

Access to textbooks

Teachers were asked about the number of textbooks for literacy and numeracy that year four and year six students had access to. They were provided with five options to choose from.

- Each student has their own textbook.
- Two students share one textbook.
- More than two students share one textbook.
- Only the teacher has the textbook.
- No textbook is provided.

Student access to textbooks

On average, teachers reported that 27% of year four students and 34% of year six students had their own literacy textbooks. For numeracy the numbers were higher with 30% of year four and 36% of year six students having their own numeracy textbooks. So, about a third of students across the year levels had access to a personal textbook.

In contrast, about four out of ten year four students either had no literacy or numeracy textbook or only the teacher had a textbook. This finding was lower for year six students. About three out of ten year six students either had no literacy or numeracy textbook or only the teacher had a textbook. A significant proportion of students had no easy access to textbooks to study from.

There were also large variances seen at a country level. In PILNA 2021 participating countries, the proportions of students having their own literacy and numeracy textbooks ranged from 0% to 87% for year four students while for year six students, this variance was even higher, ranging from 0% to 100%.

The full range of teacher responses by literacy, numeracy, and year level is shown in Table 1.

Table RCTT#1

Percentage of students with access to literacy and numeracy textbooks in class

Access to textbooks	Year 4		Year 6	
Literacy				
Each student has their own textbook	<div><div></div></div>	27% (1.7)	<div><div></div></div>	34% (1.5)
Two students share one textbook	<div><div></div></div>	20% (1.5)	<div><div></div></div>	18% (1.3)
More than two students share one textbook	<div><div></div></div>	13% (1.2)	<div><div></div></div>	14% (1.3)
Only the teacher has the textbook	<div><div></div></div>	32% (1.4)	<div><div></div></div>	28% (1.4)
There is no textbook at all	<div><div></div></div>	8% (1.4)	<div><div></div></div>	6% (0.7)
Numeracy				
Each student has their own textbook	<div><div></div></div>	30% (1.5)	<div><div></div></div>	36% (1.6)
Two students share one textbook	<div><div></div></div>	20% (1.5)	<div><div></div></div>	22% (1)
More than two students share one textbook	<div><div></div></div>	13% (1.4)	<div><div></div></div>	13% (1.2)
Only the teacher has the textbook	<div><div></div></div>	28% (1.8)	<div><div></div></div>	24% (0.8)
There is no textbook at all	<div><div></div></div>	9% (1.9)	<div><div></div></div>	6% (1.7)

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

What does this mean?

Access to textbooks varies throughout Pacific schools, creating different learning environments for students, depending on the school they attend.

The reasons for this are not known. It may be that some schools are experiencing resource issues or textbooks are not deemed necessary by some schools. Textbook access across both year levels also varies significantly by country. This suggests that countries have distinct learning environments or textbook needs.

As learning environments throughout the region are diverse, it is difficult to determine the effect on students that this text book access variance may have.