

From policy to practice: Reflections on NEP 2020 in the classroom

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NEP 2020 and the focus on FLN

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 frames universal acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as an urgent national mission, stating that “The rest of this Policy will become relevant for our students only if this most basic learning requirement (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic at the foundational level) is first achieved”. Since the release of the policy, central and state governments have put enormous efforts into rolling out programs intended to meet the goal of ensuring that every child acquires FLN by Std II, the end of the newly designated ‘foundational stage’ of education for 3-8-year-olds.

The National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat Mission provides a roadmap for achieving these objectives. The extensive guidelines published in 2021 lay out the mission’s implementation, defining the learning goals that must be achieved at every step of the foundational stage to ensure that this objective is achieved by 2026/27. It also lays out desired classroom teaching-learning practices, such as creating an inclusive classroom environment, using innovative play- and activity-based approaches, and ensuring availability and usage of Teaching Learning Material (TLM), among others.

This national mission has subsequently been adapted and contextualised at the state level, and as of January 2025, all states and Union Territories in India are implementing FLN programs in some form. Capacity building programs on FLN for teachers and interventions such as ‘Vidya Pravesh’, a 3-month play-based school preparation module for students entering Std I, are common across most states, while other initiatives may be specific to one or a subset of states.

ASER 2024 provides some indicators of the percolation of these policy pushes to individual schools. More than 80% of the 15,728 schools across the country that were visited as part of the survey reported having received a directive from the government to implement FLN activities for Std I-III in both the current and previous academic years, and TLM other than textbooks was observed in more than 85% Std I and II classrooms. The survey data also shows that in over 75% of the schools visited, at least one teacher had received in-person training on FLN. However, little information is available — either in ASER or from other sources — on how these initiatives have translated into changes in teaching-learning in the classroom.

In mid-2024, prior to the rollout of the ASER 2024 survey, an ASER Centre team set out to explore this question. We did so in two ways. First, a classroom observation tool was designed and piloted to capture key elements of the classroom environment and the nature of the interactions taking place within it. Based on these observations, an interview guide was developed to explore observed teachers’ perspectives on teaching and learning, understand what they thought had changed post NEP 2020, and what challenges remained. This ‘deep dive’ exercise was conducted in Std II classrooms in 24 schools spread across one district each in 8 states, reflecting a variety of geographies and socioeconomic and educational conditions (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal). In each district, a convenience sample of one remote rural school, one well-connected rural school, and one urban school was chosen. A total of 45 lessons were observed in these 24 classrooms, and subsequently conversations were held with all 24 teachers. More details on sampling and methods are provided in Annexure 11; this article describes key findings and takeaways from this exercise. All the tables referenced in this article are also presented in Annexure 11.

Classroom composition

The Std II students and teachers whom we observed were studying and working in teaching-learning contexts that varied enormously from school to school, depending on the number of classrooms and teachers available, and the number of students in each grade. These differences had less to do with physical infrastructure (all these schools had water, electricity, toilets, and other key facilities) than with the combination of grades sitting together.

The following table summarises these characteristics for the classes in our sample. While the RTE (Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009) and NEP 2020-prescribed teacher to student ratio of 1:30 was exceeded in only 3 of these 24 classrooms⁴ (one each in West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh), the grade composition varied enormously.

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⁴ For the sake of convenience, we use the term ‘classroom’ to denote a set of students taught by a single teacher during the observation, even though 2 of these 24 ‘classrooms’ were actually outside (one in a verandah, one outdoors).

Table: Student composition in sampled Std II classrooms

District/ State	School level	School location	Which other grades were sitting with Std II on the day of the observation?					How many students were in the class?		
			Pre-primary	Std I	Std III	Std IV	Std V	Std II	Other grades	Total
Kamrup Rural, Assam	Primary	Rural remote	X	X	X	X	X	12	0	12
	Secondary	Rural well connected	X	X	X	X	X	19	0	19
	Primary	Urban	X	X	X	X	X	13	0	13
Gariyaband, Chhattisgarh	Primary	Rural remote	X	Yes	X	X	X	9	13	22
	Primary	Rural well connected	X	X	Yes	X	X	3	5	8
	Higher Secondary	Urban	X	X	X	X	X	51	0	51
Solan, Himachal Pradesh	Primary	Rural remote	X	X	Yes	X	X	7	2	9
	Primary	Rural well connected	Yes	X	X	X	X	13	6	19
	Primary	Urban	X	X	X	X	X	33	0	33
Raisen, Madhya Pradesh	Secondary	Rural remote	X	Yes	X	X	X	5	4	9
	Higher Secondary	Rural well connected	X	Yes	X	X	X	24	5	29
	Upper Primary	Urban	X	X	X	X	X	10	0	10
Puri, Odisha	Primary	Rural remote	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	19	21
	Upper Primary	Rural well connected	X	Yes	Yes	X	X	5	8	13
	Upper Primary	Urban	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	19	21
Ajmer, Rajasthan	Primary	Rural remote	X	Yes	X	X	X	4	2	6
	Higher Secondary	Rural well connected	X	Yes	X	X	X	12	2	14
	Higher Secondary	Urban	X	Yes	Yes	X	X	7	12	19
Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh	Primary	Rural remote	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7	9	16
	Primary	Rural well connected	X	X	X	X	X	14	0	14
	Upper Primary	Urban	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	X	4	25	29
North 24 Parganas, West Bengal	Primary	Rural remote	X	X	X	X	X	18	0	18
	Primary	Rural well connected	X	X	X	X	X	35	0	35
	Primary	Urban	X	X	X	X	X	13	0	13

Only 10 classrooms were exclusively for Std II students, while the other 14 were multigrade. The schools visited as part of ASER 2024 had a similar proportion of multigrade Std II classrooms (more than 60%). In our sample of 24 schools, regardless of class strength, all 3 classrooms visited in Assam and West Bengal were single grade classrooms for Std II; in Rajasthan and Odisha, all 3 classrooms were multigrade. In most other states the larger urban school in the sample had single grade classrooms, while in the rural remote and rural well-connected schools, they were multigrade.

Moreover, teaching was by no means teachers' only responsibility. In one school, one of the two teachers appointed was also the acting Head Teacher, and was additionally responsible for the newly created pre-primary class. In many schools, teachers told us that the focus on collecting and documenting student-level outcomes has increased time spent on reporting at the expense of time available for teaching.

Teachers and teaching

Despite this, in almost all of the classrooms we visited, teachers were present and involved with teaching-learning activities: what is known as teachers' 'time on task'⁵ was very high (Annexure 11, Table 5). Even in cases where the teacher was not actively working with the Std II students who were the focus of our observation, this was often because they were working with another grade sitting in the same classroom or attending to other school tasks, such as checking notebooks.

We summarise below some key aspects of these teachers' teaching practice that we observed and subsequently talked to them about, categorised into two broad areas: attitudes towards young children in the 'foundational' stage, and teaching methods and materials used in the classroom.

Attitude towards young children

Our conversations with teachers made it clear that one key message that has been understood and accepted is that the early years of school require a different approach to teaching-learning. Without explicit prompting, many teachers spoke about what makes the 'foundational' age group special and why young children need to be treated differently. They articulated the importance of the transition from home to school and described how young children needed to enjoy coming to school and not feel afraid before focusing on their studies. It was interesting to note that this conception of teaching-learning extended beyond the initial few months after children join school, to the entire foundational stage of schooling.

Notably, these attitudes were not only articulated during the interview, they were also visible in teachers' actions in the classroom. Most teachers knew their students by name and many exhibited warm, positive behaviours towards them, such as praising or encouraging one or more students and smiling, laughing or joking with them (Annexure 11, Table 7). Although some amount of verbal abuse, physical punishment, and other forms of what we categorise as 'discouraging' behaviours were also observed, for the most part teachers' treatment of these young students did seem to reflect an overall understanding that gentleness and warmth is more important than discipline at this early stage in their school trajectories.

However, this attitude did not always extend to the belief that all children can learn. Despite these feelings of kindness and understanding towards young children, many teachers continued to categorise students into "bright" students who can learn and "weak" ones who cannot. As discussed below, students' abilities and learning levels did not appear to inform observed teachers' overall approach to classroom teaching.

Teaching methods

At first glance, the teaching-learning activities taking place in these classrooms look quite similar to traditional chalk-and-talk methods. Across the 215 'snapshots' taken in these 45 lessons, teachers were most often doing whole-group teaching activities, mainly speaking to or asking questions to the whole [Std II] class (referred to as 'one-way' or 'two-way' interaction in Annexure 11, Table 5). More than three-quarters of the time, they were standing or sitting in front of the class while teaching.

Children in Std 1 to 3 do not know how to read in the beginning, I start them with vowels and consonants, then when they learn to read a little, I start teaching them how to read words. These 3 classes sit together, similarly Std 4 and 5 sit together, I teach them one day and then they keep doing their work. First, I ask them to read, then make them understand and do question/answer exercise, if something is left then I give it to them as homework. Right now there are some children [in Std 4 and 5] who are not able to read, so I group them together and do activities that I do with Std 2 and 3. Overall, if the child knows how to read a book, then he can handle the other subjects easily, there is no problem.

[Teacher, Rajasthan]

They are young children; we have to pamper them a little bit. If we create a fearful atmosphere, they won't even come to school. It is important for them to be fond of us. If they do not get attached to us, then how will they be attached to their studies? [Teacher, Chhattisgarh]

I (Interviewer): What do you do to support those [students] who don't come [to school] daily?

T (Teacher): First, I tell them how to complete [the task], then I ask them to read what they have done. Sometimes, I ask other children to teach them. This is how I approach it. Some children are able to catch up, however, some are weak, so they remain weak. Their mind is weak, so despite my persistent effort, they are only able to learn a little after a long time. [Teacher, Madhya Pradesh]

⁵ In this context, 'time on task' refers to the proportion of time that a teacher is engaged in active instruction during a lesson. Students' 'time on task' is the proportion of time that students engage with learning activities during a lesson.

However, many teachers were doing things differently. In the majority of these lessons, teachers tried to ensure that most students participated in some way, including by going up to students sitting in the middle or back of the class (30 of the 45 lessons observed). Many teachers tried to contextualise the content for their students by using local examples (27 of 45 lessons), and some interacted with students in local languages (8 of 45 lessons). In 17% of the snapshots where teachers were observed engaging with students in Std II, they used some form of TLM (other than textbooks): materials on the walls, workbooks or practice books, occasionally puzzles or games. In almost 15% of the snapshots, teachers were either moving around the class, or else sitting on the ground with their students. While these kinds of practices were still not dominant in the teaching methods we observed, they seemed to reflect both a shift in focus and understanding of their role in the classroom as well as the difficulties of implementing some of the NIPUN guidelines given the ground realities that teachers face. We return to some of these challenges at the end of this article.

Students

NIPUN guidelines emphasise creating a classroom that has an interactive learning environment, encouraging students to think, express, and collaborate. Teachers are encouraged to create a child-friendly classroom to engage every child in reading, writing, and early math, using contextually relevant activities that progress from simple to complex; a play-based medium of learning, and a print- and material-rich setting is central to such a classroom.

As described earlier, these classrooms did seem to be friendly. Students were mostly treated with kindness and were not scared of their teachers — in fact sometimes the very opposite was observed.

However, this rarely translated into differences in the kinds of learning activities that most students were engaged in (Annexure 10, Table 8). Teachers do engage students for most of the time, but as mentioned earlier their methods are often more traditional than laid out in the NIPUN Guidelines. There were only 4 snapshots where most students were doing a play-based learning activity; in 55 snapshots students were engaged in choral repetition either led by the teacher or another student. In about a quarter of these snapshots students were doing a writing activity (64)⁶ - either copying or taking dictation (independent writing was not recorded in any of the snapshots). Small-group activities were observed in just one classroom. Perhaps most strikingly, despite the influx of TLM into schools across the country, students were observed using any form of TLM other than textbooks and notebooks in just 6 snapshots (Annexure 10, Table 9).

When the teacher entered the classroom, all the children ran toward her — some to touch her feet, others to give her a hug — and she also embraced them. She then addressed the class, reminding them of what she had taught them to do when someone comes to the class: “Say good morning!” [Field notes, Rajasthan]

Concluding thoughts

The exercise of examining FLN-related policy prescriptions, state level interventions, and how these translate into teachers’ daily practice in the classroom generated a set of overarching reflections that we share below by way of conclusions.

- Policy provides a starting point, and the rationale for why FLN is important and how best to ensure that students in the initial years of primary school acquire these skills are ideas that appear to have been communicated clearly and on scale. In all 8 states that we included and in most of the schools that we visited, teachers articulated this new focus and for the most part approved of it. Aspects of the new approach that required attitudinal shifts rather than new pedagogical practices were visible in their classrooms.
- States have adopted and adapted these policy prescriptions in different ways; but the large-scale rollout of FLN training programs for teachers is



In FLN, the focus is on basic language and math skills. Children understand in their own language and learn how to read, write and ask. Math is just as important. Children learn to identify digits, read and write numbers and understand other foundational concepts. To teach this, systematic worksheets are provided. The syllabus is designed in a way that children learn the fundamentals and develop on it further. [Teacher, Odisha]

⁶ These were not mutually exclusive options since students could have been doing multiple activities at the same time, for example simultaneously listening to the teacher and writing in their notebooks.

common to all. Trainers explain these new approaches regarding what and how to teach, including in some instances how to use the new TLM. However, even this limited deep dive into 24 classrooms shows clearly that it is not possible to teach Std II the same way in every school. As part of their training, teachers have limited opportunities to identify and discuss these challenges, or figure out how best to address them. These concerns were expressed in different ways by some teachers we spoke to. Going forward, creating spaces for practice, discussion, and adaptation may be vital to increasing uptake.

- Consequently, post-training support systems to teachers are of vital importance, and here states differ markedly in the amount and type of support they provide. In some states, the teachers we spoke to were unable to name any form of support available to them post the FLN training. In others, trainers are available to be consulted if teachers wish to do so. In still others, regular “monitoring” visits from officials ensure that the focus on FLN is not lost, but they check compliance with data collection protocols rather than teaching-learning in the classroom. In just a couple of cases, teachers spoke about block or district level officials actually demonstrating how to do a particular activity in the classroom.
- Absent the space to practice and then adapt the new methods and materials as needed, teachers are often unable to make full use of the guidelines and materials provided to them. To take just one example, even though the focus on TLM was clear to all the teachers we spoke to, those who actually used any form of TLM in the classroom did so in ‘demonstration’ mode – in all but one case it was the *teacher* using the TLM, not the students. Getting TLM into students’ hands requires a great deal more thought, very often about practical, rather than pedagogical, questions. For example, in states where teachers are given funds to make their own TLM rather than provided with pre-decided kits, teachers worried about finding time to make materials for all students in the class, and also about the material getting torn or broken quickly — since they themselves have to remake it. Others had no place to store TLM in the classroom, and bringing armfuls of materials for students, separately for each grade present in the classroom, presented significant logistical challenges. Still others had been provided TLM kits but were unclear about how and when to use them.
- Perhaps most crucially, decisions on what and how to teach are still based primarily on syllabus completion. A key element of the NIPUN Bharat guidelines is continuous and comprehensive School Based Assessments which can help to identify students’ strengths and early learning gaps and difficulties, so as to potentiate their performance and scaffold it through learning support. The assessment under NIPUN Bharat focuses on the goals or ‘lakshyas’ that the mission sets out, and the recommended assessment tools include observation, project work, assignments, oral questions, portfolios, self and peer assessment, and holistic progress cards, among others. However, at the state level, continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) often takes the form of formative and summative assessments of curriculum content, conducted in the traditional pen-and-paper format. Although teachers in several states talked about monthly FLN-specific assessments, almost none spoke about using FLN assessment results to inform their classroom practice. Resolving the inherent contradiction between ensuring universal FLN and syllabus completion is a question that the system has yet to reckon with in a systematic way.

I: Madam, you are saying many children come here from different areas [outside of Himachal], so naturally, the native language of these children will also be different. So how do you tackle that challenge? Because here we speak our Himachali.

T: Yes, yes, yes. Absolutely, absolutely! Sir, the issue is that in other regions you have to work on students' English but here you also have to work on students' Hindi. Sir, you will be surprised to hear this, but my teaching experience has been that the children who have come here from outside, their Hindi is much better than our Himachali children. Because they speak in Hindi and their Hindi is fine, but we speak in pahadi, so we have a pahadi accent that comes [while speaking Hindi]. Then confusion happens like the extra vowel of 'a' in the dialect here. And people who come from Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, their Hindi is refined. They speak good Hindi. There is no problem with them. We face problem in teaching local children because you have to teach them Hindi as well. [Teacher, Himachal Pradesh]

T: We try, we accept the challenge. We never back down, you must have seen all the charts. All the TLM is there, we have made a lot of it, but the damp walls ruin it. Then we don't feel like making it again, it will all be ruined after two months. [Teacher, Uttar Pradesh]

There is little doubt that some things have changed for the better since the rollout of NIPUN Bharat and its adaptations across the country. Whether or not the specific recommendations of NIPUN are in place on the ground, the clear focus on FLN goals, and the resultant visibility of FLN in schools and among teachers, is in itself a big step forward. This is reflected in the fact that for the first time in 20 years of ASER, learning levels in the foundational stage have improved substantially

across the country, a change mostly driven by government schools. This 'deep dive' exercise provided many examples of positive attitudes and practices, some of which are excerpted below. Identifying, recognising and building upon the work of teachers like these will encourage many more to follow.

Opinions on NIPUN

T: It's called foundation, right? If we build a strong foundation, then in the future the pillar will be strong. My effort for the last 3-4 years has been to do my best...many older students are not able to read, so the government's effort is also for children to learn the foundational skills right at the beginning. Under NIPUN Bharat, all children will learn to read and write by 2027. [Teacher, Madhya Pradesh]

Teaching-learning material

I: How do you use those [FLN kits]?

T: We use them during the class like the mathematics kit for the 4-5 periods on math. Our students learn rectangle, triangle all the shapes from that kit. There is a geo board. Children learn from that as well. We have a necklace, it is made of 100 beads. Students use it to learn counting and other basic things like add, subtract, multiply. Students can learn different kinds of mathematical concepts from that. [Teacher, Odisha]

I: Do you use games to teach? or TLM?

T: Yes, I use TLM, especially for mathematics. I draw five birds and then erase two. They find images fun. If they don't understand what subtraction is, then I erase it [the drawing] to explain it. I try to use different ways of explanation, one that they would find the most useful. [Teacher, West Bengal]

Attitude towards young children

T: The best teacher is the one who can understand the child's psychology, catch their mood just by looking at their face and expressions. So my effort is that if the child wants to learn through a poem, I will teach through a poem; if s/he wants to learn through a joke, I will teach using a joke. If someone understands better through anecdotes, then I will narrate an incident. In this way the child gets interested that Sir tells us new stories, narrates new poems, teaches us so well. So, my effort is that the children participate and also learn something. I also enjoy it. [Teacher, Madhya Pradesh]

Lesson planning

T: Currently we are following the guidelines shared by the government. We do not make anything on our own. We adjust ourselves according to that. What is there in the guide, like today is our six week and fifth day. [Teacher, Uttar Pradesh]

Peer learning and grouping

T: Yes, in [Std] 1 there is grouping. Admissions are done in such a way, that some get admission early and some get admission a little late. Then groups are formed on this basis. [Teacher, Himachal Pradesh]

I: Ma'am, how do you make groups?

T: We group one child who understands quickly with two other children. It's called peer learning. [Teacher, Himachal Pradesh]

Annexure 11: Key findings from the classroom observations

Overview

Prior to the rollout of the large-scale 'basic' ASER survey in September 2024, a 'deep dive' exercise was conducted in Std II classrooms in 24 schools spread across 8 states of India. This was done in order to understand whether and how the systemic push towards universal acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) coming from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat Mission 2021 was translating into changes in teaching-learning practices, environments, and materials in these classrooms. Std II was selected as this is the final year of the 'foundational' stage of education, as defined by the NEP 2020.

Sample

In each state, a district adjoining the state capital was purposively selected. In each district, a convenience sample of 3 schools was selected — one remote rural school that was difficult to reach by public transport, one well-connected rural school located close to a main highway, and one school in an urban area. A total of 24 schools were selected in this way. In each school, two separate lessons were observed in the classroom¹ where Std II students were sitting, followed by an interview with the teacher teaching these lessons. Due to limitations faced in some schools, a total of 45 lessons were observed across these 24 classrooms.

Observation process

Immediately on entering the classroom, observers recorded some general information about the classroom. In cases of multigrade classrooms, they observed where Std II students were located.

Next, observers recorded a 'snapshot' of the classroom — what the teacher was doing, what most students in Std II were doing, and what materials were being used at that specific moment. To take a snapshot, observers seated towards the back of the classroom first located the teacher and observed what she was doing; and then quickly scanned the room to note what the majority of Std II students were doing. They then marked teacher activity(ies), student activity(ies), class organisation, and the teaching-learning materials being used from a set of options provided in the classroom observation format. Finally, they wrote a short 2-3 sentence description of the classroom activity that had been observed and captured in the snapshot.

Repeat snapshots were recorded every 8 minutes for the entire duration of the lesson, generating an overall picture of the teaching-learning activities that occurred during the lesson. This process produced an average of 4-5 snapshots per lesson, and a total of 215 snapshots across the sample.

At the end of each lesson, a set of summary indicators and a longer text description captured an overview of what had taken place during the observed lesson as a whole. Across the sample, this generated a total of 45 lesson summary observations.

Table 1: 'Deep dive' sample description

State	District	Schools visited	Classrooms observed	Lessons observed						Snapshots	Teachers interviewed
				Language	Math	English	Mixed	None	Total lessons		
Assam	Kamrup Rural	3	3	2	3	0	0	0	5	27	3
Chhattisgarh	Gariyaband	3	3	3	1	2	0	0	6	28	3
Himachal Pradesh	Solan	3	3	1	3	0	2	0	6	29	3
Madhya Pradesh	Raisen	3	3	3	1	0	2	0	6	28	3
Odisha	Puri	3	3	2	2	0	1	1	6	30	3
Rajasthan	Ajmer	3	3	3	0	1	0	0	4	20	3
Uttar Pradesh	Sitapur	3	3	2	3	0	1	0	6	27	3
West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	3	3	3	1	0	2	0	6	26	3
Total		24	24	19	14	3	8	1	45	215	24

Table 2: Range of students in the observed classrooms. By type of classroom (n=24)

Type of classroom	No. of classrooms						Total
	0-10 students	11-20 students	21-30 students	31-40 students	41-50 students	>50 students	
Single grade	1	6	0	2	0	1	10
Multigrade	4	5	5	0	0	0	14

¹ For the sake of convenience, we use the term 'classroom' to denote a set of students taught by a single teacher during the observation, even though 2 of these 24 'classrooms' were actually outside (one in a verandah, one outdoors).

Classroom infrastructure and Teaching Learning Material (TLM)

Table 3: Classroom infrastructure (n=24)

Indicator	No. of classrooms	%
There is space for every student present to sit comfortably*	21	87.5
There is space for the teacher to walk up to every student	19	79.2
All the students are sitting on chairs/benches	12	50.0
All the students are sitting on mats/tat pattis	10	41.7
There is at least one blackboard/whiteboard that is easy to write on	21	87.5
If yes , all the students can easily see what is written on the blackboard/whiteboard	21	100.0
There is at least one open window or more than one open door in the classroom	22	91.7
There is TLM on the walls of the classroom	17	70.8
If yes , at least one of these is at the eye-level of the students	14	82.4

*To ascertain whether students were sitting 'comfortably', observers checked whether there is space to open books, write in notebooks, stand and move their arms in case of an activity, etc.

Table 4: Availability of TLM

Type of TLM	Observed in the classroom	Observed in the school (not classroom)	Not observed	Total	
Reading	Wallpapers/charts/posters/painted material	17	6	1	24
	Storybooks/story cards/children's magazines	8	10	6	24
	Number or letter cards	8	8	8	24
Writing/drawing	Colour pens/sketch pens/crayons/colour pencils	0	7	17	24
	Drawing/colouring sheets	6	2	16	24
Playing/doing	Puzzles/games/blocks/other manipulables	4	7	13	24
Any other material		2	1	21	24

Key findings

- Of the 24 classrooms, most had blackboards/whiteboards, proper ventilation, and adequate space for children to sit comfortably and for teachers to move around (Table 3).
- TLM was observed on the walls in 17 out of the 24 classrooms. Of these classrooms, most had TLM at the eye-level of the students (Table 3).
- Other hand-held or manipulable TLM (such as letter or number cards, colouring material, and blocks/games) was available in only a few classrooms. More often, TLM was kept elsewhere in the school rather than in the observed classroom (Table 4).
- While various kinds of reading materials were more often available, very few schools had materials available for writing or drawing activities, either in the school or the classroom (Table 4).

Teacher activity

Table 5: Type of teacher interaction with students. By snapshot (n=215)

During the snapshot, the teacher was:		All students	Most students	Some students	One student	Total no. of snapshots	
						n	%
Engaging with Std II students	One-way communication with students	27	5	6	16	54	25.1
	Two-way communication with students	38	5	13	20	76	35.3
	Observing or listening to students	19	0	3	6	28	13.0
Not engaging with Std II students	Interacting with students of another grade(s)					15	7.0
	Preparing for the next learning activity					10	4.7
	Not observing or listening to any students					32	14.9
Total		84	10	22	42	215	100

Table 6: Type of classrooms (n=24)

Type of classroom	No. of classrooms	%	
Single grade	10	41.7	
Multigrade	2 grades	8	33.3
	3 or more grades	6	25.0
Total	24	100	



Table 7: Teacher attitude in the classroom (n=45)

Type of behaviour	During the lesson, the teacher was:	No. of lessons	%
Encouraging	Called at least 3 students by their name	39	86.7
	Made sure that most students had a chance to participate	32	71.1
	Praised or encouraged one or more students	30	66.7
	Smiled, laughed, or joked with one or more students	24	53.3
Discouraging	Used negative language or verbally abused students	10	22.2
	Gave corporal punishment	6	13.3
	Carried a cane or stick	4	8.9
	Punished a student	0	0

Key findings

- In about three-fourths of the classroom snapshots, teachers were observed to be engaging with Std II students in some way.
 - The most common type of teacher engagement with students involved teachers saying/asking something to the students and students responding, coded as "two-way communication" (35.3% of snapshots). This occurred most often with the whole group ("All students") rather than with a subset of one or a few students, meaning that the entire class was repeating after the teacher (Table 5).
 - Teachers also frequently spoke to students without eliciting any response from them, coded as "one-way communication" (25.1% of snapshots). Most often, this interaction was with all the students of Std II – such as when she was explaining a topic or giving instructions, and the entire class was listening (Table 5).
- In the majority of the lessons observed, teachers encouraged the observed students in a variety of ways like addressing them by name, trying to ensure participation, smiling/laughing/joking, or praising them. However, some discouraging behaviours like use of negative language or corporal punishment were also observed during a few lessons (Table 7).

Student activity

Table 8: Std II students' activity (n=215)

Student activity	During the snapshot, most students were:*	No. of snapshots	%
Watching/ listening	To the teacher	85	39.5
	To other student(s)	29	13.5
	Other	1	0.5
Reading	Textbook	9	4.2
	Storybook/story card	0	0
	Other	1	0.5
Doing/making	Playing (games/puzzles/activities)	2	0.9
	Acting/singing/dancing	0	0
	Arts or Crafts activity	2	0.9
Saying	To the teacher (recitation/repetition/responding)	38	17.7
	To each other	17	7.9
Writing	Copying/dictation	45	20.9
	Answers to questions	17	7.9
	Creative (free) writing	0	0
	Other	2	0.9
	Preparing for a learning activity	4	1.9
	Waiting for teacher's instruction	22	10.2
	Not doing the assigned learning activity	2	0.9
	No organised learning activity happening	26	12.1

*This was a multi-select question where observers recorded all the applicable activity options that they observed students doing during a snapshot.

Table 9: TLM used by most students during snapshots (n=215)

During the snapshot, most Std II students were using:*	No. of snapshots	%
Textbook	57	26.5
Storybook/story card	2	0.9
Notebook and pencil/slate and chalk	60	27.9
Other things to write with (colours, crayons, etc.)	1	0.5
Other things to write on (blackboard, chart paper, etc.)	0	0
Craft materials	2	0.9
Puzzles/games/shapes/other manipulables	1	0.5
Not using any materials	108	50.2

*This was a multi-select question where observers recorded all the applicable TLM being used during a snapshot.

Key findings

- By far the most commonly observed student activity was listening to and/or watching the teacher or another student (53.5% or 114 of 215 snapshots). While doing so, in 38 snapshots students were also simultaneously saying something to the teacher or to other student(s) (usually responding to the teacher/ repeating in chorus), in 7 they were reading the textbook, and in 4 they were writing (Table 8).
- In one-third of the snapshots, students were doing a writing activity, consisting of either copying or writing answers to a question. Students were not observed doing any creative/free writing in any of the snapshots (Table 8).
- Students were rarely observed reading (less than 5%) or doing play-based learning activities (less than 2%) (Table 8).
- In half of the snapshots, students were not using any TLM. When they were observed using TLM, this usually comprised textbooks and/or notebooks. Students were almost never observed using handheld/ manipulable TLM (Table 9).