The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA): Introduction and Background

Amber Gove
RTI International

April 2016

About the Presentation

- Prepared for the USAID workshop/webinar "Release of the *EGRA Toolkit, Second Edition:* Updated Guidance and Tools for Conducting Early Grade Reading Assessments," Bethesda, Maryland, April 27, 2016.

- This presentation and the workshop/webinar were funded by USAID under the Education Data for Decision Making (EdData II) project, led by RTI International, Task Order No. AID-OAA-BC-12-00003 (RTI Task 20).

- The presentation originally was prepared for the USAID "EGRA Basics and Beyond" workshop/webinar, November 2015, Bethesda, Maryland; and also was used at a workshop at the annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), Vancouver, BC, Canada, March 2016.

Session Objectives

- Know what EGRA is and what it measures:

  - EGRA as a curriculum-based measurement and monitoring assessment

- Be aware of the research-based rationale for EGRA content and design

- Understand different purposes of EGRA and current usage

  - Expansion of its purpose and uses since 2006

- USAID's intended audience and use of the *EGRA Toolkit, Second Edition*

SDG4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to **relevant and effective learning outcomes**

4.1.1 Percentage of children/ young people

(i) in Grade 2/3,

(ii) at the end of primary and

(iii) at the end of lower secondary

achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (a) reading and (b) mathematics

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-2-IAEG-SDGs-E-Revised.pdf

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

- Used to measure system and program effectiveness, identify gaps in instruction and areas for support.

- Administered orally by an assessor, one-on-one with a child.

- Components (subtasks) are aligned with essential and teachable skills that research shows children can and should acquire in the early grades.

- Open source, freely available.

- Locally developed following internationally agreed, standard guidance.

- Based on these and other results, UNESCO estimates more than 250M children are not acquiring basic skills.

Nigeria, RTI International

Dubeck & Gove, 2015
Gove & Wetterberg, 2011
Gove, 2012
RTI International, 2009
RTI International and International Rescue Committee, 2011
RTI International, 2016
UNESCO, 2014

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

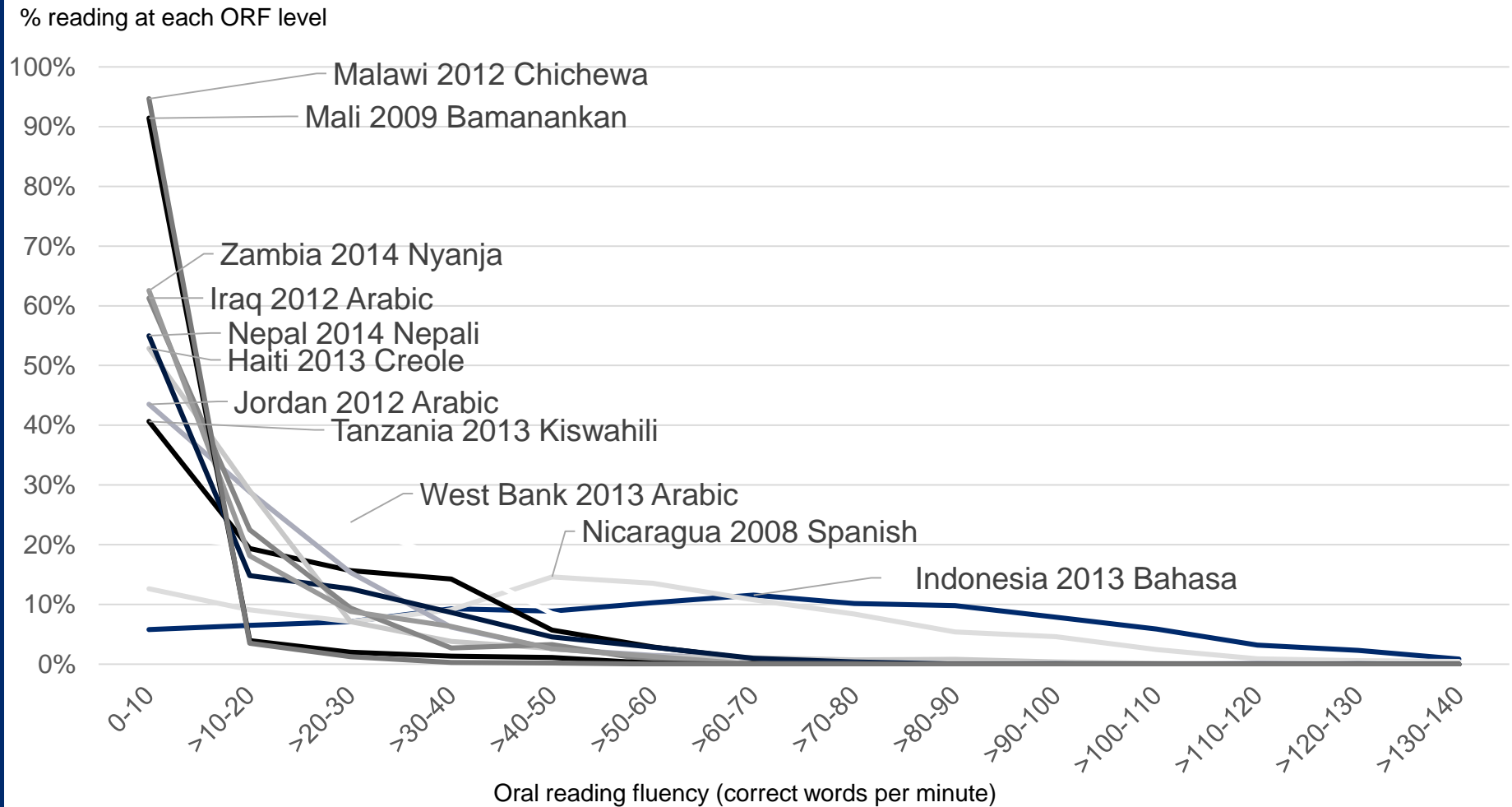| Component	Early reading skill	Skill demonstrated by students' ability to:
1. Listening comprehension	Listening comprehension; oral language	Respond correctly to different types of questions, including literal and inferential questions about the text the assessor reads to them
2. Letter identification: Letter names and/or letters sounds	Alphabet knowledge	Provide the name and/or sound of letters presented in both upper case and lower case in a random order
3. Nonword reading	Decoding	Make letter-sound (grapheme-phoneme correspondences, or GPCs) through the reading of simple nonsense words
4. Oral reading fluency with comprehension	Oral reading fluency	Read a text with accuracy, with little effort, and at a sufficient rate
	Reading comprehension	Respond correctly to different types of questions, including literal and inferential questions about the text they have read
5. Initial or final sound identification, or letter sound discrimination, or phoneme segmentation, identification of onset/ rime sounds	Phonological awareness	Identify/differentiate the onset/rime sounds of words or the initial or final sounds of words, or segment words into phonemes by having the assessor and then the student read the phonemes aloud
6. Familiar word reading	Word recognition	Read words which are randomly ordered and drawn from a list of frequent words

EGRA: Global Reach and Rapid Expansion
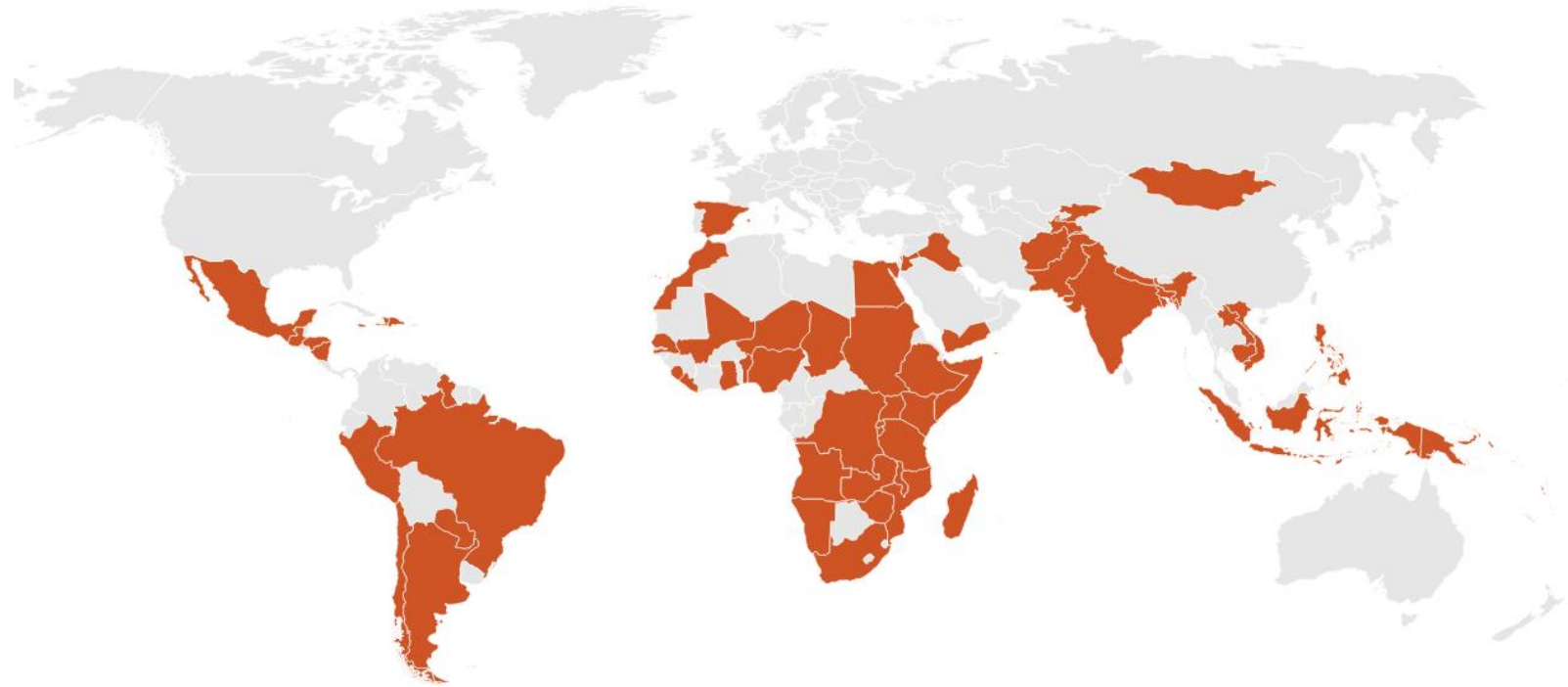
Used by
30+
organizations

Used in
70+
countries

Adapted for
120+
languages

Grade 2 Oral Reading Fluency: National Samples, by Language

% reading at each ORF level

Malawi 2012 Chichewa
Mali 2009 Bamanankan
Zambia 2014 Nyanja
Iraq 2012 Arabic
Nepal 2014 Nepali
Haiti 2013 Creole
Jordan 2012 Arabic
Tanzania 2013 Kiswahili
West Bank 2013 Arabic
Nicaragua 2008 Spanish
Indonesia 2013 Bahasa

Oral reading fluency (correct words per minute)

Source: Gove et al., 2015

Different Types of Assessments: A Continuum

Examinations
- Completion/promotion exams
- Matriculation exams
- "A levels"

Formal
High cost
More time
High stakes

Assessment surveys
- SACMEQ
- PASEC
- PISA
- PIRLS/Pre-PIRLS
- TIMSS
- Early Grade Reading Assessments

Informal
Lost cost
Less time
Low stakes

Classroom assessment
- Class tests
- Homework
- Projects/presentations
- Mastery/monitoring checks

How Can EGRA Results Be Used?

- Examine gaps in reading competencies to raise awareness, improve policy, curriculum, etc. (country or regional level)

- Identify key skills, or areas of instruction, that need to be improved in order to target interventions (teacher training, materials, etc.)

- Inform education sector strategic planning, resource allocation and budgeting

- Identify changes over time

- Evaluate outcomes of program designed to improve specific early grade reading skills (impact evaluation or performance evaluation)

- Develop reading indicators and benchmarks

Source: USAID, 2011; Gove & Cvelich, 2011; Gove et al., 2013

Limitations of EGRA and Its Results

- EGRA measures a *specific set* of critical early grade reading skills, not necessarily *all* important literacy skills.

- The individual nature of assessment administration and the size of a typical sample mean it is usually used to report results at a regional, national or program level, not district, school, or student level.

- EGRA is not a high-stakes accountability tool.

- The assessment is not suited for direct cross-language comparisons, but could be used to report on percentage of children meeting grade-level expectations.

Source: Dubeck & Gove, 2015

Bibliography

Adolf, S. M., Catts, H. W., & Lee, J. (2010). Kindergarten predictors of second versus eighth grade reading comprehension impairments. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *43*(4), 332–345. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022219410369067

August, D. & Shanahan, T. (Eds.) (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Caravolas, M., Lervåg, A., Mousikou, P., Efrim, C., Litavský, M., Onochie-Quintanilla, E., ... & Hulme, C. (2012). Common patterns of prediction of literacy development in different alphabetic orthographies. *Psychological Science, 23*(6), 678–686. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0956797611434536

Crouch, L. A., & Gove, A. K. (2011). Leaps or one step at time: Skirting Or helping engage the debate? The case of reading. In J. N. Hawkins and W. J. Jacob (Eds.), *Policy debates in comparative, international and development education* (pp. 120–151). Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Daniel, S. S., Walsh, A. K., Goldston, D. B., Arnold, E. M., Reboussin, B. A., & Wood, F. B. (2006). Suicidality, school dropout, and reading problems among adolescents. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *39*(6), 507–514. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/00222194060390060301

Darney, D., Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., Stormont, M., & Ialongo, N. S. (2013). Children with co-occurring academic and behavior problems in first grade: Distal outcomes in twelfth grade. *Journal of School Psychology*, *51*(1), 117–128. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2012.09.005

Bibliography (continued)

Dubeck, M. M., & Gove, A. K. (2015). The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA): Its theoretical foundation, purpose, and limitations. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *2015*, 1–8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.11.004

Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Hosp, M. K., & Jenkins, J. R. (2001). Oral reading fluency as an indicator of reading competence: A theoretical, empirical, and historical analysis. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *5*(3), 239–256. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s1532799xssr0503_3

Good, R. H., Simmons, D. C., & Smith, S. (1998). Effective academic intervention in the United States: Evaluating and enhancing the acquisition of early reading skills. *School Psychology Review, 27,* 45–56.

Gove, A. (2012). Think global, act local: How early grade reading assessments can improve learning for all. *Compare—A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 42*(3), 531–541.

Gove, A., Chabbott, C., Dick, A., DeStefano, J., King, S., & Piper, P. (2015). *Early learning assessments: A retrospective.* Background paper prepared for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015, Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and challenges.* Paris: UNESCO. unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002324/232419e.pdf

Gove, A. K., & Cvelich, P. K. (2011). *Early reading: Igniting education for all. A report by the early grade learning community of practice.* Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. Retrieved from http://www.rti.org/pubs/early-reading-report-revised.pdf

Gove, A. K., Habib, S. S., Ralaingita, W. D., & Piper, B. L. (2013). Classroom-up policy change: Early reading and math assessments at work. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, *8*(3), 373–386. http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2013.8.3.373

Bibliography (continued)

Gove, A. K., & Wetterberg, A. (2011). The Early Grade Reading Assessment: An introduction. In *The Early Grade Reading Assessment: Applications and interventions to improve basic literacy* (pp. 1–38). Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI Press. Retrieved from http://www.rti.org/egrabook

Kanjee, A. (2009). Assessment overview [Presentation]. Prepared for the first READ Global Conference, "Developing a Vision for Assessment Systems," Moscow, October 1, 2009.

Kim, Y. S., Wagner, R. K., & Foster, E. (2011). Relations among oral reading fluency, silent reading fluency, and reading comprehension: A latent variable study of first-grade readers. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *15*(4), 338–362. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2010.493964

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) [US]. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups* (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: NICHD. Retrieved from http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/report.cfm

RTI International. (2007). *EdData II Early Grade Reading Assessment Workshop: Summary notes from the expert workshop, Washington, DC, November 16 and 17, 2006.* Prepared for USAID under the Education Data for Decision Making (EdData II) project, Contract No. EHC-E-00-04-00004. Retrieved from https://www.eddataglobal.org/reading/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=57

RTI International. (2009). *Early Grade Reading Assessment toolkit.* Prepared for the World Bank, Office of Human Development, under Contract No. 7141961. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. Retrieved from https://www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&id=149

Bibliography (continued)

RTI International. (2016). *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) toolkit, second edition.* Prepared for USAID under the Education Data for Decision Making (EdData II) project, Task Order No. AID-OAA-BC-12-00003 (RTI Task 20). Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00M1V5.pdf

RTI International & International Rescue Committee. (2011). Guidance notes for planning and implementing EGRA. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. Retrieved from https://www.eddataglobal.org/reading/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=318

Scanlon, D. M., Gelzheiser, L. M., Vellutino, F. R., Schatschneider, C., & Sweeney, J. M. (2008). Reducing the incidence of early reading difficulties: Professional development for classroom teachers versus direct interventions for children. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *18*(3), 346–359. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2008.05.002

Seymour, P. H. K., Aro, M., & Erskine, J. M. (2003). Foundation literacy acquisition in European orthographies. *British Journal of Psychology, 94,* 143–174. http://dx.doi.org/10.1348/000712603321661859

Torgesen, J. K. (2002). The prevention of reading difficulties. *Journal of School Psychology*, *40*(1), 7–26. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/s0022-4405(01)00092-9

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2014). *Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2013/4, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all.* Paris: UNESCO. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011). *Evaluation: Learning from experience.* Washington, DC. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/USAIDEvaluationPolicy.pdf

Bibliography (continued)

Vaessen, A., Bertrand, D., Tóth, D., Csépe, V., Faísca, L., Reis, A., & Blomert, L. (2010). Cognitive development of fluent word reading does not qualitatively differ between transparent and opaque orthographies. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *102*(4), 827–842. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0019465

Wagner, D. A., Lockheed, M., Mullis, I., Martin, M. O., Kanjee, A., Dowd, A., & Gove, A. K. (2012). The debate on learning assessments in developing countries. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *42*(3), 509–545. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2012.670480

Ziegler, J. C., Bertrand, D., Tóth, D., Csépe, V., Reis, A., Faísca, L., ... & Blomert, L. (2010). Orthographic depth and its impact on universal predictors of reading a cross-language investigation. *Psychological Science. 21(4)* 551–559. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0956797610363406