



# DOUBLE THE FEET ON THE STREET

NZ Walking Conference 2008

4-5 August, Auckland

Conference Organisers  
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<b>Phone number</b>	03 352 5890	<b>Fax Number</b>	(03) 366 3188
<b>Presentation topic</b>	School Travel		
<b>Presentation title</b>	An investigation into the effects of the mode of travel and length of travel of secondary school students on their preparedness for learning		
<b>Presentation Style</b>	<b>Presentation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Workshop / Walkshop</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Estimated Time Required</b>	0-10 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	10-20 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	20-30 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Abstract Remit

A number of Government and local authority organisations are working with schools to encourage students to walk or cycle to school. These initiatives (or programmes) are the results of government policies and strategies associated with 1) improving the health of children and reducing obesity, 2) reduced road congestion and improving mobility and accessibility and 3) reducing the pollution resulting from motorised transport. Primary and Intermediate schools have largely been the targets for these initiatives with the view of developing good habits at an early age. There has been relatively little work focused on high schools, even though there has been a major reduction in the numbers of students walking and cycling to high school.

While there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that exercise before school helps students to stay focussed at school, there has been little research internationally to support this claim. Student engagement can be defined many ways. The way that NZCER have been defining it relates to students' sense of connection to their school and their commitment, attitude and involvement as learners. Students who are engaged in the learning process will tend to learn more and be more receptive and more willing to learn new ideas. The research that has been undertaken relating to exercise appears not to be linked to student engagement (or preparedness to learn). NZCER is attempting to develop a scale of engagement which could be used by all secondary schools. They have constructed a draft test which is currently in the trial stage.

The purpose of Derek's research project is to explore the link between exercise and student engagement (or preparedness to learn) in junior secondary school classes in New Zealand. This project looks at the type and duration of student activity before and after school and links this with student engagement as measured by the trial self reporting instrument being developed by NZCER.

The project has two stages. The first stage involves a wide scale survey using an online survey of approximately 1000 students in schools nationally. Students are asked to identify the mode of transport they use to travel to and from schools and how they feel about their classroom learning. The second stage is a case study involving monitoring the travel choices/patterns of a small group of students over a period of a month. The students' physical activity and route choices will be recorded using GPS units. This information will be plotted on maps using GIS. Some of these students will be selected for this study because they self-identified as inactive. Such students will be encouraged to become active in the form of walking or cycling to school for the month. The students in this second part of the project will also be interviewed at the conclusion of the month to gain qualitative data relating to their exercise and engagement.

This workshop will aim to present some of the preliminary findings of this project, including a discussion on the linkages between student engagement, exercise, including travel to and from school, and a number of other factors. In addition to advice on how to progress this research project Derek is seeking suggestions for future research in this area by other Teacher Fellows.

**Author Profile**

Derek is a 2008 Science, Technology and Mathematics Teacher Fellow being co-hosted by Beca and CPIT for the year. Derek is uniquely placed to examine this link having worked in the education sector as a secondary mathematics teacher for the last 25 years and currently working within a transport engineering team at Beca in Christchurch.