

# Global Landscape of In-service Teacher Professional Development Programs: The Gap between Evidence and Practice

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# How do we get better teachers?

Recruit

Prepare

Motivate

Improve

# Why focus on in-service professional development?

Governance

Political  
Economy

Evidence  
(it can work)

Evidence  
(it often  
doesn't)

# Evidence

## Teacher PD can work:

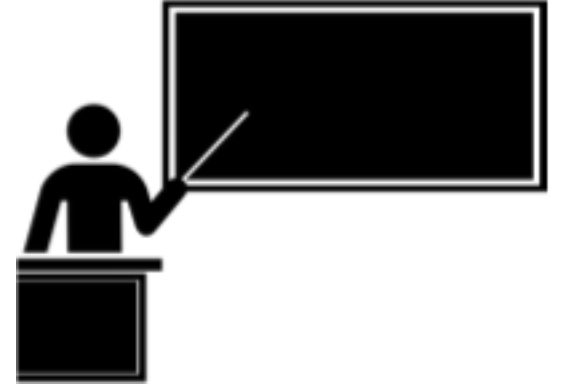
- Evans & Popova (2016) compared 6 recent reviews of 227 studies with learning results, and find PD works when:
  - It is individualized and repeated.
  - It is associated with a specific task.

## But it often doesn't:

- Early literacy program in northern Uganda (Kerwin & Thornton 2015)
  - Worked well when NGO-implemented
  - Some significant negative impacts with government trainers
- Active learning intervention with training and materials in **Costa Rica** (Berlinksi & Busso 2017)
  - Negative impact on student learning

# Objectives of this presentation

1. Summarize updated evidence of what we know about what good teacher professional development looks like
2. Compare characteristics of actual teacher PD programs with what we know works—based on available research evidence

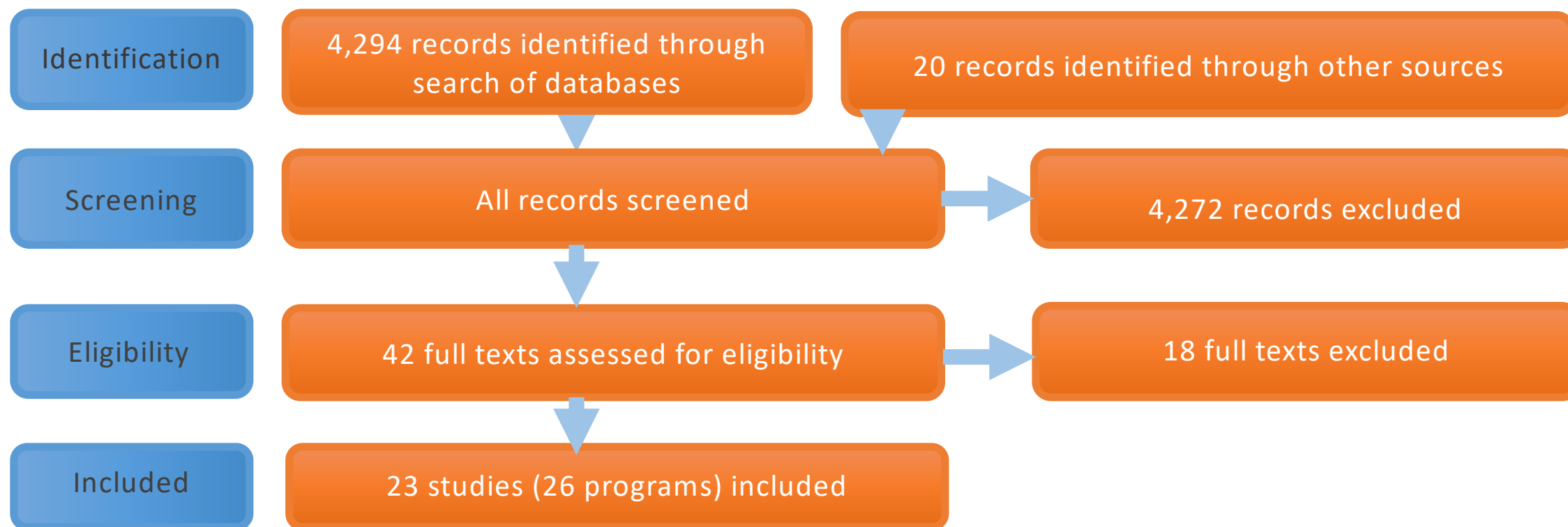


# Part 1: What do successful programs look like?



# Sample of **evaluated programs**: The search

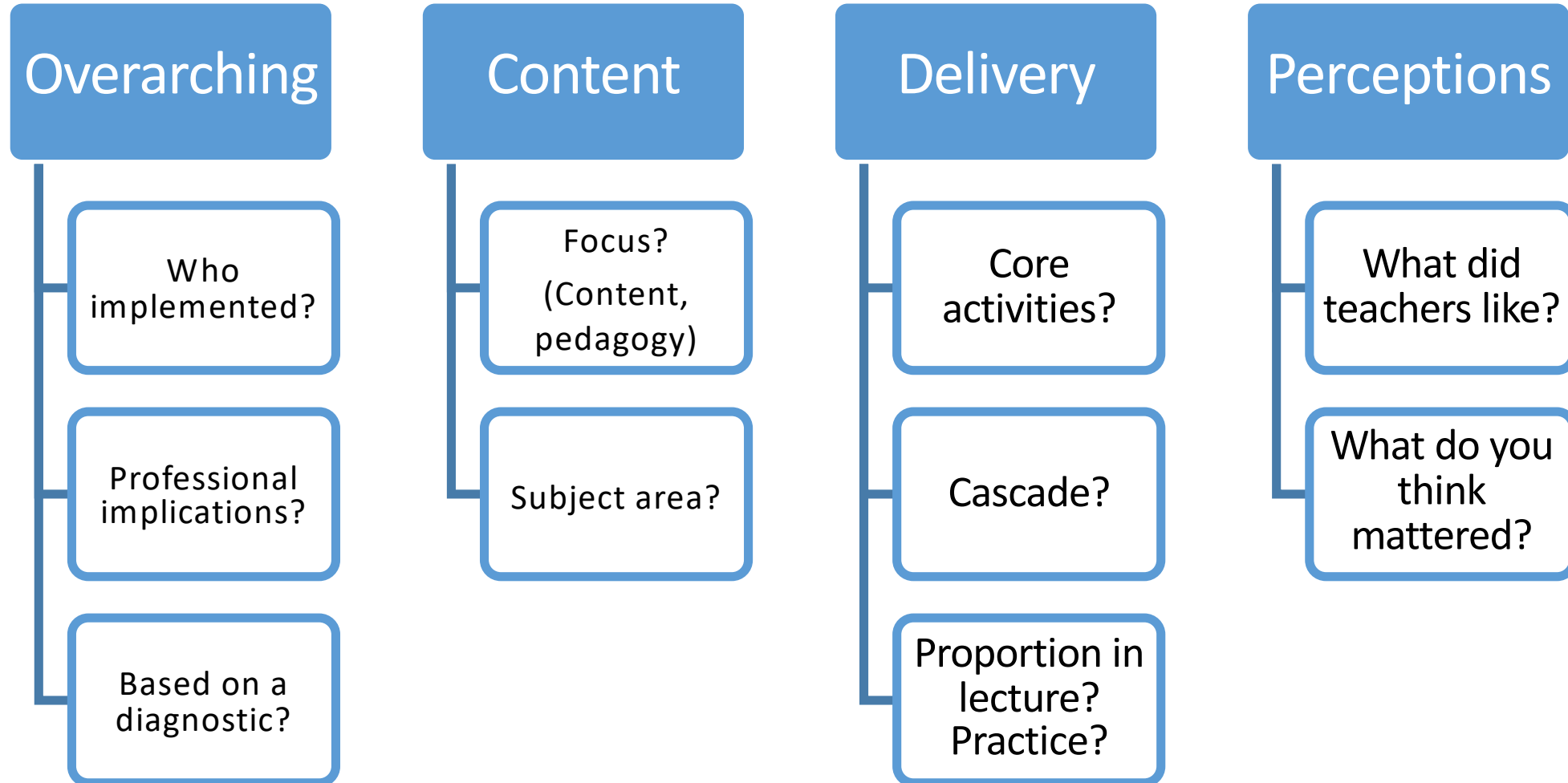
11 meta-databases searched







# The ITTSI: What does the instrument look like?



# Availability of information

## Papers

- Information on 27/51 indicators (52%) was reported in the evaluations on average

## Contact

- We contacted the authors of all evaluations to put us in touch with program implementers – 25/33 responded

## Interview

- We interviewed the program implementers for 18/33 programs

## Success

- Post-interview, information on 98% was collected on average

What is  
associated with  
success?

- Bivariate regressions
- Remember power: 33 observations
- 3 robustness checks

# Characteristics “Robustly” Associated with Successful PD Programs in Low and Middle-Income Countries

## Overarching Aspects

- Program linked to career (promotion, points to promotion or salary) [+0.12\*\*]
- Targeted by years of experience [+0.10\*]

## Content

- Training involves lesson enactment [0.10\*]
- No subject focus [-0.23\*\*\*]
- Focus on counseling [-0.20\*\*\*]

## Delivery

- Initial face-to-face training [0.15\*\*\*]
- Training at central location (e.g., hotel) [-0.13\*]
- Distance learning [-0.10\*]

# Other Large and Positive (But not Robust) Characteristics Associated with Successful PD Programs in Low and Middle-Income Countries

## Overarching Aspects

- Targeted by skill gaps [-0.06\*]
- Provide flashcards, word banks, reading pamphlets [+0.13]

## Content

- Subject focus on IT [+0.08\*]
- **Subject Focus on other (not literacy, science, math) [-0.10\*\*\*]**

## Delivery

- Proportion of face-to-face training spent practicing with other teachers [+0.16\*]
- Trainers are education university students [+0.15]
- Follow-up visits to review content [+0.14]

# What do trainers think is the most effective?

Mentoring follow-up  
visits

(5/18 interviewees)

Complementary  
materials (structured  
lessons, scripted  
materials)

(5/18 interviewees)

Engaging teachers -  
for their opinions and  
ideas either through  
discussion or text  
messages

(4/18 interviewees)

## Part 3: How do global programs line up?

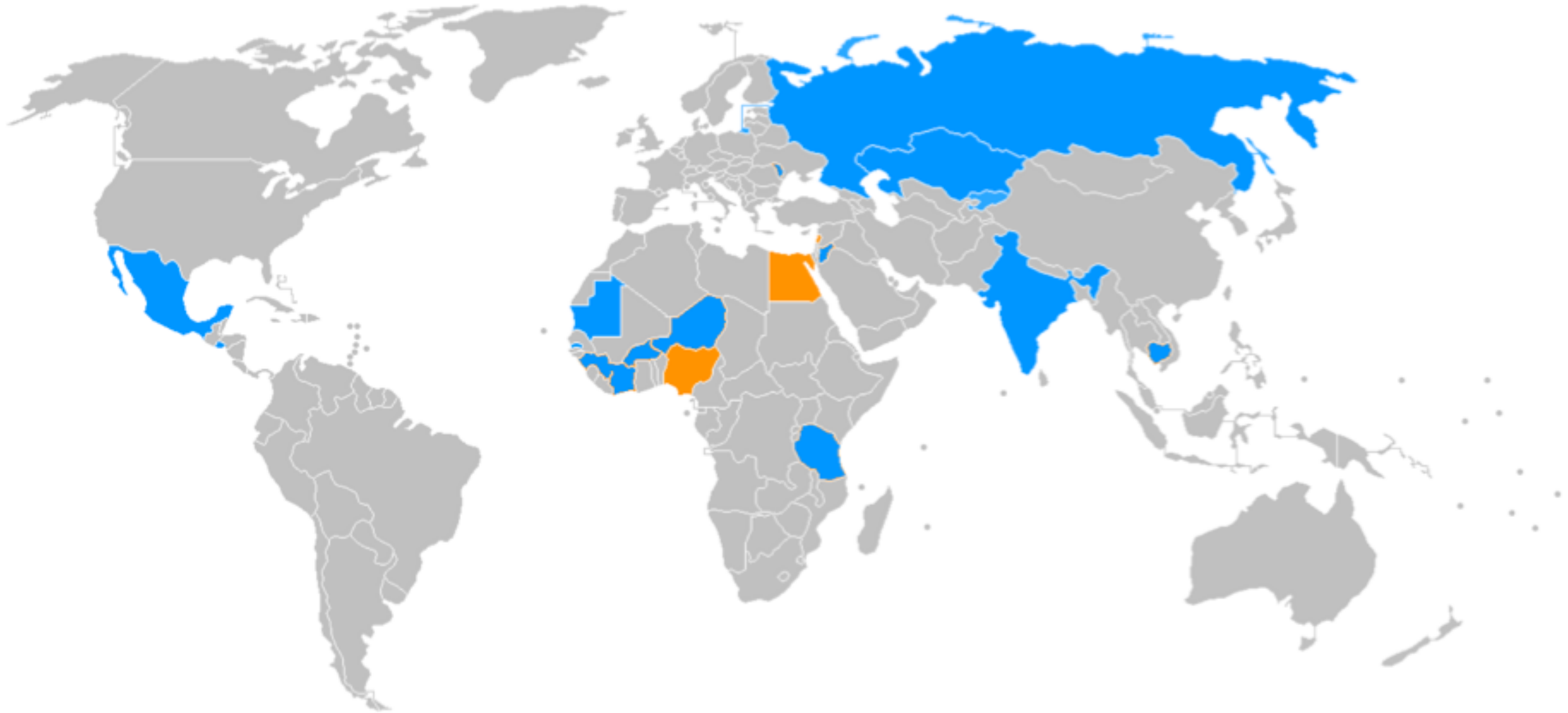
- Global snapshot
- 139 Programs
- 17 Education systems

# Sample of **at-scale programs**

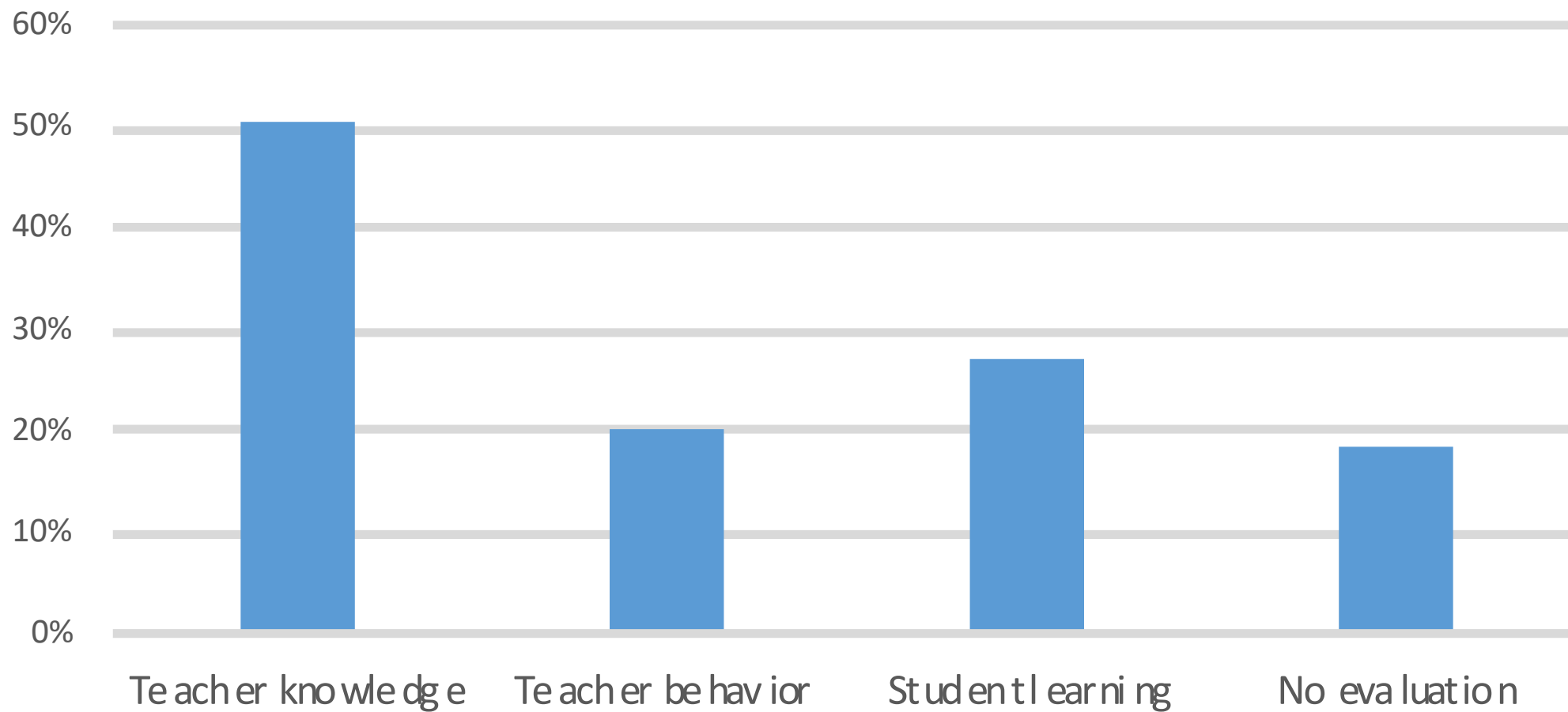
- Identified 4-5 countries in each region
- Obtained permission from Government/Ministry of Education in each country
- Obtained list of all teacher training programs conducted from 2012-2016
- Sampled 10 largest-teacher programs
  - ITTSI Survey in 4 largest programs
  - BITTSI Survey in remaining 6 programs
- Phone interviews conducted with teacher training program coordinators



# Geographical Distribution of At-Scale Global Programs

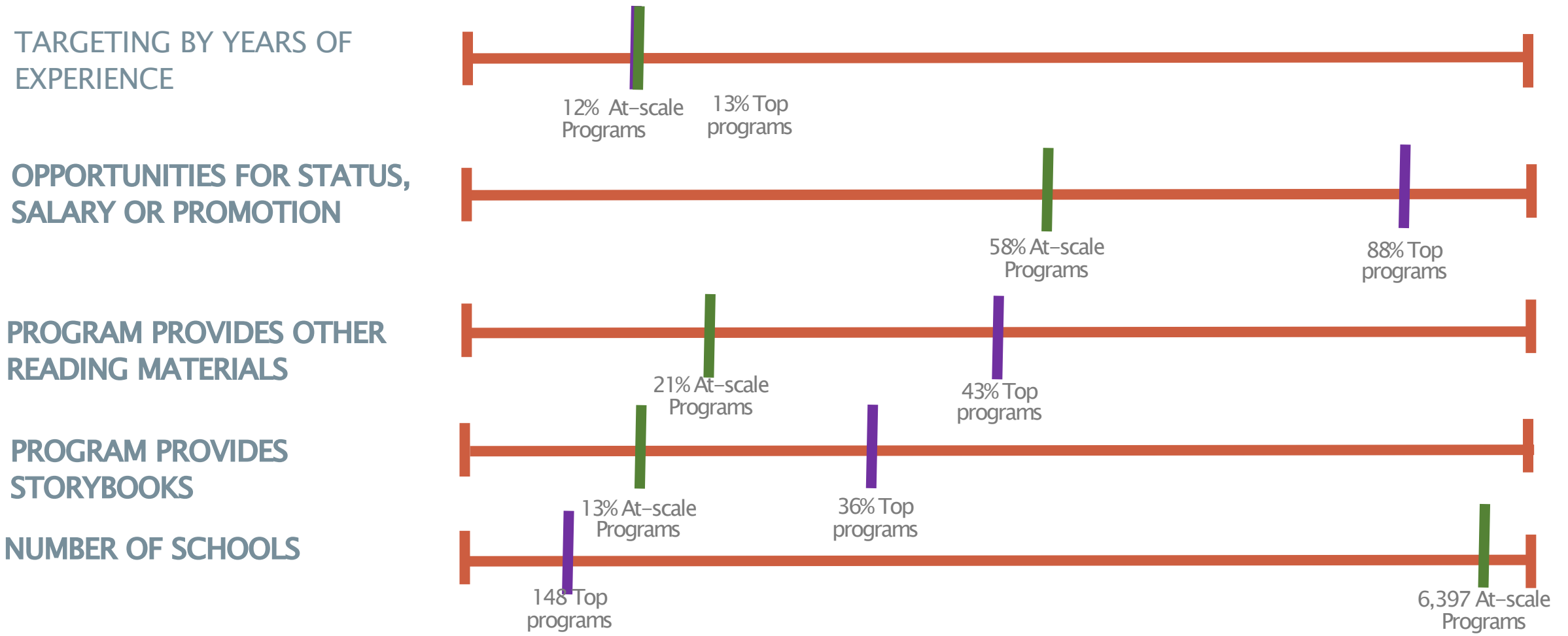


# How often are at-scale programs evaluated?



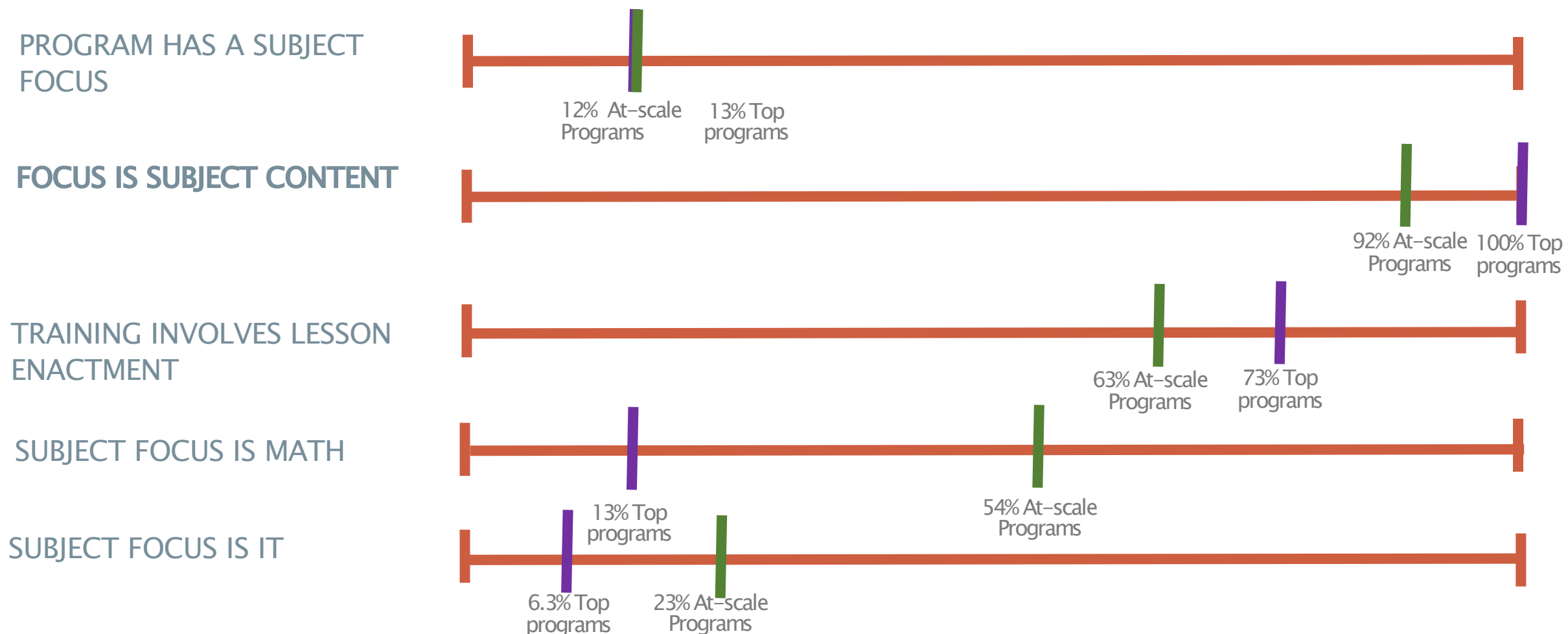
# How do at-scale programs compare with top programs? Overarching Aspects

## NORMATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS COMPARED WITH TOP PROGRAMS (BASED ON TEST SCORE GAINS)



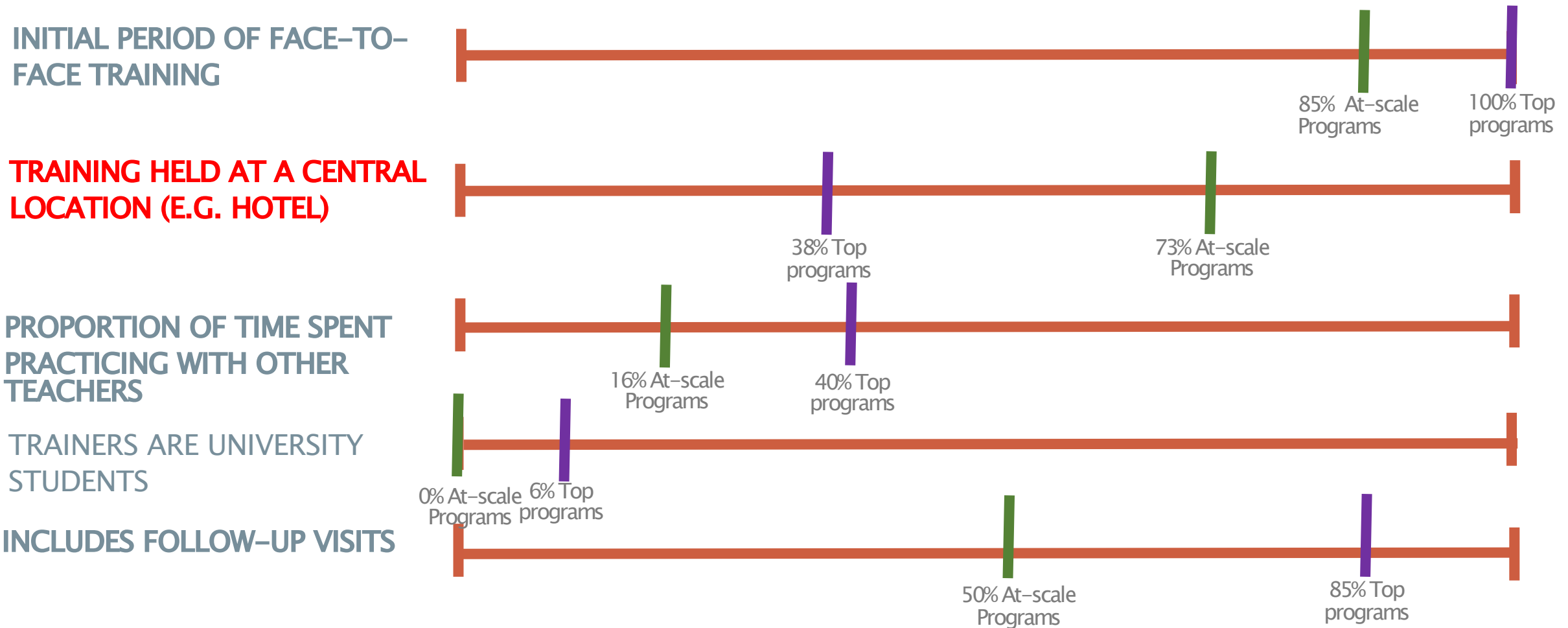
# How do at-scale programs compare with top programs? Content

## NORMATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS COMPARED WITH TOP PROGRAMS (BASED ON TEST SCORE GAINS)



# How do at-scale programs compare with top programs? Delivery

## NORMATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS COMPARED WITH TOP PROGRAMS (BASED ON TEST SCORE GAINS)



# Takeaways

- Weak reporting on interventions can be improved by using the ITTSI
- At-scale PD programs differ from top-performing programs in some crucial ways we think are important for student learning
  - Fewer at scale programs:
    - Linked to incentives
    - Include follow-up visits
    - Provide time for teachers to practice together
- PD programs may not make a difference if they do not include these elements

# Thank you!

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- Photo Credits: World Bank Flickr Feed