

significant gains in EGRA scores from the baseline assessment to the midline assessment. For example, in Sindhi schools, students averaged 35.6 correct words per minute in the midline assessment, representing a 33.8 percent increase from the baseline assessment. SRP TLAs will continue to use formative assessments like the EGRA every four to six weeks to measure students from a starting point and provide instant feedback to teachers on student progress and best practices for targeted assistance. Muhammad Jawed, head teacher from Karachi working with the SRP project, said that, through formative assessments, “teachers got a great chance to know the weak points of each student, now they know well about each and every child” and “students know where they stand and where they need to work hard.”



TECHNICAL BRIEF

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: MAXIMIZING LEARNING THROUGH TARGETING NEEDS

Effective literacy instruction requires teachers adapt to student needs, ensuring each child masters the foundational skills of reading. However, teachers often lack the time, tools, and support to regularly gather and analyze student performance information or integrate this data into their teaching approaches. In Pakistan, Georgia, and Rwanda, Chemonics is combining formative assessment with teacher professional development to support teachers to adapt instruction to student learning needs.

Formative assessments for progressive learning. Formative assessments are formal and informal processes for teachers and students to gather evidence to improve learning.¹ Chemonics has built upon its experience across the globe to contribute to the body of research demonstrating that implemented effectively, formative assessment can produce an increase in learning gains of 0.4 to 0.7 points and are especially impactful for struggling learners.² Formative assessments provide teachers

¹ Chappuis, J. (2009). Seven strategies of assessment for learning. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

² Black, P., & William, D. (1998a). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles Policy and Practice*, 5(1), 7-73

with real-time, targeted feedback on students' mastery of literacy skills, tracking reading growth over time. By demonstrating that struggling students can make incremental progress with targeted support, formative assessments promote, among both teachers and students, the idea that all children can learn.³ Additionally, using tests as an improvement tool rather than a measure of success or failure can make teachers and students more comfortable with assessment and foster more interactive learning.

ANALYZING, TRACKING, AND BOOSTING PERFORMANCE IN PAKISTAN, GEORGIA, AND RWANDA

USAID's Pakistan Sindh Reading Program (SRP), the Georgia Primary Education Project (G-PriEd), and the Rwanda Soma Umenye Activity leverage formative assessments to analyze learning needs of students with the greatest skill deficiencies and to help teachers individualize instruction and set goals based on assessment results. In Pakistan, SRP and the Sindh government use monthly assessments linked to progressive curricular goals to provide teachers, school leadership, and government officials with real-time data, recorded on tablets, about achievements and areas for adaptation. In Sindh Province, 50 percent of third grade students were unable to answer a single question correctly on the SRP Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Baseline. SRP uses the assessment results to divide these “zero-

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The Georgie Pri-Ed Project empowers teachers to use formative assessments as a way to measure student growth in reading and literacy.

³ Ibid.

scorers” into a spectrum of specific needs, identifying and tracking student gaps in mastery of the component skills of reading. In the EGRA Midline, however, the results showed an improvement in zero-scorers and reading comprehension compared to the baseline study.

In Georgia, G-PriEd tied formative assessments to the national curriculum and assessment of literacy by empowering teachers to measure classroom-level progress toward national goals and benchmarks for reading. The G-PriEd E-Assess platform allows teachers to generate their own subject- and skill-specific assessments, and provides a suite of additional formative assessments, all aligned with the national curriculum and standards for reading. G-PriEd also developed tools and software to level student reading materials for assessment of student reading ability.

In Rwanda, the Soma Umenye Activity noticed that while many teachers conduct formative assessments, they very rarely make use of the assessment data. In conjunction with the Rwanda Education Board, the Activity is currently developing and piloting a set of tools and guidelines for structured formative assessments. These guidelines will serve as a resource for administering formative assessments and helping teachers modify their instruction in response to assessment results.

KEY TO SUCCESS: COMBINING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT WITH TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Formative assessments are most effective when fed back into teacher coaching and training.⁴ G-PriEd uses teacher learning circles (TLCs) as a teacher peer-to-peer learning opportunity. In the TLCs, facilitators guide teachers through discussions and reflections on applying improved classroom teaching practices. TLC facilitators are equipped with video modules demonstrating best practice in constructivism, formative assessment, and differentiated instruction. The videos serve as a basis for sessions with early grade teachers, supporting them to digest their data and adapt their instruction according to assessment results. In Pakistan, teaching and learning associates (TLAs) conduct formative assessments and serve as teacher coaches, reviewing and discussing assessment results with teachers on the day assessments are collected. This structured support expands teacher capacity to internalize assessment results and use them to adapt instruction toward student needs. The Soma Umenye Activity plans to implement, with the Rwanda Education Board, a robust training and coaching program to support teachers in conducting, understanding, and using formative assessments. The project also plans to regularly engage provincial and district advisors to review the progress and discuss the challenges of implementing formative assessments.

USING DATA TO WORK SMARTER IN THE CLASSROOM

Following G-PriEd program implementation, classroom observations revealed that 82 percent of teachers used formative assessments regularly in measuring student progress, and with the results adapted their practices. Furthermore, 99 percent of Georgian principals reported seeing noticeable improvements in teachers' instructional strategies during the project's course. In Pakistan, students made

⁴ Ibid.