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Socio-economic status, cultural diversity and the aspirations of secondary students in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne, Australia / Mark P. Bowden ; James Doughney

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**Abstract**

Using data from a recent survey of Australian secondary students, we find that those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to aspire to attend university. The same can be said for students who do not speak English at home. We find that students with an ethnic minority background are more likely to perceive higher levels of support from parents. However, we find that all students believe they receive encouragement from their parents to do well at school (rather than discouragement or disinterest), and that there is little difference in the level of importance placed on the views of parents between students from English and non-English speaking background. While interest in university education is strong across all socio-economic groups, particularly for students who do not speak English at home, there is a considerable gap between aspirations and enrolment levels. We suggest that this 'aspirations gap' is larger for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This analysis also supports growing evidence that the postcode methodology for allocating socio-economic status to individuals is unreliable. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Bowden,

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