Using Student Assessment Results
for Education Quality and Systems Strengthening

CASE STUDY

Uses of assessment information to support student learning in Germany

ESCHBORN, GERMANY – OCTOBER 25, 2011

General Overview of Germany and its Education System

- **Federal Republic**
- **Capital: Berlin**
- **Size: 357.111,91 km2**
- **Population: 81,752 Mio**

The German Education System

	Grade	Advanced vocational training			University		Age
		Technical or Trade school					
Secondary school	13	Vocational qualification			University qualification exam (Abitur)		19
	12 11	Training and education at companies and part time vocational schools (Berufsschule)	Full-time vocational school (Berufsfachschule)	Vocational upper secondary school (Fachoberschule)	Gymnasium or Gesamtschule University qualification exam (Abitur)		18 17
Secondary school	10 9 8 7 6 5	Secondary general school (Hauptschule)	Intermediate school (Realschule)		Grammer school (Gymnasium)	Comprehensive school (Gesamtschule)	16 15 14 13 12 11 10
Elementar	4 3 2 1	Primary school (Grundschule)					9 8 7 6
Pre-		Kindergarten					5 4 3

General Overview of Student Assessment Activities in Germany

- Early experiences
  - The IEA studies
  - The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)

- The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS)

- TIMMS Video

Lessons learned (1)

- From early studies:
  - One determined scientific leader needed to drive the research agenda
  - Consensus among **researchers** needed **before** launching the study

Lessons learned (2)

- From TIMMS
  - One determined scientific leader needed to drive the research agenda
  - Consensus between scientific project management and decison makers on goals and procedures
  - Pre-designed and consensual communication plan for results

The Konstanz Resolution (1)

- By the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (24.10.1997)

- Some „fundamental reflections with regard to benchmarking within the Federal Republic of Germany"
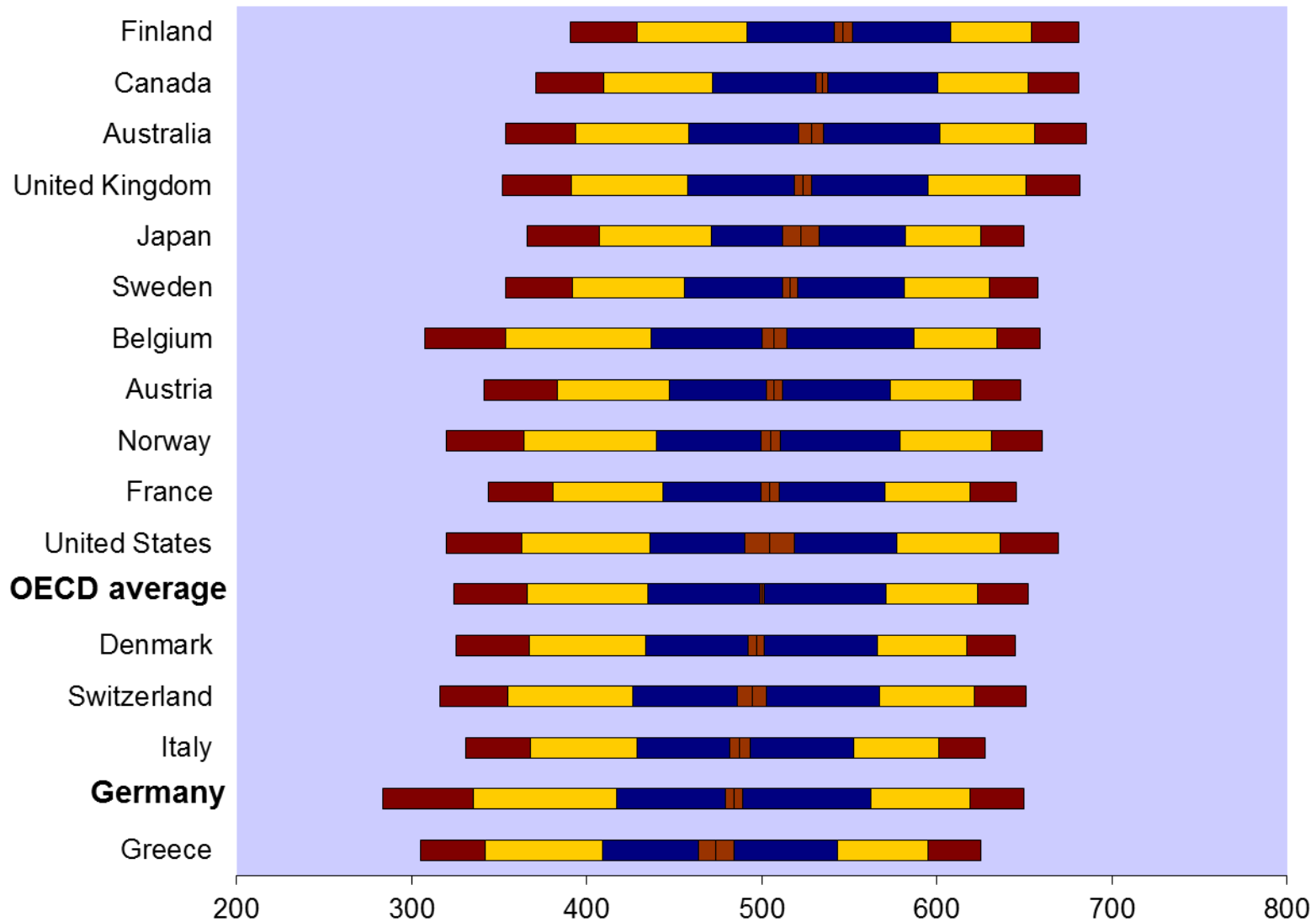
The Konstanz Resolution (2)

- Goals:
  - To develop procedures to ensure quality of school education

  - To develop and test assessment instruments (literally: instruments of evaluation)

  - To implement systematic and recurrent student achievement studies across the „Länder" (states, provinces)

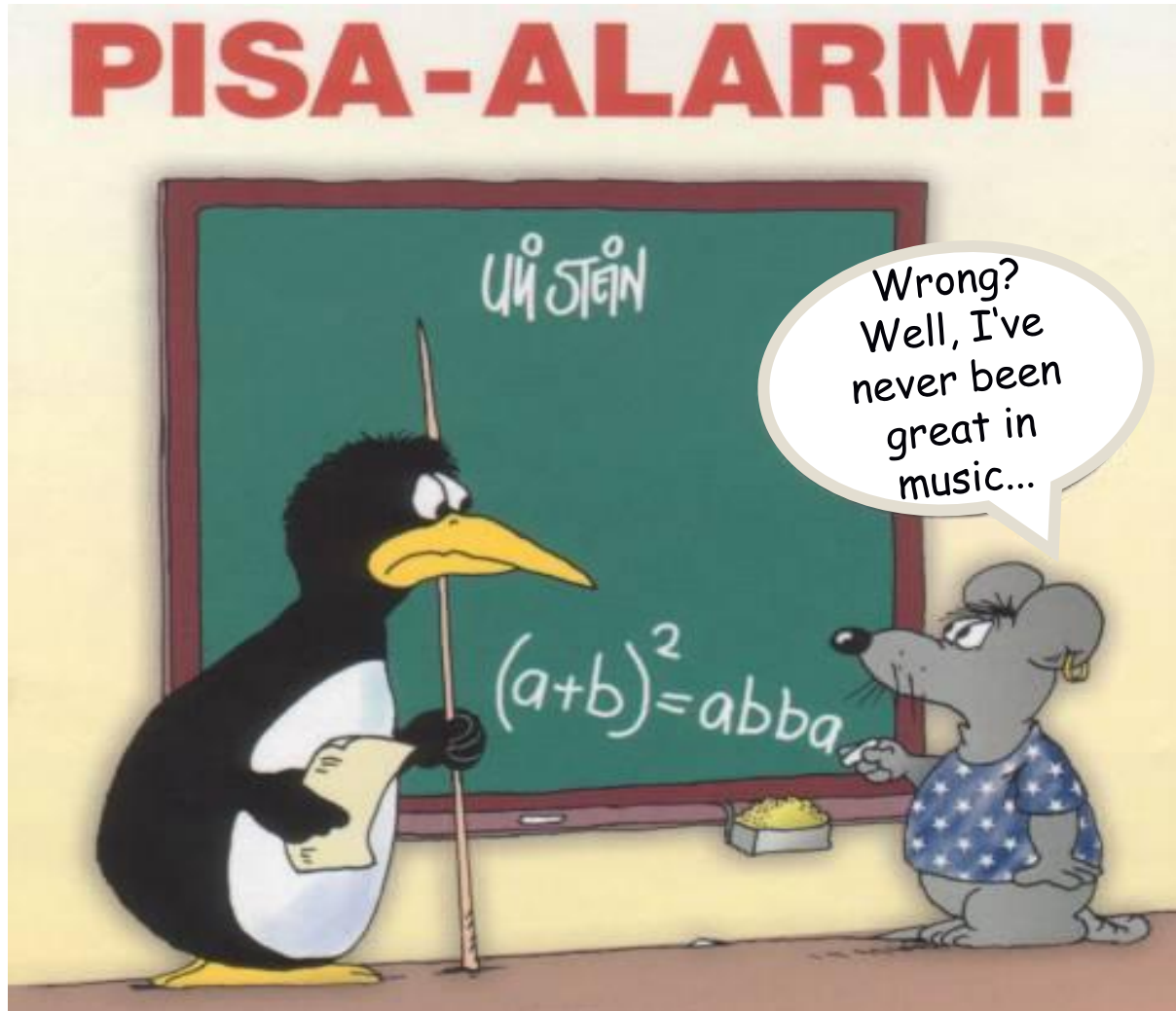# The OECD "Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)"

- The TIMMS lessons applied
  - involvement of all relevant stakeholders matters

- The German PISA 2000 national extension

- The PISA 2000 results

- The „shock" and its consequences

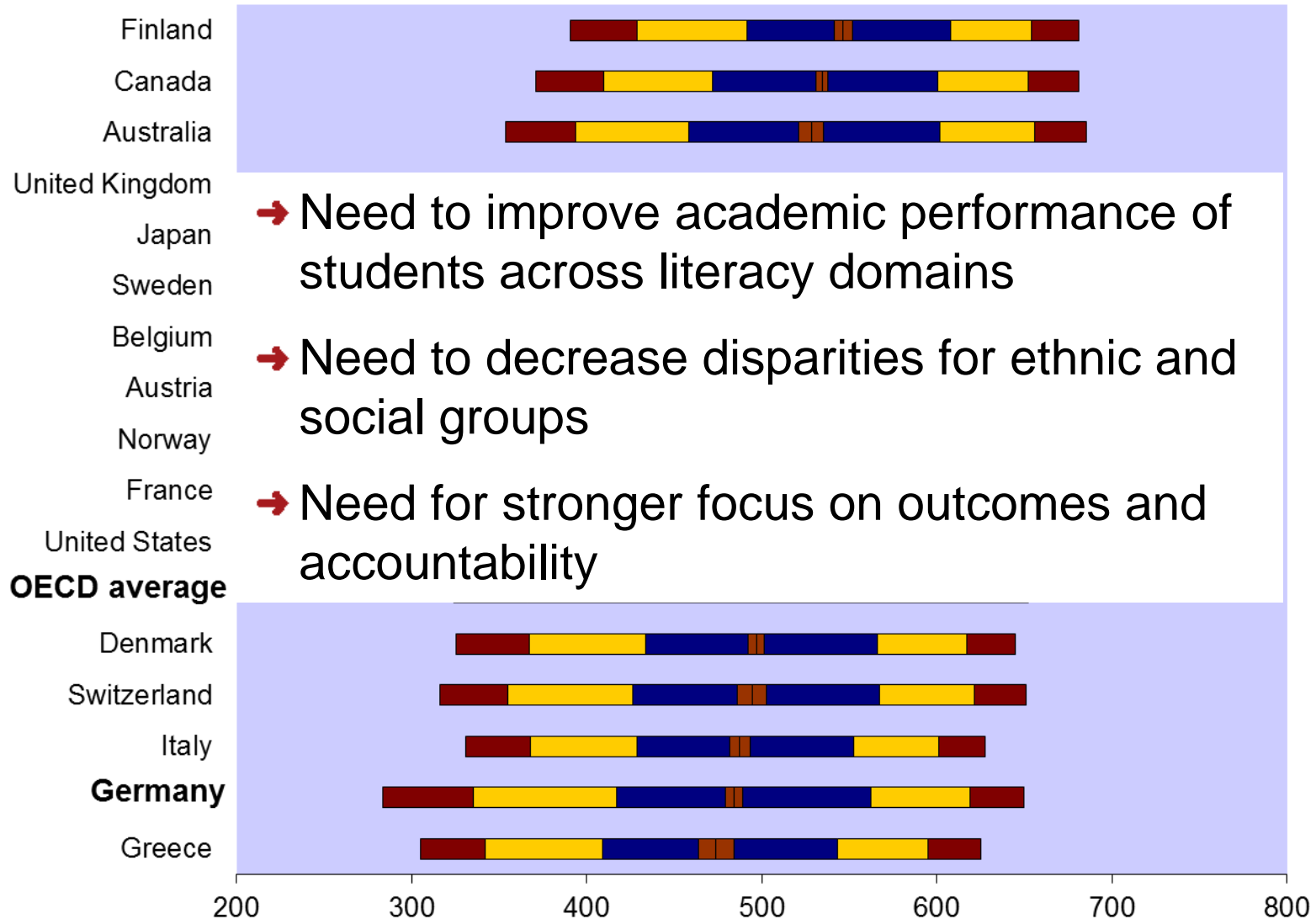# The PISA 2000 Results
Student performance in reading literacy

The PISA shock

Germany after PISA 2000 (1)

PISA 2000: Student performance in reading literacy

→ Need to improve academic performance of students across literacy domains

→ Need to decrease disparities for ethnic and social groups

→ Need for stronger focus on outcomes and accountability

Germany after PISA 2000 (2)

→ Definition of strategic goals and action programs in the 16 federal states in Germany

→ Introduction of various accountability and school evaluation initiatives in the federal states:

- → Standards

- → System evaluation

- → Centralized exams

- → State-wide standardized assessments (Vergleichsarbeiten) at the primary and secondary level (grades 3 and 8)

- → Extended autonomy for schools

- → School inspectorates

Germany after PISA 2000 (3)

➡ Foundation of a national

Institute for Educational Progress (IQB) in Berlin (4.12.2003)

Germany after PISA 2000 (2)

→ Definition of strategic goals and action programs in the 16 federal states in Germany

→ Introduction of various accountability and school evaluation initiatives in the federal states:

- → Standards

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State-wide testing as part of the quality strategy

Task development
Teachers
Educational researchers

Pilot studies
Do tasks and items work well
psychometrically
and content-wise?

Test
Every year
Approx. 2 Mio Students

VERA-TEST

Vergleichsarbeiten
der Jahrgangsstufe 8
in Berlin

System monitoring vs. state-wide testing

➜ Difference in goals (system monitoring vs. data-based school improvement for each and every school)

➜ Time lines (every 3 years vs. annually)

➜ Sample-based vs. total population

➜ Test administration (external vs. teachers at schools)

➜ Availability of results (16 months later vs. immediate feedback)

VERA – Types of Feedback

Immediate Feedback

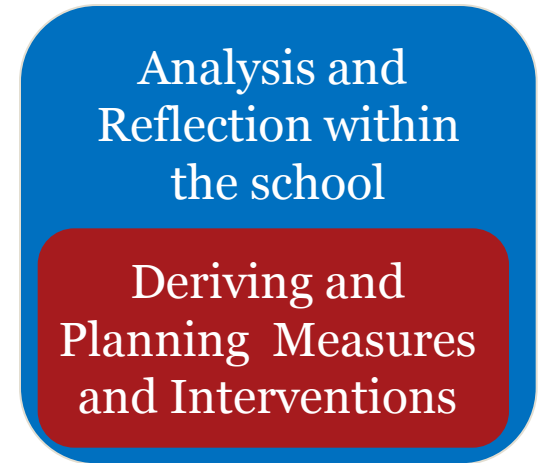Class Level Feedback
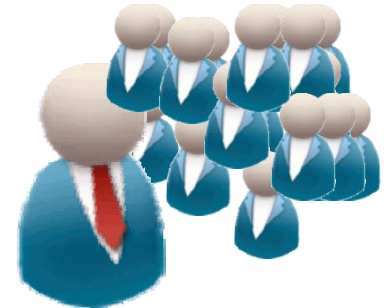
Individual Level Feedback

8a

8b

School Level Feedback

8c

VERA-Types of Feedback:
Analysis → Reflection → Measures

Current challenges

Current challenges (1)

- School level and/or class-room level reporting

- The link between large-scale, system-level assessment and school/class-room oriented assessment

- Formative assessment

Current challenges (2)

- Technology-based assessment

- Fine-grained, individual learning progress oriented diagnostics

Conclusions

- Fairly successful at the system level (standards, large-scale assessments, monitoring,)
- State-wide testing: right direction, but difficult implementation
- „Ensuring quality" beyond assessment studies (e.g. intervention studies) at its beginnings
- Technology-based assessment only at a research/pre-pilot level.