# Argument

1. Literacy programs in LMICs have large room for improvement
2. Because many teaching activities (group work, gradual release) have little evidence in LMICs and are patchily adopted by teachers
3. Because teaching involves social interactions which are culturally conditioned
4. In ways that are predictable
5. And which limit the effectiveness of some pedagogical strategies
6. Stop changing how teachers fundamentally interact with other humans
7. Co-create teaching activities that are (i) culturally appropriate (ii) adhere to principles of effective learning
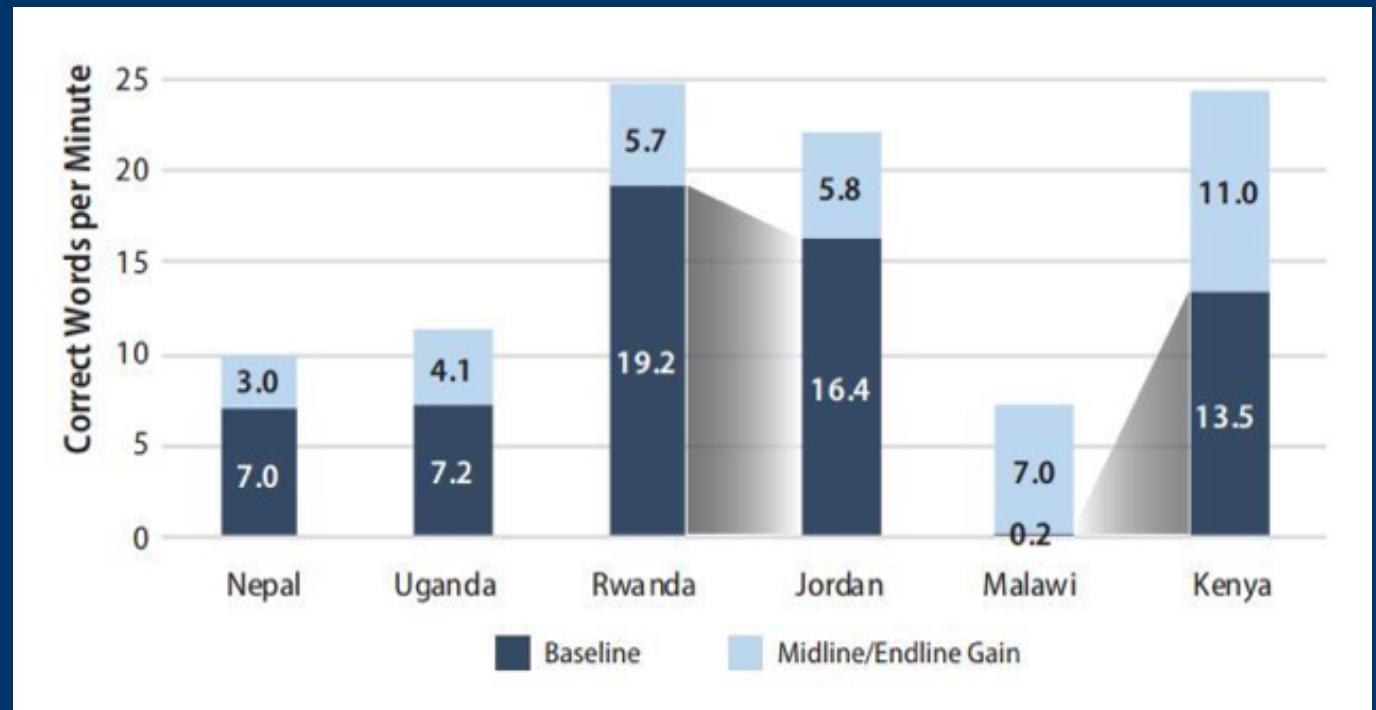8. Where possible, build SE skills of students and teachers

Outline

The problem
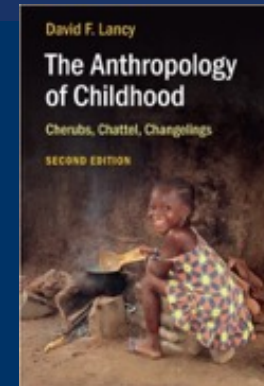
The social classroom: students

The social classroom: teaching
activities

Limited Gains in Reading Fluency

Stern, J. M. B., & Piper, B. (2019). Resetting Targets: Examining Large Effect Sizes and Disappointing Benchmark Progress. *RTI Press*.

Effective literacy instruction in low-income countries

Pedagogical goal

Phonics
Interaction with text

Activity Structure

Small group work
Paired reading
Gradual release model

Efficacy in LMICs: ☑ ?

Implementation in LMICs: ☑ X

Phonological Aw
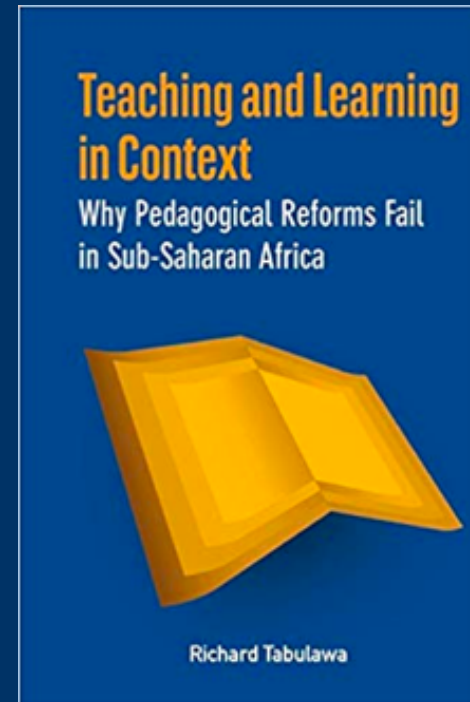
"[new teaching activities] need to be congruent with the values and past experiences of those who are expected to adopt it or else **tissue rejection** (Hoyle, 1970) will occur"
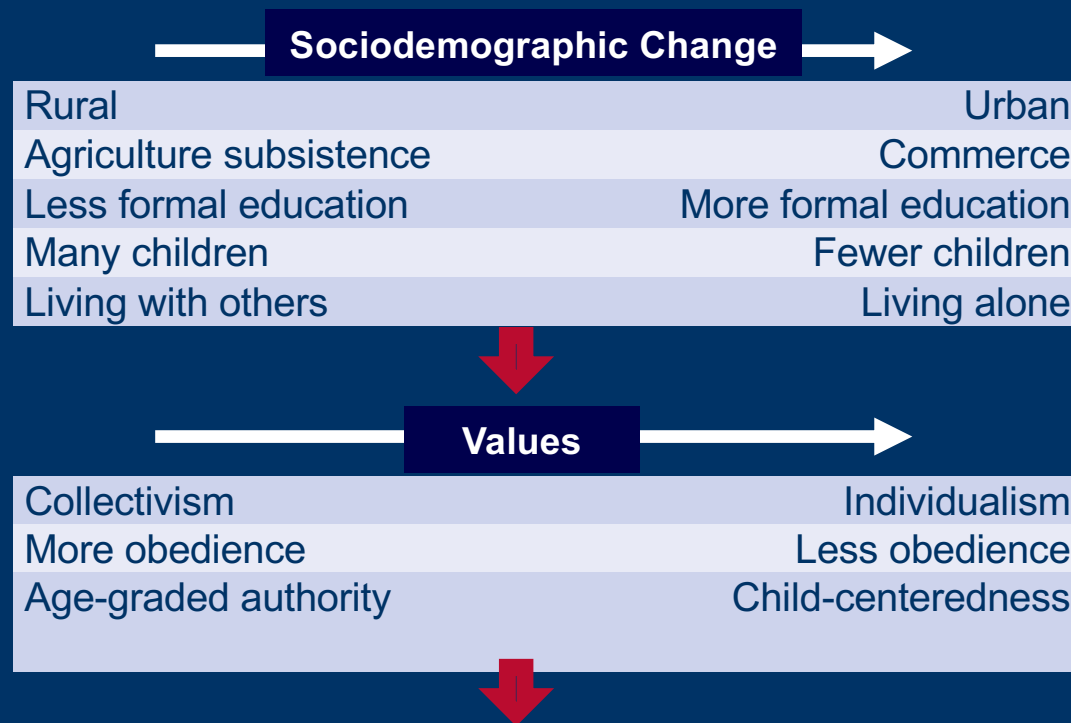
Teaching and Learning in Context
Why Pedagogical Reforms Fail in Sub-Saharan Africa

Richard Tabulawa

David F. Lancy

The Anthropology of Childhood

Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings

SECOND EDITION

Social Change and Human Development

Sociodemographic Change →

Rural	Urban
Agriculture subsistence	Commerce
Less formal education	More formal education
Many children	Fewer children
Living with others	Living alone

Values →

Collectivism	Individualism
More obedience	Less obedience
Age-graded authority	Child-centeredness

Greenfield, P. M. (2016). Social change, cultural evolution, and human development. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 8*, 84–92. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.10.012

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Developmental/Behavioral Change

|	
Respect, obedience	Expression, curiosity, independence
Shyness	Extraversion
Gender roles ascribed	Gender roles chosen
Focus on others	Focus on self
Empathy for others	Internal feeling states
Less self-esteem	More self-esteem
Fitting in	Standing out, uniqueness
Cooperation	Competition

The Social Classroom

Part 1 – The Students

USAID Tusome Pamoja

- Grades 1–4 Reading and Mathematics
- Pre-Primary
- $68 million
- 1.4 million children
- 26,000 teachers
- 3,025 schools, 5 regions
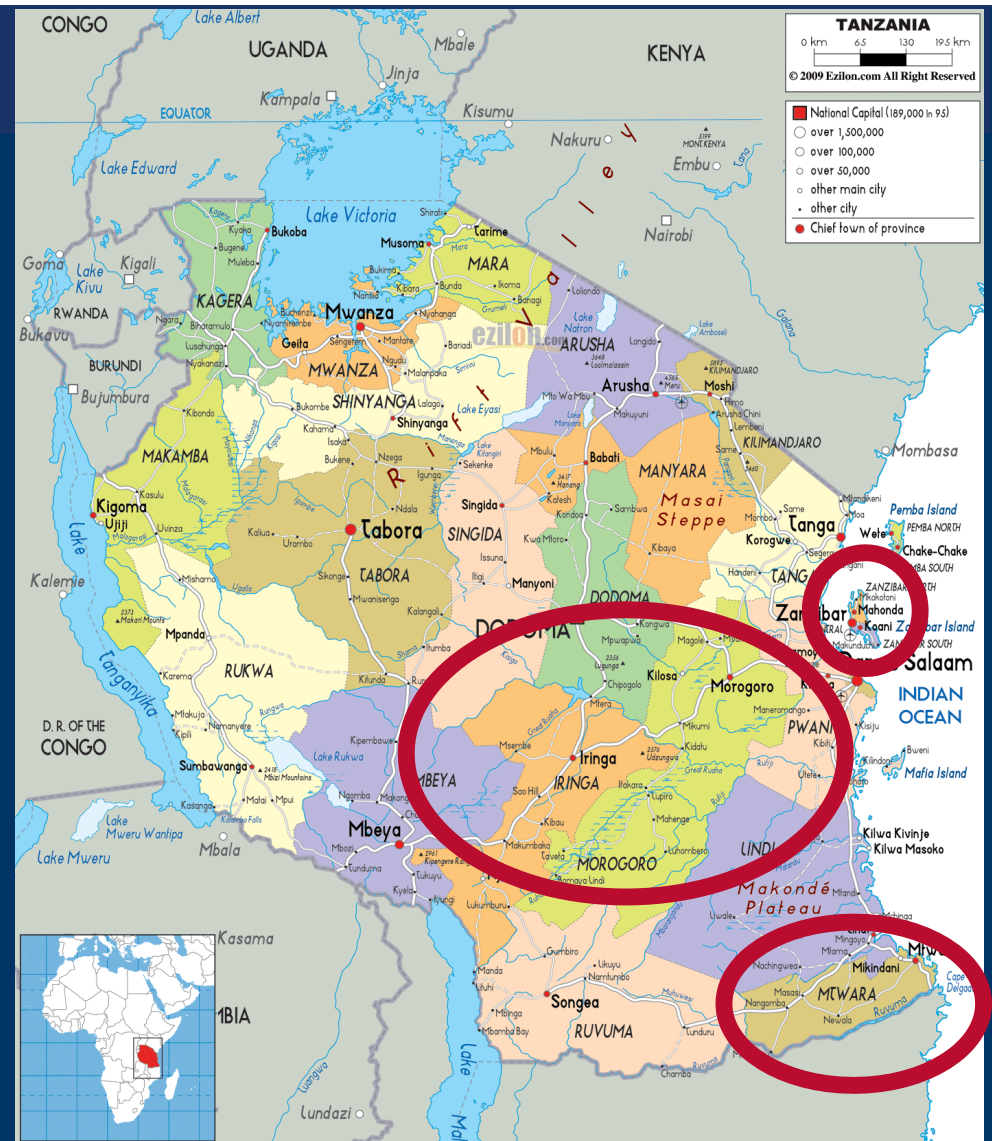
What qualities do your children/students need in order to learn in school?

4 randomly
selected schools
in rural Mtwara,
Tanzania

9 focus groups with 95 parents
27 interviews with teachers
80 interviews with students

Jukes, M. C. H., et al. (2018). "Respect is an investment": Community perceptions of social and emotional competencies in early childhood from Mtwara, Tanzania. *Global Education Review*, *5*(2), 160–188.

What qualities do your children/students need in order to learn in school?

What Parents Value	What Teachers Value
Respect Obedience Disciplined Being polite and calm	Curiosity Confidence Self-directed

Jukes, M. C. H., et al. (2018). "Respect is an investment": Community perceptions of social and emotional competencies in early childhood from Mtwara, Tanzania. *Global Education Review*, *5*(2), 160–188.

Goals for Schooling

- Julian Huxley, first Director of the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1932). The dual mandate of education:

    "…education should be adapted to the local environment of time and place, and yet give the opportunity of transcending that environment."

What social-emotional competencies should children develop?
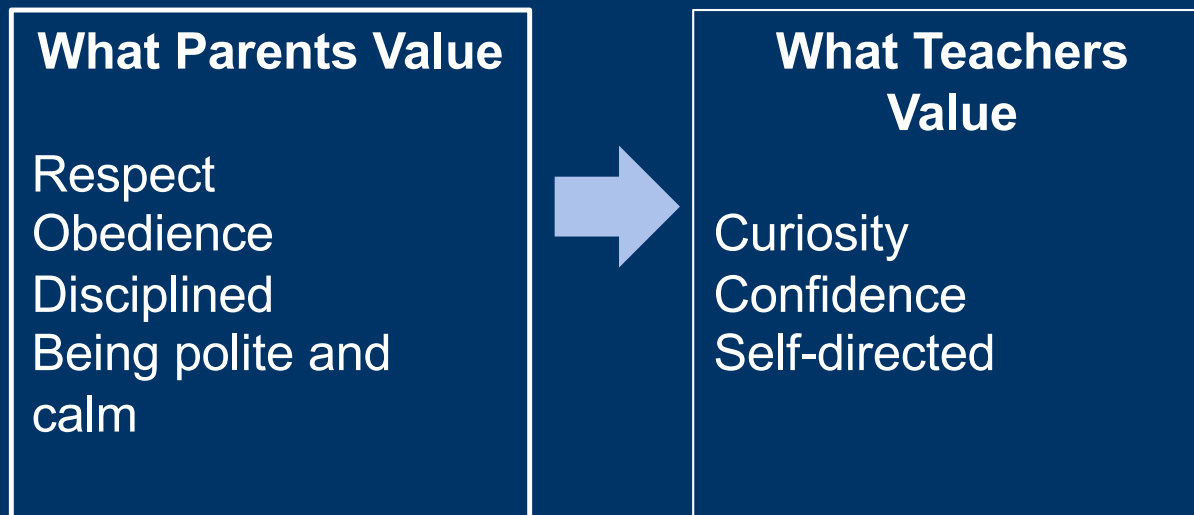
What Parents Value

Respect
Obedience
Disciplined
Being polite and
calm

$\rightarrow$

21st Century Skills

Critical thinking
Creativity
Collaboration
Communication
Information literacy

What social-emotional competencies should children develop?

What Parents Value

Respect
Obedience
Disciplined
Being polite and
calm

What Teachers Value

Curiosity
Confidence
Self-directed

Jukes, M. C. H. (2019). Contextualizing the goals of social and emotional learning curricula and materials. NISSEM global briefs.
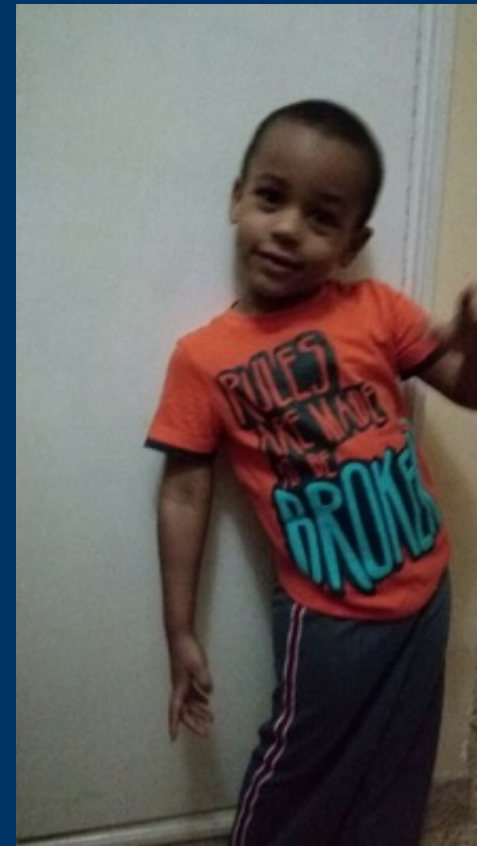
Who Participates in Classroom Activities?

"Those pupils who volunteer are courageous, they love to be close to teachers, they trust their teachers in a way that nobody else can teach them**."**

Comments from Urban Vs. Rural Teachers

Comment	Number of Teachers		
	Rural	Urban	% Urban
Pupils who raise their hands are the active and sociable ones.	5	1	17%
Pupils who raise their hands are the curious ones.	5	1	17%
Pupils who do not raise their hands are shy and fearful.	13	3	19%

"Respect is an investment."

Curiosity Prevalent Among More Educated and Wealthy

SEL Vs Parent SES

Standardized SEL score

0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
-0.1
-0.2

Low   Mid   High

SES Tertile

Other SEL   Curious
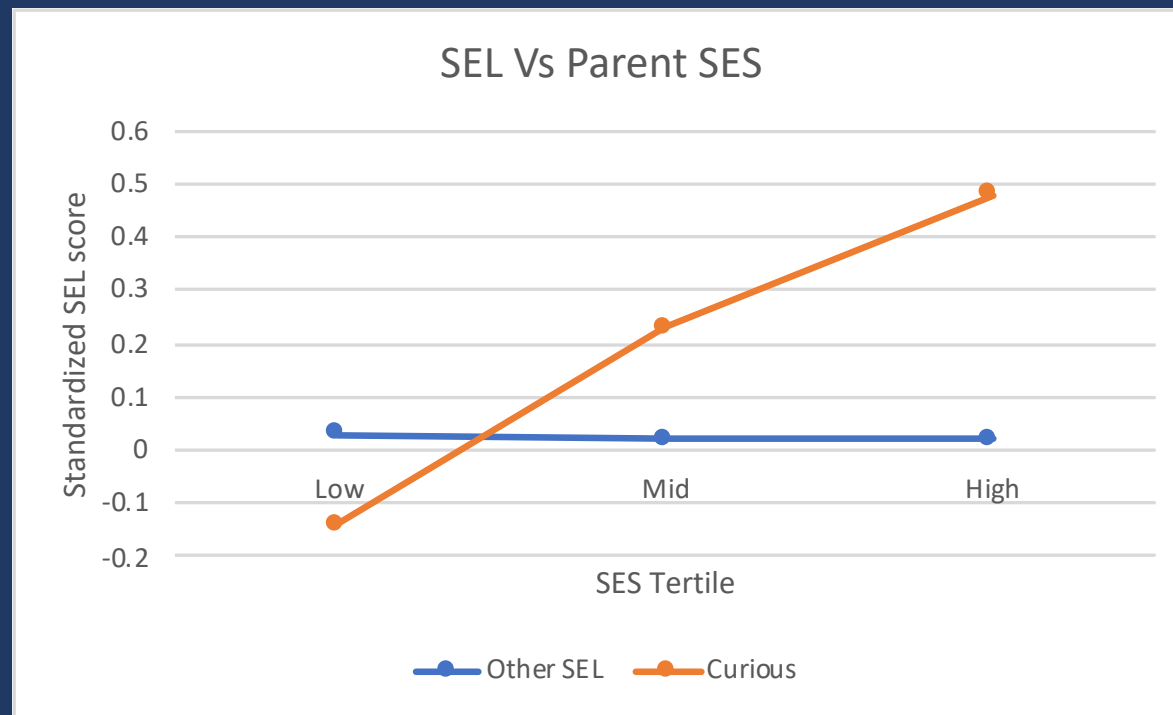
Urban Migration and Cognitive Abilities in the Gambia
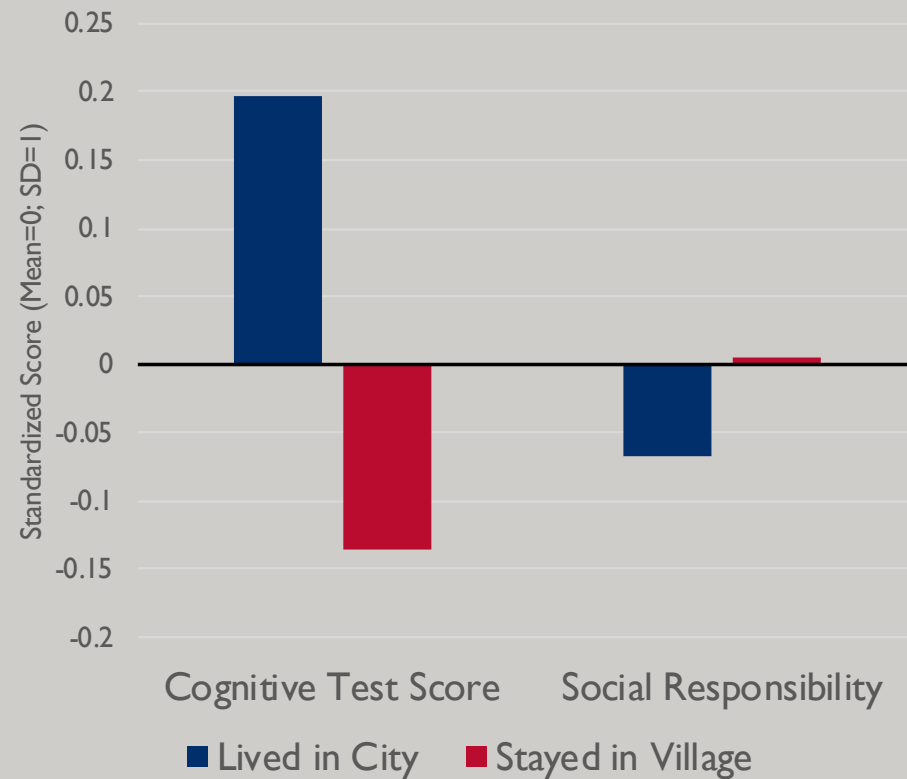
Jukes, M. C. H., Zuilkowski, S. S., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2018). Schooling, urban migration and the development of cognitive skills and social responsibility in the Gambia, West Africa. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 49*(1), 82–98.

More Urban Classrooms Have Children Who Ask Questions or Express Their Ideas (MELQO, 2017)

URBAN (n=22): No 55, Yes 45
RURAL (n=48): No 79, Yes 21

■ No ■ Yes
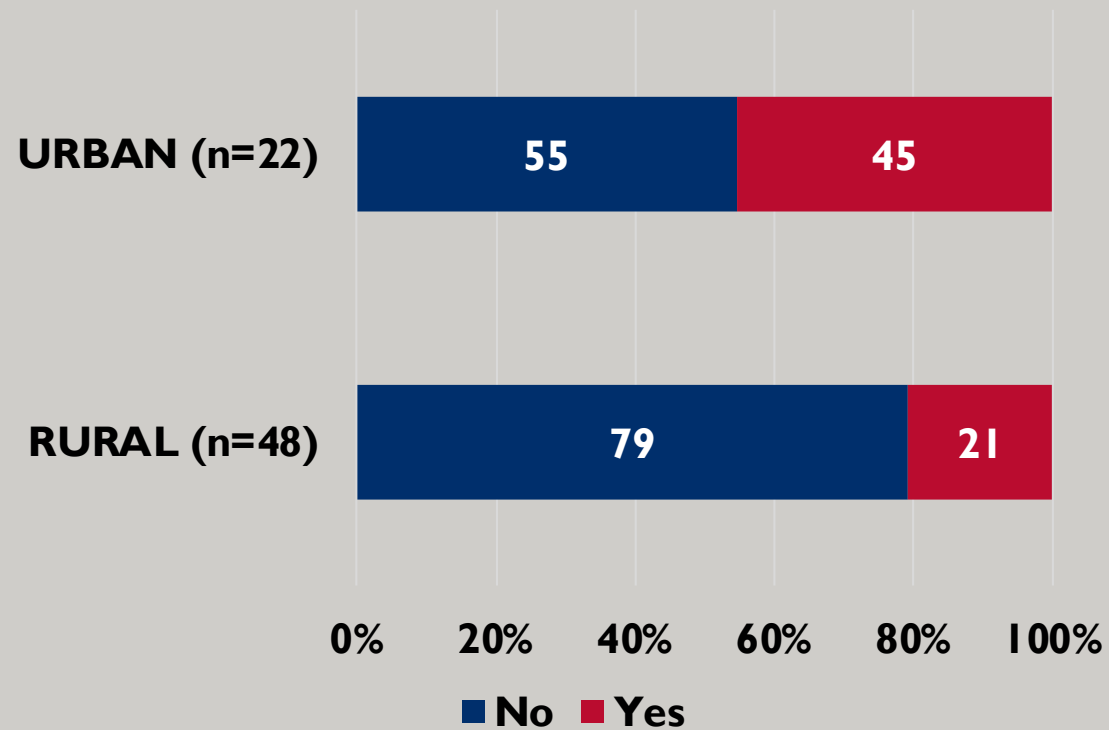
Pearson's chi-squared test (chi^2)=4.48, p=.03

What social-emotional competencies should children develop?
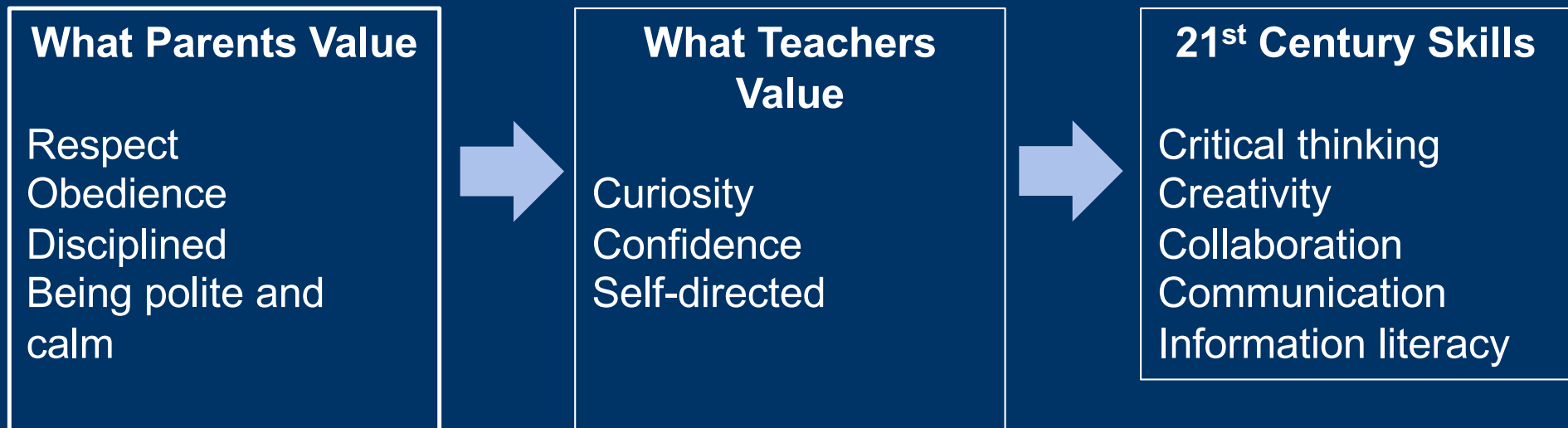
What Parents Value	What Teachers Value	21st Century Skills
Respect Obedience Disciplined Being polite and calm	Curiosity Confidence Self-directed	Critical thinking Creativity Collaboration Communication Information literacy

Jukes, M. C. H. (2019). Contextualizing the goals of social and emotional learning curricula and materials. NISSEM global briefs.

Gender

- Some parents said girls should be more obedient than boys and boys should be more sociable

- Most teachers said that boys and girls should be equally obedient

Gender – associations with parent-rated competencies

Response Variable	Pupils' Overall Score	Obedient	Curious	Conscien -tious	Emotional regulation	Sociable	Polite	Religious
Age	0.1**	0.07**	0.03	0.15**	0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.06**
Female	0.27**	0.28**	-0.11	0.2**	0.09	0.29**	0.19**	0.19**
Parent Education Primary	0.27**	0.16	0.38**	0.12	0.09	0.15	0.28**	0.25**
Form 4 or Higher	0.07	-0.13	0.63**	-0.06	0.14	-0.15	0.28**	0.15
Parents live together	0.22**	0.08	0.16	0.13	-0.05	0.17**	0.12	0.29**
Constant	-1.17**	-0.77**	-0.61**	-1.32**	-0.19	-0.51**	-0.31	-0.92**

BRIEFING NOTE

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Tanzania
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Education
Quality
Improvement
Programme

UKaid
from the British people

Improving access to quality early years education for marginalised children: The School Readiness

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Literacy & Girls' Education   Impact & Reach   Take Action   Start a Fundraiser   DONATE

◄ Back to Literacy & Girls' Education

Girls' Education

The Social Classroom

Part 2 – Teaching Activities

Picture Credit: GPE 2018

The Social and Cultural Basis of Pedagogical Choices

Study 1 – Observed classes of 36 teachers in Iringa, Mtwara and Zanzibar + Interview

Reading activities almost all choral

Little "you do"

Little group work

Children were asked the same questions repeatedly

The Social and Cultural Basis of Pedagogical Choices

Study 2 – Presented 5 scenarios to 17 teachers in Morogoro

Example Scenario

In one classroom teacher Musa asks the students to read together as a whole class.
In another classroom, teacher Sultan sometimes asks students to read in pairs.

The Social and Cultural Basis of Pedagogical Choices

Study 2 – Presented 5 scenarios to 17 teachers in Morogoro

	Togetherness (Umoja)	Fairness	Making students happy	Avoiding Embarrasing Students
Asking repeated questions	12	6	11	15
Differentiated instruction	12	11	11	0
Paired reading	12	7	0	0

Avoiding Embarrassment

"[If students are asked questions they do not know the answer to] they will be laughed at by their fellow students and **develop bad feelings about themselves** and can result in **teachers being seen as incompetent** and unfit for the teaching profession"

"The children were happy because it gave them the easy to answer the question, **students naturally do not like to be in tension when in class**, so they were happy with repeating same answers."

Togetherness (Umoja)

"When you [teach as a whole class rather than differentiate], **you bring unity among them**; they help one another in learning."

"[differentiated instruction] is very bad because it perpetuates the gap between weak and strong students. The weak students will **feel isolated and disregarded** in the class."

"When you ask different questions **students can sometime feel divided**."

Fairness

"this is a fair approach because **all students are treated equally**. It brings cooperation among them. All will be happy and will understand the lesson. It makes them be one and **feel they are together and united. They will love one another."**

"[the students] felt happy because the learned together and were **equally treated by their teacher**. They were not treated differently."

Predominance of Teacher-Led Activities

"It is a waste of time to ask [students] things they do not know."

"You know when you do something together with your pupils, **you get connected to them**."

"...[independent group learning] is very bad because the weak students **will feel bad and isolated**. The teacher should treat **all students equally** by teaching them addition first and not to leave it for them to do on their own"
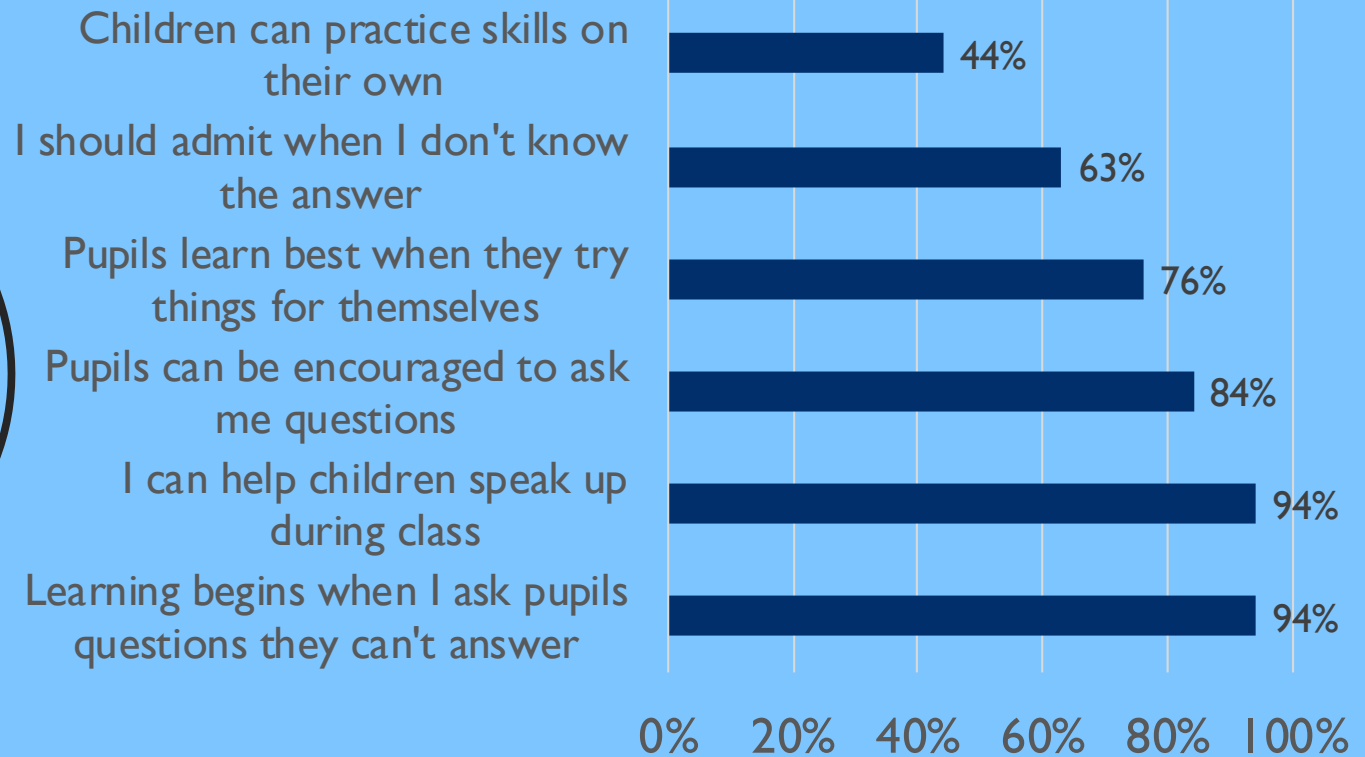
Cooperation

"Pupils learn best when they share a book together. **Distributing a book to each hinders cooperation** among them."

"Independent learning is not effective because **pupils always cooperate with others in life**, even with normal things, so it will take time for pupils to understand when taught alone compared to being in a group."

Teachers' Pedagogical Attitudes

Children can practice skills on their own — 44%

I should admit when I don't know the answer — 63%

Pupils learn best when they try things for themselves — 76%

Pupils can be encouraged to ask me questions — 84%

I can help children speak up during class — 94%

Learning begins when I ask pupils questions they can't answer — 94%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Forced-choice questionnaire with 131 teachers from 36 schools

39

Conclusion: Effective Pedagogy =

- Compatible with Cultural and Social Norms of the Classroom
  - But student SE skills built where possible
- Follows Key Cognitive Learning Principles
  - Students participate in their own learning
  - Children learn at different paces and in different ways
  - Teachers need to gauge student understanding to provide instruction at the right level
  - Students practice skills independently

- Co-designed by Teachers?

Examples

- **Thumbs up/thumbs down**
  - ✓ checking for understanding
  - ✓ without embarrassment

- **Teacher-directed group work** –
  - ✓ individual practice
  - ✓ students feel free to speak up

BUT co-design with teachers to ensure that:
  - ✓ teacher retains sense of control
  - ✓ small groups retain sense of togetherness with their class
  - ✓ easier to manage

Research Partners

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Sarrynna Sou, RTI International

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Thanks!

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