

Does Australia have a World-Class Education System? Evidence from PISA 2006

Have Standards Changed?

How did the performances of Australian students in 2006 compare with the performances of Australian students in 2000 and 2003? Did average levels of achievement increase, decline, or remain the same in Australia over this period?

Scientific Literacy

Because of changes in what was assessed between 2003 and 2006, it was not possible to compare the Scientific Literacy performances of students on these two occasions. Scientific Literacy was a minor domain in 2000 and 2003, but a major domain in 2006 (meaning that a wider range of scientific literacy skills was assessed).

Mathematical Literacy

There was no significant decline in Australian students' Mathematical Literacy performances between 2003 and 2006. However, there was a significant decline in the average performances of Australian girls during this time. There were also significant declines in average performance in two Australian states: WA and SA.

Reading Literacy

Overall, the average Reading Literacy performances of Australian students declined between 2003 and 2006. This decline is explained primarily by the fact that there were fewer Australian students in 2006 performing at the highest reading levels. The decline occurred for both boys and girls, but not uniformly across the Australian states and territories. The average performance of girls declined significantly between 2003 and 2006 in NT and WA, and between 2000 and 2006 in TAS. The average performance of boys declined significantly between 2003 and 2006 in SA and the NT, and also in SA between 2000 and 2006.