Professional Development in Equity Interventions for School Teachers

Teacher Survey Report, 2019

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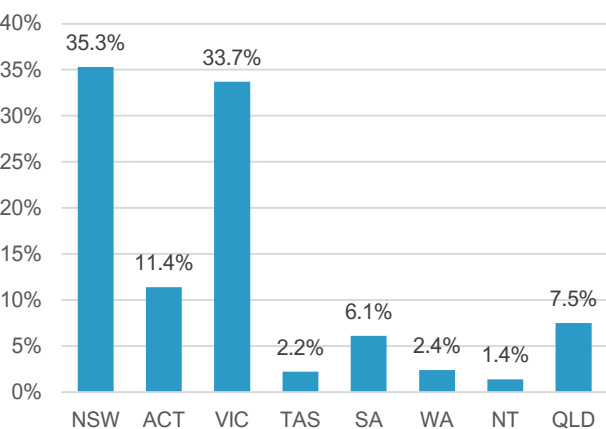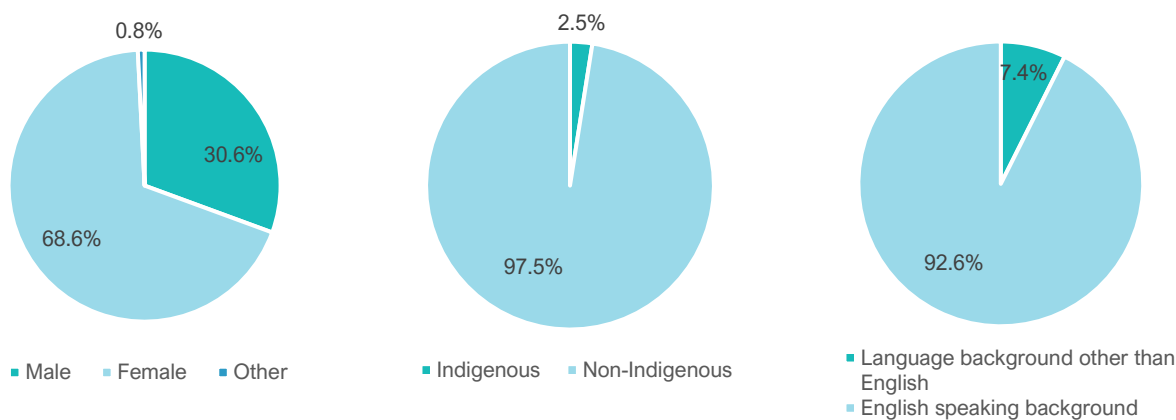
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Professional Development in Equity Interventions for School Teachers: Teacher Survey Report

Teachers in all states and territories and in all schooling sectors (State, Catholic, Independent) were invited to complete an online survey designed to determine their level of understanding and specific learning needs in relation to nurturing students' aspirations and supporting pathways to higher education. This report provides a broad overview of the first step in the project. The survey was informed by prior studies of school students' aspirations (for example, Gemici, 2014; Gore et al., 2015; Gore et al., 2017) in order to draw attention to issues teachers might otherwise not identify as well as provide the opportunity for teachers to name specific areas of professional learning need.

Sample

Demographic characteristics (*n* = 513)

Male Female Other

Indigenous Non-Indigenous

Language background other than English
English speaking background

Location

Most survey participants worked at schools in either NSW (35.3%) or Victoria (33.7%). The next largest proportions came from the ACT (11.4%) and Queensland (7.5%), with the remaining 12.1% spread across South Australia (6.1%), Western Australia (2.4%), Tasmania (2.2%), and the Northern Territory (1.4%).

School sector

Almost equal numbers reported working in the Government (44.6%) and Catholic (44.2%) sectors. The remaining 11.2% reported working in the Independent sector.

44.6%

44.2%

11.6%

■ Government ■ Catholic ■ Independent
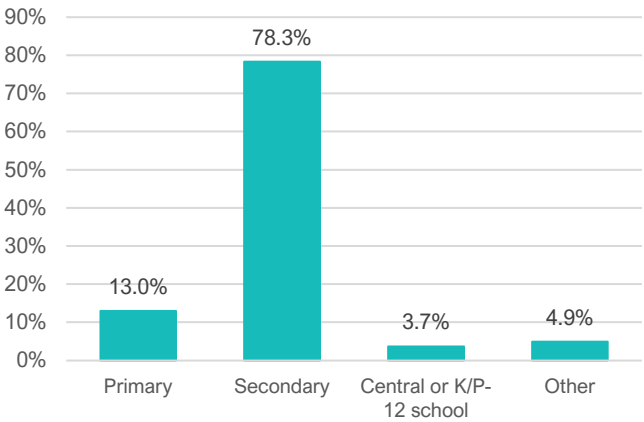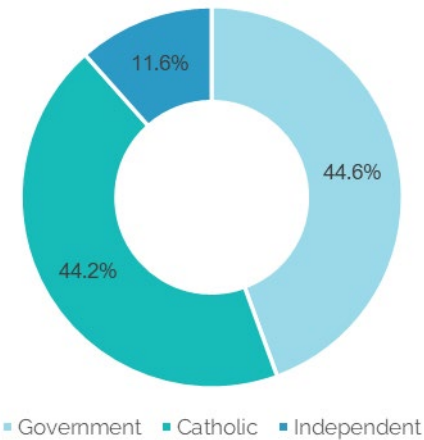
School type

Most participants were working in **Secondary schools (78.3%),** 13.0% were in Primary schools, and 8.6% were from either a Central or K/P – 12 or 'Other' type of school. 'Other' school types included senior secondary schools, K/P-10 schools, behavioural schools, alternative secondary schools and middle schools.

78.3%

13.0%

3.7%

4.9%

Primary   Secondary   Central or K/P-12 school   Other
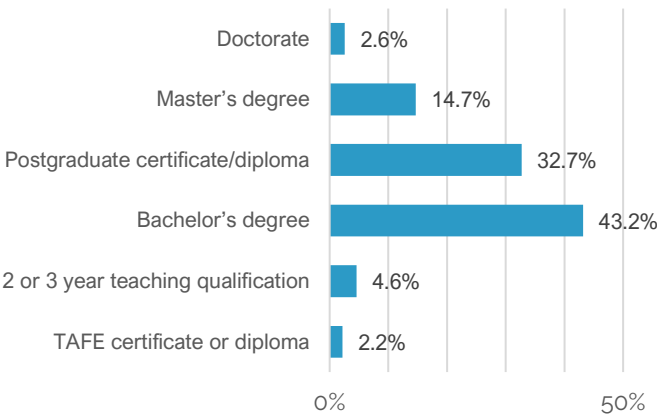
Level of education

43.2% of participants told us that their highest level of education was a Bachelor's degree, while **32.7% held a postgraduate certificate or diploma**, and 14.7% had finished a Master's degree

Doctorate 2.6%

Master's degree 14.7%

Postgraduate certificate/diploma 32.7%

Bachelor's degree 43.2%

2 or 3 year teaching qualification 4.6%

TAFE certificate or diploma 2.2%

0%   50%

Note: Due to research approval agreements with governing bodies, results from the survey are not able to be reported by school sector or by State.

Years of experience

Almost one-third of participants had been teaching for 'More than 20 Years' (30.7%), with the remaining two-thirds dispersed across categories ranging from zero to 20 years' teaching experience.

Bar chart:
- 0-2 years: 9.4%
- 3-5 years: 11.8%
- 6-10 years: 17.5%
- 11-15 years: 15.7%
- 16-20 years: 14.8%
- More than 20 years: 30.7%
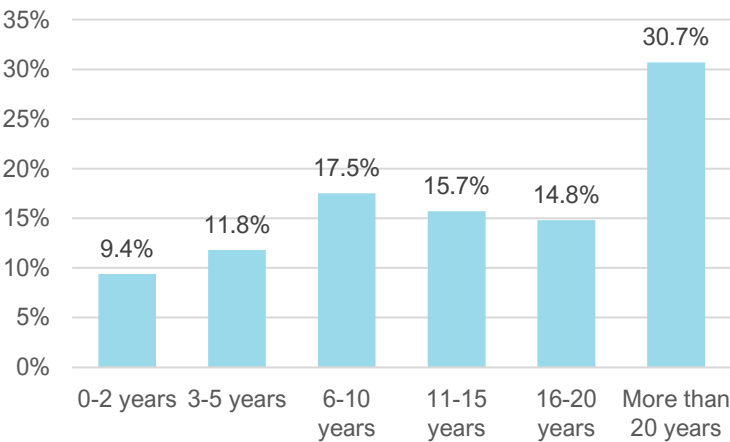
Student aspirations

Perceptions of career aspirations

23%

agreed that career aspirations of **Indigenous and non-Indigenous** students are similar.

95%

disagreed that **career aspirations were fixed** by the time students were in Year 10.

52%

agreed that **fewer girls aspire to careers in science.**

58%

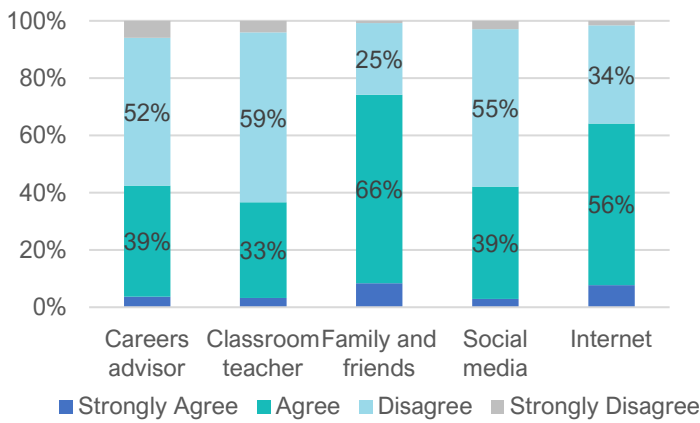agreed that **gender stereotypes** shape student aspirations.

20%

agreed that **students from low SES and high SES backgrounds** have similar

Views on careers education

Chart: Views on careers education (stacked bar chart showing percentages)

- Careers advisor: 39% Agree, 52% Disagree
- Classroom teacher: 33% Agree, 59% Disagree
- Family and friends: 66% Agree, 25% Disagree
- Social media: 39% Agree, 55% Disagree
- Internet: 56% Agree, 34% Disagree

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Sources of information about careers

Participants agreed **family and friends were the primary source of career information** for students (Agree and Strong Agreed: 74.2%). The Internet was the second most popular source of information (Agree and Strongly Agree: 64.1%)

Teachers impact on student aspirations

95%

of participants agreed that **teachers make a difference** to students' aspirations.

69%

of participants **disagreed that careers advisors had more influence** than teachers on students' aspirations.

82%

of participants agreed that it was their role to advise **students on post-secondary occupational and educational plans.**
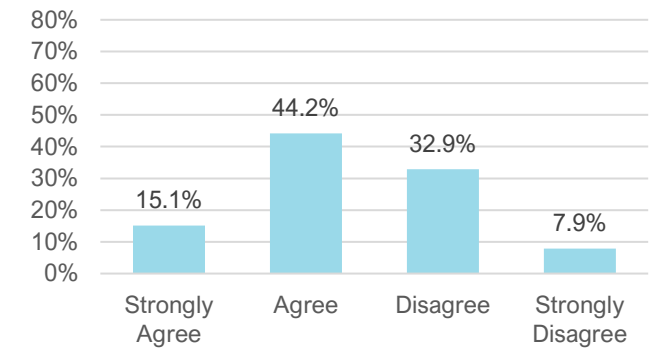

86%

of participants agreed that teachers influence **students' aspirations for higher education.**
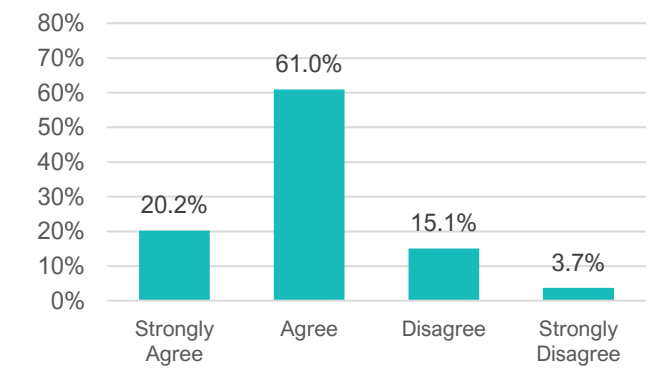
Advice about university

Enrolment process

More than half (59.3%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident in advising students about the university enrolment process
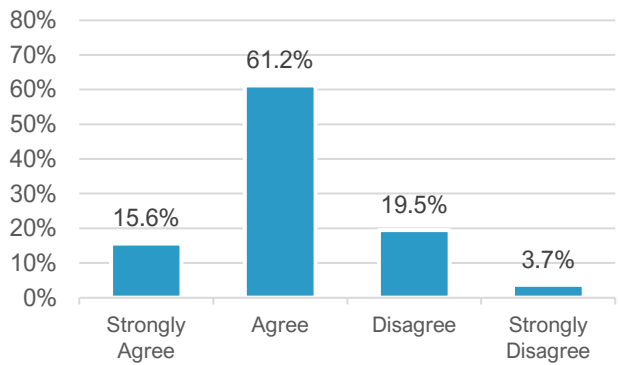

Preparation for University life

81.2% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were **confident in advising** students on how to prepare for university life.

Provision of information about university

The majority of participants (76.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were **comfortable providing students** with information about university

Expertise to provide information about university

55.8% of participations agreed or strongly agreed that they had **sufficient expertise to provide students with information about university.** 44.3% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.
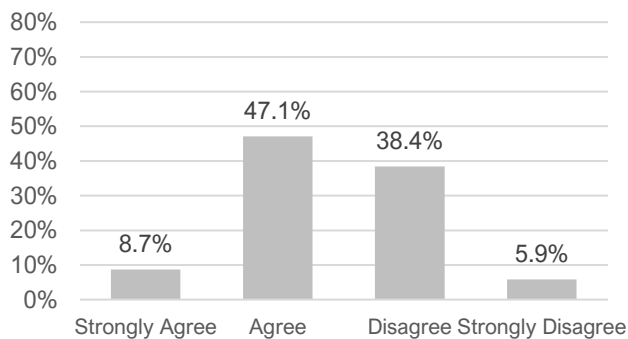
Reflections on approaches to student aspirations

54%

of participants agreed that there were occasions **when they could have done more** to support students' aspirations.

66%

of participants agreed that most advice provided about educational and/or occupational aspirations **occurs in informal settings.**

55%

of participants agreed that there was **not enough time** to address students' occupational and/or educational aspirations.
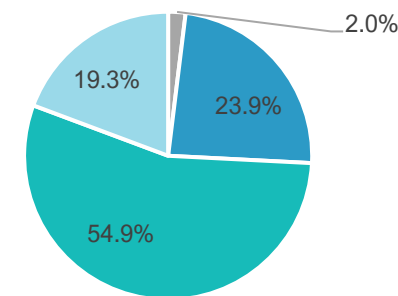
33%

of participants agreed that they take **students' background or circumstances** into account when advising them about university aspirations.
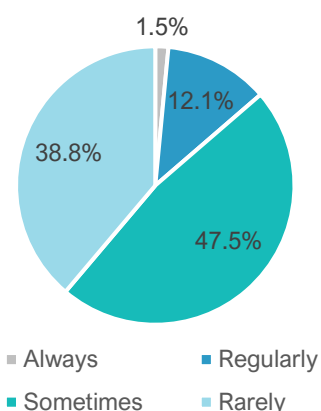
# Reflections on approaches to student aspirations

With whole classes

More than half of participants (54.9%) reported discussing aspirations with whole classes 'Sometimes'. A further 23.9% said they did this 'Regularly', and 19.3% 'Rarely'. Only 2.0% of participants reported 'Always'.

2.0%

19.3%

23.9%

54.9%

- Always
- Regularly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

With high achieving students more than low achieving students

Almost half of participants reported 'Sometimes' (47.5%), discussing educational and/or occupational aspirations with high achieving students more than low achieving students. 38.8% reported 'Rarely'. Relatively small proportions of participants reported that they 'Regularly' or 'Always' did this, with 12.1% and 1.5% selecting these options respectively.
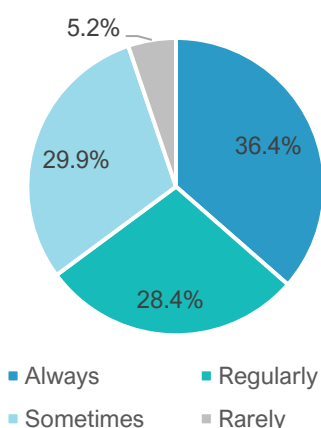
When approached

The greatest proportions of participants reporting that they 'Always' (36.4%), 'Sometimes' (29.9%) or 'Regularly' (28.4%) discuss student aspirations when approached. A relatively small proportion (5.2%) reported that they do this 'Rarely'.

Areas of student aspirations in which teachers need support

91%

of participants reported that they 'somewhat' or 'to a great extent' need **help with understanding the future of work.**
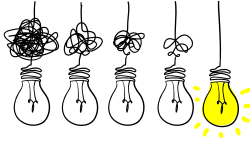

83%

of participants reported that they 'somewhat' or 'to a great extent' need **help with understanding the university sector.**

86%

of participants reported that they 'somewhat' or 'to a great extent' need **help with understanding their role in shaping student aspirations.**

85%

of participants reported that they 'somewhat' or 'to a great extent' need **help with understanding how aspirations intersect with demographics.**

86%

of participants reported that they 'somewhat' or 'to a great extent' need **help with understanding how aspirations are formed.**

Conclusion

These survey responses were taken into account in designing the *Aspirations: Supporting Students' Futures* professional learning course for teachers. They were used to identify myths and misunderstandings, understand areas where information was needed, and, in some instances, the survey data were included in the course so teachers could see views of their peers across the country.

References

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