RTI for English Language Learners

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Klingner (2011)

As a backdrop…

We are not doing enough to examine underlying assumptions about who can learn and who struggles: "It was if the failure was invisible, or worse, inevitable" (Noguera & Wing, 2006).

"We lament that we have to spend so much of our careers documenting competence, when it should simply be assumed, suggesting that 'language minority' students have the intellectual capabilities of any other children, when it should simply be acknowledged, and proposing instructional arrangements that capitalize fully on the many strengths they bring into classrooms, when it should simply be their right" (Moll & Gonzalez, 1997).

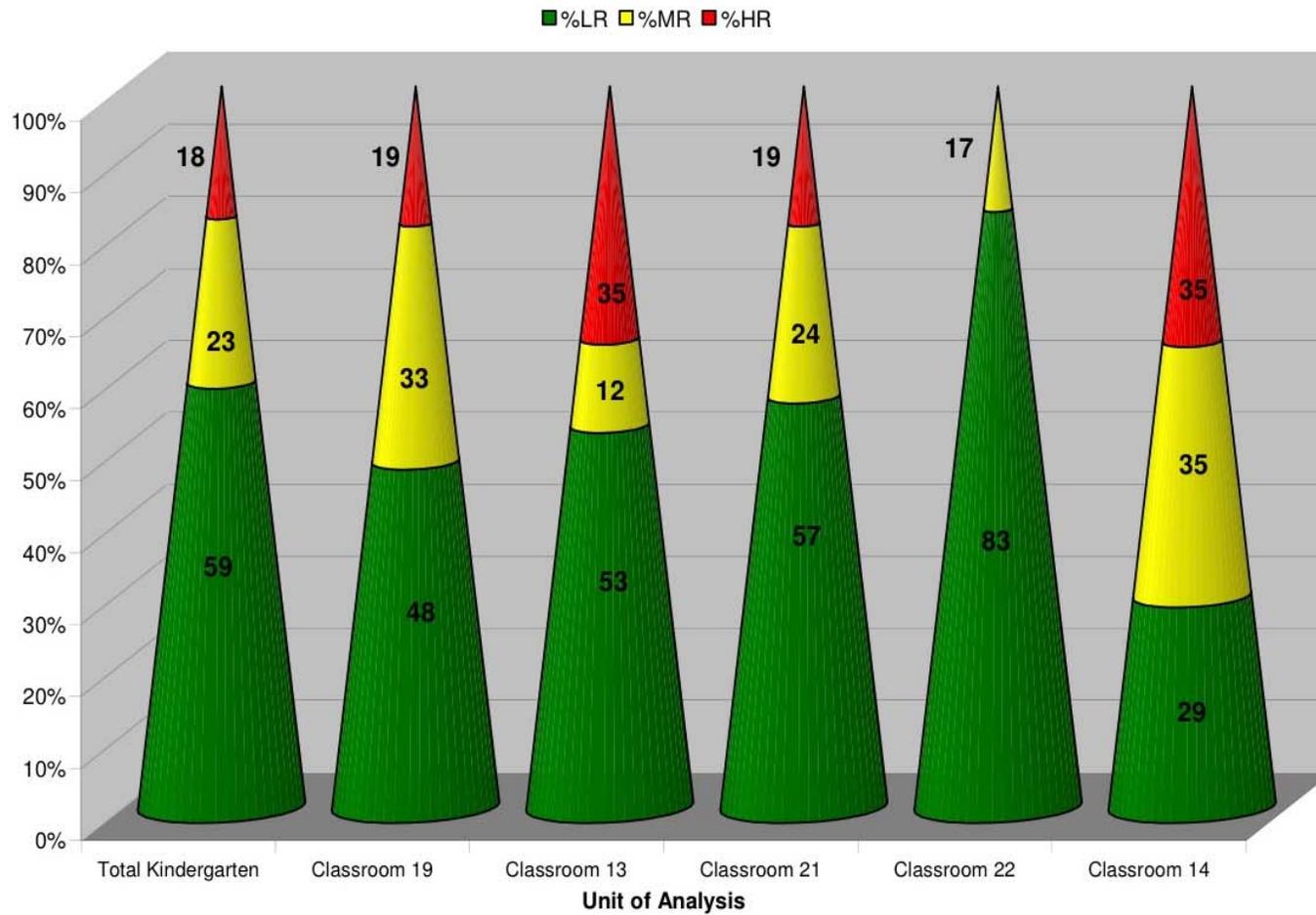Klingner (2011)

Issues and Recommendations

Issue 1: *According to progress-monitoring data, more than half of the English language learners are not reaching benchmarks.*

Recommendations

- For RTI to work, most ELLs must be succeeding.
- When many students are not progressing, **change instruction:**
  - Has the instructional program been validated with students like those in the class?
  - Is instruction at an appropriate level for students' language and learning needs?
  - Is the program well-implemented?
  - Are teachers sufficiently differentiating instruction to meet diverse student needs?
  - Is the environment conducive to learning?
- This will require:
  - **observing in classrooms** and supporting instruction
  - *developing and capitalizing on local expertise.*
- Use progress monitoring to ensure that instruction is adjusted to meet the needs of individual students *and* classrooms of learners.

Letter Naming Fluency Risk Level Overview
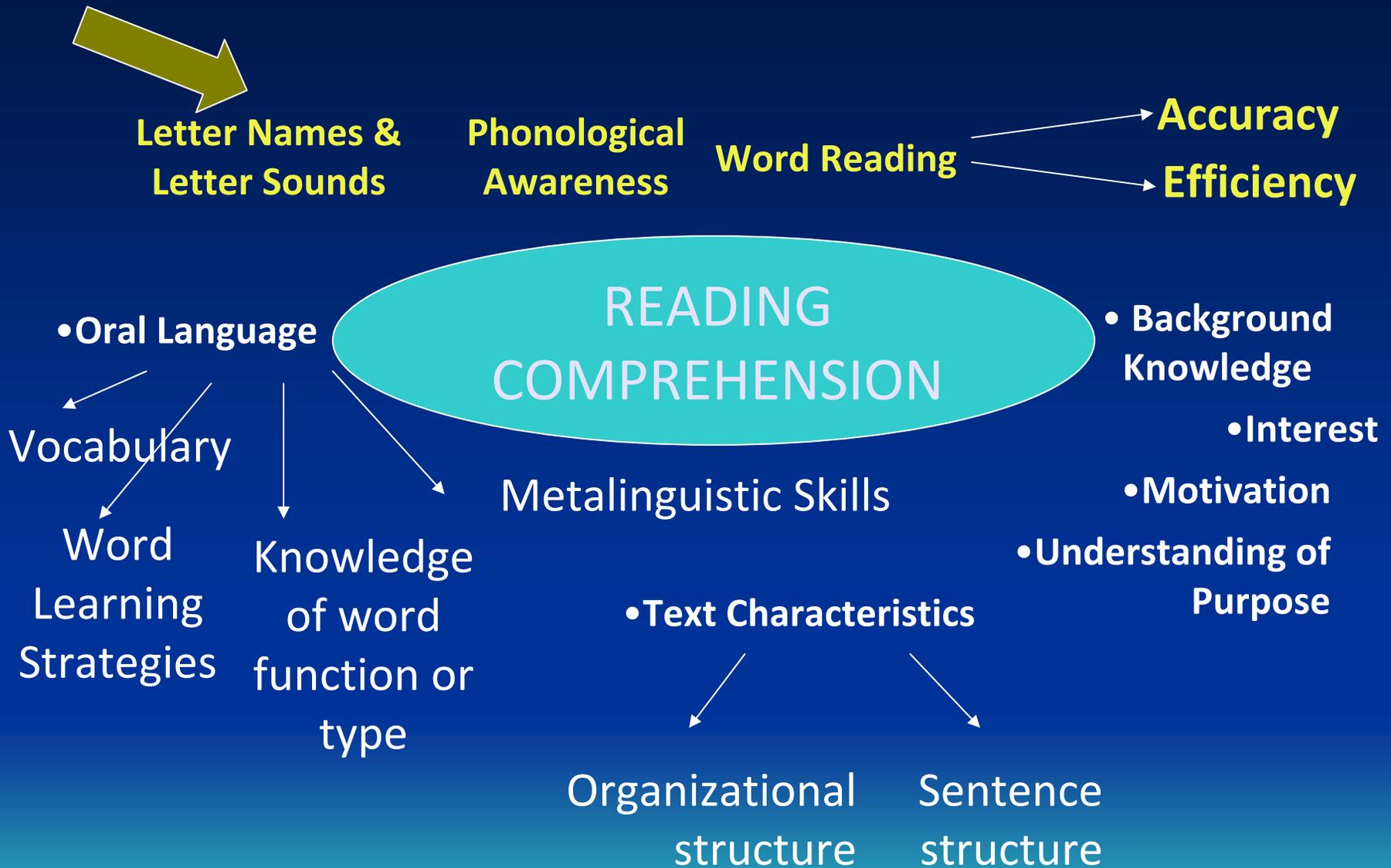
George Batsche & David Tilly

Klingner (2011)

A Common Scenario: Early Literacy Measures

Lesaux

Letter Names & Letter Sounds

Phonological Awareness

Word Reading → **Accuracy** / **Efficiency**

READING COMPREHENSION

•**Oral Language**

Vocabulary

Word Learning Strategies

Knowledge of word function or type

Metalinguistic Skills

•**Text Characteristics**

Organizational structure

Sentence structure

• **Background Knowledge**

•**Interest**

•**Motivation**

•**Understanding of Purpose**

The Gap between Reading Words & Comprehending Text (Lesaux)
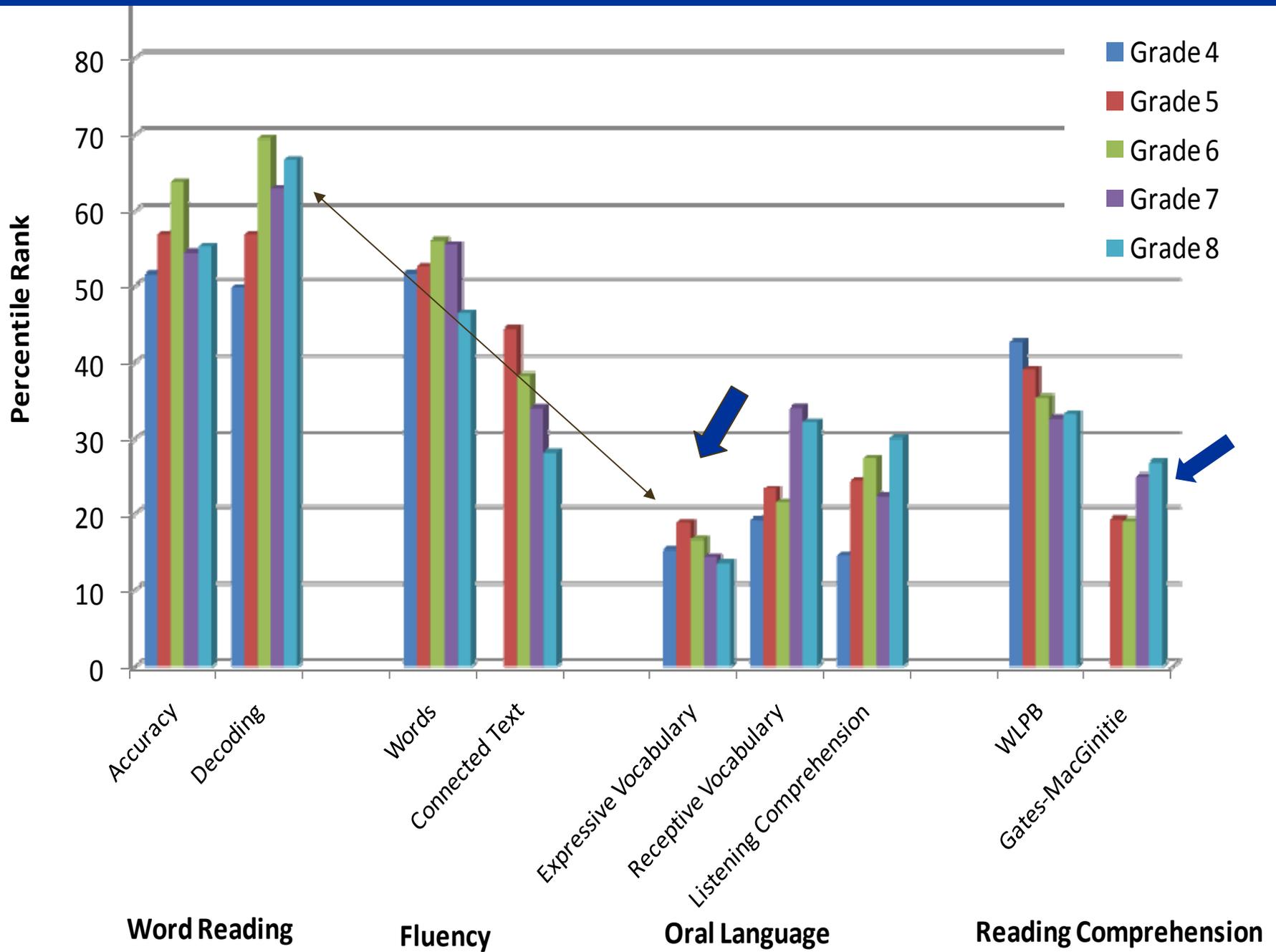
Recommendations

- Use *multiple* assessment methods to provide a comprehensive view of learning.

- Use RTI assessment strategies that reflect the multi-dimensional nature of language and literacy.

- Oral reading fluency (ORF) does not correlate with comprehension for ELLs as it does for fluent English speakers (Crosson & Lesaux, 2009)—use ORF as a starting point for further assessment.

Issue 3: *School personnel are confused by what it means for practices to be "evidence-based" for ELLs.*

What Do We Mean by "Evidence-based"?

- The RTI model is based on the principle that instructional practices or interventions at each level should be based on scientific research evidence about "what works."

- However, it is essential to find out **what works with whom, by whom, for what purposes, and in what contexts**—
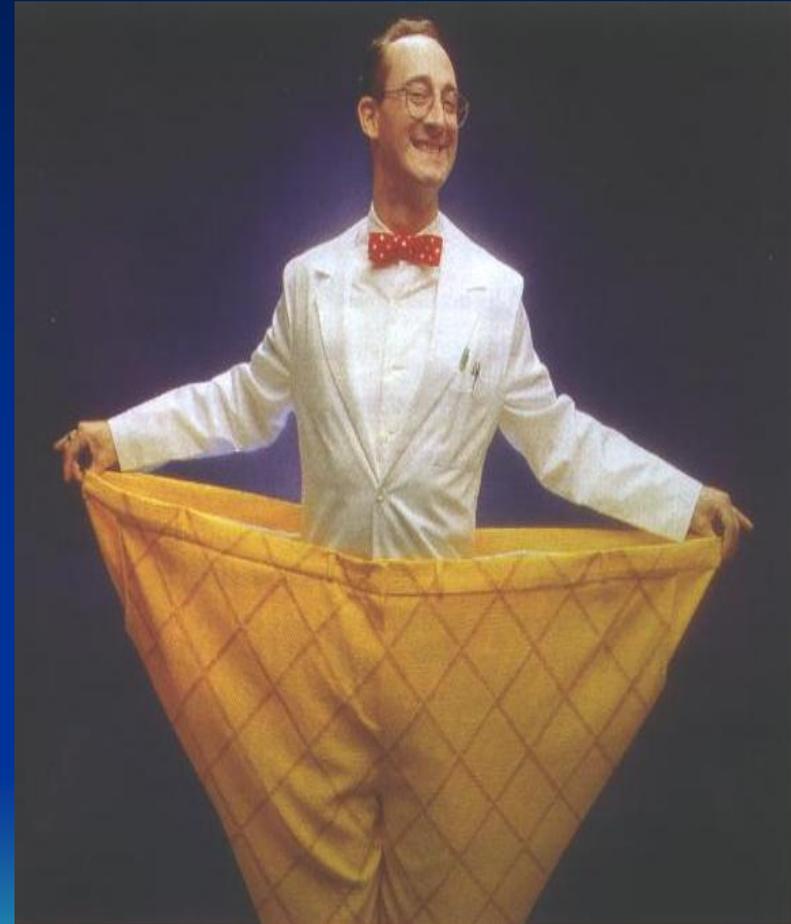
One size does not fit all.

- When deciding if a practice is appropriate for implementation as part of an RTI model, it should have been validated with students like those with whom it will be applied.

- The National Reading Panel report "**did not address issues relevant to second language learning**" (2000, p. 3).

- <u>Issue 4</u>: *Many school personnel are unsure how to distinguish between language acquisition and learning disabilities.*

Sequential Bilinguals and Simultaneous Bilinguals

**ELLs with LD exhibit difficulties in their first language as well as in English.**

- When students are sequential bilinguals, it is not hard to determine whether difficulties are evident in both languages.
- When students are simultaneous bilinguals, it is much more challenging to determine if difficulties are the result of language acquisition or LD.
- We need a new way to think about the process of simultaneous language acquisition (Escamilla).

(Some) Similarities b/w LD and Language Acquisition

Behaviors Associated w/ LD	Behaviors when Acquiring an L2
Difficulty with phonological awareness	Difficulty distinguishing b/w sounds not in L1
Slow to learn sound-symbol correspondence	Confusion w/ sound-symbol correspondence when different than in L1
Difficulty remembering sight words	Difficulty remembering sight words when word meanings not understood
Difficulty retelling a story in sequence	May understand more than can convey in L2
Confused by figurative language	Confused by figurative language, anaphora, words with multiple meanings

In Conclusion…

- RTI offers a new way of conceptualizing how we support student learning, along a continuum rather than categorically.

- Yet we must ensure that students truly receive appropriate instruction, valid assessment, and an adequate opportunity to learn.

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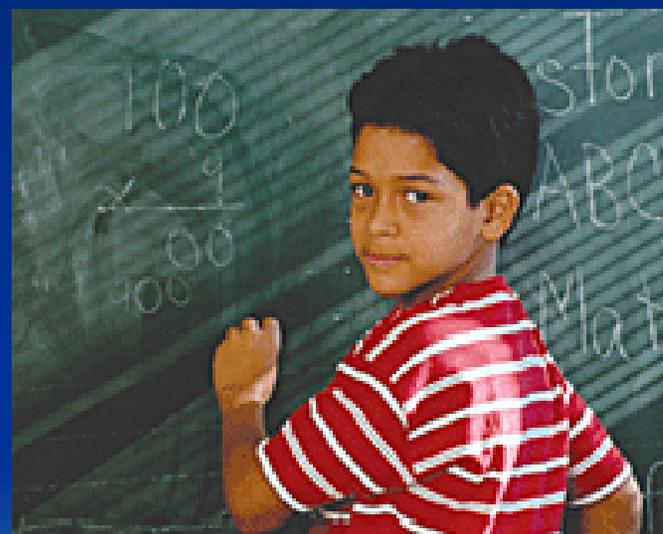
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