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## **Australian ground-breaking study helps great teachers make great students**

**A new study revealed today, links improved literacy outcomes in students with development of students' positive mindset and behaviours for learning.**

Ground-breaking Australian research has demonstrated that students' reading performance can improve if they are taught specific social and emotional skills that support learning.

*Helping Great Teachers Make Great Students* was released today by its author, Professor Michael E. Bernard, an international researcher from the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education.

The research and its report were funded by the Australian Scholarships Group (ASG).

Professor Bernard's research evaluated the teaching of positive attitudes and behaviours for learning in two National Partnership Schools in Victoria.

The research demonstrates that teachers who are able to teach their students attitudes and behaviours for learning (AB4L), are more successful in imparting subject content particularly where students are struggling. And those students in the lower 50% of their classes in reading achievement showed significant improvements in their reading comprehension performance.

Professor Bernard said the research is an Australian first, providing empirical evidence that teaching students AB4L improves how well they do in literacy.

"I have always believed there was an artificial separation between academic learning, and social and emotional learning," Professor Bernard said. "In fact, the two are linked, and teachers need to be good at teaching both."

"All teachers want their students to succeed. This research shows that, if we equip our teachers with methods for developing students' positive attitudes and behaviours for learning, the students actually become better learners. This in turn makes it easier for teachers to teach the subject content."

AB4L was created by Professor Bernard in 2009. It focuses on the self-management skills and attitudes that help students stay focused and engaged during classroom instruction. Specific learning behaviours include initiative, cooperativeness, engagement, confidence and persistence.

During the study, some of the teachers at the two participating schools were trained in how to integrate AB4L into literacy lessons. Students in those classes showed significant improvement in their behaviours for learning and reading comprehension.

Former Dean of Education at the University of Melbourne, Professor Brian Caldwell, stated that the study has important implications for policy and practice.

“No amount of testing and reporting of student achievement will improve levels of literacy in Australian schools unless students’ attitudes and behaviours prepare them for learning. Professor Bernard's study shows how this can be achieved through an innovative program that has been tested and found to be successful under experimental conditions,” said Professor Caldwell, who is now Managing Director and Principal Consultant at Education Transformations.

“Professor Bernard has a well-deserved international reputation for grounded research that has led to approaches that teachers can adopt and achieve immediate impact. We need more of this kind of research if we are to meet the goals of schooling in Australia.”

The AB4L research is part of ASG’s broader support for Professor Bernard’s *You Can Do It! Education* Program, which aims to provide all children with the foundations of achievement, positive relationships and emotional well-being. ASG is the publisher of *You Can Do It! Education* resources that are currently used in thousands of primary and secondary schools across Australia.

With a history of nearly 40 years, ASG was established as a parent cooperative – utilising the structure of a friendly society – committed to empowering parents to take action to realise the education dreams they have for their children.

As part of its commitment to supporting education, ASG is the long-term supporter of a range of programs and resources that support students and teachers in school classrooms and early childhood centres.

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