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Cognitive data collection instruments

Cognitive data were collected through two instruments: a literacy instrument and a numeracy instrument. These were based on the 2016 Pacific regional benchmarks for literacy and numeracy and are the culmination of work that began with the first PILNA cycle in 2012. Refinements have been made to these instruments over time and will continue to be made where analysis finds they can improve.

Each PILNA cycle has had a pilot study for the cognitive instruments in the year prior to its implementation. The results of these studies inform changes to the cognitive instruments; the changes for 2021 are outlined in the previous section.

Literacy instrument

The literacy instrument is a single booklet that contains the reading assessment on one side and the writing assessment on the other.

Students were allowed 15 minutes to read the reading section and instructions before being allowed one hour to complete the reading portion of the assessment. A further 45 minutes was allowed for students to complete the writing assessment. Three different versions of the test booklet were used.

The reading assessment focuses on three areas:

- identifying information;
- interpreting information; and
- critically analysing information.

The writing assessment focuses on six key areas:

- quality of ideas;
- structure and organisation;
- grammar and syntax;
- vocabulary;
- spelling; and
- punctuation.

Numeracy instrument

The numeracy instrument is a single booklet that contains the numeracy assessment on one side and the student questionnaire on the other side.

Students were given ten minutes to read the numeracy section and instructions before being allowed one hour to complete the assessment. Students then completed the student questionnaire.

The numeracy assessment contains four strands:

- number;
- operations;
- measurement and geometry; and
- data and chance.

Specific information about the content of the assessments cannot be supplied for security reasons.