

Porous Learning: Enhancing literacy **learning@home** in the digital environment

INTRODUCTION:

Using a digital environment, learning can occur anytime and anywhere. However, there is potential for a 'second digital divide': this is the divide in types of high level usage and practices for learning. This study focussed on the differences in what learners did out-of-school that had impacts on their learning. We aimed to understand the different ways that students within a predominantly Māori and Pasifika low decile community used the digital environment for learning out-of-school or **learning@home**. Moreover, we sought to understand how these practices might be associated with literacy achievement and how they can be capitalised upon for literacy learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

What factors enhance and constrain students' **learning@home** in a low SES community? Sub-questions:

1. What are the patterns of **learning@home** by students at home?
2. How do parents provide support and guidance for students' **learning@home**?
3. What guidance and support is accessible to parents to help them support students' **learning@home**, and how do families interpret and use this?
4. How are these patterns of student use and parental support associated with writing achievement?
5. What barriers to school achievement exist, and how, if at all, are these addressed by families?

METHODOLOGY: WHAT DID WE DO?

- Mixed-methods design over two years (2013 and 2014)
- Multiple perspectives: teachers, students, parents – two sets of interviews for each group: one each year
- Students' achievement data taken from the e-asTTle writing assessment tool in each year
- Researchers used qualitative methods to look for key practices that acted as opportunities or constraints for learning. Patterns of relationships between these practices and student achievement were compared

PARTICIPANTS: WHO WAS INVOLVED?

We interviewed 40 students from Years 5-12 and their parents/caregivers (37 mothers, 9 fathers). We talked with teachers ($n = 12$ each year) in focus group interviews.

RESULTS: WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

1. **Time engaged in learning@home:** Students who made high levels of progress spent time learning outside of school using the digital environment, researching, creating, blog-posting and reading online.
2. **Learning@home activities that 'go beyond' school learning:** Learning outside of school needed to be additional to what was set as in-school tasks (often required or encouraged by teachers). High progress students also did additional or extension activities by showing learning 'initiative', as opposed to 'catching up'.
3. **Independent learning@home strategies:** Students varied in the quality of their informational literacy strategies, their collaboration strategies and their critical literacy. Lack of independent strategies became a barrier for some who relied on waiting for help or who gave up.
4. **Parental support for learning@home:** Powerful forms of support included discussion about big ideas and concepts, and connecting with the school learning by reading and discussing blog posts.
5. **Reading for learning@home was valued:** Students valued the opportunity to access information and reading material. High achieving students who continued to make progress were those who were most likely to mention the value they placed on reading.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

1. Develop shared understandings about how **learning@home** contributes to and complements the learning in school time
2. Teach students to monitor their independent use of time when **learning@home**. Provide supports to assist them
3. Provide opportunities for extension to all students, for example through 'open ended' **learning@home** activities. Teach students how to broaden and deepen their learning independently. Provide supports for both independence and initiative.
4. Work with colleagues, community and students to decide upon **learning@home** strategies that your students might need. Provide structures and supports to develop these.

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