TaRL Webinar Series
Session 5: Adapting the TaRL Approach to Different Contexts

11 December 2018
Adapting Teaching at the Right Level for Different Contexts

WEBINAR

DECEMBER 11, 2018
My Journey

- Growing interest from international organizations and countries in Pratham’s TaRL approach – is it really applicable?

- First experience in Ghana and exposure to PAL Network countries helped me learn:
  - The problem is universal – children are not learning
  - Systems are focused on inputs not outputs
  - Inputs are provided in the medium of instruction in schools which differs from children’s mother tongue
  - There is lack of realization that even within a single grade/class, children have multiple and different ability levels and thus require level-based attention

- TaRL addresses these challenges – hence applicable across contexts!

- Now time to try it out

- Solution must continue to be simple, doable, replicable and cost effective
Adapting TaRL

Factors we kept in mind during adaptation:

- Dealing with different types of composition – what if all children are at the same level?
- Language – the state language vs. spoken language, phonetic nature of the language (creation of syllabic charts), English learning is still an issue – what is the right approach?
- High levels of enrolment – how do you tailor the approach?
- Shifting children from one level to another – how do you build this skill in a new context?
- Time has to be found to build basic skills – how do you find time across different system structures?
- Teaching learning material – how much material is essential and what is the cost?
- Track learning levels for course correction – how do you build this practice into systems that are not used to measurement?
The process of Unlearning

Children can learn – facilitate their learning
  ◦ Have faith in their ability

This does not mean they don’t need support
  ◦ Put a hand on their back
  ◦ Respect them
  ◦ Allow them to express

Data is not just for reporting
  ◦ Use data effectively not just to create reports
  ◦ Trust your mentors

Mentoring is essential
  ◦ Do not inspect, support
THANK YOU
Generalizing the TaRL Approach to Zambia

Emily Cupito
Associate Director of Policy
J-PAL Africa
11 December 2018
The Generalizability Puzzle

• Can a study inform policy only in the location in which it was undertaken?
• Should we use only whatever evidence we have from our specific location?
• What counts as a “similar enough” new setting?
• Should a new local randomized evaluation always precede scale up?
• Must an identical program or policy be replicated a specific number of times before it is scaled up?
Structured Approach to Evidence in Policy

• Evidence from single study just one part of the puzzle
  • We weigh the evidence based on quality and adjust priors

• Combine, theory, descriptive evidence, and results of rigorous impact evaluations to answer:
  • Whether results from one country likely to replicate in another
  • When we need more evaluation and when we don’t

• Draw on a theory based understanding of research on education interventions
Generalizability Framework

Bates and Glennerster 2017:

1. What is the disaggregated theory behind the program?

2. How strong is the evidence for the required general behavioral change?

3. Do the local conditions hold for that theory to apply?

4. What is the evidence that the implementation process can be carried out well?
Teaching at the Right Level in Zambia
1. Disaggregated theory behind the program

Education systems often cater to top performers

**IN MOST EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

- Education is for winners

**WITH TEACHING AT THE RIGHT LEVEL**

- All children learning well
2. Strength of the evidence

Evidence suggests “business as usual inputs” are not enough to increase learning outcomes

- **Flipcharts in Kenya, flexible grants in Niger, libraries in India, and anticipated grants in Zambia** and India all had no impact on test scores.

- **Extra teachers in Kenya** which reduced the class size has no impact on test scores

- Providing **extra computers in Columbia** and Peru had no impact on test scores

- A study on **textbooks in Kenya** found no impact on average – but did find an impact for the **top 40% of students**
2. Strength of the evidence

Timeline of TaRL Randomised Evaluations

- **2001-2003 India**
  - Volunteers pulled children out of school for 2 hours per day

- **2005-2007 Kenya**
  - Grade 1 classes divided by ability, led by government teachers during school day

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- **2008 India**
  - One month holiday camp held at school, led by teachers with volunteer support.

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- **2008-2010 India**
  - In-school, teacher led learning improvement program + support by Pratham volunteers

- **2007 India**
  - Self-paced computer games

- **2008 Ghana**
  - Trial of teacher led vs. tutor led in school and out of school

- **2007 India**
  - Self-paced computer games

- **2007-2008 India**
  - In-school, teacher led programme for 1 hour per day throughout the year. Strongly supported by govt monitors.

- **2012-2013 India**
  - In-school, teacher led programme for 1 hour per day throughout the year. Strongly supported by govt monitors.

- **2012-2013 India**
  - In-school, teacher led programme for 1 hour per day throughout the year. Strongly supported by govt monitors.

- **2013-2014 India**
  - “Learning Camps” in govt primary schools. Led by Pratham staff supported by village volunteers.

J-PAL Africa | Generalizing the TaRL Approach to Zambia
3. Local Conditions

Baseline Literacy - Comparison with India

- **Beginner**
- **Letters**
- **Words**
- **Paragraph/Story**

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4. Evidence on implementation process

Teachers are trained and mentored to assess children and group them by ability level.

Children are sorted by learning level and there is time dedicated to basic skills.

Instruction is targeted at the level of the child and they are able to absorb the lesson.
Continued, iterative process:

• Helped government map pros and cons of TaRL models to their context

• Government piloted three different models:
  1. One month camp for 3 hours per day during school day in 20 schools
  2. One month holiday camp for 3 hours per day in 20 schools
  3. One hour per day for two terms in 40 schools (decision to scale this one)

• Reviewing data, discussing issues and making improvements built into core of TaRL approach
  • Mentoring and discussion at classroom level
  • Monthly review meetings at zonal level (~10 schools)
  • Review meetings at district and provincial levels each term
  • Ministry HQ meetings to decide on scale up design and process, regular data reviews
4. Evidence on implementation process

The team continues to invest in improving TaRL implementation

**Public goods sharing implementation details**

- Deepened partnerships with other non-governmental organisations supporting TaRL

**Learning journeys to India**

**Fundraising for scale up**

**Embedded staff help build gov't capacity**
Further Reading

Kremer and Glennerster, 2012, Chapter in Handbook of Health Economics


www.povertyactionlab.org

Thank you!