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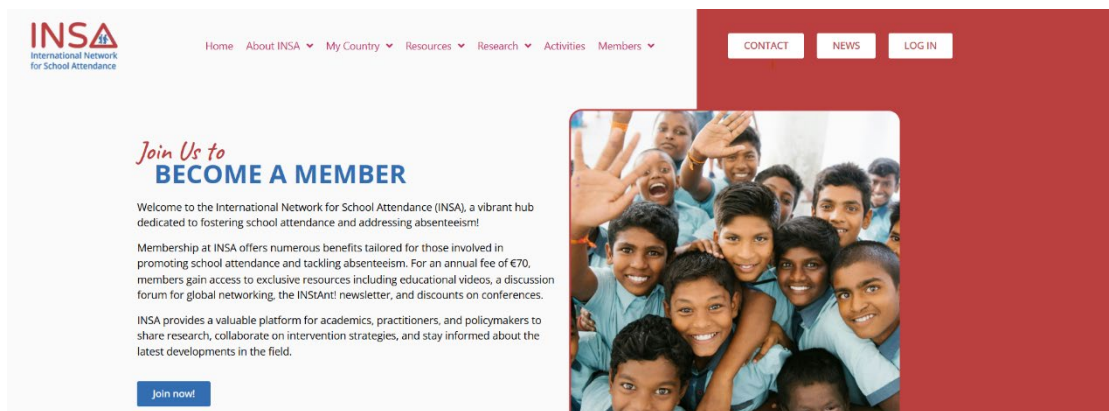


Welcome to INStAnt!

We're giving our INStAnt newsletter a refresh and look forward to sharing updates with you about the exciting work our members are undertaking to better understand and support children, families, and schools with school attendance.

We have also recently launched our new [website](#)!

You will be able to find helpful resources, dedicated pages with information specific to your country, and information on upcoming events and activities.



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INSA Conference 2024 Review



The theme of this year's conference was *Partnering to Advance Attendance*. It was wonderful to see so many dedicated researchers, clinicians, and educators come together in New Orleans to share our research and experiences.



The air in the Crowne Plaza was abuzz. While outside the streets thrummed with jazz, inside the energy was palpable as the corners of the world folded together toward addressing one “wicked” problem. One of the first keynotes of the conference from Joshua Childs embodied the intentions of INSA perfectly: to centre collaboration above co-operation, and to develop holistic approaches to addressing absenteeism.

The passion for supporting the next generation was reflected in communities globally. My favourite presentation across the three days was during one of the Family Engagement sessions, in which Nicole Manawatu-Brennan spoke about her work as a director for Tuahiwi Education Limited in New Zealand. Her organisation centres Indigenous knowledge and frameworks within education settings

to improve the learning of all students, and I was struck by its emphasis on community and commitment to working with the families experiencing problems with school attendance.

There were multiple modalities to engage with the ongoing research and projects. Poster presentations were running in spaces between presentation venues, and there was a mixture of keynotes, and smaller presentations interspersed with networking opportunities. The round tables running each day showcased a variety of different approaches to information exchange and collaboration. While some included specialist panels, others were more akin to workshops. On more than one occasion, the atmosphere was described as “familial” and “supportive”.

Additional opportunities to connect were also reflected in the vibrant social calendar that included group tours of the city, and a fancy dress Halloween dinner (a crowd favourite!). By the end of the closing address, the connections forged over the three days were visible. Goodbyes are my least favourite part of any occasion, but the momentum and connections that had been forged through the conference created a sense more of “see you soon”.



We are thrilled to announce that the next INSA Conference will be held in
Alicante, Spain in 2026! Stay tuned for details!

Meet the Newest Member of the INSA Executive: Yali Horta



Building on a 15-year career in supporting school communities in Chile to improve children's educational trajectories, I'm excited to join INSA Executive. My work has focused on empowering institutional leaders and their teams to build a robust plan to promote attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism in early education. As a human right, education must be guaranteed with a set of strategies that not only react to attendance problems, but also prevent escalation of these issues. As an INSA Executive member I hope to make connections between researchers and practitioners in the field that cross borders.

-- Yali Horta

The current INSA Executive includes:

President: Glenn Melvin (Australia)

Secretary: Lisa McKay-Brown (Australia)

Treasurer: Gil Keppens (Belgium)

Ordinary members: David Heyne (Netherlands), Catriona O'Toole (Ireland),
Yali Horta (Chile)

In Attendance

with

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty's passion for young people and problem-solving for impact is apparent within the very first moments of meeting her. As the eldest of five children, her parents instilled in her a strong ethos of service and leadership that is exemplified across her life's work. Whether as a child responsible for advocating for her siblings at school, a high school student starting her own youth group, a principal in an alternative school, or as a long-time university academic supporting students from less privileged backgrounds in Indiana, USA, her drive to make a positive difference in the lives of young people is palpable.

This passion led Carolyn to co-found the field of attendance and absenteeism, and lead work in this field within the USA. Now, it also sees Carolyn taking a temporary absence from her work with INSA, as she has recently commenced as the inaugural dean of [Founder's College at Butler University](#). Opening in 2025 with a cohort of 100 students, Founder's College at Butler University caters for high-ability students from low-wealth backgrounds who may have experienced attendance challenges throughout their schooling years. As Carolyn notes, "there are not a lot of people looking at helping those students see themselves in college, and what that next step looks like, and how to prepare them for that journey even after absence or absenteeism".

Reflecting on her work with INSA, Carolyn is most proud of the movement INSA has generated across the world. From its initial beginnings with four like-minded people identifying a need for international collaboration, followed by a workshop at the Lorentz Center in the Netherlands with twenty-one attendees, to now having the fourth conference in New Orleans attended by over two hundred people across twenty countries, the INSA movement is now "bigger than any one of us". Carolyn believes strongly that we work better together; that "none of us are expert but we learn more from each other".

Carolyn notes that INSA is still in its early stages of development and considers that our next steps are to create pathways for others to join the conversation on attendance, and to focus on measuring impact. She asks, "when we put all of that together, how many students' lives have we changed the

trajectory for? If we've changed the trajectory, then it's also about: how did we do that? Did we change standards, did we change policy, did we create new curriculums, did we make schools better?" She identifies that one of the challenges we face is developing a shared language between the disparate stakeholders involved in supporting student attendance, to build trust and understanding "so people can see themselves in every part of the work that we do, whether it's the prosecutor, the police, the judge, the lawyer, the school superintendent, whoever it is, they could see themselves in every part of the work we do at INSA. And once they see themselves, they will find the same passion and joy that we have for finding solutions that matter to change lives long beyond us."

While Carolyn's departure from the INSA leadership is temporary, she leaves knowing that INSA is going to "continue to make an impact" through "problem solving for those vexing problems that change can bring about some good outcomes". INSA would like to express its sincere thanks to Carolyn for her outstanding dedication and leadership in establishing and nurturing INSA to this point in its development, and wish her every success with her work at Founder's College at Butler University. However, we leave the final words to Carolyn:

"I believe in access and learning. I choose joy every single day in this work regardless of what comes. When you choose joy there's just passion for the future. There's a vision, you're not stuck, you're solving for things not yet solved, things not yet defined as challenges, with people you soon befriend for a lifetime."



ECR CORNER

Early career researchers and doctoral students engaged in a series of events at the INSA 2024 conference, including speed networking, a dinner at New Orleans' Copper Vine restaurant, and a robust round table discussion. Those in attendance expressed a strong interest in establishing a formal network for ongoing connection. We are pleased to announce that INSA is creating a network for all research students and early career researchers, aimed at providing opportunities for collaboration, networking, and sharing of experiences. Keep an eye out for the next edition of INStAnt for details of how to become involved, or please email ameade@deakin.edu.au to be notified directly when these details are finalised.



Spotlight on Research



Frontiers Research Topic

Education Not Cancelled: Pathways from absence to post-secondary education

Edited by INSA members Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, Chris Kearney, David Heyne, and Catriona O'Toole

This special issue has published seven articles examining college pathways for students who have experienced school attendance challenges during primary or secondary school. The issue has received over 14,000 article views and has been downloaded over 2,000 times.

[Read the issue here](#)

Featured Article

Secondary school students' perspectives on supports for overcoming school attendance problems: a qualitative case study in Germany

Chiara Enderle, Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg, Asa Backlund, Joakim Isaksson, Ulf Fredriksson, and Heinrich Ricking

The study explores school attendance problems (SAPs) in Germany, focusing on students' perspectives and support systems within schools. Using qualitative methods, it identifies various factors contributing to SAPs, such as mental health issues, peer relationships, and family dynamics. The research adopts ecological systems theory to analyze the interplay between individual, micro-, and macro-level influences on attendance. Protective measures like positive teacher-student relationships, supportive school climates, and systemic interventions are emphasised. The findings advocate for holistic, context-sensitive strategies to address SAPs, moving beyond punitive measures to foster student engagement and resilience.

[Read the article here](#)

Upcoming Frontiers Research Topic

Addressing Emotionally Based School Avoidance: Strategies for supporting children and adolescents struggling with school attendance

Edited by Joanna Anderson and INSA members Carolina Gonzalvez and Trude Havik

This special issue is currently open for submissions for manuscripts (evidence synthesis and primary qualitative and quantitative research) focusing on:

- Individual, family, and school-level risk factors for emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)
- Development and evaluation of programs and interventions addressing EBSA
- Measures assessing the reasons for school non-attendance

Submit a manuscript to this Research Topic

Manuscript Summary Submission Deadline 15 December 2024

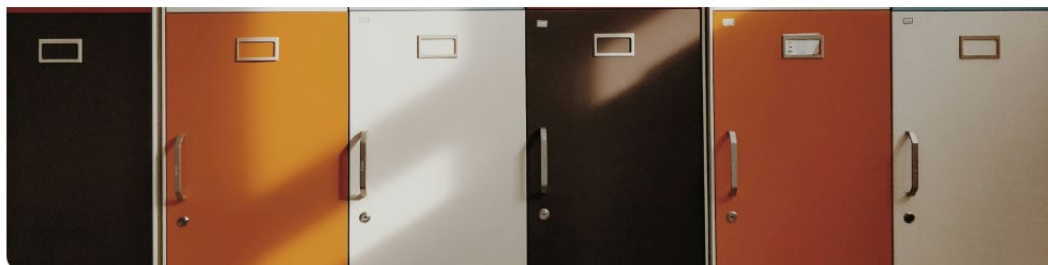
Manuscript Submission Deadline 31 March 2025

Resource Hub: What's new?

Looking for a questionnaire to help with understanding school attendance problems? Check out the '[Resources](#)' page on the new INSA website!

Questionnaires

Here you can find questionnaires which are used to understand school attendance problems. We are including translations to other languages as they become available. If you have a questionnaire you would like to share, please contact INSA: info@insa.network.



Inventory of School Attendance Problems (ISAP)

–

School Refusal Evaluation (SCREEN)

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School Non-Attendance Checklist (SNACK)

+

School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS)

+

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for School Situations (SEQ-SS)

+

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