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

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TLPS 2025

Teaching and Learning Practices Survey 2025. Meghalaya

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Acknowledgements

The Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) is the result of a collaborative effort involving institutions, practitioners, researchers and state governments committed to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy in India.

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About TLPS Partners

Language and Learning Foundation

Founded in 2015, Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) is an education non-profit, dedicated to improving foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) outcomes of students in primary grades at scale, in collaboration with the national and state governments in India. LLF is a system-focused and impact-driven organisation that takes a three-pronged approach for equitable foundational learning improvements through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers and mentors, District Demonstration Programmes and System Strengthening on FLN with a focus on inclusivity and equity. Since its inception, LLF has worked in 10 states, reaching 2.18 crore children and 11.8 lakh teachers and educators through State Level Technical Support and improved learning outcomes of 14 lakh children through District Demonstration Programmes and teaching-learning practices of 2,50,000 teachers and teacher educators.

Tata Trusts

Established in 1892, the Tata Trusts are India's oldest and amongst Asia's largest philanthropic institutions. They have played a pioneering role in bringing about an enduring difference in the lives of the communities they serve, advancing equity, resilience and shared progress. Inspired by the vision of the Founder Jamsetji Tata and guided by a legacy of proactive philanthropy, the Tata Trusts work to catalyse systemic and sustainable change across diverse areas by building institutions, strengthening public systems and accelerating socio-economic development. The Trusts build meaningful solutions, bridging tradition and innovation, through collaborations that nurture grassroots efforts, empower change makers and touch lives across India.

Educational Initiatives

Educational Initiatives (EI), founded in 2001, is a pioneering education research and PedTech organisation that combines pedagogical research with technology-driven solutions to improve student learning and teaching practices. Working across diverse economies and demographics, EI's research and assessment work informs classroom practice and education policy, alongside the design of diagnostic, personalised and adaptive learning solutions.

Madhi Foundation

Madhi Foundation is a systems-focused education non-profit that partners with governments to strengthen foundational learning by aligning curriculum, teacher development, assessment, technology and monitoring to the realities of public-school classrooms. Madhi leads level-based material design, mentoring-oriented teacher support and data-driven implementation systems, while also engaging parents as learning allies. Madhi additionally advances language and oracy through strategic programmes and translation of state-level learnings into transferable models.

About the Teaching Learning Practices Survey

The Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) was conceptualised to provide systematic and large-scale evidence on classroom practices in Grades 1 and 2 for language and mathematics. By examining what actually happens in early-grade classrooms across diverse contexts, the Survey aims to complement existing assessments and provide 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-learning practices—informing how system-level efforts translate into classroom-level pedagogical change and where further support is needed.

Importantly, the Survey aims not only to document current practices but also to identify needs for strengthening the instructional core of foundational learning. By identifying both strong practices and areas of support, the Survey contributes to building a more responsive FLN ecosystem, one in which classroom realities inform programme design, teacher support systems and academic leadership.

The Survey focused on six themes: classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, language teaching practices, mathematics teaching practices, time distribution of teaching and learning tasks and perception of teachers on training, academic support, informal assessment methods and impact of NIPUN Bharat Mission. An array of tools were used to measure effectiveness of these themes, namely classroom observation, time-on-task, lesson sequence, pre- and post-observation, teacher interview questionnaire and profile of schools and children.

The Survey, therefore, plays a dual role:

- Diagnostic, by providing a detailed, evidence-based picture of what is happening inside classrooms today
- Developmental, by enabling governments and partners to shape teachers' professional development, mentoring structures and instructional materials in ways that directly respond to observed classroom needs.

The Survey elevates this often-invisible dimension, viz. teaching and learning inside classrooms to the forefront of India's foundational learning agenda.

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Abbreviations

ARP	Academic Resource Person
BMC	Block Mission Coordinator
CFU	Check for Understanding
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRC	Cluster Resource Coordinator
CRO	Classroom Observation
DERT	Department of Educational Research and Training
DSEL	Department of School Education and Literacy
DSEO	District School Education Officer
ELPS	Experience, Language, Pictorial, and Symbol
FLN	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
FLNAT	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test
GRR	Gradual Release of Responsibility
LLF	Language and Learning Foundation
LS	Lesson Sequence
NCF-FS	National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage
NEP	National Education Policy
NIPUN	National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy
NISHTHA	National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
SDSEO	Sub-Divisional School Education Officer
TLMs	Teaching-Learning Materials
TLPS	Teaching Learning Practices Survey
ToT	Time-on-Task

Glossary

- **Blending**: Orally combining individual sounds to form a spoken word (e.g., /k/ /æ/ /t/ → "cat")
- **Classroom learning environment**: The overall physical, socio-emotional, and instructional conditions of a classroom that shape learner participation, comfort and learning.
- **Classroom Teaching Practices**: Observable strategies and methods teachers use to engage students in learning. This includes the management of class time and activities, delivering instructional content and using techniques like using TLMs, monitoring, questioning, providing feedback, and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- **Choral response**: the whole class or most students answer together verbally in unison.
- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**: A sustained, ongoing system of teacher training, coaching support and reflection designed to improve teacher knowledge and their classroom practice.
- **Decoding**: Association between written symbols and spoken sounds and words by using symbol–sound correspondences in a given language.
- **Differentiated instruction**: Deliberately adapting instructional tasks, grouping and support based on different learner levels/needs within the same classroom.
- **Expressive writing**: Writing where children share their own ideas and experiences rather than only copying or reproducing content.
- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)**: The ability of children to read with understanding, express meaning through oral and written language, and perform basic mathematical operations with conceptual understanding and application, expected to be achieved by the end of Grade 3 by India's NIPUN Bharat Mission.
- **Foundational numeracy**: Competence in early number concepts (counting, quantity, place value), basic operations and applying mathematical reasoning to everyday contexts.
- **Home language**: The language(s) that a child acquires naturally in early childhood and uses frequently and confidently for everyday communication in the home and immediate community. This may be the child's mother tongue or a local language or a regional language, that may or may not be the school's medium of instruction.
- **Independent reading practice**: Time when children read on their own (or quietly in pairs/groups).
- **Instructional Time Loss**: The instructional time during which teaching-learning activities are not effectively engaged in, due to disruptions, poor classroom management, or administrative tasks.
- **Lesson plan**: A teacher's structured preparation for a lesson, typically clarifying learning goals, sequence of activities, materials and how understanding will be checked and supported; ideally differentiated for children at different learning levels.

- **Multigrade classroom**: A classroom setup where one teacher teaches two or more grades simultaneously.
- **NIPUN Bharat Mission**: The national initiative launched by Government of India in 2021 that laid the mandate to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3 by 2026–27.
- **National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS, 2022)**: The curriculum framework for Foundational Stage (ages 3–8 years), integrating developmental goals and pedagogical guidance for early childhood and early primary education.
- **National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)**: India's overarching education policy that prioritises universal foundational literacy and numeracy in the early primary years and frames reforms across curriculum, pedagogy, teacher education and assessment.
- **Off-task**: Behaviour that is not aligned to the intended learning or teaching activity during instructional time [e.g., disruptive behaviour, inattention (for students); filling registers or reporting attendance for mid-day meals (for teachers)].).
- **Open-ended questions**: Questions that support comprehension and language development by requiring explanation, reasoning, or elaboration rather than a single, short answer.
- **On-task**: Student or teacher behaviours that are aligned to the intended teaching-learning activity or objective at that moment.
- **Oral language development (OLD)**: Strengthening of children's spoken language knowledge and skills, including listening comprehension, oral expression, vocabulary, verbal reasoning and discourse skills.
- **Place value**: The value of a digit based on its position (ones, tens, hundreds), which is essential for multi-digit number understanding and operations.
- **Print-Rich Materials**: Printed or visual resources that are purposefully displayed and used in the classroom to support print awareness and learning. Examples include number charts, story or poem posters, labels, children's books, word walls, and so on.
- **Scaffolded Tasks**: Educational activities that provide support and guidance to students at different levels of learning. Scaffolded tasks help students build on their existing knowledge by breaking down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps, with more support at the beginning and less as students gain independence.
- **Sound–symbol association**: Understanding the relationship between sounds of a language (phoneme or syllable) with their corresponding symbols or written representation (grapheme/letter patterns/*varn* or *akshara*), forming the basis for reading and writing.
- **Time-on-task (ToT)**: The proportion of observed classroom time during which learners (or teachers) are engaged in intended learning/instructional activity.

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 State Government of Meghalaya prioritises seamless transition between pre-primary and early primary schooling, treating the foundational period (ages 3–8) as a single pedagogical unit, as envisioned under the NCF-FS.

About TLPS 2025

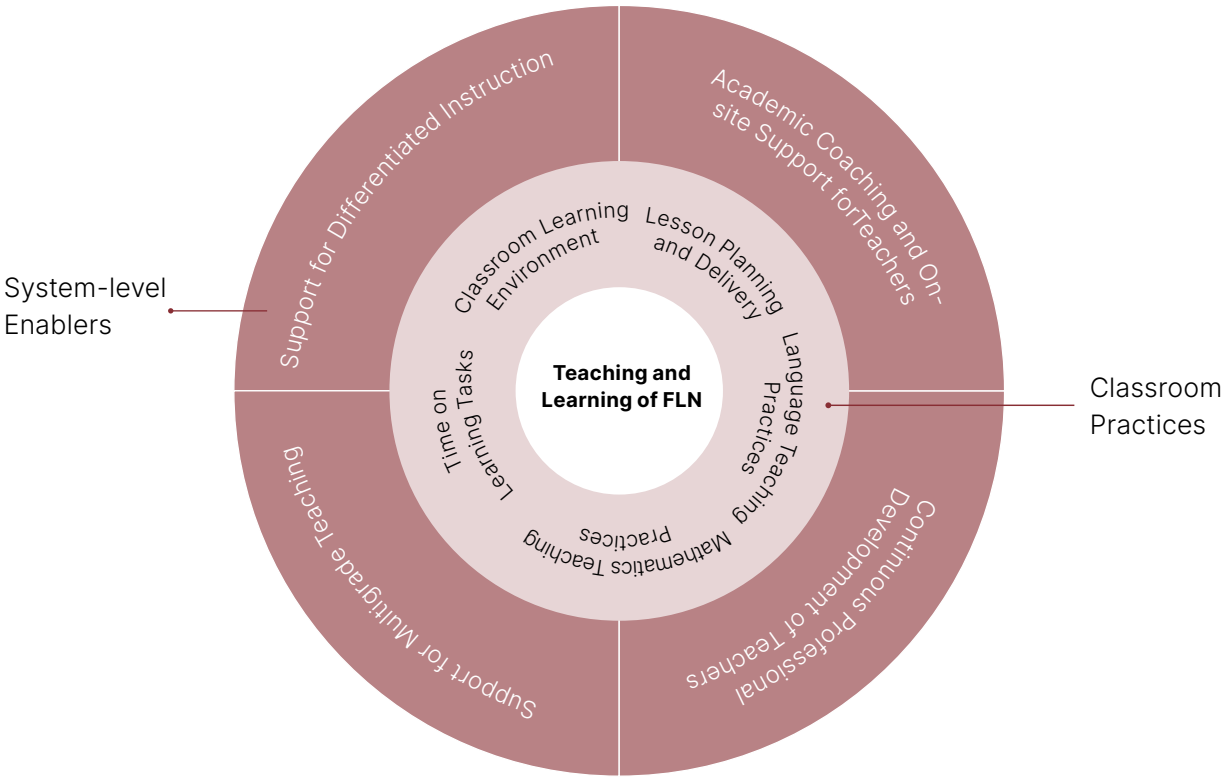
The Survey was conducted between November 2024 and March 2025 in nine states: Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh, covering 21 districts and 1050 classrooms. In addition to the broader nation-wide TLPS 2025 report, state-specific reports have been prepared to provide more granular and contextual insights to policy makers, educators, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, on FLN outcomes in each of the surveyed states.

This document serves as a status report on the current state of teaching and learning practices in the sampled schools in Meghalaya, informing how system-level efforts translate into classroom-level pedagogical change and where further improvement is needed. A total of 50 classrooms were surveyed across East Garo Hills district of the State.

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 enablers



TLPS 2025 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	Recommendations
All observed early-grade classrooms had a functional blackboard. Out of 50 observed classrooms, six classrooms displayed print-rich materials.	There is scope for improving availability of print materials in classrooms and placing them thoughtfully and actively using during instruction to support learning.
In all observed classrooms, children were seated in rows and columns, and the arrangement was changed in one classroom during the observed lesson.	Teachers should be encouraged to adopt flexible seating and grouping arrangements to foster more interaction and collaboration among children.
In 50% of the observed classrooms, few children talked/asked questions amongst each other or to the teacher. Teachers asked questions to individual children sometimes in 22% (11) of the classrooms.	Teacher-child relationships should be strengthened in early-grade classrooms to help children become more confident, participate in discussions, and engage meaningfully in learning.
Children in sampled schools spoke predominantly in Garo (96%). Minuscule proportions of native speakers of languages like Hindi and Bangla were reported.	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	Recommendations
Teachers reported planning for their lessons the next day in 22% (11) of the 50 observed classrooms. However, only one teacher had documented plans.	In addition to giving clear instructions, teachers should model expected responses and verify that children have understood so that they can participate meaningfully and learn successfully.
Teachers in over half of the observed classrooms (30) gave instructions before or during an activity, out of which in seven classrooms they also confirmed with at least a few children whether they understood what was expected of them.	Through regular and purposeful observation, teachers need to identify errors, adjust instruction, and provide timely support.
Teachers in 22% of classrooms (11) observed and monitored children during independent or group activities at least sometimes.	There is scope for strengthening feedback practices through regular checking of children's work, clear explanations of mistakes, and simple steps for improvement.

In 22% (11) of the observed classrooms teachers checked a few children's work and corrected errors themselves. In another 11 classrooms, teachers went a step ahead by identifying mistakes for some children.

In almost half of the observed classrooms, teachers relied on choral responses to confirm children's understanding. Few teachers checked for individual children's understanding through varied methods.

During the limited observation period, only a few of the teachers were seen using differentiated teaching strategies to support children at different learning levels.

64% of the observed classrooms (32) were multigrade in Meghalaya. Balvatika children were present in seven multigrade classrooms.

During lessons, teachers should 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.

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

Note: *Since Language Teaching practices were observed in only 23 classrooms (with observations for individual indicators limited to 13 or less), their findings are not included in the Executive Summary.*

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. T*eaching of Mathematics was observed in fewer than 30 classrooms, so results are only indicative.*

Main Findings	Recommendations
In eight out of 27 observed classrooms, teachers used TLMs to explain mathematical concepts at varying levels of effectiveness. In 23 of the observed classrooms, children did not get any opportunity to use TLMs.	Teachers should use TLMs more consistently and in planned, 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.
In 22 of 27 classrooms, teachers did not use real-life examples to contextualise mathematical concepts and processes.	Mathematical concepts should be introduced using familiar and everyday contexts so that young children can relate mathematics to their daily experiences and develop practical problem-solving skills.
The use of 'why and how' questions was limited with teachers in 25 of 27 classrooms not using such questions to encourage mathematical reasoning and justification.	Teachers should ask questions that encourage children to explain their thinking and reasoning, helping shift learning away from rote mathematical procedures to deeper conceptual understanding.
Children were given independent tasks for practice in close to half (13) of the observed classrooms. Teachers provided active feedback in eight of these classrooms.	During independent practice, teachers should 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 Findings	Recommendations
In sampled classrooms, children remained 'off-task' (i.e., not engaged in any learning activity) for 23% of the total class time. When they were 'on-task', mechanical or repetitive activities consumed the majority of their time.	There is scope for creating a better balance between teacher-centred instruction and learner-centred practices to enhance children's engagement with learning. Teachers should plan and manage independent and group tasks more deliberately, particularly in multigrade contexts where their attention is divided.

Other findings

- In the survey sample, 62% of the teachers were aware of two or more FLN goals and learning outcomes.
- 32% of the interviewed teachers reported that they had attended an in- person training on FLN.
- 50% of the teachers reported receiving academic support occasionally or infrequently

Recommendations for system-level enablers

Strengthen academic coaching and on-site support for teachers

Teacher interviews reveal that academic support for teachers has scope to be more regular and instructionally strong. On-site academic coaching can be strengthened through regular classroom visits by academic resource persons (ARPs), 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.

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). 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.

Multigrade teaching support

Teachers working in multigrade settings need specific curricular guidance and pedagogical tools to manage multiple groups effectively. Teacher handbooks and student workbooks could be designed taking into account the multigrade landscape of government schools and support teachers in 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 are key to reducing learning gaps within the classroom.

Using assessment to track and support learning

Assessments should focus on a defined set of critical FLN learning outcomes and be implemented periodically across all schools to ensure consistency. Given the prevalence of multigrade classrooms, assessments should be differentiated by learning level rather than grade alone. Findings from these assessments should feed directly into instructional planning, flexible grouping, and targeted remediation.

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in Meghalaya

CHAPTER 1

1.1 State context and FLN reform agenda

In alignment with the national vision of universal foundational learning under the NIPUN Bharat Mission, the Government of Meghalaya has prioritised foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) as a critical reform area to ensure that all children attain grade-level competencies by the end of Grade 3.

Meghalaya's unique socio-linguistic and geographic context—characterised by linguistic diversity (Khasi, Garo, Pnar, and other tribal languages), dispersed habitations, and rural-remote schooling conditions—necessitates a context-responsive FLN strategy. The reform agenda in the State is, therefore, designed to be inclusive, multilingual and adaptable to local learning environments.

Since 2020, the State has undertaken systemic reforms to align with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022. These reforms reflect a deliberate effort to ensure coherence across the full arc of foundational education — from policy directives down to curriculum design for the foundational stage (Balvatika to Grades 2 and 3) and, ultimately, to how learning is transacted in the classroom.

The State's approach emphasises continuity of learning from pre-primary to early primary, recognising the foundational stage (ages 3–8) as a single pedagogical continuum, as envisioned in NCF-FS.

1.2 Strengthening the instructional core

Meghalaya's FLN reform places the classroom at the centre of transformation, focusing on strengthening the instructional core—teachers, learners, and content.

1.2.1 Foundational competencies framework

Instructional priorities are guided by clearly defined FLN competencies aligned with NIPUN Bharat learning outcomes across the different domains presented here.

Literacy Domains

- Oral language development (home language-based interaction)
- Listening comprehension and vocabulary building
- Decoding and early reading fluency
- Reading comprehension and meaning-making
- Emergent and guided writing

Numeracy Domains

- Number sense and quantity understanding
- Place value and number operations
- Measurement, patterns, and spatial understanding
- Problem-solving in real-life contexts

1.2.2 Multilingual and contextual pedagogy

Consistent with NCF-FS principles, early grade instruction in Meghalaya prioritises:

- Mother tongue/home language as the medium of learning (Khasi, Garo, Pnar, etc.)
- Gradual bridging to English through oral language exposure
- Teaching-learning materials contextualised to local culture, environment and lived experiences

1.2.3 School readiness and continuum of learning

The State has institutionalised Vidya Pravesh, a three-month play-based school readiness programme designed to ensure a smooth transition from home or Anganwadi to formal schooling. The programme supports the development of socio-emotional, cognitive, and motor skills, while introducing children to pre-literacy and pre-numeracy concepts through play. This approach aligns with the NCF-FS emphasis on play-based, discovery-based, and activity-based learning.

1.2.4 Teacher preparation and professional development

Teacher capacity building is being strengthened through the implementation of NISHTHA FLN, which provides competency-based pedagogical training. The focus is on child-centric and inclusive pedagogy, activity-based and experiential learning, and continuous assessment practices. This is complemented by ongoing academic support through cluster- and block-level mentoring structures.

1.2.5 Teaching-learning materials (TLMs)

The state has developed and distributed teacher handbooks aligned with FLN competencies and other supplementary materials. The TLMs are designed to:

- Support guided instruction and independent practice
- Enable differentiated learning
- Reinforce competency mastery rather than rote learning

1.3 Key interventions

School Readiness – Vidya Pravesh

Play-based, 3-month preparatory module for Grade 1	Focus on language-rich interactions, storytelling, games, and numeracy readiness	Ensures alignment between Anganwadi and primary school experiences

Teacher Capacity Building – NISHTHA FLN

State-wide training covering all foundational grade teachers	Modules aligned with NIPUN competencies and NCF FS pedagogy	Emphasis on classroom implementation and reflective practices

Curriculum and TLM Reform

Revision of foundational stage curriculum in line with NCF FS, integrating

Developmentally appropriate learning progression	Competency-based outcomes	Local cultural and linguistic context

Pedagogical Shift

Transition from textbook-driven instruction to:

- Activity-based learning
- Play-based and experiential pedagogy
- Competency-driven progression

Increased focus on:

- Reading comprehension (not just decoding)
- Writing for expression
- Conceptual understanding in numeracy

FLN Assessments – FLNAT

Introduction of structured assessment tools to track FLN progress

Periodic assessment of:

- Reading fluency and comprehension
- Writing ability
- Numeracy competencies

Use of data for:

- Instructional planning
- Identification of learning gaps
- Targeted remediation

1.4 Implementation principles

Given Meghalaya's context, implementation is guided by the following principles.

- **System Alignment.** Implementation ensures coherence across curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices, with consistent alignment to national frameworks like NIPUN Bharat and the NCF-FS.
- **Continuity Across the Foundational Stage.** A seamless progression is ensured from pre-primary settings (Anganwadi and Balvatika) through Grades 1 to 3, avoiding fragmentation in early learning experiences.
- **Multilingual Realities.** Implementation actively addresses the diverse language contexts present in Meghalaya's classrooms. Teachers are supported with multilingual teaching strategies, and teaching-learning materials are developed in local languages to bridge the gap between home and school.

- **Teacher Support Systems.** Academic mentoring and on-site support are strengthened to enable continuous professional development. Teachers are provided with practical classroom tools and guidance to translate policy intent into effective practice.

- **Contextual Relevance.** Pedagogy and materials are adapted to reflect the realities of rural and remote schools, tribal communities, and multi-grade classrooms — ensuring that implementation is grounded in the lived contexts of both teachers and learners.

1.5 Way forward

The Government of Meghalaya remains committed to achieving universal foundational literacy and numeracy in alignment with national goals under the NIPUN Bharat Mission.

Key Priorities Going Forward

1. Deepening Curriculum Implementation
   - Operationalising NCF FS-aligned curriculum across all foundational classrooms
   - Strengthening teacher understanding of learning progression
2. Strengthening Instructional Practices
   - Embedding competency-based pedagogy in daily classroom practice
   - Promoting active, experiential, and play-based learning
3. Effective Use of TLMs
   - Ensuring regular and meaningful use of teacher handbooks and workbooks
   - Supporting teachers in adapting materials for diverse learners
4. Strengthening Assessments and Data Use
   - Institutionalising FLNAT as a regular diagnostic tool
   - Using assessment data for targeted interventions
5. Focus on Inclusion and Equity
   - Addressing learning needs of children in remote and tribal areas
   - Strengthening multilingual education practices
6. Sustained Teacher Support
   - Continuous professional development and mentoring

Meghalaya's FLN reform represents a systemic, competency-driven, and contextually-grounded transformation of early grade education. By aligning policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment with the principles of the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022, the state is building a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

The sustained focus on early grade classrooms, teacher capacity, and child-centric pedagogy positions Meghalaya to achieve its goal of universal foundational literacy and numeracy, ensuring that every child is equipped with essential learning skills by the end of Grade 3.

CHAPTER
2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework used to study teaching and learning practices related to FLN in Grades 1 and 2 in the East Garo Hills district of Meghalaya.

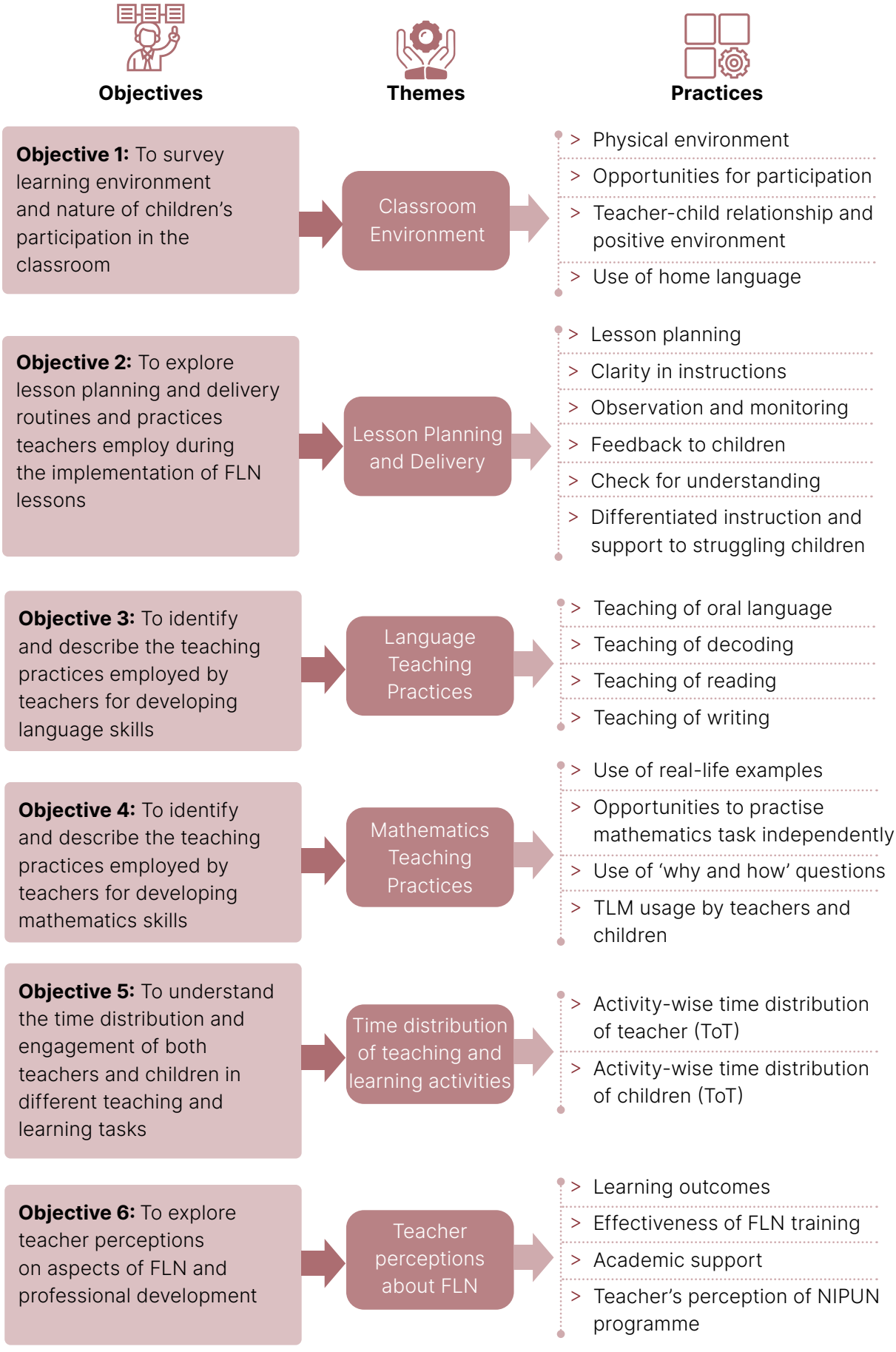
2.2 Scope of the survey

The Survey examines classroom-level teaching and learning practices related to FLN in Grades 1 and 2 across selected schools in nine states including Meghalaya.

The focus is everyday instructional processes within classrooms, categorised into the following themes: (i) Classroom Environment (ii) Lesson Planning and Delivery (iii) Language Teaching Practices (iv) Mathematics Teaching Practices (v) Time allocation of teaching and learning activities and (vi) Teacher perception of FLN and professional development.

The Survey draws on classroom observations, teacher interviews and time-on-task data to provide a detailed picture of how teaching and learning unfold in early-grade classrooms. Classroom observations were conducted during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Figure 2.1: ***Mapping of Survey objectives to themes and practices***



2.3 **Coverage of the survey**

For the state of Meghalaya, the Survey examined classroom teaching and learning practices related to FLN in Grades 1 and 2 in 50 schools in two blocks (Samanda and Songsak) of one district (East Garo Hills). In each classroom, either a language lesson or a mathematics lesson was observed for a duration of 40 minutes to capture teaching practices and classroom interactions during regular teaching periods.

1 district

50 classrooms

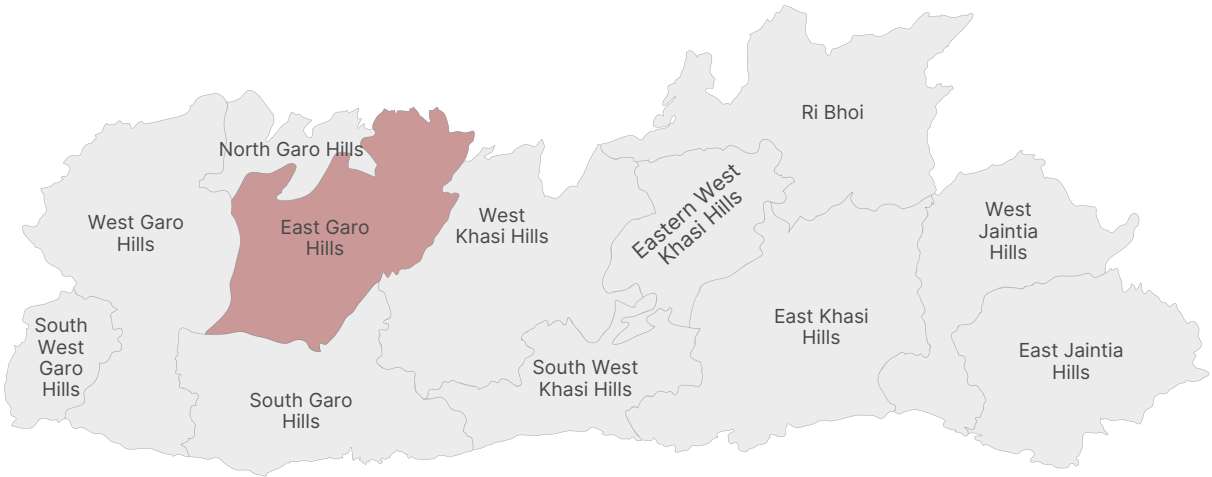
50 teachers

1000+ children

Grade 1	**Grade 2**	**Language**	**Mathematics**
26 classrooms	24 classrooms	23 classrooms	27 classrooms

Number of tools	Number of supervisors	Number of field observers	Number of hours of observation
6	2	6	100+

District	**Block**
East Garo Hills	Samanda Songsak

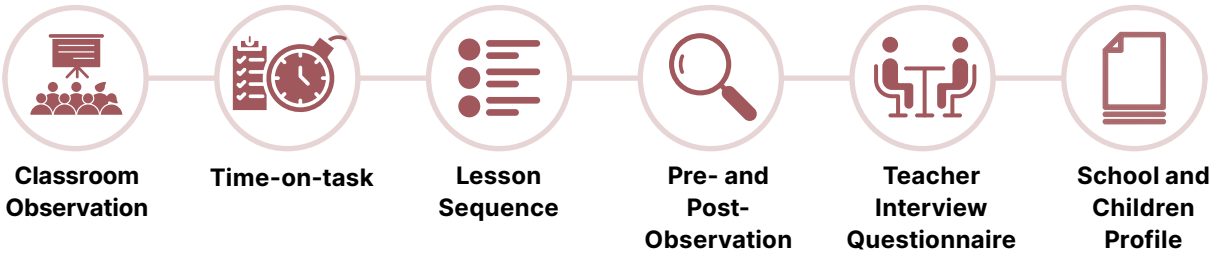


2.4 **Survey design**

2.4.1 **Survey tools**

The Survey combined quantitative and qualitative structured data collection tools designed to capture classroom environments, teacher-child interactions and teaching practices for language and mathematics. A total of six tools were developed, each with clearly defined objectives.

Figure 2.2: ***Six key tools for data collection***



S. No.	Tool	Objective/Components
1	Classroom Observation (CRO)	21 indicators across learning environment, lesson planning/ delivery, language and maths teaching—rated on a 4-point scale
2	Time-on-task (ToT)	Distribution of instructional time across activities, recorded every three minutes
3	Lesson Sequence (LS)	Flow and nature of teaching activities—both open-ended narrative and coded instructional steps, skills targeted, and TLMs used
4	Pre- and Post-Observation	School-level context (enrolment, attendance) and physical classroom environment (seating, print materials)
5	Teacher Interview Questionnaire	Lesson planning, beliefs about grade-level outcomes, training received, perceptions of NIPUN Bharat
6	School and Children Profile	School-level data and children's socio-economic background

2.4.2 Teaching-learning practices, indicators and rating scale

Definitions

Practice

A specific, observable set of teacher actions that represents an identified part of a recommended pedagogical process.

Indicator

A specific, observable behaviour that provides evidence of a practice implemented in the classroom. (A practice can have more than one indicator)

Rating Scale

Each indicator was rated on a 4-point rating scale. Rating 1 indicated least effective practice, 2 – partially effective practice, 3 – effective practice and 4 – most effective practice.

2.5 Analysis framework

The analysis was guided by the Survey's objectives, which were further organised into specific practices and indicators to structure the inquiry. Indicators drawn from the CRO, ToT, pre- and post-observation, LS and teacher interview tools were systematically mapped to each objective to ensure analytical coherence and consistency. Triangulation across tools strengthened the robustness of interpretation and reduced the potential influence of field observer bias.

2.6 Sampling framework: Selection of districts, blocks and schools

The Survey adopted a multi-stage sampling design.

Stage 1 – District selection

> Districts where partner organisations or LLF were actively implementing FLN-focused interventions were deliberately excluded.

Stage 2 – Block and school selection

- The sampling aimed to cover 50 schools in the selected district.
- Two blocks were randomly selected within the selected district.
- To balance methodological rigour with field feasibility, around half of the required schools (approximately 12-13 per block) were selected through random sampling. The remaining schools were selected based on geographic proximity to sampled schools to minimise travel time.

Within each sampled school

- Classrooms were selected to ensure an approximate balance between Grade 1 and Grade 2 observations.
- Observations were evenly distributed across language and mathematics lessons within each district.
- Schools were included in the sample only if they had an enrolment of more than seven children, and classroom observations were conducted only when at least five children were present at the time of observation.

2.7 Training & field implementation

A structured, multi-tiered training and implementation strategy was adopted to ensure consistent, reliable and high-quality administration of survey tools across the State. The training approach was designed to strengthen both conceptual understanding of FLN processes and the practical skills required for systematic classroom observation using multiple data collection instruments.

1

A five-day national orientation workshop, including two days of field visits, was conducted to orient consultants, supervisors and partner organisations to the Survey methodology, tool architecture, indicators and rating scales, particularly for the classroom observation tool.

2

A dedicated two-day supervision training was conducted at national level to strengthen field-level quality assurance and supervision mechanisms for supervisors' adherence.

3

A comprehensive five-day training workshop was conducted in Meghalaya. The initial phase focused on orienting participants on FLN concepts and the specific data collection instruments, including the Time on Task Tool, Classroom Observation Tool, and Teacher Interview Questionnaire. The middle phase of the workshop involved intensive hands-on practice, form-filling exercises, and structured reflections on potential tool-related challenges. Two days of school visits were conducted, allowing the team to apply the tools in real-time settings and participate in final debriefing sessions to address any remaining gaps in understanding.

4

Each observation team typically consisted of two field observers, supported by a supervisor who shadowed visits and monitored implementation adherence and provided on-site feedback. Field observers spent around two hours in each school following the protocol for CRO, note-taking, interviewing the teacher and collecting the school and children profile. The team then moved to the second school for the day to follow the same process for another grade or subject.

Data Digitisation: Data in paper-pencil was daily digitised on an Application by the field observers. Random checks were conducted by the supervisors to identify missing data, incomplete survey forms and gaps in supporting evidence.

5

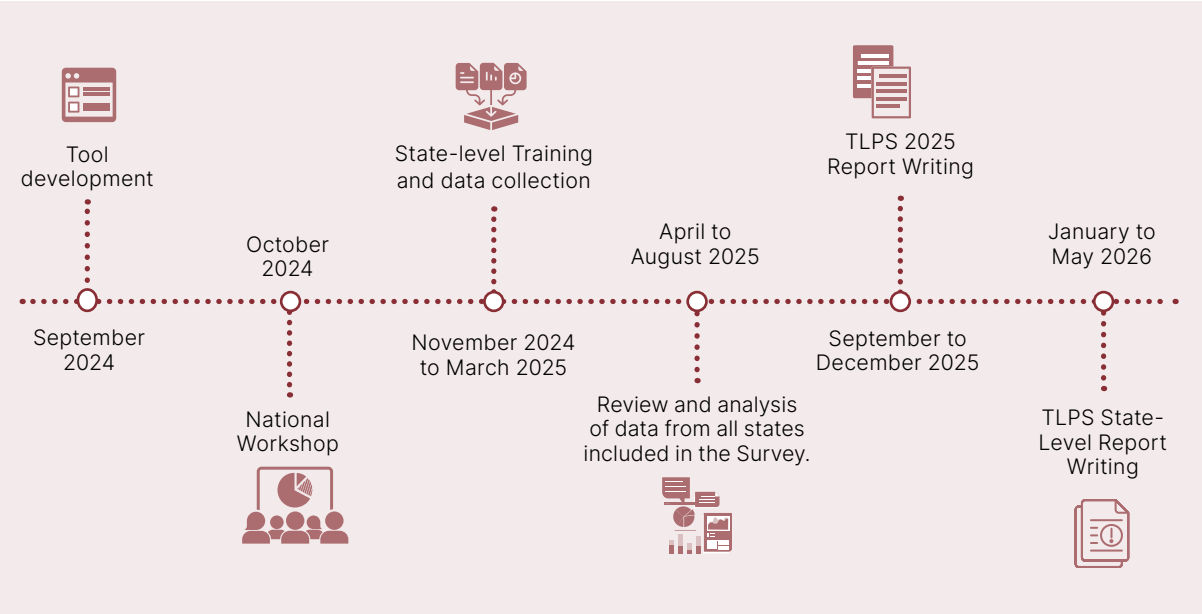
Across all data collection sites, daily debrief sessions of 2-3 hours were conducted during active fieldwork. These sessions operated as intensive quality assurance checkpoints where:

> Every completed observation tool was reviewed in detail.
> Field observers read examples aloud for group discussion.
> Rating interpretations were validated against the established framework.
> Doubts about ratings were identified and corrected before digitisation.

2.8 **Quality assurance and supervision**

Quality assurance procedures were integrated at every stage of data collection to ensure reliability and to minimise both measurement error and potential field observer bias. Periodic data reviews were conducted by the core team; daily debrief sessions were conducted by the core team and consultants to review field documentation and to provide immediate corrective feedback; field observers were accompanied by the core team and consultants to conduct shadow visits.

2.9 **Timeline**



2.10 **Implementation challenges**

- The mountainous terrain of East Garo Hills increased travel times between schools.
- Some school locations had to be changed due to student absenteeism.
- Maintaining the continuous availability of the field observation team throughout the duration of the data collection period required constant coordination and adaptive management.

2.11 **Limitations**

- Only one district was selected for the survey. Hence the findings do not represent the situation at the state level.
- Classroom observations were limited to a single 40-minute language or mathematics lesson on one day. As for all such observations, the presence of observers could influence teaching practices during the period of observation. For example, many teachers may have repeated a lesson or activity which they had already done with children earlier.
- The practices and indicators selected for observation are not exhaustive; rather, they were chosen because they are both important for effective teaching in the early grades and observable in a reliable manner within the limited scope of a single observation.

Note: *Detailed TLPS methodology and tool development process can be found in the TLPS National Report: https://languageandlearningfoundation.org/teaching-learning-practices-survey/*

EMOTIONS

CHAPTER 3

Classroom Learning Environment

3.1 Overview of classroom learning environment

The classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping children's learning experiences and overall development. A positive, accepting, well-organised, and stimulating environment not only enhances academic performance but also fosters social and emotional growth. A supportive classroom is where children feel safe, motivated, and encouraged to explore, engage, question, and collaborate. It holds the power to transform learning into an engaging and meaningful journey. NCF-FS 2022 recommends that a safe, secure, comfortable and happy classroom environment can help children to learn better and achieve more.

3.2 Effective practices of classroom learning environment and their indicators

Observations of classroom environments were conducted in 50 classrooms, comprising 26 Grade 1 and 24 Grade 2 classrooms. The Survey focused on four critical aspects of the classroom environment: physical environment, teacher-child relationship, opportunities for participation and use of home language. These components were examined through multiple indicators of effective practice (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 ***Practices and indicators of classroom learning environment***

Practices	Indicators of Effective Practice
Physical Environment	Physical space and sitting arrangement
	Availability of a functional blackboard
	Availability and accessibility of print-rich material
Teacher-child relationship	Children feel confident and express freely with the teacher and each other
Opportunities for participation	Teacher asks questions to individual children
	Teacher gives time to children to respond when asking individual children
Use of home language	Teacher accepts the use of home language by children and uses it in teaching

3.2.1 Physical environment

The physical space and arrangement of a classroom significantly influence children's engagement, behaviour, and teaching and learning processes. Beyond basic infrastructure, seating arrangements that allow for flexible grouping are more effective in encouraging better interactions, teacher monitoring, and supporting learning objectives through both small-group and whole-class activities.

Another enabling factor is the display and use of a variety of classroom print material during teaching and learning. Children who are exposed to books and other print material at home often pick up basic concepts about print easily. For children who lack such exposure—a reality for many Indian children—it is even more important that classrooms have a print-rich environment at school. In a print-rich environment, children get many different opportunities to interact with different forms of print in meaningful contexts. This shows children that print carries meaning and that reading and writing serve real, everyday purposes. Over time, children become motivated to try to read and write themselves.

3.2.2 **Teacher-child relationship**

A warm, trusting teacher-child relationship is the cornerstone of a positive classroom environment. Young children who experience caring, respectful and responsive relationships with their teachers are more excited about learning, more positive about coming to school, more confident, and achieve more in the classroom. Such relationships help children feel safe to express ideas, ask questions, make mistakes, and take learning risks. This not only supports academic progress but also nurtures emotional growth, resilience, and motivation in learners. Simply put, a positive teacher-child relationship is the critical foundation affecting children's learning and progress in school, without which refinements in pedagogy, curricula and TLMs may be largely meaningless. The NCF-FS 2022 recommends that classrooms must offer inclusive and enabling learning environments that provide every child freedom, acceptance, meaningfulness, belonging and challenge.

3.2.3 **Opportunities for participation**

An inclusive classroom environment is one in which every child, irrespective of ability, language, gender, or socio-economic background, feels valued, heard, and able to participate meaningfully in the learning process. Such environments foster a sense of belonging and promote collaboration, empathy, and equity. Creating this environment means more than physical access to schooling; it requires classroom practices that cultivate participation, dialogue, and respect. In the Survey, two indicators were used as proxies to assess whether teachers were taking steps toward such inclusivity: first, whether they made efforts to engage individual children in discussions, and second, whether they provided adequate wait time for children to think and respond. Allowing adequate wait time after asking a question is just one strategy. Other examples include giving children the option to pass and return to the question later, or incorporating 'turn-and-talk' routines (or variations like think-pair-share and write-share). These approaches enable all children to engage with the question, while also tempering the dominance of those who are quick to respond, thus creating more balanced opportunities for participation.

Both of these practices are central to an inclusive classroom environment because they ensure that children are not only present, but are genuinely involved in learning—offering ideas, processing information at their pace, and developing confidence through supported participation.

3.2.4 **Home language use**

Using children's home languages in early schooling is essential for building a strong foundation in learning. When children's familiar language is used in the classroom, they understand better, they are able to express ideas, ask questions, and connect new concepts to what they already know. Language is not just a tool for instruction; it shapes children's thoughts, enhances engagement, participation and understanding. Using children's most familiar language strengthens early

literacy and numeracy while affirming children's cultural identities. The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) recommends using a child's home language as the medium of instruction, wherever possible, and to bridge the gap between home and school languages.

3.3 Findings of classroom learning environment

3.3.1 Physical environment

Source	Indicators
Pre- & Post-observation Survey	Physical space and seating arrangement
	Availability of a functional blackboard
	Availability, nature and accessibility of print-rich material

Functional blackboards were available in each of the 50 observed classrooms. All of the classrooms had a row-and-column seating style. Seating arrangements were changed in 2% of the classrooms as the observation progressed, to suit the nature of activity being conducted or to support peer learning.

Print-rich materials were displayed in six classrooms out of the 50 observed across the State. These materials were displayed at children's eye-level—a basic requirement for making them accessible—in half of those (3) classrooms.

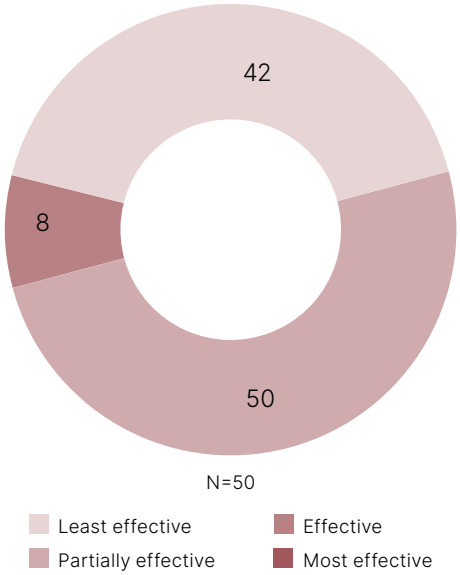
The findings indicate that while basic infrastructure such as blackboards is widely available, the physical space can be used in more effective ways that support teaching and learning. Further, few classrooms saw changed seating arrangements during lessons. This suggests that teachers can significantly improve learning outcomes by supporting peer learning, facilitating movement, and enabling small-group or whole-class interactions aligned with lesson goals.

To create truly enabling classroom environments, teachers need to design flexible seating arrangements that suit the lesson objectives and the nature of the task. Ensuring that age-appropriate classroom print is available, accessible, and regularly used during lessons would go a long way in supporting early language learning.

3.3.2 Teacher-child relationship

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Children feel confident and express freely with the teacher and each other	Children are quiet throughout the period and do not talk to the teacher or other children	Only a few children talk/ ask questions amongst each other or to the teacher	Some children look comfortable in teacher's presence and talk or ask questions freely with others and the teacher	Most children are comfortable in the teacher's presence and talk freely or ask questions with others and the teacher

Figure 3.1: ***Percentage of classrooms where children felt confident and expressed freely with teachers and each other***



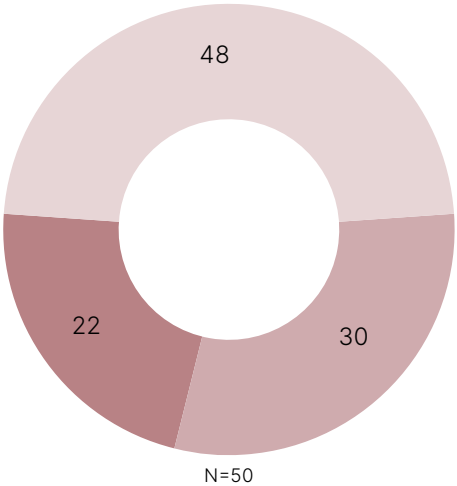
In 92% of the surveyed classrooms, children either remained silent throughout the lesson or only a few children participated in discussions. In these settings, children quietly followed instructions or stayed largely silent, often because teachers did not provide opportunities to speak, scolded children or engaged with only a small group of children.

These findings indicate that there is much scope to strengthen teacher-child relationships in early-grade classrooms in the State. The current learning environment does not adequately support children's academic or socio-emotional growth. Any improvements in pedagogy, curriculum, or TLMs will have limited impact unless accompanied by deliberate efforts to create warm, responsive classroom relationships.

3.3.3 Opportunities for participation

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher asks questions to individual children	Teacher does not ask individual children	Teacher occasionally asks individual children only	Teacher sometimes asks individual children	Teacher mostly asks individual children
Teacher gives time to children to respond when asking individual children	Teacher does not wait for responses	Teacher occasionally waits for children's responses	Teacher sometimes waits for children's responses	Teacher mostly waits for children's responses

Figure 3.2: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers asked questions to individual children***



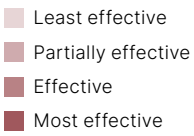
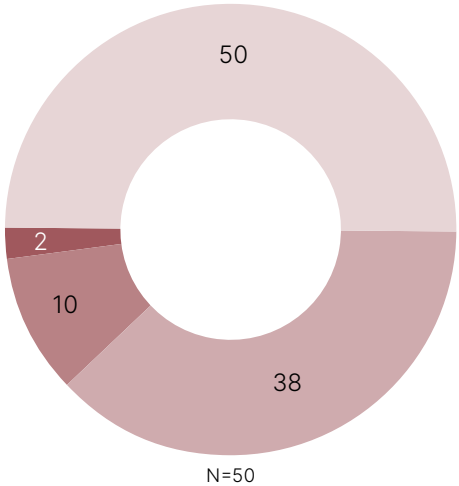


Figure 3.3: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers gave time to children to respond when asking individual children***



In 22% (11 classrooms) of the surveyed classrooms in Meghalaya, teachers sometimes asked questions to individual children, whereas in almost half of the classrooms (24) teachers did not direct any questions to individual children. In these latter classrooms, teachers relied on children's choral responses to their questions rather than engaging children one-on-one.

A gap also emerged in the provision of adequate wait time, defined as allowing at least 3-10 seconds after posing a question for children to think and respond. Among classrooms where teachers asked questions to individual children, in only 12% (six classrooms) of them did the teachers wait for children's answers at least sometimes, while in half (25) of the classrooms, teachers did not wait at all and instead supplied the answers themselves. This practice limits children's opportunities to think, participate, and express their ideas, particularly for learners who already struggle to keep pace.

The findings suggest that there is considerable scope for creating an inclusive environment where every child is encouraged to think, participate, and express themselves. When teachers do not actively engage individual children or allow them sufficient time to respond, children cannot contribute to shared meaning-making, weakening the foundations of an inclusive classroom environment that values every learner's voice.

3.3.4 **Use of home language**

The Survey was conducted in East Garo Hills district, where Garo is both the home language of children and the medium of instruction at the primary school level. The findings mirror this reality: in most (96%) of the observed classrooms, teachers reported Garo as children's home language and that children were able to understand the medium of instruction in classrooms. Only minuscule proportion of children speaking languages like Hindi and Bangla were reported.

Overall, this indicates that classroom instruction is occurring in the children's home language (Garo). It is an encouraging finding because extensive use of children's home/familiar language in early school years is crucial for children's active participation, self-confidence, comprehension and learning.

3.4. **Conclusion**

The findings from this chapter indicate that while basic physical infrastructure is widely in place across the observed classrooms in Meghalaya, the broader learning environment requires significant strengthening. Print-rich materials were present in a small proportion of classrooms and seating arrangements remained fixed in almost all classrooms throughout the observed lessons. In addition, teacher-child relationships in most classrooms were not yet conducive to children's active participation.

Together, these findings point to a strong need to move towards creating truly enabling learning environments. This means actively provisioning and using print-rich materials as instructional tools, organising classroom spaces flexibly to support learning goals, and building warm, responsive teacher-child relationships that give every child the confidence to speak, ask questions, and engage meaningfully in learning.

Lesson Planning and Delivery

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Overview of lesson planning and delivery

Thoughtful lesson planning and purposeful lesson delivery form the bedrock of effective teaching. They are central to creating meaningful learning experiences for young children. When teachers plan with intention, communicate expectations clearly, observe how children engage with tasks, and respond to their needs through timely guidance and support, they create classrooms where every child has a genuine chance to learn. These practices help teachers understand what children know, where they struggle, and how to adjust instruction so that all learners can progress.

Just as a supportive classroom environment is essential, strong lesson planning and delivery practices form the foundation for more specific teaching strategies that build early language and mathematics skills.

4.2 Effective practices of lesson planning and delivery and their indicators

Classroom observations focusing on lesson planning and delivery practices were conducted in 50 classrooms, comprising 26 Grade 1 and 24 Grade 2 classrooms. Classroom observations focused on the following indicators for lesson planning and delivery practices: lesson planning, use of clear instructions, observation and monitoring of children's tasks, giving feedback on written work, checking for understanding, as well as use of differentiated instruction for children at different learning levels (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: ***Practices and indicators of lesson planning and delivery***

Practices	Effective practice indicators
Lesson Planning	Teacher plans for the lesson
Clarity in Instructions	Teacher provides clear instructions before, during, and after the activity
Observation and Monitoring	Teacher observes and monitors independent and group activities of children
Feedback	Teacher gives feedback/support on written work done by children
Check for Understanding (CFU)	Teacher uses questions, prompts or other strategies to check children's understanding
Differentiated Instruction and Support to Struggling Children	Teacher employs differentiated instruction or support for children at different levels

Additionally, data was taken from teacher interviews on the following questions:

Lesson Planning

> Do you plan the lesson you will teach the next day? If yes, how do you plan for the lesson? If no, why?

Differentiated instruction

> Do you have children who have not learnt some of the basic skills that have been taught? What do you think could be the reasons for some children not being able to learn well?

> How do you support children who have not yet learnt?

4.2.1 Lesson planning

Planning for a lesson is an essential part of teaching practice. It helps to ensure that teaching is purposeful, coherent and aligned with children's developmental and learning needs. When teachers plan, they are better able to select and sequence activities, anticipate challenges, and create meaningful learning experiences that build on what children already know. The NCF-FS 2022 highlights that planning includes developing and organising classroom tasks as per target competencies and outcomes, pedagogy to be followed, resources to be used and assessment to be carried out. Planning also includes practice activities for children, home assignments, and displays in the class relevant to what is being taught.

4.2.2 Clarity of instructions

Clarity of instructions is a key part of good teaching, especially in the early years of schooling. Many young children take time to learn how school works and may not understand the expectations of formal, classroom-based learning. When teachers give clear, step-by-step instructions, children know what they are supposed to do, how to do it, and what a good result looks like. In addition to giving clear directions, teachers also need to show examples and model the task for young children. When teachers give clear instructions and reinforce them through modelling, children are more likely to stay focused, complete tasks, and learn better.

4.2.3 Observation and monitoring

Observation and monitoring are essential parts of good lesson delivery. When teachers watch how children work, both on their own and in groups, they gain valuable insights into what children understand, how they think and apply new learning and where they need help. Such information helps teachers adjust their explanations, change activities, or provide extra support when needed. In this way, observation not only helps identify learning gaps but also guides teachers in making timely decisions that improve classroom learning.

4.2.4 Providing feedback

Providing feedback on children's work is an important aspect of effective lesson delivery. When teachers comment purposefully on children's work, they not only acknowledge children's efforts but also help them understand how and why their responses can be improved. Timely, balanced and specific feedback enables children to recognise what they have done well and what needs further attention. The NCF-FS 2022 also recommends that feedback be constructive and focused

on effort and growth rather than merely evaluating outcomes. By directing children's attention to strategies, concepts or steps they may have missed, effective feedback guides learners to reflect on their work, improve their skills, and take ownership of their learning over time.

4.2.5 Check for understanding

Regular CFU are vital to effective lesson delivery, especially in the early years, when children are still building foundational skills. CFU helps teachers know whether children have understood key ideas before moving on, allowing them to identify misconceptions and provide support when needed. Simple strategies, such as asking questions, using quick tasks, or observing children's responses, give teachers real-time insight into children's learning.

Choral responses can help build participation but they often mask individual differences. A few confident voices may lead, while other children simply repeat without understanding. Relying only on group responses does not show teachers what individual children understand. Thus, consistent and varied CFU practices are required to ensure that teaching remains clear, inclusive and responsive to all learners.

4.2.6 Differentiated instruction and support to struggling children

Differentiated instruction is essential for effective lesson planning and delivery. In the foundational years especially, classrooms include learners with varied backgrounds and developmental levels, making it important for teachers to adjust their teaching so all children can participate meaningfully. This means planning lessons that modify content, methods, or activities to support those who struggle as well as those who are ready to move ahead. As highlighted in the NCF-FS 2022, teachers are expected to use multiple pedagogical approaches so that no learner is left behind and every child can access learning successfully.

4.3 Findings of lesson planning and delivery

4.3.1 Lesson planning

Source	Indicators
Teacher Interviews	Do you plan the lesson you will teach the next day?
	If yes, how do you plan for the lesson? If no, why?
Pre- and post-observation tool	Teacher has a documented lesson plan/strategy for the period. (Yes/No with explanation and comments)

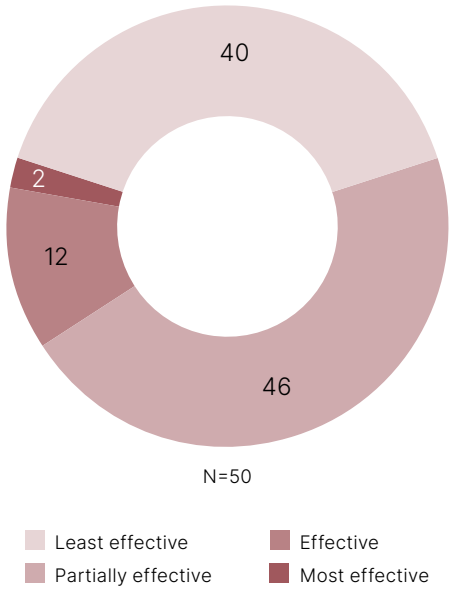
In teacher interviews, 22% of teachers reported planning for the lesson they would teach the next day. However, most teachers were found to have relied mainly on mental or informal lesson planning that was not systematically recorded. Documented plans were observed with a small proportion (2%) of interviewed teachers.

The findings suggest that while some teachers recognise the importance of lesson planning, there is a gap between intent and actual practice. The fact that most of the teachers did not have written lesson plans indicates that planning may be inconsistent or overly dependent on memory, which can limit the quality and continuity of teaching.

4.3.2 Clarity in instructions

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher provides clear instructions before, during and after the activity	Teacher begins activity without giving any instruction (before, during or after)	Teacher gives instructions before or during an activity but does not confirm if all children understand them	Teacher gives instructions before or during an activity, and confirms with some children if they have understood them	Teacher clearly communicates instructions to ensure all children understand them at each stage—before, during, and after every activity

Figure 4.1: ***Teacher provides clear instructions before, during and after the activity***



In over half of the classrooms (30 classrooms), teachers gave instructions before or during an activity. Of these, in 14% (seven) classrooms, teachers also confirmed with at least a few children whether they understood what was expected of them.

The findings reveal wide variations in how teachers communicate instructions during classroom activities. Although some teachers provide directions before or during classroom activities, few do so in a structured and complete way. As a result, many children may be engaging in tasks without fully understanding what they are expected to do or why. In early-grade classrooms where children are still developing familiarity with classroom routines and academic language, unclear or incomplete instructions can cause children to become confused, go off-task and lose learning time. These gaps highlight the need for teachers to give clear, step-by-step instructions, model expected responses, and verify that children have understood so that they can participate meaningfully and learn successfully.

4.3.3 **Observation and monitoring**

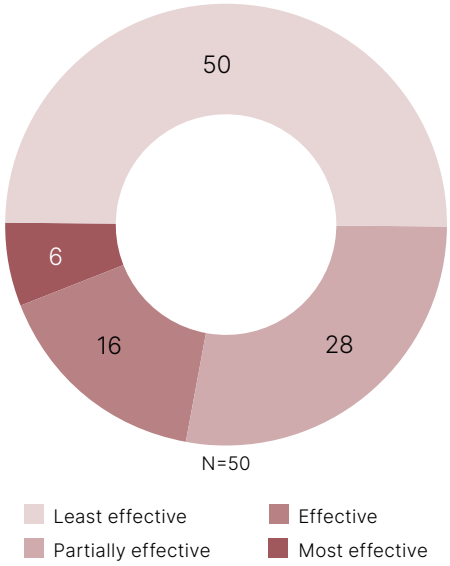
Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher observes and monitors independent and group activities of children	Teacher does not observe or monitor during independent or group activities of children	Teacher occasionally observes and monitors a few children	Teacher sometimes monitors during independent/ group activities of some children	Teacher mostly observes and actively monitors the group activities or independent work of most children

In 22% (11 classrooms) of the observed classrooms, teachers observed and monitored independent or group activities of children at least sometimes. In half of the surveyed classrooms (25 classrooms), teachers did not observe or monitor children at all during independent tasks or group activities, and in an additional 28% (14 classrooms), teachers did so occasionally and with a small number of children.

Data from ToT observations show that, on an average, teachers spent 3% of lesson time (40 minutes) supervising group or individual work of children.

These findings show that regular and purposeful observation is yet to become a common part of classroom practice. When teachers do not closely monitor children's work, they miss important information about what children understand and where they struggle. With a few teachers actively monitoring most children, there are very limited opportunities to adjust instruction, offer timely feedback, correct errors, or provide other forms of support that strengthen learning.

Figure 4.2: ***Teacher observes and monitors independent and group activities of children***

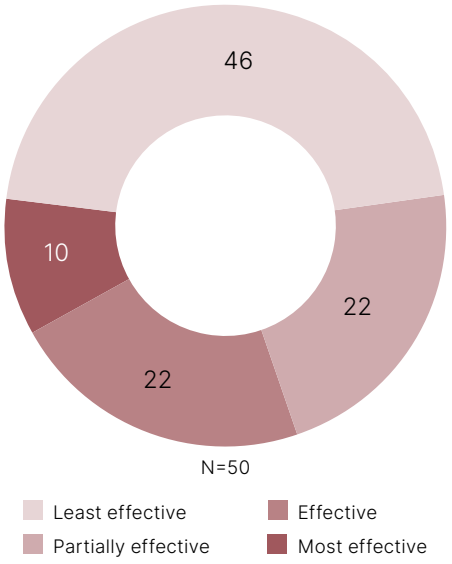


4.3.4 **Providing feedback**

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher gives feedback/ support on written work done by children	Teacher does not check any children's work	Teacher checks a few children's work and corrects it himself/herself but does not share the feedback	Teacher checks some children's work and defines the mistake	Teacher gives constructive feedback to most of the children based on the mistakes, explains the concept again, asks to rework and re-checks

Classroom observations reveal that in almost half (23 classrooms) of the sampled classrooms, teachers did not check children's written work. In another 22% (11 classrooms), teachers checked a few children's work and corrected errors themselves. In a further 22%

Figure 4.3: ***Teacher gives feedback/support on the written work done by children***



(11 classrooms), teachers went a step ahead by identifying mistakes for some children but did not provide sufficient guidance on how to correct them. In 10% (five) classrooms, teachers demonstrated effective feedback practices—reviewing most children's work, explaining errors, revisiting the concept where needed, and asking children to redo and resubmit their work.

These findings suggest that there is a lot of scope to improve constructive feedback practices among teachers, which is central to reinforcing learning. When teachers do not check children's work and many others only identify or correct errors without explanation, children miss the support they need to learn from their mistakes. Without timely and specific feedback, children continue to complete tasks without fully knowing how to improve or deepen their learning.

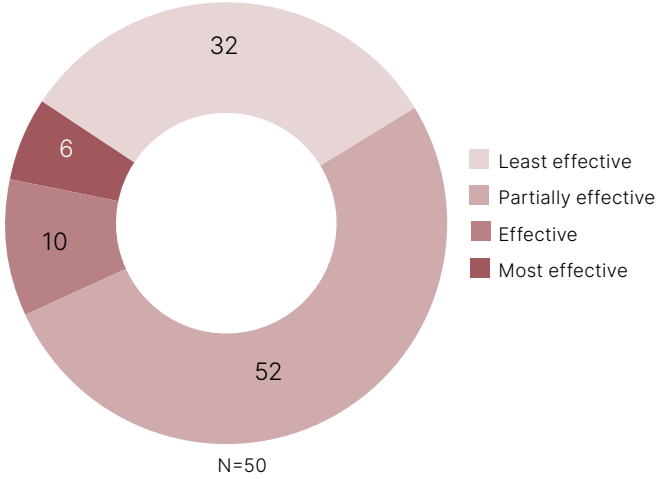
Teachers can strengthen feedback practices by regularly checking most children's work, clearly explaining why an answer or approach is incorrect, and providing simple steps to improve. Encouraging children to reflect on, correct, and resubmit their work helps them apply the feedback and see their own progress.

4.3.5 Checks for understanding

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher uses questions, prompts or other strategies to check children's understanding	Teacher does not use any questions or other strategies to check children's understanding	Teacher accepts choral response to confirm children's understanding	Teacher sometimes confirms through questions, prompts or other strategies for children's understanding	Teacher mostly confirms children's understanding through questions, prompts and other strategies

In half (52%) of the observed classrooms, teachers relied mainly on choral responses to confirm children's understanding of the lesson. Such group responses do not show what individual children understand. In a small proportion (6%) of the observed classrooms, teachers regularly used questions, prompts, or other strategies to check for children's understanding actively. In 32% (16) of the classrooms, teachers did not use any questions or strategies to check whether children had understood the lesson.

Figure 4.4: ***Teacher uses questions, prompts or other strategies to check children's understanding***



In most classrooms, teachers asked questions that focused on recalling facts from the recently covered content. Few teachers went beyond this, where they posed questions that required children to explain their reasoning, assigned individual and group practice tasks, invited children to solve problems on the board, or checked classwork during the lesson.

These findings reveal that the use of checks for understanding can be more consistent and effective. Many children are not getting enough opportunities to show what they have understood during a lesson. When teachers rely only on choral responses, they cannot see which children are confused or need extra help. To improve this, teachers can use a few simple strategies during the lessons, such as asking individual children to explain their thinking or to demonstrate how they solved a problem; giving a quick task; or observing how children complete a step. This will ensure that all children are learning, not just the more confident ones.

4.3.6 **Differentiated instruction and support for children**

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher employs differentiated instructions or support for children at different levels	Teacher does not know children's learning needs and does not use any differentiated instructions	Teacher knows the learning needs of children but does not have a plan to use differentiated instructions	Teacher knows the learning needs of the children but can apply differentiated instructions on only some children	Teacher knows the learning needs of the children, forms group/groups based on the needs and gives level-based instructions and need-based support to most children

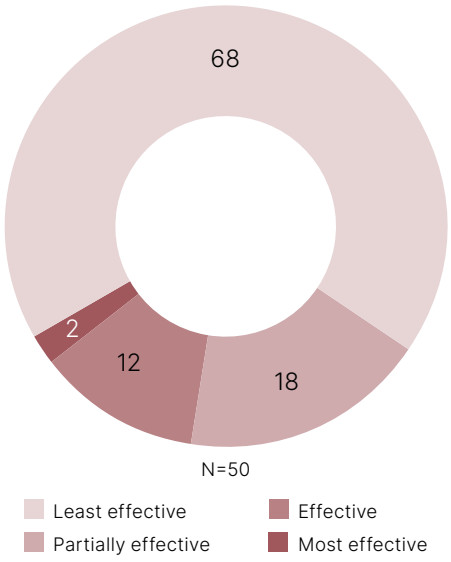
Additional insights were drawn from teacher interviews as related to the following questions:

- Do you have children who have not learnt some of the basic skills that have been taught?
- What do you think could be the reasons for some children not being able to learn well?
- How do you support the children who have not learnt yet?

In most (43 classrooms) of the surveyed classrooms, teachers did not use any differentiated instruction or support during the observed lesson, such as guided reading, individualised writing tasks, or graded mathematics activities. It is encouraging to note that in 32% of the observed classrooms, teachers were aware about the learning needs of the children and in 14% of the classrooms they were able to apply differentiated instructions at least sometimes.

In interviews, 90% teachers acknowledged having children who were struggling with basic language and mathematics skills. A significant proportion attributed these learning gaps to factors outside the

Figure 4.5: ***Teacher employs differentiated instructions or support for children at different levels***



classroom, such as lack of parental support (66%) or lack of interest (18%), rather than to limitations in teaching and learning processes.

Teachers who reported attempting to support children lagging behind their peers, used a diverse set of strategies to assist children's learning like giving them special attention (52%), additional practice (18%), giving them extra time (16%), calling them separately to explain (16%) or assigning them separate tasks (12%).

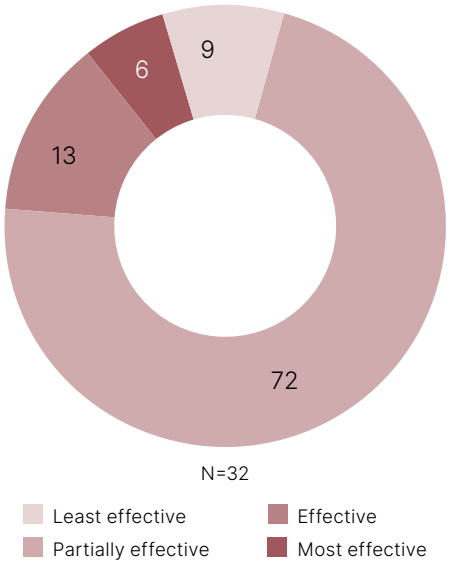
These findings suggest that while most teachers know that some children are struggling, they either do not recognise their role in offering support to these children or are not equipped to adapt instruction accordingly. To improve, teachers would need to understand children's learning levels, plan for varied needs, and use simple differentiated strategies. Even small shifts like flexible grouping, guided practice in level-based groups, or providing scaffolded tasks during regular lessons, can help ensure that all children are meaningfully included.

4.3.7 Multigrade teaching

Multigrade teaching situations, including classrooms where children of two or more grades were sitting together, were found in 64% (32 out of 50 classrooms). Children of grades 1 and 2 were sitting together in 26% (13) of classrooms. Balvatika children were present in seven multigrade classrooms.

The classroom observation included an indicator about 'teacher engaging both the grades in meaningful learning' with performance ranging from 'the teacher giving no attention to any grade' to 'effectively engaging both grades in a meaningful way'.

Figure 4.6: ***In a multigrade situation, the teacher engages both the grades in meaningful learning***



Teachers in 19% (six of the 32 multigrade classrooms) were able to engage children of different learning levels to some degree of effectiveness. Owing to small class and school sizes in several districts, multigrade teaching situations are likely to be common. Better teacher deployment can help improve the problem to some extent. However, teachers working in multigrade and multilevel settings need specific guidance and pedagogical support to manage more than one grade or group effectively.

4.4 Conclusion

The findings from the indicators of lesson planning and delivery suggest that there is a lot of scope for improvement. Lesson planning is often informal or undocumented, limiting continuity and preparedness. Similarly, teachers' monitoring of children's work, checking for individual understanding and providing feedback have been less frequent, likely leaving many children without guidance on how to improve.

At the same time, the findings highlight several dimensions for strengthening instructional practice. Structured lesson planning, clear step-by-step instructions and modelling the expected response, and regular observation of children's work can help teachers respond more effectively to learners' needs and offer specific feedback to them. While differentiated instruction is currently limited, broad level-based grouping and providing guided practice or scaffolded tasks can help ensure that all children are meaningfully included in learning.

CHAPTER 5

Language Teaching Practices

5.1 Overview of language teaching practices

Talking, thinking and reasoning, reading and writing—all involve the use of language. Developing higher-order comprehension skills like reasoning, analysing and forming opinions in the early years is critical to all future learning. The basic purpose of early language teaching is to enable all children to read fluently with comprehension, respond to questions about what they read, and express themselves with clarity, both orally and through independent writing. In addition, children should develop an interest in the habit of reading.

A balanced approach to early language and literacy requires teaching to focus on all the four blocks of oral language development, decoding, reading and writing, as recommended in NCF-FS 2022.

Figure 5.1: ***Four components of language teaching***

Source – NCF-FS 2022, page 114

5.2 **Effective practices of language teaching and their indicators**

The Survey examined language teaching across the four practices using six indicators of effective practice—two for oral language, two for reading, and one each for decoding and writing (Table 5.1).

Language teaching was observed across 23 classrooms (G1-14, G2-9). Within the sampled language classrooms, different sub-indicators were observed in different classrooms. As a result, the sample sizes of the sub-indicators are smaller and varied. Due to the small sample size, the findings given below are non-representative and purely indicative. However, these findings may suggest some general trends in language teaching that merit further consideration.

Table 5.1: ***Language practices and indicators of language teaching***

Language practices	Indicators of effective practice
Teaching to develop oral language	Teacher relates the discussion or theme to children's prior and contextual knowledge and experiences
	Teacher asks open-ended questions during language instructions, e.g., oral language sessions, or reading lessons
Teaching of decoding	Teacher uses a variety of activities to help children develop sound-symbol association and blending
Teaching of reading	Teacher reads aloud and supports comprehension of the text
	Children are given opportunities to practise reading independently
Teaching of writing	Teacher provides prompts that encourage children to write in their own words

5.2.1 **Teaching to develop oral language**

Oral language development is the foundation for learning to read and write. Classroom activities such as conversations, storytelling, interactive read-alouds, narration, retelling, and role-play help develop skills such as vocabulary, listening comprehension, verbal thinking, reasoning, and oral expression.

When teachers relate discussions to children's real-life experiences, it enhances children's participation and engagement. It provides opportunities to construct knowledge with reference to their familiar contexts and to move from the known to the unknown. For example, during a lesson on seasons, the teacher could include the impact of seasons on children's food, daily routines and clothing.

Similarly, when teachers ask open-ended questions (e.g., 'Why?' 'How?' or 'What do you think?') during oral discussions and interactions for any theme or lesson, and build the discussion by including children's responses, it improves comprehension, reasoning and other higher-order thinking skills.

5.2.2 Teaching of decoding

Decoding is a foundational reading skill that helps children convert written text into spoken language. It begins with learning sound-symbol associations and progresses to blending—the ability to combine individual sounds to form meaningful words.

The teaching of decoding should be systematic and explicit. It is effective if teachers use a variety of decoding activities to strengthen the association between symbols and their sounds. A combination of activities like identifying the letter in the print material and pronouncing it, picking a letter-card (varn/flash card) and telling the letter to their friend, finding the letter and encircling it, Bingo etc. can be used by teachers.

5.2.3 Teaching of reading

Reading is a complex process of constructing meaning from written texts. It requires understanding of oral language, phonological awareness, decoding skills, reading fluency and comprehension. Simply put, the two broad dimensions of skilled reading are (a) fluent decoding and (b) strong language comprehension. Effective teaching and learning of reading could follow the gradual release of responsibility (GRR) process of 'I do it' followed by 'We do it', and then 'You do it together and later 'You do it alone'.

Many important reading routines roughly map on to this sequence. Thus, the teaching of reading would begin with interactive read-aloud by the teacher followed by shared reading by teacher and children together, followed by guided reading where children read in small groups, pairs or individually under the guidance of the teacher and, finally, opportunities for independent reading by children. Across all these reading routines, comprehension should be at the heart of the process.

5.2.4 Teaching of writing

Writing is the process of expressing thoughts and ideas through written symbols in a structured, meaningful way that others can understand. The focus of writing instruction in the early grades has to be on both: basic letter formation and writing conventions as well as compositional skills to communicate meaning. By the end of Grade 2, children should be able to write short, simple sentences to express their thoughts (NCF-FS 2022).

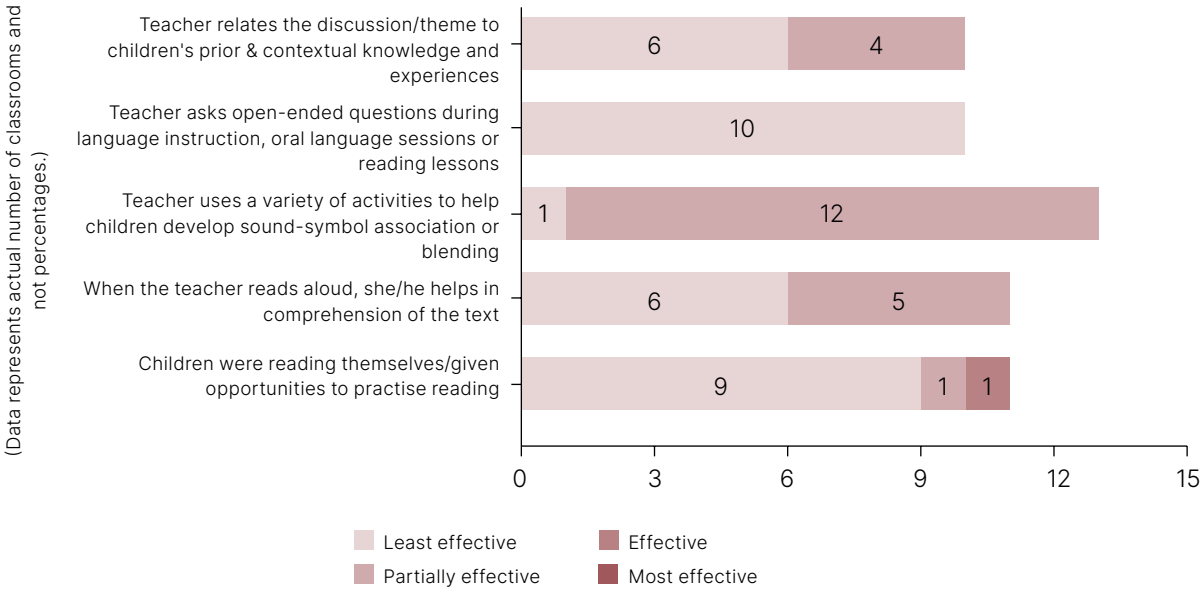
Early writing requires extensive support from the teacher. Teachers should share their writing samples, discuss the writing task with children and jointly compose the main points to be written. It is important for the teacher to generate prompts that are meaningful and engaging for children and to support them with feedback during the writing process.

5.3 **Findings of language teaching practices**

The following table shows the rating scales used for the six indicators. Each indicator was rated on a 4-point rating scale. Rating 1 indicated least effective practice, 2 – partially effective practice, 3 – effective practice and 4 – most effective practice.

	Indicator	1	2	3	4
Oral Language Development	Teacher relates discussion to children's experiences	No space for inclusion of real-life experiences or prior knowledge	Limited inclusion of real-life experiences or prior knowledge	Sometimes includes real-life experiences or prior knowledge	Frequently uses a wide range of real-life experiences and children's prior knowledge
Oral Language Development	Teacher asks open-ended questions during lessons	Does not ask open-ended questions	Asks a few open-ended questions without waiting for children's responses	Asks a few open-ended questions and includes some responses	Builds discussion through children's responses to open-ended questions
Decoding	Teacher uses varied activities for sound-symbol association or blending	Children copy letters from the board only	Uses one activity type	Uses two activity types	Uses more than two activity types
Reading	Teacher reads aloud and helps comprehension	No strategy for comprehension	Only factual questions or repetition	Limited factual and open-ended questions at the end of reading	Builds context before reading, asks prediction and open-ended questions throughout
Reading	Children practise reading independently	No opportunities for practice	Reading independently without observation	Paired reading with limited teacher input	Independent reading with teacher feedback and correction
Writing	Specific prompts to children writing in their own words	No writing in own words	A few unplanned prompts	Specific but inconsistent prompts	Clear prompts with examples and feedback

Figure 5.2: ***Overview of Language Teaching Practices***



(Note: Language teaching was observed in only 23 classrooms, with sub-indicators observed in smaller subsets. Due to small sample sizes, findings are indicative).

Teaching of oral language was observed in 10 classrooms. A majority of teachers in these classrooms had a lot of scope to improve in their ability to relate discussions and themes to children's real-life experiences and prior knowledge. Teachers did not use any open-ended questions in these classrooms. These indicate a pattern where oral language development activities are dominated by teacher talk and literal questions that require yes/no or one-word responses, to which children usually respond in unison.

In 12 of the 13 classrooms observed for decoding, teachers used only one activity to develop sound-symbol association. Teachers were not seen using varied activity types to reinforce decoding skills. Using just one decoding activity may not be effective in helping children understand how written symbols map onto sounds or how to blend individual sounds to form meaningful words.

Teaching of reading was observed in 11 classrooms. Teachers in these classrooms either did not use any comprehension strategy or just repeated the text and asked factual questions to support children's understanding of the text. Further, in most of the observed classrooms, children were not given opportunities for independent reading, with or without teacher guidance.

Teaching of writing was seen in only four of the 23 schools observed for language instruction in Meghalaya. Given this small number, the findings for this indicator are not presented here.

Overall, across oral language, decoding, and reading, instruction is largely teacher-led, children remain passive, and opportunities for children to think, express, and practise independently are rare.

5.4 **Conclusion**

A shift is needed in the nature of language teaching activities in early-grade classrooms to include activities that encourage active engagement of children. These include relating what is being discussed to children's immediate contexts and experiences; asking them to predict, think, infer in response to open-ended questions; using more strategies for sound-symbol association; and helping children develop reading comprehension and writing for expression and communication. Overall, there is a need to strengthen early language teaching practices to enable the shift from teacher-led routines to practices that actively engage children in meaning-making.

Mathematics Teaching Practices

CHAPTER 6

6.1 Overview of mathematics teaching practices

In early mathematics teaching, it is important to develop both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency in the foundational skills. NCF-FS 2022 defines the curricular goal for mathematics as enabling children to develop mathematical understanding and to make sense of the world through quantities, shapes, and measures. Specifically, this includes competence in counting, numbers, basic operations, shapes and spatial relations and measurement.

NCF-FS 2022 recommends effective approaches such as developing mathematical abstract ideas through the concrete Experience, Language, Pictorial, and Symbol (ELPS) progression, connecting learning to children's real-life experiences and prior knowledge, promoting mathematical talk and reasoning, and developing a positive attitude towards mathematics.

6.2 Effective practices of mathematics teaching and their indicators

Mathematics teaching practices were systematically observed in 27 classrooms (G1-12, G2-15). The Survey focused on four key teaching practices: the use of teaching-learning materials (TLMs) to teach mathematical concepts, such as counting, numbers, basic operations, the use of real-life examples, asking 'why and how' questions, and giving opportunities for independent practice. These components were examined through five indicators of effective practice (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: ***Effective practices of mathematics teaching and their indicators***

Practices	Indicators of effective practice
Use of teaching-learning materials	Teacher uses appropriate TLMs/manipulatives to explain mathematical concepts and processes
	Children use TLMs/manipulatives to understand mathematical concepts and processes
Independent practices by children	Children are given independent mathematics tasks for practice
Use of real-life context	Teacher uses examples from children's life to explain mathematical concepts and processes
Asking 'why and how' questions	Teacher asks 'why and how' questions to deepen mathematical thinking of children while teaching mathematical concepts and processes

6.2.1 Use of teaching-learning materials

The use of TLMs is a core pedagogical practice for developing conceptual understanding in early-grade mathematics. In Grades 1 and 2, appropriate TLMs may include objects such as beads, ice-cream sticks, *ganitmala*, counters, bottle caps, dice, place-value cards, number cards, shape cards, etc. Teachers use these materials to demonstrate concepts such as addition with counters, modelling tens and ones with bundled sticks, or illustrating shapes with classroom objects. Children, in turn, use the manipulatives themselves to practise counting, composing and decomposing numbers, solving addition or subtraction tasks, exploring shapes, or representing quantities. Such hands-on engagement helps make abstract ideas concrete, visible, and easier to understand.

6.2.2 Providing opportunities for independent practice

Independent and repeated practice is essential for helping children consolidate mathematical learning. Such practice supports the transfer of knowledge from working memory to long-term memory, improving accuracy and automaticity. After demonstration and guided practice, children therefore need adequate time and space to practise on their own for learning to take hold. During this phase, teacher support through observation and timely feedback remains crucial to reinforce correct understanding and address errors.

In Grades 1 and 2, opportunities for independent practice may take different forms. These include answering oral questions individually, completing short written tasks, solving problems from workbooks or textbooks, using worksheets, practising independently with manipulatives such as *ganitmala* (string beads), and engaging in simple real-life tasks, such as counting objects or making amounts with play money.

6.2.3 Use of children's real-life experiences

Real-life examples are the everyday situations, objects, and experiences that children already know and understand. Teachers use them to make mathematical ideas meaningful and connected to children's lives rather than abstract or disconnected. Since solving real-life problems is a core goal of mathematics, this helps children make sense of abstract symbols and develop practical problem-solving skills.

In Grades 1 and 2, such examples may include counting objects in the classroom, comparing the water in two bottles to understand 'more' or 'less', bundling sticks to explore tens and ones, identifying shapes such as plates (circle) or books (rectangle), or using play money for simple transactions. These contexts help children grasp abstract ideas by seeing mathematics at work in everyday situations.

6.2.4 Asking 'why and how' questions

Teacher's use of purposeful questioning—especially 'why and how' questions—promotes reasoning, explanation, and deeper understanding of mathematical ideas. In early mathematics, 'why' questions prompt children to justify their answers and strengthen numerical reasoning.

For example, "Why is 8 bigger than 6?" or "Why do we add these numbers?". 'How' questions help children explain the steps they used, such as "How did you get 7?" or "How did you count

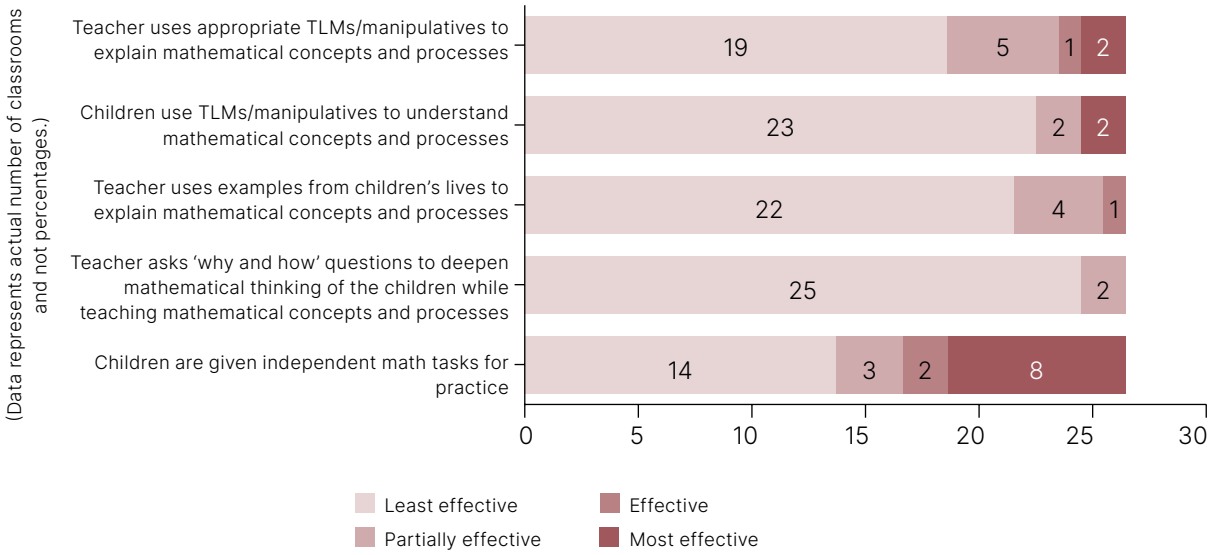
on from this number?," supporting procedural clarity and communication skills. The use of such questions also encourages children to think about their own reasoning and explore alternative strategies, rather than simply recall and apply procedures.

6.3 **Findings of mathematics teaching practices**

The following table shows the rating scales used across five indicators. Each indicator was rated on a 4-point rating scale. Rating 1 indicated least effective practice, 2 – partially effective practice, 3 – effective practice and 4 – most effective practice.

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher uses appropriate TLMs/ manipulatives to explain mathematical concepts and processes	TLMs are not used	TLMs are used in an unplanned manner	TLMs are used in a planned manner but not used every time	TLMs are used in a planned way to explain the concept several times
Children use TLMs/ manipulatives to understand mathematical concepts and processes	TLMs are not used by children	A few children use TLMs	Some children use TLMs	Most children get opportunity to practise with TLMs
Teacher uses examples from children's lives to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher uses no examples from real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher seldom uses examples from real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher sometimes uses examples of real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher mostly uses examples from real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes
Teacher asks 'why and how' questions to deepen mathematical thinking of the children	Teacher does not ask 'why and how' questions	Teacher asks 'why and how' questions but does not wait for children's responses	Teacher asks a few 'why and how' questions and includes some children's responses	Teacher asks some 'why and how' and includes children's responses to build the discussion
Children are given independent mathematics tasks for practice	Children are not given any opportunity to practise independent mathematics tasks	Children are doing independent mathematics tasks, but the teacher does not observe the practice	Children are doing independent mathematics tasks and the teacher observes them without any inputs	Children are given opportunities to practise independent mathematics tasks; and the teacher observes mistakes, corrects and models; and asks the child to solve again

Figure 6.1: ***Overview of Mathematics Teaching Practices***



(Note: Mathematics teaching was observed in only 27 classrooms. Due to this small sample size, findings are indicative).

Mathematics teaching practices were observed in 27 classrooms in Meghalaya. Teachers used TLMs during mathematics instruction in eight classrooms at varying levels of effectiveness. In most classrooms (23 of 27), children did not get any opportunity to use TLMs. In just two classrooms did most children engage with TLMs consistently. Limited levels of engagement with TLMs can hinder building strong foundational concepts and making sense of abstract ideas.

Teachers' use of real-life examples while explaining mathematical ideas was observed in a handful of classrooms. In 22 of 27 classrooms observed, teachers did not use any real-life examples. Similarly, there is much scope to improve the use of 'why' and 'how' questions. Teachers in 25 of 27 classrooms did not use such questions to encourage mathematical reasoning and justification.

Notably, in close to half (13) of the observed classrooms, children were doing independent practice tasks for mathematics. In eight of these classrooms, teachers actively guided the children in attempting these tasks, correcting mistakes and offering inputs.

The findings point to areas for improving the quality of early mathematics teaching across the observed classrooms. TLMs were used in about a third of classrooms, and where used, engagement was largely teacher-led and unplanned. Hands-on exploration is foundational for building conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas in young children. Similarly, with real-life examples and reasoning-focused 'why and how' questions absent in a majority of schools, mathematical ideas are likely taught in ways that are largely abstract, procedural, and disconnected from children's lived experiences—limiting the development of number sense and meaningful understanding. Independent practice is a relative strength, observed in close to half the classrooms. Active teacher observation and targeted feedback during practice tasks can be strengthened to ensure that this practice translates into real learning.

6.4 **Conclusion**

Overall, the findings show that there is a lot of scope for improving early mathematics teaching in the sampled schools. Instruction is currently abstract and procedural—TLMs are rarely used, real-life contexts are seldom drawn on, and reasoning-focused questioning is almost entirely absent. The relative strength in independent practice is encouraging, and it should be accompanied by conceptual grounding or teacher questioning that pushes children to think and explain. Strengthening the use of concrete materials, everyday contexts, and purposeful questioning emerge as the main priorities for improving the quality of early mathematics teaching in these schools.

Time Distribution on Teaching and Learning Tasks

CHAPTER 7

7.1 Overview of time-on-task and instructional time

ToT is the proportion of instructional time during which the teacher and children are actively engaged in meaningful activities related to teaching and learning. It was observed that instructional activities constituted significantly less proportion of time than the allocated teaching time. To ensure quality learning, teachers should plan and structure lesson routines to maximise children's 'time-on-task'. A high ToT does not by itself ensure that learning will occur, but it is a basic condition for effective teaching and learning. Children's time on learning can be enhanced by better classroom management as well as by including activities that increase children's active engagement.

7.2 Nature of teacher and children's activities

The ToT analysis presented below has two main strands related to observations of a 40-minute class, viz. (a) Time distribution of teachers' activities and (b) Time distribution of children's activities.

The Survey observed classroom activities of every teacher and five children in each classroom by recording "snapshots" every third minute, e.g., at the 0, 3rd, 6th minute and so on in each classroom over a 40-minute period of observation.

A set of 21 teaching activities were identified through analysis of other ToT studies and modified for an FLN focus through several rounds of field work. A list of 18 such activities, arrived at by combining a few activities can be seen in Table 7.1. These have been further clubbed into four major categories, viz. 'teacher-centred', 'learner-centred', 'classroom management', 'non-teaching' or 'off-task'. Classroom activities were classified into 'on-task' (teacher/child was "on some task") and 'off-task' (teacher/child was "not engaged in any teaching/learning tasks") activities.

A set of 21 children's classroom activities were identified through a similar process. A truncated list of nine activities, by combining a few similar activities can be seen in Table 7.2. The 'on-task' list included both 'mechanical' type activities like copying from the blackboard, choral repetition and some clearly more 'learning' type activities like working in small groups, and doing a class assignment.

7.3 Findings of time distribution of activities

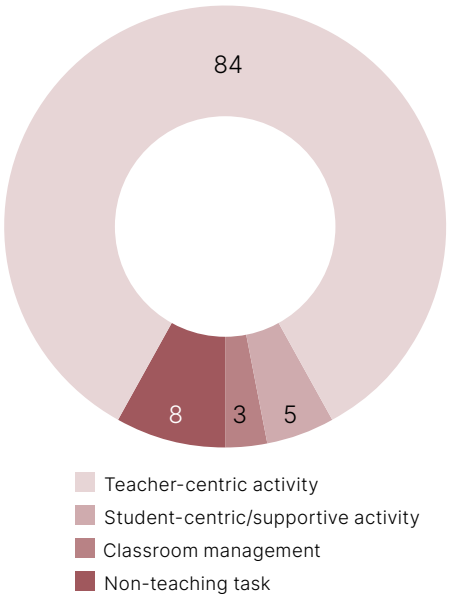
7.3.1 Time distribution of teachers' activities

Teachers' activities were observed 13 times in each classroom at intervals of three minutes (each period of observation was 40 minutes). A total of 650 teachers' activity observations were made.

Table 7.1 ***Percentage of time distribution of teachers' activities***

TEACHER-CENTRIC ACTIVITY	%
Teaching a topic by writing on blackboard	20%
Explaining the concept/topic to children orally or by using TLMs	14%
Instructing children to engage in the classroom activities	2%
Giving homework/assignment/test/dictation or any other tasks	11%
Correcting homework or test papers or class work	9%
Teacher asking questions to whole class or individual child(ren)	14%
Reading from a textbook or workbook or other material	14%
Total	**84%**
CHILDREN-CENTRIC/SUPPORTIVE ACTIVITY	**%**
Supervising group work or children's individual work	3%
Replying to question/providing clarifications and giving feedback	0%
Conversation with children without lesson's context	1%
Encouraging and motivating students to become involved learner	1%
Total	**5%**
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	**%**
Teacher scolding/reprimanding child/children	2%
Class management for teaching-learning—dividing groups, giving instructions like forming queue, take a break, helping students in transition activity	0%
Teacher is looking at the planning for the next topic	1%
Total	**3%**
NON-TEACHING TASK/OFF-TASK	**%**
Teacher is not in the class	4%
In classroom, but no activity	3%
In other class (multigrade) or with another levelled group	1%
Using mobile during teaching time or talking with parents/school staff/PRI members	0%
Total	**8%**

Figure 7.1: ***Percentage of time spent by teachers on average in different classroom activities***



Most of the teachers' time (84%) was spent on teacher-centric activities. The most prominent of these were:

- Teaching a topic by writing on the blackboard (20% of time)
- Explaining the concept/topic to children orally or by using TLMs (14% of time)
- Teacher asking questions to whole class or individual child(ren) (14% of time)
- Teacher reading from a textbook or workbook or other material (14%).

This indicates that when teachers explain concepts to children, they are also making an effort to engage children by asking questions. However, the questions mostly tend to be of literal/factual type that elicit a choral yes/no or one-word response from the children (see Chapter 5-Language Teaching Practices).

The ToT analysis generally corroborates the findings from the 'classroom observation tool' for language and mathematics, which showed that much of the teaching-learning process is largely teacher-led.

Teachers engaged in learner-centric activities for 5% of the teaching time. Among these activities, the most prominent activity was supervising children's individual or group work (3%).

Encouragingly, teachers engaged in 'non-teaching or 'off-task' activities for 8% of the observed class, a figure lower than usual estimates.

Overall, these findings indicate that while teachers are largely 'on-task', most of this teaching-learning time is spent on teacher-directed activities, with less attention to designing student-centric activities. This distribution of classroom teaching time should be better balanced for meaningful learning.

7.3.2 Time distribution of children's activities

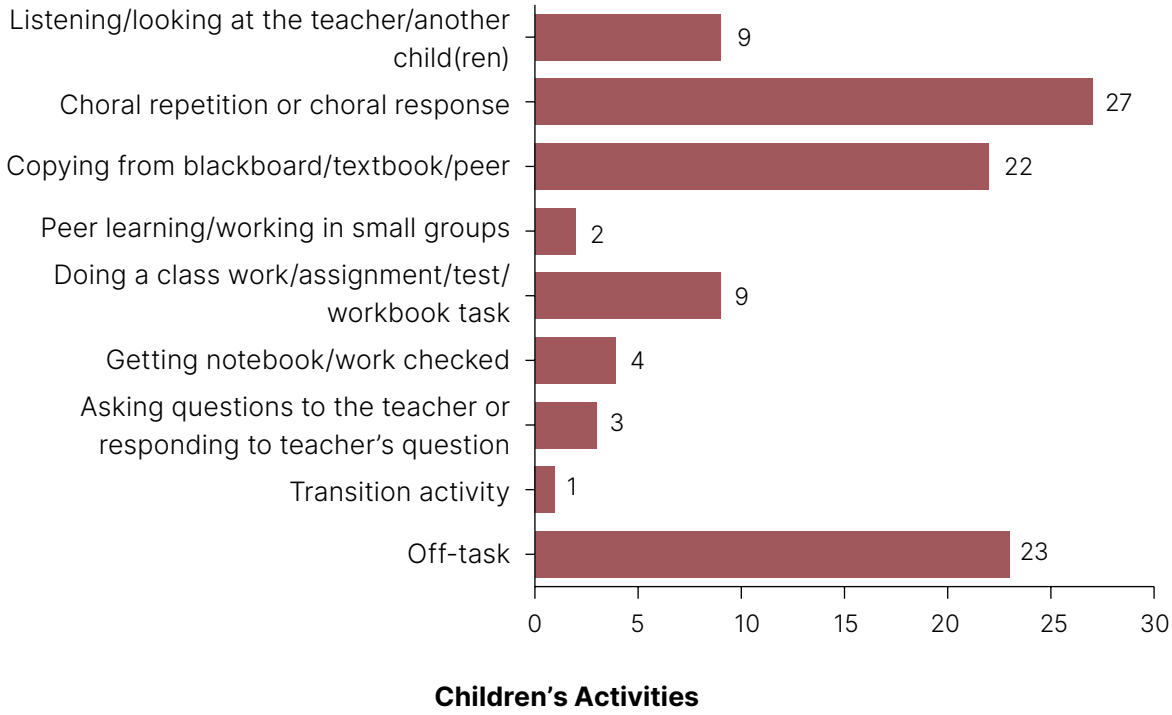
Five children were observed in every classroom 13 times, at 3-minute intervals, during a 40-minute observation period. A total of 3,223 children observations were made.

Table 7.2: ***Percentage of time distribution of children's activities***

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES	%
Listening/looking at the teacher/another child(ren)	9%
Choral repetition or choral response	27%
Copying from blackboard/textbook/peer	22%
Peer learning/working in small groups	2%
Doing a class work/assignment/test/workbook task	9%

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES	%
Getting notebook/work checked	4%
Asking questions to the teacher or responding to teacher's question	3%
Transition activity	1%
Off-task	23%

Figure 7.2: ***Percentage of time spent by children on average in different classroom activities***



The analysis of children's activity from the sampled classrooms reveals that children remained off-task for 23% of the class time. This is important because it indicates that an average child might not be engaged in learning for close to a fourth of the class time.

When children were 'on-task', they spent a lot of the class time in activities like copying from blackboard (22% of class time) and giving choral responses (27% of class time) which require minimal engagement in learning.

7.4 Conclusion

When children remain 'off-task' for a considerable part of the teaching-learning time, or spend time on activities that are not learning-centred, their active learning time is reduced. A shift is needed to enhance classroom activities that are more 'learner-centred' as well as 'learning-centred.' Children's active learning time can also be enhanced through clear guidance to teachers on strategies for multigrade teaching, which is a structural reality in many classrooms.

CHAPTER 8

Teacher Perceptions

This chapter presents findings from the TLPS 2025 related to teachers' perceptions of FLN. The analysis draws on quantitative and qualitative insights gathered primarily through structured teacher interviews in all 50 schools. Classrooms of all interviewed teachers were also observed using the CRO tool, allowing teacher reported perceptions to be examined alongside classroom practices.

Teachers' perceptions offer valuable insights into teachers' awareness of grade-appropriate FLN learning outcomes for language and mathematics, their experiences and perceived usefulness of in-person FLN training, the nature of regular academic support they receive at the cluster and block level to improve teaching practices and assessment methods teachers use to track children's learning.

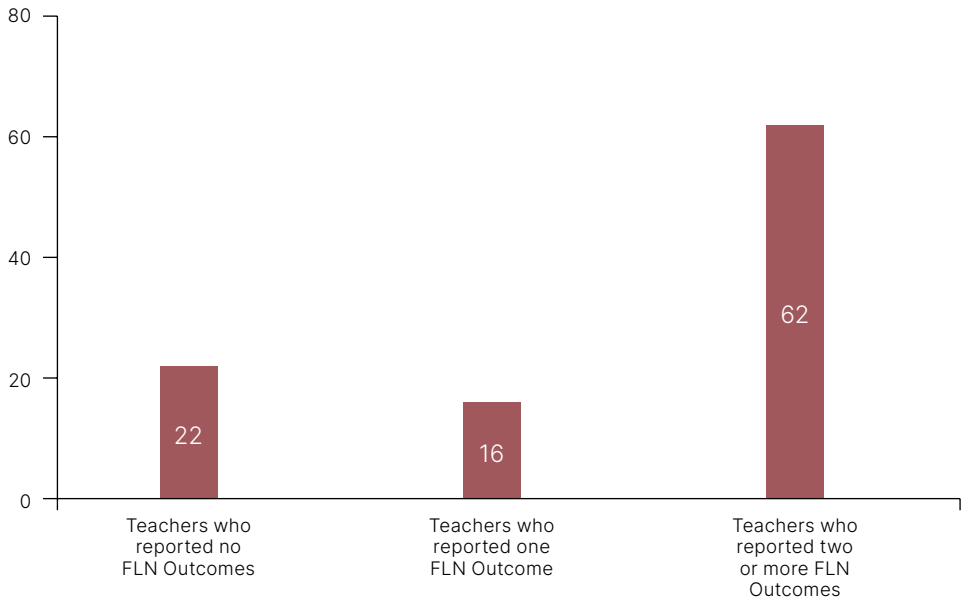
Teacher perceptions were explored on four key dimensions:

- Teacher awareness of FLN learning outcomes for language and mathematics
- Reported effectiveness of FLN training
- Academic support received by teachers from cluster and block personnel
- Assessment methods followed and maintenance of record by teachers

Findings from teacher interviews

8.1 Teachers' awareness of FLN

Figure 8.1: ***Teacher's awareness of FLN outcomes***

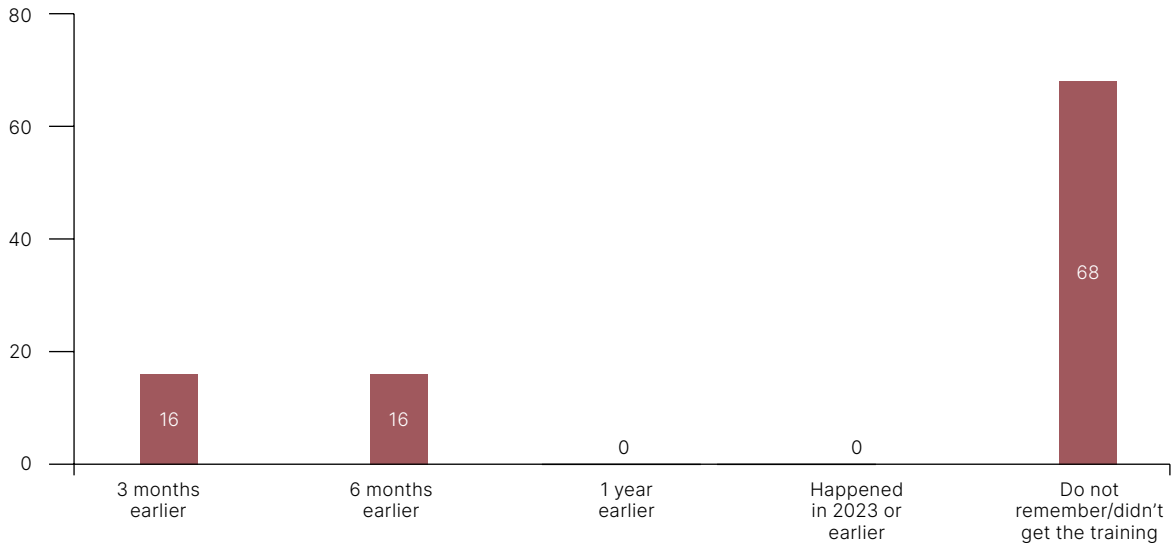


> During the teacher interviews, 62% Grade 1 and 2 teachers were able to recall and articulate at least two grade-appropriate FLN learning outcomes.

> Around a fifth (22%) of teachers could not recall any FLN outcomes at all, pointing to a gap in basic awareness.

8.2 Trainings of FLN

Figure 8.2: ***Teachers' in-person attendance of FLN Training***

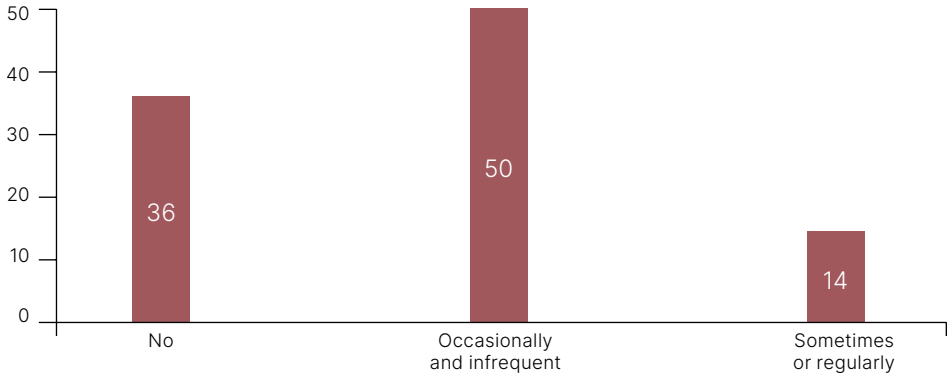


> 68% of the interviewed teachers either did not receive or could not remember receiving FLN training, meaning only about a third of them recalled exposure to FLN training. Of those who reported receiving training, the most recent exposure was split between the last three months (16%) and last six months (16%).

> 22% of teachers rated training as "very useful" and 8% as "moderately useful".

8.3 Academic support

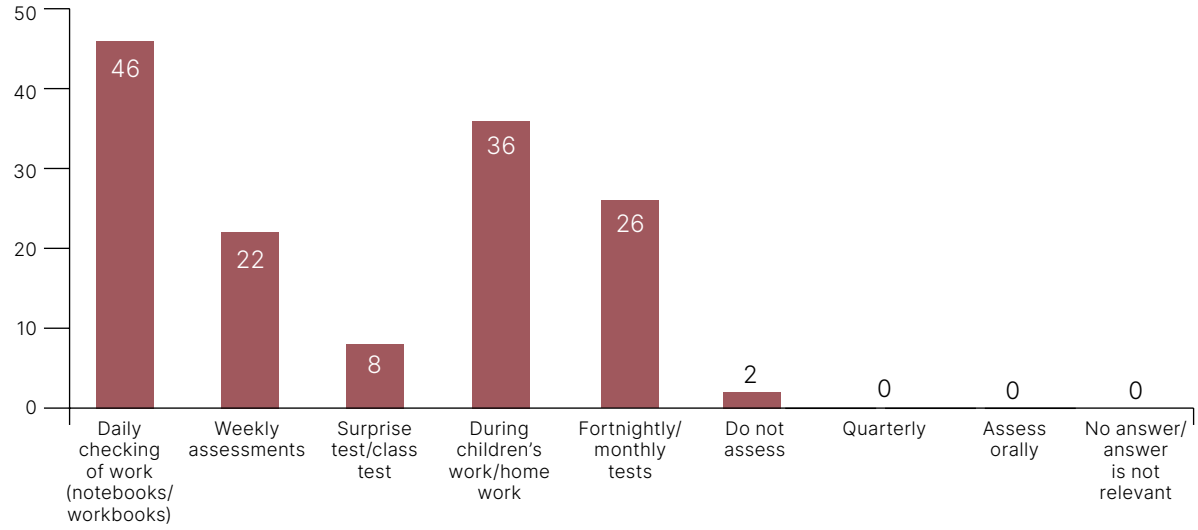
Figure 8.3: ***Frequency of academic support reported by teachers***



- There is scope to make on-site academic support more accessible and regular: 36% of teachers reported receiving no academic support at all, and 50% received it only occasionally or infrequently. This means 14% of teachers received academic support sometimes or regularly.
- For the teachers who claimed receiving academic support, CRCs and Block Resource Persons are the primary providers.
- Around 38% of teachers rated the academic support they received as moderately to very useful. This means that the quality of support provided to teachers and its relevance to classroom practice have some scope for improvement.

8.4 Assessment of children's learning

Figure 8.4: ***Percentage of teachers who followed different assessment methods***



- Close to 98% teachers followed written methods of assessment to track children's learning, including weekly assessment, checking of home or class work, notebooks and workbooks, fortnightly or monthly tests, and class tests.
- 64% teachers reported maintaining records of children's assessment to track their learning, including entering in a register, filling in a tracker in a teacher handbook or a teacher's diary, maintaining a diary etc.

8.5 Conclusion

Overall, the teacher interviews reveal a gap between awareness and support. Most teachers demonstrate a reasonable awareness of FLN learning outcomes, but this has not been consistently built through formal training or sustained academic support—both of which can improve in terms of their reach, regularity and usefulness. Bridging this gap in training access and onsite support might perhaps be the most critical system-level change required in the sampled district.

Recommendations

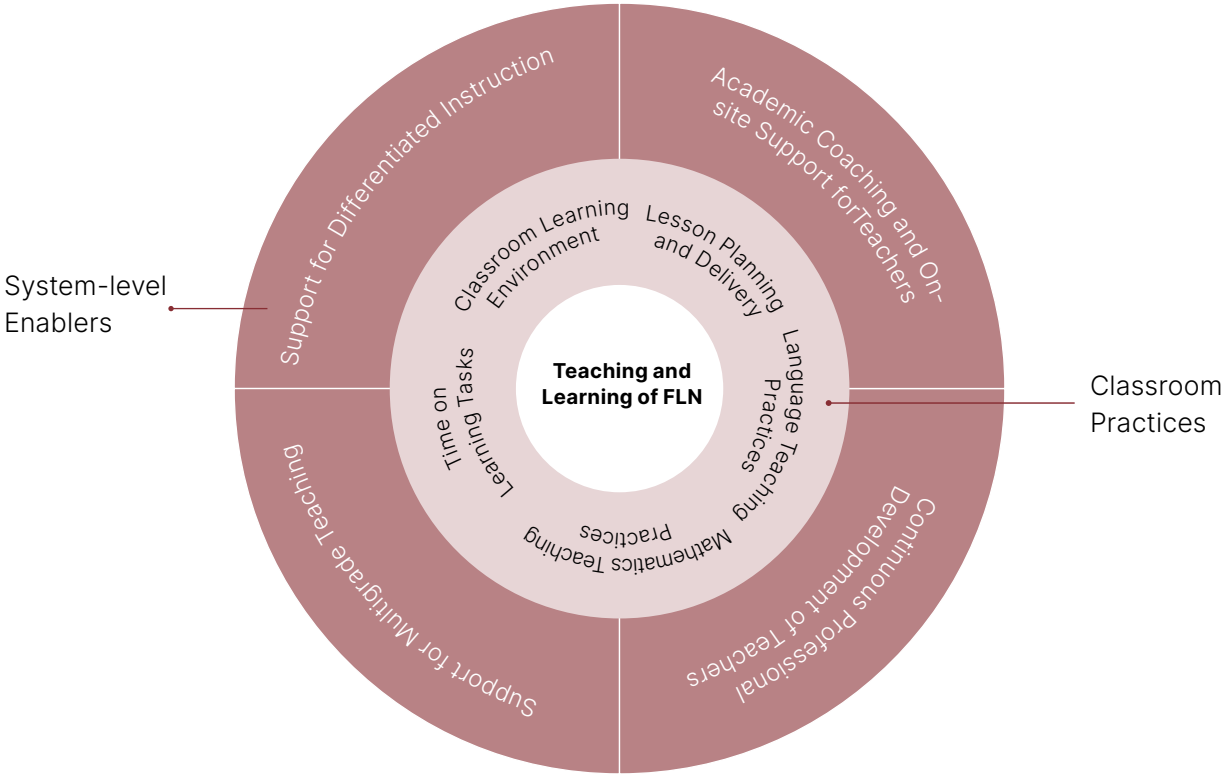
CHAPTER 9

9.1 Introduction

The Survey was conceptualised to provide systematic evidence on teaching practices for language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2 for the sampled schools in the state of Meghalaya. Beyond documenting existing practices, the Survey identifies critical gaps and areas for strengthening the instructional core of FLN. The recommendations of the Survey are divided into two main sections:

- Section 9.2 presents key recommendations for strengthening classroom teaching practices, drawing directly on the Survey's main findings from the sampled schools.
- Section 9.3 outlines recommendations for system-level changes that will enable and sustain the actions proposed in the first section.

Priorities for classroom practices and system-level enablers



9.2 Recommendations for classroom practices

This section presents theme-wise actions to strengthen teaching and learning of FLN, based on the Survey. These actions are not meant to be uniform prescriptions; their effective use requires decentralised and context-sensitive approaches that respond to local linguistic, cultural, and institutional realities.

9.2.1 **Classroom learning environment**

Classrooms can become places where every child feels seen, heard, and confident to participate by changing how classrooms are organised, building stronger relationships with children, and including children's home languages.

- The sampled schools in Meghalaya need to make significant progress in establishing print-rich environments and ensuring that print materials are accessible to children. Examples of useful print materials in early grades include poem and story posters, children's books, number and letter/word walls, labels for things, word cards and place-value cards. Once such print-rich materials are made available, steps should be taken to ensure that these are used actively and meaningfully during instruction to support learning.

- Teachers should be encouraged to adopt flexible seating and grouping arrangements to foster more interaction, collaboration, and alignment between classroom activities and learning goals.

- There is much scope to strengthen teacher-child relationships in early-grade classrooms in the State.

- Teachers need to actively engage individual learners during instruction and allow them sufficient time to respond. This helps children participate in shared meaning-making and helps teachers get a sense of children's understanding.

9.2.2 **Lesson planning and delivery**

Teachers recognise the importance of planning and supporting children's learning, but there is significant scope for more systematic and effective use of key lesson planning and delivery practices.

- Teachers need to give clear instructions, model expected responses, and verify that children have understood so that they can participate meaningfully and learn successfully. During lessons, teachers can use simple instructional frameworks (like "I Do, We Do, You Do") to help break down complex tasks into clear, manageable steps.

- Teachers need to engage in group activities with the children by moving around the classrooms to identify gaps in learning and to ensure all children are adequately supported.

- Feedback practices need strengthening through regular checking of children's work, clear explanations of errors, and simple steps for improvement. Encouraging children to reflect on and revise their work helps them apply the feedback and see their own progress.

- 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. This helps teachers notice and respond to misunderstandings early.

- To support all learners, teachers need to understand children's learning levels and use targeted, differentiated instruction strategies such as flexible grouping, guided practice in level-based groups, and scaffolded tasks during regular lessons.

9.2.3 **Language teaching practices**

The findings on language teaching practices were based on a very small sample of schools but some broad recommendations are offered here based on the overall trends. Overall, there is much scope to shift the norm from teacher-dominated routines to practices that actively engage children in meaning-making.

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

- Decoding instruction needs to be more systematic and include multiple activities that reinforce sound-symbol associations in different ways.

- Teacher read-alouds of texts and stories need to be more interactive with greater participation from children and a stronger focus on building comprehension.

- Children also need adequate time to practise reading in small groups or pairs, as well as independently, with guidance from the teacher. Giving children texts at their level for this practice will help improve their fluency and comprehension.

- Supporting writing for expression should be a clear priority area. Writing activities should move beyond copying exercises to include meaningful opportunities for children to compose their own texts and express ideas and emotions. This is what will help children build the skills needed for later independent writing.

9.2.4 **Mathematics teaching practices**

Strengthening early mathematics teaching requires moving beyond procedural routines towards practices that support conceptual understanding and reasoning. When such practices are used consistently, they can support stronger number sense and more confident engagement with mathematics.

- There is a clear need for teachers to use TLMs more consistently and in learner-centred ways. This includes both teacher demonstration and use of TLMs by children. Integrating these practices as part of 'concrete-pictorial-abstract' sequences might help ensure that children get 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.

- In the sampled schools, there is much scope to improve the use of reasoning-focused questioning. Teachers should be encouraged to ask 'why and how' questions that prompt children to explain their thinking, justify their answers, and reflect on strategies. This helps transition 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 skill building.

9.2.5 Time on learning tasks

The ToT analyses from the Survey highlight important opportunities to strengthen how classroom time is used to support children's learning.

- There is much scope to create a better balance between teacher-centred instruction and learner-centred practices to enhance children's engagement with learning. This includes strengthening active monitoring of children's work to provide timely clarification and feedback, and moving beyond questions that elicit factual responses towards approaches that make children's thinking visible.

- There is a need for a more efficient utilisation of classroom time to reduce off-task activities for both the teachers as well as the children.

- Teachers also need to plan and manage independent and group tasks more deliberately, particularly in multigrade contexts where their attention is divided.

- Teachers need to design more interactive learning opportunities to increase children's active engagement during classroom time. This includes creating regular opportunities for children to ask and respond to questions, work in small groups, engage with learning materials, and receive feedback from the teacher.

9.3 Recommendations for system-level enablers

9.3.1 Strengthen academic coaching and on-site support for teachers

Teacher interviews reveal that academic support for teachers has scope to be more regular and instructionally strong. On-site academic coaching can be strengthened through regular classroom visits by academic resource persons (ARPs), 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.

9.3.2 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). 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.

9.3.3 Multigrade teaching support

Teachers working in multigrade settings need specific curricular guidance and pedagogical tools to manage multiple groups effectively. Teacher handbooks and student workbooks could be designed taking into account the multigrade landscape of government schools and support teachers in planning parallel activities, organising independent work, using flexible grouping, and managing time across grades.

9.3.4 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.

9.3.5 Using assessment to track and support learning

Assessments should focus on a defined set of critical FLN learning outcomes and be implemented periodically across all schools to ensure consistency. Given the prevalence of multigrade classrooms, assessments should be differentiated by learning level rather than grade alone. Findings from these assessments should feed directly into instructional planning, flexible grouping, and targeted remediation.

"I am happy to see the release of this Survey, the Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS). The findings provide a strong evidence base. Given the scale of the sample, the insights emerging from this can be seen as reflective of teaching and learning practices across the country. Classrooms must move beyond one-way teaching. Education thrives when children are encouraged to question, explore and keep their curiosity alive."

- Shri Sanjay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India

"Children learn best when learning is joyful and rooted in their real experiences. As the National Curriculum Framework reminds us, play must remain at the core of early learning. When children learn in familiar languages and meaningfully use teaching-learning materials, classrooms become spaces where every child can truly engage. My best wishes to LLF for the study, we will take inputs from it."

- Smt. Archana Sharma Awasthi, Additional Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India

"TLPS is a significant study for its sharp focus on understanding teaching-learning practices of language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2. The findings provide vital pointers for improving instruction in early grades by keeping meaning-making at the centre. It is time for us to join hands to support teachers in bringing about the much-needed shifts in classroom practices."

- Ms. Amrita Patwardhan, Head, Education, Tata Trusts

"We are really happy to have completed India's first large-scale survey of teaching and learning practices for foundational learning in partnership with several other organisations. Student learning can improve only when children are actively engaged in learning. We hope this report can trigger a nation-wide discourse on the need for transforming teaching and learning for young children in early grades in primary schools in India."

- Dhir Jhingran, Founder & Executive Director, Language and Learning Foundation

About TLPS 2025

The Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) 2025 provides systematic, large-scale evidence on teaching practices for language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2. 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 1,050 classrooms. By capturing a wide range of contexts, TLPS provides a rich snapshot of the current teaching and learning practices for foundational literacy and numeracy (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, Educational Initiatives, Madhi Foundation, QUEST, and Vikramshila Education Resource Society.

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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Tools for TLPS 2025 and grade-wise data-tables can be accessed from the QR Code above