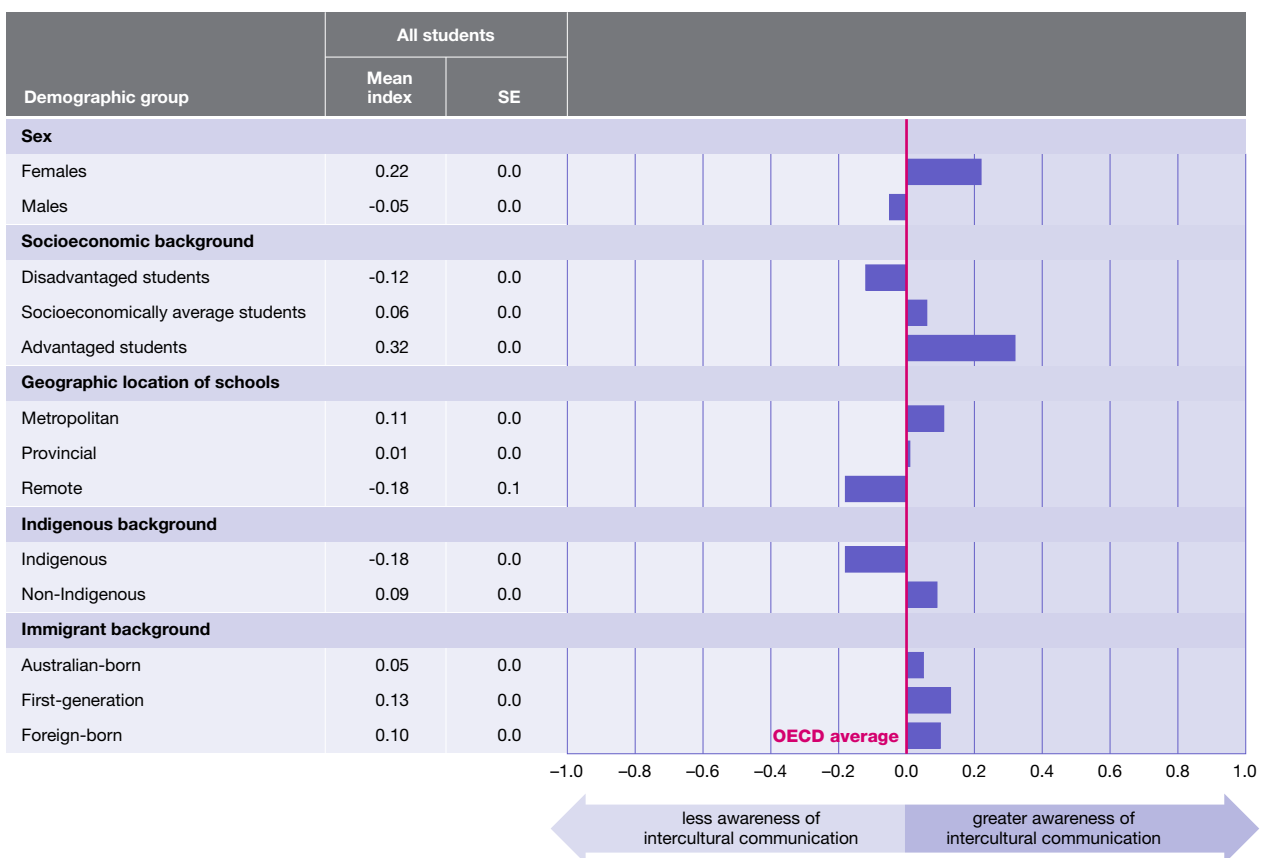
Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the student awareness of intercultural communication index.

**FIGURE 4.4** Percentage of students who reported their agreement on aspects of awareness of intercultural communication, by state and territory

## Student awareness of intercultural communication for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 4.5 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic group, and the OECD average on the student awareness of intercultural communication index.

- ▶ Female students reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than male students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report a greater awareness of intercultural communication.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in provincial and remote schools, while students in provincial schools reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than students in remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than Indigenous students.
- ▶ First-generation students reported a greater awareness of intercultural communication than Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 4.5** Student awareness of intercultural communication index, for different demographic groups

Figure 4.6 shows the percentage of students who expressed their agreement on different behaviours related to aspects of awareness of intercultural communication for different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students, in their agreement that they *frequently check that they are understanding each other correctly* with a difference of 12 percentage points, and that they *choose their words carefully*, a difference of 11 percentage points, both in favour of male students.
- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their agreement that they *frequently check that they are understanding each other correctly* with a 20 percentage point difference, and that they *carefully observe their reactions* and that they *explain things very carefully*, with an 18 percentage point difference, both in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their agreement that they *choose their words carefully*, with a 12 percentage point difference, they *listen carefully to what they say*, with an 11 percentage point difference, and they *carefully observe their reactions*, with a 10 percentage point difference. All of these differences were in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, in their agreement that they *frequently check that they are understanding each other correctly* with a difference of 12 percentage points, and that they *carefully observe their reactions*, with a 10 percentage point difference, both in favour of non-Indigenous students.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students were found in their agreement that they *carefully observe their reactions* and that they *listen carefully to what they say*, each with a difference of 5 percentage points in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>			
	I carefully observe their reactions	I frequently check that we are understanding each other correctly	I listen carefully to what they say	I choose my words carefully
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	82	59	82	61
Males	83	71	80	71
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	74	55	73	57
Socioeconomically average students	83	65	82	67
Advantaged students	91	75	87	74
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	85	66	82	67
Provincial	79	62	77	64
Remote	74	59	72	55
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	77	68	72	58
Non-Indigenous	87	80	78	67
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	81	64	79	65
First-generation	85	67	83	68
Foreign-born	85	66	84	66

Demographic group	I give concrete examples to explain my ideas	I explain things very carefully	If there is a problem with communication, I find ways around it (e.g. by using gestures, writing)
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	80	82	91
Males	76	77	83
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	70	70	79
Socioeconomically average students	78	80	87
Advantaged students	85	88	93
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	79	81	88
Provincial	76	75	83
Remote	73	77	83
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	74	59	74
Non-Indigenous	81	65	83
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	76	78	86
First-generation	81	83	88
Foreign-born	78	80	87

**FIGURE 4.6** Percentage of students who reported their agreement on aspects of awareness of intercultural communication, for different demographic groups

## Contact with people from other countries

Contact with people from other countries and different cultures has the ability to foster understanding, mitigate prejudice and improve relations. Withholding judgment and avoiding ignorance and closed-mindedness can create connectedness between people (OECD, 2020, p. 123).

### How is contact with people from other countries measured in PISA?

Using a yes or no question, students were asked about whether they have contact with people from other countries in the following environments:

- ▶ In their family
- ▶ At school
- ▶ In their neighbourhood
- ▶ In their circle of friends.

### Students contact with people from other countries in an international context

Figure 4.7 shows the percentage of students who reported having contact, and where they had contact with people from other countries, for Australia, the comparison countries and the OECD average.

- ▶ Australian students reported having more contact with people from other countries *in their family, at school, and in their circle of friends* than contact with people from other countries *in their neighbourhood*.
- ▶ Australian students reported having more contact with people from other countries in the four different environments than students in Macao (China), Poland, and across the OECD countries.
- ▶ Australian students reported having more contact with people from other countries in three of the four environments than students in Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), and Macao (China).
- ▶ Australian students reported having less contact with people from other countries in three of the four environments than students in Canada, Germany, Ireland, and New Zealand.

Country	Percentage of students who reported Yes			
	In the family	At school	In my neighbourhood	In my circle of friends
<b>Australia</b>	67	65	41	65
Canada	66	70	46	68
Chinese Taipei	32	78	33	60
Estonia	33	46	44	67
Germany	52	72	44	77
Hong Kong (China)	29	68	29	58
Ireland	76	68	43	65
Korea	10	37	42	22
Macao (China)	31	55	23	60
New Zealand	80	73	40	74
Poland	55	31	25	61
Scotland (United Kingdom)	66	58	30	65
Singapore	65	73	38	73
OECD average	54	53	38	63

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 4.7** Percentage of students who reported having contact with people from other countries, for Australia and comparison countries

## Students contact with people from other countries in a national context

Figure 4.8 shows the percentage of students who reported having contact, and where they had contact with people from other countries, for the jurisdictions. Inevitably this is likely to be influenced by the proportion of Australians born overseas in each jurisdiction. In the 2016 census the overall proportion of Australians born overseas was just under 29%. There were significant variations between jurisdictions, however. The highest proportion of the population born overseas was Western Australia, at 35%, followed by Victoria at 31%, New South Wales at 30%, The Australian Capital Territory at 28%, both Queensland and South Australia at 24%, the Northern Territory at 23% and Tasmania at 13%.

Tasmanian students reported having less contact with people from other countries across the four different environments than in the other Australian jurisdictions.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported having contact with people from other countries *in their family* ranged from 50% of students in Tasmania to 71% in Western Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported having contact with people from other countries *at school* ranged from 57% of students in Tasmania to 73% in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported having contact with people from other countries *in their neighbourhood* ranged from 27% of students in Tasmania to 47% in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported having contact with people from other countries *in their circle of friends* ranged from 49% of students in Tasmania to 73% in the Northern Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported Yes			
	In the family	At school	In my neighbourhood	In my circle of friends
ACT	66	40	40	73
NSW	69	44	44	65
VIC	68	40	40	64
QLD	62	38	38	65
SA	63	34	34	64
WA	71	44	44	71
TAS	50	27	27	49
NT	68	47	47	73

**FIGURE 4.8** Percentage of students who reported having contact with people from other countries, by state and territory

## Students contact with people from other countries for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 4.9 shows the percentage of students who reported having contact, and where they had contact with people from other countries, for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students, in their reported contact with people from other countries *in their family* and *at school*, each with a gap of 4 percentage points in favour of female students.
- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their reported contact with people from other countries *at school*, with a difference of 15 percentage points, in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and provincial schools in their reported contact with people from other countries *in their family*, with a difference of 21 percentage points, in favour of students in provincial schools.

- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, in their reported contact with people from other countries *in their family*, with a difference of 14 percentage points, in favour of non-Indigenous students.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students were found in the reported contact with people from other countries *in their family*, with a difference of 44 percentage points, and between Australian-born students and foreign-born students the reported contact with people from other countries *in their family*, with a difference of 41 percentage points, not in favour of the Australian-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported Yes			
	In the family	At school	In my neighbourhood	In my circle of friends
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	69	67	40	64
Males	65	64	41	67
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	60	58	35	59
Socioeconomically average students	68	65	40	66
Advantaged students	72	74	47	71
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	72	68	44	69
Provincial	51	58	31	54
Remote	56	64	38	67
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	54	62	37	58
Non-Indigenous	67	66	41	66
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	47	60	34	57
First-generation	88	69	47	72
Foreign-born	91	79	53	83

**FIGURE 4.9** Percentage of students who reported having contact with people from other countries, for different demographic groups

## Languages spoken and learned by students

*Language is a basic tool for communicating and being multilingual promotes social cohesions and intercultural dialogue, as well as expanding one's access to all sorts of materials, ranging from international media to literature and cinema (OECD, 2020, p. 129).*

### How are languages spoken and learned by students measured in PISA?

Students were asked about how many languages, including the language(s) they and their parents (*your mother, your father*) speak well enough to converse with others. Students were asked to respond on a four-point scale (one language, *two languages*, *three languages*, *four or more languages*).

## Languages spoken and learned by students in an international context

Figure 4.10 shows the percentage of students who reported that they, their mother, and their father speak two or more languages, for Australia, the comparison countries and the OECD average.

- ▶ Thirty-eight per cent of Australian students reported that they speak *two or more languages*, which was similar to the proportion of students in Scotland, higher than the proportion of students in Korea, and lower than the remaining comparison countries and the OECD average.
- ▶ Thirty-nine per cent of Australian students reported that their mother speaks *two or more languages*, which was higher than the proportion of students in Korea and Scotland, and lower than the remaining comparison countries and the OECD average.
- ▶ Thirty-seven per cent of Australian students reported that their father speaks *two or more languages*, which was similar to the proportion of students in Ireland and New Zealand, higher than the proportion of students in Korea, and lower than the remaining comparison countries and the OECD average.

Country	Percentage of students/parents who speak two or more languages		
	Student	Student's mother	Student's father
<b>Australia</b>	38	39	37
Canada	63	60	57
Chinese Taipei	84	87	86
Estonia	90	86	86
Germany	86	73	73
Hong Kong (China)	93	82	75
Ireland	59	44	39
Korea	28	19	19
Macao (China)	91	81	75
New Zealand	42	42	38
Poland	80	53	56
Scotland (United Kingdom)	39	31	30
Singapore	92	90	90
OECD average	68	57	57

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 4.10** Percentage of students and parents who speak two or more languages, for Australia and comparison countries

## Languages spoken and learned by students in a national context

Figure 4.11 shows the percentage of students who reported that they, their mother, and their father speak two or more languages, for the jurisdictions.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that they speak *two or more languages* ranged from 24% of students in Tasmania to 43% in Victoria.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that their mother speaks *two or more languages* ranged from 18% of students in Tasmania to 44% in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that their father speaks *two or more languages* ranged from 19% of students in Tasmania to 42% in New South Wales.



State/Territory	Percentage of students/parents who speak two or more languages		
	Student	Student's mother	Student's father
ACT	37	41	36
NSW	40	44	42
VIC	43	43	41
QLD	31	29	30
SA	34	32	32
WA	34	36	35
TAS	24	18	19
NT	41	41	33

**FIGURE 4.11** Percentage of students and parents who speak two or more languages, by state and territory

### Languages spoken and learned by students for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 4.12 shows the percentage of students who reported that they, their mother, and their father speak two or more languages, for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ **Gender:** A higher proportion of female students reported that they speak *two or more languages* than male students.
- ▶ **Socioeconomic background:** The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their reports that their mother speaks *two or more languages*, with a difference of 6 percentage points, in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ **Geographic location of schools:** The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and students in provincial schools in their reports that their mother speaks *two or more languages*, with a difference of 24 percentage points, in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ **Indigenous background:** The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, in their reports that their mother speaks *two or more languages*, with a difference of 10 percentage points, in favour of non-Indigenous students.
- ▶ **Immigrant background:** The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students were found in their reports that their mother and father speaks *two or more languages*, with a difference of 61 and 60 percentage points respectively, in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students/parents who speak two or more languages		
	Student	Student's mother	Student's father
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	39	38	38
Males	36	39	37
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	38	41	38
Socioeconomically average students	37	39	38
Advantaged students	38	35	36
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	42	45	44
Provincial	24	21	19
Remote	31	28	28
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	34	29	31
Non-Indigenous	38	39	38
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	20	17	16
First-generation	49	58	56
Foreign-born	75	77	76

**FIGURE 4.12** Percentage of students and parents who speak two or more languages, for different demographic groups

## Foreign languages learned at school

*Learning a foreign language enables communication with people from other cultural backgrounds and unfamiliar contexts. Acquiring a second language can also enhance one's global understanding or positive dispositions toward other countries and cultures.*

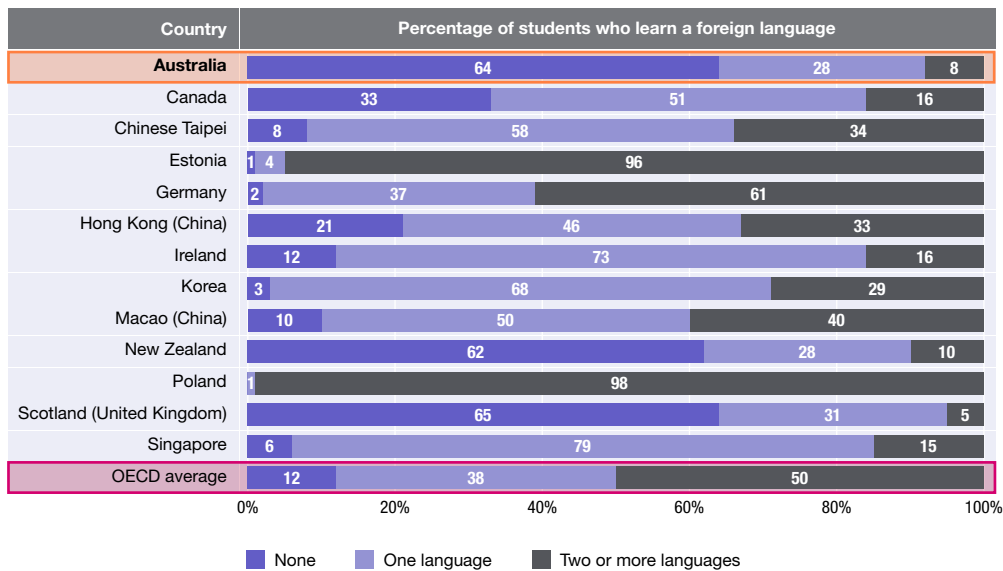
### How are foreign languages learned at school measured in PISA?

Students were asked about how many languages, in addition to English, they learn at school. The open-ended responses were coded as *none*, *one language*, and *two or more languages*.

### Foreign languages learned at school in an international context

Figure 4.13 shows the percentage of students who learn a foreign language at school, for Australia, the comparison countries and the OECD average.

- ▶ Sixty-four per cent of Australian students reported that they do not learn a foreign language, which was similar to the proportion of students in New Zealand and Scotland and higher than the remaining comparison countries and the OECD average (12%).
- ▶ Twenty-eight per cent of Australian students reported that they learn one foreign language, which was similar to the proportion of students in New Zealand and Scotland and lower than the OECD average (38%).
- ▶ Eight per cent of Australian students reported that they learn two or more foreign languages which was lower than the OECD average (50%).



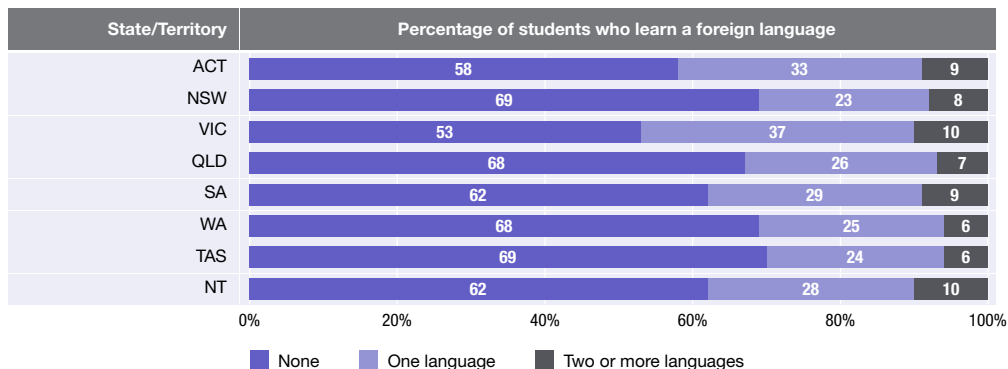
Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 4.13** Percentage of students who learn foreign languages at school, for Australia and comparison countries

## Foreign languages learned at school in a national context

Figure 4.14 shows the percentage of students who learn a foreign language at school, for the jurisdictions.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that they do not learn a foreign language ranged from 53% of students in Victoria to 69% in New South Wales and Tasmania.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that they learn one foreign language ranged from 23% of students in New South Wales to 37% in Victoria.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported that they learn two or more foreign languages ranged from 6% of students in Western Australia and Tasmania to 10% in Victoria and the Northern Territory.

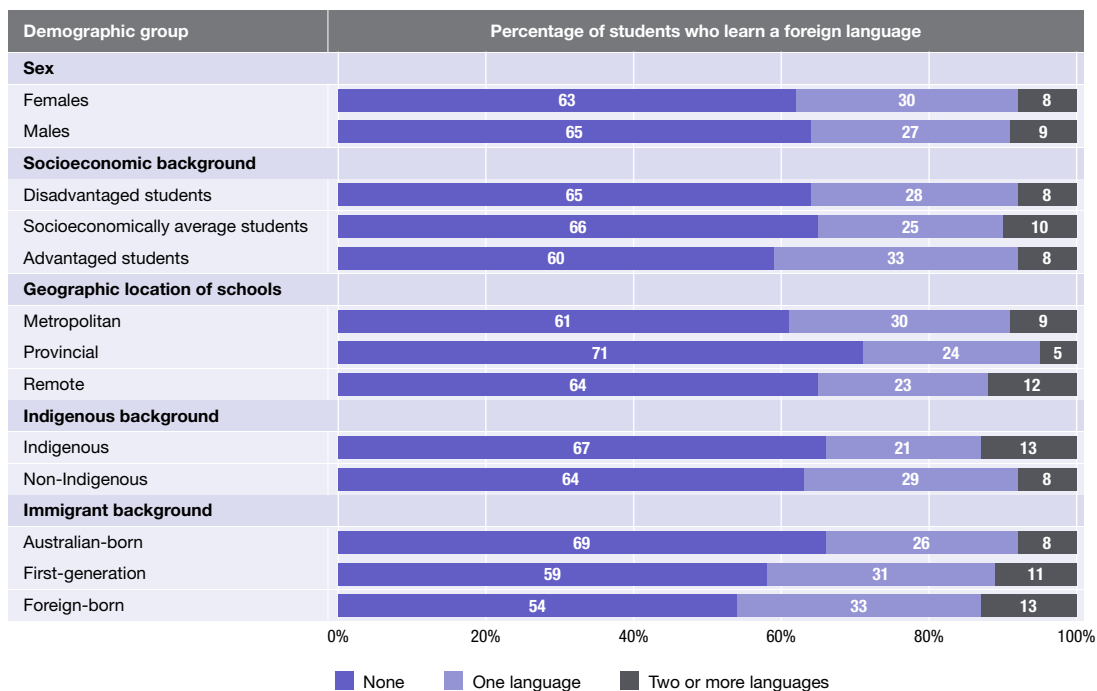


**FIGURE 4.14** Percentage of students who learn foreign languages at school, by state and territory

## Foreign languages learned at school for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 4.15 shows the percentage of students who learn a foreign language at school, for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: A higher proportion of female students reported that they learn one foreign language than male students.
- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and socioeconomically average students in their reports that they learn one foreign language, with a difference of 8 percentage points, in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and students in provincial schools in their reports that they do not learn a foreign language, with a difference of 10 percentage points, in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, in their reports that they learn one foreign language, with a difference of 8 percentage points, in favour of non-Indigenous students.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students were found in their reports that they do not learn a foreign language, with a difference of 16 percentage points, in favour of Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 4.15** Percentage of students who learn foreign languages at school, for different demographic groups

# Taking action for collective well-being and sustainable development

This chapter examines the fourth dimension of global competence which focuses on students' ability to take action for collective wellbeing and sustainable development, and highlights the action-orientated and practical nature of these skills. This dimension is strongly influenced by the notion of active citizenship, something defined by the Australian Government as "*getting involved in your local community and displaying values such as respect, inclusion and helping others*"<sup>11</sup>.

According to the OECD, this dimension focuses on young people's role as active and responsible members of society, and refers to individuals' readiness to respond to a given local, global or intercultural issue or situation. This dimension recognises that young people have multiple realms of influence ranging from personal and local to digital and global. Competent students create opportunities to take informed, reflective action and have their voices heard.

Taking action may imply standing up for a schoolmate whose human dignity is in jeopardy, initiating a global media campaign at school, or disseminating a personal view point on the refugee crisis via social media. Globally competent students are engaged to improve living conditions in their own communities and also to build a more just, peaceful, inclusive and environmentally sustainable world (OECD, 2018, p. 11).

This chapter examines the similarities and differences between countries, the Australian jurisdictions and different demographic groups focusing on global-mindedness and student engagement regarding taking action global topics.

## Global-mindedness

*As reported by the OECD, a globally-minded person has concerns for people in other parts of the world, as well as feelings of moral responsibility to try to improve others' conditions irrespective of distance and cultural differences. Globally-minded people care about future generations, and so act to preserve the environmental integrity of the planet. Globally-minded individuals exercise agency and voice with a critical awareness of the fact that other people might have a different vision of what humanity needs, and are open to reflecting on and changing their vision as they learn about these different perspectives* (OECD, 2018, p. 17).

<sup>11</sup> Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs (2021). *Celebrating Citizenship*, retrieved from <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/celebrating-citizenship/active-citizen>

## How is global-mindedness measured in PISA?

In 2018, PISA asked students to report on the extent to which they agreed with the following six statements covering a sense of agency regarding global issues:

- ▶ *I think of myself as a citizen of the world.*
- ▶ *When I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it.*
- ▶ *I think my behaviour can impact people in other countries.*
- ▶ *It is right to boycott companies that are known to provide poor workplace conditions for their employees.*
- ▶ *I can do something about the problems of the world.*
- ▶ *Looking after the global environment is important to me.*

Students were asked to respond to each of these statements on a four-point scale (*strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree*).

An index of global-mindedness was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate a greater sense of global-mindedness than the average student across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate a lower sense of global-mindedness than the average student across the OECD countries.

In considering the themes included in this dimension, it is apparent that students' attitudes and values are of greater importance here than skills and knowledge. The notion of being a citizen of the world is a philosophical stance that can be charted back as far as the Stoics in ancient Greece. Key attributes of a global citizen include the ability to have empathy and compassion for those different to ourselves. Beyond this, it requires having the self-efficacy to believe that personal action can make a difference.

The focus on the themes of poor employment conditions and the global environment are reflective of aspects of global citizenship that have been receiving increasing attention in curricula around the world. Other aspects of global citizenship that are not included, however, are those that include questioning factors that lead to the persistence of global patterns of wealth and poverty, and critical self-reflection of one's own positioning relative to global issues. The latter are rather more sensitive, and hence controversial, and thus their omission is not a surprise.

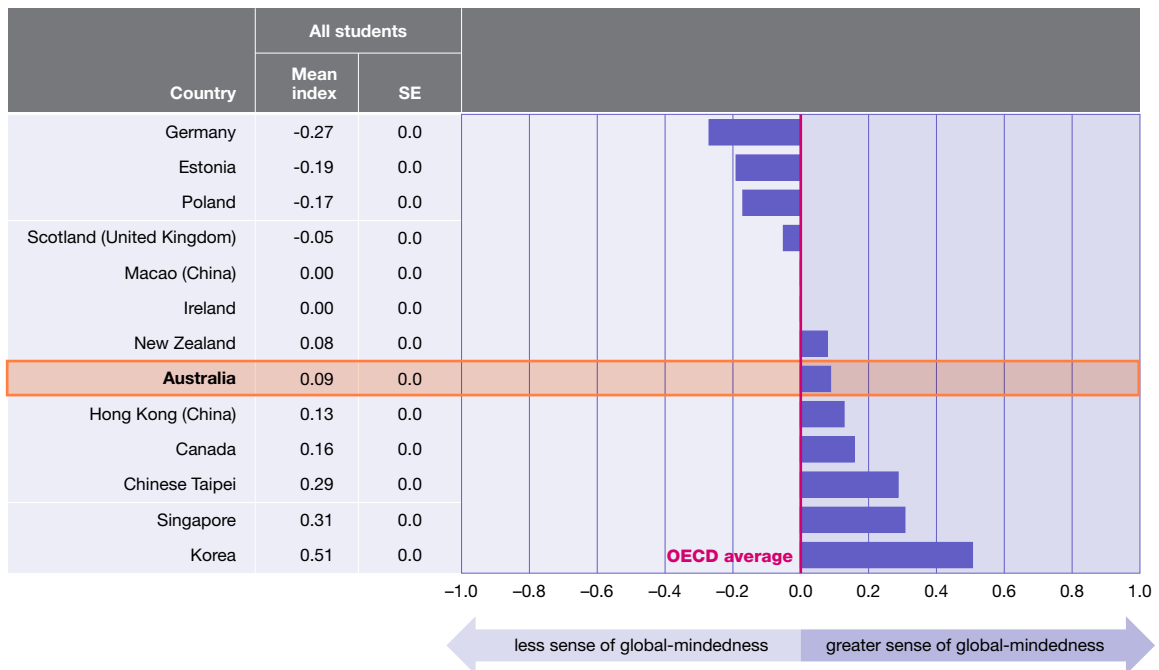
The inclusion of global issues in curricula, access to media which covers global issues and exposure to people from a range of backgrounds are all likely to be factors that influence student responses to the elements of this dimension. Other affective elements may be influenced by education but are equally premised on an innate sense of moral and social responsibility. This is likely partly influenced by family and community attitudes to global citizenship.

## Global-mindedness in an international context

Figure 5.1 presents the mean index scores on the global-mindedness index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ a greater sense of global-mindedness than students across the OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.09 for Australia was higher than the mean index score of 0.00 for the OECD average.
- ▶ a greater sense of global-mindedness than students in Germany, Estonia, Poland, Scotland, Macao (China), and Ireland.
- ▶ a similar sense of global-mindedness to students in New Zealand.
- ▶ a less sense of global-mindedness than students in Hong Kong (China), Canada, Chinese Taipei, Singapore and Korea.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the global-mindedness index.

**FIGURE 5.1** Global-mindedness index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 5.2 shows the percentage of students responded to each statement with either *agreed* or *strongly agreed*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as ‘agreed’ or as having a sense of global-mindedness.

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students reported a greater sense of global-mindedness as measured by five of the six statements than students from across the OECD countries, with the exception *Looking after the global environment is important to me*.
- ▶ Similar proportions of students in Australia, and Scotland reported they agreed *I think of myself as a citizen of the world*, while similar proportions of students in Australia, Scotland, Ireland, and New Zealand reported they agreed *It is right to boycott companies that are known to provide poor workplace conditions for their employees*.
- ▶ A higher proportion of students in Australia reported they agreed *I can do something about the problems of the world* than students in Germany, Estonia, Poland, Scotland, Macao (China), Ireland and New Zealand and students across the OECD countries.
- ▶ Overall, students in Korea, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Canada, and Hong Kong (China) reported a greater sense of global-mindedness when responding to each statement, than Australian students.

Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>					
	I think of myself as a citizen of the world	When I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it	I think my behaviour can impact people in other countries	It is right to boycott companies that are known to provide poor workplace conditions for their employees	I can do something about the problems of the world	Looking after the global environment is important to me
Germany	62	56	47	61	41	67
Estonia	76	58	51	63	50	71
Poland	69	57	51	66	58	76
Scotland (United Kingdom)	81	66	53	70	54	72
Macao (China)	81	78	44	71	54	90
Ireland	87	63	56	69	59	71
New Zealand	84	69	61	70	61	80
<b>Australia</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>77</b>
Hong Kong (China)	86	78	57	80	71	85
Canada	84	70	66	74	65	79
Chinese Taipei	89	82	61	83	81	89
Singapore	87	81	76	77	71	87
Korea	89	81	80	89	67	89
OECD average	76	67	56	66	57	78

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the global-mindedness index.

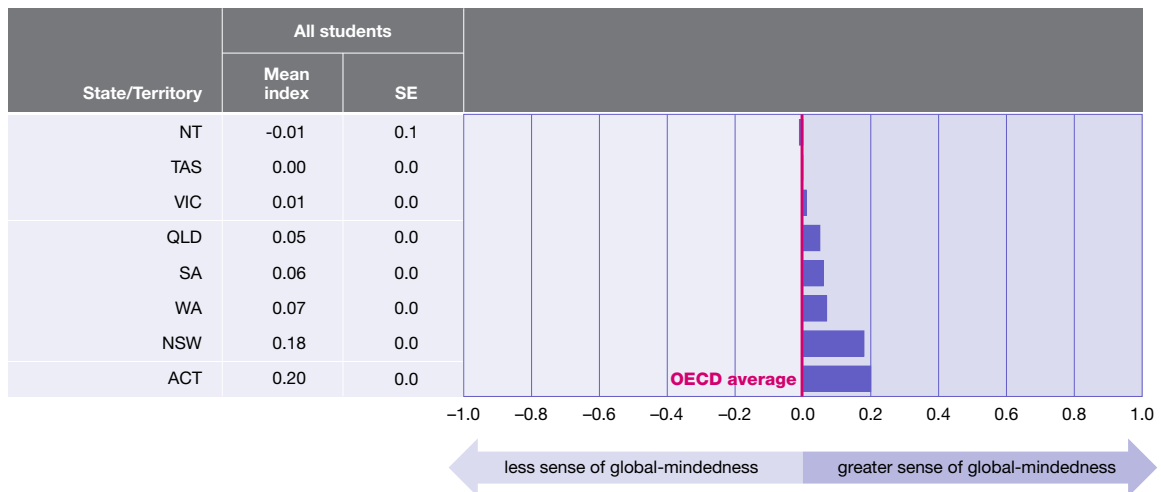
**FIGURE 5.2** Percentage of students who reported having a sense of global-mindedness, for Australia and comparison countries

## Global-mindedness in a national context

Figure 5.3 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the global-mindedness index.

- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, and Western Australia reported a greater sense of global-mindedness than students from across the OECD countries.
- ▶ The mean index scores on global-mindedness ranged from -0.01 in the Northern Territory to 0.20 in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ Students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales reported a similar sense of global-mindedness and a greater sense of global-mindedness than students in all other Australian jurisdictions.
- ▶ Students in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory all reported a similar sense of global-mindedness.





Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the global-mindedness index.

**FIGURE 5.3** Global-mindedness index, by state and territory

Figure 5.4 shows the percentage of students who reported have a sense of global-mindedness for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions reported having a sense of global-mindedness.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I think of myself as a citizen of the world* ranged from 77% of students in the Northern Territory to 85% of students in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *When I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it* ranged from 65% of students in Victoria to 73% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I think my behaviour can impact people in other countries* ranged from 58% of students in Tasmania to 65% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *It is right to boycott companies that are known to provide poor workplace conditions for their employees* ranged from 63% of students in the Northern Territory to 75% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I can do something about the problems of the world* ranged from 57% of students in the Northern Territory to 68% of students in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *Looking after the global environment is important to me* ranged from 73% of students in the Northern Territory and Victoria to 80% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported agree or strongly agree					
	I think of myself as a citizen of the world	When I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it	I think my behaviour can impact people in other countries	It is right to boycott companies that are known to provide poor workplace conditions for their employees	I can do something about the problems of the world	Looking after the global environment is important to me
NT	77	68	61	63	57	73
TAS	81	68	58	65	59	75
VIC	82	65	59	67	59	73
QLD	81	69	61	67	63	77
SA	83	70	62	66	62	76
WA	81	68	62	69	61	76
NSW	85	73	65	71	68	80
ACT	84	73	65	75	66	80

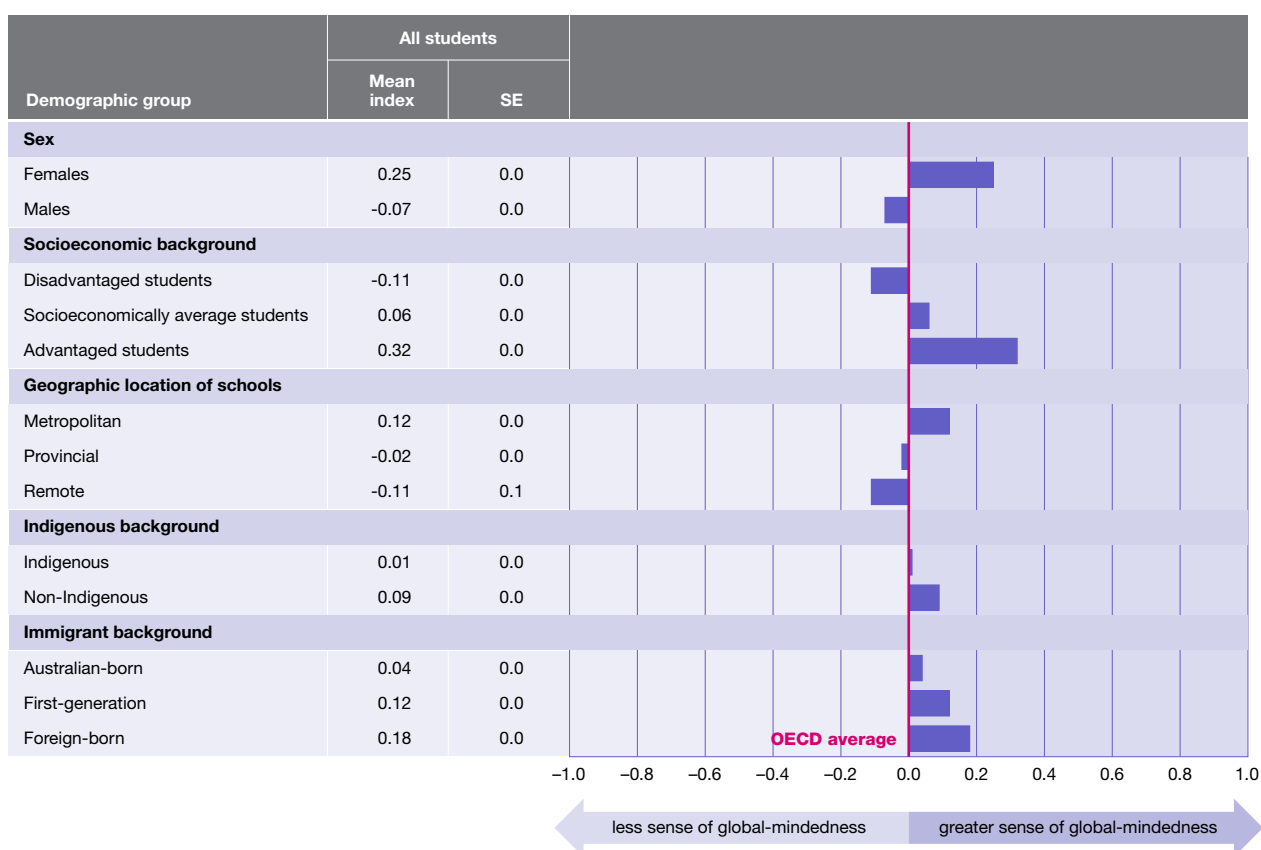
Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to highest mean score on the global-mindedness index.

**FIGURE 5.4** Percentage of students who reported having a sense of global-mindedness, by state and territory

## Global-mindedness for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 5.5 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the global-mindedness index.

- ▶ Female students reported a greater sense of global-mindedness than male students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report a greater sense of global-mindedness.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported a greater sense of global-mindedness than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous and Indigenous students reported a similar sense of global-mindedness.
- ▶ Foreign-born students and first-generation students reported a greater sense of global-mindedness than Australian-born students.



**FIGURE 5.5** Global-mindedness index, for different demographic groups

Figure 5.6 shows the percentage of students who reported having a sense of global-mindedness for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students in their sense of global-mindedness for the statements *When I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it* with a 16 percentage point difference, and *looking after the global environment is important to me*, with a 9 percentage point difference. Both differences were in favour of female students.
- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in their sense of global-mindedness for the statements *I can do something about the problems of the world*, with a 16 percentage point difference, and *It is right to boycott companies that are known to provide poor workplace conditions for their employees*, and *looking after the global environment is important to me* both with a 12 percentage point difference. Both differences were in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools in their sense of global-mindedness for the statements *when I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it*, with a 14 percentage point difference, and *I think of myself as a citizen of the world*, with a 13 percentage point difference, both differences were in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest difference in reporting sense of global-mindedness was found in favour of non-Indigenous students for the statement *I think of myself as a citizen of the world*, with an 8 percentage point difference.
- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest differences between Australian-born students and foreign-born students in their sense of global-mindedness were for the statements *I think my behaviour can impact people in other countries*, with an 11 percentage point difference, followed by an 8 percentage point difference for the statement *When I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it*, both differences were in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree</i> or <i>strongly agree</i>		
	I think of myself as a citizen of the world	When I see the poor conditions that some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it	I think my behaviour can impact people in other countries
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	86	77	66
Males	79	61	58
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	77	65	58
Socioeconomically average students	83	68	62
Advantaged students	86	75	67
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	83	70	63
Provincial	81	66	59
Remote	70	56	54
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	75	72	63
Non-Indigenous	83	69	62
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	83	67	60
First-generation	84	71	63
Foreign-born	81	75	70
Demographic group	It is right to boycott companies that are known to provide poor workplace conditions for their employees	I can do something about the problems of the world	Looking after the global environment is important to me
<b>Sex</b>			
Females	72	67	81
Males	65	59	72
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>			
Disadvantaged students	63	57	70
Socioeconomically average students	68	62	77
Advantaged students	75	72	83
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>			
Metropolitan	70	64	78
Provincial	65	59	74
Remote	65	58	72
<b>Indigenous background</b>			
Indigenous	67	64	75
Non-Indigenous	69	63	77
<b>Immigrant background</b>			
Australian-born	67	62	75
First-generation	69	64	77
Foreign-born	73	68	80

**FIGURE 5.6** Percentage of students who reported having a sense of global-mindedness, for different demographic groups

## Student engagement with global issues

*The capacity to take action is seen as the culmination of the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired by students. Students who have knowledge of global and intercultural issues, who are able to understand the perspectives of others and who have interest in other cultures should also be able to translate such positive attributes into actions that benefit their local communities and the world in which they live (OECD, 2020, p. 143).*

### How is student engagement with global issues measured in PISA?

In 2018, PISA asked students to report on whether they take action with respect to a series of topics related to environmental protection, gender, equity, and staying informed about international and social issues, such as poverty and human rights. Students responded to each of the following seven statements:

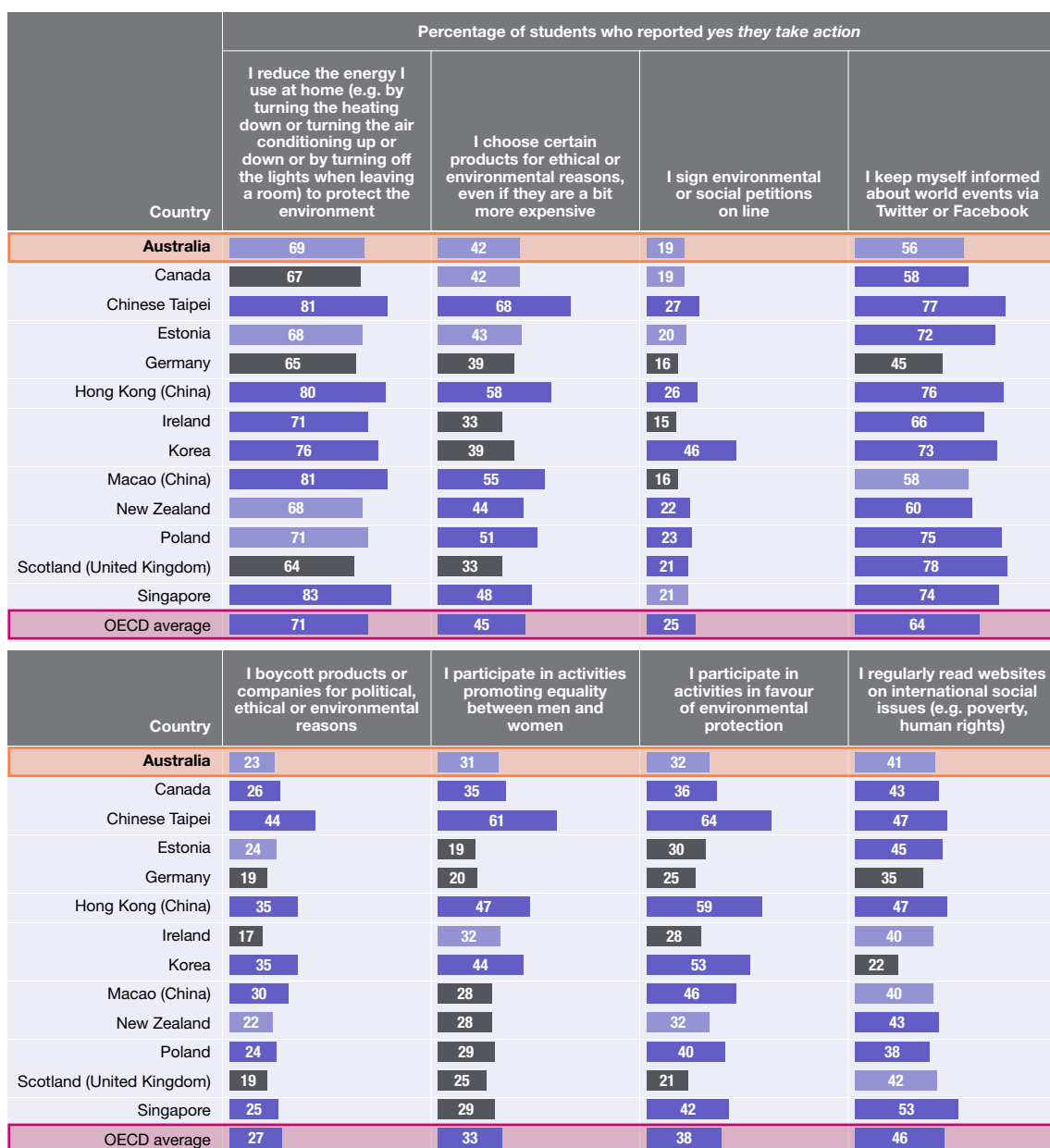
- ▶ *I reduce the energy I use at home (e.g. by turning the heating down or turning the air conditioning up or down or by turning off the lights when leaving a room) to protect the environment.*
- ▶ *I choose certain products for ethical or environmental reasons, even if they are a bit more expensive.*
- ▶ *I sign environmental or social petitions online.*
- ▶ *I keep myself informed about events via Twitter or Facebook.*
- ▶ *I boycott products or companies for political, ethical or environmental reasons.*
- ▶ *I participate in activities promoting equality between men and women.*
- ▶ *I participate in activities in favour of environmental protection.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements with either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to confirm whether they take action on this issue. For ease of reading, students who responded ‘Yes’ are referred to as taking action.

### Student engagement with global issues in an international context

Figure 5.7 shows the percentage of students who reported taking action about global issues for each statement, for Australia and comparison countries.

- ▶ A lower proportion of Australian students reported taking action for each of the topics than the OECD average.
- ▶ Similar proportions of students in Australia, New Zealand, Estonia and Poland reported greater engagement with taking action for global issues such as *I reduce the energy I use at home*, while similar proportions of students in Australia, Scotland, Macao (China) and Ireland reported *I regularly read websites on international social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights)*.
- ▶ Students in Australia reported greater engagement with taking action for global issues such as *I participate in activities promoting equality between men and women* than students in Singapore, Poland, New Zealand, Macao (China), Scotland, Germany and Estonia.
- ▶ Students in Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Korea, Macao (China), Canada, Singapore, Poland and students from across the OECD countries reported greater engagement with taking action for global issues such as *I boycott products or companies for political, ethical or environmental reasons*, than Australian students.
- ▶ Overall, students across the comparison countries were more likely to report they take action concerning energy consumption, followed by keeping informed about world events via Twitter or Facebook, and they choose certain products for ethical or environmental reasons even if they are more expensive. The least common global issues students across comparison countries took action on were promoting gender equality and signing environmental or social petitions online.



- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 5.7** Percentage of students who reported taking action for collective wellbeing and sustainable development, for Australia and comparison countries

## Student engagement with global issues in a national context

Figure 5.8 shows the percentage of students who reported taking action about global issues for each statement for the jurisdictions. Most students across the jurisdictions reported a willingness to take action.

- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I reduce the energy I use at home (e.g. by turning the heating down, or turning the air conditioning up or down or by turning off the lights when leave a room)* ranged from 63% of students in Tasmania to 73% of students in the Northern Territory.

- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I choose certain products for ethical or environmental reasons, even if they are a bit more expensive* ranged from 41% of students in Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory to 43% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I sign environmental or social petitions online* ranged from 16% of students in South Australia to 23% of students in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I keep myself informed about world events via Twitter or Facebook* ranged from 51% of students in the Northern Territory to 59% of students in South Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I boycott products or companies for political, ethical or environmental reasons* ranged from 20% of students in South Australia to 26% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I participate in activities promoting equality between men and women* ranged from 28% of students in Western Australia to 36% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I participate in activities in favour of environmental protection* ranged from 28% of students in Victoria and South Australia to 37% of students in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students that reported *I regularly read websites on international social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights)* ranged from 39% of students in South Australia and Tasmania to 46% of students in the Northern Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported yes they take action			
	I reduce the energy I use at home (e.g. by turning the heating down or turning the air conditioning up or down or by turning off the lights when leaving a room) to protect the environment	I choose certain products for ethical or environmental reasons, even if they are a bit more expensive	I sign environmental or social petitions on line	I keep myself informed about world events via Twitter or Facebook
ACT	69	43	19	52
NSW	70	42	23	57
VIC	66	41	17	58
QLD	68	42	19	53
SA	71	42	16	59
WA	71	41	19	55
TAS	63	42	22	58
NT	73	41	18	51

State/Territory	I boycott products or companies for political, ethical or environmental reasons	I participate in activities promoting equality between men and women	I participate in activities in favour of environmental protection	I regularly read websites on international social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights)
ACT	26	36	34	45
NSW	25	35	37	42
VIC	21	29	28	40
QLD	22	29	32	41
SA	20	29	28	39
WA	23	28	31	41
TAS	24	34	31	39
NT	22	33	31	46

**FIGURE 5.8** Percentage of students who reported taking action for collective wellbeing and sustainable development, by state and territory

## Student engagement with global issues for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 5.9 shows the percentage of students who reported taking action for global issues for each statement.

- ▶ **Gender:** The largest differences were found between male and female students for the statements *I participate in activities promoting equality between men and women* with an 11 percentage point difference, and *I choose certain products for ethical or environmental reasons, even if they are a bit more expensive*, with a 10 percentage point difference. Both differences were in favour of female students.
- ▶ **Socioeconomic background:** The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in taking action for global issues for the statements *I choose certain products for ethical or environmental reasons, even if they are a bit more expensive*, with a 14 percentage point difference, and *I regularly read websites on international social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights)* with a 12 percentage point difference. All differences were in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ **Geographic location of schools:** While there were large percentage differences between students in metropolitan school and students in remote schools, these differences were not statistically significant. The largest significant differences were found between students in metropolitan schools and provincial schools in taking action for global issues for the statement *I regularly read websites on international social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights)*, with a 6 percentage point difference, and *I reduce the energy I use at home*, with a 3 percentage point difference, all differences in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ **Indigenous background:** The largest differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in reporting a willingness to take action for global issues were for the statements *I participate in activities promoting equality between men and women*, with a 10 percentage point difference, and for the statements *I sign environmental or social petitions online* and *I participate in activities in favour of environmental protection*, with a 6 percentage point difference respectively, all differences were in favour of Indigenous students.
- ▶ **Immigrant background:** The largest difference between Australian-born students and foreign-born students in taking action for global issues was for the statements *I regularly read websites on international social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights)*, with an 11 percentage point difference, followed by a 7 percentage point difference for the statement *I reduce the energy use I use at home*, both differences in favour of foreign-born students.



Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>yes they take action</i>			
	I reduce the energy I use at home (e.g. by turning the heating down or turning the air conditioning up or down or by turning off the lights when leaving a room) to protect the environment	I choose certain products for ethical or environmental reasons, even if they are a bit more expensive	I sign environmental or social petitions on line	I keep myself informed about world events via Twitter or Facebook
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	73	47	21	57
Males	65	37	18	55
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	65	36	19	53
Socioeconomically average students	69	40	18	56
Advantaged students	73	50	23	59
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	69	42	19	57
Provincial	67	40	19	54
Remote	71	44	26	54
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	69	43	25	56
Non-Indigenous	69	42	19	56
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	66	40	19	56
First-generation	71	42	19	55
Foreign-born	73	46	24	58
Demographic group	I boycott products or companies for political, ethical or environmental reasons	I participate in activities promoting equality between men and women	I participate in activities in favour of environmental protection	I regularly read websites on international social issues (e.g. poverty, human rights)
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	24	37	35	45
Males	22	26	29	37
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	20	30	29	36
Socioeconomically average students	22	29	30	39
Advantaged students	28	36	39	48
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	23	31	32	42
Provincial	21	32	32	37
Remote	28	46	41	48
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	27	41	38	43
Non-Indigenous	22	31	32	41
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	21	31	31	38
First-generation	24	31	32	43
Foreign-born	25	32	36	49

**FIGURE 5.9** Percentage of students who reported taking action for collective wellbeing and sustainable development, for different demographic groups

# Education for living in a global world

The OECD's decision to include global competence in PISA provides a comprehensive overview of education systems' efforts to create learning environments that invite young people to understand the world beyond their immediate environment. Placing importance on interacting with others with respect for their rights and dignity, and taking action towards building sustainable and thriving global communities. A fundamental goal of this work is to support evidence-based decisions on how to improve curricula, teaching, assessments and schools' responses to cultural diversity in order to prepare young people to become global citizens. (OECD, 2018, p. 14)

This chapter looks at data collected from the student and school questionnaires. It examines the similarities and differences between countries, the Australian jurisdictions and different demographic groups on learning activities students are exposed to, multicultural learning at school, global issues covered in the curriculum, and teacher capacity to integrate intercultural learning into their lessons.

## Availability of global competence learning activities

*As reported by the OECD, PISA aims to provide a comprehensive overview of education systems' efforts to create learning environments that invite young people to understand the world beyond their immediate environment, interact with others with respect for their rights and dignity, and take action towards building sustainable and thriving communities. A fundamental goal of this work is to support evidence-based decisions on how to improve curricula, teaching, assessments and schools' responses to cultural diversity in order to prepare young people to become global citizens (OECD, 2018, p. 17).*

## How is availability of global competence learning activities measured in PISA?

In 2018 PISA asked students to respond to ten questions about different global competence learning activities they learn at school. The purpose of the question was to provide information about students' perceptions of what they are learning at school that has relevance to 'global competence'.

Students responded to statements about learned knowledge content, activities used to learn, reflection on global issues and learning relevant skills. Students responded to each of the following ten statements:

- ▶ *I learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies.*
- ▶ *I learn how to solve conflicts with other people in our classroom.*

- ▶ *I learn about different cultures.*
- ▶ *We read newspapers, look at news on the Internet or watch the news together during classes.*
- ▶ *I am often invited by my teachers to give my personal opinion about international news.*
- ▶ *I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year.*
- ▶ *I participate in classroom discussions about world events as part of the regular instruction.*
- ▶ *I analyse global issues together with my classmates in small groups during class.*
- ▶ *I learn how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues.*
- ▶ *I learn to communicate with people from different backgrounds.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements requiring a yes-or-no answer.

More than the dimensions included in previous chapters, the elements of this dimension sit squarely within school curricula. Many of these activities related to what might be included in humanities or social science classes, but others relate to the overall school philosophy. Activities such as *learning about the interconnectedness of countries' economies* and an *analysis of global issues* may take place in subjects such as business or economics, in addition to humanities and social sciences.

*Classroom discussions about world events, reading newspapers together and giving a personal opinion about world events* may be incorporated in language classes as well as humanities and social sciences. In some schools there may be explicit schemes to engage students with their peers in other countries, for example through shared virtual classes or exchange schemes.

A commitment to multiculturalism in Australian society means that it is common for *different cultures to be celebrated* throughout the year. This is likely to be most emphasised in schools with the most culturally diverse cohorts of students. The remaining three activities related to communication skills, and these could be covered in a range of different subjects at school, including art, music, languages, humanities and social sciences.

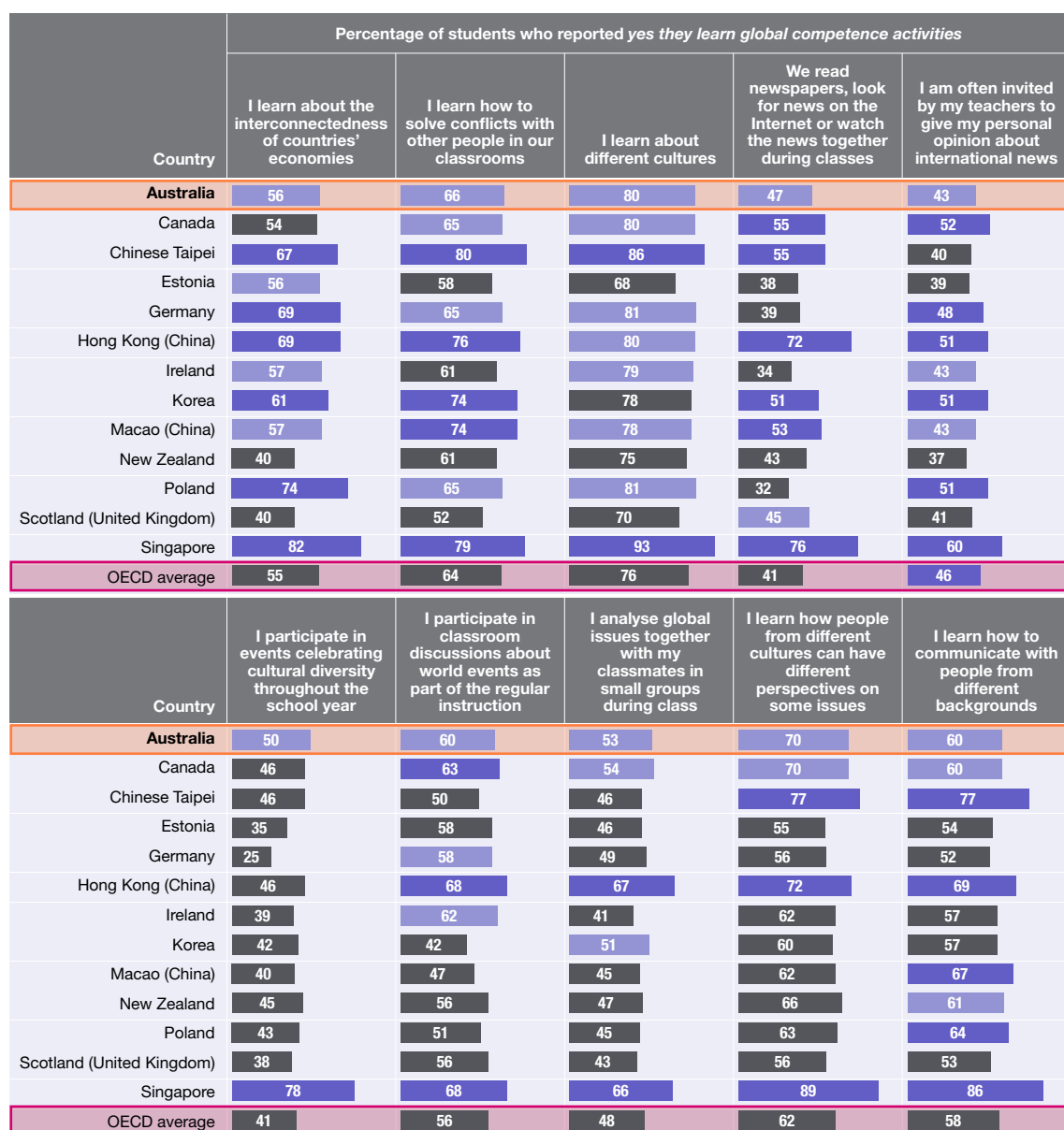
*Learning to communicate with people from different backgrounds* could also be interpreted as learning a foreign language. Equally, *learning to communicate, learning to solve conflicts* and *learning about different perspectives on issues* may not be explicitly taught in schools.

## Availability of global competence learning activities in an international context

Figure 6.1 shows the percentage of students who reported they engage in global competence learning activities at school, for Australia and comparison countries. Overall, students in Australia engaged very positively with global competence learning activities at school.

- ▶ The statement that gained the most support from students was *I learn about different cultures*. More than two-thirds of students in all countries reported that this was the case, including 80% of students in Australia and 93% of students in Singapore.
- ▶ The statement that gained the least support from students was *I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year*. Less than 50% of students in almost all countries agreed that this was the case. The only exceptions were Australia, with 50% of students agreeing, and Singapore, with 78% of students agreeing.
- ▶ The highest proportion of students reporting that they engaged in all but one of the activities listed were from Singapore. For *I learn how to solve conflicts with other people in our classrooms*, an almost identical proportion of students in Chinese Taipei reported this as students in Singapore.
- ▶ A relatively high proportion of Australian students reported *I analyse global issues together with my classmates in small groups in my class*. This was agreed to by 53% of Australian students, similar to the proportion of students in Canada and Korea, and only lower than the proportions of students who reported this in Hong Kong (China) and Singapore.

- ▶ A relatively low proportion of Australian students reported *I am often invited by my teachers to give my personal opinion about international news*. This was agreed to by just 43% of Australian students, similar to the proportion of students in Ireland and Macao (China) but lower than the proportions of students in seven other countries.



- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 6.1** Percentage of students who reported they engaged in global competence learning activities, for Australia and comparison countries

## Availability of global competence learning activities in a national context

Figure 6.2 shows the percentage of students who reported they engage in global competence learning activities at school in each of the Australian states and territories.

- ▶ The activity that the highest proportion of students agreed that they engaged in was *I learn about different cultures*. Between 77% of students in Queensland and Tasmania and 86% of students in the Australian Capital Territory reported doing this.
- ▶ Another activity that a higher proportion of students agreed that they engaged in was *I learn how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues*. Between 63% of students in Tasmania and 77% of students in the Australian Capital Territory reported doing this.
- ▶ The two activities that the lowest proportion of students agreed that they engaged in were *I am often invited by my teachers to give my personal opinion about international news* and *We read newspapers, look for news on the Internet or watch the news together during classes*. The proportions of students that reported doing these ranged from just 36% of students in the Northern Territory to 54% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ Somewhat surprisingly, the proportion of students who reported *I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year* was relatively low. Between 45% of students in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania and 57% of students in New South Wales reported doing this.
- ▶ The highest proportions of students that reported that they engaged in eight of the ten activities were from the Australian Capital Territory. In contrast, the lowest proportions (or joint lowest proportions) of students that reported that they engaged in eight of the ten activities were from Tasmania.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies* ranged from 47% of students in Tasmania to 72% of students in Western Australia
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I learn how to solve conflicts with other people in our classroom* ranged from 63% of students in the Northern Territory to 70% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I participate in classroom discussions about world events as part of regular instruction* ranged from 55% of students in Tasmania to 67% of students in the Australian Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported *I learn how to communicate with people from different background* ranged from 51% of students in Tasmania to 66% of students in the Australian Capital Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported <i>yes</i> they learn global competence activities				
	I learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies	I learn how to solve conflicts with other people in our classrooms	I learn about different cultures	We read newspapers, look for news on the Internet or watch the news together during classes	I am often invited by my teachers to give my personal opinion about international news
ACT	65	70	86	54	50
NSW	60	68	84	51	47
VIC	51	64	78	45	41
QLD	52	65	77	43	43
SA	52	67	78	43	39
WA	72	64	80	47	42
TAS	47	67	77	39	42
NT	52	63	81	44	36

State/Territory	I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year	I participate in classroom discussions about world events as part of the regular instruction	I analyse global issues together with my classmates in small groups during class	I learn how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues	I learn how to communicate with people from different backgrounds
ACT	56	67	66	77	66
NSW	57	64	60	75	62
VIC	45	57	46	64	57
QLD	49	60	51	68	58
SA	45	58	49	67	62
WA	48	60	57	74	61
TAS	45	55	46	63	51
NT	47	58	46	69	62

**FIGURE 6.2** Percentage of students who reported they engaged in global competence learning activities, by state and territory

## Availability of global competence learning activities for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of students who reported they engage in global competence learning activities at school for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ **Gender:** The largest differences found between male and female students in reporting they engaged in global competence learning activities were for the statements *I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year*, and *I learn how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues*, both with a 7 percentage point difference. Both differences were in favour of female students.
- ▶ **Socioeconomic background:** The largest differences found between advantaged and disadvantaged students in reporting they engaged in global competence learning activities were for the statements *I am often invited by my teachers to give my personal opinion about international news*, with a 14 percentage point difference, and equally *I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year*, and *I analyse global issues together with my classmates in small groups during class* both with a 12 percentage point difference. All differences were in favour of advantaged students.
- ▶ **Geographic location of schools:** The largest differences found between students in metropolitan schools and remote schools reporting they engaged in global competence learning activities was for the statement *I learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies*, with a 9 percentage point difference, in favour of students in metropolitan schools.
- ▶ **Indigenous background:** The largest differences found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students reporting they engaged in global competence learning activities were for the statements *I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year*, and *I learn how to communicate with people from different backgrounds*, both with a 7 percentage point difference in favour of Indigenous students.

- ▶ Immigrant background: The largest difference between Australian-born students and foreign-born students in reporting they engaged in global competence learning activities were for the statements *I learn how to communicate with people from different backgrounds*, with an 11 percentage point difference, followed by a 7 percentage point difference for the statement *I learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies*, both differences in favour of foreign-born students.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported yes they learn global competence activities				
	I learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies	I learn how to solve conflicts with other people in our classrooms	I learn about different cultures	We read newspapers, look for news on the Internet or watch the news together during classes	I am often invited by my teachers to give my personal opinion about international news
<b>Sex</b>					
Females	54	66	83	46	43
Males	59	65	77	47	44
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>					
Disadvantaged students	53	62	74	42	38
Socioeconomically average students	56	65	81	46	42
Advantaged students	60	70	84	52	52
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>					
Metropolitan	57	66	81	47	44
Provincial	54	65	78	45	43
Remote	66	64	77	48	47
<b>Indigenous background</b>					
Indigenous	59	69	79	45	43
Non-Indigenous	56	66	80	47	44
<b>Immigrant background</b>					
Australian-born	54	66	79	45	44
First-generation	58	65	81	48	43
Foreign-born	61	67	81	48	42

Demographic group	I participate in events celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school year	I participate in classroom discussions about world events as part of the regular instruction	I analyse global issues together with my classmates in small groups during class	I learn how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues	I learn how to communicate with people from different backgrounds
<b>Sex</b>					
Females	54	61	53	73	60
Males	47	60	53	66	59
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>					
Disadvantaged students	44	53	47	63	56
Socioeconomically average students	50	61	53	70	60
Advantaged students	56	67	59	75	63
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>					
Metropolitan	51	61	54	71	61
Provincial	47	60	51	65	56
Remote	56	62	55	66	57
<b>Indigenous background</b>					
Indigenous	57	61	53	68	67
Non-Indigenous	50	60	53	70	59
<b>Immigrant background</b>					
Australian-born	48	60	51	68	57
First-generation	51	60	55	71	61
Foreign-born	56	62	57	75	68

**FIGURE 6.3** Percentage of students who reported they engaged in global competence learning activities, for different demographic groups

## Intercultural learning activities in teachers' practices

As reported by the OECD, the way that a teacher frames a topic in the curriculum can significantly shape its contribution to global competence. When framing a topic to explore with students, teachers may consider the ways in which this topic addresses local and global dynamics. In order to avoid the risk that global education becomes a catch-all curriculum where everything fits, teachers must have clear ideas about the global and intercultural issues that they want students to reflect upon. Teachers need to collaboratively research topics and carefully plan the curriculum, giving students multiple opportunities to learn about a core set of issues that increase in complexity throughout their education. (OECD, 2018, p. 14).

### How is intercultural learning activities in teachers' practices measured in PISA?

In 2018 PISA asked school principals to respond to ten statements about whether particular intercultural learning activities are included in lessons and activities at their school. The activities covered different learning activities that could help develop students' intercultural understanding. Principals responded to each of the following ten statements:

- ▶ *In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in my country.*
- ▶ *In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in other countries.*
- ▶ *In our school, students learn about the cultures (e.g. beliefs, norms, values, customs or arts) of diverse cultural groups that live in my country.*
- ▶ *In our school, students learn about different cultural perspectives on historical and social events.*
- ▶ *Our school supports activities that encourage students' expression of diverse identities (e.g. national, religious, ethnic or social identities).*
- ▶ *Our school offers an exchange program with schools in other countries.*
- ▶ *Our school organises multicultural events (e.g. cultural diversity day).*
- ▶ *In our school, we celebrate festivities from other cultures.*
- ▶ *In our school, students are encouraged to communicate with people from other cultures via web, Internet, social media.*
- ▶ *Our school adopts different approaches to educate students about cultural differences (e.g. teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, simulations, problem-based learning, music, art, etc.)*

Principals were asked to respond to each of the statements requiring a yes-or-no answer.

Their responses to each of these will likely be influenced by a combination of the formal curriculum, as well as by the multi-cultural nature of the school population, and the school's philosophy towards embracing difference. A further likely factor is the approach of the country or region that schools are based in towards recognising, and celebrating, cultural diversity.

### Intercultural learning activities in teachers' practices in an international context

Figure 6.4 shows the percentage of principals who reported intercultural learning activities are included in teachers' practices in lessons and activities at their school, for Australia and comparison countries.

- ▶ Overall, in Australia, of the 10 intercultural learning activities included in teachers' practices in lessons and activities, for nine of the learning activities a significantly greater proportion of teachers included intercultural activities in their practices than teachers across the OECD countries. More than 95% of Australian teachers reported five intercultural learning activities:



- ▶ *In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in my country.*
  - ▶ *In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in other countries.*
  - ▶ *In our school, students learn about the cultures (e.g. beliefs, norms, values, customs or arts) of diverse cultural groups that live in my country.*
  - ▶ *In our school, students learn about different cultural perspectives on historical and social events.*
  - ▶ *Our school supports activities that encourage students' expression of diverse identities (e.g. national, religious, ethnic or social identities).*
- ▶ For these five learning activities, a significantly higher proportion of teachers in Singapore reported three activities, and a significantly higher proportion of teachers in New Zealand reported one activity. In all other countries, the proportions of teachers who reported these learning activities were either similar to, or significantly lower than, the proportions of teachers in Australia.
  - ▶ 84% of teachers in Australia reported *Our school organises multicultural events (e.g. cultural diversity day)*. This was agreed to by a similar proportion of teachers in New Zealand and a greater proportion of teachers in Singapore, but smaller proportions of teachers in all other countries.
  - ▶ 82% of Australian teachers reported *Our school adopts different approaches to educate students about cultural differences (e.g. teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, simulations, problem-based learning, music, art, etc.)*. This was a similar to, or a greater proportion than, teachers in eight countries. It was less than the proportions of teachers who reported this learning activity in Canada, Chinese Taipei, Estonia and Singapore, rising to 94% of teachers in Chinese Taipei and Singapore.
  - ▶ 64% of teachers in Australia reported *In our school, we celebrate festivities from other cultures*. This was a similar to, or greater than, the proportions of teachers in ten countries but less than the proportions of teachers who reported this learning activity in Macao (China), New Zealand or Singapore, rising to 94% of teachers in Singapore.
  - ▶ 64% of teachers in Australia also reported *Our school offers an exchange program with schools in other countries*. This was similar to, or greater than, the proportions of teachers in nine countries but less than the proportions of teachers who reported this learning activity in Chinese Taipei, Germany, New Zealand and Singapore, rising to 90% of teachers in Singapore.
  - ▶ The smallest proportion of teachers in Australia at 57% reported *In our school, students are encouraged to communicate with people from other cultures via web, Internet, social media*. This was greater than the proportions of teachers in eight countries but less than the proportion of teachers who reported this learning activity in Chinese Taipei, Estonia, Macao (China), Poland and Singapore, rising to 80% of teachers in Chinese Taipei.

Country	Percentage of students in schools whose principals reported intercultural learning activities are included in lessons and activities				
	In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in my country	In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in other countries	In our school, students learn about the cultures (e.g. beliefs, norms, values, customs or arts) of diverse cultural groups that live in my country	In our school, students learn about different perspectives on historical and social events	Our school supports activities that encourage students' expression of diverse identities (e.g. national, religious, ethnic or social identities)
<b>Australia</b>	97	97	97	98	96
Canada	97	93	97	97	95
Chinese Taipei	97	95	97	96	95
Estonia	97	96	98	97	89
Germany	92	92	99	87	88
Hong Kong (China)	72	66	84	74	91
Ireland	94	95	96	95	94
Korea	71	81	76	93	83
Macao (China)	92	89	89	94	97
New Zealand	96	95	99	99	96
Poland	86	82	91	83	79
Scotland (United Kingdom)	90	98	96	95	98
Singapore	98	90	100	99	98
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>85</b>

Country	Our school offers an exchange program with schools in other countries	Our school organises multicultural events (e.g. cultural diversity day)	In our school, we celebrate festivities from other cultures	In our school, students are encouraged to communicate with people from other cultures via web/Internet/social media	Our school adopts different approaches to educate students about cultural differences (e.g. teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, simulations, problem-based learning, music, art, etc.)
<b>Australia</b>	64	84	64	57	82
Canada	54	78	60	54	88
Chinese Taipei	83	68	62	80	94
Estonia	51	66	45	79	92
Germany	72	44	19	55	72
Hong Kong (China)	39	56	62	55	85
Ireland	43	67	31	47	82
Korea	27	32	13	54	77
Macao (China)	43	70	77	75	85
New Zealand	74	89	72	63	83
Poland	43	63	51	70	79
Scotland (United Kingdom)	32	61	61	41	82
Singapore	90	97	94	71	94
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>78</b>

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 6.4** Percentage of intercultural learning activities reflected in teachers' practices, for Australia and comparison countries

## Intercultural learning activities in teachers' practices in a national context

Figure 6.5 shows the percentage of principals who reported intercultural learning activities are included in school lessons at their school in each of the Australian states and territories.

- ▶ At least 95% of students in all jurisdictions apart from one attended a school in which their school principals reported each of the following learning activities:
  - ▶ *In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in my country.*
  - ▶ *In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in other countries.*
  - ▶ *In our school, students learn about the cultures (e.g. beliefs, norms, values, customs or arts) of diverse cultural groups that live in my country.*
  - ▶ *In our school, students learn about different cultural perspectives on historical and social events.*
  - ▶ *Our school supports activities that encourage students' expression of diverse identities (e.g. national, religious, ethnic or social identities).*
- ▶ For the first four of these five learning activities the exception was Tasmania, where 86% of students attended schools in which their school principals reported these learning activities. For the fifth learning activity, the exception was Victoria, in which 94% of students attended schools in which their school principals reported this learning activity.
- ▶ More than 75% of students attended schools in which their school principals reported:
  - ▶ *Our school organises multicultural events (e.g. cultural diversity day).*
  - ▶ *Our school adopts different approaches to educate students about cultural differences (e.g. teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, simulations, problem-based learning, music, art, etc.)*
- ▶ Between half and 80% of students attended schools in which their school principals reported:
  - ▶ *Our school offers an exchange program with schools in other countries.*
  - ▶ *In our school, we celebrate festivities from other cultures.*
  - ▶ *In our school, students are encouraged to communicate with people from other cultures via web, Internet, social media.*
- ▶ The greatest differences were in relation to exchange programmes. Less than 55% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales attended schools in which their principals reported that their school offered an exchange programme, in contrast to more than 80% of students in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students in schools whose principals reported intercultural learning activities are included in lessons and activities				
	In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in my country	In our school, students learn about the histories of diverse cultural groups that live in other countries	In our school, students learn about the cultures (e.g. beliefs, norms, values, customs or arts) of diverse cultural groups that live in my country	In our school, students learn about different cultural perspectives on historical and social events	Our school supports activities that encourage students' expression of diverse identities (e.g. national, religious, ethnic or social identities)
ACT	100	97	100	100	100
NSW	97	97	97	97	97
VIC	96	99	96	97	94
QLD	98	96	95	99	95
SA	98	95	98	100	96
WA	99	98	100	98	98
TAS	99	96	99	100	100
NT	86	86	86	86	100

State/Territory	Our school offers an exchange program with schools in other countries	Our school organises multicultural events (e.g. cultural diversity day)	In our school, we celebrate festivities from other cultures	In our school, students are encouraged to communicate with people from other cultures via web/Internet/social media	Our school adopts different approaches to educate students about cultural differences (e.g. teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, simulations, problem-based learning, music, art, etc.)
ACT	53	82	69	73	81
NSW	54	82	59	48	86
VIC	71	86	65	60	82
QLD	67	85	69	58	78
SA	82	81	65	65	81
WA	63	89	66	58	77
TAS	60	85	71	72	90
NT	89	97	69	79	94

**FIGURE 6.5** Percentage of intercultural learning activities reflected in teachers' practices, by state and territory

## Global issues covered in the year 10 curriculum

As reported by the OECD, schools can provide a safe space in which students can explore complex and controversial global issues that they encounter through the media and their own experiences. Global competence is supported by knowledge of global issues that affect lives locally and around the globe as well as intercultural knowledge, that is, knowledge about the similarities, differences and relations between cultures. Global issues are those that affect all individuals, regardless of their nation or social group. They range from trade to poverty, human rights, geopolitics and the environment. Global issues reveal how different regions around the world are interconnected by shedding light on the diversity and commonality of their experiences (OECD, 2018, p. 13).

## How are global issues covered in the year 10 curriculum measured in PISA?

In 2018 PISA asked school principals about attention to global challenges and trends in the year 10 curriculum. The question focuses on the same global issues that students were asked (refer to Chapter 2). Principals responded to each of the following seven global issues:

- ▶ *Climate change and global warming.*
- ▶ *Global health (e.g. epidemics).*
- ▶ *Migration (movement of people).*
- ▶ *International conflicts.*
- ▶ *Hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world.*
- ▶ *Causes of poverty.*
- ▶ *Equality between men and women in different parts of the world.*

Principals were asked to respond to each of the statements requiring a yes-or-no answer.

## Global issues covered in the year 10 curriculum in an international context

Figure 6.6 shows the percentage of students who attended schools in which principals reported that global issues were covered in the year 10 curriculum, for Australia and comparison countries.

- ▶ In general, lower percentages of students in Australia attended schools in which principals reported that global issues were taught in year 10 than in most comparison countries.
- ▶ Out of 12 comparison countries, the proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that certain issues were taught in year 10 were:
  - ▶ Significantly lower than nine comparison countries for *Climate Change and Global Warming* and for *Causes of Poverty*, and similar to three countries.
  - ▶ Significantly lower than seven comparison countries for *Equality between Men and Women in Different Parts of the World* and *Hunger or Malnutrition in Different Parts of the World* and similar to five countries.
  - ▶ Significantly lower than six comparison countries for *Global Health (e.g. epidemics)* and for *Migration (movement of people)* and similar to six,
  - ▶ Significantly lower than three comparison countries for *International Conflicts*, similar to eight and significantly higher than one.
- ▶ For five of the seven global issues, the proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that these were taught in year 10 was similar to the OECD average.
- ▶ For *International Conflicts*, the proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that this was taught in year 10 was significantly higher than the OECD average.
- ▶ For *Equality between Men and Women in Different Parts of the World*, the proportion of students in Australia that attended schools where principals reported that this were taught in year 10 was significantly lower than the OECD average.

Country	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported global issue topics are covered in Year 10			
	Climate change and global warming	Global health (e.g. epidemics)	Migration (movement of people)	International conflicts
<b>Australia</b>	90	81	83	90
Canada	91	78	81	87
Chinese Taipei	95	92	87	84
Estonia	95	87	95	91
Germany	95	79	90	87
Hong Kong (China)	98	95	78	83
Ireland	96	84	89	90
Korea	98	92	80	89
Macao (China)	100	86	76	92
New Zealand	91	85	95	97
Poland	99	98	99	99
Scotland (United Kingdom)	83	77	81	78
Singapore	95	80	89	93
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>

Country	Hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world	Causes of poverty	Equality between men and women in different parts of the world
<b>Australia</b>	79	81	79
Canada	75	78	80
Chinese Taipei	87	82	97
Estonia	86	89	87
Germany	88	92	87
Hong Kong (China)	83	91	74
Ireland	95	97	90
Korea	90	93	94
Macao (China)	82	93	86
New Zealand	82	87	80
Poland	98	99	97
Scotland (United Kingdom)	80	84	83
Singapore	82	87	61
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 6.6** Percentage of students whose school principals reported global issues are covered in the Year 10 curriculum, for Australia and comparison countries

## Global issues covered in the year 10 curriculum in a national context

Figure 6.7 shows the percentage of principals who reported global issues were covered in the year 10 curriculum in each of the Australian states and territories.

- ▶ A lower proportion of students in the Northern Territory than in every other Australian jurisdiction attended schools in which principals reported that each of the global issues were covered in the year 10 curriculum.
- ▶ The largest difference was between the 32% students in the Northern Territory that attended schools in which principals reported that *Hunger or Malnutrition in Different Parts of the World* was taught in the year 10 curriculum, and the 68% to 89% of students in other jurisdictions who attended schools where principals reported that this was taught in year 10.

- ▶ The smallest difference was between the 81% students in the Northern Territory that attended schools in which principals reported that *International Conflicts* were taught in the year 10 curriculum, and the 86% to 97% of students in other jurisdictions who attended schools where principals reported that this was taught in year 10.
- ▶ Differences between other jurisdictions were generally low. In contrast to the 49% of students in the Northern Territory, between 86% and 97% of students in other jurisdictions attended schools in which principals reported that *Climate Change* was taught in year 10.
- ▶ In contrast to the 43% of students in the Northern Territory, between 74% and 92% of students in other jurisdictions attended schools in which principals reported that *Global Health (e.g. epidemics)* was taught in year 10.
- ▶ In contrast to the 46% of students in the Northern Territory, between 72% and 95% of students in other jurisdictions attended schools in which principals reported that *Migration (movement of people)* was taught in year 10.
- ▶ In contrast to the 59% of students in the Northern Territory, between 69% and 92% of students in other jurisdictions attended schools in which principals reported that *Causes of Poverty* was taught in year 10.
- ▶ In contrast to the 53% of students in the Northern Territory, between 74% and 90% of students in other jurisdictions attended schools in which principals reported that *Equality between Men and Women in Different Parts of the World* was taught in year 10.

State/Territory	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported global issue topics are covered in Year 10			
	Climate change and global warming	Global health (e.g. epidemics)	Migration (movement of people)	International conflicts
ACT	93	76	78	90
NSW	94	92	90	92
VIC	87	75	83	87
QLD	86	74	72	89
SA	87	82	84	86
WA	97	81	82	94
TAS	91	90	95	97
NT	49	43	46	81

State/Territory	Hunger or malnutrition in different parts of the world	Causes of poverty	Equality between men and women in different parts of the world
ACT	70	77	85
NSW	89	90	83
VIC	75	80	74
QLD	68	69	77
SA	79	80	87
WA	79	83	77
TAS	88	92	90
NT	32	59	53

**FIGURE 6.7** Percentage of students whose school principals reported global issues are covered in the Year 10 curriculum, by state and territory

## Intercultural learning in the year 10 curriculum

According to the OECD, schools play a crucial role in helping young people to develop global competence. They can provide opportunities for young people to critically examine global developments that are significant to both the world at large and to their own lives. Schools can encourage intercultural sensitivity and respect by allowing students to engage in experiences that foster an appreciation for diverse peoples, languages and cultures (OECD, 2018, p. 4).

### How is intercultural learning in the year 10 curriculum measured in PISA?

In 2018 PISA, in addition to asking principals whether global issues were covered in the year 10 curriculum, principals were also asked whether intercultural learning is covered in the year 10 curriculum. The question focused on attention to global competence-related attitudes, abilities and skills in the curriculum. Principals responded to each of the following five intercultural topics:

- ▶ *Communication with people from different cultures or countries.*
- ▶ *Knowledge of different cultures.*
- ▶ *Openness to intercultural experiences.*
- ▶ *Respect for cultural diversity.*
- ▶ *Critical thinking skills.*

Principals were asked to respond to each of the statements requiring a yes-or-no answer.

### Intercultural learning in the year 10 curriculum in an international context

Figure 6.8 shows the percentage of principals who reported intercultural learning activities is covered in the year 10 curriculum, for Australia and comparison countries.

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students attended schools in which principals reported *Respect for cultural diversity* is covered in the curriculum than students in Estonia, Hong Kong (China) and New Zealand.
- ▶ The proportion of Australian students that attended schools in which principals reported that *Knowledge of Different Cultures*, *Openness to Intercultural Experiences* and *Respect for Diversity* were covered in the year 10 curriculum was similar to the OECD average.
- ▶ The proportion of Australian students that attended schools in which principals reported that *Communicating with People of Different Cultures or Countries* and *Critical Thinking Skills* were covered in the year 10 curriculum was significantly lower than the OECD average.
- ▶ Poland had the highest proportion of students attending schools in which principals reported that all intercultural learning activities were covered in the year 10 curriculum.
- ▶ The proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that *Communicating with People of Different Cultures or Countries* was part of the year 10 curriculum was significantly higher than the proportion of students in Ireland but significantly lower than the proportions of students in seven comparison countries.
- ▶ The proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that *Critical Thinking Skills* was part of the year 10 curriculum was significantly higher than the proportion of students in Ireland and New Zealand but significantly lower than the proportion of students in six comparison countries.
- ▶ The proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that *Respect for Cultural Diversity* was part of the year 10 curriculum was significantly higher than the proportion of students in Estonia, Hong Kong (China) and New Zealand but significantly lower than the proportion of students in five comparison countries.



- ▶ The proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that *Openness to intercultural experiences* was part of the year 10 curriculum was significantly higher than the proportion of students in New Zealand but significantly lower than the proportion of students in five comparison countries.
- ▶ The proportion of students in Australia that attended schools in which principals reported that *Knowledge of Different Cultures* was part of the year 10 curriculum was significantly higher than the proportion of students in Estonia, Hong Kong (China) and New Zealand but significantly lower than the proportion of students in Germany and Poland.

Country	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported there is a formal curriculum in the following areas				
	Communicating with people from different cultures or countries	Knowledge of different cultures	Openness to intercultural experiences	Respect for cultural diversity	Critical thinking skills
<b>Australia</b>	35	85	69	85	80
Canada	33	84	69	86	88
Chinese Taipei	72	90	90	94	83
Estonia	52	80	65	77	79
Germany	61	94	85	92	94
Hong Kong (China)	43	63	64	74	90
Ireland	22	78	62	81	62
Korea	63	80	69	89	84
Macao (China)	56	87	89	94	99
New Zealand	31	60	52	66	65
Poland	94	99	97	100	99
Scotland (United Kingdom)	28	80	60	84	69
Singapore	66	87	85	93	88
OECD average	50	81	70	87	85

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed in alphabetical order.

**FIGURE 6.8** Percentage of students whose school principals reported intercultural learning is covered in the Year 10 curriculum, for Australia and comparison countries

## Intercultural learning in the year 10 curriculum in a national context

Figure 6.9 shows the percentage of principals who reported intercultural learning activities are covered in the year 10 curriculum in each of the Australian states and territories.

- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported intercultural learning activities were covered in the year 10 curriculum was lower in the Northern Territory than in all other jurisdictions for four of the five intercultural learning activities.
- ▶ Overall, the highest proportions of students who attended schools in which principals reported intercultural learning activities were covered in the year 10 curriculum were for *Respect for Cultural Diversity*, with a maximum of 92% of students in Tasmania and a minimum of 78% of students in the Australian Capital Territory, and *Knowledge of Different Cultures*, with a maximum of 91% of students in Tasmania and a minimum of 54% of students in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ The lowest proportions of students who attended schools in which principals reported intercultural learning activities were covered in the year 10 curriculum were for *Communicating with People from Different Cultures or Countries*, with a maximum of 45% of students in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia and a minimum of 16% of students in the Northern Territory.

- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported *Openness to intercultural experiences* is covered in the curriculum ranged from 55% in the Northern Territory to 86% in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported *Critical thinking* is covered in the curriculum ranged from 68% in Western Australia to 85% in Tasmania.

State/Territory	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported there is a formal curriculum in the following areas				
	Communicating with people from different cultures or countries	Knowledge of different cultures	Openness to intercultural experiences	Respect for cultural diversity	Critical thinking skills
ACT	45	89	86	78	74
NSW	30	83	63	84	81
VIC	36	90	76	86	80
QLD	34	82	61	80	84
SA	45	87	79	87	84
WA	43	89	75	90	68
TAS	39	91	75	92	85
NT	16	54	55	81	77

**FIGURE 6.9** Percentage of students whose school principals reported intercultural learning is covered in the Year 10 curriculum, by state and territory

# Developing global competence at school

Schools can play an important role in developing global competence. Schools need to help students learn to be autonomous in their thinking and fully aware of the diversity of modern living. Schools can foster the value of the diversity of peoples, languages and cultures, encouraging intercultural sensitivity, respect and appreciation. Open and flexible attitudes are vital if young people are to co-exist and interact with people from other faiths and countries. Globally competent individuals can understand and appreciate different perspectives and worldviews and interact successfully and respectfully with others. (OECD, 2020, p. 5).

This chapter looks at data collected from the student and school questionnaires and examines the similarities and differences between countries, the Australian jurisdictions and different demographic groups focusing on principal's views on teachers' multicultural beliefs and students' perceptions of their teachers' attitudes towards people from other cultures.

## Principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs

*As reported by the OECD, a major goal of many teacher development programs is to prepare teachers not only to teach a particular subject, but also to work with diverse student populations. Raising awareness about cultural sensitivity in schools has become a common feature of teacher preparation. Some courses address diversity by broadly focusing on issues such as race, culture, gender, ethnicity, language diversity and sexual orientation, while others are more specific. However, teacher training courses cannot be developed without understanding teachers' beliefs and attitudes (OECD, 2020, p. 215).*

## How are principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs measured in PISA?

In 2018 PISA asked school principals to report their views on their teachers' multicultural beliefs. The purpose of the question was to provide information about the multicultural school climate, and more specifically, the teachers' multicultural and egalitarian beliefs. Principals responded to four statements indicating the extent to which they felt the following statements reflected an opinion shared by their teaching staff:

- ▶ *It is important for students to learn that people from other cultures can have different values.*
- ▶ *Respecting other cultures is something that students should learn as early as possible.*

- ▶ In the classroom, it is important that students of different origins recognise the similarities that exist between them.
- ▶ When there are conflicts between students of different origins, they should be encouraged to resolve the argument by finding common ground.

Principals were asked to respond to each of the statements on a four-point scale (*shared among none or almost none of them, shared among some of them, shared among many of them, shared among all or almost all of them*).

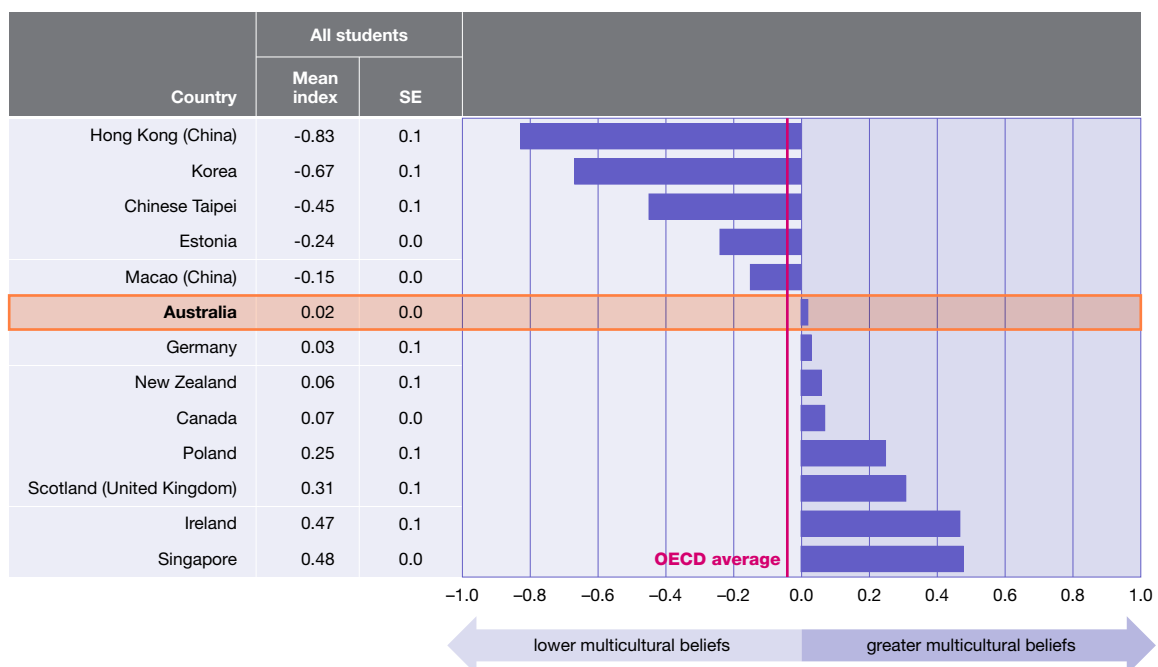
- ▶ An index of principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate greater multicultural and egalitarian beliefs than the average teacher across the OECD countries, while lower values indicate lesser multicultural and egalitarian beliefs than the average teacher across the OECD countries.

## Principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs in an international context

Figure 7.1 shows the mean index scores on the principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian principals reported:

- ▶ similar multicultural beliefs among their teachers to principals from across the OECD countries. The mean index score of 0.02 for Australia was similar the mean index score of -0.05 for the OECD average.
- ▶ more positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals in Macao (China), Estonia, Chinese Taipei, Korea and Hong Kong (China).
- ▶ similar multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals of students in Canada, New Zealand, and Germany.
- ▶ Lower multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals in Singapore, Ireland, Scotland, and Poland.



Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index.

**FIGURE 7.1** Principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 7.2 shows the percentage of principals' who responded to each statement with either *shared among many of them* or *shared among all or almost all of them*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as '*many or all teachers*' with shared positive multicultural beliefs among teachers, for Australia and comparison countries.

- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students attended schools in which principals reported that many or all teachers shared the belief *Respecting other cultures is something that students should learn as early as possible* than students in Hong Kong (China), Korea and students from across the OECD countries, but this was a lower proportion than students in Germany, Ireland and Singapore.
- ▶ A higher proportion of Australian students attended schools in which principals reported that many or all teachers shared the belief *It is important for students to learn that people from other countries can have different values* than students in Hong Kong (China), Korea and Macao (China), but this was a lower proportion than students in Estonia, Germany, Ireland and Singapore.
- ▶ Similar proportions of students in Australia attended schools in which principals reported many or all teachers shared the belief *In the classroom, it is important that students of different origins recognise the similarities that exist between them*, than students in Poland, Germany, Estonia, New Zealand, Canada, Scotland, Chinese Taipei and students from across the OECD countries, but this was a lower proportion than students in Ireland and Singapore.
- ▶ A lower proportion of students in Australia attended schools in which principals reported many or all teachers shared the belief *When there are conflicts between students of different origins, they should be encouraged to resolve the argument by finding common ground*, than students in Estonia, Ireland, Macao (China), Poland and Singapore.

Country	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported teachers views on multicultural beliefs were shared amongst many or all teachers			
	It is important for students to learn that people from other cultures can have different values	Respecting other cultures is something that students should learn as early as possible	In the classroom, it is important that students of different origins recognise the similarities that exist between them	When there are conflicts between students of different origins, they should be encouraged to resolve the argument by finding common ground
Hong Kong (China)	77	81	79	82
Korea	83	78	79	82
Chinese Taipei	92	95	92	94
Estonia	99	96	95	97
Macao (China)	87	97	91	95
<b>Australia</b>	93	96	93	94
Germany	100	99	95	94
New Zealand	96	97	94	91
Canada	94	95	94	93
Poland	93	96	96	97
Scotland (United Kingdom)	93	94	93	93
Ireland	97	99	98	98
Singapore	98	99	98	99
OECD average	93	93	93	94

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index.

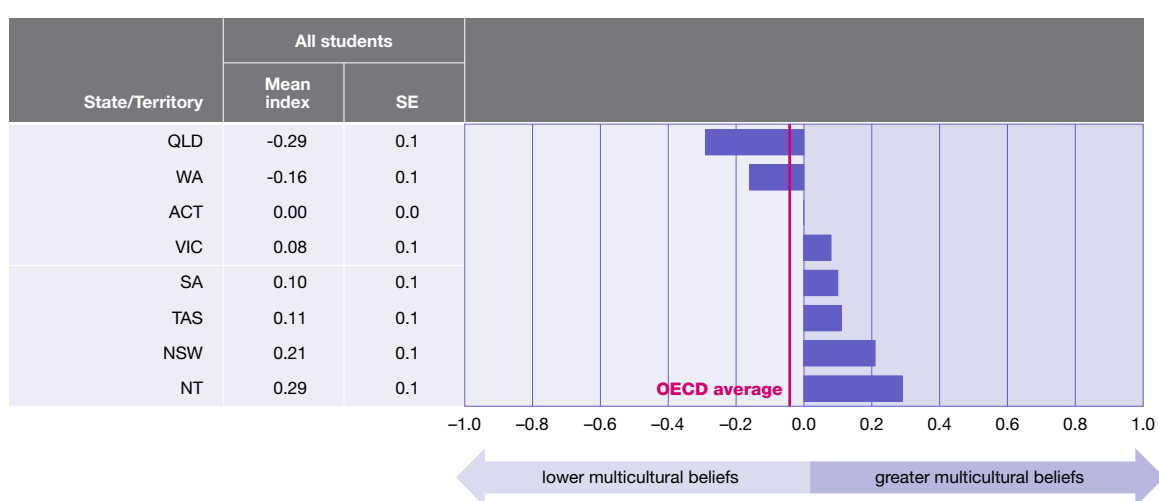
**FIGURE 7.2** Percentage of teachers with shared multicultural beliefs, for Australia and comparison countries

## Principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs in a national context

Figure 7.3 shows the mean index scores for principals in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index.

Principals in all Australian states and territories with the exception of Queensland and Western Australia reported more positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals from across the OECD countries.

- ▶ The mean index scores on the principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index ranged from -0.29 in Queensland to 0.29 in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ Principals in the Northern Territory reported more positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals in Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ Principals in Victoria reported similar positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers as did principals in all states and territories with the exception of Queensland.
- ▶ Principals in Queensland reported less positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers than principals in all Australian states and territories.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index.

**FIGURE 7.3** Principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index, by state and territory

Figure 7.4 shows the percentage of principals who reported that many or all teachers shared positive multicultural beliefs in each of the Australian states and territories.

- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported that many or all teachers shared the belief *It is important for students to learn that people from other cultures can have different values* ranged from 90% in Queensland and Western Australia to 100% in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported that many or all teachers shared the belief *Respecting other cultures is something that students should learn as early as possible* ranged from 92% in Western Australia to 100% in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported that many or all teachers shared the belief *In the classroom, it is important that students of different origins recognise the similarities that exist between them* ranged from 86% in Tasmania to 100% in the Northern Territory.
- ▶ The proportion of students who attended schools in which principals reported that many or all teachers shared the belief *When there are conflicts between students of different origins, they should be encouraged to resolve the argument by finding common ground* ranged from 86% Queensland to 100% in the Northern Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported teachers views on multicultural beliefs were shared amongst many or all teachers			
	It is important for students to learn that people from other cultures can have different values	Respecting other cultures is something that students should learn as early as possible	In the classroom, it is important that students of different origins recognise the similarities that exist between them	When there are conflicts between students of different origins, they should be encouraged to resolve the argument by finding common ground
QLD	90	93	88	86
WA	90	92	89	93
ACT	91	94	91	91
VIC	94	97	95	98
SA	94	97	96	94
TAS	95	94	86	91
NSW	94	97	96	95
NT	100	100	100	100

Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the principals' views on teachers' multicultural beliefs index.

**FIGURE 7.4** Percentage of teachers with shared multicultural beliefs, by state and territory

## Student perception of discrimination at school

As reported by the OECD, the definition of discrimination has changed over time as researchers have documented its nature and the forms it takes. Existing definitions distinguish between symbolic, traditional, institutional and individual discrimination. The term symbolic is used to distinguish certain types of discrimination from traditional and more blatant forms, such as racism. Traditional discrimination is a shared negative attitude towards a group of people based on stereotypes and generalisations, while symbolic discrimination is more subtle. Individual discrimination can be described as an act taken by one individual, while institutional discrimination is systemic and entrenched. (OECD, 2020, p. 105).

## How is student perception of discrimination at school measured in PISA?

The PISA measure of discrimination at school could be seen as both individual and institutional, as discrimination can be the act of one teacher or a reflection of a more institutional problem.

In 2018, PISA asked students specifically about their perception of their teachers' attitudes towards people from other cultural groups by responding to the following four statements:

- ▶ *They have misconceptions about the history of some cultural groups.*
- ▶ *They say negative things about people of some cultural groups.*
- ▶ *They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by [country of test].*
- ▶ *They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups.*

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a four-point scale (*none or almost none of them, some of them, most of them, and all or almost all of them*).

An index of perception of discrimination at school was constructed using the responses to these statements. Higher values on the index indicate greater student perception of a discriminatory school climate than that perceived by students across the OECD countries on average, while lower values indicate lower student perceptions of a discriminatory school climate than that perceived by students across the OECD countries on average.

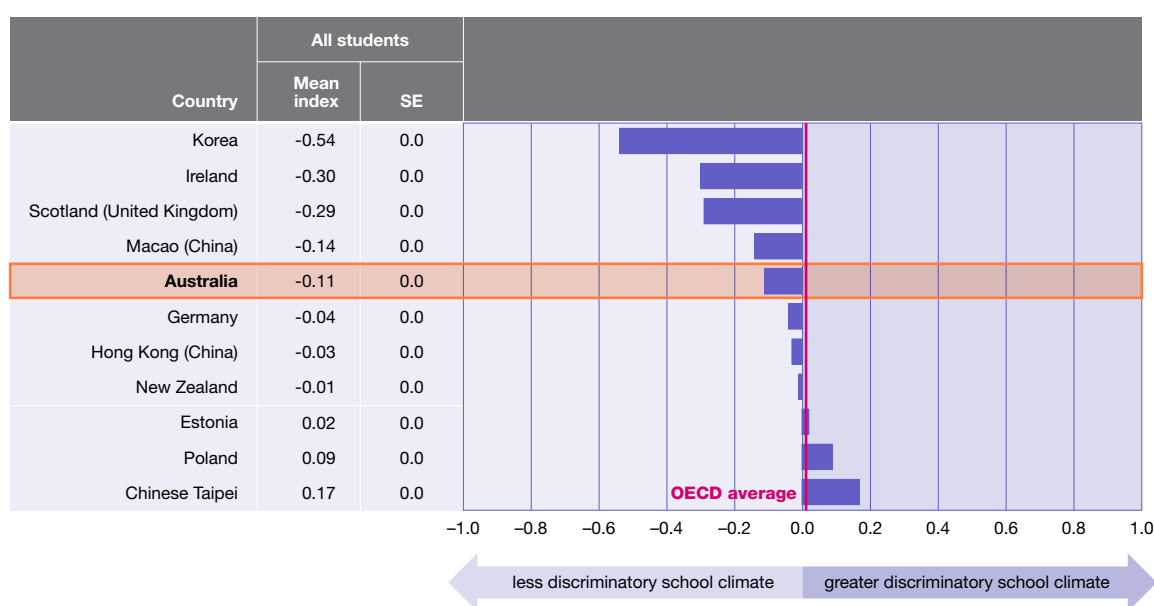
While the PISA measure of perception of discrimination at school is broad, it is specifically focusing on students perceptions of their teachers' attitudes towards people from other cultural groups, and could therefore equally be called the index of student perception of teacher discrimination. However, in keeping with the naming convention used by the OECD in reporting this index, the OECD's index of perception of discrimination at school has been reported throughout this chapter.

## Student perception of discrimination in an international context

Figure 7.5 presents the mean index scores on the perception of discrimination at school index for Australia, the comparison countries, and the OECD average.

Australian students reported:

- ▶ a less discriminatory school climate than students across the OECD countries. The mean index score of -0.11 for Australia was lower than the mean index score of -0.01 for the OECD average.
- ▶ a greater discriminatory school climate than students in Korea, Ireland, and Scotland.
- ▶ a similar discriminatory school climate than students in New Zealand, Estonia and Ireland, and Scotland.
- ▶ a less discriminatory school climate than students in Chinese Taipei, Poland, Estonia, New Zealand, Hong Kong (China) and Germany.



Note: Data not available for Canada and Singapore.

Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the perception of discrimination at school index.

**FIGURE 7.5** Perception of discrimination at school index, for Australia and comparison countries

Figure 7.6 shows the percentage of students who responded to each statement with either *most of them*, and *all or almost all of them*, for Australia and comparison countries. For ease of reading, these responses are referred to as ‘*most of their teachers*’ for students’ perceived discrimination by their teachers. It is important to note that the percentages of students who reported discrimination by their teachers was extremely small, both in Australia and in comparison countries, with no percentage more than 16%.

- ▶ A lower proportion of Australian students reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers, as measured by three of the four statements, than students across the OECD countries.
- ▶ Similar proportions of students in Australia reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers for the statement *They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups*, than students in Germany, Estonia, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong (China).
- ▶ A higher proportion of students in Australia reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers for the statement *They have misconceptions about the history of some cultural groups* than students in Estonia, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Germany, Scotland, Ireland and Macao (China), Korea and students across the OECD countries.



- ▶ A lower proportion of students in Australia reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers for the statement *They say negative things about people of some cultural groups*, than students in Chinese Taipei, Poland, Estonia and students across the OECD countries.

Country	Percentage of students who reported <i>most teachers, all or almost all teachers</i>			
	They have misconceptions about the history of some cultural groups	They say negative things about people of some cultural groups	They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by Australia	They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups
Korea	5	5	5	6
Ireland	9	6	8	10
Scotland (United Kingdom)	9	7	8	10
Macao (China)	6	6	8	10
<b>Australia</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>
Germany	10	10	11	15
Hong Kong (China)	11	11	12	13
New Zealand	13	10	11	15
Estonia	12	12	13	14
Poland	12	13	16	16
Chinese Taipei	11	13	13	13
OECD average	12	12	14	15

- Significantly higher than Australia
- Not significantly different from Australia
- Significantly lower than Australia

Note: Data not available for Canada and Singapore.

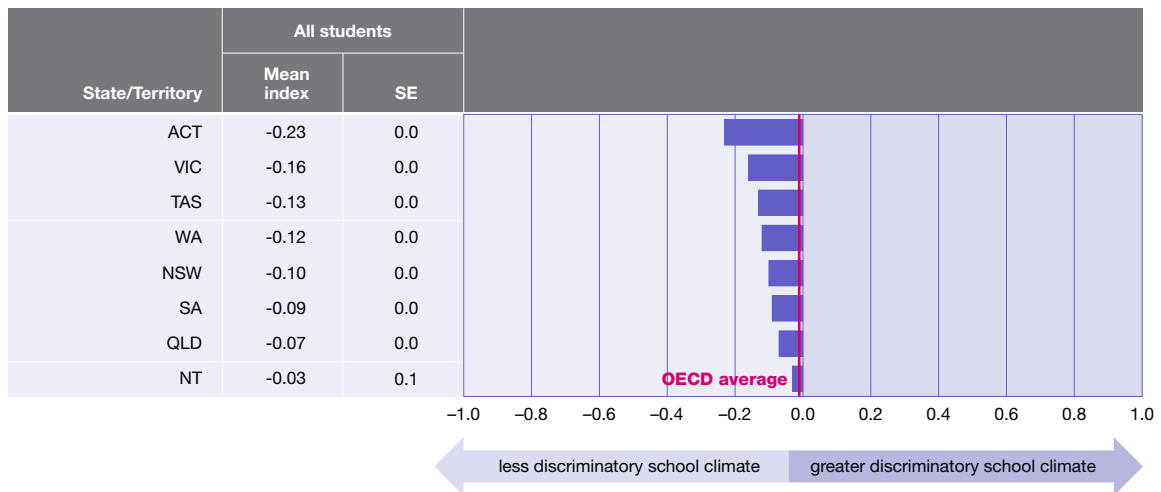
Countries are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the perception of discrimination at school index.

**FIGURE 7.6** Percentage of students who perceived teachers attitudes toward people from other cultural groups to be discriminatory, for Australia and comparison countries

## Student perception of discrimination in a national context

Figure 7.7 shows the mean index scores for students in each of the Australian states and territories, and the OECD average on the perception of discrimination at school index.

- ▶ Students in all Australian states and territories with the exception of the Northern Territory reported a lower perception of discrimination by most of their teachers than students from across the OECD countries.
- ▶ The mean index scores on the perception of discrimination by teachers index ranged from -0.03 in the Northern Territory to -0.23 in the Australian Capital Territory.
- ▶ Students in Victoria reported a greater perception of discrimination by most of their teachers at school than students in South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory.
- ▶ Students in Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and Tasmania reported a similar perception of discrimination by most of their teachers at school.



Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the perception of discrimination at school index.

**FIGURE 7.7** Perception of discrimination at school index, by state and territory

Figure 7.8 shows the percentage of students who reported having a greater perception of discrimination by most of their teachers at school in each of the Australian states and territories.

- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers for the statement *They have misconceptions about the history of some cultural groups* ranged from 10% of students in the Australian Territory to 14% of students in New South Wales and South Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers for the statement *They say negative things about people of some cultural groups* ranged from 6% of students in the Northern Territory to 12% of students in New South Wales.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers for the statement *They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by Australia* ranged from 8% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 13% of students in South Australia.
- ▶ The proportion of students who reported they perceived discrimination by most of their teachers for the statement *They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups* ranged from 10% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to 17% of students in the Northern Territory.

State/Territory	Percentage of students who reported most teachers, all or almost all teachers			
	They have misconceptions about the history of some cultural groups	They say negative things about people of some cultural groups	They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by Australia	They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups
ACT	10	8	8	10
VIC	13	10	11	13
TAS	13	8	10	12
WA	13	10	10	13
NSW	14	12	12	14
SA	14	11	13	13
QLD	13	11	12	14
NT	12	6	10	17

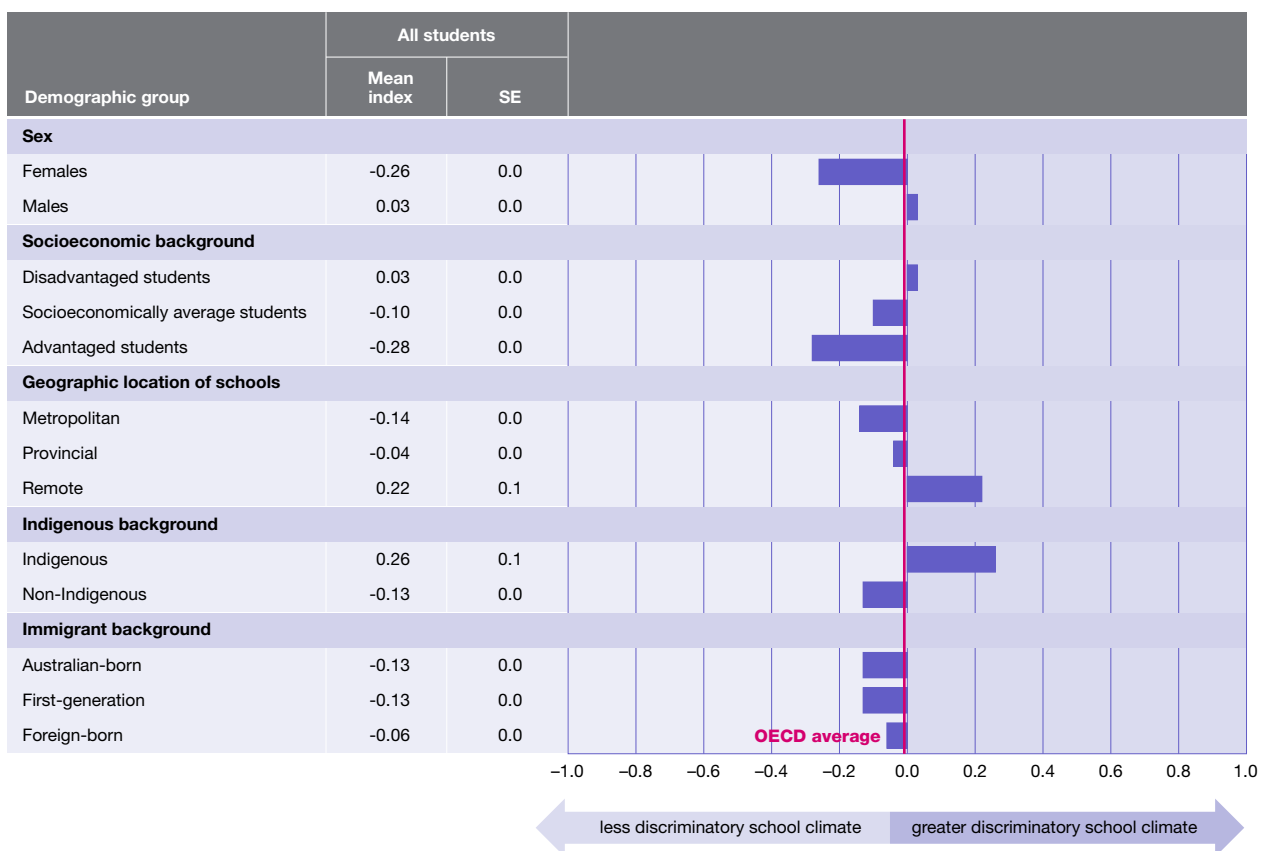
Note: Jurisdictions are listed from the lowest to the highest mean score on the perception of discrimination at school index.

**FIGURE 7.8** Percentage of students who perceived teachers attitudes toward people from other cultural groups to be discriminatory, for Australia and comparison countries, by state and territory

## Student perception of discrimination for different demographic groups in a national context

Figure 7.9 shows the mean index scores for students from different demographic groups, and the OECD average on the perception of discrimination at school index.

- ▶ Male students reported a greater perception of a discrimination at school by most of their teachers than female students.
- ▶ The more socioeconomically advantaged students were, the more likely they were to report a lower perception of discrimination at school by most of their teachers.
- ▶ Students in metropolitan schools reported a lower perception of discrimination at school by most of their teachers than students in provincial and remote schools.
- ▶ Non-Indigenous students reported a lower perception of discrimination at school by most of their teachers than Indigenous students.
- ▶ Australian-born students reported a lower perception of discrimination at school by most of their teachers than foreign-born students.



**FIGURE 7.9** Perception of discrimination at school index, for different demographic groups

Figure 7.10 shows the percentage of students who reported having a greater perception of discrimination at school by most of their teachers at school for the different demographic groups.

- ▶ Gender: The largest differences were found between male and female students who perceived discrimination at school by most of their teachers for the statements *They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups* with a difference of 8 percentage points, and *They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups*, and *They say negative things about people of some cultural groups* both with a difference of 7 percentage points, both in favour of female students.

- ▶ Socioeconomic background: The largest differences were found between advantaged and disadvantaged students who perceived discrimination at school by most of their teachers for the statements *They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by Australia* with an 8 percentage point difference, and *They say negative things about people of some cultural groups*, with a 7 percentage point difference and both in favour of disadvantaged students.
- ▶ Geographic location of schools: The largest differences were found between students who perceived discrimination at school by most of their teachers for the statements *They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups* with a 15 percentage point difference, and *They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by Australia*, with a 9 percentage point difference, both in favour of students in remote schools.
- ▶ Indigenous background: The largest differences were found between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who perceived discrimination at school by most of their teachers for the statements *They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups*, with a 12 percentage point difference, *They say negative things about people of some cultural groups* and *They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by Australia* each with an 11 percentage point difference, all in favour of Indigenous students.
- ▶ Immigrant background: There were no significant difference between Australian-born born, first-generation or foreign-born students in their perception of discrimination at school by most of their teachers.

Demographic group	Percentage of students who reported <i>most teachers, all or almost all teachers</i>			
	They have misconceptions about the history of some cultural groups	They say negative things about people of some cultural groups	They blame people of some cultural groups for problems faced by Australia	They have lower academic expectations for students of some cultural groups
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	10	7	8	9
Males	17	14	15	17
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>				
Disadvantaged students	16	14	15	16
Socioeconomically average students	14	11	12	14
Advantaged students	11	7	7	10
<b>Geographic location of schools</b>				
Metropolitan	12	10	10	13
Provincial	16	13	14	15
Remote	20	15	20	28
<b>Indigenous background</b>				
Indigenous	23	21	22	24
Non-Indigenous	13	10	11	13
<b>Immigrant background</b>				
Australian-born	13	10	11	13
First-generation	13	10	11	13
Foreign-born	16	11	12	15

**FIGURE 7.10** Percentage of students who perceived teachers attitudes toward people from other cultural groups to be discriminatory, for different demographic groups



# Concluding comments: Insights into Australian students' global competence

CHAPTER

# 8

## Why global competence?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) enables countries to undertake a comparative review of their education systems every three years. It has gained huge prominence among policy makers around the world for the unique insights that it can provide into the educational achievement of 15-year-old students who are – in many countries – in the final year of compulsory education. It gives important insights into the preparedness of young adults to meet the challenges of the future and the extent to which they can analyse, reason and communicate their ideas effectively.

PISA focuses on the core domains of reading literacy, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy. In the last few cycles, the OECD has extended this to include one innovative domain per cycle, providing a more comprehensive outlook on students' 'readiness for life'. In 2012 this was creative problem solving, in 2015 it was collaborative problem solving and in 2018 it was global competence.

Innovative domains focus on interdisciplinary or 21st century competences. They represent an element of student learning that is deemed of importance to young adults but that is not yet commonly included in assessment. In PISA 2022 the innovative domain is creative thinking. For PISA 2025, the innovative domain will be learning in a digital world. ACER has been confirmed as the contractor for this latter domain, with item development already well under way.

Global competence was selected for inclusion in 2018 due to a growing awareness of the interconnectedness of countries around the world. This has important implications for the attributes and competencies that young adults need to gain in order to thrive in their future lives. Whether they enter the world of business, finance, health, law, education, engineering or science, an ability to understand and value the multiplicities of perspectives on any topic will be of great value. Beyond this, an awareness of key issues impacting different parts of the world, and the ability to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, will help them navigate their professional and personal journeys.

## How is global competence defined in PISA?

Global competence is defined in PISA as a multidimensional capacity that encompasses the ability to:

1. examine issues of local, global and cultural significance
2. understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others

3. engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures; and
4. take action for collective well-being and sustainable development.

Each of these are supported by four core components (specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and values).

In PISA 2018, data on global competence was collected through two instruments:

- ▶ a **cognitive test** which focused on the cognitive aspects of global competence, including knowledge and cognitive skills of three dimensions of global competence (examining issues of local, global and cultural significance; understanding and appreciating the perspectives and worldviews of others; and taking action for collective well-being and sustainable development).
- ▶ a **set of questionnaire items** collecting self-reported information on students' awareness of global issues and cultures, skills (both cognitive and social) and attitudes, which covered all four dimensions of global competence.

In 2018, 66 countries, including Australia, participated in the global competence questionnaire, with 27 of these countries also participating in the global competence test. In this report a subset of these countries are used to provide international comparisons with Australia. The comparison countries include OECD countries: Canada, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Korea, New Zealand, Poland and Scotland (United Kingdom); and the partner countries: Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Macao (China) and Singapore. These countries were selected because their students performed either similarly to, or better than, Australian students in reading literacy in the 2018 cycle of PISA.

## Key findings from this report

As you have read through this report you will have noted that there are patterns that repeat again and again. You may also have identified that some patterns are at odds with common patterns, and you may have seen some findings that were surprising. In this final chapter, we highlight seven areas of particular interest in order to consider the factors that are likely to have influenced them. It is important to note that all of the differences discussed here are statistically significant.

## Findings by country

In almost all measures included in this report, data collected from Australian students has exceeded the OECD average. Australian students reported:

- ▶ A greater awareness of global issues
- ▶ Greater self-efficacy in explaining global issues
- ▶ Greater ability to understand the perspectives of others
- ▶ Greater respect for people from other cultures
- ▶ Greater ability to adapt to new situations
- ▶ More positive attitudes towards immigrants
- ▶ Greater awareness of intercultural communication
- ▶ More contact with people from other countries *in their family, at school, in their neighbourhood and in their circle of friends*
- ▶ A greater sense of global mindedness
- ▶ More engagement in nine of ten global competence learning activities
- ▶ More school opportunities to engage in nine of ten intercultural learning practices,
- ▶ Less discrimination among teachers, as perceived by students, and
- ▶ More multicultural beliefs among teachers, as perceived by school principals.

This indicates that Australian students are better equipped to thrive in an interconnected world in comparison with their peers across OECD countries which is a very positive conclusion. As noted at the start of each chapter, this finding reflects not only what happens in schools, but also broader Australian society. Clearly, curricula, school leaders and teachers are providing students with good opportunities to learn about the world around them and to engage with people who are different from themselves.

Curricula, school and teacher practices inevitably reflect the wider community and its values. As noted at the start of the report, the highly multicultural nature of the Australian population is inevitably a strong influence on the patterns identified here. World Bank data from 2015 indicates that international migrants make up 28% of Australia's population. This is greater than New Zealand (23%), Canada (22%), Estonia and Germany (both 15%), Poland (2%) and Korea (0%). It is, however, less than Singapore (45%) and Hong Kong (China) (39%) (World Bank, 2021).

Taking into account the proportions of international immigrants in each of the comparison countries, responses from students can be better understood, and this partly explains why Australian students were above the OECD average on almost all measures. On ten of the points listed above, however, students in Canada reported even higher levels than those in Australia. Similarly, students in Chinese Taipei and Singapore reported higher levels than students in Australia for nine of the points and students in Korea for six of them. This indicates that – although Australia is already doing extremely well in ensuring that students gain global competence – there is always room for improvement.

## Findings by jurisdictions

In many measures in this report, data has varied by jurisdiction, with some patterns becoming clear. On the whole, higher proportions of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales reported on a range of levels of global competence than those in other jurisdictions. For example, higher proportions of students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales than the OECD average reported a number of global competency measures:

- ▶ awareness of global issues (Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales)
- ▶ self-efficacy in explaining global issues (Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, and Western Australia)
- ▶ ability to understand the perspectives of others (New South Wales and Victoria)
- ▶ interest in learning about other cultures (Australian Capital Territory), and
- ▶ a sense of global mindedness (Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, and Western Australia).

In contrast, lower proportions of students in Tasmania than the OECD average reported the following elements:

- ▶ Self-efficacy in explaining global issues
- ▶ Interest in learning about other cultures, and
- ▶ Contact with people from other countries in their neighbourhood and in their circle of friends.

In addition, students in Tasmania were the only ones in Australia to report *respect for people from other cultures* that was at, rather than above, the OECD average. Similarly, students in the Northern Territory were the only ones to report a *positive attitude towards immigrants* that was at, rather than above, the OECD average.

There are likely to be a number of factors that explain these patterns. At the 2016 census, 30% of the population of New South Wales were born overseas, and this was the case for 28% of the population of the Australian Capital Territory. Although relatively high, these proportions were, similar to Victoria at 31% and lower than Western Australia at 35%. In contrast, Tasmania had the lowest proportion of the population born overseas, at 13%, and the Northern Territory at 23%.

The demographic make-up of the population is highly likely to be a factor that influences global competence among students in Australian jurisdictions. Other factors may include the extent to which the government of each jurisdiction emphasises cultural engagement and promotes the value of those from a range of different backgrounds.

Interestingly, while the proportion of students in most jurisdictions that reported *contact with people from other countries in their family, neighbourhood and circle of friends* was at or above the OECD average, the proportion of students in all jurisdictions reported *contact with people from other countries in their schools* that was below the OECD average. This is a difficult finding to explain, since school populations tend to reflect those in the community.

It is important to remember that the data on global competence reflects students' perceptions, which may differ from reality. It is possible that familiarity with other students at school renders any foreign origin less noteworthy while contact with those in the broader community remains more superficial, and hence any differences appear to be more salient. Nevertheless, this is a finding that would require further research to fully understand.

## Findings by gender

In almost all measures included in this report, data has varied by gender, almost always in favour of females. Higher proportions of females than males reported each of the following:

- ▶ Ability to understand the perspectives of others
- ▶ Interest in learning about other cultures
- ▶ Respect for people from other cultures
- ▶ Positive attitudes towards immigrants
- ▶ Awareness of intercultural communication
- ▶ More contact with people from other countries in their family
- ▶ They speak two or more languages
- ▶ They are learning a foreign language
- ▶ A greater sense of global mindedness, and
- ▶ Reported taking action for collective wellbeing.

In contrast, higher proportions of males than females reported *self-efficacy in explaining global issues*. Similar proportions of females and males reported *awareness of global issues, ability to adapt to new situations* and *engaging in global competence learning activities*.

The gender divide found in relation to global competence is interesting. It reflects findings in a range of scholarly studies that illustrate the same pattern<sup>12</sup>. Some theorists point to greater levels of empathy among females as lying at the root of this, but this remains an area of debate.

## Findings by socioeconomic background

For many of the measures of global competence, higher proportions of socioeconomically advantaged students than those who were less advantaged reported agreement. This was true for each of the following:

- ▶ Awareness of global issues
- ▶ Self-efficacy in explaining global issues

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Tompkins, A., Cook, T., Miller, E. and LePeau, L. (2017). Gender Influences on Students' Study Abroad Participation and Intercultural Competence. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 54(2): 204-216, DOI: 10.1080/19496591.2017.1284671; Solhaug & Norgaard Kristensen (2020). Gender and intercultural competence: analysis of intercultural competence among upper secondary school students in Denmark and Norway, *Educational Psychology*, 40(1): 120-140, DOI: 10.1080/01443410.2019.1646410; Holm, K., Nokelainen, P. & Tirri, K. (2009) Relationship of gender and academic achievement to Finnish students' intercultural sensitivity, *High Ability Studies*, 20(2): 187-200, DOI: 10.1080/13598130903358543



- ▶ Ability to understand the perspectives of others
- ▶ Interest in learning about other cultures
- ▶ Respect for people from other cultures
- ▶ Ability to adapt to new situations
- ▶ Positive attitudes towards immigrants
- ▶ Awareness of intercultural communication
- ▶ More contact with people from different countries at school
- ▶ They are learning a foreign language
- ▶ A greater sense of global mindedness
- ▶ Reported taking action for collective wellbeing, and
- ▶ Reported engaging in global competence learning activities.

The indication of lower levels of global competence among more socioeconomically disadvantaged students is not a surprise. Many, although not all, newer immigrants may be more concentrated in less advantaged communities and there is extensive scholarly research to indicate that greater levels of diversity lead to lower levels of social trust<sup>13</sup>.

Moreover, disadvantage drives a fear of the other. This is largely thought to be driven by a competition for resources, in which those unlike ourselves are regarded as threats to our livelihood, including employment and housing (Gereke, Baldassarri, & Schaub, 2018; Daniele, Martinangeli, Passarelli, Sas, & Windsteiger, 2020). This finding has, however, been contradicted in Australian research (McKenna et al., 2018) which indicates that further investigation is needed to find the underlying reasons for the patterns we see here.

In contrast, higher levels of global competence among more advantaged students are also reflective of the broader scholarly research. For those who are socioeconomically advantaged, global competence is more of an aesthetic endeavour than a practical need. Those who are more affluent have the resources to undertake activities such as engaging in foreign travel and enjoying food and entertainment from a variety of different cultural traditions. They are also more likely to engage with high quality media which has a greater coverage of foreign news, and to attend schools in which they have access to cultural aspects such as language learning and exchange programmes.

## Findings by geographic location

Another clear pattern that can be discerned in the data collected on global competence is the contrast between students in metropolitan and non-metropolitan schools. Higher proportions of students in metropolitan schools reported each of the following:

- ▶ Awareness of global issues
- ▶ Self-efficacy in explaining global issues
- ▶ Ability to understand the perspectives of others
- ▶ Interest in learning about other cultures
- ▶ Respect for people from other cultures
- ▶ Ability to adapt to new situations
- ▶ Positive attitudes towards immigrants
- ▶ Awareness of intercultural communication
- ▶ Contact with people from other countries in their family, and in their neighbourhood

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<sup>13</sup> See for example: Thisted Dinesen, P., Schaeffer M. & Mannemar Sonderskov, K. (2020). Ethnic Diversity and Social Trust: A Narrative and Meta-Analytical Review. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23(1): 441-465.

- ▶ They, their mothers and fathers speak two or more languages
- ▶ They are learning a foreign language, and
- ▶ A greater sense of global mindedness.

In addition, a much higher proportion of students in remote schools reported discrimination by teachers than those in provincial and metropolitan schools. The patterns shown here are likely to be explained by a number of the factors already discussed. Immigrants tend to be located in metropolitan areas in greater numbers than in provincial and remote areas, meaning that there is less opportunity to interact with those from diverse cultural backgrounds outside of cities.

Higher levels of social disadvantage also tend to be found outside of the metropolitan areas, and hence the points noted above in relation to disadvantage are pertinent in many non-metropolitan areas. There may also be other related factors at play, and this warrants further research to identify the reasons for some of the patterns apparent in the PISA data.

## Findings by Indigenous background

In addition to jurisdiction, gender, disadvantage and location, another factor that appears to influence global competence is whether or not student were Aboriginal and Torres Straits islander students. Lower proportions of Indigenous students reported each of the following:

- ▶ Awareness of global issues
- ▶ Self-efficacy in explaining global issues
- ▶ Respect for people from other cultures
- ▶ Ability to adapt to new situations
- ▶ Positive attitudes towards immigrants
- ▶ Awareness of intercultural communication
- ▶ More contact with people from different countries in their family and in their circle of friends
- ▶ They, their mothers and fathers speak two or more languages, and
- ▶ They are learning a foreign language.

At the same time, similar proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students reported their ability to *understand the perspectives of others, learn about other cultures and a sense of global mindedness*. Interestingly, higher proportions of Indigenous than non-Indigenous students reported that they *engaged in action for collective wellbeing*, including signing petitions, boycotting products and protecting the environment. More concerningly, a much higher proportion of Indigenous students reported discrimination by teachers than non-Indigenous students.

These patterns are partly explicable by some of the other characteristics already discussed. People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin are more likely to live in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that 48% Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people live in the 20% of local government areas that are the most disadvantaged, against 18% of non-Indigenous people.

Moreover, two-thirds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live outside of major cities compared to just one-quarter of non-Indigenous people. The findings by location and socioeconomic status are therefore likely to explain some of these patterns. Beyond this, there may be other factors that influence global competence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the inter-generational trauma caused by the stolen generation. Again, further research would enable the reasons behind some of these figures to be investigated.

## Findings by immigrant background

In all of the data collected on global competence in PISA 2018, distinctions between recent arrivals in Australia and others were clear. Higher proportions of first-generation students and foreign-born students reported each of the following:

- ▶ Awareness of global issues
- ▶ Self-efficacy in explaining global issues
- ▶ Greater ability to understand the perspectives of others
- ▶ Interest in learning about other cultures
- ▶ Respect for people from other cultures
- ▶ Ability to adapt to new situations
- ▶ Positive attitudes towards immigrants
- ▶ Awareness of intercultural communication
- ▶ More contact with people from different countries in their family, at school, in their neighbourhood and in their circle of friends
- ▶ They, their mothers and fathers speak two or more languages
- ▶ They are learning a foreign language, and
- ▶ Sense of global mindedness.

It is important to interpret this data with reference to who first-generation and foreign-born students are likely to be. According to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, England continues to be the greatest source of migrants to Australia, with English born migrants comprising 3.8% of the Australian population in 2020. Other large groups of migrants are those from India (2.8%), China (2.5%), New Zealand (2.2%), Philippines (1.2%) and Vietnam (1.1%).

Many migrants to Australia do speak languages other than English and this can certainly explain some of the findings above, as can the likelihood that they have more contact with people from different countries and positive attitudes toward immigrants. There may also be something inherent in moving from one country to another that makes people more likely to be globally competent. Migration requires risk-taking and openness, and the willingness to move beyond one's comfort zone, all of which are associated with intercultural competence. Moreover, global diaspora remain connected to their countries of origin, hence are likely to be more aware of global issues.

## Outliers and surprises

As identified at the start of this chapter, for almost all measures included in this report, data collected from Australian students has exceeded the OECD average. This demonstrates that Australian students are relatively global competent in relation to their peers in other countries. There were, however, some elements in which this pattern was reversed. These are interesting to explore, not only as they are contradictory in terms of the overall pattern, but also as they can provide insights into ways to strengthen Australian students' global competence even further.

## Language Learning

A significant, although not particularly surprising, finding is that 64% of Australian students reported that they do not learn a foreign language, compared to just 12% across OECD countries, and similar only to students in New Zealand and Scotland. The proportion of students reported they were learning at least one foreign language varied from 40% or above in the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria to less than a third in New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Just 8 per cent of Australian students reported that they learn two or more foreign languages, compared to 50 per cent across OECD countries and similar only to students in New Zealand and

Scotland. Moreover, fewer languages were spoken by students and their parents than students across OECD countries.

Inevitably, students in countries where English is the national language are less likely to learn languages than in other countries. This does, however, not mean that language learning is not important. Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) is an Australian Government initiative to enhance interest in language learning among pre-schoolers, hoping to influence them to pursue language studies in the future.

Mandated hours of language learning vary significantly from one jurisdiction to another, as do requirements for language teachers. The Morrison Government's \$2.18 million language package was announced in 2019 and may help enhance language learning among Australian students, but there is clearly still a long way to go.

## Teaching global issues

As well as collecting data from students, PISA also includes a questionnaire for school principals. In Australia, lower percentages of students attended schools in which principals reported that global issues were taught in year 10 than in most comparison countries. This pattern was particularly marked for students in the Northern Territory.

Given that this question is specifically about what is taught in year 10, it may be the case that global issues are taught in other school years instead. Nevertheless, this may be an issue for further exploration to ensure that global students are learning as much about global issues as their peers.

Moreover, while greater proportions of Australian students than students in other countries attended schools in which principals reported that a wide range of intercultural learning activities, this did not extend to all activities. Smaller proportions of students in Australian than other countries such as Chinese Taipei, New Zealand and Singapore in which principals reported that their schools:

- ▶ encouraged students to communicate with people from other cultures via web / internet / social media
- ▶ offered an exchange program with schools in other countries
- ▶ celebrated festivities from other cultures
- ▶ adopted different approaches to educate students about cultural differences (e.g. teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, simulations, problem-based learning, music, art, etc.), and
- ▶ had a formal curriculum in Year 10 for *communicating with people from different cultures or countries*.

These are factors that may wish to be looked at in order to ascertain whether any changes are required to curricula or to school practices in order to further enhance Australian students' global competence.

## Interest in learning about other cultures

Despite Australian students' overall relatively high levels of global competence, their interest in learning about other cultures was surprisingly low. This is particularly striking given both the multicultural nature of much of the Australian population, as well as Australians' reputation for being active global travellers (when the pandemic does not make that impossible).

Faced with statements asking them about their interest in learning about: *how people live in different countries; more about the religions of the world; the traditions of other cultures; and how people from various cultures see the world*, Australian students reported that they were less interested in learning about other cultures than students across the OECD.

The lack of interest in learning about other cultures was most marked in Western Australia and Tasmania, but the highest proportion in the Australian Capital Territory, at 58%, was still less than

two-thirds of all students. Male students and students in remote areas were particularly disinterested in learning about other cultures.

Australian students reported the least interest in *learning more about the religions of the world*, with the proportions that expressed interest ranging from 42% of students in the Australian Capital Territory to just 33% of students in Western Australia and South Australia.

Given the diversity of religions within Australia, and the importance that religious understanding plays in enhancing tolerance, peace and mutual respect - in both local and international communities - this may be something that educational authorities could consider emphasising in the curriculum in the future.

## **Taking action on global issues**

Finally, an interesting finding was that although they rank highly in terms of global competence overall, a lower proportion of Australian students reported taking action on global issues than students from across OECD countries for aspects such as reducing energy use at home, buying products for ethical reasons or supporting environmental protection.

It may be the case that Australian students feel that Australian policies are sufficient, and they do not need to take any personal action themselves. Given that the percentages of Australian students that reported action were significantly smaller than the percentages of students in two countries with a similar policy portfolio to Australia - Canada and New Zealand - however, there may be other factors that are influencing these trends.

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