

# **Addressing the global learning crisis**

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## **Some comments**

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## Four main points: A very quick tour

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1. What **is** learning?
2. Is there a **crisis** in learning?
3. Inside the **black box** of learning
4. The new **Research Task Force** of the Brookings/CUE *Global Compact on Learning*

# What is learning?

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- **Behaviorists: Change in behavior**
- **Cognitivists: Change in conceptual organization**
- **Neuroscientists: Change in biochemistry**
- **Educationists: Change in achievement/test scores**
- **MDG/EFA-ists: Quality of education**
- **Bottom line: we often don't know how or what to measure for inputs or outputs in relation to educational policies.**

# Is there a crisis in learning?

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- Webster's: "Crisis" : A situation that has reached a critical phase.
- Are we in a critical phase, different from prior critical phases?
- Sophisticated experimental studies of human learning have been going on since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. A topic of very long-term interest.
- The crisis today seems more a function of the near-unilateral focus, over decades, on educational **quantity** (access/ enrolment data) by development agencies.
- Policy makers helped to create the "crisis". Learning has **always** been the issue, as is **imperative**.

# Inside, and insight in, the black box of learning

- In many intervention studies, we lack credible, relevant, or timely information on inputs, outputs or both.
- Problem of inputs: One example, at least 3 of 13 studies in the Glewwe paper considered impact of ICTs. Yet, few today would suggest that the particular ICT inputs are relevant today. Also issue of **Hawthorne** (short-lived) effects.
- Problem of outputs: The focus now should be on credible outcome measures that are **smaller** (adapted to local contexts), **quicker** (gain relevance and policy attention), and **cheaper** (thus, can be repeated more often and with local ownership).
- E-copy PDF: Google 'Wagner, SQC, UNESCO' or send me an email: [wagner@literacy.upenn.edu](mailto:wagner@literacy.upenn.edu)



## Smaller, quicker, cheaper Improving learning assessments for developing countries

Daniel A. Wagner



Quality education for all

# Research Task Force of the Brookings/CUE Global Compact on Learning

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- Following on the GCL report of 2011
- What are the gaps in **learning** research in developing countries?
- Five key domains:
  1. Basic literacy and numeracy and the transition to higher-order skills (lead: R. Govinda)
  2. information and communications technologies (lead: E. Hinostroza)
  3. Conflict and emergency situations (lead: M. Pigozzi)
  4. Informal and non-formal education (lead: P. Britto)
  5. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation (lead: Y. Sayed)
- **Main goal:** Provide policy makers and researcher with a learning-focused agenda to address key issues for investments.
- **Today's bottom line question:** What is the impact of learning research on learning impact?