



Dr José David Weinstein Cayuela
The Challenge of Aligning Assessment with Student Learning

Chile has created possibly the most powerful educational assessment system in Latin America and has given a lot of important information. This information is used to grade schools by a scoring system. Because these scores tended to be unclear, an attempt was made to create definitions. This information is important in allowing schools to have a general picture of their standing. However, it is not sufficient. We have tried to establish a complementary system giving specific information, not just in general comparative terms, and this information can be used to influence the way schools teach. This system is called Mejor Escuela or Better School.

The capacity to work with and train teachers in the classroom is absolutely critical.

It is also useful in assessing the capacity of teachers and enabling improvement mechanisms to be implemented. There may be a highly developed national assessment system, but the tools may not be available to individual schools or classrooms. In many cases, teachers may not have the skills to evaluate how children have progressed. Therefore, the capacity to work with and train teachers in the classroom is absolutely critical. This is done by modelling teacher behaviour through consultants and external teachers.

Therefore, while there may be improvements in assessments at national level, there also need to be other tools which can be used at school level. It is important to align the results of national tests with school-level information and to align the different methodologies.

Jenny Lewis
Capacity Building for Educational Leaders

Reforms are sometimes sacrificed to other issues and unplanned inputs. They are designed for political purposes in the first place and are dropped because the wrong political party introduced them to begin with, because reforms are measured by criteria other than educational



outcomes or because of the length of time a party is in power. Many educators have no access to international testing because of the associated costs. Therefore, criteria for a common playing field and a wider workforce to implement them are required.

While benchmarking can be heavily biased towards performance indicators and standards, best practices and quality models are the best change agents for many countries. Some of the schemes from high-performing countries are key indicators for successful projects, such as student-centred education, access for all, stable funding and accountability. Many countries are starting to look at capacity building of leaders within schools and what needs to be in place for leaders to create reforms, and they are starting to move from a competency to a capability leadership framework. We need to start to think about those who have to implement and sustain change and grow capability from classroom to system leadership.

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Dr Bálint Magyar
Digital Literacy

Gaining digital literacy should be considered a human right. The presumed knowledge set to be provided by schooling changes with time, but the faster it changes with technology shift, the sooner this set becomes outdated. Without lifelong learning, countless people would be deprived of the chance to update their knowledge. Digital literacy enables participation in education, helping people to access more opportunities to learn and maintain their value to the community.

Gaining digital literacy should be considered a human right.

The right to public participation may also be considered a human right and effective public participation depends on access to accurate and comprehensive information. Digital literacy therefore becomes a precondition for public participation. Lifelong learning still does not form part of the right to education in international agreements, but



it should be protected in this way. Digital literacy should be attained at primary level as a human right and the right to become digitally literate granted as part of lifelong learning. Digitally illiterate people are prevented from fully accessing their rights because they lack the skills, so this should be declared as a right with accompanying legal obligations at government level.

It is necessary to force governments to devote public resources to providing digital skills and access to everyone. Recommendations and strategies are insufficient; legal guarantees for digital literacy are essential. These measures will increase social cohesion, generate markets and increase the efficiency, competency and competitiveness of individuals and societies.

Questions and Answers

Prof. John Wood, Moderator: How do you empower teachers to take ownership of assessment?

Dr José David Weinstein Cayuela: There is an imbalance between accountability and support. Countries need to provide better conditions and build capacity for teachers.

Jenny Lewis: Leadership capacity building should be made part of teacher training and teacher empowerment has to be central to reforms.

Prof. John Wood: To what extent can linking schools across different countries help this empowerment?

Jenny Lewis: A number of child-managed projects are being rolled out in Namibia and Papua New Guinea, concerned with overcoming some of the key issues facing them and encouraging quality learning.

Dr Bálint Magyar: Countries need to be aware of what is going on around the world but should not simply adopt initiatives without awareness of context.

Prof. John Wood: How do we ensure that the content being accessed by teachers is accurate?



Prof. John Wood

Dr Bálint Magyar: Universities are resistant to adopting new models for historical reasons. While a lot of teachers are open to new methodologies, the majority are conservative. The question is how best practices can be made to permeate the entire spectrum.

From the floor: How do we bridge the gap between localised initiatives and government policy? Does an insistence on digital literacy, empowerment, devolved assessment etc. shift attention from ensuring access to education for those deprived of it? What meaning does education have in families where no one has a job, or in the Australian aboriginal population where their own learning has been ignored and unworkable solutions have been imposed?

Dr José David Weinstein Cayuela: We need national policies, but also opportunities to develop initiatives at local level. It must also be possible to connect these different levels. Secondly, the challenge is to think in terms of access and quality at the same time.

Jenny Lewis: The constant theme we are seeing is the need for capacity building. We have to focus on leadership to ensure access and quality.

Dr Bálint Magyar: Digital rights create a compelling mechanism for putting pressure on governments, even in poorer countries. Shortage of funds is not the major question in Eastern Europe, for example, so much as wasteful spending.

From the floor: Is compulsory early childhood education not also an essential requirement? How can institutions and international organisations provide access to quality education for African and Brazilian people? How broadly do you define digital skills, and what contribution can be made by television and mobile phones, for example? How do we protect the future of education from being compromised by economic demands?

Jenny Lewis: Many countries are investing significant time and effort in delivering early childhood education, with the result that outcomes are improved dramatically.

Dr Bálint Magyar: Early learning is very important. Surveys indicate that the majority of dropouts in Hungary come from groups who did not attend kindergarten. Regarding segregation, there has been pressure to segregate poor and disadvantaged children, so we have implemented anti-discrimination laws and financial incentives. Television and other means do create greater possibilities for opening up access to education. Finally,

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people in Europe change professions several times, meaning that we need to be able to provide lifelong education.

Dr José David Weinstein Cayuela: Educational policy has three goals: to improve human capital; improve political coherence; and reduce inequity. However, countries need long-term policies to attain these objectives.

Prof. John Wood: Digitisation allows people's democracy far more than under traditional media, but we need to teach people how to access information, and that is what education is all about.

From the floor: We know that teaching is perhaps the most important societal task, but what should we teach our teachers to be? How can we help young learners evaluate teachers in practical ways? What suggestions do you have for funding accessibility?

Dr José David Weinstein Cayuela: Empowerment is the most important thing we can do in teacher training, but it is not just about technology. Teachers have a moral purpose in educating children and we need to reinforce that idea. Regarding assessment, it is important to cultivate a common procedure for sharing different views and criteria.

Dr Bálint Magyar: It is necessary to select the right people to be teachers and to ask the question of what we teach those who are capable of being teachers.

Prof. John Wood: Can I have one action point from each of you?

Jenny Lewis: We need to use the information from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and problem-solve across our respective countries.

Dr José David Weinstein Cayuela: It is important to reduce the gaps between international, national, school and classroom assessment systems.

Dr Bálint Magyar: Literacy means digital literacy in the 21st century. Without it, people cannot be active members of society.

