

Teacher confidence in teaching

Teachers were asked two sets of questions about their confidence in teaching: one set for literacy topics and the other for numeracy topics. The questions were phrased as: 'How do you find teaching the following aspects of literacy/numeracy?' Their response options were limited to a four-point scale: 'Very difficult', 'Difficult', 'Easy', and 'Very easy'.

Confidence in teaching literacy

For reporting purposes, teachers who responded with 'Easy' or 'Very easy' were considered to demonstrate confidence in teaching a particular topic.

Table TT2.7 shows the percentage of students in Fiji whose teacher expressed confidence in teaching literacy topics.

Overall, most students in both year levels had teachers who were confident in teaching literacy topics; the proportions of students with such teachers ranged from 84% to 100%.



















Across both year levels, areas where a lower proportion of students had teachers who expressed confidence were 'Organisation and structure' (year four, 86%; year six, 84%) and 'Quality of ideas' (year four, 90%; year six, 85%).

Areas with the highest proportions of students having teachers who expressed confidence were 'Oral language' (year four, 99%; year six, 100%), 'Reading comprehension' (year four, 96%; year six, 98%); 'Vocabulary' (year four, 92%; year six, 98%); 'Letter sound correspondence' (year four, 95%; year six, 94%); and 'Spelling and punctuation' (year four, 94%; year six, 97%).

Areas where fewer students had confident teachers appear to be in areas with more subjective or more complex teaching and assessment criteria, such as 'Quality of ideas' and 'Organisation and structure' in writing.

Table TT2.7

Percentage of students whose teachers expressed confidence in teaching literacy

Subject	Year 4	Year 6
Vocabulary	 92% (2.8)	 98% (2.8)
Grammar and syntax	 91% (2.9)	 93% (2.9)
Spelling and punctuation	 94% (2.7)	 97% (2.7)
Quality of ideas (writing)	 90% (2.4)	 85% (2.4)
Organisation and structure (writing)	 86% (3.5)	 84% (3.5)
Phonemic awareness	 90% (2.4)	 87% (2.4)
Letter sound correspondence	 95% (1.9)	 94% (1.9)
Reading comprehension	 96% (2.1)	 98% (2.1)
Oral language (speaking and listening)	 99% (0.8)	 100% (0.8)

Percentage of students whose teachers expressed confidence in teaching literacy, Fiji, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

The same questions were asked of teachers in the 2018 PILNA cycle and results from both the 2018 and 2021 cycles of PILNA are presented here for comparison. Table TT2.8 shows the differences in the percentages of students who had a teacher confident in teaching the various literacy areas between 2018 and 2021 PILNA cycles.

Compared with the 2018 PILNA cycle, more students in 2021 had teachers who expressed confidence in teaching literacy across all areas. Every literacy area saw an increase in the proportion of students who had a teacher confident in teaching it. This was true across both year four students and year six students.

Overall, a greater proportion of teachers in Fiji were confident in teaching literacy areas compared with the regional averages.

Table TT2.8

Percentage of students whose teachers express confidence in teaching literacy in 2018 and 2021

Subject	2018	Difference	2021
Year 4			
Vocabulary	90% (3.6)		92% (2.8)
Grammar and syntax	79% (4.1)		91% (2.9)
Spelling and punctuation	88% (3.0)		94% (2.7)
Quality of ideas (writing)	61% (5.7)		90% (2.4)
Organisation and structure (writing)	65% (5.3)		86% (3.5)
Phonemic awareness	79% (4.1)		90% (2.4)
Letter sound correspondence	84% (4.2)		95% (1.9)
Reading comprehension	83% (3.1)		96% (2.1)
Oral language (speaking and listening)	91% (2.7)		99% (0.8)
Year 6			
Vocabulary	90% (2.6)		98% (1.3)
Grammar and syntax	76% (3.7)		93% (2.5)
Spelling and punctuation	89% (2.8)		97% (1.7)
Quality of ideas (writing)	76% (3.5)		85% (3.9)
Organisation and structure (writing)	75% (4.0)		84% (3.5)
Phonemic awareness	84% (3.1)		87% (3.6)
Letter sound correspondence	88% (2.5)		94% (2.0)
Reading comprehension	90% (2.4)		98% (1.1)
Oral language (speaking and listening)	89% (2.8)		100% (0.0)

Percentage of students whose teachers express confidence in teaching literacy in 2018 and 2021, Fiji, PILNA 2018 and 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Confidence in teaching literacy and teacher qualities

A regional scale focused on measuring teachers' confidence in teaching literacy based on teachers' responses was established. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher levels of confidence in teaching literacy. The literacy teaching

confidence scores were analysed against teacher demographics (gender, age, teaching experience, and qualification level). The significant findings are listed below.

- Female teachers were more confident in teaching literacy than male teachers.
- Teachers who had a degree level or higher qualification were more confident than teachers who did not.
- Teachers who were in the younger age range (20–35 years old) were more confident in teaching literacy than teachers in the older age range (over 35 years old).
- Teachers with less experience in teaching (less than 10 years) expressed more confidence in teaching literacy than teachers with more experience (more than 10 years).

The PILNA scale for teachers' confidence in teaching literacy has an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160–240). The scale was formed from statistical analysis of the answers to all nine questions that teachers were asked about their confidence in teaching this area.

Confidence in teaching numeracy

Table TT2.9 shows the percentage of students whose teachers expressed confidence in teaching numeracy topics.















Most students in both year levels had teachers who were confident in teaching numeracy topics. Across both year levels, the proportion of students with confident teachers in the numeracy topics ranged between 86% and 99%.

Across both year levels, a topic where a lower proportion of students had teachers who expressed confidence was 'Fractions and percentages', although this was not lower by much (year four, 86%; year six, 93%).

Overall, a greater proportion of teachers in Fiji were confident in teaching numeracy areas compared with the regional averages.

Table TT2.9

Percentage of students whose teachers express confidence in teaching numeracy 2021

Subject	Year 4	Year 6
Number and patterns	 98% (1.5)	 99% (0.7)
Place value	 97% (1.4)	 99% (1.0)
Fractions and percentage	 86% (3.0)	 93% (1.8)
Operations	 93% (2.5)	 96% (1.8)
Measurement	 95% (2.3)	 96% (1.6)
Geometry	 94% (2.5)	 96% (1.6)
Data and chance	 93% (2.7)	 94% (2.0)

Percentage of students whose teachers expressed confidence in teaching numeracy, Fiji, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

The same questions were asked of teachers in the 2018 PILNA cycle and results from both cycles are presented for comparison. Table TT2.10 shows the differences in the percentages of students who had a teacher confident in teaching the various numeracy areas between 2018 and 2021 PILNA cycles.

Similar findings were found in numeracy as in literacy. In every numeracy area, across both year levels, the proportion of students who had a teacher confident in teaching each area was either higher or the same in 2021 compared with 2018.

Table TT2.10

Percentage of students whose teachers express confidence in teaching numeracy in 2018 and 2021

Cohort	Category	2018	Difference	2021
Year 4	Number and patterns	98% (1.2)		98% (1.5)
Year 4	Place value	95% (2.2)		97% (1.4)
Year 4	Fractions and percentages	65% (4.8)		86% (3.0)
Year 4	Operations	78% (3.8)		93% (2.5)
Year 4	Measurement	87% (4.5)		95% (2.3)
Year 4	Geometry	90% (2.7)		94% (2.5)
Year 4	Data and chance	74% (4.0)		93% (2.7)
Year 6	Number and patterns	99% (0.5)		99% (0.7)
Year 6	Place value	95% (2.1)		99% (1.0)
Year 6	Fractions and percentage	72% (4.3)		93% (1.8)
Year 6	Operations	84% (3.7)		96% (1.8)
Year 6	Measurement	88% (2.9)		96% (1.6)
Year 6	Geometry	92% (2.7)		96% (1.6)
Year 6	Data and chance	85% (3.3)		94% (2.0)

Percentage of students whose teachers expressed confidence in teaching numeracy in 2018 and 2021, Fiji, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Confidence in teaching numeracy and teacher characteristics

A regional scale with nine items focused on measuring teachers' confidence in teaching numeracy based on teachers' responses was established. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher levels of confidence in teaching numeracy. As with literacy, the numeracy teaching confidence scores were compared to teachers' demographic groups (gender, age, teaching experience, highest qualification). There were no gender differences for numeracy teaching confidence, but other significant differences were found.

- Teachers who had a degree level or higher qualification were more confident in teaching numeracy than teachers who did not.
- Teachers who were in the younger age range (<35 years old) were more confident in teaching numeracy than teachers in the older age range (over 35 years old).

The PILNA scale for teachers' confidence in teaching numeracy has an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160–240). The scale was formed by statistical analysis of the answers to six out of seven questions teachers were asked about their confidence in teaching this area.

What does this mean?

A high proportion of students in Fiji have teachers who are confident in teaching literacy and numeracy. Overall, a greater proportion of teachers in Fiji were confident in teaching both literacy and numeracy areas compared with the regional averages. The proportion of students who have confident teachers were about the same in the numeracy domain as in the literacy domain.

In literacy, fewer students have confident teachers in areas that require more subjective or complex teaching and assessment, such as quality of ideas and organisation and structure in writing.

Differences were noted within the comparisons of teacher demographic factors. In numeracy, teachers with degree level or higher qualifications were more confident in teaching numeracy than teachers with lower-level qualifications. Teachers who were younger (>35 years old) were also more confident in teaching numeracy than teachers who were older (>35 years old).

For literacy,

The reasons for these differences are unknown. It may be that younger and more qualified teachers have inflated confidence in teaching from their more limited teaching experience or due to changes in pre-service teacher education.