



**Talanoa  
Ako**

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# **PISA for Pacific parents and schools**

*Tama a le 'ele'ele, sa'ili malō*



## Acknowledgments

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## Foreword

Literacy is the ability to listen, speak, read, write, and think critically in any language.<sup>1</sup> *The New Zealand Curriculum* states that “Literacy in English gives students access to the understanding, knowledge, and skills they need to participate fully in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of New Zealand and the wider world.”<sup>2</sup> However, academic achievement and informed citizenship are not the only benefits of reading literacy. Research also shows that reading increases empathy and social skills and improves health and wellbeing.<sup>3</sup>

For Pacific learners, literacy in their Pacific languages is beneficial.<sup>4</sup> This is because, for them, successful learning is founded on their language, values, and cultures.<sup>5</sup> Most Pacific learners are bilingual and can use both English and their heritage language in curriculum learning. Being bilingual enables Pacific learners to participate, engage, and achieve in education and contribute fully to New Zealand’s social, cultural, and economic growth. In New Zealand and around the world, these goals are all recognised as critical for the future.

PISA’s definition of reading literacy is consistent with the above goals and recognition. PISA defines reading literacy as “understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.”<sup>6</sup> This definition is broader than simply decoding information and literal comprehension. It implies that reading literacy involves understanding, using, and reflecting on written information in a range of situations. It also suggests that reading literacy involves the awareness of and the ability to use a variety of appropriate strategies when processing texts.

The PISA findings highlighted in this resource demonstrate that students’ reading habits can affect their performance in reading-related activities. The types of learning strategies that students adopt in these activities can further influence their performance and determine whether they are engaging in deep or surface-level learning. The findings make clear that students who are highly engaged in a wide range of reading activities and who use learning strategies that facilitate deeper levels of learning are more likely to perform well at school.

<sup>1</sup> <https://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Effective-Literacy-Practice-Years-5-8>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/English/Why-study-English>

<sup>3</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/284286/reading\\_for\\_pleasure.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284286/reading_for_pleasure.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://ero.govt.nz/about-us/our-strategies/pacific-strategy-2019-2022>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ero.govt.nz/about-us/our-strategies/pacific-strategy-2019-2022>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.acer.org/files/PISA\\_Thematic\\_Report\\_-\\_Reading\\_-\\_web.pdf](https://www.acer.org/files/PISA_Thematic_Report_-_Reading_-_web.pdf)

## WHAT IS PISA?

Created by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international standardised study that assesses and compares how well countries are preparing their fifteen-year-old students to meet real-life opportunities and challenges. Since 2000, PISA has been administered every three years.

The findings from PISA provide New Zealand's education decision makers with a robust and independent source of information. They measure progress against our goal of building a world-leading education system that equips all New Zealanders with the skills for success and informed citizenship in the modern world. PISA also provides international benchmarks that we can use to evaluate the performance of our students and education system.

## WHAT DOES PISA ASSESS?

PISA assesses three key areas of knowledge and skills: reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy. The focus of PISA 2018 was reading. During the exam, students also completed an extensive background questionnaire.

In New Zealand, PISA is administered in the English language only, which contradicts the Ministry of Education's goal to emphasise reading literacy in all Pacific languages to empower Pacific learners and revitalise Pacific languages.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, it undermines research findings that confirm that maintaining the development of a home language, such as Pacific languages for Pacific learners, is highly beneficial for literacy development in English.<sup>8</sup>

## WHO PARTICIPATES IN PISA?

Around 600,000 fifteen-year-old students from seventy-nine countries, including all thirty-seven OECD countries, participated in PISA 2018. In New Zealand, almost 62,000 students from 194 schools took part in the main study. Students and schools were randomly selected. In the exam, students were free to identify with as many ethnic groups as they wished. All students who identified with Pacific groups, even if they also chose another ethnicity, were included in this analysis.

This resource presents the key findings from PISA 2018 for the reading performance of all students who identified as Pacific.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/the-statement-of-national-education-and-learning-priorities-nelp-and-the-tertiary-education-strategy-tes/government-actions-in-early-learning/raising-achievement-for-pacific-learners/#sh-pacific%20community>

<sup>8</sup> <https://assets.education.govt.nz/public/Literacy-and-Maths-strategy-development-in-2021/Shifting-the-dial-Full-document.pdf>



## Introduction

Assessment is one way for teachers to find out what our children know, and what they need to know, so they can make informed decisions about what to teach. However, assessments such as PISA also have political ties as they are a way to identify national shortcomings in terms of education.

PISA was designed to assist governments to monitor the outcomes of their education systems in terms of learner achievement. It is conducted internationally to allow governments to assess how learners in their countries perform compared to learners in other countries. In this way, PISA helps governments to understand and enhance the effectiveness of their education systems and to learn from other countries' practices.

However, the narrowly defined focus of PISA makes it problematic for our Pacific learners. This is because PISA is conducted to serve the views and realities of others, such as the government, and is applied with little or no recognition of the diversity of Pacific learners. This inequity is manifested in the disparity between Pacific learners' cultures, languages, knowledge, values, and worldviews and those expected to pass the PISA test. Hence, comparisons drawn from PISA results are inequitable and linked to the prolonged stigmatisation of Pacific learners as "failures" in New Zealand's overall achievement data. This is the unquestioned power of assessments that we ought to be aware of.





## TOFĀ‘A‘ANOLASI: HOME AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Tofā‘a‘anolasi is a methodology recently created as part of a PhD study that examined standardised reading assessments in New Zealand primary schools.<sup>9</sup>

Tofā‘a‘anolasi is “the wisdom to identify and critique the many and deep meanings of texts, practices and systems from a Pacific perspective.” The use of Tofā‘a‘anolasi in the study mentioned above gave the experts who write the assessments, the teachers who administer the assessments, and the Pacific learners who take the assessments, the chance to critique the assessment papers as well as the assessment system.

The Tofā‘a‘anolasi methodology empowers Pacific voices to question assumptions that have been accepted as truth while, at the same time, seeking to uphold Pacific solutions, processes, and knowledge. It accepts the Pacific notion that knowledge, truth, and value lie in the wisdom of the collective.<sup>10</sup> At the micro level, Tofā‘a‘anolasi examines language use, verbal interaction, and communication. At the macro level, Tofā‘a‘anolasi looks at power, dominance, and inequality.

In this resource, the Tofā‘a‘anolasi approach reveals how the PISA assessment enacts and reproduces power and inequality in the school context. It does so by asking:

- » How are Pacific learners positioned in PISA assessments?
- » What assumptions are made about Pacific learners in the PISA assessments?
- » What are the implications of these assumptions for Pacific learners?

Tofā‘a‘anolasi gives participants in PISA assessments a voice and enables conversations between Pacific learners, their parents, families, communities, and teachers, to collectively construct the knowledge necessary to navigate a way forward for Pacific learners’ and their fight for freedom.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131857.2016.1232645>

<sup>10</sup> Anae, M., Coxon, E., Mara, D., Wendt-Samu, T., & Finau, C. (2001). *Pasifika education research guidelines*. Auckland: Auckland Uniservices Limited

## About this resource

The title “Tama a le ‘ele‘ele, sa‘ili malō” is a Samoan sentence that means “children of the land, fight for freedom.” The title was chosen to represent our Pacific learners and their learning journey. “Tama a le ‘ele‘ele” contends that our Pacific learners be recognised and appreciated as children of this Pacific land of Aotearoa New Zealand. This recognition and appreciation grants them the right to the quality teaching and support they need succeed at school, have better futures, and become good citizens. This resource highlights the urgency for a partnership between home and school to support our Pacific learners’ reading literacy achievement.

The resource is framed around the key themes that are the PISA questions from the learners’ questionnaire. In each theme is a graphic presentation of data. There are also generalised statements explaining the data, which mostly relate to the learners’ achievement.

This resource consists of ideas and activities parents, families, schools, and teachers can use to empower Pacific learners to keep doing their best at school. This resource is designed to be used with learners of any age, unless specified. It is also intended to be pragmatic to:

- » empower Pacific learners to have positive attitudes towards reading
- » empower Pacific learners with the knowledge of the most efficient and effective strategies to enable, accelerate, and advance their learning
- » empower parents to support their children’s learning effectively
- » empower teachers to cater effectively for the learning needs of our Pacific learners.

This resource builds on the many resources designed to cater for the learning needs of Pacific learners. These include the Pacific Education Plan,<sup>11</sup> Pasifika Compass,<sup>12</sup> Tulai Mai,<sup>13</sup> Pasifika Early Literacy Project,<sup>14</sup> Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika (LEAP),<sup>15</sup> and Pasifika Education Community.<sup>16</sup> All these resources are available on the Ministry of Education website, Te Kete Ipurangi.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/action-plan-for-pacific-education-2020-2030/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://teachingcouncil.nz/resource-centre/tapasa/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/NZC-Updates/Issue-27-November-2012>

<sup>14</sup> <https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/en/teaching-strategies-and-resources/communication/pasifika-early-literacy-project/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/LEAP>

<sup>16</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Media-gallery/Effective-teaching-for-Pasifika-students>

<sup>17</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/>

## TALANOA AKO GUIDED RESOURCES

- » This resource is part of a set of Talanoa Ako Guided Resources intended to support parents, families, and communities to actively participate in equitable partnerships with early learning services and schools, and to work together to support their children's learning progression and achievement. These resources are also available on the Ministry of Education website, Te Kete Ipurangi, and will be available for schools from Down the Back of the Chair.<sup>18</sup> The Ministry of Education is currently working on a literacy and mathematics strategy, which is due for release in 2022.

## WAYS TO USE THIS RESOURCE

The ideas and activities in this resource are written in plain English and are realistic and doable at home and in the classroom. Some of the activities are accompanied by an explanation of what to do, what to say, and why.

Parents and teachers can use these ideas whenever they see fit. Parent-led activities are for use at home, except for a few ideas that can be used in places such as local libraries. Teacher-led ideas and activities are for before reading, during reading, and after reading.

At the end of each section are questions to help parents and teachers reflect on the support they are providing to learners. There are also links to resources that parents and teachers can access for further support.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.thechair.co.nz/login/moe-thechair>



GAVIN  
BISHOP

Big  
books

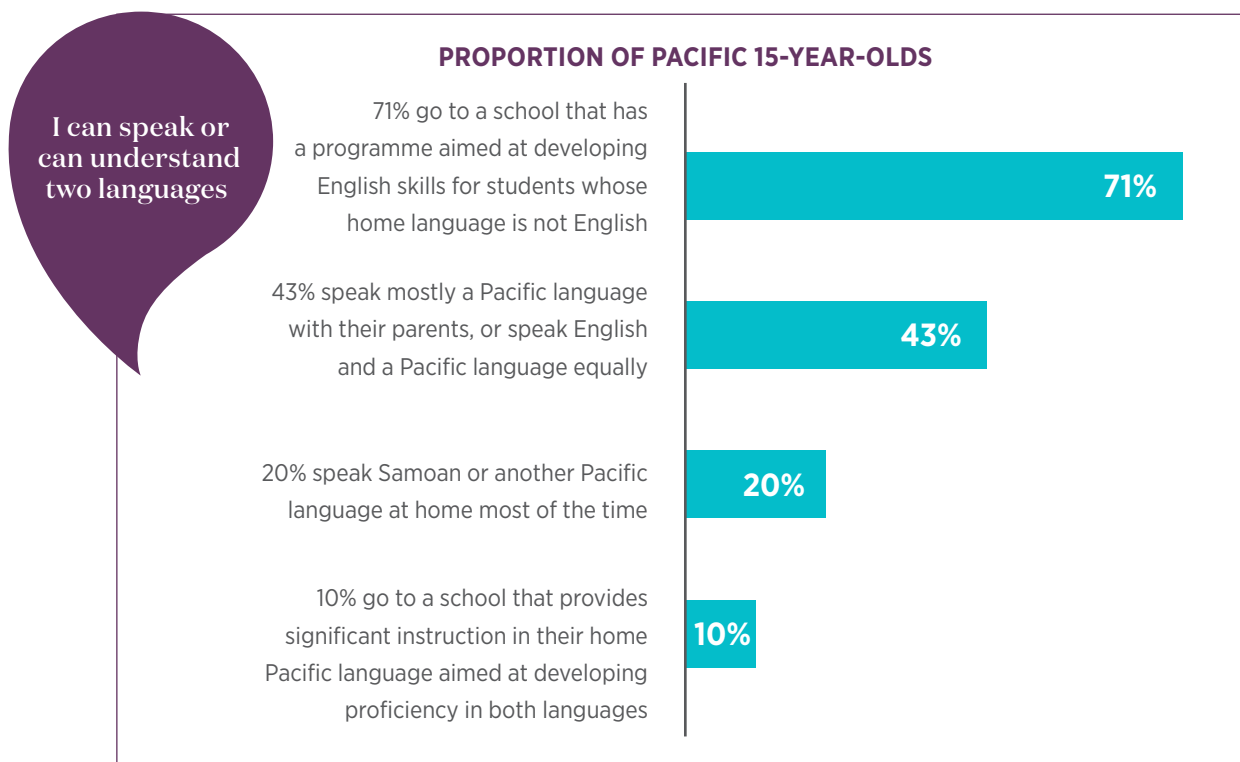
# THE PLANETS

ANDREW COHEN WITH  
PROFESSOR BRIAN COX

# Are Pacific students' languages being valued and affirmed?

## MANY LEARNERS COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR PARENTS IN MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE

Figure 1: Pacific learners' language experiences at home and at school



### WHAT THE DATA ARE TELLING US

- » Many students communicate in English both in and out of school.
- » Many students communicate with their parents in more than one language.
- » Many students receive support to develop their English language skills before and while attending regular classes.
- » A small proportion of students are supported at school to use their home language to (1) access the curriculum and (2) develop their ability to communicate in their home language and English.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

Research suggests that our children can benefit from using two languages at school.<sup>19</sup> Pacific learners have also expressed the importance of using their home language to learn mainstream subjects such as science and maths before presenting their answers in the English language expected in the classroom.<sup>20</sup> It is vital that we stay positive and appreciate the effort our children put into learning in multiple languages.

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.academia.edu/29054019/Translanguaging\\_in\\_the\\_Bilingual\\_Classroom\\_A\\_Pedagogy\\_for\\_Learning\\_and\\_Teaching?from=cover\\_page](https://www.academia.edu/29054019/Translanguaging_in_the_Bilingual_Classroom_A_Pedagogy_for_Learning_and_Teaching?from=cover_page)

<sup>20</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Media-gallery/Language-enhancing-the-achievement-of-Pasifika-LEAP/Being-bilingual>

## BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education refers to situations in which learners can study subjects such as reading, writing, and mathematics in their first or stronger language while they are acquiring proficiency in English. This approach is beneficial to Pacific learners as it provides content area instruction in a language they understand so that learning does not have to be postponed until they master the English language of the classroom.<sup>21</sup>

## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- » Speak in your first language. Watch movies and read books and discuss them in your first language. Use your first language at mealtimes, family outings, and family celebrations. Stay in touch with family and friends by talking with them on social media.
- » During evening prayer time, sing hymns in your first language and read the Bible as a family (you could read 5 sentences at a time). Instead of telling children about the sentences they have read, ask them to interpret and share their understanding. Discuss (e.g., ask children to explain their understanding of the read sentences). Summarise (e.g., ask children to retell the read sentences in their own words). Talk about the author's message (e.g., ask children to explain what God wants us to know from the read sentences). Discuss the author's purpose for writing the sentences (e.g., ask children to think about how they can apply the learning from these sentences to their everyday lives).
- » For homework, discuss the assignment, new vocabulary, and instructions in your first language. Help your children complete the assignment in English.

## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » It is important to know your learners. Some Pacific learners are literate in their home languages, so it is important to capitalise on this strength and encourage the use of a trans-lingual and bilingual approach. Put learners who have the same home languages in groups to work on tasks in class.
- » Allow learners to discuss and understand topics in their home language. Teach reading comprehension skills and strategies in English, but allow learners to discuss reading strategies, concepts, and their understanding of texts in their home language.
- » Have reading resources (fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, newspapers, comic books, etc.) in your learners' home languages available in your classroom library.<sup>22</sup> Encourage learners to read materials in both their home language and English. Encourage learners to take the books home to read with their families.
- » Make time to read silently in class. Learners should see their teacher reading (silently and passionately) a book in their home language in class. Make time to talk briefly about the books read each week. This will give (1) the learners a purpose for reading and (2) the teacher an idea of the level of understanding learners have of the reading materials.
- » Plan reading activities that require learners to draw on their own experiences and knowledge of local communities. This includes having reading materials about indigenous Pacific knowledges in your classroom for learners to read and learn from.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13670050208667764>

<sup>22</sup> <https://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Pasifika-dual-language-books>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika/5079>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » How can we as a family help our children speak in our home and first language?
- » How can I overcome the problem that my children are not fluent in my first language?
- » How can my child succeed when they are fluent only in their home language?
- » Does it help if I teach my child reading skills in my home language?
- » Are all teachers in my child's school aware of the benefits of bilingual education?
- » How is the school catering for my child's need to learn in two languages?
- » My child can understand my first language but can only respond in English. How can I help them understand and respond confidently in both?
- » Are there any community support groups that can help me help my child?
- » Is it possible for my child, who is fluent in their Pacific language only, to have a support person to translate for them in exams?
- » I try to explain things to my child in English. Does my level of English have an impact on my child's reading and learning?

### FOR TEACHERS

- » Am I aware of how my learners' background knowledge and experiences affect their ability to engage effectively with texts?
- » How am I using my learners' home languages to create opportunities and pathways for learning?
- » What do I know about bilingualism? How can I use this awareness to help plan for my learners' learning?
- » What research is available to help me convince my learners' parents to speak in their first language at home for the sake of their children's learning?
- » What are my own assumptions about my learners' home/first language, culture, and knowledge?
- » In what ways am I allowing my own assumptions to influence the decisions I make in class?
- » What are the effects of my decisions on my learners and their learning?
- » Is our school advocating effectively for our Pacific learners' need for a bilingual approach to learning?
- » What can I learn from specialist ESOL teachers to help me cater for my Pacific learners' learning needs?
- » Have I given parents and communities realistic and doable ideas to promote and engage in bilingual tasks at home?

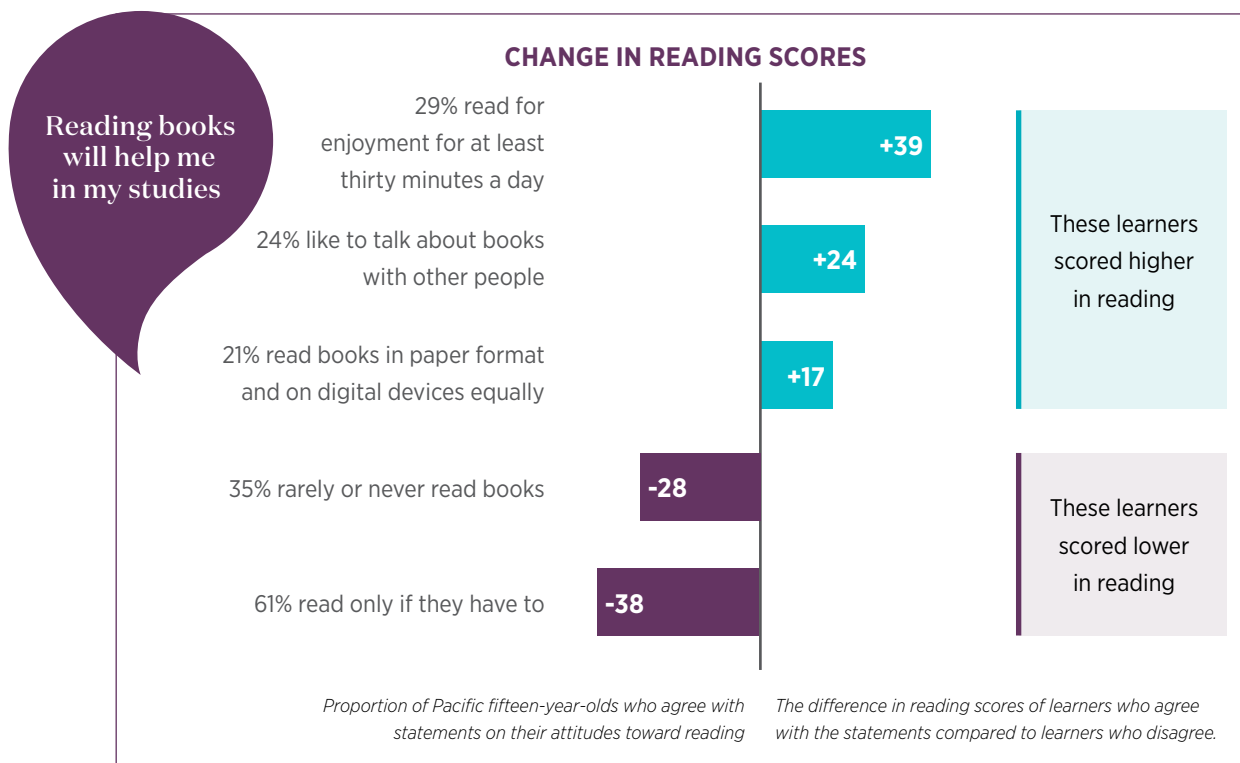




# Are we fostering our Pacific learners' enjoyment of reading?

**LEARNERS WHO READ FOR ENJOYMENT AND DISCUSS BOOKS WITH OTHERS SCORED HIGHER IN READING THAN THOSE WHO DO NOT**

Figure 2: Pacific learners' attitudes to reading and its relationship with achievement



## WHAT THE DATA ARE TELLING US

- » Students who enjoy reading have higher reading scores.
- » Students who read and understand multiple types of texts have higher reading scores.
- » Students who read texts on both digital and paper formats have higher reading scores.
- » Students who read for enjoyment for at least thirty minutes a day have higher reading scores.

## WHERE TO NEXT?

Pacific learners need to read more from an early age, for both enjoyment and information. As a community, we need to understand and promote the importance

of reading. Reading materials can be in the learner's first/home language, English, or both. According to research, learners can benefit from bilingualism and bilingual education.<sup>24</sup>

At school, it can be challenging to get our most reluctant readers (who are often lower achievers and vulnerable learners) to read. Empowering them to enjoy reading is a difficult job, but it is important that we keep encouraging them to see and believe in the importance of reading. As teachers, we need to reflect on what we are doing in the classroom to make reading for Pacific learners not just a requirement but normal and interesting.

<sup>24</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/LEAP/Being-bilingual>

## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- » Talk to your children about the importance of reading (e.g., for school, church, jobs, family matters, social life).
- » Make reading part of your children's homework and study routine.
- » Make time to read and talk with your children about what they read (such as books, newspapers, social media posts, the Bible, signs and notices around the community, contents of products at the supermarket).
- » Have your children join the local library to get books and reading materials they want to read (which are now available in paper, digital, and audio formats).<sup>25</sup>
- » Arrange for key people in the community, such as church ministers, sports leaders, local librarians, and local members of parliament to speak on the importance of reading. They can also lead and be involved in setting up activities that promote and maintain reading in the community.
- » Make reading a deliberate focus of your church community (e.g., dedicate time for children to read on Sunday, before or after church). Encourage children to read and provide reading materials in languages other than English.
- » Be involved in church literacy programmes such as Reading Together<sup>26</sup> and Talanoa Ako.<sup>27</sup>
- » For some parents who do not read, make time to sit down with your children and tell them stories about family, history, adventures, etc. for them to learn from.
- » Consistently praise your children for the effort they put into reading.

<sup>25</sup> <https://natlib.govt.nz/librarians/te-puna/te-puna-search>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.readingtogether.net.nz/reading-together.html>

<sup>27</sup> <https://gazette.education.govt.nz/articles/powerup-programme-boosts-pacific-students-learning/>

## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » Hold regular discussions with learners and families to promote the need to read at school (e.g., for future careers and pathways). Invite guest speakers to talk to your learners about the importance of reading and especially about their own experience(s) of falling in love with reading. Guest speakers could be a successful reader (and high achiever) in the school, a respected role model in the community, and/or a reading ambassador.<sup>28</sup>
- » Match the texts to the learners' interests and abilities. Allow learners to choose reading materials. Ask learners to list features of books they consider "cool" (e.g., title, cover design, typography, illustrations, storyline, film tie-in, etc.). The books can be in written, digital, or audio formats. This can help you identify and get the books the most "reluctant" readers may/wish to read.
- » Have all types of texts (such as novels, newspapers, brochures, etc.) in different Pacific languages available in the library corner for learners to read.
- » Make Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) compulsory and fun for everyone, including you, the teacher. Choose the best time of the day to have it. Provide rewards.
- » Encourage learners to read longer texts (such as novels). Run fun class competitions based on books they read. Provide rewards – learners respond well to them.
- » Connect reading topics to your learners' current and real-life experiences (e.g., read about the history of Polyfest when it is Polyfest time, or the advantages and disadvantages of social media, since social media has become part of their culture).<sup>29</sup>
- » Encourage a collaborative model of reading in your class, where learners cooperate to enjoy a reading task without necessarily completing it.<sup>30</sup>
- » Emphasise "task goals" to empower learners to take risks and make mistakes so they are not shy to read. These should be learning and "performance" goals. This can help learners raise their self-efficacy as well.
- » Build on learners' interest in digital technology.<sup>31</sup> Provide opportunities for learners to read and respond to texts online.
- » Scaffold struggling learners to acquire the strategies and skills to understand what they read.<sup>32</sup> Learners need to understand what they read to be able to enjoy reading.
- » Be consistent with positive, descriptive feedback on your learners' comprehension, skills, and effort.

<sup>28</sup> <https://natlib.govt.nz/about-us/collaborative-projects/new-zealand-reading-ambassador>

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272998596\\_Exploring\\_the\\_Potential\\_Benefits\\_of\\_Using\\_Social\\_Media\\_in\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272998596_Exploring_the_Potential_Benefits_of_Using_Social_Media_in_Education)

<sup>30</sup> <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.970.291&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <https://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Inclusive-practice/Supporting-Pacific-learners>

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Education. (2005). *Guided Reading: Years 5 to 8*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media (pages 62–63 for more possible ways to address reading difficulties).



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » Have I talked to my child's teacher about how I can support their reading at home?
- » How am I encouraging my child to spend time reading a variety of books at home?
- » How often do I go to libraries and book shops with my younger children?
- » What makes taking my child to the local library easy/difficult?
- » What can I do so my family can have time to read books for enjoyment?
- » What other support can I get from our local library to help my child's reading?
- » Am I able to model the importance of reading? How?
- » What can I do to join a community that can support my child's reading?
- » What activities could we do together to support reading?
- » How can I ask my church minister or people in my community to support reading and literacy?

### FOR TEACHERS

- » What other resources can I use in class to boost learners' enjoyment of reading?
- » How else can I support my learners to enjoy reading?
- » How am I encouraging my learners to read and enjoy reading?
- » How am I supporting my learners' parents to foster reading enjoyment at home?
- » How am I incorporating texts with Pacific knowledge, language, experiences, and worldviews to help build my learners' enjoyment of reading?
- » How am I making sure that my assumptions about my learners are not affecting my teaching?
- » Am I actively using Tapasā<sup>33</sup> in my classroom?
- » Am I aware of any quality online resources to help boost my learners' enjoyment of reading?
- » Have I talked to my learners' parents about support available in the community to help their children at home?
- » Is what I'm doing working? How do I know? What are my next learning steps?

<sup>33</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Tapasā>



**SCIENCE FACTORY**

**NO FLIGHT**

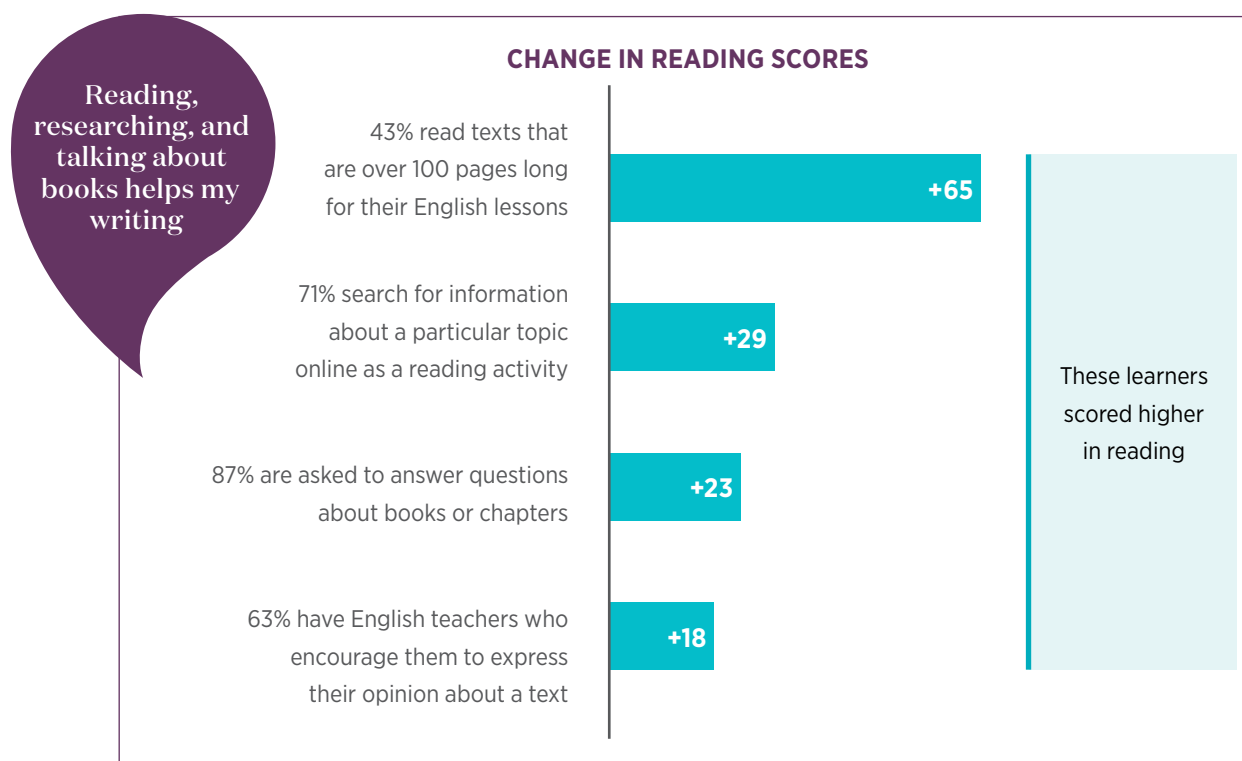
of air. You can't see it, but you can feel it  
you. Read on and find out why air moves  
there we use air in the

...in the world of air  
...and windfalls  
...you need to do  
...explaining the  
...with each project  
...and explanations  
...illustrations.

## Are Pacific students being given opportunities to engage with texts and reading tasks that develop their reading literacy skills?

LEARNERS WHO ARE GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO READ TEXTS, RESEARCH ONLINE, AND DISCUSS WITH OTHERS SCORED HIGHER IN READING THAN THOSE WHO ARE NOT

Figure 3: Pacific learners' opportunity to learn and its relationship with achievement



### WHAT THE DATA ARE TELLING US

- » Students who read longer (continuous) texts have higher reading scores.
- » Students who are asked questions about a book or chapter have higher reading scores.
- » Students who spend more time on quality reading have higher reading scores.
- » Students who use the internet to find information have higher reading scores.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

To become good readers, learners need to read both at home and in the classroom. At home, parents can support reading by building on what learners are studying at school and by making reading an important, normal, and regular feature of family life. In the classroom, learners can engage in quality reading with reading activities that enable them to apply learnt reading skills and strategies. It is vital to align the follow-up activities with learners' interests and abilities.

## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

### For younger children

Read to and with your child. As you read, ask your child to predict what might happen next in a story. Ask who, what, where, when, and why questions about the books (e.g., What is the story about? Who is the important person in the story? Why is that person important? Where did the story take place? How do you know? What is the writer trying to tell us in this story?).

- » Ask your child about books being read at school and be familiar with them to extend conversations.
- » Talk about how the illustrations and text in a book support each other. When reading stories, illustrations can help readers to visualise the people, places, and events in the story. Illustrations also help readers see what the words describe.
- » Talk with your child when you go to the library about how to pick out books of interest at an appropriate reading level.

### For older children

- » Provide time, a quiet space, writing materials, and electronic devices for your children to read and do schoolwork on.
- » Insist on your children reading a chapter book for at least thirty minutes a day (on paper or in digital or audio format).
- » Make time to ask about what your children read (e.g., What is the author saying in the story? What have you learnt from it? How useful is that text to you as a student?).
- » Always praise your children for reading and trying their best.





## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » Make fun follow-up reading activities for learners to do, to apply their learnt skills and knowledge of reading strategies, on their own (in class or at home). For example, a reading research project can give learners the chance to (1) read widely both digital and paper materials (2) apply their skills in locating key and important ideas and (3) summarise ideas in their own words. An example of a task is an A-Z project, where learners:
  - › work their way from A through to Z; choose a topic they are interested in, (e.g., the Alphabet, Body piercing, Covid-19, Down Syndrome, etc.)
  - › brainstorm what they know and what they want to know
  - › read the internet, books, newspapers, brochures, and magazines to find answers to their questions
  - › present their findings to the class;
  - › self- and peer-evaluate their work and progress.
- » Use social media in class activities.<sup>34</sup>
- » Make up resources for learners to use to enhance their reading ability and enjoyment.<sup>35</sup> These can include laminated questions to develop learners' thinking skills. For example:
  - › To critique written texts: (What is the purpose of the text? How is the text organised to achieve its purpose? Who is the intended audience? Is it fiction or non-fiction? How do you know? What do the pictures suggest? What do the words suggest? Who benefits from this text? What view of the world is the text presenting? How does the text depict age, gender, culture? How are the adults and/or children portrayed in this text? What kind of language is used in the text? Do you agree with the author's position? Why/why not? What strategy is the author using to strengthen their position or point of view? What is missing from the text?).<sup>36</sup>
- » To help your learners engage in longer texts; have a list of simple questions they can reflect on as they read (Recommended questions help learners to know, comprehend, apply their knowledge, analyse, and evaluate texts).
- » Other follow up tasks learners can do based on what they read include: book reviews; consequence charts; timelines; before and after charts; flowcharts; plus, minus, interesting charts; predict and check charts; word search; cloze activities; word clines; word match; sequence and reconstruct texts; character studies; character hot seat; concept maps; three-level reading guides; scaffolded note taking; comparing texts; distinguishing between facts and opinions; generating questions about the texts; identifying key words; identifying main ideas; comparing different views of texts; and writing letters to the authors with own opinions of the texts.

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rdouan-Faizi/publication/272998596\\_Exploring\\_the\\_Potential\\_Benefits\\_of\\_Using\\_Social\\_Media\\_in\\_Education/links/5598ab7708ae5d8f3933f9ab/Exploring-the-Potential-Benefits-of-Using-Social-Media-in-Education.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rdouan-Faizi/publication/272998596_Exploring_the_Potential_Benefits_of_Using_Social_Media_in_Education/links/5598ab7708ae5d8f3933f9ab/Exploring-the-Potential-Benefits-of-Using-Social-Media-in-Education.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> <https://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Resources-for-planning/ESOL-teaching-strategies/Reading>

<sup>36</sup> <https://jalt-publications.org/sites/default/files/pdf-article/jalt2017-pcp-026.pdf>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » Have I talked to my child's teacher about how I can support their reading at home?
- » How am I encouraging my child to spend time reading a variety of books at home?
- » How often do I go to libraries and book shops with my younger children?
- » What makes taking my child to the local library easy/difficult?
- » What can I do so my family can have time to read books for enjoyment?
- » What other support can I get from our local library to help my child's reading?
- » Am I able to model the importance of reading? How?
- » What can I do to join a community that can support my child's reading?
- » What activities could we do together to support reading?
- » How can I ask my church minister or people in my community to support reading and literacy?

### FOR TEACHERS

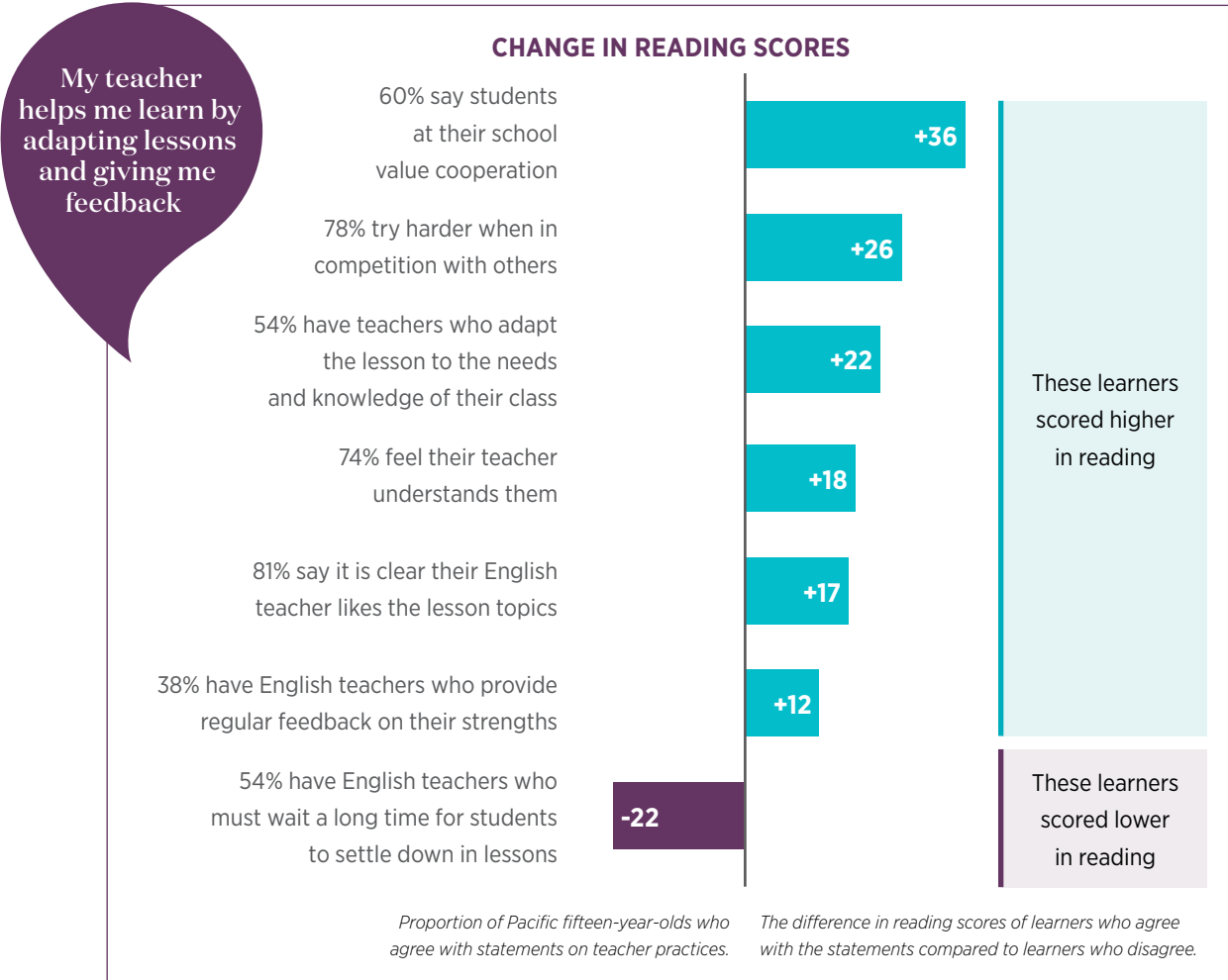
- » What skills do the learners have that will facilitate their capacity to engage with curriculum and assessment tasks?
- » How am I setting up the learners to succeed?
- » What evidence have I got to show that my teaching is working? Are the learners learning?
- » How am I encouraging learners to read critically, analyse, and synthesise ideas?
- » What effect is the "ability to apply reading strategies" having on my learners' reading achievement?
- » Have I considered learners' interests in the follow-up tasks and activities?
- » Am I using the internet effectively in my classroom?
- » How am I encouraging learners to read longer texts in class?
- » How do I know the follow-up tasks and activities are effective to develop the learners' reading skills?
- » Where else can I get support? (How can I join TESOLANZ<sup>37</sup> for extra support?)

<sup>37</sup> Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Aotearoa New Zealand, <https://www.tesolanz.org.nz/>

# Are Pacific students' teachers using effective teaching practices for reading?

**LEARNERS WHOSE TEACHERS PROMOTE COOPERATION AND COMPETITION, ADAPT LESSONS, REGULARLY GIVE FEEDBACK, AND UNDERSTAND THEIR STUDENTS SCORED HIGHER IN READING**

Figure 4: Teaching practices and their relationship with achievement



## WHAT THE DATA ARE TELLING US

- » Students who receive emotional support in class have higher reading scores.
- » Students who compete and cooperate with others have higher reading scores.
- » Differentiated planning is associated with high reading scores.
- » Building on students' previous learning is associated with high reading scores.
- » Consistent and constructive feedback is associated to high reading scores.
- » Teachers' enthusiasm for both teaching and how students learn affects students' reading scores.
- » Difficult in-class working conditions (because of loud noise and disorder, teachers waiting for students, students waiting for teachers) are associated with low reading scores.

## WHERE TO NEXT?

At home, our children need to see and believe that we are with them in the learning process. We can start by supporting them to read and develop a love of reading. We can also help by finding out from their teachers how we can support our children at home.

It is important for teachers to support families to reinforce learning at home. If families want to know how they can support at home, teachers should be able to give them constructive information, including prompting questions to ask their children.

In the classroom, it is important that teachers regularly reflect on their own teaching practices. Ask your yourself what you could do differently to make reading fun and easy for learners and to differentiate your planning and teaching to cater for the diverse and changing needs of your learners. It is also important that you engage with and learn from learning conversations and peer observations.



## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- » Show enthusiasm for what your children are learning at school (e.g., pop into their study space to say hello, take them a drink, ask about school, ask about NCEA credits; know what they are studying at school, know when the assignments are due, insist on having conversation time, and make time to hear your child read the assignment to you and see the work before it is submitted; ask about what they need – perhaps a tutor?).
- » Talk to your children about the challenges of school. Respond appropriately to any issues they may share. Make time to attend your children’s 3-way conference. At the 3-way conference, ask appropriate questions – e.g., How is my child doing? Is my child engaged in reading? If not, why is my child not engaged? If your child did not pass an assessment, ask why.
- » Was my child ready for this assessment? Will my child be given the chance to resubmit? If not, why not? What are the next learning steps for my child? What can I do at home to help? Your voice as parents is powerful. You must speak up for your children: no one else will.
- » Communicate regularly with your child’s teacher to know your child’s progress and how you can support them at home.
- » Be proactive. As a community, develop your own literacy programmes to support your children’s reading and seek funding (from organisations such as the Pacific Education Support Fund,<sup>38</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Education).
- » Join programmes, initiatives, and events available in the community that can support reading.

<sup>38</sup> <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/action-plan-for-pacific-education/pacific-education-funds/pacific-education-support-fund/>

## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » Be prepared (this includes having resources ready). Have a “do now” list for (older) learners to work on as soon as they walk into the classroom; set firm and meaningful routines; have meaningful tasks that reinforce taught reading skills for fast finishers; make time to record both the good and concerning effort and behaviour on school systems such as KAMAR; give learners desirable reasons to do the work (e.g., for NCEA credits).
- » Be consistent with proactive discipline. Learners need to see that consequences for problem behaviours are logical. Be specific with feedback and feed forward. Focus on skills, expectations, and attitudes (e.g., “I like how you ... your next learning step is ...”). Learners need to know about how they are doing and how they could do better.<sup>39</sup>
- » Be consistent with marking. Comment on skills and effort. Make time at the beginning of lessons to go over marking and comments with learners. Give learners the chance to respond to the feedback and comments. This is the chance for them to reflect on own learning and the best way forward.
- » Be consistent with formative assessment to identify the learners changing needs. This can be done through observation, taking anecdotal notes, talking with learners, analysing work samples, and from learners’ self-evaluations.<sup>40</sup>
- » Set high expectations of learners and provide the scaffolding to meet these.<sup>41</sup>
- » Set clear learning outcomes and success criteria. Learners need to know what the learning looks like before they start.<sup>42</sup>
- » Plan and prepare (1) before reading, (2) during reading, and (3) after reading expectations and activities for the diverse needs of learners.<sup>43</sup>
- » Teach learners how to read and understand all types of texts: description (e.g., process in a technical manual, catalogue, blog diary); narration (e.g., novel, comic strip, report in a newspaper); exposition (e.g., essay, entry in an online encyclopedia); argumentation (e.g., letter to the editor, posts in an online forum); instruction (e.g., recipe, instructions for operating software); transaction (e.g., personal letter to share news, text message to arrange meeting).
- » Discuss text structures, language features, dialogue conventions and connectives. Explain how the use of language reflects the purpose.
- » Encourage peer and group discussions of books so learners can learn from each other.
- » Set up class reading competition tasks. This can encourage learners to learn, use, and apply the learnt skills. It can also push learners to read and understand required subject content.

<sup>39</sup> <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/category/school-resources/classroom-management/>

<sup>40</sup> [https://pdf.truni.sk/e-ucebnice/iktv/data/media/iktvv/Symposium\\_LTML\\_Royce%20Sadler\\_BFormative\\_Assessment\\_and\\_the\\_design\\_of\\_instructional\\_systems.pdf](https://pdf.truni.sk/e-ucebnice/iktv/data/media/iktvv/Symposium_LTML_Royce%20Sadler_BFormative_Assessment_and_the_design_of_instructional_systems.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/category/school-resources/high-expectation-teaching/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Media-gallery/Effective-teaching-for-Pasifika-students/Learning-intentions>

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Education. (1996). *The learner as a reader: Developing Reading Programmes*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

- » Maintain good relationships with parents and build on parents' knowledge and cultural capacity.<sup>44</sup>
- » Build on learners' prior knowledge and interests.<sup>45</sup>
- » Provide consistent opportunities for learners to study unfamiliar English words they read in texts e.g., front-load topic/academic vocabulary; provide Y-charts of what each word looks, sounds, and feels like, and explain the different forms of each word).<sup>46</sup>
- » Encourage learners to work in online programs such as Education Perfect.<sup>47</sup>
- » Regularly reflect on your own teaching. What went well? What didn't? What changes do I need to make?<sup>48</sup>



<sup>44</sup> <https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-pacific-learners/create-a-welcoming-environment-where-parents-and-families-can-openly-discuss-concerns/>

<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Education. (1996). *The learner as a reader: Developing Reading Programmes*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

<sup>46</sup> <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ951842.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.educationperfect.com/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/NZC-Updates/Issue-27-November-2012>



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » Am I able to ask for evidence of my child's progress from their reading teacher?
- » How easy it is for me to contact the principal if the teacher is unresponsive?
- » Do I know how I can be involved in my child's learning?
- » Am I able to ask for homework that gives my child meaningful opportunities to practise and enhance their reading skills at home?
- » Is there a Talanoa Ako and/or Reading Together programme in my community I can attend?
- » Do I know what questions to ask schools to support my child's learning?
- » Do I know what literacy and reading support is available at school for my child if they need it?
- » Does the school have bilingual and Pacific reading resources for us to use if we want these?
- » Do I understand the importance of reading for my children and that it is my job to foster and grow this? Have I spoken to their teachers about how I can do this?
- » What questions do I ask the teacher to get support for the challenges my child is facing at school?

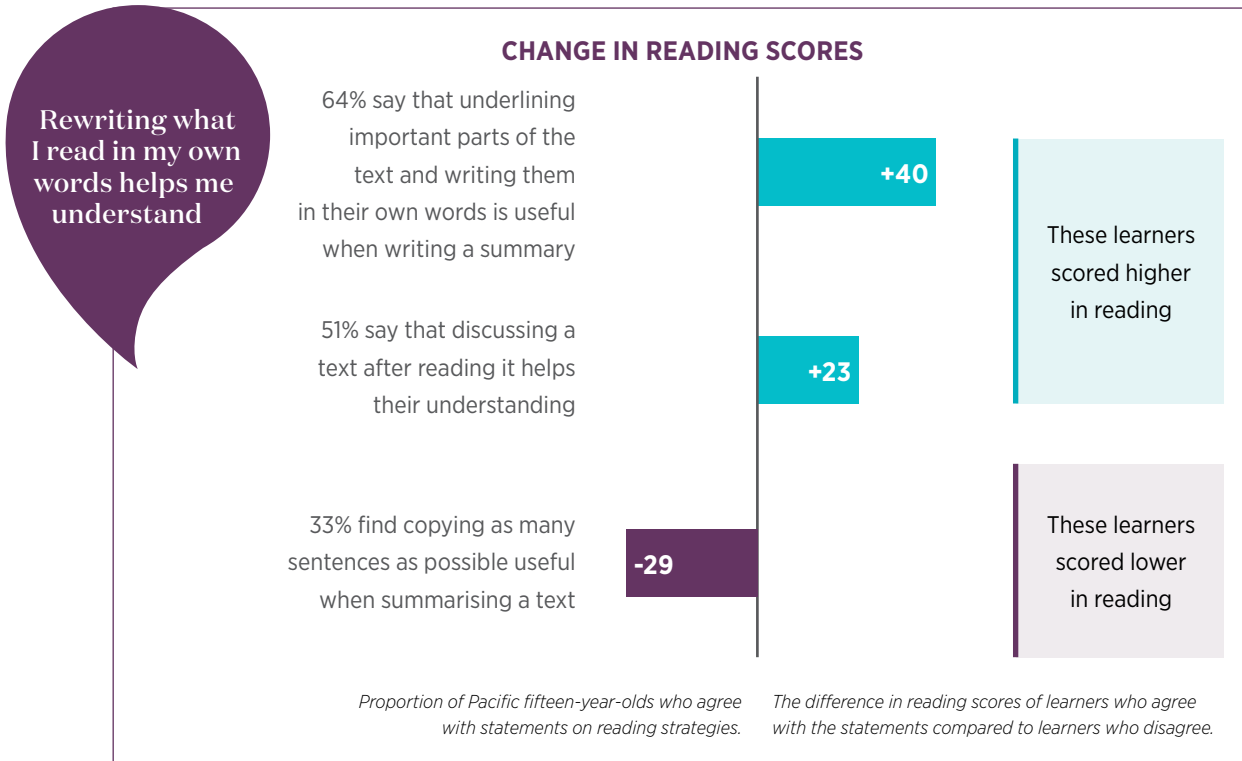
### FOR TEACHERS

- » What am I doing that is working and what is not? How can I make lessons engaging for learners?
- » What do I know about effective teaching pedagogy for Pacific learners?
- » Why is using data as a basis for developing appropriate literacy and learning opportunities important?
- » How am I integrating successful vocabulary lessons to help my learners with their reading?
- » How am I supporting my learners' parents to effectively help their children engage with texts at home?
- » Do I build on the language and vocabulary strengths my children come into the classroom with? How?
- » How can I include cooperative reading tasks for my learners?
- » What can I do to show learners my enthusiasm for their learning?
- » What support have I given the parents to enable them to effectively support their children's reading at home?
- » How else can I support learners' emotional wellbeing?

# Are we fostering Pacific students’ awareness of effective reading strategies?

**LEARNERS WHO WERE AWARE OF EFFECTIVE READING STRATEGIES, SUCH AS WRITING TEXT IN THEIR OWN WORDS AND DISCUSSING THE CONTENT WITH OTHERS, SCORED HIGHER IN READING**

Figure 5: Pacific learners’ awareness of reading strategies and its relationship with achievement



## WHAT THE DATA ARE TELLING US

- » Students who discuss texts with others have higher reading scores.
- » Students who locate important facts and sentences in texts and rewrite them in their own words have higher reading scores.
- » Memorising texts is linked to low reading scores.
- » A third of students are unaware of reading comprehension strategies.

## WHERE TO NEXT?

At home, our role in empowering our children to do well at school is important. It is vital that we make time to support our children’s reading and to understand what they read. Learners need to know effective reading strategies to help them understand and use texts. Therefore, scaffolding learners to know and be able to apply these strategies is vital. As parents we need to understand these strategies (e.g., discussing texts with others, locating important facts or sentences, and retelling them in their own words).



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## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- » Maintain good communication with teachers. Know what support is needed for your children so you can help at home.
- » Seek ideas from online resources about how to support your children's reading at home.<sup>49</sup>
- » Have your children read newspapers (and other materials) "for" you.
  - › They can "retell the text in their own words" This will enable them to apply the summarising skills they are learning at school.
  - › They can orally translate the text from English to your first language (or from your first language to English).
  - › They can write about them using their own words.
- » Seek support from school for your children to join quality online learning forums such as Education Perfect.<sup>50</sup>

## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » Have a list of the reading skills and strategies on the board so learners can see the labels. Explain and model the reading strategies for the learners. This can be done using the 'thinking aloud' approach and in small group teaching sessions.<sup>51</sup> Focus on one skill at a time, as you scaffold the learners to know and be able to apply the strategies.<sup>52</sup>
- » Plan interesting follow-up activities for learners to do, to give them the chance to apply their new learning.<sup>53</sup> These activities can be done individually, in pairs or in groups.
- » Provide opportunities for learners to talk and share their understanding of reading strategies. Provide ongoing opportunities for learners to use more than one strategy.
- » Let parents know about useful resources (such as those online) so they can use them to help their children at home.<sup>54</sup>
- » Sometimes, learners get tired of hearing their teacher's voice. In that case, you may want to direct them to quality online resources.<sup>55</sup>
- » Regularly check that learners are aware of the strategies they are using to access the information in texts. Give learners the chance to talk in class about the reading strategies they use to access information and why. This can be done in pairs, groups, or individually.

<sup>49</sup> <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/encouraging-older-children-to-read-independently-ideas-for-parents/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.educationperfect.com/>

<sup>51</sup> Davis, A. (2007). Teaching Reading Comprehension. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

<sup>52</sup> <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/summariser/>

<sup>53</sup> Cameron, S. (2004). The Reading activity handbook. Purposeful reading responses to enrich your Literacy programme. Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann Education

<sup>54</sup> <https://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Effective-Literacy-Strategies-in-Years-9-13>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrEq-1UujOo>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » Do I know what reading strategies are? What do they look and sound like?
- » Where do I go to find further help with this?
- » What sorts of questions could I ask so I can get the help my child needs?
- » What things can I do right now to be more supportive of my child's reading and learning so that they do well at school?
- » How am I helping my child practise their learnt reading strategies at home?
- » Is it helpful if I explain the strategies in the language I am most comfortable in?
- » How can I explain summarising to my child?
- » Why is memorising texts not a successful strategy for reading? How can I make it work for my child?
- » How can the school support me so I can help my child?
- » How can our community help our children learn reading strategies?

### FOR TEACHERS

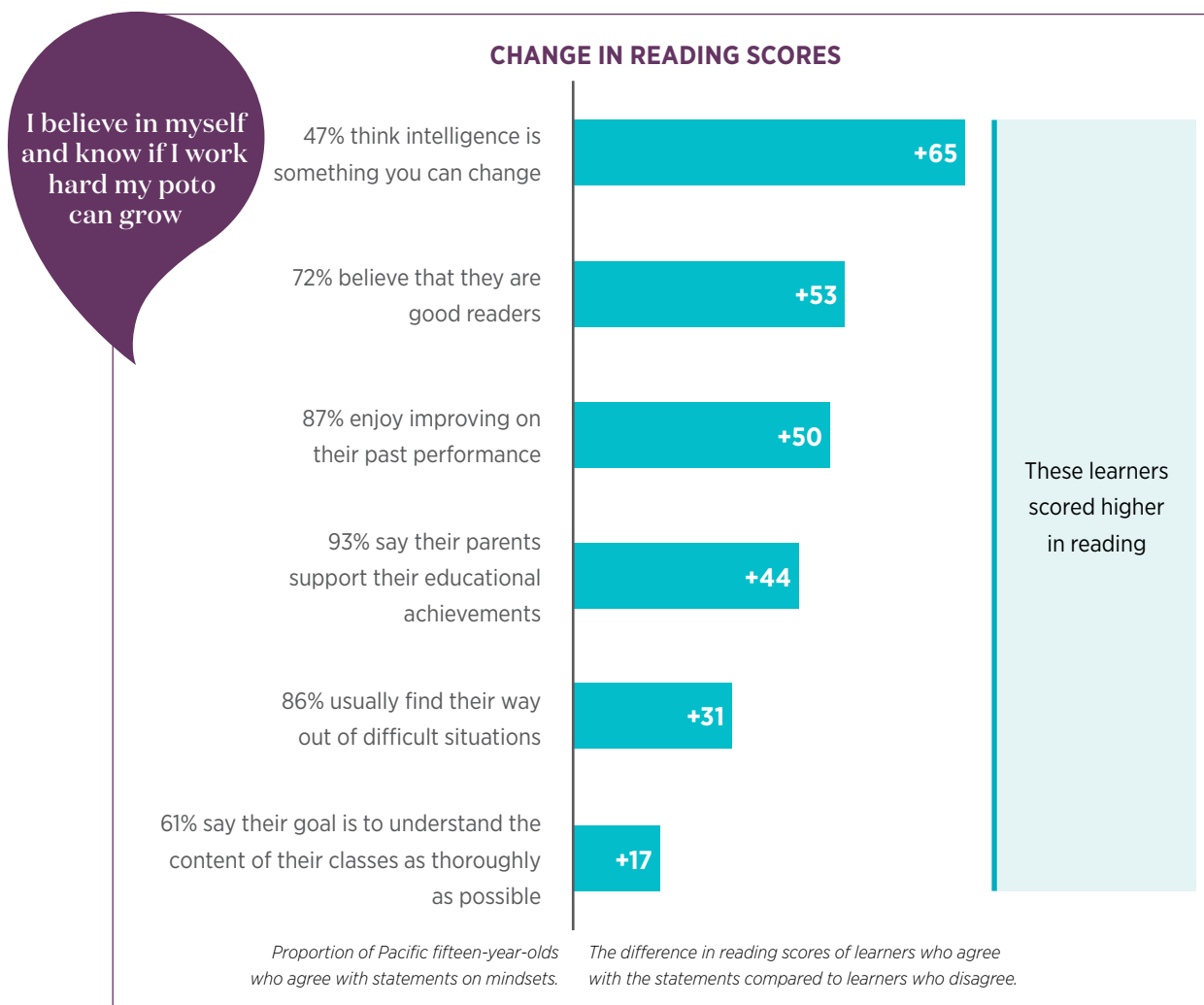
- » Have I made time to help parents learn about reading strategies? What prompts and resources can I provide for parents to use with their children?
- » Can my learners analyse, reason, and communicate ideas effectively? What else can I do to support them?
- » How do I create a classroom environment that encourages my learners to understand and remember what they are reading and learning?
- » How well do I incorporate my learners' life experiences, culture, and what they do outside of school into their learning in class so that their learning is more meaningful?
- » How could I draw on parents' knowledge, experiences, and expertise to help me cater for their children's diverse literacy needs?
- » How am I adapting my teaching to cater for the needs of my struggling readers?
- » What if I record my modelling sessions so learners can easily refer to them in the future?
- » Will daily homework be helpful for learners to remember and retain reading strategies?
- » Can teaching strategies using stories from the Pacific help learners to remember the strategies?
- » Will it help students if they explain the strategies in their home/first/preferred language?



# Are our Pacific students confident and resilient readers?

**LEARNERS WHO BELIEVE INTELLIGENCE CAN GROW, WHO ARE GOAL-ORIENTED, AND WHO HAVE CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE SCORED HIGHER IN READING**

Figure 6: Pacific learners' mindsets and their relationship with achievement



## WHAT THE DATA ARE TELLING US

- » Students who believe in their own ability to read and understand texts have higher reading scores.
- » Students who persevere to understand difficult reading tasks have higher reading scores.
- » Students who enjoy succeeding have higher reading scores.
- » Students who have set goals to learn and master the content of their courses have higher reading scores.
- » Students whose confidence and educational efforts and achievements are supported at home have higher reading scores.
- » Students who find the PISA test difficult (in terms of layout, vocabulary, and the texts they are expected to read) have low reading scores.

## WHERE TO NEXT?

Learners want to learn. It is important that we build on our learners' desire to succeed and support them to become resilient and driven by their own efforts to achieve their goals. Overseas research has proven that pride and self-esteem make learners work harder.<sup>56</sup> We need to empower Pacific learners to be proud of themselves and the effort they put into their work, which will empower them to keep doing their best.

## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- » Attend your children's first 3-way conference (This will help you know the "placement" of your children. It is important that you know, earlier in the year, at the level at which your children are learning, and know how much support is needed, and then start to plan accordingly).
- » Be proactive. Ask for the course outline, talk with your child about it, and get to know the reading materials. Make the effort to know what is expected and be on board from the beginning - your children need to see and feel that you are with them all the way.
- » Be consistently positive and show appreciation of the effort your children put into schoolwork (Tell them, for example, "I am proud of the effort you are putting into your work", "Well done, now we can make things even better, let's see how we can do this").
- » Become members of the local library, where you can get reading materials in paper, digital, or audio formats. Make time to read together to get better.
- » Invite the church minister and key people in the community to be involved in empowering children to be resilient and confident readers. Set up a Reading Together programme in church so children can have the chance to read and discuss books together. Invite your community to search for further support and ideas on the internet.<sup>57 58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244019845489>

<sup>57</sup> <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/some-initial-thoughts-on-how-parents-can-support-their-childrens-learning/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Archives/Assessment/Supporting-parents-and-whanau>





## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » Turn your classroom into a warm and accepting space so learners can feel appreciated. This can empower learners to take risks and become more involved.
- » Include academic resilience in reading literacy assessments. These include how engaged the learners are in class, how often they ask for help, and how well they monitor their own learning.<sup>59</sup>
- » Model literacy skills and self-efficacy (e.g., demonstrate thinking and coping strategies, model mistakes while reading and then provide a plan for recovery from mistakes). Ask “what else can you do when you don’t know a word? What other tools do we have?” This type of discussion also allows learners to learn from one another.
- » Be consistent with accurate and descriptive feedback on learners’ efforts and learning processes, and not only on the outcome. For example, instead of saying “I’m proud of you”, say “You must be proud of yourself because you worked very hard revising your summary.” Instead of saying “Good idea!”, say “Wow! you put yourself in the character’s situation and figured out how they might feel.” Inaccurate positive feedback creates a false perception of ability. It can also be viewed as patronising by some of our senior Pacific learners.
- » Teach learners to be metacognitive readers. This will give them the ability to monitor their reading so they can solve any problems they encounter.<sup>60</sup>
- » Support learners to set up their goals or “next learning steps”. These specific and individualised learning goals must target certain reading skills or completion of tasks. The achievement of these specific goals will not only raise the level of learners’ self-efficacy but bring pride to some learners that they have mastered certain reading skills.
- » Teach word reading processes to increase learners’ knowledge, skills, and awareness of ways to recognise words. This can be done by integrating the three categories of vocabulary (high-frequency words, specialised vocabulary, general academic vocabulary) with your daily reading lessons. Teach language structure.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27639452>

<sup>60</sup> Davis, A. (2007). *Teaching Reading Comprehension*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

<sup>61</sup> <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ951842.pdf>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » How often do I find out from teachers about how well my child is doing in reading?
- » What is a resilient reader? What makes them resilient?
- » What am I doing at home to help my child become a resilient reader?
- » How do I know that what I am doing at home is working?
- » Are there any other support organisations in the community to help me help my child?
- » Will reading together as a family help my child become a resilient reader?
- » How am I encouraging my child to set goals for their learning?
- » How can I help my child feel proud of their efforts when pride is inconsistent with the expectations of my culture?
- » Can reading books in our first/home language help my child be a confident reader?
- » How can I help my child prepare for the reading tests?

### FOR TEACHERS

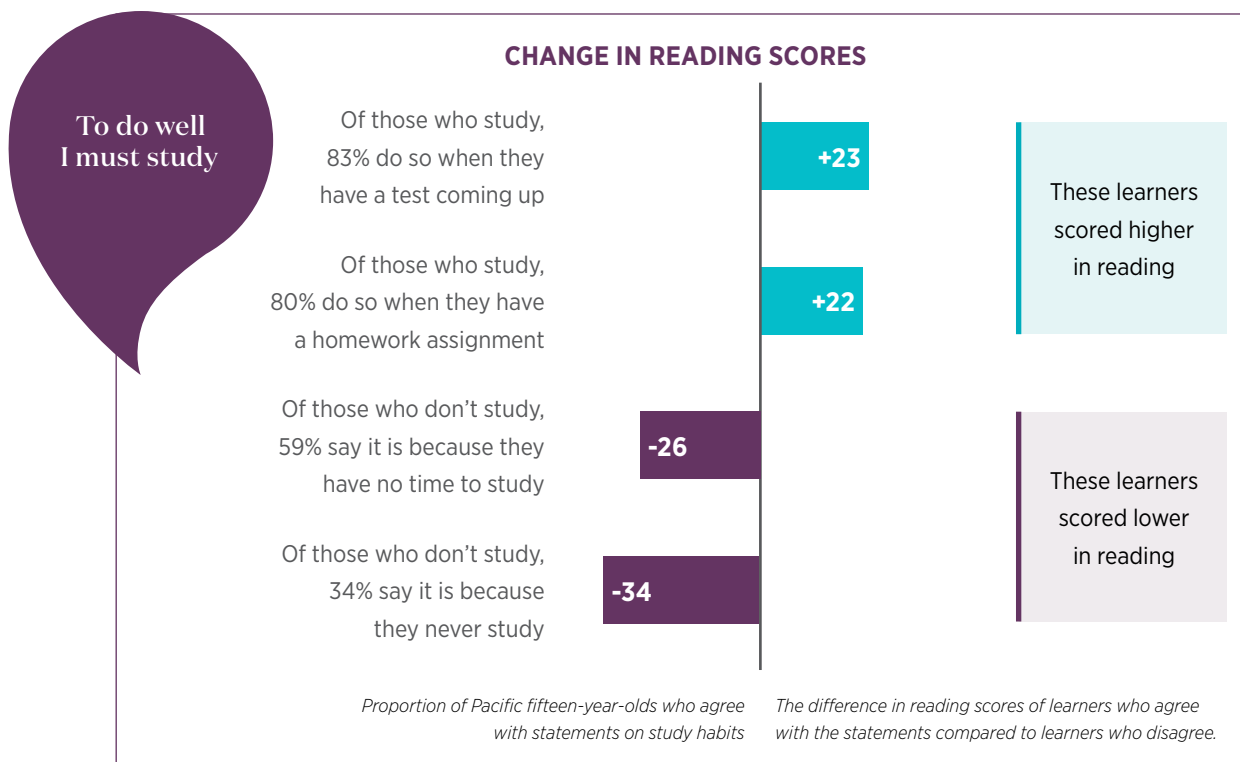
- » How am I incorporating my learners' life experiences and culture to help them read more?
- » How am I making sure my learners are clear about how to be successful readers?
- » How am I developing my learners' personal efficacy in reading?
- » How is my teaching not effective for my struggling readers? What can I do differently to help?
- » What am I doing to prepare my learners to cope with the complexity of texts they have to read and understand in exams?
- » Are the formative assessments helping my learners improve in their learning? How do I know?
- » How am I including my learners' parents and families in the conversations about their children's reading progress?
- » Are there any community initiatives I can suggest to my learners' parents to contact for further support?
- » Am I aware of any cultural implications that may impact my learners' ability to be proud and show pride in their work?
- » Are my learners confident in their ability to apply reading strategies across all curriculum areas? What else can I do to help?



# Do Pacific students have sufficient learning opportunities outside of school?

## LEARNERS WHO STUDY FOR TESTS AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS SCORED HIGHER IN READING

Figure 7: Pacific learners' study habits and their relationship with achievement



### WHAT THE DATA ARE TELLING US

- » Many students are supported outside of school.
- » The quality of support students get affects their reading scores.
- » Most students study when they have to (for tests, assignments, when asked to, to please parents).
- » Students who study for tests have higher reading scores.
- » Students who do not have time to study and never study have lower reading scores.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

We need to develop in our children the urgency to study. Equally important, we need to be able to help our children study and learn effectively at home and at school. It is vital to dedicate a room or section of the house and the necessary tools such as tables for studying. This could also mean being quiet at certain times of the day so children can concentrate on their studies.

## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- » Provide time, a quiet space, pens, papers, and devices for your children to use for their homework (if support is needed for computers, contact organisations such as Pasifika Futures<sup>62</sup> and WINZ,<sup>63</sup> or your children's school).
- » If you need to, please ask teachers for support in how to effectively help your children with their reading at home (e.g., "Can the school help me, and others like me, who want to support our children's reading at home, but do not really know how?").
- » Locate and use support already available for parents, families, and the community.<sup>64 65 66</sup>
- » Communicate regularly with the school to find out about assignments and due dates, your children's engagement in tasks, problems they are facing at school, etc.
- » Talk with children about their progress at school. Talk about the challenges of school and work actively on solutions to issues (listen, hear, and respond to what your children say).
- » Support your children by showing enthusiasm for their learning (e.g., make time to help your children, ask about what they are doing and why).
- » Set goals with your children at the beginning of every term (e.g., I will pass all my assessments with good grades). This will empower them to study. Talk regularly about goals and progress with your children, so they know you are with them on their journey.
- » Propose (to the school principal, church leaders, and other key people in the community) and set up a homework club for children. The homework club could be a social space in which children can ask tutors questions without fear of appearing foolish and in which they can apply themselves to study.<sup>67</sup>
- » Consider small tokens of appreciation for children's effort and progress (e.g., a family dinner out after a good term or a good and heartfelt thank you).

<sup>62</sup> <http://pasifikafutures.co.nz/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/children/school-costs.html>

<sup>64</sup> <https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/pacific-communities/talanoa-ako-radio/summer-sessions>

<sup>65</sup> <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Archives/Assessment/Supporting-parents-and-whanau>

<sup>66</sup> <https://elearning.tki.org.nz/Beyond-the-classroom/Engaging-with-the-community/Connecting-with-families-and-communities-of-Pacific-learners>

<sup>67</sup> <https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/55641/VAOIVA%20PONTON%20Final%20%2017%20SEP.pdf?sequence=9&isAllowed=y>

## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » Teach your learners the reading skills they need to take responsibility for their learning outside of school.
- » Help parents help their children by:
  - › maintaining good communication with parents (for both concerns and exciting information)<sup>68</sup>
  - › allowing learners to take books home to read with/to their parents
  - › making time to help parents with effective ways to support their children at home<sup>69</sup>
  - › creating tasks and opportunities that acknowledge and use parents' cultural knowledge and values<sup>70</sup>
  - › sending out bilingual newsletters and modifying meetings to accommodate parents' work schedules
  - › having translators available whenever Pacific parents need that support.

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<sup>68</sup> <https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-pacific-learners/facilitate-regular-opportunities-to-discuss-students-learning-and-well-being-and-plan-effective-support/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/four-strategies-to-effectively-support-pasifika-students/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-pacific-learners/support-families-to-help-their-children-learn-at-home/>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » Have I provided the tools my children need for their out-of-school studies?
- » Do I remain in contact with teachers to know what I can do at home to help my children broaden their understanding of reading?
- » Am I making time to effectively help my children with their work?
- » How do I know that the support I am giving my children is working?
- » Are there any community support groups I can join to help me to support my children's learning?
- » What study tips do I know that I can teach my child?
- » What makes studying hard for my children at home? What can I do to help?
- » Who should I talk to if my child shares (sensitive) information regarding challenges at school?
- » Have I prioritised time for my children to study?
- » How well am I monitoring to make sure my child is on task with their schoolwork?

### FOR TEACHERS

- » What are some ways I can help learners engage in out of school reading activities?
- » What support do I give parents to effectively help their children study at home?
- » How frequently do I talk to my learners to find out what their interests and dreams are in life?
- » What strategies am I using to build culturally responsive contexts for my learners?
- » How are learners' voices included in the day-to-day activities, practices, and events that happen in our school?
- » How are the cultural identities of our learners used as a strength in my classroom?
- » How do I support my learners to succeed in achieving in their plans and dreams?
- » How am I helping my learners' parents cater for their children's needs out of school?
- » How can the school use the support from learners' parents to help lift the outcomes of our learners?
- » What community support is available for my learners' parents to get the support they need?







## What are effective assessment practices for Pacific students?

### ACCORDING TO PISA FINDINGS

- » Pacific students score lower on average in the PISA reading assessment than their peers.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

These achievement results demand an urgent response from parents, families, communities, and teachers. They also implicate the learners' own commitment to reading and understanding different types of texts and urge them to mobilise themselves to be strong and passionate readers.

Parents and teachers need to be aware of factors that contribute to how Pacific learners perform in standardised assessments (such as PISA) and respond to this in their support, teaching, instructions, and assessment practices. Some of these factors have been revealed in the PISA questionnaire (as discussed previously); others are included in the conversations with Pacific learners on page 49.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2017-07/apo-nid110351.pdf>

What  
the Pacific  
learners said

*“Because the words are hard. Some may find them easy but, to most of us, they are hard.”*

What  
this shows

The English language of the assessments is difficult.

*“They should test us on what we have been taught, that way we have some knowledge of what is in the test. These questions are hard. Like we’ve never seen most of the words before ... the texts are difficult ... because they are not like the normal ones our teachers give to us in class and ia (yes) it makes the test unfair for us.”*

There is a mismatch between what learners know in terms of what they are taught at school, their culture, background knowledge, interests and experience, and what PISA assesses them on.

*“You know, what makes sense to us is not what makes sense to them.”*

*“If there was enough time and the stress levels are not so high, we could read and take time and answer questions and maybe enjoy the test and learn from it.”*

Pacific learners need more time to complete the PISA assessments.

*“We need more time ... to read and understand instructions ... read and think about the information and form the answers to write.”*

*“Tests are important to us as Samoan students because some people, they see you as just a Pacific Islander, that they think you are not good for things ... so the tests will show them that we can do things.”*

Assessments are important to Pacific learners.

*“They expect a high standard ... they say “to’aga e fai le a’oga” (persevere in your schoolwork).”*

Pacific learners’ parents, families and communities value school and want their children to do well in assessments.

*“To get a good score, to try harder, to do better ... and it makes me determined to do well in tests.”*

*“Our teacher gets sad when the test results comes back, cos many of us fail to get the correct answers.”*

Pacific learners are affected by how teachers respond to assessment results.

*“Cos if you get wrong the teachers can growl at you ...”*

*“Confused, numb, shaky, sweaty, no good, bored, tired, sick, dizzy, headache, angry, mad, worried, embarrassed, regretting not knowing the answers.”*

Pacific learners are hugely affected by their inability to “know” the knowledge, language and skills expected to pass assessments.

*“It’s embarrassing to be in the lowest group, so I get angry.”*

*“I think they want us to ‘think’ like them. In the test they give us things to start thinking about them.”*

Pacific learners are aware of the power of assessments. Pacific learners know that, to pass the tests, they need to think like “them” (assessment writers).

## WHAT PARENTS, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- » Provide time, a quiet space, pens, papers and devices for your children to use for their studies.
- » Learn how to support your children for exams. Talk about exams. Share your own experiences of exams (what worked, and what you had to avoid and why).
- » Make studying a daily routine. Encourage children to revise the skills and concepts they have learnt in addition to doing their homework. Encourage children to use active revision ideas such as: writing the most important information on post-it notes or charts and diagrams; recording and listening to the learnt information; retelling the learnt concepts in own their words; practising and applying the skills learnt at school.<sup>72</sup> Consider removing mobile phones and other distractions during study time.
- » Ask teachers about the tests. Ask about the content of the tests and how the content will be tested (e.g., are learners expected to answer in multiple choice, short answer or in essay). Ask teachers to tell and show you how to best help your children at home for tests.
- » Remain positive no matter what the outcomes are. Help your children turn negative outcomes into motivations to do better.

## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- » Set your learners up to succeed.
  - › Know the pre-determined knowledge and reading skills expected of your learners at their class level (for example, the Year 11 learners who participate in the PISA reading test must learn the reading skills at Level 5 of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.<sup>73</sup> Teach these skills. Tell your learners' parents about these expectations.
  - › Use previous reading exam papers. Analyse the questions, identify the skills and knowledge expected to pass. Teach the expected reading skills so learners are equipped with the strategies and knowledge they need to succeed in the tests.
  - › Be consistent with formative assessments to help monitor your learners' progress towards their pre-determined and expected knowledge and skills. Information gathered from formative assessments can complement results from standardised testing when drawing conclusions about learners' achievements.
  - › Talk with your learners about "what makes sitting exams difficult?" Include your learners' needs in your plan (e.g., teach the learners exam skills such as how to answer test questions, how to choose between multiple choice answers and how to manage the time).
  - › Talk to your learners about the importance of tests. They feel better knowing that you are on their side, and that it is "you and them" against the test papers.
  - › Talanoa with your learners' parents about how they can support their children.

<sup>72</sup> <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/supporting-students-to-develop-effective-study-skills/>

<sup>73</sup> <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- » What can we do at home to help?
- » Are there any resources we can use?
- » How trustworthy are the PISA assessments?
- » How can we help our children study to pass these important exams?
- » What are the effects of tests and testing on my child?
- » Do we understand what assessment is? How and when does it occur?
- » Do they include Pacific concepts in these tests?
- » Who marks the tests?
- » What are schools and teachers doing about the non-achievement of Pacific children at school?
- » Why are exams important?

### FOR TEACHERS

- » What formative assessment tools am I using to assess the reading strengths, needs, and progress of my learners?
- » How am I using data from formative assessments to support my learners working towards NCEA?
- » How am I closely monitoring my learners progress towards higher reading capabilities?
- » Am I aware that Pacific learners may interpret and respond to texts in ways that differ from the expected responses of the test writer and teacher? What can I do to bridge this gap?
- » How am I incorporating test results in my own learning conversations with colleagues and in my professional development goals?
- » How do these results implicate my own teaching? What are my next planning and teaching steps?
- » How are my learners implicated in these results? What can I do about it?
- » How is PISA an effective way to assess my learners?
- » How can my school's senior leadership team help me support my learners?
- » How is PISA mismatched to what my learners are learning in class? How can I bridge this gap?
- » How can we support parents to grow their knowledge and strategies to support their children?



## Conclusion: Rethinking assessment for Pacific learners

Our Pacific learners are not doing as well as they could in the PISA reading assessment. The PISA extensive background questionnaire and numerous other studies (referred to in this resource) have amplified our Pacific learners' voice regarding the factors that contribute to their underachieving dilemma. Concerns such as the mismatch of knowledge, culture, linguistic skills, interests, and prior experiences, as well as our Pacific learners' wavering academic resiliency, have been exposed. However, using the Tofā'a'anolasi approach in this resource has enabled more than our Pacific learners' voice. It empowers home and school partnerships to address our Pacific learners' learning needs. Furthermore, it highlights how the problem goes beyond assessment methodology to the more fundamental issue of power over decision making about the most effective assessment strategy for our Pacific learners. That is, given the political agenda behind the implementation of PISA, and the inescapable biases in this assessment tool, we must therefore acknowledge that PISA assessment:

- » serves a specific political purpose
- » test results are not necessarily true indications of Pacific learner achievements.

Therefore, to mitigate the negative experiences that disadvantage Pacific learners and address the assessment concerns that have been raised, it is recommended that:

- › We enable effective engagement with Pacific communities and seek ways to ensure the work done in schools is responsive to the reading literacy needs of Pacific learners.
- › We strengthen the use of formative and non-standardised assessments that allow teachers to identify what our Pacific learners have learnt and what they need to work on, in relation to their expected pre-determined learning as specified in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.
- › We reconsider time constraints in assessments as they add to the dilemma of already disadvantaged Pacific learners. This is because, in assessments, Pacific learners do twice the workload. They have to unpack and understand the language of the test before attempting to answer the questions. They frequently translate the instructions, texts, and questions between their first language and English to compensate for their limited ability to generate ideas, solve vocabulary problems,<sup>74</sup> distinguish between given multiple choice options, and create answers in intelligible English.<sup>75</sup>
- › We consider conducting the PISA test in Pacific languages.
- › We acknowledge the inescapable mismatches and biases in assessments when we make statements about Pacific learners and their achievements.<sup>76</sup>
- › We continue to empower Pacific learners to celebrate their identity as “Tama a le ‘ele‘ele” (Children of the land) to respect the traditions they are heir to, that form their own education inheritance and their “sa'iliga malō” (fight for freedom).

<sup>74</sup> <https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Media-gallery/Language-enhancing-the-achievement-of-Pasifika-LEAP/Being-bilingual>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0191491X92900178>

<sup>76</sup> <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2017-07/apo-nid110351.pdf>

# Glossary

## **3-way conference**

a conversation between the learner, parents, families, and the teacher where the learner talks about their learning

## **academic resilience**

the ability to effectively deal with difficult learning materials and pressures in the school setting

## **anecdotal notes**

brief notes teachers take as they observe children

## **approach**

a way of dealing with a situation or a problem

## **assumptions**

a belief that is accepted as true without proof

## **bilingual**

speaking two languages fluently

## **bilingualism**

the phenomenon of speaking and understanding two languages

## **collaborate**

working together with others on an activity or project

## **collective**

when people act as a group

## **constructive feedback**

supportive feedback given to students. It reveals and helps to identify solutions to areas of weakness they may have

## **critical reading**

reading to understand, question and evaluate the texts

## **critique**

evaluate somebody's work

## **cultural capacity**

when people have knowledge and confidence in their own culture

## **curriculum**

the overall content taught in an educational system

## **decoding**

sounding out words by pronouncing their parts and then joining those parts to form words

## **descriptive language**

words that help visualise, describe, define, or explain information about people, places, things, situations, or actions

## **differentiate**

identifying and addressing the different needs, interests, and abilities of all learners to give them the best possible chance of achieving their learning goals

## **diversity**

having many different elements. An example of diversity is a classroom full of children of different cultures

## **dominance**

power and influence over others

## **Education Perfect**

a teaching, home-schooling and tutoring program available on the internet

## **equitable**

being fair, just, and impartial

## **feed forward**

a positive comment on a learner's work with future-oriented solutions

## **feedback**

information about how learners are presently performing

## **fiction**

refers to books and stories created from the imagination

## **formative assessment**

assessment activities learners do in class. Results from these assessments are used to adapt the teaching to meet the needs of learners

## **front load**

frontloading vocabulary is when teachers teach words and their meanings before students are exposed to them in a text



**individualised**

designed or modified to suit a particular individual, tailored

**inequity**

unfairness and injustice

**literacy**

the ability to read and write

**literate**

having the ability to read and write

**macro level**

something that covers a large amount, or is broad in scope

**methodology**

a specific procedure used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic

**micro level**

a small organisation or sub-organisational unit, or a narrow and refined focus

**NCEA**

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

**non-fiction**

books or stories that are generally true and accurate

**OECD**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PISA**

Programme for International Student Assessment

**pragmatic**

practical

**proficiency**

competency or skill in doing or using something

**reading ambassador**

a person who promotes a reading culture across schools and the community

**resubmit**

to submit an assignment again after revisions are made

**scaffold**

when a teacher puts strategic supports into a lesson so students can learn the material and master the tasks

**self-efficacy**

belief in one's own capabilities to complete learning tasks to the required standard

**standardised**

conforming to a standard of measurement or value

**stigmatisation**

disgraceful or damaging description of a person or group

**strategies**

methods or ways to achieve something

**summarise**

to briefly recount the main points of a text

**synthesis**

the composition or combination of parts to form a whole

**Tapasā**

a Samoan word that means "compass"

**pedagogy**

the method and practice of teaching

**thinking aloud approach**

saying out loud what a person is thinking about when reading. Teachers "think out loud" to model this process for students as a way to deal with difficult words, ideas or other difficult tasks

**trans-lingual**

using different languages to help produce meaning in listening, speaking, reading, and writing

**visualise**

to imagine or form a mental image of something



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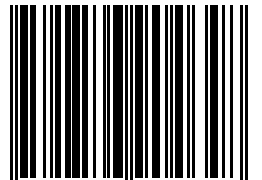
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