

Foreword

More than any other skill, the ability to read is fundamental to successfully navigating the school curriculum. Moreover, it is central to shaping each individual's trajectory through life, his or her economic wellbeing, and the ability to actively and fully participate in broader society.

PIRLS 2011 is the third cycle of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and continues the long history of research in the area of reading achievement developed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). PIRLS 2011 provides information on trends in reading literacy achievement of fourth grade students for countries that have participated in previous cycles of the assessment, while providing baseline data for new countries.

Two features of PIRLS 2011 have the potential to provide new insights into the role of reading in understanding

