

What Can IEA Data Reveal About Socio-Economic Status and the Ability to Study at Home?

New analysis of IEA data from the **International Computer and Information Literacy Study** (ICILS) continues to shed light on the relationship between **socio-economic status** (measured by parental occupation) and the **availability of digital devices** in the home. With the rise in children learning from home around the world, and no guarantee when all students will be back in the classroom, questions are understandably being raised about equity and the ability of children from less advantaged backgrounds to continue their education effectively.

Commenting on the findings, IEA Executive Director, Dr Dirk Hastedt said:

“We found that 24% of students across the study, whose parents had a higher “occupational status”, reported having fewer than two laptop or desktop computers at home, compared to 41% of students whose parents had a lower “occupational status”. This raises questions about whether children will have enough access to devices to use for studying at home, especially if their parents and siblings also need access to a computer to work from home.”

“In the last cycle of the ICILS study, in 2018, we asked more than 46,000 students about the digital devices they have access to at home, including laptop and desktop computers, and tablets and e-readers. This data can now provide an important insight into how prepared young people were to the switch to home working, and which students risk slipping behind their peers.

“We talk a lot about the digital divide, and these new figures provide an insight into one aspect of it; the “devices divide”, but we mustn’t forget the “knowledge divide” too. In the most recent cycle of ICILS, students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds had significantly higher scores in ICILS than their less advantaged peers.

“People are often surprised to learn that only 21% of students in ICILS demonstrated that they can be independent computer users, with the majority of students needing direct instruction to complete basic tasks. However, while the average students from a more affluent background needed support and direct instruction to carry out tasks, their less advantaged peers performed even more poorly, demonstrating only a functional working knowledge of computers.

“While many countries are making significant efforts to ensure the continuity of education opportunities by increasing access to devices, it is also vital they make sure the students actually know how to use them effectively.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

ICILS 2018 Participating Education Systems

Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Moscow (Russian Federation)*, North Rhine Westphalia (Germany)*, Portugal, Uruguay, and the United States. **Benchmarking education systems (these systems, and the US, were not included in the study averages above).*

Occupational Status refers to the international socioeconomic index of occupational status scores of both parents. The ICILS student questionnaire collected data on parental occupational status through questions that allowed students to give open-ended responses. The students' responses were classified according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) framework (International Labour Organization 2007). Research indicates relatively high consistencies between data on parental occupation collected from students and from parents (Schulz 2006; Vereecken and Vandegheuchte 2003).

IEA is preparing a series of short analyses using data from our studies, to provide insights into how well prepared pupils, their teachers, and schools are to continue schooling during the coronavirus crisis. More information about this release, or IEA data, can be sought from:

Jennifer Ross

Media and Outreach
+31 (0) 6 12 32 51 82



Researching education, improving learning

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

Tel. +31 (0) 20 625 36 25 | Fax +31 (0) 20 420 7136 | www.iea.nl
IEA Amsterdam | Keizersgracht 311 | 1016 EE Amsterdam | The Netherlands

