





The Results

We evaluated the impact of the contextualised tests on numeracy scores for students in years 6 and 8, and reading scores for students in Year 6. In the numeracy tests, we found that, in Year 8, treatment has no impact on numeracy scores in the pooled sample of students, as well as separate subsamples for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

In Year 6, there is no evidence of an impact on Indigenous test scores and weak evidence of a negative impact on non-Indigenous scores, namely through an increase in the number of questions not attempted. In reading, however, the average treatment effect is 0.27 standard deviations (s.d.), with higher effects for Indigenous students (0.30 s.d.) than non-Indigenous students (0.24 s.d.).

These magnitudes mean that the contextualised reading test closes the rural-urban reading gap by 33 percent and the Indigenous-non-Indigenous gap by 50 percent. Together these results imply that cultural context may be important for performance on certain types of basic-skills tests.

Culturally Contextualised Education Material

Testing is important, but the big prize for getting cultural context right is improvement in actual learning outcomes. Given the magnitude of the effects in reading tests it seems plausible that providing tailored educational materials such as handouts, textbooks, and multi-media content could have a large effect on learning outcomes.

We are planning a future RCT to investigate these effects.

Location of the trial



Further enquiries can be made at:
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