TLPS | Teaching Learning Practices Survey

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Teaching and Learning Practices Survey

A study to strengthen FLN teaching and learning practices in India

2025 | SUMMARY

Implemented with

Centre for microFinance · Ei · MADHI · QUEST · Vikramshila

TLPS 2025

Teaching and Learning Practices Survey 2025

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Executive Summary

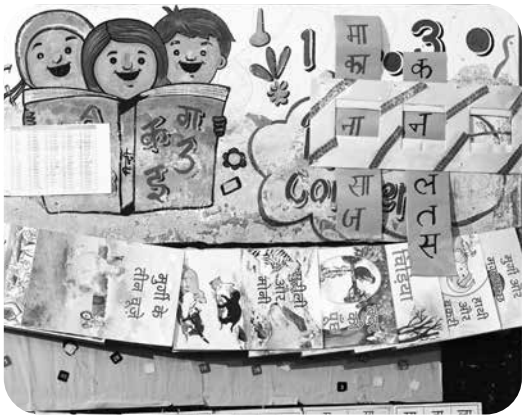
Introduction

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 positioned Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as the country's highest priority for education. This renewed focus was further strengthened by the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS, 2022). To operationalise this vision, the Government of India launched the NIPUN Bharat Mission with a clear national mandate: *Achieve universal FLN for all children by 2026-27*. This has catalysed unprecedented efforts across states to improve the teaching and learning of FLN.

The national and state governments are tracking progress in student learning through a range of large-scale assessments of FLN learning outcomes. This is a welcome trend. We know that FLN learning outcomes can improve in a sustained manner only when teaching and learning practices for language and mathematics in early grades improve significantly. Systematic and reliable observation of teaching and learning practices, along with analysis of the findings, can provide insights into gaps and needed improvements.

Several states have developed and implemented classroom observation tools for observing teaching and learning in Grades 1 to 3. The quality and utilisation of this extensive classroom observation-based data has been somewhat limited for a variety of reasons. More importantly, there is no reliable large-scale survey in the country that documents how teaching and learning are taking place in early-grade classrooms.

About TLPS 2025



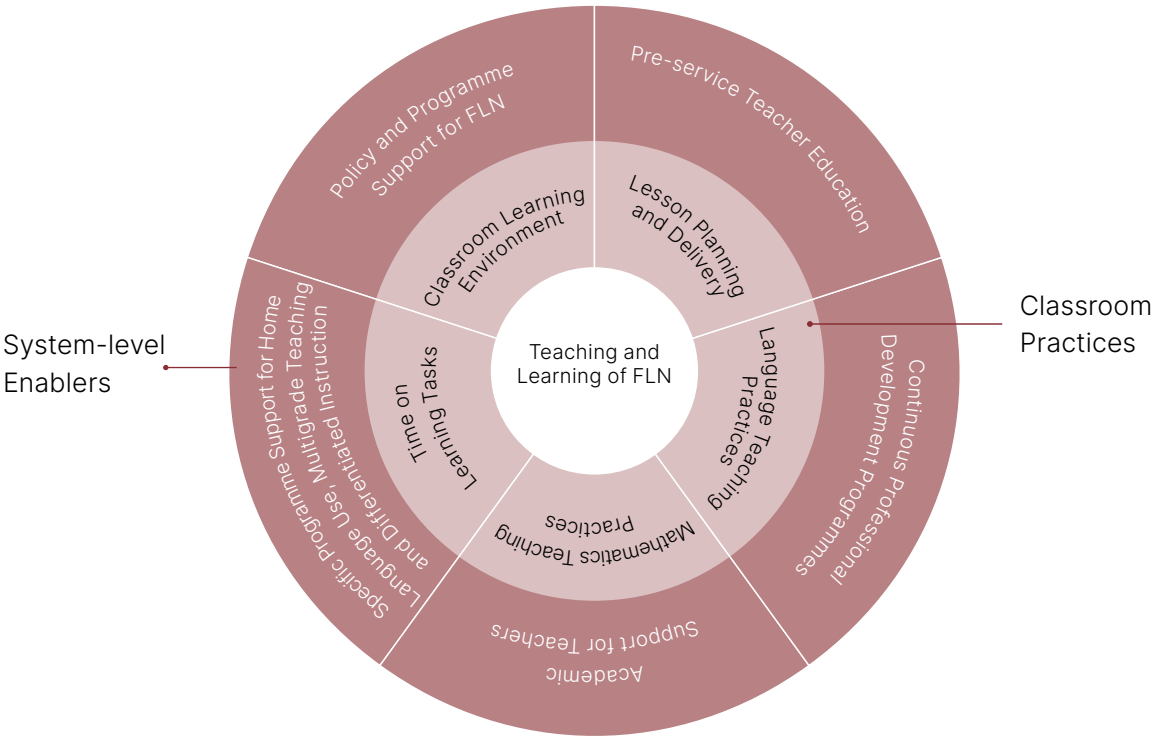
Recognising this critical gap, the Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) 2025 was conceptualised to provide systematic, national-level evidence on teaching practices for language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2. By examining these practices in early-grade classrooms across diverse contexts, the Survey provides a direct lens into how children's learning materials, teacher training programmes and on-site academic support are getting translated into classroom teaching and learning. It serves as a status report on the current state of teaching and learning practices—informing how system-level efforts translate into classroom-level pedagogical change and where further improvement is needed.

The Survey was conducted between November 2024 and March 2025 in nine states—Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh—covering 21 districts and 1050 classrooms. By capturing a wide range of contexts, TLPS provides a rich national-level snapshot of the current teaching and learning practices for FLN. Anchored by Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) and supported by Tata Trusts, the Survey has been implemented in collaboration with a consortium of organisations—Centre for microFinance (CmF), Educational Initiatives (Ei), Madhi Foundation, Quality Education Support Trust (QUEST) and Vikramshila Education Resource Society (VERS)—organisations with a deep interest and commitment to working with the government education system to improve foundational learning at scale.

Findings and recommendations

The Survey presents findings under the following themes: classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, language teaching practices, mathematics teaching practices and time distribution for different classroom activities for both teachers and children. It also presents teachers' perceptions on some aspects of FLN and their professional development.

Priorities for classroom practices and system-level changes



The Survey includes two types of recommendations:

> Recommendations for strengthening classroom teaching practices, drawing directly on the Survey's main findings. These are presented in the following section along with the related classroom-level findings.

> Recommendations for system-level changes that will enable and sustain effective teaching practices are presented in the section after the one on classroom teaching practices.

Findings and recommendations for classroom practices

Classroom learning environment

The Survey examined the following: classroom physical environment, teacher-child relationships, opportunities for children to participate and the use of children's home languages.

Main findings

Most early-grade classrooms display print-rich materials. However, in most cases, the material is not displayed at children's eye level. In 73% of classrooms, children were seated in rows and columns and the arrangement did not change during the observation.

In two-thirds of the classrooms, children were mostly quiet and had few opportunities to speak freely, engage in conversation with the teacher, or learn from one another.

Although 73% teachers knew the children's home languages, only 10% used them consistently to enhance children's participation and comprehension.

Recommendations

There is a need to ensure that print materials are thoughtfully placed and actively used during instruction to support learning. Teachers should be encouraged to adopt flexible seating and grouping arrangements to foster more interaction and collaboration among children.

There is a pressing need to strengthen teacher-child relationships in early-grade classrooms to help children become more confident, participate in discussions and engage meaningfully in learning.

Using children's home or most familiar languages consistently and strategically is a critical practice for improving children's self-confidence, participation and comprehension.

Lesson planning and delivery

The Survey examined the following: teachers' use of clear instructions with children, observation and monitoring of children's independent work, feedback on writing tasks, use of check-for-understanding strategies and use of differentiated instruction for different learning levels in the classroom.

Main findings

Most teachers did not monitor children's work during group or individual tasks. While some teachers checked the children's written work, very few teachers provided meaningful feedback or guidance to help children improve.

Over half the teachers relied on asking questions to the whole class, which

Recommendations

Through regular and purposeful observation, teachers need to identify errors, adjust instruction and provide timely support. Feedback practices need strengthening through regular checking of children's work, clear explanations of mistakes and simple steps for improvement.

elicited a choral response from the children. Very few teachers checked for individual children's understanding through varied methods.

During the limited observation period, only 30% of teachers used differentiated teaching strategies to support children at different learning levels.

During lessons, teachers need to use simple and varied checks for understanding, such as asking individual children to explain their thinking or giving children a quick task to demonstrate their learning.

To support all learners, teachers need to use targeted strategies such as flexible grouping, guided practice in level-based groups and scaffolded tasks during regular lessons. It is essential to provide extra attention and support to children who are struggling to learn, after proper identification.

Language teaching practices

The Survey examined the following: use of children's prior knowledge in discussions, asking open-ended questions, employing a variety of strategies teaching decoding, use of comprehension strategies during read-aloud, opportunities to practice reading independently and providing clear prompts for expressive writing.

Main findings

The use of children's real-life experiences and open-ended questions to encourage children to think and express themselves during oral language activities was limited.

The teaching of decoding was not systematic and relied either on writing letters and words or on just one activity to reinforce sound-symbol association and blending.

More than half (52%) of the teachers gave opportunities for children to practise reading independently, while only 18% teachers provided guidance and support during this time.

More than three-fourths of the teachers gave writing tasks that involved copying from the blackboard or textbook or writing letters and words.

Recommendations

Oral language activities need to encourage active engagement by connecting content and discussions to familiar contexts and experiences, asking children to predict, think and infer and giving them opportunities to respond more fully to open-ended questions.

Decoding needs to be taught more systematically and should include multiple activities that reinforce sound–symbol associations in different ways, including the use of simple teaching-learning materials (TLMs).

Children need adequate time to practise reading in small groups or pairs, as well as independently, with guidance from the teacher.

Writing activities should move beyond copying exercises to include meaningful opportunities for children to compose their own texts and express ideas and emotions.

Mathematics teaching practices

The Survey examined the following: use of TLMs by teachers and children, opportunities to practise mathematics tasks independently, use of children's real-life experiences for mathematics concepts and use of 'why and how' questions by teachers.

Main findings

28% of teachers used TLMs effectively for demonstration. In 53% of classrooms, children did not use TLMs at all.

A majority of teachers (58%) did not use real-life examples to contextualise mathematical concepts and processes.

In 19% of classrooms, teachers posed 'why and how' questions somewhat effectively.

More than half the teachers gave children mathematics tasks to work independently. Overall, 16% teachers observed the children, corrected their work and provided feedback.

Recommendations

There is a pressing need for teachers to use TLMs more consistently and in learner-centred ways. This will ensure that children have regular opportunities to explore concepts hands-on and build conceptual understanding, rather than only observing demonstrations.

Integrating familiar, everyday contexts when introducing and practising mathematical ideas can help children see the relevance of mathematics in their daily lives and develop practical problem-solving skills.

Teachers need to ask more 'why' and 'how' questions that prompt children to explain their thinking, justify their answers and reflect on strategies, helping shift learning from rote procedures to deeper reasoning and conceptual understanding.

During independent practice, teachers need to actively monitor children's work and provide timely guidance and feedback so that practice goes beyond mechanical repetition and strengthens conceptual understanding and fluency.

Time on learning tasks

The Survey examined the time spent by teachers and children on different classroom activities.

Main finding

Children remained 'off-task' for 27% of the total class time. When they were 'on-task', mechanical and repetitive type activities consumed most of their time.

Recommendation

Teachers need to create a better balance between teacher-centred instruction and learner-centred practices to enhance children's engagement with learning. Teachers also need to plan and manage independent and group tasks more deliberately, particularly in multigrade contexts where their attention is divided.

Other findings

- There is strong awareness among teachers about FLN goals and learning outcomes.
- 83% teachers reported that they have attended an in-person training on FLN in the past year.
- Almost all teachers believe that the NIPUN/FLN Mission is having a positive impact.
- The frequency and quality of academic support received by teachers is quite varied. While 52% teachers reported receiving academic support, the remaining 48% reported irregular visits, inadequate or no support.

Recommendations for system-level changes

This section outlines key systemic levers that need to be strengthened to enable and sustain the classroom-level actions described in the previous section.

Continue and extend policy support to FLN

It is vital that policy support for FLN must continue beyond the current NIPUN Bharat Mission timeframe, viz., up to 2026-2027. While Grades 1 and 2 must remain the primary focus, the policy and programme focus for the consolidation of foundational skills also needs to extend to Grades 3 to 5 (preparatory stage). As this support is extended, there is also a need to broaden the vision of foundational learning to include critical thinking and reasoning, strong oral expression and independent writing in language, as well as problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics. Such a shift helps move classroom practice beyond mechanical skill acquisition towards meaningful application to real-life situations.

Integrate FLN focus within pre-service teacher education programmes

In many states, pre-service teacher education requires curricular revision to include a clear focus on FLN, play-based pedagogy, teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse situations and practical classroom strategies for multigrade and multilevel teaching. The Survey findings also show that basic pedagogical practices—such as building respectful teacher-child relationships, encouraging children's participation, giving clear instructions and monitoring learning to provide feedback—are weak or inconsistently applied and therefore need explicit emphasis in teacher education. There is a strong need to move from lecture-based instruction towards practice-oriented and experience-based teacher preparation.

Build a coherent and practice-focused system of continuous teacher professional development

There is a need to reimagine teacher training as continuous professional development (CPD) rather than as isolated events. Effective CPD should offer multiple pathways for learning, including structured courses, blended and online programmes, in-person workshops and simple digital supports such as WhatsApp nudges and short, on-demand learning resources.

During training sessions, a greater emphasis should be placed on practice-oriented designs—prioritising demonstrations, guided practice, collaboration among teachers and reflection—so that teachers can apply new strategies confidently in their classrooms.

Finally, peer learning should be strengthened as a core CPD strategy. Creating opportunities for teachers to learn from one another through learning circles, peer observations, joint planning and sharing of effective practices can help reinforce training messages and support sustained change in classroom practice.

Strengthen academic coaching and on-site support for teachers

Teacher interviews reveal that academic support for teachers is often irregular and limited in depth. There is a strong need to strengthen on-site academic coaching through regular classroom visits by academic resource persons (ARPs), cluster resource coordinators (CRCs), or equivalent roles. These visits should focus on observing classroom practice, demonstrating effective strategies and providing concrete, actionable feedback tailored to each teacher's context. Such support is vital for helping teachers translate training inputs into day-to-day practice.

Mid-tier academic functionaries need to be relieved of excessive non-academic responsibilities so they can focus on instructional support. They also require targeted technical training to develop a strong understanding of FLN concepts, active learning classroom pedagogy and principles of supportive supervision. In addition, cluster-level meetings should be reoriented as structured academic forums rather than administrative gatherings.

Address home language use, multigrade teaching and differentiated instruction in a systematic manner

These challenges require planned and systematic programme support, not just general suggestions or brief training efforts alone.

Use of home language

There is a strong need to develop and support systematic multilingual approaches to foundational learning that respond to the linguistic realities of local communities. States need to create clear curricular and pedagogical frameworks to formally include children's most familiar languages in teaching and learning in the foundational years, supported by high-quality multilingual materials and assessments. Multilingual pedagogy also needs to be embedded across pre-service and in-service teacher education. Teachers who don't understand and speak the children's home languages need to be encouraged and supported to develop basic conversational skills in these languages.

Multigrade teaching

Multigrade teaching and multigrade classrooms are a widespread reality in government schools, with nearly two-thirds of classrooms in the Survey sample falling into this category. Teachers working in multigrade settings need specific curricular guidance and pedagogical tools to manage multiple groups effectively. This includes support for planning parallel activities, organising independent work, using flexible grouping and managing time across grades.

Differentiated instruction

Teacher guides, training modules and academic support systems should explicitly model how differentiated instruction strategies—such as flexible grouping, scaffolded tasks and guided practice for small groups, especially for children who are struggling to learn—can be planned and implemented within everyday classroom routines. Providing extra attention and support to such children is key to reducing learning gaps within the classroom.

MONDAY
TUESDAY
THURSDAY
SATURDAY

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The TLPS 2025 Report presents findings that describe and analyse the classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, selected teaching practices for language and mathematics and time on learning tasks for both teachers and children. It also explores teachers' perceptions of some aspects of FLN and their professional development. The recommendations of TLPS suggest how classroom teaching practices can be improved and the system-level changes that can enable and sustain this change in FLN teaching and learning practices.

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