Assessing Foundation Skills in Reading

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READ Technical Group

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Outline

1. Rationale
2. Development: the case of EGRA
3. Results and implications
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2. Development: the case of EGRA
3. Results and implications
Rationale

• Why reading?
• Why early?
• Why oral reading?
• How can foundation assessments improve teaching and learning?
Why reading?

• No, it is not “the only thing that matters”
• But it is a good one to start with . . .

  o It is a (the?) foundation skill. Difficult to imagine anything else going well if children can’t read well and soon.

  o It can be used as a marker. Difficult to imagine a good school that can’t teach children to read; if children are not reading, the school (district, country) needs serious help.
Why early?

Children below a certain level by the end of Grade 1, stay behind

And, if they cannot read, they fall behind in everything else

Gap widens over time

(Source: Good, Simmons and Smith, 1998)
Why oral reading?

- Oral reading seems to be a good predictor (relationship between fluency and comprehension – a bit like riding a bicycle)
- Students frequently bottom out (floor-effect problems) on paper-and-pencil tests
- Elements of oral reading are in accord with curricular frameworks but frequently there are no specific (teacher-level) guidelines on how to assess
Classroom assessment of foundation skills . . .

- is based on curriculum and learning goals
- is adequate in scope, valid, reliable, practical and provides timely feedback
- is part of an integrated cycle of classroom improvement designed to improve teaching and learning (see diagram)
PLANNING
- Establish goals
- Develop/modify scope and sequence for instruction
- Identify instructional needs based on assessment
- Provide support

TEACHING
- Communicate learning goals
- Effectively use instructional time
- Deliver content while engaging all students in learning

MONITORING
- Assess student learning
- Analyze (and report on) student results
- Use information to improve teaching and learning
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Development thus far

• 2006: Expert consultative process, creation of draft EGRA instrument
• 2007: 8 initial efforts, funded by World Bank, USAID and directly by countries
• 2008: 11 additional efforts; March workshop in Washington, DC (200 participants);
• 2009: 27 in Latin America and Africa
## Summary of test components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Skill demonstrated by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Letter name knowledge</td>
<td>Provide the name of upper- and lowercase letters in random order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>• Segment words into phonemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify the initial sounds in different words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Letter sound knowledge</td>
<td>Provide the sound of upper- and lowercase letters distributed in random order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Familiar word reading</td>
<td>Read simple and common one- and two-syllable words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summary of test components (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Skill demonstrated by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Nonsense word reading</td>
<td>Make grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) through the reading of simple nonsense words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6. Oral reading fluency with comprehension | • Read a text with accuracy, with little effort, and at a sufficient rate  
|                                      | • Respond to literal and inferential questions about the text they have read          |
| 7. Listening comprehension          | Respond to questions about the text the assessor reads to them                         |
| 8. Dictation                        | Translate sound to print, write, spell, and use grammar properly                       |
John had a little dog. The little dog was fat. One day John and the dog went out to play. The little dog got lost. But after a while the dog came back. John took the dog home. When they got home John gave the dog a big bone. The little dog was happy so he slept. John also went to sleep.
Other characteristics

• Many segments timed to 1 minute
  – Meant to measure fluency (critical skill), also more efficient – whole test can be done in less than 15 minutes
• Can be done on sample basis; easy to score
• Can provide essentially instant results for a village (Pratham, UWEZO)
• Applied by trained assessor (or teacher), one-on-one, not pencil-and-paper in whole class
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## Sample results for Grade 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>CWPM goal</th>
<th>% tested students who met goal</th>
<th>% comprehension</th>
<th>% zero scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible uses

– Policy awareness and motivation
  • Macro
  • Community-based

– Impact tracking and evaluation
  • Project monitoring
  • Project impact and evaluation
  • System monitoring over time

– Teacher-based assessment (with adaptation)
  • Link to community-based awareness, social mobilization
  • Motivating and driving instructional practice
Sample uses to date

- Peru: national debate and a presidential pledge to have all children reading by end of grade 2;
- The Gambia: government revamped approaches to teacher professional development to focus on the early grades and begin mother-tongue instruction;
- Mali: renewed focus on teacher professional development and instructional materials in local languages;
Sample uses to date (cont’d)

- Liberia: spurred development of reading intervention programs and continuous monitoring by teachers;
- Nicaragua and Honduras: ministry requested additional training seminars in teacher use of the tool for continuous assessment;
- South Africa: the Department for Education is using EGRA on their own to assess mother tongue instruction in several languages.