

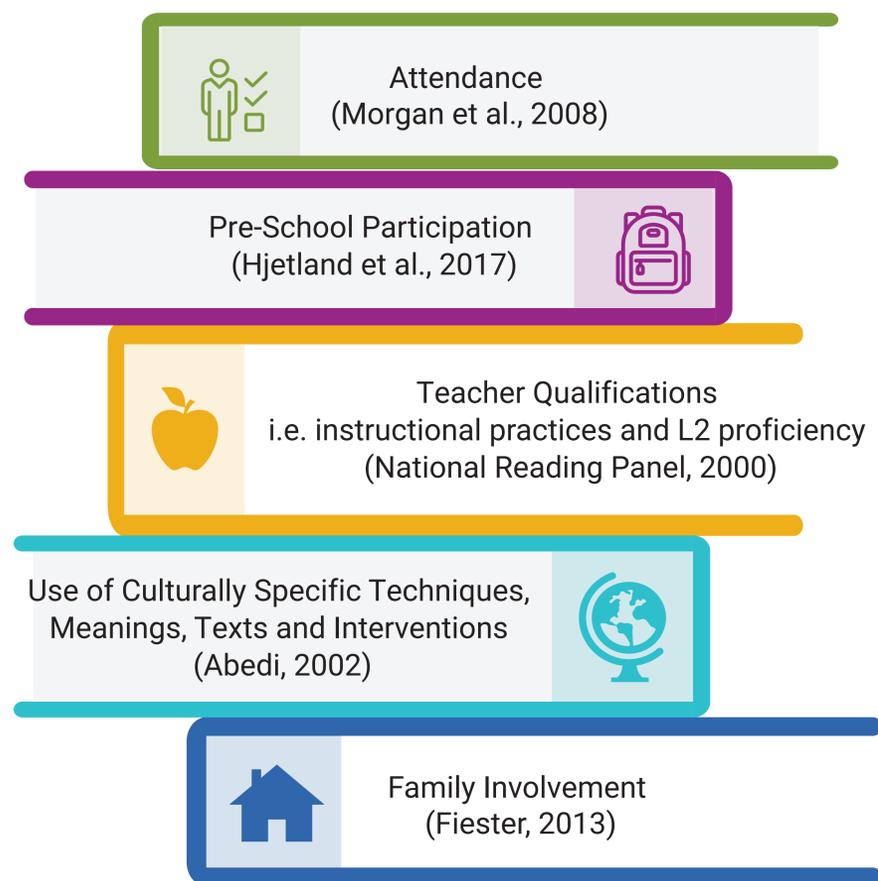
Analyzing Key Factors Affecting Early Reading Development and Performance in a Pacific Region Context



Research shows that making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn by the end of grade 3 is a crucial moment in a student's academic career. Students who do not reach grade-level proficiency by this time have significantly reduced chances of graduating from high school and succeeding in their careers (Hernandez, 2011). Grade 3 is also when students begin to be tested on their reading skills.

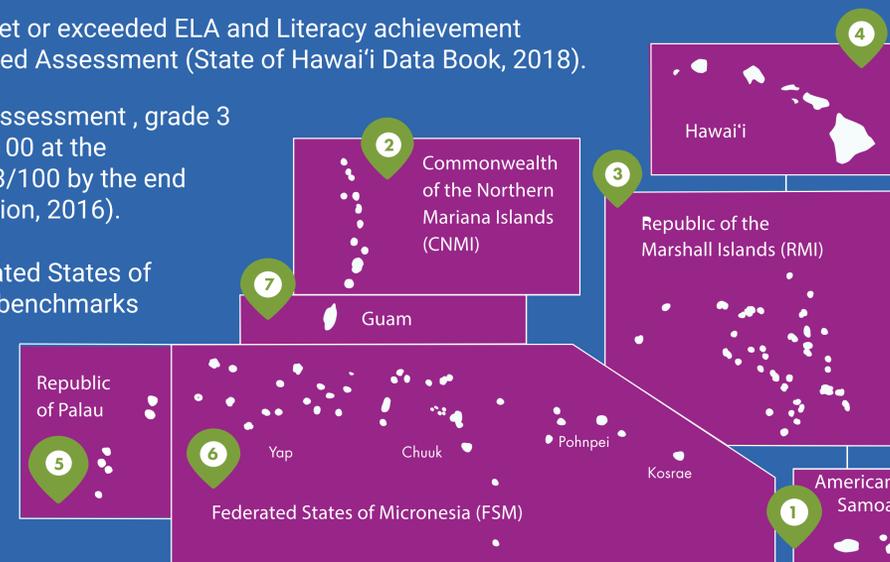
Other studies show that students who have not developed essential reading skills by the start of grade 4 score lower on state assessments and struggle with developing social emotional skill competencies (Miles & Stipek, 2006; Hein et al., 2013). In addition, students in Pre-K to grade 3 move through different developmental phases quickly, so supporting their reading acquisition must involve both cognitive and non-cognitive domains.

Predictive Factors of Early Reading Proficiency in the Pacific



Early Reading in the Pacific Region

- 27% of grade 3 students in American Samoa scored above the "basic" range in reading on the 2014/15 SAT-10 (American Samoa Integrated-Data Group Alliance, n.d.)
- 18% of students in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands scored in the "ready" or "exceeding" grade 3 reading proficiency levels on the 2016/17 ACT Aspire Reading Assessment (CNMI PSS, 2018).
- 25% of grade 3 students scored proficient or higher in English reading on the 2017 Republic of the Marshall Islands MISAT exam (Ministry of Education, 2017).
- 49% of grade 3 students in Hawai'i met or exceeded ELA and Literacy achievement levelson the 2016/17 Smarter Balanced Assessment (State of Hawai'i Data Book, 2018).
- On the 2016 Palau English Reading Assessment , grade 3 students scored an average of 34.5/100 at the beginning of the school year and 58.3/100 by the end (Republic of Palau Ministry of Education, 2016).
- 35% of grade 6 students in the Federated States of Micronesia met or exceeded reading benchmarks on the 2017/18 National Minimum Competency Test (Assessments: NMCT Reports, 2019).
- 10% of grade 3 students in Guam scoerd "ready" on the 2014/15 ACT Aspire Reading Test (Guam Department of Education, 2016).



Strategies to Support Pacific Students in Early Literacy Acquisition

- Implementing student-centered teaching.
- Ensuring resources are culturally relevant and easily accessible.
- Utilizing and modeling culturally responsive pedagogies.
- Viewing learning as a group activity.
- Establishing closer connections between the home and school.
- Teacher development.
- Example from the Pacific region: The Early Grade Learning Assessment (EGLA) Project:
 - Implemented new inputs in learning, assessment, teacher development, and data management.
 - Found that professional development had the largest positive influence on literacy outcomes.
 - Additional findings suggest that fostering proficiency in a student's first language is likely to improve reading skills in their second language (Asian Development Bank, 2015).