International Literacy Day: A Learning Agenda

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September 7, 2012

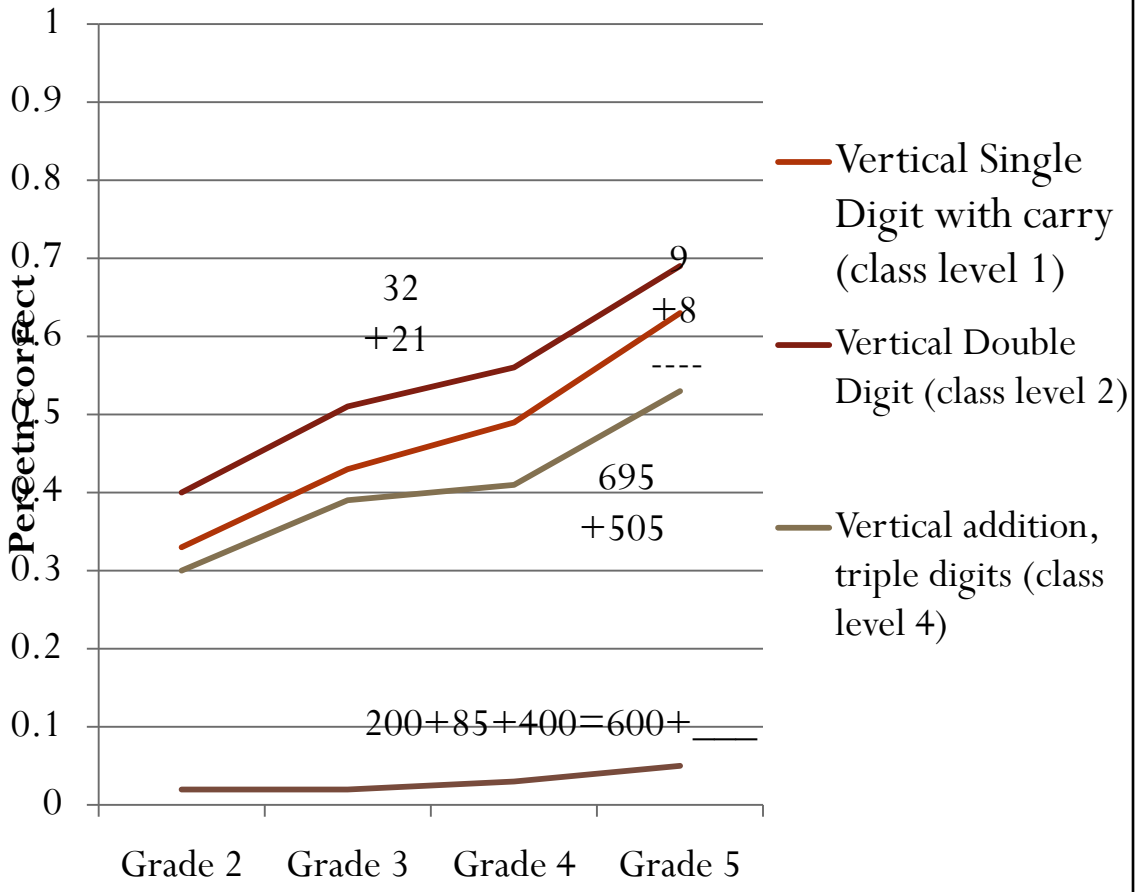
Four Main Points

- Learning profiles (learning per grade) are too low to lead to adequate comptency
- Extending school alone with not be enough
- An input based approach will not be enough to raise learning
- Beyond mimetic isomorphic mimicry to systems that focus on perfromance

(Unless otherwise noted all graphs and data are from my forthcoming book "The Rebirth of Education" from Center for Global Development and draft chapters detailing the results are available online at http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/lpritch/)

Schooling should lead to *opportunity* but won't if the learning profile is too shallow





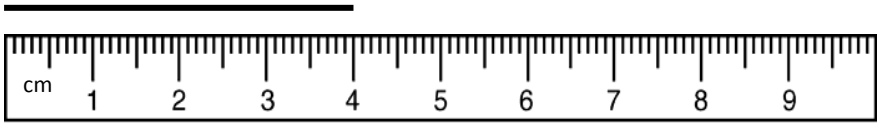
Source: APRESt (via Pritchett 2012)

Little learning per year of schooling

Country	Average percentage point increase in reading/division, per year of schooling	Of students who couldn't read or divide, percent who learned in next grade
Reading (grade 2 story)		
India	13.2	17.1
Pakistan	14.1	18.7
Tanzania	14.8	21.5
Uganda (English)	7.7	8.2
Kenya	20.4	34.1
Division (one digit into three digits)		
India	8.3	9.3
Pakistan	9.9	11.6
Uganda	11.3	14.4
Kenya	18.6	28.4

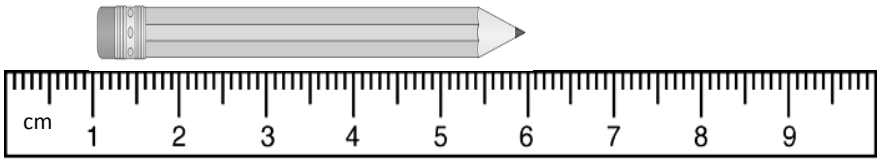
Length and measurement, illustrating conceptual understanding versus rote

Class 4, 6, 8 Math



The length of the line in the figure above is 4 cm.

How long is the pencil shown in the picture? (Use the ruler shown in the picture.)



Class 4:
5 cm (**23.0%**)
6 cm (46.0%)

Class 6:
5 cm (**22.1%**)
6 cm (41.7%)

Class 8:
5 cm (**34.7%**)
6 cm (38.8%)

Only 7,2 percent of students clear up this fundamental confusion in four years of schooling

Shallow learning profiles lead to low cumulative performance of school leavers

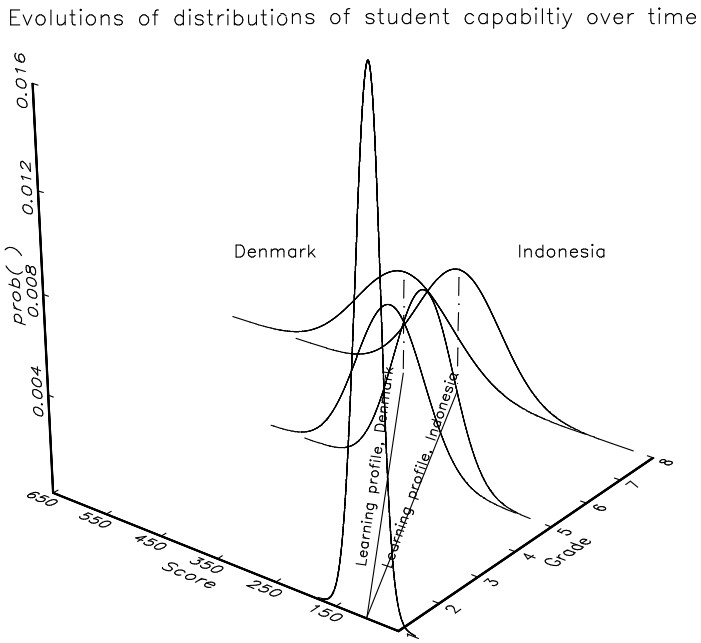
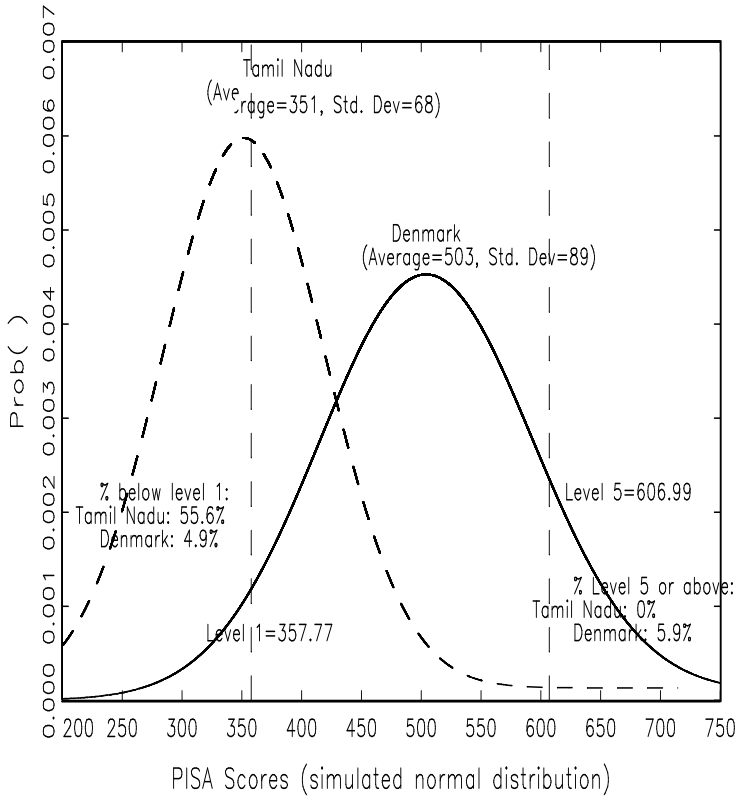
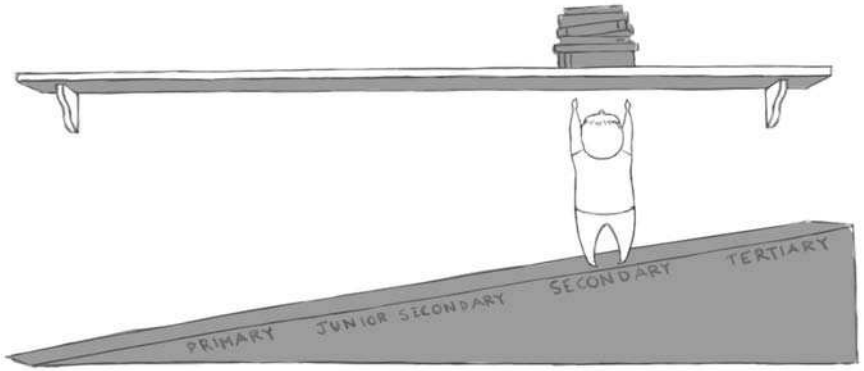


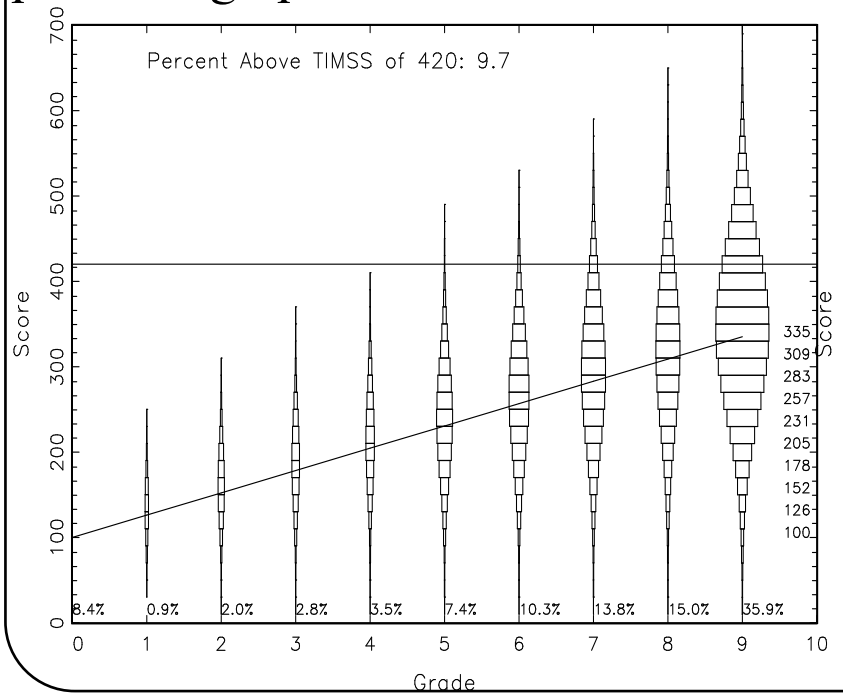
Figure 1.8: Denmark and Tamil Nadu, India Compared
(PISA 2009(+) Mathematics)

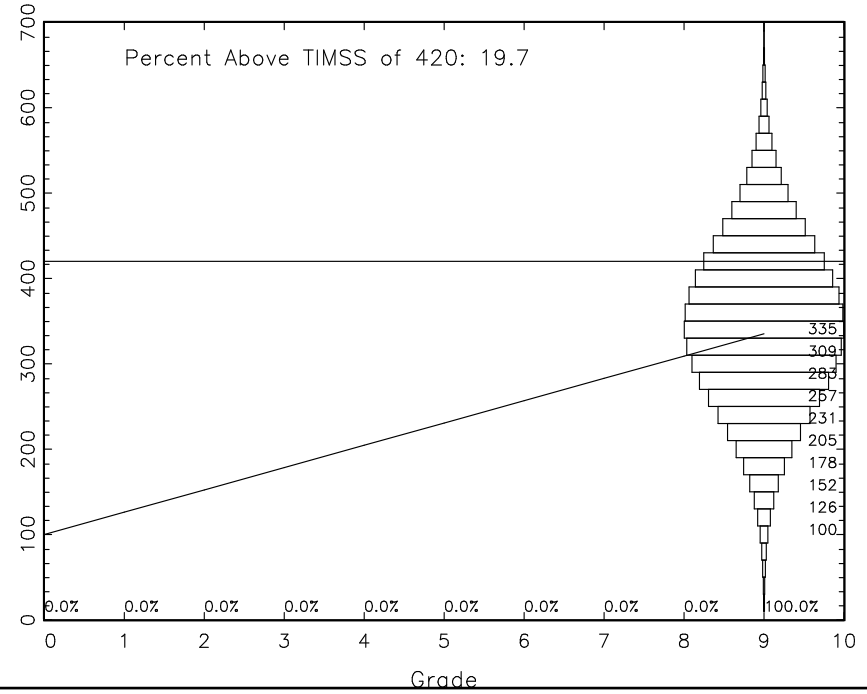


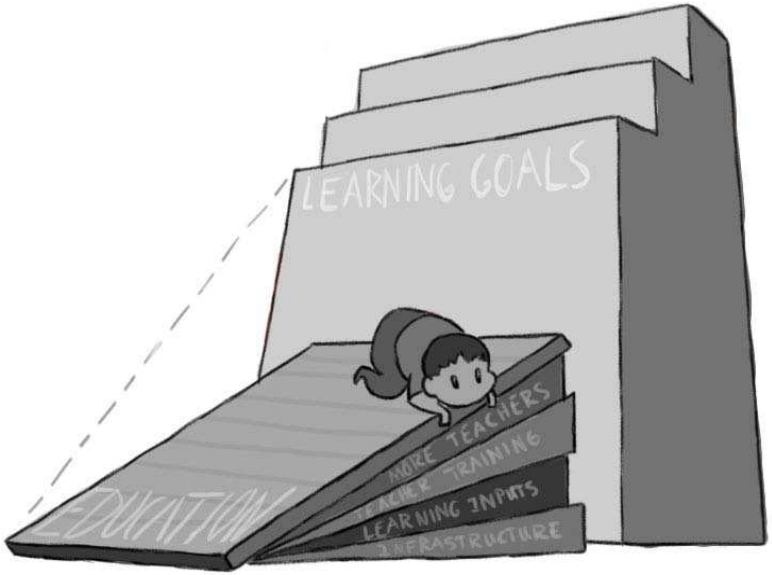


If the learning profile is too flat just more schooling cannot reach learning goals

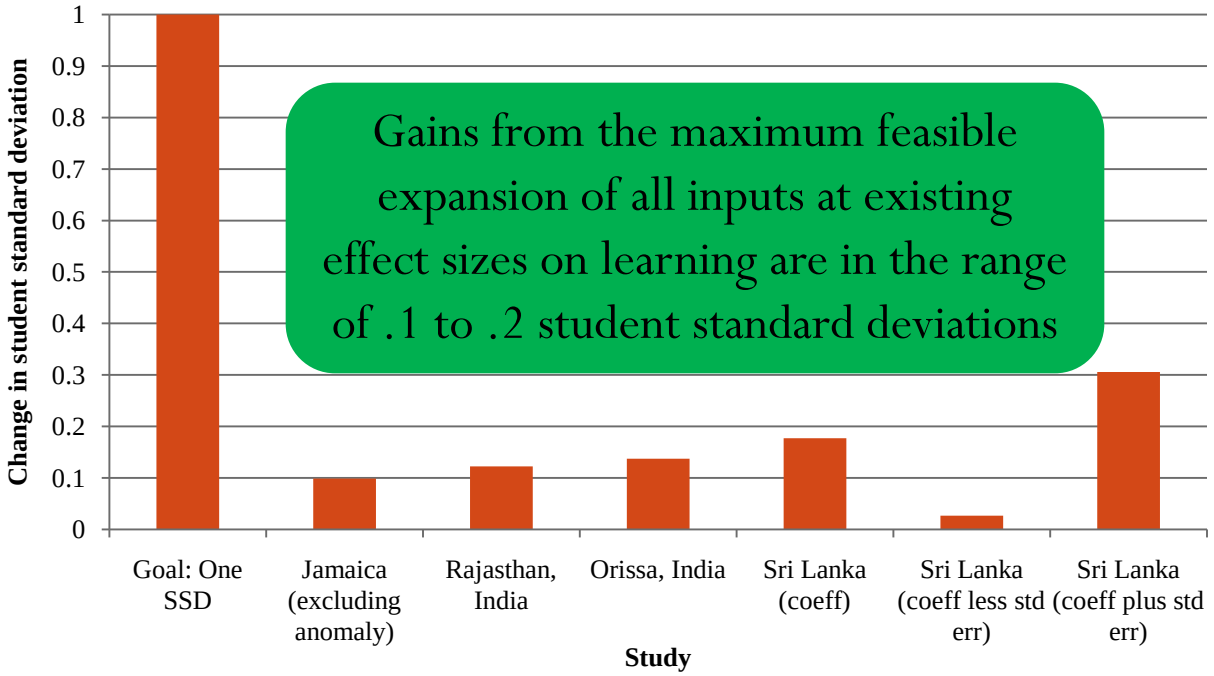
Using the learning profile of Ghana in 2007 even reaching universal secondary completion only increases those above a minimal threshold by 10 percentage points



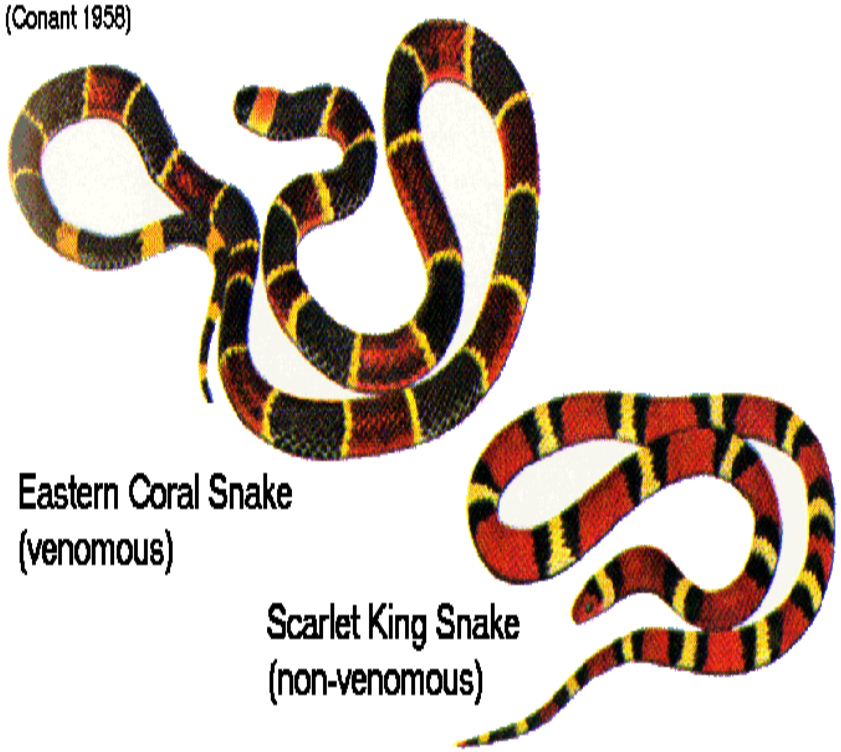




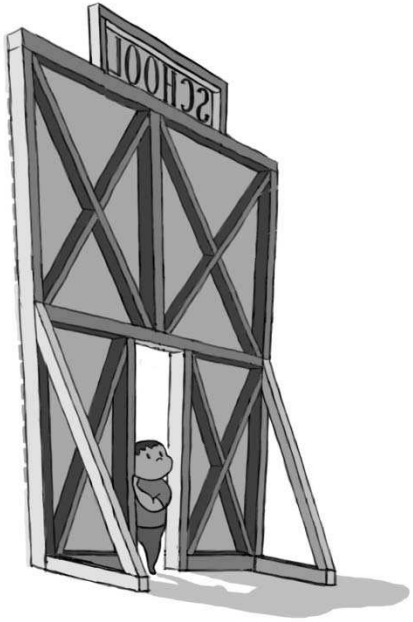
The impact of just more standard inputs is just not big enough—even doing everything desirable in "business as usual" fashion won't be enough



Mimetic Isomorphic mimicry in snakes and schools: When is a school just a building?



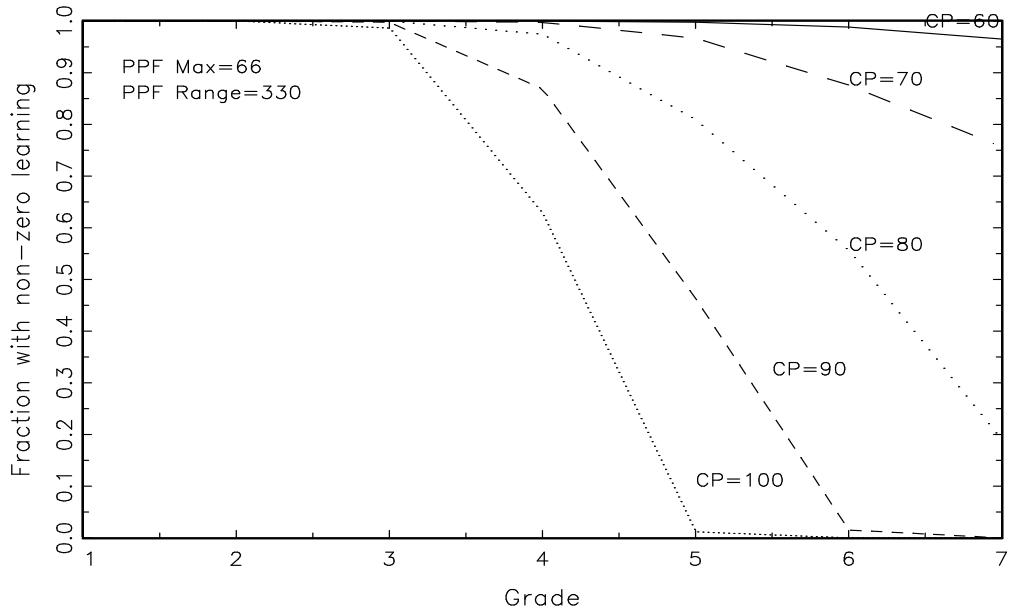
Camouflage of looking like a poisonous snake is a survival strategy—without the bother of being poisonous



Camouflage of looking like a school—buildings, teachers, kids in uniform—allows public schools to survive without all the bother of educating children

Getting better outcomes is not just "speeding up" or getting more ambitious—covering too much too fast is part of the problem

Figure 10: Fraction of kids learning anything falls as curricular pace (CP) increases even with the same PPF



Moving ahead in the curriculum faster than children are learning leaves many children so far behind they learn little or nothing

Source: Pritchett and Beatty 2012

There are things out there that work—but an educational eco-system that encourages demonstrated solutions to scale (and other to wither) is essential



Fish swim

…mammals swim



…turtles swim



…birds swim

