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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



READING WITHIN REACH

# Early Grade Reading Benchmarks:

*Strategies and Tools  
for Successful Literacy  
Development*

June 27, 2018

University Research Co., LLC

# Welcome!

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## Purpose of today's presentations and discussion

- Provide the early grade reading community of practice an opportunity to share experiences developing and using EGR benchmarks
- Identify needs and future directions with respect to research, development and use of EGR benchmarks

Today's presentations will be available on the  
Global Reading Network website after the event

<https://globalreadingnetwork.net/>

## Before we begin....

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In small groups or via the Chat feature on Zoom, take 10 minutes to discuss the following questions. Identify a few key points to share with the larger group.

- What are your experiences developing and using benchmarks for early grade reading?
  - For what purpose were benchmarks developed?
  - How and with whom were they identified?
  - How were they applied?
  - What worked "well" and what did not?
- What questions and needs do you have with respect to benchmarking?



## Early Grade Reading Benchmarks: Strategies and Tools for Successful Literacy Development

June 27, 2018

Initiatives to improve early grade reading in low-resource contexts are increasingly engaged in efforts to develop and apply benchmarks—or achievement standards—to measure progress in early grade reading outcomes. The purpose of this event is to provide the early grade reading community of practice an opportunity to discuss approaches that have been used, share experiences using EGR benchmarks, and identify needs and future directions with respect to research, analysis and use of EGR benchmarks.

<b>8:45 AM- 9:00 AM</b>	<b>In-person arrival</b>
<b>9:00 AM- 9:15 AM</b>	<b>Welcome</b> <i>Alison Pflepsen, Reading Program Specialist, Reading within Reach</i>
<b>9:15 AM- 9:35 AM</b>	<b>Experience sharing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your experiences developing and using benchmarks for early grade reading? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For what purpose were benchmarks developed?</li> <li>○ How and with whom were they identified?</li> <li>○ How were they applied?</li> <li>○ What worked “well” and what did not?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What questions and needs do you have with respect to benchmarking?</li> </ul>
<b>9:35 AM- 10:05 AM</b>	<b>Setting oral reading fluency benchmarks</b> <i>Heather Simpson, Chief of Programs, Room to Read</i> <b>A standardized approach to data-driven oral reading fluency benchmarks?</b> <i>Matthew Jukes, Senior Education Evaluation Specialist, RTI International</i>
<b>10:05 AM- 10:20 AM</b>	<b>Questions and answers</b>
<b>10:20 AM- 10:35 AM</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>10:35 AM- 10:55 AM</b>	<b>A regression discontinuity approach to find a fluency benchmark for second grade</b> <i>Leslie Vanessa Rosales Flores, Evaluation Specialist, USAID Lifelong Learning Project, Juárez &amp; Associates</i>
<b>10:55 AM- 11:10 AM</b>	<b>Questions and answers</b>
<b>11:10 AM- 11:30 AM</b>	<b>Using benchmarks: Exploring the consistency and stability of EGRA benchmarks</b> <i>Hetal Thukral, Director of Evaluation &amp; Research, School-to-School International</i>
<b>11:30 AM- 11:45 AM</b>	<b>Questions and answers</b>
<b>11:45 AM- 12:00 PM</b>	<b>Next steps and future directions</b>



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# Early Grade Reading Benchmarks: Strategies and Tools for Successful Literacy Development

*A Global Reading Network Short Course and Webinar Event*

*June 27, 2018*

## HEATHER SIMPSON

### *Room to Read*

Heather Simpson is the Chief Program Officer of Room to Read, an organization that believes World Change Starts with Educated Children.® Room to Read envisions a world in which all children can pursue a quality education that enables them to reach their full potential and contribute to their communities and the world. Heather is responsible for the design, execution, and monitoring of Room to Read's Literacy and Girls' Education programs in 10 countries across Asia and Africa. Heather leads the development and implementation of Room to Read's overall educational program strategy and oversees the global programs teams. She serves as a critical member of the senior management team helping to set strategic direction for Room to Read's programs and growth.

## MATTHEW JUKES

### *RTI International*

Matthew Jukes is a Fellow and Senior Education Evaluation Specialist at RTI International. He has two decades of academic and professional experience in evaluating education projects, particularly in early-grade literacy interventions and the promotion of learning through better health.

Dr. Jukes' research addresses culturally relevant approaches to assessment of social and emotional competencies in Tanzania; improving pedagogy through an understanding of the cultural basis of teacher-child interactions; frameworks to improve evidence-based decision-making; and methods to set reading proficiency benchmarks. He is contributing to projects in Malawi and Tanzania aimed at improving the quality of pre-primary and primary education in those countries.

Dr. Jukes came to RTI in 2016 from Room to Read, where he was Senior Director of Global Research, Monitoring and Evaluation. Prior to joining Room to Read in 2012, he was an associate professor of International Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he taught courses on evidence-based decision making and on the roles of both culture and health in effective education. Dr. Jukes has also applied his research to work with the World Bank, UNAIDS, UNESCO, Save the Children and the UK Department for International Development.

## LESLIE ROSALES

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### *Juárez & Associates*

Leslie Rosales holds a PHD in Educational Research and Evaluation from Ohio University. She has been a specialist in monitoring, evaluation and research in Juárez and Associates, Guatemala, for over 10 years. She is currently the principal reading assessment and growth model specialist in the USAID Lifelong Learning project where she has been implementing the notion of growth in the accountability system of Guatemala since 2014. She also worked in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Directorate of the Ministry of Education (DIGEDUCA) prior to joining the Juárez and Associates team.

## HETAL THUKRAL

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### *School to School International*

Hetal Thukral serves as STS's Director of Evaluation and Research leading a team of seven senior researchers, psychometricians, and evaluation experts.

Thukral has over 15 years of experience in implementing international education programs from the U.S. and abroad, with a focus on program evaluation and improvement at the federal and local levels. She has experience working on USAID, DFiD, World Bank, IADB, and African Development Bank-funded projects. Domestically, Thukral has experience working at the district-level supporting research and policy development for the Howard County Public School System in Maryland. In these roles, Thukral has built and applied rich technical skills in program evaluation and analysis.

Thukral holds a doctorate in education policy with a special certificate in measurement and statistics from the University of Maryland College Park and a master's degree in international education from the George Washington University.

## Next Steps and Future Directions

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- What issues related to early grade reading benchmarks do we need to further discuss and research as a community of practice?
- What tools and resources related to EGR benchmarking are needed to support the diverse stakeholders who are working to improve early grade reading initiatives?



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[www.globalreadingnetwork.net](http://www.globalreadingnetwork.net)