

Student Difficulties

The PILNA 2021 student questionnaire collected information about difficulties students experienced beyond well-being. Specifically, the questionnaire asked students to respond to statements about their ability to learn, manage themselves, and navigate their environment. Their responses highlight the learning support needs in the region.

Students were provided with a list of situations and were asked to indicate whether they had any difficulty with them. The situations were framed around physical, cognitive and behavioural challenges, such as seeing, hearing, managing behaviour and walking. The responses they could give were 'No difficulty', 'A little difficulty', 'A lot of difficulty', or 'I cannot do it at all'.

Proportions of students experiencing challenges

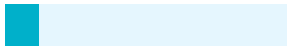
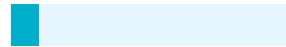
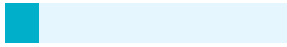
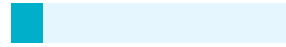
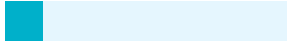
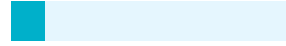
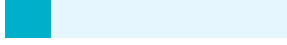
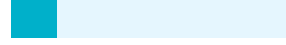
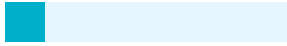
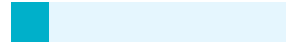
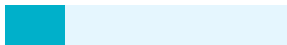
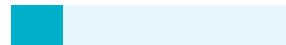
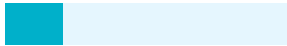
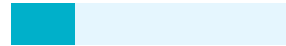
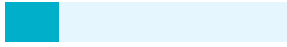
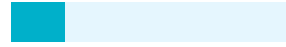
Table STT1.9 lists the challenges to student learning measured by the questionnaire. This table also shows the proportions of year four and year six students who reported these as either 'A lot of difficulty' or 'I cannot do this at all'. This allows us to identify the proportion of students on whom these factors posed a severe burden.

Overall, the distribution of students reporting at least 'A lot of difficulty' across the eight items was relatively concentrated. For both year four students and year six students, the proportion of students reporting at least 'A lot of difficulty' across the items was between 10% and 22%.

The most frequent difficulty was 'Controlling your behaviour' (year four, 20%; year six, 22%). This was followed by 'Learning or remembering things' (year four, 21%; year six, 18%) and 'concentrating and focusing your attention' (year four, 19%; year six, 19%). The least reported difficulty was 'Seeing, even if wearing glasses' (year four, 12%; year six, 10%).

Table STT1.9

Percentage of students with difficulties

Category	Year 4	Year 6
Seeing, even if wearing glasses	 12% (1.3)	 10% (0.9)
Hearing, even if wearing a hearing aid	 12% (1.4)	 11% (1.1)
Walking or climbing steps	 13% (1.4)	 12% (1.1)
Being understood by other people when I speak	 16% (1.5)	 16% (1.3)
Self-care, such as feeding or dressing yourself	 14% (1.5)	 13% (1.3)
Learning or remembering things	 21% (1.8)	 18% (1.5)
Controlling your behaviour	 20% (1.6)	 22% (1.8)
Concentrating and focusing your attention	 19% (1.7)	 19% (1.3)

Percentage of students with difficulties, Fiji, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

These findings can be compared with teachers' responses to a similar set of items (Student difficulties reported by the teacher). Not all the items were the same but there are interesting comparisons that can be made for the items about controlling their behaviour, and concentrating and focusing their attention.

What does this mean?

A large proportion of students in Fiji are experiencing behavioural and cognitive challenges related to learning and school environments in general. One out of five students across both year four and six are finding it difficult to concentrate and, relatedly, finding it difficult to control their behaviour. Smaller proportions of students are experiencing difficulties with sensory or physical tasks. These findings can inform learning support activities in Fiji.