

# HEART

HEALTH & EDUCATION ADVICE & RESOURCE TEAM

## **Helpdesk Report: Availability of school performance data and learning achievement**

**Date:** 01.11.13

**Query:** Does the availability of school performance data have an effect on learning achievement? Why and in what circumstances?

These helpdesks were designed to enable an extensive search for evidence on various methods for improving learning. There are a series of six similar reports, each is based on an edit of a literature search for their chosen method. After the initial search had been done the search fields were expanded to include further search engines and search methods, for more information please see the search strategy section of the report.

The list of methods searched in the series are: textbooks, teacher training, infrastructure and basic facilities, school leadership, school governance and student performance data.

**Enquirer:** DFID

### **Content**

1. Screened results from search strategy
2. Additional resources
3. Search strategy
4. Screening method

#### **1. Screened results from search strategy**

No documents were assessed as potentially relevant.

#### **2. Additional resources**

The following resources were identified through other helpdesk reports and Google scholar.

#### **The Impact of Diagnostic Feedback to Teachers on Student Learning: Experimental Evidence from India**

Karthik Muralidharan and Venkatesh Sundararaman (2010)  
Economic Journal 120 (546)

Available at: <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/impact-diagnostic-feedback-teachers-student-learning-experimental-evidence-india>

We present experimental evidence on the impact of a programme that provided low-stakes diagnostic tests and feedback to teachers, and low-stakes monitoring of classroom processes across a representative set of schools in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. We find teachers in treatment schools exerting more effort when observed in the classroom but students in these schools do no better on independently-administered tests than students in schools that did not receive the programme. This suggests that though teachers in the programme schools worked harder while being observed, there was no impact of the feedback and monitoring on student learning outcomes.

### **Methods**

Primary  
Experimental

### **Short-Run Learning Dynamics under a Test-Based Accountability System: Evidence from Pakistan**

Felipe Barrera-Osorio and Dhushyanth Raju (2010)

Human Development Network Education Policy Research Working Paper 5465

Available at: <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/book/10.1596/1813-9450-5465>

*(This document is also included in the governance report)*

Low student learning is a common finding in much of the developing world. This paper uses a relatively unique dataset of five semiannual rounds of standardized test data to characterize and explain the short-term changes in student learning. The data are collected as part of the quality assurance system for a public-private partnership program that offers public subsidies conditional on minimum learning levels to low-cost private schools in Pakistan. Apart from a large positive distributional shift in learning between the first two test rounds, the learning distributions over test rounds show little progress. Schools are ejected from the program if they fail to achieve a minimum pass rate in the test in two consecutive attempts, making the test high stakes. Sharp regression discontinuity estimates show that the threat of program exit on schools that barely failed the test for the first time induces large learning gains. The large change in learning between the first two test rounds is likely attributable to this accountability pressure given that a large share of new program entrants failed in the first test round. Schools also qualify for substantial annual teacher bonuses if they achieve a minimum score in a composite measure of student test participation and mean test score. Sharp regression discontinuity estimates do not show that the prospect of future teacher bonus rewards induces learning gains for schools that barely did not qualify for the bonus.

### **Methods**

Secondary  
Non-systematic review

### **Standards-Based Accountability in South Africa**

Nick Taylor (2009)

School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 20 (3)

Abstract available at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09243450902916704#.UnKlYnDwmSo>

The implementation of standards-based accountability (SBA) interventions aimed at improving school performance often focuses on the testing component, at the expense of capacity building. This was the case in South Africa when a SBA programme was instituted by government in 2000, which was accompanied by substantial rises in senior certificate pass rates between 2000 and 2003. Our analysis indicates that the bulk of these effects was achieved by manipulating the results by means of 4 measures: eliminating high-risk candidates, encouraging candidates to register at the easier standard grade, lowering the

standard of examination questions, and raising raw scores during the moderation process. However, research results from other school improvement programmes in the country indicate that significant improvement in school performance is possible when capacity-building elements are combined with accountability measures.

## Methods

Secondary

Non-systematic review

### 3. Search strategy

#### Databases and websites searched:

- Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC)
- British Education Index (BEI)
- Web of Knowledge – limited to Social Sciences Citation Index only
- R4D DfID Research For Development
- Gov.uk: Publications section and DFID evaluation reports
- 3ie Systematic Review Database
- 3ie Database of Impact Evaluations
- The Campbell Library
- EPPI Centre
- Google Scholar

#### Search strategy concepts

The search strategy was tailored to the functionality of the different databases searched. In searching the academic databases, ERIC, BEI and Web of Science, search strings were developed for the search concepts, student performance data, DFID priority countries and Learning Achievement and these were combined. Both keyword and subject heading searches were carried out. Please see Annex C for the full search strategy for these databases. Other databases had more limited search functionality and were searched within topic/ sector areas e.g. Education or using fewer keywords.

The full search strategies for ERIC, BEI and Web of Science are included in Annex B. Please see the following table for summaries of the search strategies and results.

#### ERIC, BEI and Web of Science

Database and Dates covered	Date searched	Concept search strategy	Hits	Notes	LMIC hits
British Education Index (BEI) 1975 - present	09/10/13	As ERIC but No primary or secondary school limit included	21		
Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) 1966-present	7-10-13	School student data and DfID countries and Learning Achievement. Limited to Primary & Secondary Education, yrs 2000-2013	68		~700
Science Citation Index & Social Sciences Citation Index	10-10-13	Slight modifications as compared to ERIC search	25		165

WOS 1900 - present					
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Further detail on the search methods are outlined in Annex C.

#### 4. Screening method

Studies were assessed against the following inclusion criteria:

- Geography: DFID priority countries. A list of priority countries is provided in Annex A. Both Tier 1 and Tier 2 countries were included
- Language: Limited to English language only
- Relevance: Studies which address the thematic research question i.e. **does the availability of school performance data have an effect on learning achievement? Why and in what circumstances?**
- Study design: Primary empirical studies (quantitative or qualitative) and secondary analysis (systematic reviews or rigorous literature reviews) which meet the relevance criterion were included. Case studies, theoretical, conceptual and policy papers were excluded.
- Publication date: Within last 10 years

Studies were screened on the basis of the abstract. Where studies were potentially relevant but their adherence to the inclusion criteria could not be fully ascertained from the abstract (for example, evaluation methodology was not stated), they were included in the list, so they can undergo further screening from the full text at a later date.

Study design was described using the DFID How To Note: Assessing the Strength of Evidence:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-note-assessing-the-strength-of-evidence>

#### Authors

This query response was prepared by Laura Bolton, Judy Wright and Thomas Veale

**About Helpdesk reports:** The HEART Helpdesk is funded by the DFID Human Development Group. Helpdesk reports are based on 3 days of desk-based research per query and are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues, and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts may be contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged.

For any further request or enquiry, contact [info@heart-resources.org](mailto:info@heart-resources.org)

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