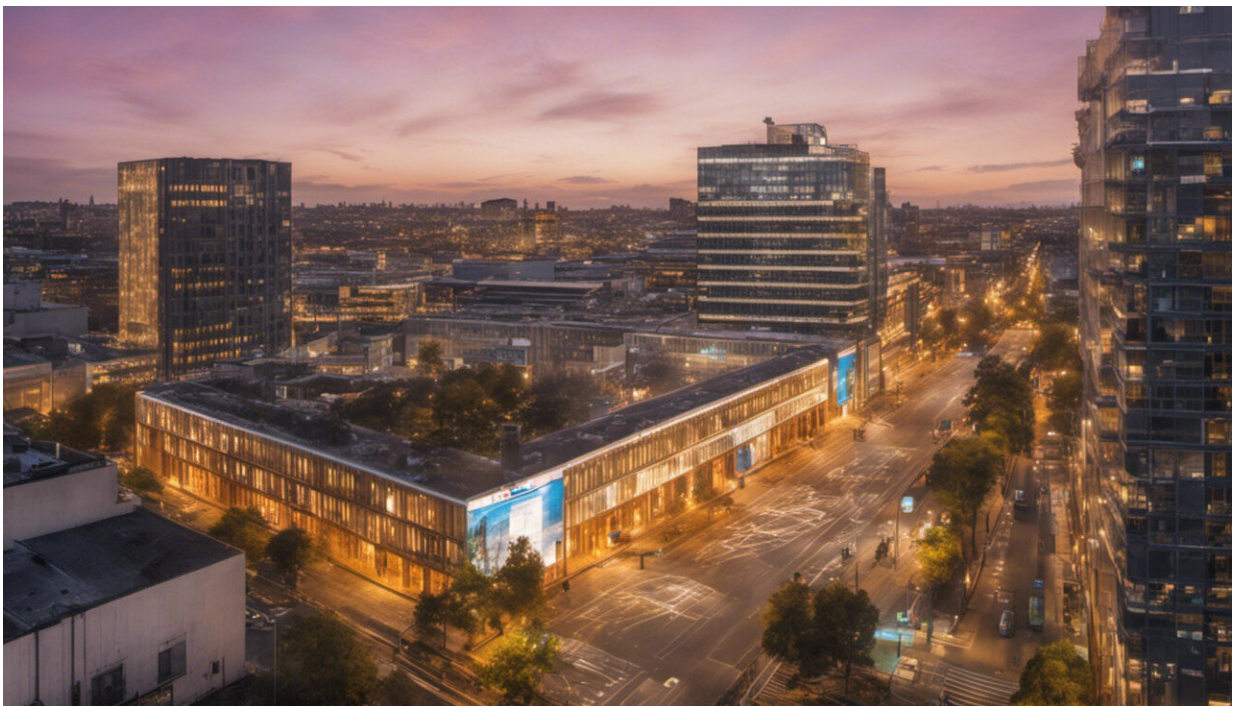


# Australian students are becoming increasingly disengaged at school – here's why

February 5 2016, by Pearl Subban, Monash University

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Around [one in five](#) Australian school students don't find school engaging, which means they are [less likely to learn properly](#).. It's an issue that tends to worsen as students become older.

A [study](#) showed that in year 7, 70% of [students](#) observed found [school](#) engaging, but in year 9, this dropped to 55%.

Part of the reason is that the brightest kids are not being challenged enough, leading to students becoming [disconnected and disengaged](#) from their studies.

Disengagement has resulted in Australian classrooms [becoming rowdier](#) and bullying becoming more prevalent.

A [2012 study](#) revealed that just 60% of students in South Australian secondary schools found school engaging. While over two thirds of teachers reported disengaged behaviours on an "almost daily basis".

## **Why are students not engaged at school?**

There are many possible [reasons](#) for disengagement. Among these are the possibilities that the tasks being set are too challenging or too boring resulting in students being easily distracted; or that lessons being taught are perceived as uninteresting or irrelevant.

This has marked implications for the academic progress of these students, who are then at risk of dropping out of school prior to completion.

## **Disengagement can lead to dropping out**

[Around 25%](#) of disengaged young people do not complete school, with some variation nationally from primary to secondary school. This should be concerning.

Of the 25% who did not complete school in 2013-14, [one in four](#)

students indicated that they did not like school, with some indicating that their disinterest was on account of not doing well.

Of concern is the [quietly disengaged](#) student, who sometimes goes unnoticed because they are usually compliant, but not as productive as they could be.

## **How to make students more engaged**

While engaged students are keen to perform well, achieve highly, and consequently look forward to successful post-school lives, disengagement can lead to poorer academic performance for some students, and therefore limited success. This can in turn affect their quality of life.

## **Personalised learning approach**

Teaching children in the same way means some of the brightest kids often are not challenged enough. Personalised learning has been [identified](#) as one of the essentials to school success. This involves using [individually designed strategies](#) which tap into student strengths to help increase the level of student engagement. This [could include](#), using open learning spaces, student developed timetables and behaviour guidelines.

## **Add sense of purpose to learning**

Getting students involved with projects and using real-life scenarios [could contribute](#) to a sense of ownership and bring enjoyment to learning. Through these approaches, students are more likely to feel that school is relevant, important and prepares them meaningfully for life outside school.

## Foster student wellbeing

[Positive interactions](#) between teachers and students can help create classroom stability, feelings of security and overall gratification with the learning process. Forming [positive relationships](#) at school can also [contribute towards](#) a student's emotional and social wellbeing.

Teachers need to compare their strategies with their peers in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the different methods they use to increase student engagement at schools.

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