ACTING ON THE EVIDENCE
What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students?

BY MAREE TELFORD and RUTH TOUMU'A
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WHAT IS PISA?
The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international standardised study that assesses and compares how well countries are preparing their 15-year-old students to meet real-life opportunities and challenges.

WHAT DOES PISA ASSESS?
PISA assesses three key areas of knowledge and skills – reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy – and has a focus on one of these literacy areas each time PISA is administered. The focus of PISA 2009 was reading.

HOW OFTEN IS PISA ADMINISTERED?
PISA is administered every three years, beginning in 2000. Reading was the main focus in the first cycle.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN PISA?
Around 470,000 15-year-old students from 65 countries or economies, including the 34 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries, participated in PISA 2009. In New Zealand 4,643 students from 163 schools took part in the main study. Students and schools were randomly selected.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The Ministry of Education is very grateful to the 191 schools that participated in the PISA 2009 main study or field trial, to the staff who very generously volunteered to co-ordinate this study in their school, and to the students who took part in the assessment.

The section, What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students? is the result of a collaborative effort of many people.

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Maree Telford
PISA 2009 National Project Manager
Senior Research Analyst

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This workbook examines key findings about the reading performance of New Zealand’s Pasifika 15-year-olds from the Programme for International Student Assessment 2009 (PISA 2009) and explores their implications. In New Zealand, PISA was administered in English only. The purpose of this document is to encourage school leaders and teachers to ACT ON THE EVIDENCE.

The workbook provides information about our Pasifika 15-year-olds’ reading habits in the print medium (reading enjoyment, time spent reading, what they read), the types of literary tasks that they do for school, the motivational practices and the scaffolding and structuring practices they experience in their English classes. It also provides information on their use and knowledge of effective learning strategies that are critical to their educational development. These findings are based on our Pasifika students’ responses to questions asked in the PISA 2009 student questionnaire.

Literacy knowledge and skills are necessary for learning in every subject area and for moving from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’. It becomes increasingly more difficult as learners progress through their schooling if they do not have strong literacy skills. The literacy and language demands on learning become increasingly complex, abstract and specialised within each subject as students progress through the curriculum, particularly at the secondary levels.

The findings from PISA are relevant for both primary and secondary school Pasifika students because PISA is designed to measure the cumulative learning at age 15-years – often referred to as ‘the cumulative yield’. The reading literacy skills of our Pasifika 15-year-olds on average, are weaker than their non-Pasifika peers (see p.19).

In this workbook each section includes a piece called What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students? It has been designed to stimulate discussion among our teachers and leaders of Pasifika students in primary and secondary schools, and among our Pasifika students’ parents, families and their communities about how to:

- encourage our teachers to think reflectively on their teaching practices for our Pasifika students; encourage our school leaders to think reflectively on their leadership role to support teachers; encourage our parents, families and communities to think reflectively about how they can support their child’s learning
- nurture and encourage Pasifika students to have positive attitudes towards reading
- encourage and support Pasifika students to access a wide range of materials to expand their knowledge and skills
- provide opportunities for Pasifika students (particularly weaker readers) to tackle more complex and challenging ‘Pasifika connected’ literary texts and tasks
- strengthen Pasifika students’ reading skills and strategies by using ‘Pasifika connected’ motivational and scaffolding practices
- empower Pasifika students with the knowledge of the most efficient and effective strategies that enable and accelerate/advance their learning.

Where appropriate, reference to the Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017 (Ministry of Education 2013) is also noted, along with other relevant resources.

The Pasifika Education Plan emphasises promoting closer alignment and compatibility between the learner’s educational environment and their home and/or cultural environment. This is so that communities, education providers and services collaborate using their individual, collective and cultural connections and affiliations.

The Pasifika Education Plan shows the importance of placing Pasifika students and their parents and families in the centre of learning.

This workbook builds on PISA 2009 Reading Workbook – Acting on the evidence: what might the PISA 2009 reading findings mean for our teachers and school leaders (Telford 2013) that focuses on the findings for New Zealand 15-year-olds overall. Some of its key messages are reinforced here.

Are early educational experiences related to reading literacy at age 15?

The PISA 2009 evidence indicates that participating in early childhood education and home-based literacy-related activities when children are young has a positive relationship to reading literacy at age 15.

What do the PISA 2009 findings tell us about our Pasifika students?

Eighty percent of our Pasifika 15-year-olds had participated in early childhood education (ECE), and just over half participated in ECE for longer than one year.

The majority of Pasifika parents were involved with their 15-year-old in the early home-based literacy-related activities examined in PISA during their first year of schooling.

Pasifika students with parents who told them stories, talked with them about the things that they themselves do, or sang songs to them when they were young had an advantage in reading, relative to their peers at age 15-years, that is equivalent to at least one and a half years of schooling. The relationship between stronger reading skills and the oral activities of telling stories and singing songs was much more marked for our Pasifika students relative to their non-Pasifika peers.

Pasifika students' early childhood education experiences

Pasifika students who attended ECE for longer than one year were on average stronger readers than those who participated for a shorter period of time.

Overall their peers without ECE experience were very weak readers. The overall difference between their reading performance and that of those who attended for more than one year is equivalent to more than one year of schooling.

Pasifika students' early home-based literacy-related activities

Other early home-based literacy-related activities that also related to stronger reading literacy skills of our Pasifika students at age 15 were reading books, reading signs and labels aloud to their child, or talking with their child about what they themselves read.

At least 80% of the Pasifika parents reported that these literacy-related activities took place in English. Overall, those 15-year-olds who experienced the activities in English had a relative advantage equivalent to two years of schooling.
What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students?

The evidence indicates that Pasifika students who have had less exposure to early learning experiences at or outside of home tend to be struggling readers (particularly oral activities). How are you identifying struggling readers and promoting and encouraging parents and whänau involvement in their child’s early learning?

Reflective questions for leaders of schools with Pasifika students

- Do teachers in our school know about the Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017? How is the Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017 used to set reading goals and targets in our school charter?
  - www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/
  - PasifikaEducationPlan2013
  - See for example, Talanoa Ako, pp. 24-30 (Ministry of Education 2013) for practical tips on how schools, parents and communities can implement the Pasifika Education Plan.
  - www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/
  - PublicationsAndResources/TalanoaAkoPacificEducationTalk.aspx

- What monitoring systems do we have in place to help ensure Pasifika students, especially early in their schooling, are meeting curriculum expectations for literacy? How do we identify struggling Pasifika readers and how do we decide on or plan for what needs to be done to turn this around?

What have we learned about early literacy experiences of Pasifika learners in New Zealand from other research studies that examine early home literacy activities? How are we responding to these findings in our school? See for example, the Progress for International Research Study (PIRLS) report PIRLS 2010/2011 in New Zealand, pp. 33-40 (Chamberlain 2013), which presents reading literacy achievement findings for New Zealand by ethnicity and gender.
  - www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2539/114981/125051
  - Also, see PISA 2000: Focus on Pasifika Achievement in Reading Literacy (Ministry of Education 2004), which presents some of the factors examined in this workbook.
  - www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika_education/focus_pasifika_2000

- What guidance are we giving our Pasifika parents, families, and communities to help them support their child’s learning and literacy development? For example, schools can ask themselves: do we offer suggestions on ways they can be involved in their child’s literacy-related activities, such as their take-home activities and ways to access reading materials to use at home? When and how are these made available to Pasifika parents, families and communities?

What have we learned about the Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017? See for example, Talanoa Ako, pp. 24-30 (Ministry of Education 2013) for practical tips on how schools, parents and communities can implement the Pasifika Education Plan.
  - www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/
  - PublicationsAndResources/TalanoaAkoPacificEducationTalk.aspx

- What is the nature of our reciprocal relationship with Pasifika parents, families and communities? See for example, the BES Cases: Insight into what works 31 – Develop educationally powerful connections based on relational trust.
  - Also, the report, Partners in Learning: Schools’ Engagement with Parents, Whänau and Communities (Education Review Office 2008a), particularly ‘Responding to Diversity’ (pp. 29-33), and a video in which Rutherford College Performing Arts HOD describes how the school used its school website and other means for staying in contact with Pasifika parents.
  - Also see
How well are we linking with our early childhood centres (including Pasifika language services in our catchment area) to support Pasifika parents, families and communities prepare their children for school? For example, through parents understanding the importance of early learning, finding out what they can do to encourage their child’s readiness for school and reading and preparation for transitioning to school in English medium, and understanding the importance of strengthening their child’s first language as a strong foundation for learning. For an overview of Pasifika early childhood education in New Zealand in 2002, see Pasifika Early Childhood Education Priorities for Pasifika Early Childhood Education Research (Meade, PuhiPuhi & Foster-Cohen 2003). www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ECF/5911

How are we connecting and working together with our local Pasifika community groups (including churches, cultural groups, homework centres) to share knowledge and understanding of Pasifika learners, and to support reading through effective early reading literacy-related experiences? Who are key people in the learner’s community who could support their learning?

What regular, guided opportunities do we provide for staff to identify their own personal professional learning needs relating to Pasifika learners? How do we respond to these needs? See for example, the Literacy Professional Development Project 2009–2010 Pasifika component findings in Tula’i Mai! Making a Difference to Pasifika Student Achievement in Literacy (Silata, Dreaver, Parr, Timperley & Meissel 2012). www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika_education/literacy-professional-development-project-2009-2010

Reflective questions for teachers of Pasifika students

What do we know about effective teaching pedagogy for Pasifika students? See for example, the online video collection on Effective Teaching for Pasifika Students. http://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Media-gallery/Effective-teaching-for-Pasifika-students

How do we use what we know about our Pasifika students to support their early learning and our teaching? What books and topics do we use?

What standardised formative assessment tools are we using to assess the reading strengths, needs and progress of our Pasifika students? How are we supplementing this with other assessment information (eg, teacher observations) that helps to inform our Overall Teacher Judgements (OTJs)? See for example, information about the assessment tools and resources available on the Te Kete Ipurangi website. http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-tools-resources/Alignment-of-assessment-tools-with-National-Standards/Reading

To what extent are we using data as a basis for developing appropriate early literacy and learning opportunities? For example, focusing on overcoming areas of learning difficulty and maximising strengths.

The Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017 emphasises the importance of engaging parents, families and communities. How are we encouraging our parents, families and communities to work together with us to become effective partners in educating and developing our children as readers? See the Pasifika Education Plan’s emphasis on reciprocal relationships and Pasifika connectedness. For a list of Pasifika education research literature on Pasifika families and community engagement, see An analysis of recent Pasifika education research literature to inform and improve outcomes for Pasifika learners, pp. 18-22 (Chu, Glasgow, Rimoni, Hodis & Meyer 2013). www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika_education/an-analysis-of-recent-pasifika-education-research-literature-to-inform-and-improve-outcomes-for-pasifika-learners
Do our Pasifika parents know about the Reading Together® programme that supports early reading?
www.readingtogether.net.nz

Do we tell our Pasifika parents that if their heritage language/s is used at home this is likely to give children a strong foundation on which to learn English? Are there any barriers to doing this? See for example, Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika (LEAP), What helps students to learn, and related pages for information and research on the value of Pasifika languages and bilingualism and biliteracy for our Pasifika learners.
http://leap.tki.org.nz/What-helps-students-to-learn
LEAP also provides a list of Frequently Asked Questions concerning Pasifika learners and bilingualism.
http://leap.tki.org.nz/Frequently-asked-questions-FAQ#How_do_we_motivate

Reflective questions for Pasifika parents, families and communities

Parents, families and communities need to be actively involved in their children’s learning. Children’s learning is a partnership between them and their school. Do I feel like I am a partner with my school in my child’s learning and literacy development? Do I feel welcomed into my child’s classroom and encouraged to share information about my child with his or her teachers?

Do I know how I can be involved in my child’s learning and what questions to ask? See for example, a list of questions prepared by the Education Review Office.
www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/For-Parents/ERO-Guides-for-Parents/Asking-the-right-questions-at-school

How often do I ask teachers how well my child is doing in reading? Is the information that I am given easy to understand?

Do I ever ask the school/teachers for advice about reading activities I could do with my child? Do I need to ask for more help with this? See for example, a range of tips and advice for families to support and encourage reading in English, Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori, Tokelauan, and Niuean languages at Te Kete Ipurangi.
http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Teacher-needs/Professional-support/Professional-development-and-support/Home-school-partnership/Key-messages-in-different-languages

Do I know what questions to ask in regard to National Standards and what support a school can give my child in their literacy and learning? See for example, the information for parents on the Ministry of Education’s website.

It’s important that children enjoy books and storytelling from an early age. How often do I do this with my children? For example, reading to them, doing fun reading activities with them, telling stories that they enjoy, or knowing what their favourite books are.

How do I go about encouraging my child to value and love reading? Do I know any fun reading activities I can do at home with my child that will help him or her become a good reader? For example, parents of a primary school aged child can do some fun reading-related activities such as singing songs, telling stories, reading bedtime stories, reading signs and labels in our own language and/or in English.

How often do I go along to class and school activities, such as parent-teacher interviews, prize giving, concerts, picnics and trips?
What do the PISA 2009 findings tell us about our Pasifika students?

Around two-thirds of our Pasifika 15-year-olds reported they read for enjoyment every day. Typically, students who read for longer than 30 minutes a day were stronger readers.

Pasifika students who held positive views about reading were strong readers. A gap equivalent to approximately two years of schooling was found between students who enjoyed reading the most, and those who enjoyed reading the least.

Our Pasifika girls were more than twice as likely as our Pasifika boys to hold positive views about reading.

Pasifika students’ reading on a daily basis

A third of our Pasifika 15-year-olds reported they spent more than 30 minutes a day reading for enjoyment. These students had a large reading advantage relative to their peers who did not read for enjoyment (equivalent to approximately one and a half years of schooling).

Typically the reading literacy score of the third of our students who never read for enjoyment on a daily basis was very weak.

Twice as many of our Pasifika boys than girls did not read daily for enjoyment.

Pasifika students’ reading enjoyment

To capture students’ attitudes towards reading, 15-year-olds were asked to report their level of agreement to a series of questions containing both positive and negative questions.

Overall Pasifika students were as likely as their non-Pasifika peers to respond positively to questions that relate to reading enjoyment, such as feeling happy about receiving a book as a present, expressing their opinions about books they have read, exchanging books with their friends and talking about books with other people.

Pasifika girls were much more likely than boys to respond positively.

Boys, on the other hand, were more likely to hold more negative views. Around two-thirds of Pasifika boys reported they read only to get the information they need and well over half read only if they had to. Also, well over a third reported they found it hard to finish reading books, one in five considered reading a waste of time, and more than a quarter said they could not sit still for more than a few minutes to read.

Students who held negative views about reading generally had poor reading literacy knowledge and skills. This was particularly marked for boys.
Reflective questions for leaders of schools with Pasifika students

- To what extent does our current programme extend Pasifika learners’ opportunities to engage in, and enjoy reading in a conducive and supportive environment beyond normal school hours? For example, regular ‘homework’ centres venues for supervised reading, or holiday programmes?

- How well do we enable our teachers to plan, implement and monitor initiatives designed to successfully engage Pasifika readers?

- Are our Pasifika learners familiar with the library and what it has to offer? How can we facilitate this in appropriate ways? For example, familiarising learners with how to borrow library material, and how to access a variety of books and electronic media.

- Do we engage Pasifika students and their families in our book selection and purchasing decisions?

- How well does our school link to outside reading resources, such as the local library?

- Have we thought about school reading buddies that include family and community members, including grandparents and retirees? How could we involve them and what training could we provide to assist them? See for example, the case studies (particularly Rosebank School’s case study) on the Te Kete Ipurangi resource section, Literacy Online - Supporting Pasifika learners.

- Are we aware of reading programmes that can be used to effectively progress our Pasifika students’ reading? See for example, the Reading Together® programme and Duffy Books in Home.


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Reflective questions for Pasifika parents, families and communities

- Do I use/support my child to use the school or local library? Why? Why not?

- How often do I go to libraries and bookstores with my younger children?

- Do I get together with my child to build up my child’s (especially boys’) reading enjoyment? For example, through providing them with access to a range of fun relevant reading materials, visiting the museum, studying for church exams, reading Pasifika magazines and books by Pasifika authors.

- How often do I go to libraries and bookstores with my younger children?

- Do I use/support my child to use the school or local library? Why? Why not?

- How often does my child see me or other members of their family reading books for enjoyment? In particular, does my son (or any young boy in our family) see any male relatives reading, so that they know that reading is something to value and do for pleasure?
What do our Pasifika 15-year-olds read for enjoyment?

The evidence indicates that reading a range of reading materials, including fiction, is positively related to reading literacy.

What do the PISA 2009 findings tell us about our Pasifika students?

Typically our Pasifika 15-year-olds who regularly read fiction or non-fiction books (i.e., at least several times a month) were significantly stronger readers than their counterparts who read these materials less often.

Our Pasifika 15-year-olds were likely to read newspapers and magazines more often than fiction books, non-fiction books and comics. Close to two-thirds read newspapers, and well over half read magazines on a regular basis. Well over a third read fiction books, a third read non-fiction books, and close to twenty percent read comics regularly.

Reading fiction or non-fiction books was strongly related to stronger reading literacy skills.

**Pasifika students reading fiction books**

Pasifika students who read fiction on a regular basis were more likely to have much better reading skills than their counterparts who read them less often. Our girls were much more likely to read fiction for enjoyment than our boys.

While our Pasifika 15-year-olds were more likely to read fiction on a regular basis than the average for the 32 OECD countries (OECD average), five percent more of their New Zealand non-Pasifika peers were regular readers.

**Pasifika students reading non-fiction books**

Overall our Pasifika students who read non-fiction books were typically stronger readers than those who read them less often.

Proportionally more Pasifika girls read non-fiction books on a regular basis than boys. This was not the case for their non-Pasifika peers; boys and girls were equally likely to read this genre.

Pasifika students were also more likely to report that they read non-fiction more often than the OECD average.

**Pasifika students reading newspapers**

Our Pasifika boys and girls read newspapers to a similar extent.

While those who read newspapers regularly scored on average 19 points higher than their counterparts who were not regular readers, there is insufficient evidence to confirm that this difference is statistically significant.

Although our 15-year-olds Pasifika students read newspapers more than their non-Pasifika peers, they read them as often as the OECD average.

**Pasifika students reading magazines**

Pasifika girls were more likely than boys to regularly read magazines.

Overall the girls who read magazines regularly had weaker reading literacy skills than girls who read them less often. This was not the case for boys.

Our Pasifika students read magazines to a similar extent to the OECD average.

**Pasifika students reading comics**

Our Pasifika boys were nearly twice as likely as girls to report they read comics regularly.

Overall the boys and girls who read comics on a regular basis were equally likely to be those with weak or strong reading skills.

Pasifika students were as likely to read comics as the OECD average. They were nearly twice as likely to read them as their non-Pasifika peers.
What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students?

The evidence indicates that Pasifika students who read a wide range of materials and enjoy reading fiction are stronger readers. How are you encouraging our Pasifika students to enjoy reading and to read widely?

Reflective questions for leaders of schools with Pasifika students

- Does our school library have a variety of current reading materials that Pasifika children can relate to and engage with? See for example, the New Zealand Pacific picture book collection.
  www.pacificpicturebooks.co.nz

- Does our school library currently cater for different reading opportunities, such as the use of e-books and web-based reading materials? How do we know that? See the National Library website, Developing library services to support Pasifika Learners for tips on providing resources to support Pasifika literacy and learning and tips on creating a culturally inclusive library environment.
  http://schools.natlib.govt.nz/supporting-learners/supporting-pasifika-learners/developing-library-services-support-pasifika

- What processes do we have in place to encourage cross-curriculum liaison among subject teachers? For example, for ensuring reading material is available within and across subject areas.

Reflective questions for teachers of Pasifika students

- To what extent do we plan the deliberate and guided exposure of Pasifika readers to a wide range of text types that will build their reading confidence, ‘widen their world’ and develop the higher level literacy skills required to effectively decode more complex texts?

- To what extent are we deliberately seeking out and incorporating texts with Pasifika knowledge, language, experiences, worldview and relevance in classroom reading literacy tasks? See for example, Pasifika resources for NZ school students (Findlay) for a wide range of Pasifika-related fiction and non-fiction resources on Pacific languages, cultures, arts, literature, history, and science.
  www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=687664

Reflective questions for Pasifika parents, families and communities

- How frequently do we explore how our Pasifika learners see themselves as readers? How frequently do we engage with our Pasifika learners to find out what they are interested in, and what their goals and aspirations in life are? How can we use that information in instructional design, teacher professional learning, and resourcing decisions?

- How often and how well do we encourage the parents of our bilingual Pasifika readers to join in classroom-related activities and ask them to share their home knowledge to support the reading of school-related texts? A discussion on the role of Pasifika languages in the classroom is available on Te Kete Ipurangi.
  http://leap.tki.org.nz/Why-are-Pasifika-languages-keys-to-learning

- How aware are we of and how well do we utilise electronic and multi-media texts with our Pasifika learners? For example, Te Kete Ipurangi has a selection of Digital legends from the Pacific, retold digitally in English and Pacific languages by New Zealand students.
  www.tki.org.nz/r/pasifika/digital_legends/dl/index_e.html
  Other interactive online learning game resources with a Pasifika focus are available at: www.wicked.org.nz/Interactives/Pasifika

- What processes do we have in place to encourage cross-curriculum liaison among subject teachers? For example, for ensuring reading material is available within and across subject areas.

- How do I encourage my child to read a wide range of materials (such as, reading online, comics, magazines and fiction) and in a range of ways that he or she enjoys? How am I helping my child to get the chance to learn to enjoy a wider range of options, and broaden their knowledge and understanding through reading?

- Am I aware of the names of the authors of books that boys and girls of my child’s age enjoy reading? Am I able to discuss with my friends what their children enjoy reading? Am I able to exchange books with my friends or relatives so that our children can read widely?

- As a family, do we keep up with the news? Do we discuss the news with our children? How do we role model that we value written information and reading compared with television watching?
What types of reading literacy tasks did our Pasifika 15-year-olds report that they do in their English classes?

What do the PISA 2009 findings tell us about our Pasifika students?

Pasifika students with stronger reading literacy skills were more likely to have undertaken tasks that involved interpreting literary texts (described below), and to have used non-continuous texts (described below) in their English classes.

Weaker Pasifika readers were more likely to have used the functional texts (e.g., manuals, advertising materials), and been involved in the literature course activities (e.g., learning about the life of a writer, memorising a poem or part of a play) that were examined in PISA.

Pasifika students’ exposure to tasks associated with interpreting literary texts

Overall, boys who reported they had undertaken these relatively complex literary tasks generally had stronger reading skills:

- explaining the way characters behave in a text
- explaining the cause of events in a text
- explaining the purpose of a text.

Boys who undertook these tasks the most, generally had stronger reading skills than their counterparts who used them less often. This was not the case for girls on the first two tasks listed above: overall there was no measurable difference in their reading scores on those tasks.

Our boys were much less likely than girls to have undertaken the three tasks.

The performance gap between boys who had undertaken these tasks the most, relative to those who used them the least, overall is equivalent to nearly two years of schooling.

Our Pasifika students were more likely to report that they used these tasks more often than their non-Pasifika counterparts and the OECD average.

Pasifika students’ exposure to tasks associated with non-continuous texts

Our Pasifika students who had undertaken the following non-continuous text tasks in class the most, were typically those with stronger reading skills:

- finding information from a graph, diagram or table
- using texts that include tables or graphs
- using texts that include diagrams or maps.

Boys were less likely than girls to report that they were exposed to these relatively complex tasks. Those who were, generally had an advantage that is equivalent to approximately one and a half years of schooling.

Typically, Pasifika 15-year-olds used texts containing these types of materials to about the same extent as their non-Pasifika peers and more than their OECD counterparts.
What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students?

While our Pasifika students are more likely to report they are exposed to challenging literacy tasks and texts in their English classes, are these ‘Pasifika connected’?

Reflective questions for teachers of Pasifika students

- How do we promote a sense of urgency for our staff to better understand and more effectively address Pasifika reading literacy outcomes across all subject areas, particularly in respect to the types of reading literacy tasks they do in the classroom? As a school, what professional development/support might we need to provide? What professional development is available?

- While our weaker readers may find more complex reading tasks challenging, what processes do we have in place to ensure they are moving on quickly enough to more challenging tasks?

- Do we know how well our Pasifika students can carry out the reading literacy tasks required of them in our school classrooms? How well are we using and acting on their reading assessment data to promote school-wide teaching strategies to achieve improved outcomes?

- Are we aware that Pasifika learners may interpret and respond to texts in ways which differ from the expected responses, point of view, or the worldview of the teacher? How do we acknowledge this to support accelerated literacy learning for Pasifika?

- How are we encouraging critical reading, analysis and synthesis of ideas that enhance the relevance of new learning from texts for our Pasifika learners? What strategies are being used here, and what do we know about their impact?

Reflective questions for leaders of schools with Pasifika students

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- While our weaker readers may find more complex reading tasks challenging, what processes do we have in place to ensure they are moving on quickly enough to more challenging tasks?

- Do we know how well our Pasifika students can carry out the reading literacy tasks required of them in our school classrooms? How well are we using and acting on their reading assessment data to promote school-wide teaching strategies to achieve improved outcomes?

- Are we aware that Pasifika learners may interpret and respond to texts in ways which differ from the expected responses, point of view, or the worldview of the teacher? How do we acknowledge this to support accelerated literacy learning for Pasifika?

- How are we encouraging critical reading, analysis and synthesis of ideas that enhance the relevance of new learning from texts for our Pasifika learners? What strategies are being used here, and what do we know about their impact?
Do teachers use motivational, structuring and scaffolding practices?

The evidence indicates that exposure to challenging and motivational practices and complex structuring and scaffolding practices in English classes are positively related to reading literacy for Pasifika students.

What do the PISA 2009 findings tell us about our Pasifika students?

Pasifika students with stronger reading skills were more likely to report they had been exposed to the range of motivational practices and structuring and scaffolding practices examined in PISA.

The motivational practices and structuring and scaffolding practices listed below were strongly associated with Pasifika boys’ reading literacy skills. Overall the score point difference in reading for boys in classes where teachers used these practices the most, was equivalent to well over one and a half years of schooling.

**Pasifika students’ exposure to motivational practices**

Pasifika boys in English classes where their teachers used the following motivational practices in all or most of their lessons, were likely to have stronger reading literacy skills. This was particularly marked on the first three strategies listed below:

- asking questions that challenge students to get a better understanding of a text
- asking students to explain the meaning of a text
- giving students enough time to think about their answers
- showing students how the information in a text builds on what they already know
- encouraging students to express their opinion about a text.

While these practices had a relatively strong relationship with Pasifika boys’ reading literacy skills and knowledge, the relationship was weaker for girls.

Pasifika boys and girls were equally likely to report that their teachers used these motivational practices.

Pasifika students were much more likely than their non-Pasifika peers and their OECD counterparts to report that their teachers use motivational practices in all or most of their English classes.

**Pasifika students’ exposure to structuring and scaffolding practices**

Pasifika boys who reported that the following structuring and scaffolding practices were used in most or all of their English classes, were likely to have stronger reading skills than their counterparts in classes where these practices were used less often:

- explaining beforehand what is expected of students
- telling students in advance how their work is going to be assessed
- giving students a chance to ask questions about a reading assignment
- asking whether every student has understood how to complete a reading assignment
- checking students are concentrating while working on a reading assignment
- discussing students’ work after they have finished a reading assignment
- marking students’ work.

Their female counterparts were more likely to report that their teachers used these practices.

Pasifika students were more likely than their non-Pasifika peers to report that teachers use structuring and scaffolding practices in their English classes; they were also more likely to do so than the OECD average.
What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for our school leaders, teachers, parents, families and communities of Pasifika students?

Pasifika students are more likely than non-Pasifika students to report that their teachers use motivational and scaffolding and structuring practices in their English classes. But are these practices ‘Pasifika connected’ (particularly for our boys) to enable them to tackle complex and challenging texts and literacy tasks?

Reflective questions for leaders of schools with Pasifika students

- How do we consistently communicate to our Pasifika learners the expectation that they can and will be successful readers?
- How do we actively develop our students’ feelings of personal efficacy in reading, self-motivation to read, and personal responsibility for their own development as readers?
- How well are we using quality teaching practices to best aid the diversity of our Pasifika students? For a best evidence synthesis on quality teaching that recognises diversity across ethnic groups as well as within individual students see Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) (Alton-Lee 2003). Also, see New Zealand Post Primary Teachers’ Association’s quality teaching taskforce’s report, Quality teaching for excellence and Equity (PPTA 2012) that identifies the 10 key quality teaching factors noted in the above BES report.
- How are we using the teacher inquiry approach to teaching so that we become more culturally responsive and improve outcomes for our Pasifika students? See for example, http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-stories/Case-studies/Teachers-as-learners-Inquiry
- How do we go about providing our students with opportunities to actively participate in communicative tasks that encourage shared and scaffolded critical thinking and evaluation?
- How are we motivating Pasifika students and engaging them in reading and learning through student-to-student guided talk about shared text and their learning from it?
- How do we integrate vocabulary learning seamlessly into our students’ lessons, and how do we assist them to develop a wide range of strategies for dealing with unknown vocabulary in text? For example, using literacy strategies that are included as a part of a lesson planner. A range of language-based teaching and learning strategies to enhance Pasifika learning is available on Te Kete Ipurangi.
- How do we go about leading and sustaining teacher inquiry so that we encourage the continual search for improvement in teaching practice, knowledge building cycles and professional learning communities? See for example, Using inquiry to engage Pasifika learners.
- Do we call on external expertise (particularly Pasifika people/organisations) for professional learning relating to our students’ reading literacy? How effective is this? How do we know? For an example of a programme aimed at supporting literacy through increased home-school connections in 2006 - 2007, see Evaluation of the Home-School Partnership: Literacy Programme (Brooking & Roberts 2007).
- www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/curriculum/evaluation_homeschool

Reflective questions for teachers of our Pasifika students

- What do we know about our students’ life experiences, culture and what they do outside of school so that new learning can be linked to their prior knowledge so that it’s meaningful? See for example, the Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education 2013).
- www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan2013
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Reflective questions for leaders of schools with Pasifika students

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- www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/curriculum/evaluation_homeschool

Reflective questions for Pasifika parents, families and communities

- Are we involving ourselves in our children’s school and supporting our children to successfully complete their assignments? Do we have enough knowledge and information to be able to do this? What else do we need to know?
- How do we work with our children to ensure that they are clear about what they are expected to do for a school assignment and know how it’s going to be assessed?
- Do we ask our children’s teachers about what more we could do to support our children’s reading at home and their school assignments?
- As a community, how do we support each other’s families to help our children enjoy and complete their school assignments?
What do the PISA 2009 findings tell us about our Pasifika students?

Pasifika students who knew about the learning strategies requiring metacognition skills (summarising complex information and understanding and remembering information in a text) that international reading experts judged as the most effective were typically strong readers.

Control learning strategies (strategies that require students to self-direct their learning) were also strongly related to stronger reading skills.

Overall the performance gap between students who reported knowing the most about the effective understanding and remembering strategies and summarising strategies examined in PISA, relative to those who knew about them the least, was equivalent to at least two years and half years of schooling.

Pasifika students who used control strategies typically had a reading advantage equivalent to one and a half years of schooling.

Our Pasifika boys were much less likely than our girls to know about these effective learning approaches.

Are our Pasifika students aware of effective strategies for learning?

The evidence indicates that knowing the effective strategies for summarising and understanding and remembering complex information, and using control strategies when they study, are positively related to reading literacy.

Pasifika students’ knowledge of strategies for summarising complex information

Pasifika students with stronger reading literacy skills were more likely to know that the following summarising strategies are effective learning approaches:

- carefully checking whether the most important facts in the text are represented in the summary
- reading through the text underlining the most important sentences, and then writing them down in your own words.

Just over half of them knew about the two effective summarising strategies.

Pasifika boys were much less aware than our Pasifika girls of these effective summarising strategies. This was the case in all 34 OECD countries.

It is a concern that more than 20% of our Pasifika 15-year-old students considered that trying to copy out accurately as many sentences as possible an effective summarising strategy. Overall those students were very weak readers.

Pasifika 15-year-olds were much less likely to be aware of the effective learning summarising strategies than their non-Pasifika peers and the OECD average.

Pasifika students’ knowledge of strategies for understanding and remembering information

On average the following understanding and remembering strategies examined in PISA were used by Pasifika students with strong reading skills:

- summarising the text in your own words
- underlining the most important parts of the text.

Well under half of our Pasifika 15-year-old boys knew about these two effective strategies for understanding and remembering information.

Although the strategy of reading the text and then discussing its contents with other people had a strong relationship with non-Pasifika students’ reading skills, this was not the case for our Pasifika students. This suggests that our students have not been equipped with the skills to enable them to use this strategy effectively.

Pasifika boys were less aware than their female counterparts of the effective understanding and remembering learning strategies. This was the case in all 34 OECD countries.

Around a quarter of our Pasifika 15-year-olds rated the ineffective strategies of concentrating on parts of the texts that are easy to understand and quickly reading through the text twice, as highly effective.

Our Pasifika 15-year-olds were much less aware of the effective strategies for understanding and remembering information than their non-Pasifika peers and the OECD average.
Pasifika students’ use of control strategies (self-directing or self-regulating their learning)

The five control strategies examined in PISA were all strongly related to reading literacy skills:

- making sure that you remember the most important points in the text
- if you don’t understand something looking for additional information to clarify this
- figuring out which concepts you do not really understand
- starting by figuring out exactly what you need to learn
- checking if you understand what you have read.

Pasifika boys were much less likely than girls to use these effective learning strategies.

Pasifika students were as likely to report that they use control strategies as their non-Pasifika peers, but more likely to use them than the OECD average.

Pasifika students’ use of memorisation strategies (storing information with greater emphasis on recitation than on processing meaning)

Well over a third of our Pasifika boys and girls reported that they read the text so many times that they could recite it. This proportion was nearly twice that of their non-Pasifika peers. Typically students who used this strategy were weak readers.

Pasifika boys were much less likely than our girls to use memorisation strategies when they study.

Pasifika 15-year-olds were much more likely than their non-Pasifika peers and the OECD average to use strategies that are associated with memorisation when they study.

What might the PISA 2009 findings mean for school leaders, teachers, families and communities of Pasifika students?

The evidence indicates that Pasifika students who are aware of and use effective learning strategies when they study have stronger reading skills. What processes do we have in place to equip and empower our children with these essential learning tools?

Reflective questions for leaders of schools with Pasifika students

- Do we know whether our teachers (across the different learning/subject areas) are aware of the extent to which Pasifika students in their classes know about, and are able to use effective strategies for reading and learning? How do we know? What do we know?

- What professional development opportunities have we provided our teachers to ensure that they are providing optimal learning environments and teaching strategies for Pasifika students develop to extend their learning, including the use of effective literacy and other learning strategies? See for example, LEAP, Extending students’ existing learning strategies, at Te Kete Ipurangi.

  http://leap.tki.org.nz/Extending-students-existing-learning-strategies

- How well equipped are our teachers to ensure that Pasifika students develop effective strategies for learning and responding to the literacy and content demands of the curriculum? See for example, the research report on successful teaching and learning strategies for Pasifika learners (at the tertiary level), Sharing successful teaching and learning strategies for Māori, Pacific and youth learners – The Whitireia Way (Tomoana 2012).

Reflective questions for teachers of Pasifika students

- How do we create a classroom environment that supports and encourages our students to understand, think and remember what they are reading and learning? How well do we incorporate students’ life experiences, culture, and what they do outside of school into their learning in class so that their learning is more meaningful? See for example, the Quality Teaching for Diverse Students, *Best Evidence Synthesis Exemplar 4: Reciprocal Teaching* (Alton-Lee, Westera & Pulegatoa-Diggins 2012). www.educationcounts.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/107108/BES-Exemplar4.pdf

- In what ways could we do more of this? For example, how could we draw on the knowledge, experiences and expertise of Pasifika parents/families/community members/groups, Pasifika students, and Pasifika colleagues, to help us with this? For an example of how Pasifika students can be encouraged to participate in and lead their own storytelling and literacy experiences, see the Living Heritage initiative. www.livingheritage.org.nz/

- Do we as teachers work collaboratively to explore how to apply theories about effective learning strategies to the specific identities, languages and cultures of our Pasifika students? What Pasifika cultural guidance do they draw on to guide this process? For example, drawing on the knowledge and skills of Pasifika staff members, Pasifika parents/family/community members, or Pasifika learners themselves?

Reflective questions for Pasifika parents, families and communities

- Do we/our children know which learning strategies are the most effective for reading and learning?

- How can I support my child to strengthen these? Where do I go to find further help with this?

- How often do I take the opportunity to ask my child’s teachers and school leaders to share their knowledge about ways in which we can help our children learn?

- How often does my child’s teachers ask me for insights into my child’s reading and learning experiences?

- What sorts of questions would I like to ask about my child’s learning and how can I help them? How confident do I feel about asking these questions, and what would help me to ask them? Who in our community could support me to do this?

- As a community, how well are we encouraging and coaching our children to be the best learners they can be? For example, do we ourselves know about the best ways to study effectively, and do we remind our young people of the importance of doing this?

- How can I learn more about what I need to do to help our young people’s learning? What things can I actively do right now to be more supportive of their reading and learning so that they do well at school?
### Types of tasks students can do at each PISA reading proficiency level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Lower score limit</th>
<th>Percentage of students able to perform tasks at this level or above</th>
<th>Characteristics of tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>1% of students across the OECD can perform tasks at least at Level 5 on the reading scale 3% of non-Pasifika students 1% of Pasifika students</td>
<td>Tasks at this level typically require the reader to make multiple inferences, comparisons and contrasts that are both detailed and precise. They require demonstration of a full and detailed understanding of one or more texts and may involve integrating information from more than one text. Tasks may require the reader to deal with unfamiliar ideas, in the presence of prominent competing information, and to generate abstract categories for interpretations. Reflect and evaluate tasks may require the reader to hypothesise about or critically evaluate a complex text on an unfamiliar topic, taking into account multiple criteria or perspectives, and applying sophisticated understandings from beyond the text. A salient condition for access and retrieve tasks at this level is precision of analysis and fine attention to detail that is inconspicuous in the texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>8% of students across the OECD can perform tasks at least at Level 5 on the reading scale 17% of non-Pasifika students 4% of Pasifika students</td>
<td>Tasks at this level that involve retrieving information require the reader to locate and organise several pieces of deeply embedded information, inferring which information in the text is relevant. Reflective tasks require critical evaluation or hypothesis, drawing on specialised knowledge. Both interpretative and reflective tasks require a full and detailed understanding of a text whose content or form is unfamiliar. For all aspects of reading, tasks at this level typically involve dealing with concepts that are contrary to expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>28% of students across the OECD can perform tasks at least at Level 4 on the reading scale 44% of non-Pasifika students 17% of Pasifika students</td>
<td>Tasks at this level that involve retrieving information require the reader to locate and organise several pieces of embedded information. Some tasks at this level require interpreting the meaning of a familiar topic, or to make a simple connection between information in the text and common, everyday knowledge. Other reflective tasks require understanding and applying categories in an unfamiliar context. Reflective tasks at this level require readers to use formal or public knowledge to hypothesise about or critically evaluate a text. Readers must demonstrate an accurate understanding of long or complex texts whose content or form may be unfamiliar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>57% of students across the OECD can perform tasks at least at Level 3 on the reading scale 70% of non-Pasifika students 37% of Pasifika students</td>
<td>Tasks at this level require the reader to locate, and in some cases recognise the relationship between, several pieces of information that must meet multiple conditions. Interpretive tasks at this level require the reader to integrate several parts of a text in order to identify a main idea, understand a relationship or construe the meaning of a word or phrase. They need to take into account many features in comparing, contrasting or categorising. Often the required information is not prominent or there is much competing information; or there are other text obstacles, such as ideas that are contrary to expectation or negatively worded. Reflective tasks at this level may require connections, comparisons, and explanations, or they may require the reader to evaluate a feature of the text. Some reflective tasks require readers to demonstrate a fine understanding of the text in relation to familiar, everyday knowledge. Other tasks do not require detailed text comprehension but require the reader to draw on less common knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>81% of students across the OECD can perform tasks at least at Level 2 on the reading scale 88% of non-Pasifika students 62% of Pasifika students</td>
<td>Some tasks at this level require the reader to locate one or more pieces of information, which may need to be inferred and may need to meet several conditions. Others require recognising the main idea in a text, understanding relationships, or construing meaning within a limited part of the text when the information is not prominent and the reader must make low level inferences. Tasks at this level may involve comparisons or contrasts based on a single feature in the text. Typical reflective tasks at this level require readers to make a comparison or several connections between the text and outside knowledge, by drawing on personal experience and attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>94% of students across the OECD can perform tasks at least at Level 3 97% of non-Pasifika students 87% of Pasifika students</td>
<td>Tasks at this level require the reader to locate one or more independent pieces of explicitly stated information; to recognise the main theme or author's purpose in a text about a familiar topic, or to make a simple connection between information in the text and common, everyday knowledge. Typically the required information in the text is prominent and there is little, if any, competing information. The reader is explicitly directed to consider relevant factors in the task and in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>99% of students across the OECD can perform tasks at least at Level 5 99% of non-Pasifika students 97% of Pasifika students</td>
<td>Tasks at this level require the reader to locate a single piece of explicitly stated information in a prominent position in a short, syntactically simple text with a familiar context and text type, such as a narrative or a simple list. The text typically provides support to the reader, such as repetition of information, pictures or familiar symbols. There is minimal competing information. In tasks requiring interpretation the reader may need to make simple connections between adjacent pieces of information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of countries and economies participating in PISA 2009**

- Albania*
- Austria
- Brazil*
- Chile
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Germany
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Japan
- Korea
- Liechtenstein*
- Macao-China*
- Netherlands
- Panama*
- Portugal
- Russian Federation*
- Singapore*
- Spain
- Chinese Taipei*
- Tunisia*
- United States
- Argentina*
- Azerbaijan*
- Bulgaria*
- Colombia*
- Denmark
- Finland
- Greece
- Ireland
- Israel
- Jordan*
- Kyrgyz Republic*
- Lithuania*
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Peru*
- Qatar*
- Serbia*
- Slovak Republic
- Sweden
- Thailand*
- Turkey
- Uruguay*
- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- Croatia*
- Dubai (UAE)*
- France
- Hong Kong-China*
- Indonesia*
- Italy
- Kazakhstan*
- Latvia*
- Luxembourg
- Montenegro*
- Norway
- Poland
- Romania*
- Shanghai-China*
- Slovenia
- Switzerland
- Trinidad and Tobago*
- United Kingdom

* non-OECD countries and economies