

Supporting international student achievement – a literal pathway from secondary to tertiary study

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Research on the achievement levels of international students at secondary and tertiary education levels in New Zealand was conducted in 2004 as a project funded by the Ministry of Education through the Export Education Levy. Analysis of extant data from the Ministry of Education and New Zealand Qualifications Authority provided the basis for comparing international student achievement with the achievement of domestic students at selected New Zealand secondary schools. Results based on the 2003 school data reveal patterns of academic performance of international students by school decile (socio-economic) status, geographic region, subject area and the percentage of international students enrolled. Numbers of international students studying at Years 12 and 13 reveal a tendency to recruit students into the latter year only where their achievement in literacy-rich subjects does not compare favourably to that of New Zealand domestic students. The implications of international student achievement in literacy rich subjects at secondary school are explored in the context of pathways to university study. Specific strategies targeted at improving the success of international students at secondary levels and in line with their career aspirations are discussed.