Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)

A possible solution for learning recovery

Experiences from India and Nepal

Presenters:
Gurveen Kaur, Program Management
Divya Arora, International Collaborations
What to Expect?

- Introduction to Pratham
- What is TaRL? An Overview
- TaRL experiences from India and Nepal
About Pratham

Pratham means *first or primary* in several Indian languages. Established in 1995 to provide education to children in the slums of Mumbai, Pratham has grown in both scope and scale across the country.

Pratham facilitates India’s well-known nation wide Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in every rural district in India since 2005. Sample of over half a million children in each survey.

For the past two decades and more, Pratham has developed high-impact, low-cost interventions that help children acquire foundational skills like reading and arithmetic.

Pratham’s Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach has demonstrated proven impact on children’s learning outcomes and is now being adapted to contexts outside India as well.

In recent years, Pratham has also started vocational skilling programs to enable young people to get a good start in their working life.
Teaching at the Right Level: An Overview
Problem: Even after 3 years or more of schooling, children are unable to read simple text or perform basic math operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Beginner</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Para</th>
<th>Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ASER model of assessment is currently used in 14 countries in Asia, Africa & Latin America and recognized globally as an innovative approach to assessment for understanding basic issues in children’s learning.

- In Grade III, less than 30% are at grade level for reading.
- In each grade, wide distribution of learning levels.
- Only half of all children in Grade V have achieved Grade II learning levels.
- Math levels are often worse.

Who should the teacher teach? What should she teach whom?

TaRL tries to address this problem.
**Example: A typical school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Beg</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Para</th>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example: Session organized for TaRL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Beg</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Para</th>
<th>Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In a usual school:**
- Children are organized by age and grade (as shown by rows in the table above).
- Assume one teacher teaches each grade.
- Each teacher has about 40 children but at many different levels.
- She teaches from grade level textbook.
- But in reality she struggles with the wide range of learning levels in her class.

**Possible Solution: TaRL moves away from age-grade teaching to focusing on children’s current learning levels**

**In a TaRL session:**
- Children are organized by their current learning level (as shown by columns in the table above).
- One teacher teaches 1-2 groups.
- Each teacher has about 40 children but children are at more or less similar levels.
- She uses activities & materials appropriate for the children’s level.
In the classroom, TaRL unfolds through a simple process involving key elements.

**Assessment**
Simple one-on-one assessment done to **group** children by level instead of by grade for instruction.

**Appropriate activities & materials**
For each group, there are a set of activities and materials for reading and arithmetic that are appropriate for that group and than enable children to progress.

**Tracking progress**
Similar assessments are used for tracking children’s progress and formalizing grouping.

**Big groups-small groups**
Children do activities in groups and also individually. Children progress quickly and move into the next level group.
TaRL transforms practice in many ways, and helps shift the system from schooling for all towards learning for all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Business as usual</th>
<th>Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL</td>
<td>Goal is to complete the grade level textbook.</td>
<td>Clearly articulated goals for basic reading and arithmetic. Goal is to ensure basic foundational skills for all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESSMENT – MEASUREMENT</td>
<td>Pen-paper grade level test done at the beginning of a phase and at the end.</td>
<td>Simple quick one-on-one oral assessment used at start for grouping. Simultaneous assessment used periodically to track progress. Data discussion and review at all levels. Aggregate school or class-level data used to propel program not child-wise data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUPING</td>
<td>Full class teaching at grade level.</td>
<td>Children grouped by level rather than by grade for instruction. Children move quickly from one group to next as they progress. “Teaching at the Right Level”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHING &amp; ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>“Chalk and talk”. Textbook driven.</td>
<td>Simple framework of daily activities that can be adapted as children progress. (CAMaL – Combined Activities for Maximised Learning). Activities in big groups, small groups and individually. Children learn to work in groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAINING &amp; MENTORING</td>
<td>Resource persons as trainers. Hardly any follow up after training.</td>
<td>“Leaders of practice” created via “learning by doing. Select Government cadre” practice” the approach for 20-25 days and taste “success”, then train teachers and provide ongoing on-site monitoring and mentoring.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Multiple models through RCTs in 6 Indian states over 13 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who facilitates?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School teachers</td>
<td>In school</td>
<td>During school hours</td>
<td>Daily, 2 hours a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School teachers</td>
<td>In school</td>
<td>Outside school hours</td>
<td>Daily or intensive camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid instructors</td>
<td>In school</td>
<td>During or outside school hours</td>
<td>Daily or intensive camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid instructors</td>
<td>In community spaces</td>
<td>During or outside school hours</td>
<td>Daily or intensive camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>In school</td>
<td>During or outside school hours</td>
<td>Daily or intensive camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>In community spaces</td>
<td>During or outside school hours</td>
<td>Daily or intensive camps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Link to RCTs on various models: shorturl.at/AFKX1
Has TaRL been adapted outside India?

TaRL began in India and has now spread to Africa, Latin America and other parts of Asia.
TaRL Experiences from India and Nepal
Reading Performance over the years in Karnataka

- ASER 2020 was conducted in March 2021 with 18,000 children in 670 villages.
- The table below shows proportion of children in govt schools who can read Std II level text (on right)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Children who can read Std II level text (Govt schools)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Substantial drops are visible in the ‘20-21 school year as compared to earlier years:
- The % of children in Std III who can read a Std II text has decreased by 10 percentage points – **half of 2018 level**
- The % of children in Std V who can read at this level has declined by 15 percentage points over 2018 levels. **Less than one-third students can read at Std II level.**
Odu Karnataka
TaRL based Govt Partnership in Karnataka, India

Initiated in: 2016

Target group: Grades 4 and 5

Scale: ~900,000 children in 52,000 schools across 34 cities

Period of implementation: 2016-2022

Duration: 2 hrs/day | 10 weeks

Role of Pratham: Content, training and monitoring support

Role of the Government: Resources, Implementation, monitoring
Program Highlights

Leaders of Practice within govt

A cadre from the government is identified to lead the program, oversee key processes, monitor, review progress and plan ahead.

Hands-on Training

The ‘LoP’ are trained on TaRL approach who in turn conduct practice classes (15 days) for hands-on understanding. Thereafter LoP in turn train the teachers.

Low-Cost Material

Content and materials (low-cost and contextualised) in Kannada, Marathi, and Urdu were used depending on the medium of instruction.

Measurement

Lean data collection through GP App & real-time access to monitoring and assessment data on the reporting dashboard.

Monitoring

The intervention is monitored by leaders of practice from the government. Regular review meetings at block, district, and state-level for due course-correction.
Key Learnings

● The program was effective in improving the learning levels of children at the same rate as in the previous years, even though this cohort of children had missed almost two years of schooling.

● Dedicated team appointed at the district & sub-district level for training, mentoring & review enabled smooth communication, coordination and course corrections.

● Continuous review of assessment and monitoring data through review meetings at block, district, and state level, helped in quick action for supporting progress.

● Lean data collection & real-time access to monitoring and assessment data on the reporting dashboard

● Regular online content through the ‘Odu Karnataka’ YouTube channel provided continuous support to teachers during program implementation.
Program Impact

- The program was implemented for **60 teaching days** with 45 min dedicated to language and math each.
- The data below, represents data from **~37,400 schools** and **~878,000 children**.
- **31% age pt improvement** in the ability to **read a Std II level text** and **36% age pt improvement** in the ability to solve a 2 by 1 division problem.
Overview of the TaRL pilot in Nepal

**Target group**: Grades 4 and 5

**Scale**: ~2,500 children in 64 public schools across 3 local local governments

**Period of implementation**: December 2021 - March 2022 (10 weeks) for about 2 - 3 hours every day for both reading and math in Nepali

**Key stakeholders**: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Nepal), local governments, Street Child of Nepal, Aasman Nepal, Pratham

**Master Trainers**: Street Child of Nepal

**Instructors**: Public school teachers + Paid Instructors

**Mentors**: Aasman Nepal + Retired Headteachers recommended by the local government

**Role of the NGO**: Implementation lead, training and pilot oversight

**Role of the Government**: Strategic Orientation | Funded by: World Bank
Impact

~80% children by endline were able to read at least a simple paragraph (or grade 1 level text) in Nepali as compared to 46% at baseline.

~80% children were able to perform two digit subtraction with borrowing by the end of the intervention as compared to 33% at baseline.
Highlights and Takeaways

Highlights
● Political commitment towards learning recovery across levels
● External mentoring cadre introduced to interact with the government system
● Strong focus on capacity building of mentors on effective use of data in the classroom
● Potential scale up of the intervention being explored

Takeaways
● Variation in the program locations have to be kept in mind while planning the program design, content and strategy
● For an NGO led model - having dedicated teams that have practiced TaRL themselves is important!
● Quick and large gains can be made in a very short span of time!
Thank you!  www.pratham.org |
Poll Question (1 of 2)

Q. What does TaRL stand for?

a) Teaching at the Random Level
b) Taught at Right Level
c) Teaching at the Right Level
Q. Do you think there is a need for an intervention like TaRL in your context?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Maybe