

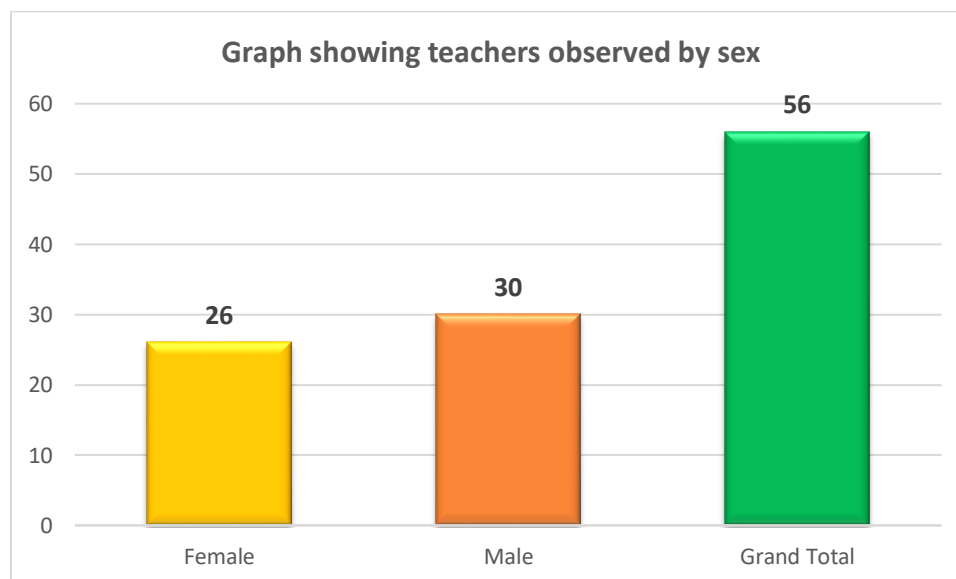
FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING CLASSROOM OBSERVATION REPORT -JUNE 2025

Introduction

This report presents the findings from foundational learning classroom observations conducted across 32 schools in Oyam, Alebtong, Kole and Arua districts. The observations were carried out by FICH Oyam in collaboration with its partners: CLASS in Alebtong, AYDI in Arua and GCU in Kole. The primary aim of these observations was to assess key aspects of teaching and learning, including classroom management, lesson delivery, use of teaching resources, gender considerations, and learners' engagement. The observations sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how foundational learning practices are implemented in these schools, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement. The findings capture evidence on the effectiveness of teachers' knowledge, adherence to lesson plans, use of interactive and student-centered methodologies, time management, and gender-responsive practices within classroom environments. This report reflects the collective efforts of the implementing partners to support quality foundational learning and to inform strategies for enhancing teaching and learning outcomes across the observed schools as presented in findings below.

REPORT FINDINGS

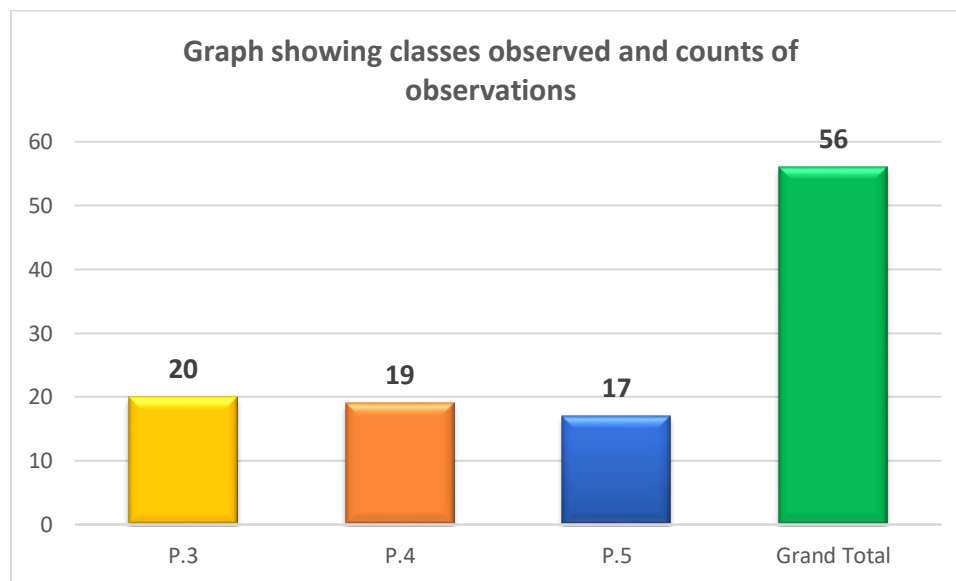
Teachers observed by gender



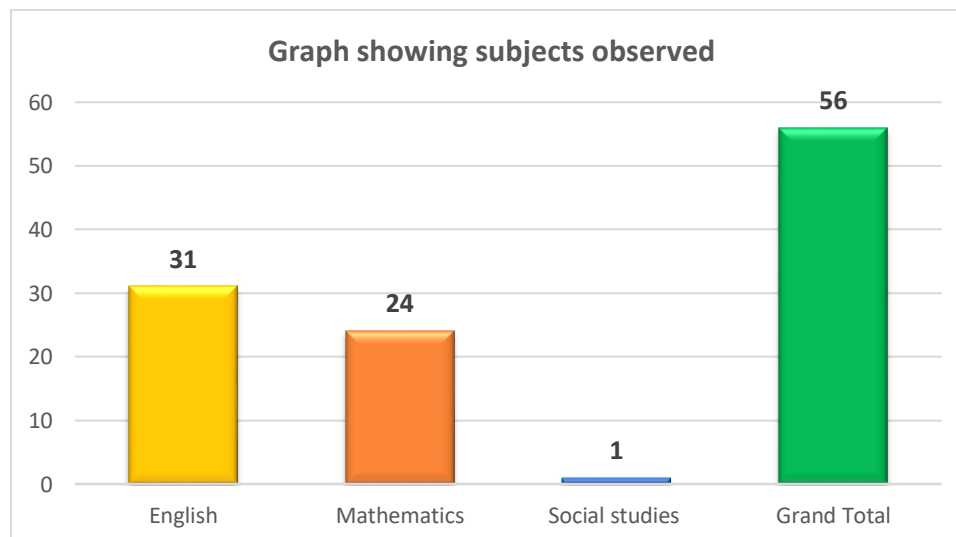
During the classroom observations, a total of 56 teachers were reached across the schools. Out of these, 30 were male teachers while 26 were female teachers. This shows that participation was fairly balanced between both sexes with male teachers making up a slightly larger proportion. The representation of both male and female teachers provided a good mix of perspectives and teaching practices during the observation exercise.

Classes observed

A total of 56 classroom sessions were observed during the exercise. Among these, 20 were P.3 classes, making it the most observed level. P.4 followed closely with 19 classes observed while P.5 had 17 classes observed. This spread gave a balanced view of teaching and learning practices across the three levels helping to capture how learners are supported as they progress from one class to another as shown below



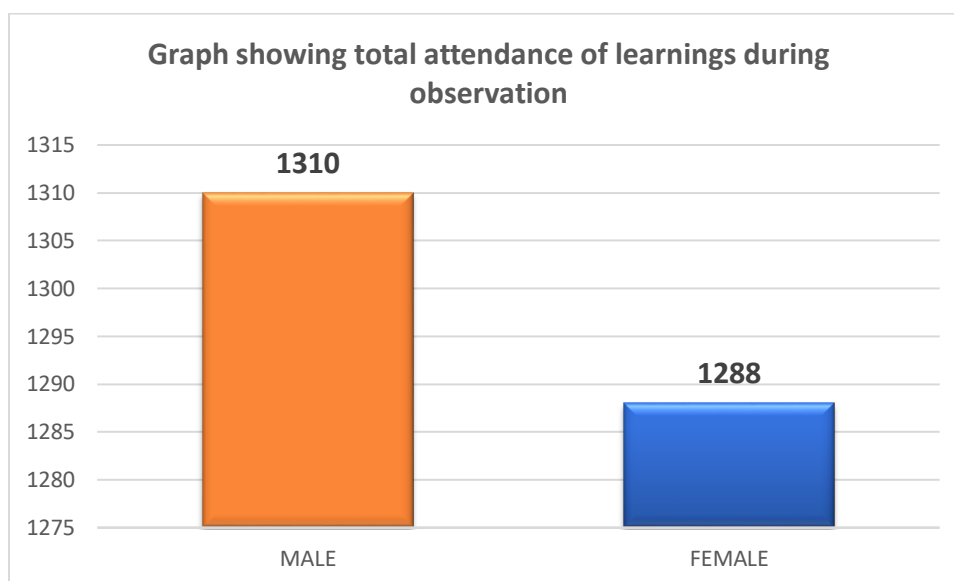
Subjects observed



During the observation exercise, a total of 56 lessons were covered across different subjects. The majority were English lessons with 31 observed reflecting a strong focus on language and literacy. Mathematics followed with 24 lessons showing consistent attention to numeracy skills. Only 1

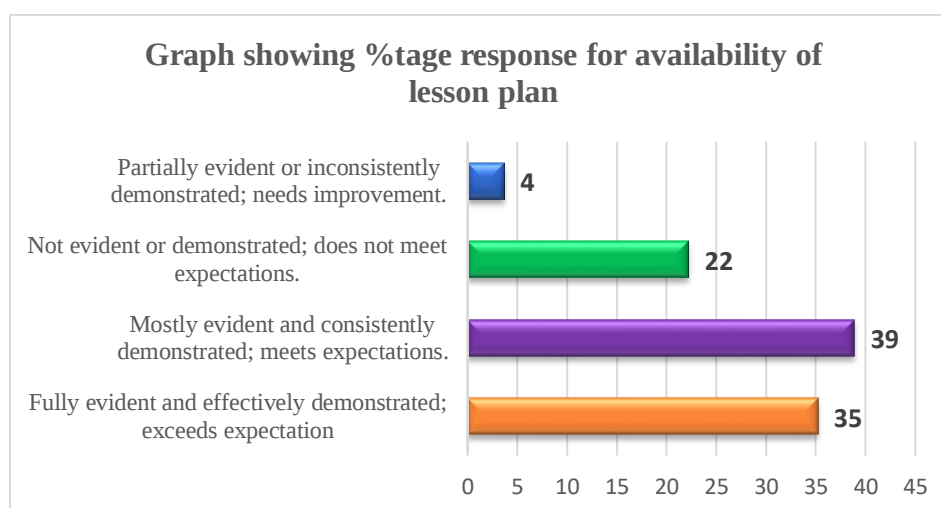
Social Studies lesson was observed indicating limited coverage of this subject during the observation period. This distribution highlights where most teaching efforts were concentrated.

Total learners present during day of observation



During the classroom observations, a total of 2,598 learners were present. Out of these, 1,310 were boys and 1,288 were girls. The attendance was fairly balanced between male and female learners with only a small difference in numbers. This balance reflects that both boys and girls were equally engaged and present in school during the observation period.

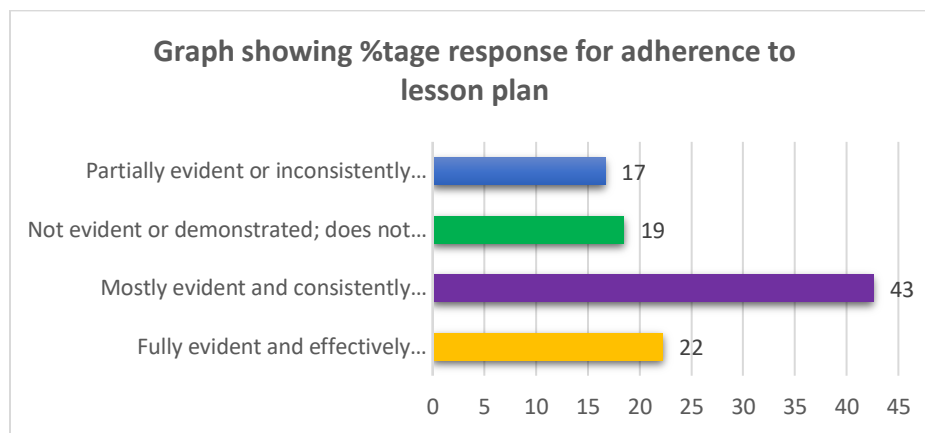
Availability of lesson plan



From the classroom observation on the availability of lesson plans, it was noted that a good number of teachers had their lesson plans prepared and in use. About 35% of teachers fully demonstrated the use of well-prepared lesson plans, going beyond expectations in their teaching. Another 39% consistently had lesson plans available and used them effectively, showing they met the expected

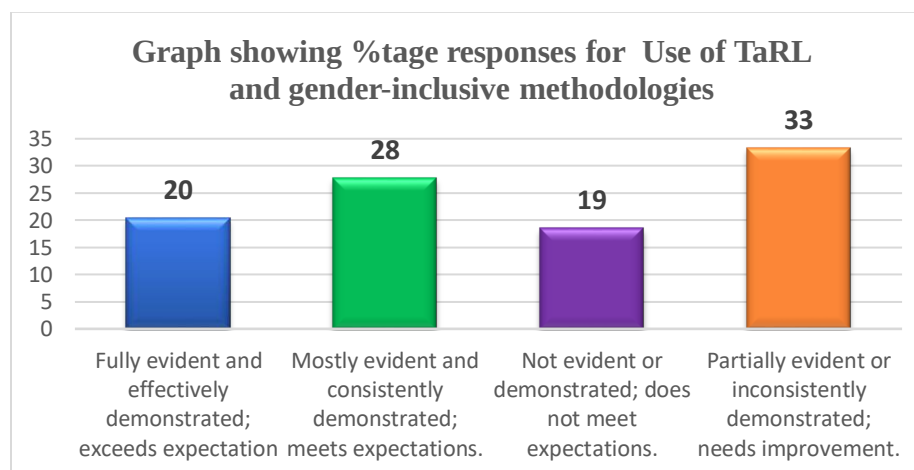
standards. However, 22% of teachers did not have any lesson plans prepared which made it difficult to guide their lessons properly. A smaller portion 4% had lesson plans but used them inconsistently or only partially, indicating the need for more support in this area. Overall, while the majority of teachers are making good progress in planning, there is still room for improvement to ensure all lessons are well-prepared and structured.

Adherence to lesson plan



From the observation on teachers' adherence to lesson plans, it was found that 22% of teachers fully adhered to their lesson plans, demonstrating excellent preparation and execution that exceeded expectations. The majority, 43%, showed consistent adherence, meeting the expected standards in planning and delivery. On the other hand, 19% of teachers did not follow or demonstrate the use of lesson plans, which affected the structure and flow of their lessons. Additionally, 17% adhered only partially or inconsistently, showing the need for further support and monitoring. Overall, while more than half of the teachers are doing well in following their lesson plans, there is still a significant group that requires improvement to ensure all learners benefit from structured and well-prepared lessons as shown below

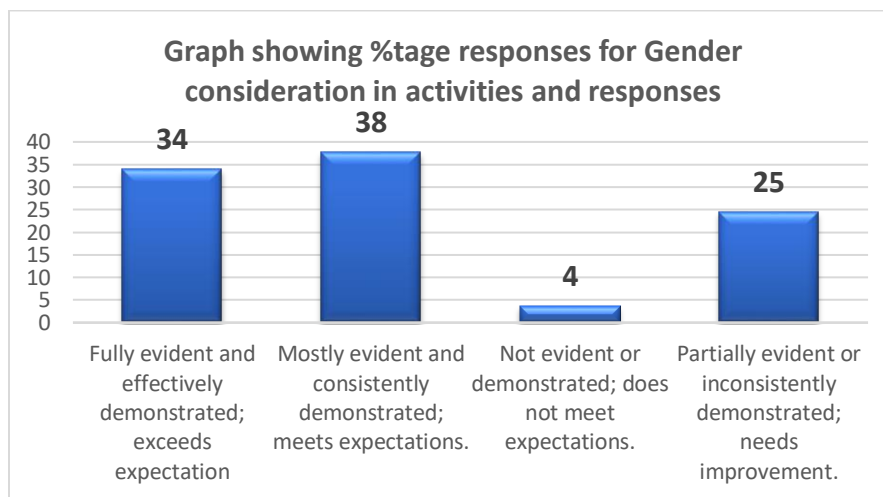
Use of TaRL and gender inclusive methodologies



From the observation on the use of TaRL and gender-inclusive methodologies, it was noted that 20% of teachers fully demonstrated these approaches going beyond expectations in making learning both structured and inclusive. Another 28% consistently applied TaRL and gender-responsive methods showing steady progress and meeting expectations. However, 33% of teachers only applied these approaches partially or inconsistently which limited their overall effectiveness in creating equal learning opportunities. In addition, 19% did not demonstrate the use of TaRL or gender-inclusive strategies at all, indicating a gap that needs to be addressed through more support and training. Overall while some teachers are effectively embracing these methodologies, there is still significant room for improvement to ensure all learners both boys and girls benefit equally from foundational learning practices.

Gender consideration in activities and responses

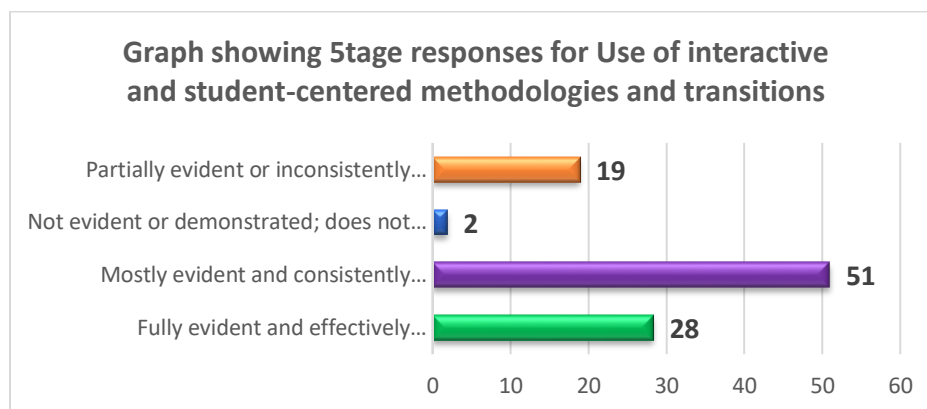
From the observation on gender considerations in classroom activities and responses, it was encouraging to note that 34% of teachers fully demonstrated gender-responsive practices going beyond expectations to ensure both boys and girls participated equally. A further 38% consistently applied gender considerations showing steady commitment to fairness and inclusivity. On the other hand, 25% demonstrated these practices only partially or inconsistently which sometimes limited equal opportunities for learners. A small proportion, 4% did not show any evidence of considering gender in their activities or responses. Overall, while the majority of teachers are making commendable progress in promoting gender inclusion, more effort is needed to strengthen consistency so that all learners are given equal chances to participate and succeed as shown below.



Use of interactive and student-centered methodologies and transitions

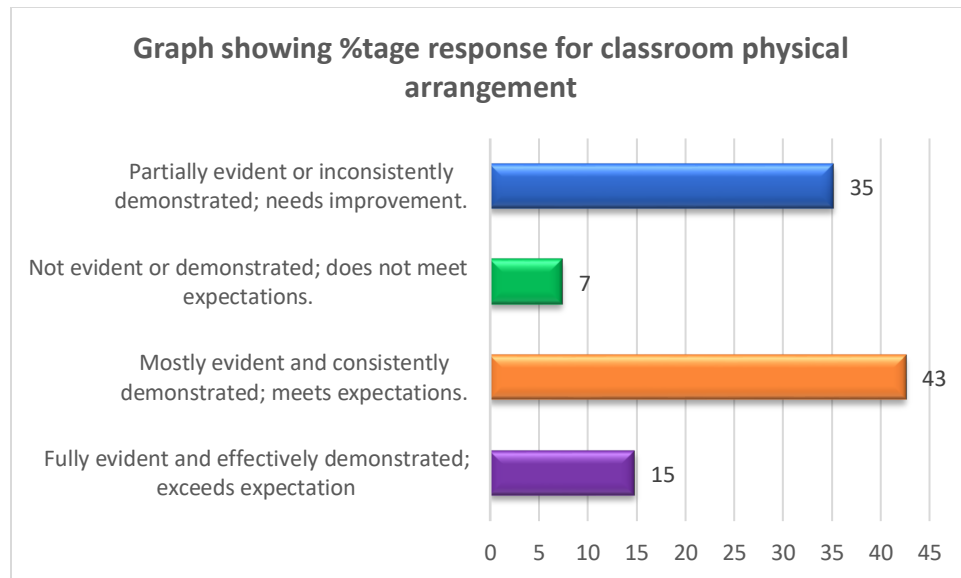
From the observation on the use of interactive and student-centered methodologies as well as smooth lesson transitions, it was noted that 28% of teachers fully demonstrated these practices, creating engaging and well-structured lessons that exceeded expectations. The majority 51% consistently applied interactive and learner-centered methods meeting the expected standards and ensuring active participation of learners. However, 19% of teachers applied these approaches only

partially or inconsistently which sometimes affected the flow and effectiveness of the lessons. A very small proportion 2% did not demonstrate the use of such methods at all. Overall, the findings show that most teachers are making strong progress in using interactive and student-centered approaches though there is still room to support those who are struggling to apply them consistently as presented below.

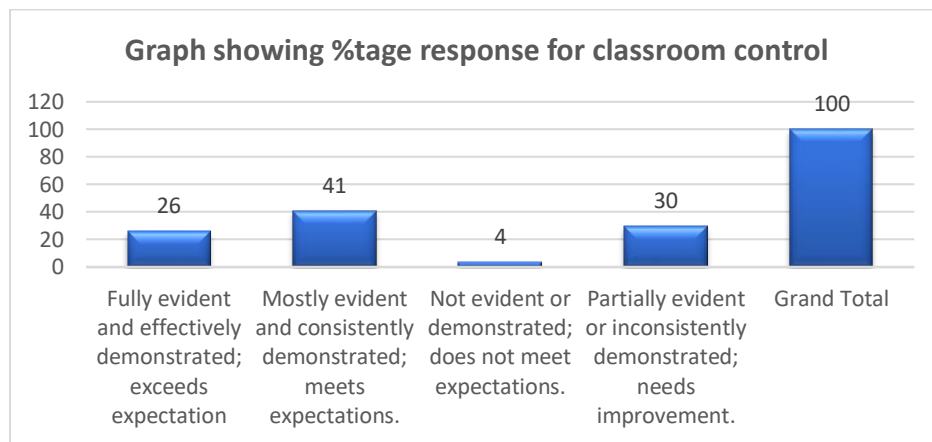


Classroom physical arrangement

From the observation on classroom physical arrangements, it was found that only 15% of classrooms were very well organized with clear seating arrangements and spaces that fully supported effective learning. A larger proportion 43% showed consistent effort in arranging the classroom to meet expectations creating an environment that supported teaching and learning. However, 35% of classrooms were only partially or inconsistently organized which at times limited smooth interaction and participation among learners. A small percentage 7% showed no evidence of proper classroom arrangement which negatively affected the learning atmosphere. Overall, while nearly half of the classrooms were adequately organized, there is still a strong need to support teachers in improving consistency so that all learners benefit from well-structured and conducive learning spaces as shown below.



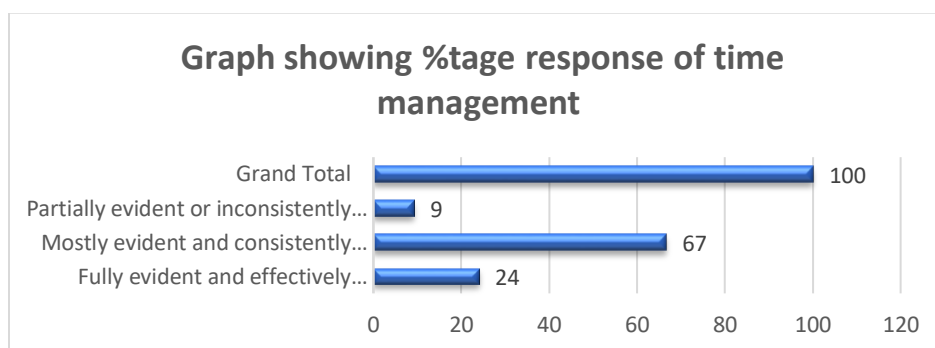
Classroom control



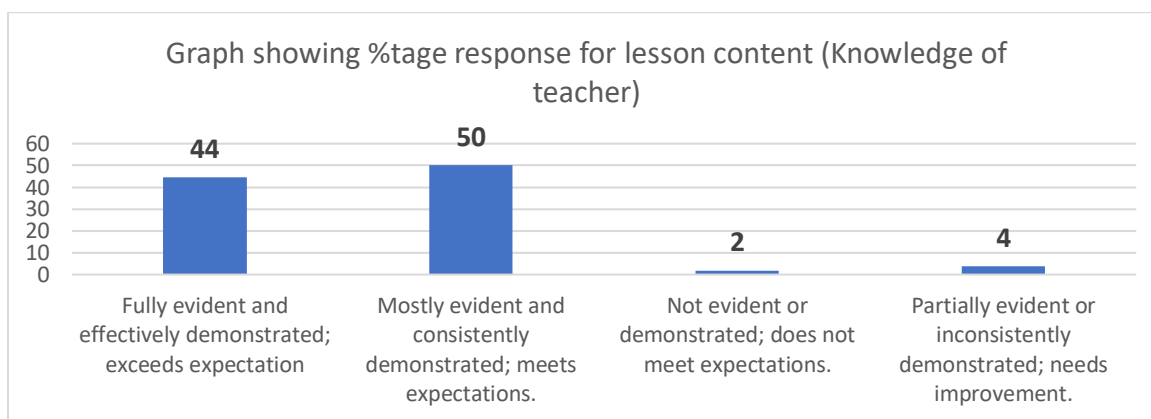
Classroom control during the observed sessions showed a mixed but generally positive picture. About a quarter of the lessons (26%) demonstrated excellent classroom management where teachers were fully in control and effectively guided learner behavior exceeding expectations. The largest portion 41% showed classroom control as mostly evident and consistently applied meeting expectations. However, there were instances where control was either partially evident or inconsistently demonstrated accounting for 30% of the observations indicating areas that need further attention and support. Only a small fraction 4% did not meet expectations where classroom management strategies were not evident. Overall, while many teachers maintained a positive and orderly learning environment, there remains room to strengthen consistency in managing classroom behavior.

Time management

Time management in the observed classrooms was generally strong. Nearly a quarter of the lessons (24%) showed excellent use of time, fully evident and effectively demonstrated, exceeding expectations. The majority of lessons, 67%, displayed time management that was mostly evident and consistently applied meeting expectations. A smaller portion 9% showed partial or inconsistent use of time indicating areas where teachers could improve pacing and planning. Overall, most teachers managed classroom time well ensuring lessons ran smoothly and learning objectives were addressed as shown below

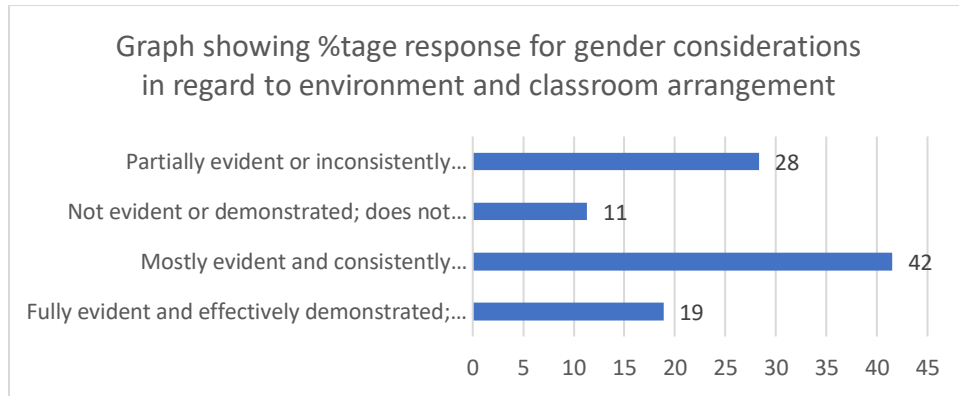


Lesson content (Knowledge of teacher)



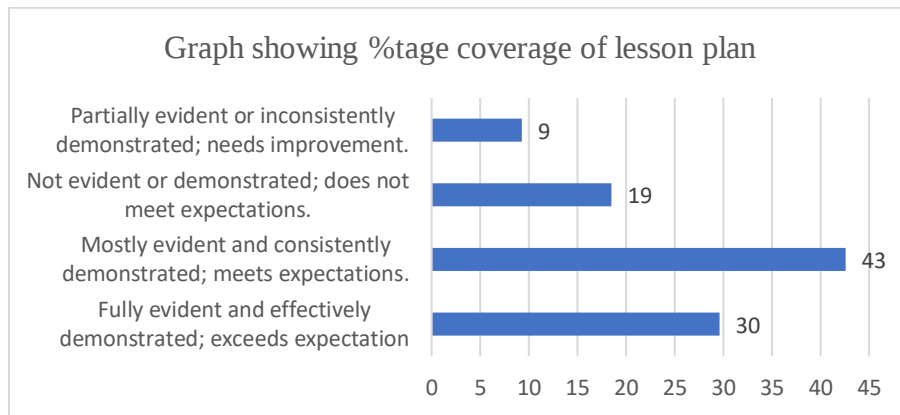
The observations indicate that teachers demonstrated strong knowledge of lesson content. About 44% of the lessons showed knowledge that was fully evident and effectively demonstrated exceeding expectations. Half of the lessons (50%) reflected knowledge that was mostly evident and consistently applied meeting expectations. Only a small proportion of lessons had gaps with 4% partially demonstrated and 2% not evident at all. Overall, the data suggests that most teachers are well prepared and confident in their subject matter, providing learners with clear and accurate instruction as demonstrated below.

Gender considerations in regard to environment and classroom arrangement



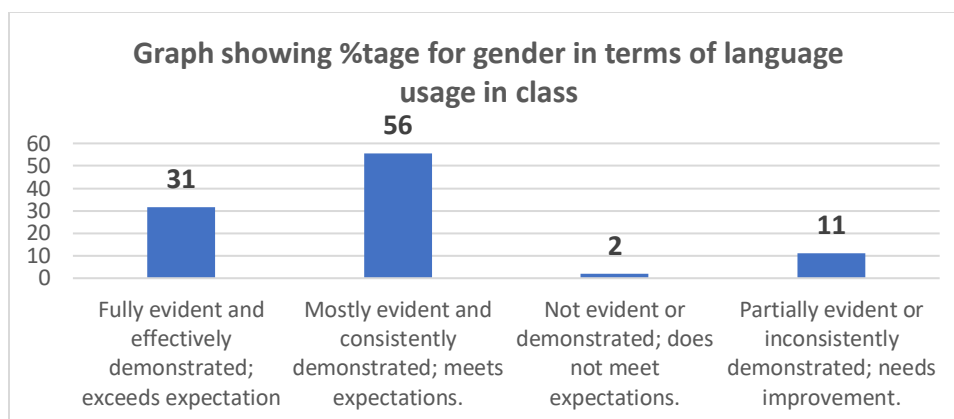
The observations on gender considerations in classroom environment and arrangement reveal a mixed picture. In 19% of the classrooms, gender-sensitive arrangements were fully evident and effectively implemented exceeding expectations. The largest portion 42% showed gender considerations as mostly evident and consistently applied, meeting expectations. However, 28% of classrooms demonstrated only partial or inconsistent attention to gender, indicating room for improvement, while 11% did not show any evident gender considerations. Overall, while many teachers are mindful of creating an inclusive environment, further efforts are needed to ensure all learners, regardless of gender, benefit equally from the classroom setup.

Coverage of lesson plan



Observations of lesson plan coverage showed that teachers generally followed their planned lessons though with varying consistency. In 30% of the cases, lesson plan coverage was fully evident and effectively demonstrated exceeding expectations. The majority, 43%, mostly followed the lesson plan consistently meeting expectations. However, 9% of lessons showed partial or inconsistent coverage and 19% did not meet expectations at all with significant portions of the plan not implemented. Overall, while many teachers are successfully delivering their planned lessons, there is room to improve consistency and ensure full coverage across all classrooms.

Gender in terms of language usage in class



The observations on gender-sensitive language usage in classrooms show a generally positive trend. About 31% of lessons fully demonstrated inclusive language exceeding expectations. The majority 56% consistently used language that considered gender meeting expectations. A small portion 11% showed partial or inconsistent attention to gender in language while only 2% did not demonstrate any gender-sensitive language. Overall, most teachers are mindful of using inclusive language that respects all learners, though there is still some room for improvement.

FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS

Successes

One of the major successes' teachers highlighted was the active participation of learners in class activities. Teachers appreciated that despite large class sizes, many learners were willing to engage and contribute. As one teacher shared, *"Learners actively participated in contributing in the class activities."* This shows that learners are developing confidence and embracing interactive learning approaches.

Another noted success was the improvement in reading and numeracy skills among learners. Teachers reported gradual but noticeable progress in learners' ability to read and write independently. A teacher observed, *"Reading skills of the learners are slowly improving with TaRL activities incorporation in my class."* Such outcomes demonstrate that Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) strategies are having a positive impact on foundational learning.

Lastly, teachers commended the availability and usefulness of learning aids in making lessons engaging and practical. The use of visual aids, real objects and interactive activities was seen as a game changer in enhancing learner understanding. As one teacher remarked, *"The method has made learning simple for the learners. The instructional materials help children to reflect on the learnings even after the lesson is done."* This suggests that hands-on learning is not only effective during lessons but also reinforces knowledge retention.

Challenges

Despite these successes, teachers faced significant challenges with managing large class sizes. High learner enrollment made classroom control and individualized attention difficult. One teacher candidly stated, *“The number of learners is too big for one teacher to handle.”* Overcrowding also affected lesson organization and the ability to integrate TaRL activities effectively.

Another recurring challenge was absenteeism and late coming, especially during the harvesting period which disrupted lesson continuity. Teachers also cited difficulties in keeping all learners on the same page academically. As expressed by one teacher, *“Absenteeism of learners making a child miss what has been covered leading to exams failure.”* This points to a need for strategies that address seasonal absenteeism and provide catch-up support for affected learners.

Infrastructure and resource gaps further compounded teaching difficulties. Poor classroom conditions, limited desks and inadequate learning materials made it hard to create a conducive learning environment. One teacher noted, *“The chalkboard is not smooth for writing, a very large enrollment experience and that makes her concentrate only to those in front, no desks for sitting and all the learners sit on the floor which makes the books very dirty.”* These structural challenges hinder both effective teaching and learners’ comfort, ultimately affecting learning outcomes.

FEEDBACK FROM LEARNERS

Learners’ experiences

Learners expressed a high level of excitement and satisfaction with their learning experience. Many mentioned that lessons were enjoyable, interactive, and easy to understand when teachers explained clearly. As one learner shared, *“The lesson was interesting and we always listen to our teacher so that we understand well. We also love exercise because it helps to check our understanding of the topic.”* This indicates that structured lessons and regular exercises play a big role in reinforcing comprehension.

Practical teaching methods and the use of learning aids were particularly appreciated by learners, as they made lessons engaging and memorable. One learner reported, *“We have loved the basket game since it is fun and helps us to understand sounds, and read words.”* Activities like these not only bring fun into the classroom but also build confidence and improve literacy skills among learners.

Learners also acknowledged their teachers’ dedication and knowledge in delivering lessons effectively. Many were quick to point out improvements in their reading and spelling abilities. A learner confidently noted, *“Learners are active, they are now writing correct spellings.”* This shows that targeted strategies like Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) and activity-based learning are helping bridge foundational gaps.

Areas of improvement

Despite the positive experiences, learners highlighted the need for teachers to slow down during lessons and provide more examples for better understanding. One learner emphasized, *“Teachers should give many examples not only one like for today for us to understand well.”* This reflects a desire for deeper clarification and sufficient practice to master concepts.

Another key area of concern was the lack of adequate learning resources and poor classroom conditions. Many learners reported overcrowded classrooms and insufficient desks forcing some to sit on the floor. As one learner explained, *“Inadequate sitting materials making some of them to sit on the floor. Our class is very large with very many learners that we have to squeeze ourselves.”* Such challenges not only affect comfort but also limit participation and concentration.

Lastly, learners expressed the need for improved time management and inclusion of diverse teaching methods to keep lessons engaging and comprehensive. One learner suggested, *“The lesson was interesting. The teacher can improve on time management so that we finish our task on time and don't miss breakfast.”* Addressing these concerns would enhance learning experiences and ensure no learner feels left behind.

Strengths Observed

Several teachers demonstrated strong lesson preparation and classroom management skills. For example, Teacher Mary received high praise for her detailed lesson planning and consistent adherence to it. One observer noted, *“Teacher Mary used real objects to aid the learners’ understanding and translated English words into the local language for better comprehension.”* Such efforts reflect good pedagogical practices that make learning relatable and effective.

Another positive observation was the active participation and discipline of learners in most classrooms. Observers reported that learners showed interest in lessons with many engaging in reading and answering questions confidently. In some lessons, gender sensitivity was considered and teachers involved both boys and girls equally when giving responses. For instance, one report stated, *“All learners had writing materials and were able to solve individual exercises, and the teacher marked and did corrections.”* This level of engagement ensures inclusivity and helps address learning gaps.

There were also examples of good classroom control and time management. Observers highlighted lessons that followed clear structures, used familiar examples and demonstrated good pacing. One comment summarized this well: *“Strength – well-planned lesson, good time management, gender kept in check.”* These strengths indicate that many teachers are applying core teaching strategies effectively.

Challenges Identified

Despite these strengths, common gaps were observed across several classrooms. A recurring issue was lack of TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) integration in lessons. Many teachers conducted

lessons without demonstrating any TaRL activity, missing opportunities to support learners at different competency levels. As one observer put it, *“No TaRL activity was demonstrated during the lesson. The teacher was encouraged to use simple TaRL numeracy activities like number chart reading as an energizer or lesson starter.”*

Another major challenge was inadequate use of teaching and learning aids. Some teachers relied solely on chalk and board without displaying visual aids or real objects that could enhance comprehension. A comment highlighted, *“No learning aid was used during the lesson except the board and chalk.”* In contrast where aids were used, learning became more interactive and easier for learners to grasp concepts.

Classroom environment and learner engagement also presented concerns. Overcrowding was a significant issue in some schools with classes holding up to 135 learners, leaving little space for movement or group work. This affected classroom control and limited the teacher’s ability to reach all learners, especially those seated at the back.

Additionally, observers noted instances of gender imbalance in participation, where teachers unintentionally favored one gender over the other, as noted in, *“Girls and boys still sit alone. No mixed sitting arrangement.”*

Recommendations

Integrate TaRL activities regularly. Teachers should incorporate TaRL strategies in every lesson to cater to different learner levels. Activities like number chart reading, multiplication table recitation or simple group tasks can make learning more inclusive and engaging.

Improve use of teaching aids. Schools should encourage teachers to use locally available materials e.g. bottle tops, sticks, charts etc. as visual and tactile aids. This will make abstract concepts more concrete, particularly in numeracy and literacy.

Classroom arrangement and gender sensitivity. Rearrange sitting plans to mix boys and girls, and consciously involve both genders during question-and-answer sessions. Teachers should also receive refresher training on gender-responsive pedagogy.

Address overcrowding and infrastructure gaps. Where classes are overcrowded, schools should consider splitting streams to manageable sizes. Provision of adequate desks and space is essential to reduce learners sitting on the floor and improve handwriting and comfort.

Lesson planning and time management. Teachers should prepare structured lesson plans with clear steps and timings for each activity. Plans should include energizers, group activities, and assessment moments to check learner understanding.

Classroom control and learner support. Teachers should adopt strategies like walking around the class, engaging learners through questions and correcting mistakes promptly. Slow learners should receive extra support, while short learners and those at the back should be moved to the front.

Continuous professional development. Organize refresher training for teachers on TaRL integration, use of teaching aids, classroom management, and participatory methods like pair-share and group work.

What Stood Out for Observers

One of the most striking observations across classrooms was the high level of learner engagement and activeness during lessons. Learners were not just passive listeners but enthusiastic participants, responding to questions, doing exercises and demonstrating understanding through practical activities. As one observer noted, *“Learners were very active in class when the teacher was teaching... Use of ‘I do, we do, you do’ was well done.”* This structured approach allowed learners to progressively take ownership of their learning, creating an interactive and lively atmosphere.

Another outstanding aspect was the use of creative teaching aids and strategies which brought lessons to life. Teachers employed a range of instructional materials, such as word cards for spelling, real objects for contextual learning and even innovative items like a “letter sound box” that captured learners’ attention through songs

Gender inclusivity also stood out as a positive practice in many classrooms. Teachers made deliberate efforts to engage both boys and girls equally fostering an environment of equality and participation. One report captured this well: *“The teacher was gender sensitive by picking both genders... having learning materials available for learners like storybooks.”* Such practices not only encourage balanced participation but also promote confidence among all learners.

Observers were impressed by the teachers’ enthusiasm and improved application of training techniques, particularly those aligned with the TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) approach. Activities like basket games, mind maps, and energizers such as role plays kept the class lively and inclusive. This demonstrates that professional development efforts are translating into practical classroom improvements.

Finally, the overall classroom environment and control were commendable in many instances. Good classroom organization, use of interludes to keep lessons lively, and clear instructions ensured smooth learning flow. In some cases, the presence of two teachers in a class enhanced control and support. Even in crowded classrooms, many teachers managed to maintain discipline and sustain learners’ attention.