

Priority areas for intervention: reading and formative assessment

Support is needed to improve student reading performance and formative assessment practices in the region.

SPC-EQAP has identified two priority areas that apply across all recommendations: (i) support is needed for student reading performance; and (ii) formative assessment practices. These areas can have substantial effects on student performance.

Student reading performance

Student reading performance is a priority for intervention due to its underperformance in PILNA 2021 and its effects on a diverse set of learning outcomes.

Students require reading ability to not only engage with texts but also to understand problems and succeed in all subjects. The relatively low reading scores from PILNA 2021 may, if left unaddressed, cause lower performance in all subjects as the students progress through school. Targeted interventions for reading performance are needed from a household level to a governmental and regional level.

Some recommendations for identifying, designing and implementing these interventions are provided in the stakeholder recommendations.

Formative assessment practices

Formative assessment practices are also a priority for the region; evidence has shown that these are among the most effective strategies for improving student performance in all areas.

Formative assessment can be described as frequent and informal assessment of student learning that identifies learning needs and allows teachers to adapt their teaching accordingly.

Some consider this as 'checking-in' with students for their understanding and identifying where extra support or teaching is needed. These practices can ensure that a greater number of students understand new concepts and that slower learners are identified and can receive the required support.

Given the number of students who are experiencing learning difficulties, formative assessment practices could have benefits across the region. These practices are powerful tools that can also improve teaching and learning for whole classes, as well as individual students.

It is recommended that regional entities, ministries of education, teacher education institutions, school leaders and teachers strengthen, develop and utilise formative assessment practices. Some recommendations for this are provided in the stakeholder recommendations.