# Student assessments in India

ACER is working with social enterprise Gray Matters to deliver strong student assessments for school improvement in India. **Richa Jain** reports.



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ACER is working closely in India with Gray Matters, a social enterprise focused on improving quality of education in low-cost private schools in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Delhi, Warangal and Jaipur.

The monitoring and evaluation program maintained by Gray Matters includes school assessments, educational analytics and evidence-based school improvement advisory services.

ACER's work with the social enterprise currently focuses on school assessments and analyses, with potential to deliver school improvement services on the basis of data and analysis from those assessments over time.

While ACER is developing technically strong student assessments for Grades 3 to 10 in English, mathematics, science and logical reasoning, the purpose of the partnership is also to develop the skills of the Gray Matters team in terms of the analysis of data as well as reporting so that Gray Matters can train school leaders and teachers on using the data to improve teaching and learning.

The new tests are being developed in three phases so that ACER test developers and psychometricians can evaluate their reliability and validity, to ensure the development of robust test items which are suitable to the target schools. The phased approach also means that ACER and Gray

By developing a more sophisticated reporting system that goes to the level of individual students, ACER is significantly improving the capability of Gray Matters to support school principals and teachers in evaluating their effectiveness at the school, class and individual student levels, in order to identify the best next steps for teaching and learning, and appropriate interventions where necessary.

Assessment programs, of themselves, do not improve learning outcomes, but they do provide information so that policy makers, school principals, teachers and other stakeholders can develop appropriate policies and programs to improve students' learning. They also enable policy makers to better identify the kinds of professional learning and resources needed by school principals and teachers.

ACER's partnership with Gray Matters in India is ensuring that all stakeholders, especially school principals and teachers, are making better use of data both to measure student achievement and growth, and to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' methods and school programs.

Matters can develop and deliver the tests according to the most efficient process, particularly in terms of technological efficiencies.

ACER began foundational work to ensure the reliability and validity of the assessments in 2010, developing descriptive measures for student achievement and growth from Grade 3 to Grade 10 for India. These measures enable reporting based on local norms, which are being revised for the target schools through a norming study.

The resulting reports provide teachers with diagnostic information for individual students and groups of students. This research aims to provide the Indian educational system with

information on student achievement and growth throughout primary and secondary schools in a way that has never been done before.

ACER's work includes the development of a test item framework, as well as the development and field trial of a test item bank based on India's National Curriculum Framework.

A report framework developed by ACER enables school principals to generate a school-level report to review overall school performance and enables teachers to generate class-level reports to review student outcomes by class and subject, and by student and subject.

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