



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EdData II

Education Data for Decision Making

Why Focus on the Early Grades? The Rationale and Development of the Early Grade Assessments

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About the Presentation

- This presentation was prepared for the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) annual meeting, Charleston, South Carolina, March 25, 2009.
- The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) EdData II project is led by RTI International. Work on the Early Grade Reading Assessment takes place under EdData II Task Order Number 3, EHC-E-03-04-00004-00.
- Icons appearing on some slides in this presentation represent links to embedded files that are not available in the PDF version of this document. To obtain copies of the embedded files, please contact Amber Gove, agove@rti.org.

Outline

1. Purpose: why Early Grade Assessment (and reading in particular)?
2. Development
3. Uses

Purpose: Why? Quality Issues

- What are the big international goals?
- How do low-income countries compare to high-income countries?
 - LI to HI ratio
 - Gross primary enrollment: 95%
 - Net primary enrollment: 80%
 - Gender parity net enrollment rate (NER): 94%
 - Completion: 58%
 - Learning achievement: Approx 30%?
 - Learning achievement: Median LI = 3rd percentile of HI or lower

LI= low income, HI = high income

So Why Focus on Early Grade Reading?

Early Grade

+

Reading =

- intervene early,
- intervene on reading,
- have some way to assess orally

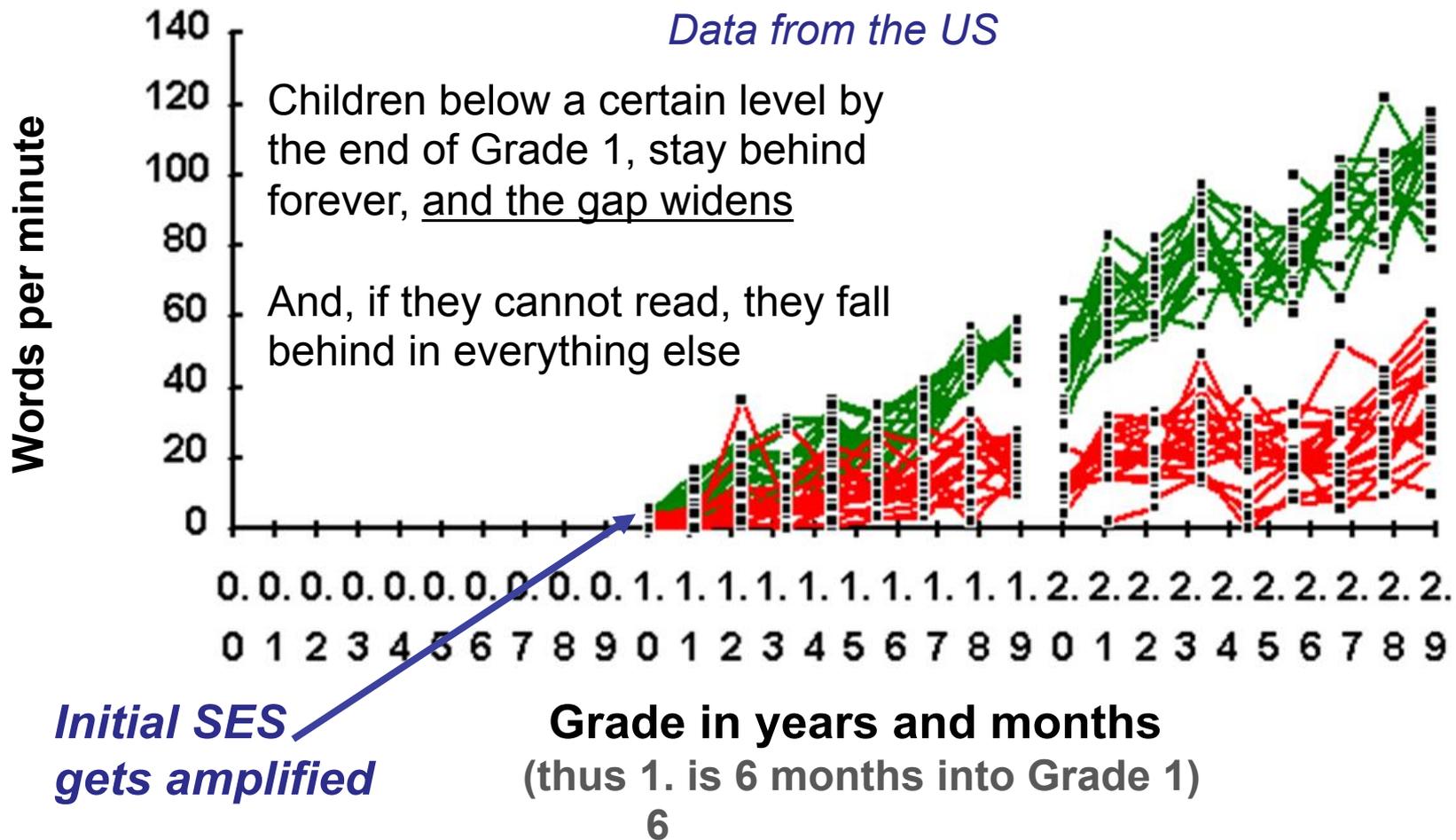
Let's see if we can motivate those conclusions

Why Early?

“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”

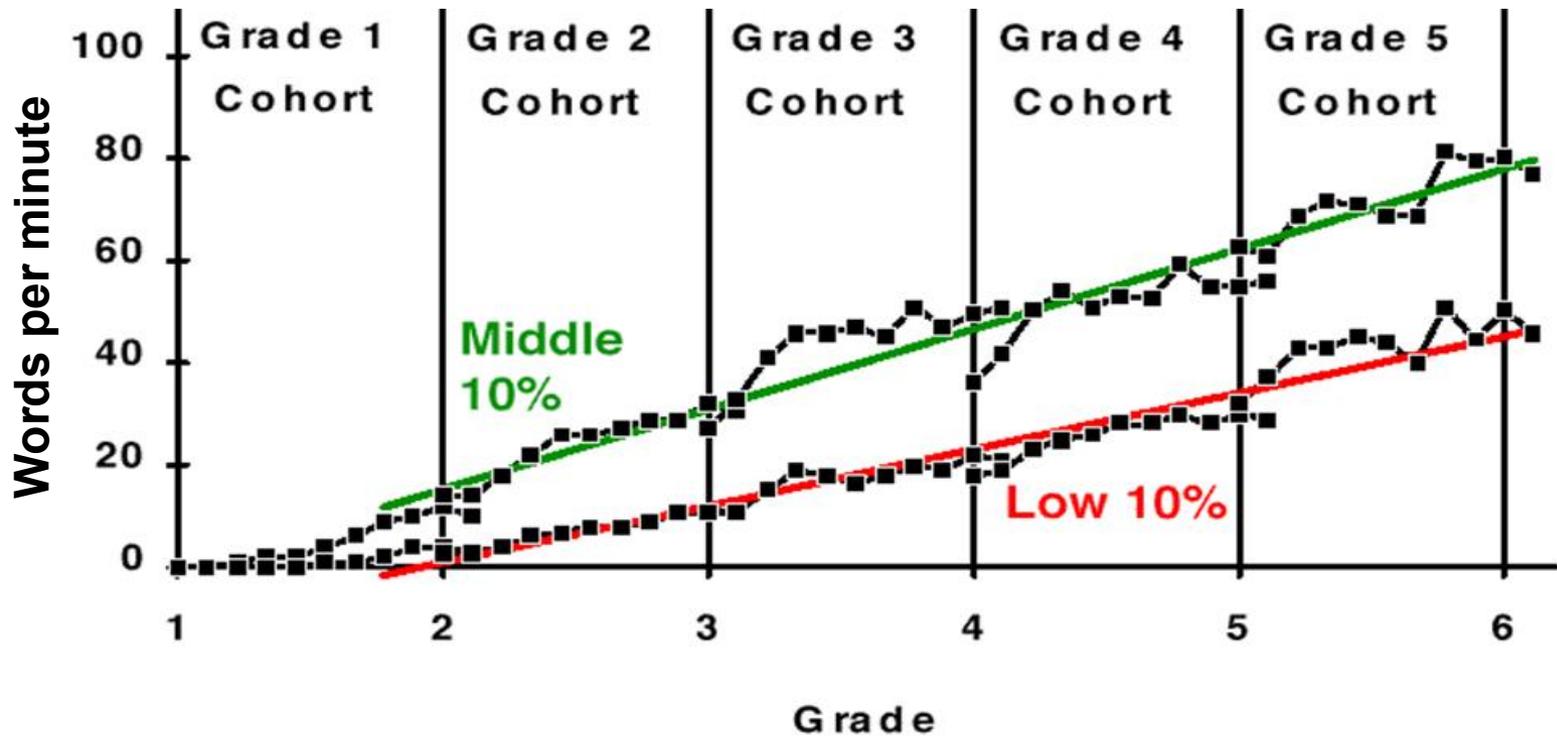
Matthew Effect?

Why Early? Matthew Effect in reading



Why early?

Reading Trajectories of Low and Middle Readers



Why reading?

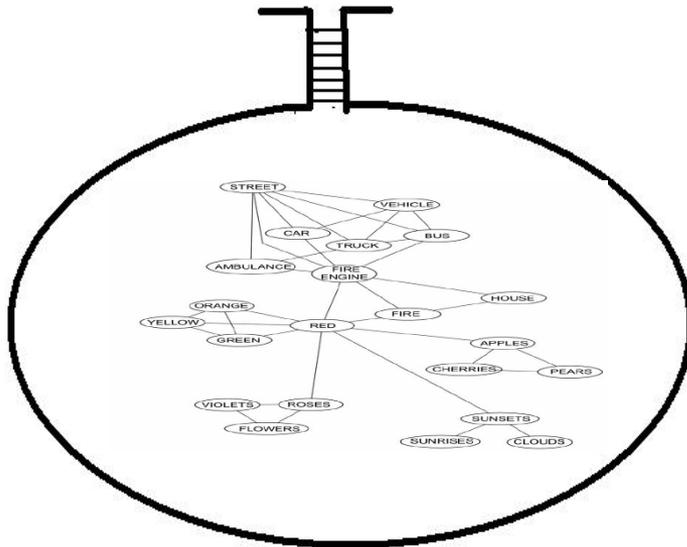
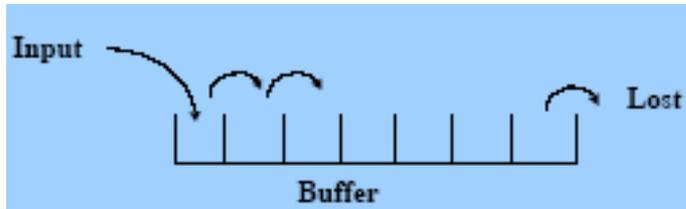
- No, it is not “the only thing that matters”
- But it is a good one to start with
 - It is a (*the*?) foundational skill -
Hard to imagine anything else going well if children can't read well and soon
 - It can be used as a marker -
Hard to imagine a good school that can't teach children to read; if children are not reading, the school (district, country) needs serious help

Why oral reading?



- Oral reading seems to be good predictor (see literature)
- 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

Why timed oral reading?



Long-term memory

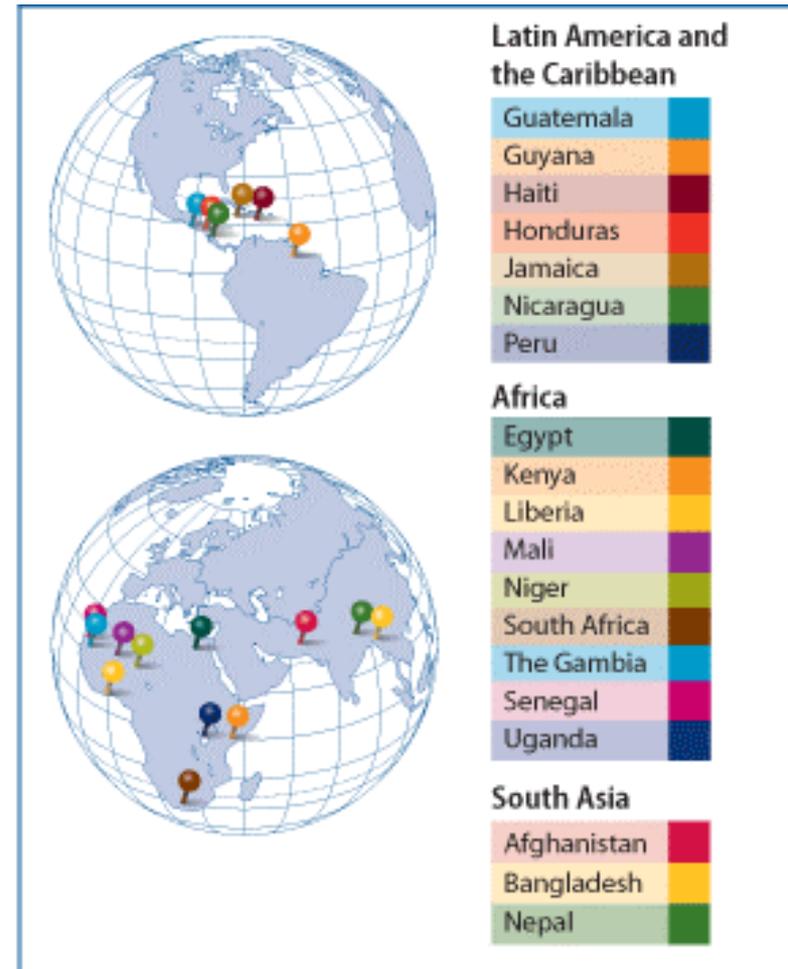
- From brain research we know short-term memory is crucial for reading comprehension
- Short-term memory can hold about 7 items for 12 seconds
- Fluency and accuracy are related to comprehension

Development thus far

- “Organic” process: meets “market test” at each step
- First: informal, small samples, see if it was useful at generating awareness, very little funding
- Attention attracted, community of practice involved
- Some funding to try it a bit more formally
 - USAID funding: validate efforts thus far with expert opinion, try some more applications
 - Call high-level experts meeting, experts validate, suggest increased formality, seriousness of trials
 - World Bank adds some funding, try it in two more international languages, local languages

Development thus far: gaining momentum

- World Bank financed in 7 countries; USAID in 7 more and growing
- March 2008 Workshop: 200 participants from 40 countries
- Colleagues from AED, AIR, Save, IRC, BRAC, Plan, Pratham (and others?) experimenting with EGRA
- 2009 Hewlett Foundation support for work in 9 languages in four countries



Instrument Component	Early Reading Skill	Skill demonstrated by students' ability to:
1. Engagement and Relationship to Print	Orientation to print	Indicate where to begin reading (uppermost left corner)
		Indicate direction of reading within a line (left to right)
		Indicate direction of reading within a page (top to bottom)
2. Letter Naming	Letter recognition	Provide the name of upper- and lower-case letters distributed in random order
3. Phoneme Segmentation	Phonemic awareness	Segment words into 2 to 5 phonemes, counting of phonemes within words
4. Familiar Word Reading	Word reading	Read simple and common one and two syllable words
5. Nonsense Word Decoding	Alphabetic principle	Make grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) through the reading of simple nonsense words
6. Paragraph Reading and Comprehension Questions	Oral reading fluency	Read a text with little effort and at a sufficient rate
	Reading comprehension	Respond correctly to different type of questions (literal with options, literal and inferential) about they text they have read
7. Listening Comprehension	Listening comprehension	Respond correctly to different type of questions (literal with options, literal and inferential) about they text the enumerator reads to them
8. Dictation	Alphabetic principle	Write, spell and use grammar properly through a dictation exercise

Other characteristics

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

Sample assessments



ESSENTIALLY
FLUENT



NON FLUENT

(Click on icons to play. Note it might not play in the full screen display mode, but only in the “normal” or “edit” model of PowerPoint. If it asks you to click, say Yes.)

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.

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
 - (Could link to community-based awareness, accountability?)
 - Motivating and driving instructional practice
 - Already being used that way in various countries