OPPORTUNITY EduFinance

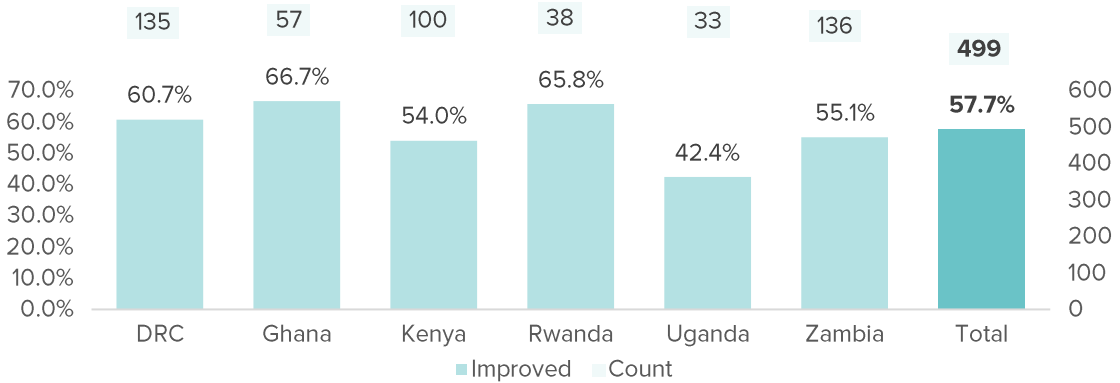**KEY INSIGHT:** Midline classroom observations suggest improvements in teaching practice quality, with **58%** of schools recording improved year-on-year scores.
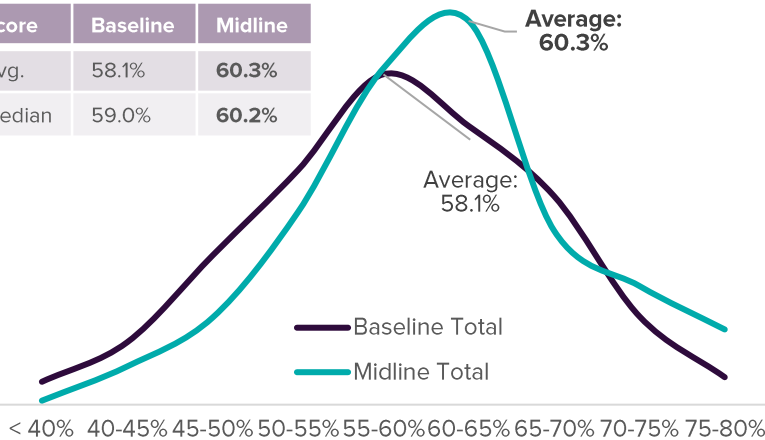
Midline classroom observations were conducted in Year 2 of the EduQuality 3-year program and found most schools **(58%)** with a baseline and midline had improved their average scores, ranging between 67%-42% improvement across countries. By Year 2, at least 5 trainings had been facilitated with teacher mentors, and mentors had been equipped and directed to begin delivering the same trainings to their peer teachers.

% of schools improving Year over Year

Bar chart showing % of schools improving Year over Year:
- DRC: 60.7% (135)
- Ghana: 66.7% (57)
- Kenya: 54.0% (100)
- Rwanda: 65.8% (38)
- Uganda: 42.4% (33)
- Zambia: 55.1% (136)
- Total: 57.7% (499)

Legend: ■ Improved ■ Count

Classroom Observation Total Scores

Score	Baseline	Midline
Avg.	58.1%	**60.3%**
Median	59.0%	**60.2%**

Average: 60.3%
Average: 58.1%

Legend: Baseline Total, Midline Total

< 40% 40-45% 45-50% 50-55% 55-60% 60-65% 65-70% 70-75% 75-80%

Data Collection & Analysis. Opportunity EduFinance has conducted and analysed 1,997 classroom from partner EduQuality schools between late 2020 and 2023. Observations evaluate **student engagement** and **teaching approaches** aligned with best practice techniques.

KEY FINDING 1. **Schools with scores below 55% in the baseline made the strongest improvements at midline.** The median score has improved from **59.0%** to **60.2%**, while the **average score** has made a slightly larger move, from **58.1% to 60.3%.** The percentage of average scores **below 55% has come down significantly,** from 34% of classes to **23%.** The percentage of schools scoring >65% made smaller increases, from 23% at baseline to 26% at midline.

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Teaching Practice. The Classroom Observation tool evaluates multiple aspects of teaching practices that are **cross-cutting best practices for instruction**. In these **three areas**, observers document whether the practice was used (yes/no). For both **lecture** & **discussion**, observers track total minutes of each practice.

Clear & Precise Expectations: Give clear & precise instructions so learners know expectations of their behaviour and performance
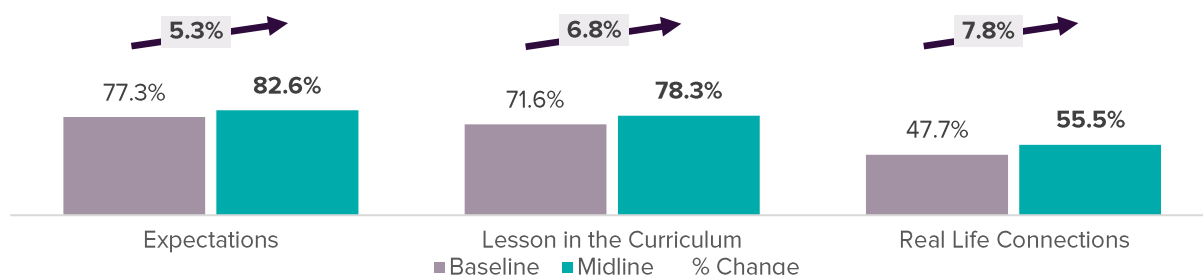
Lesson in Curriculum: Situate lesson in wider curriculum by referring to past or future lessons

Real Life Connections: Connect academic content to learners' daily lives & 'real life'

Teaching Practices Observed

| | 5.3% | | 6.8% | | 7.8% |
| Expectations | 77.3% → 82.6% | Lesson in the Curriculum | 71.6% → 78.3% | Real Life Connections | 47.7% → 55.5% |

■ Baseline   ■ Midline   % Change

KEY FINDING 2. **Teachers are beginning to show improvements in teaching best practices. 83%** now setting expectations for the learners during the lesson, up from 77%, and **78%** position the lesson in the curriculum, up from 72%. There has also been an improvement in teachers' ability to make real-life connections to the lesson topic, from 48% to **56%**; however, there is further room for improvement in this best practice.

KEY FINDING 3. **Teachers historically have not actively used learner discussion in their teaching practice, but this appears to be shifting.** Over **43%** of observed classrooms now have **≥5 minutes of discussion**, compared to 22% in the baseline. And only **27%** of schools have **≥5 minutes of lecture time**, compared to over 40% previously.
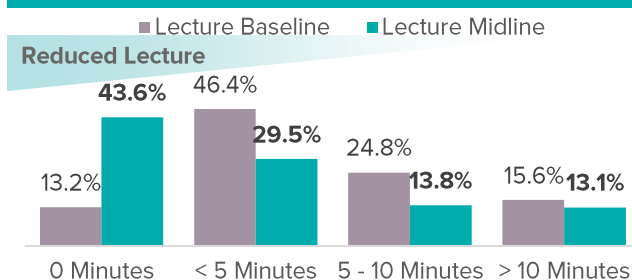
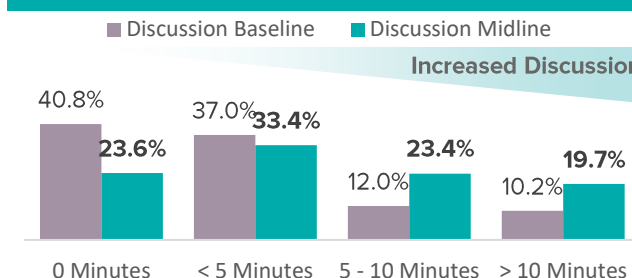**Lecture:** In this type of explanation of academic content, the learner acts as a passive listener

Discussion: In this type of active learning, learners speak out loud to each other or the teacher.

Lecture Minutes

■ Lecture Baseline   ■ Lecture Midline

Reduced Lecture

	0 Minutes	< 5 Minutes	5 - 10 Minutes	> 10 Minutes
Baseline	13.2%	46.4%	24.8%	15.6%
Midline	43.6%	29.5%	13.8%	13.1%

Discussion Minutes

■ Discussion Baseline   ■ Discussion Midline

Increased Discussion

	0 Minutes	< 5 Minutes	5 - 10 Minutes	> 10 Minutes
Baseline	40.8%	37.0%	12.0%	10.2%
Midline	23.6%	33.4%	23.4%	19.7%

Teaching Practice. The Classroom Observation tool evaluates multiple aspects of teaching practices that are **cross-cutting best practices for instruction**. In these **four areas**, observers score on a 4-level scale based on set criteria in the coding manual.

Active Learning:
Ask questions or give learners tasks to shift from passive listening to

Explanation:
When necessary, explain or demonstrate a concept to learners, ensuring the explanation is appropriate, clear, detailed and deep
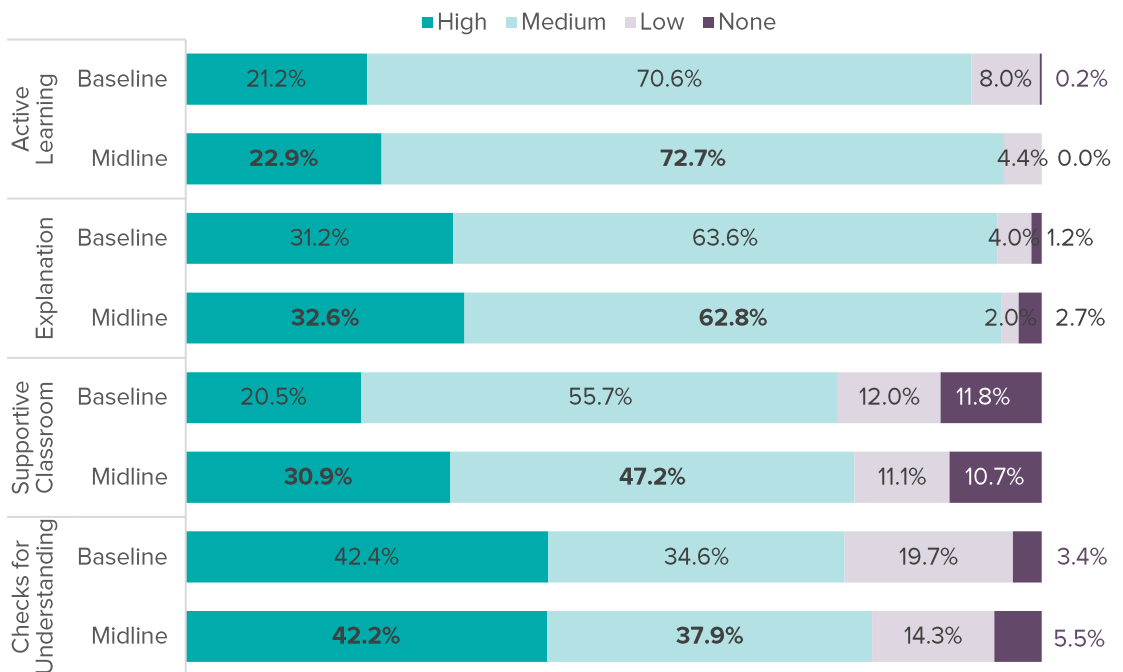
Supportive Classroom Culture:
Set, monitor and reinforce a positive, supporting classroom culture that encourages appropriate behavior and creates a respectful experience for learners and the teacher.

Checks for Understanding:
Use question or prompt techniques to determine learners' understanding of academic content

Quality of Teaching Practices

■High ■Medium ■Low ■None

Area	Phase	High	Medium	Low	None
Active Learning	Baseline	21.2%	70.6%	8.0%	0.2%
Active Learning	Midline	22.9%	72.7%	4.4%	0.0%
Explanation	Baseline	31.2%	63.6%	4.0%	1.2%
Explanation	Midline	32.6%	62.8%	2.0%	2.7%
Supportive Classroom	Baseline	20.5%	55.7%	12.0%	11.8%
Supportive Classroom	Midline	30.9%	47.2%	11.1%	10.7%
Checks for Understanding	Baseline	42.4%	34.6%	19.7%	3.4%
Checks for Understanding	Midline	42.2%	37.9%	14.3%	5.5%

KEY FINDING 4. Substantially more teachers have been observed supervising a supportive classroom, with slight improvement in the other teaching practices.
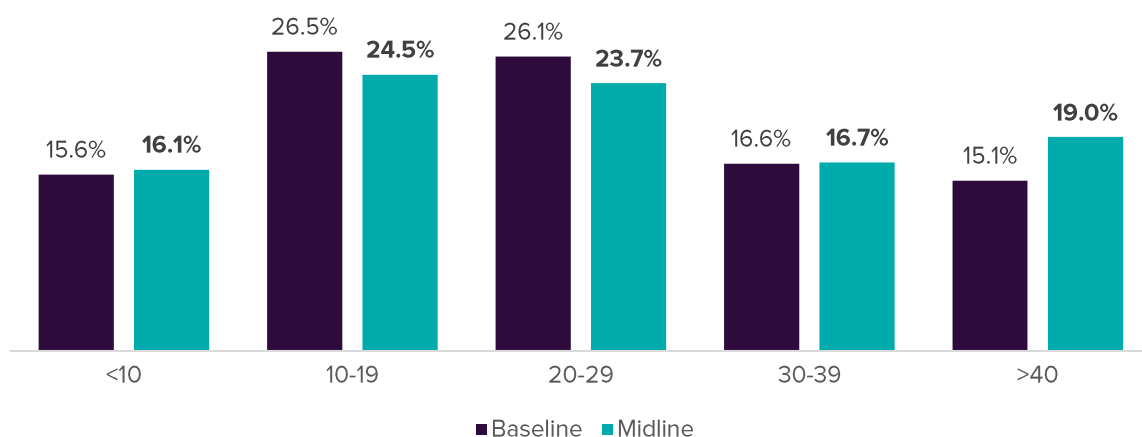
- The most challenging teaching practices seems to be setting and reinforcing a **supportive classroom** and using **checks for understanding** – although both have increased the percentage of combined 'high' and 'medium' scores.

- Under **supportive classroom culture**, **11%** of teachers still scored '**none**' which indicates the teacher used physical punishment, insulting language and/or ignored learners' disruptive behavior. Additionally, **11%** scored '**low**' indicating use of negative language or inappropriate voice with learners.
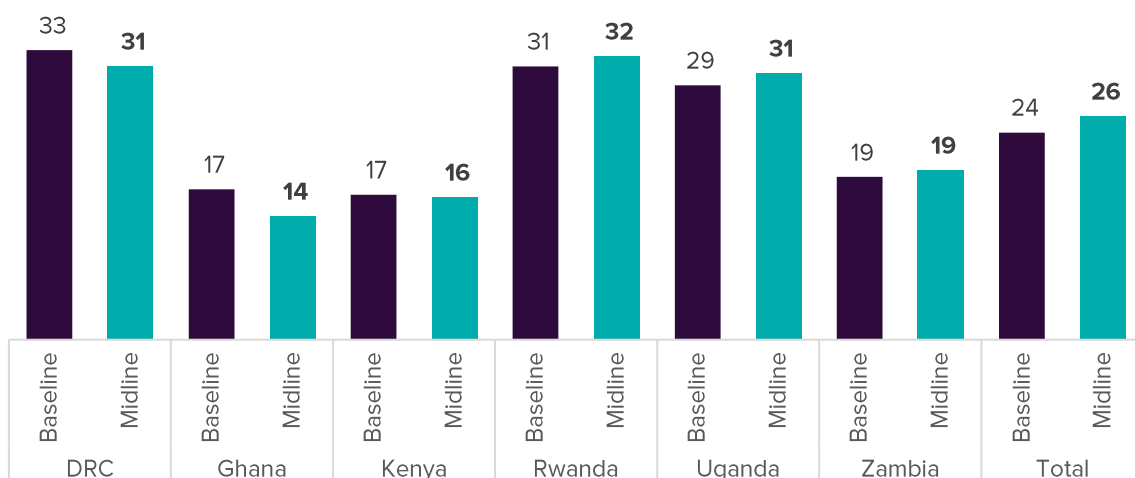
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Class Size & Lesson Planning. Pupil-to-teacher ratio is a common indicator of learning environment quality & the extent to which a learners can benefit from individualized teacher attention. **Lesson pla**ns can indicate the quality of instruction if structured with a learner-centred learning objective, learner activity, and planned assessment.

KEY FINDING 5. **Average class sizes have increased over baseline, possibly as more children returned to school following the COVID-19 pandemic.** Most classes had **≤29 learners** present, with an average class size of **26 learners**. DRC, Rwanda and Uganda all have average class sizes exceeding **30 learners**, nearly double the average class sizes in Kenya, Ghana and Zambia (<20).

Average Class Size

	<10	10-19	20-29	30-39	>40
Baseline	15.6%	26.5%	26.1%	16.6%	15.1%
Midline	16.1%	24.5%	23.7%	16.7%	19.0%

■ Baseline ■ Midline

Class Size by Country

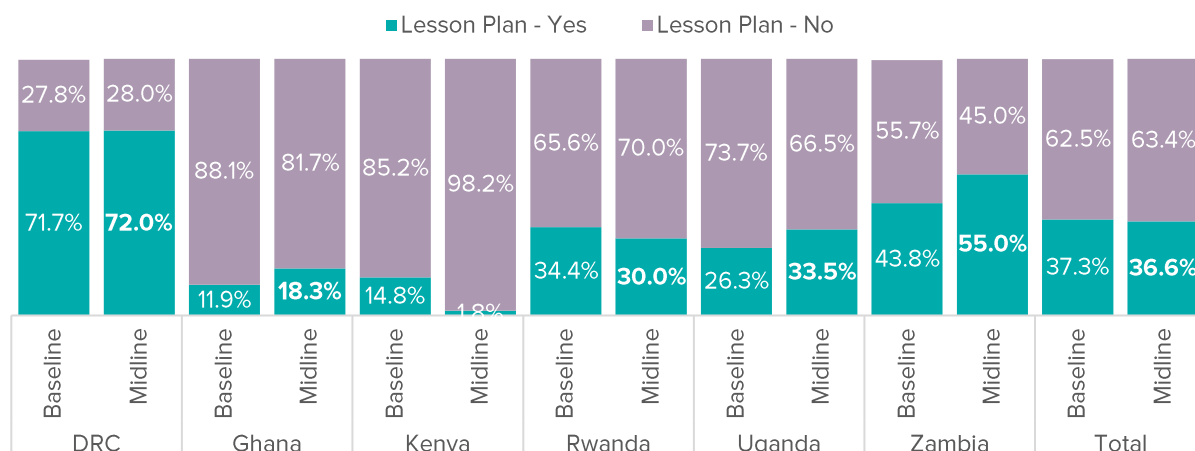|	Baseline	Midline
DRC	33	31
Ghana	17	14
Kenya	17	16
Rwanda	31	32
Uganda	29	31
Zambia	19	19
Total	24	26

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Class Size & Lesson Planning. **Pupil-to-teacher ratio** is a common indicator of learning environment quality & the extent to which a learners can benefit from individualized teacher attention. **Lesson plans** can indicate the quality of instruction if structured with a learner-centred learning objective, learner activity, and planned assessment.
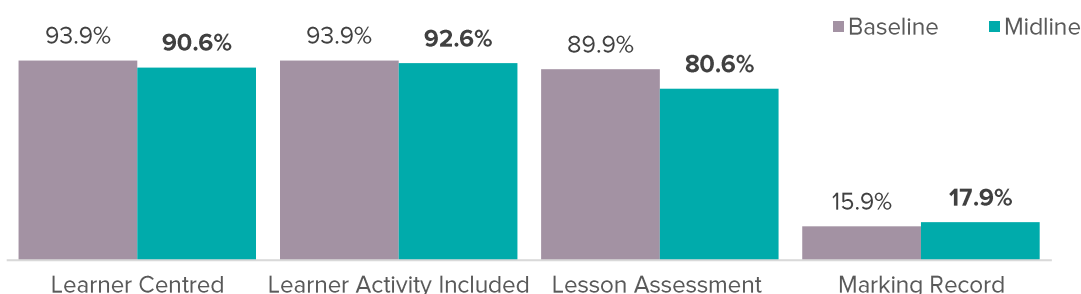
KEY FINDING 6. **Use of lesson plans remains low, with only the DRC and Zambia reporting the majority of observed classes had lesson plans at midline.** Lesson plans have been rarely observed in **Ghanaian** and **Kenyan** classrooms, which has skewed the overall data to show a slight decline in observed lesson plans to 36.6%. Similarly, fewer than **1 in 5** (18%) teachers were able to show a learner **marking record,** though there has been a 2% increase.

Presence of a Lesson Plan

■ Lesson Plan - Yes   ■ Lesson Plan - No

	Baseline	Midline	Baseline	Midline	Baseline	Midline	Baseline	Midline	Baseline	Midline	Baseline	Midline	Baseline	Midline
No	27.8%	28.0%	88.1%	81.7%	85.2%	98.2%	65.6%	70.0%	73.7%	66.5%	55.7%	45.0%	62.5%	63.4%
Yes	71.7%	**72.0%**	11.9%	**18.3%**	14.8%	1.8%	34.4%	**30.0%**	26.3%	**33.5%**	43.8%	**55.0%**	37.3%	**36.6%**
	DRC		Ghana		Kenya		Rwanda		Uganda		Zambia		Total	

KEY FINDING 7. **Lesson plan quality remains high overall, with the vast majority of plans centered on learners and including a learning activity.** More than **9 out of 10** plans demonstrated a learner centred approach (**91%**) and learning activity (93%) at midline. However, plans including a lesson assessment decreased from 90% at baseline to **81%** at midline, highlighting opportunities for some teachers to still improve plan quality.

Quality of Lesson Planning
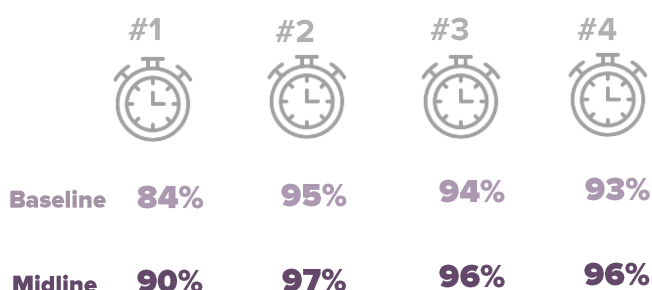
■ Baseline   ■ Midline

	Learner Centred	Learner Activity Included	Lesson Assessment	Marking Record
Baseline	93.9%	93.9%	89.9%	15.9%
Midline	**90.6%**	**92.6%**	**80.6%**	**17.9%**

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Snapshots. A snapshot uses a time interval approach to do a **10-second visual scan** of the classroom at **five-minute intervals.** Scans are conducted **four times** during the lesson to record whether a learning activity is taking place, and if so, how many learners are off-task during the learning activity.

KEY FINDING 8. **The vast majority of class time was spent on learning activities and showed an increase across all baseline snapshots.** Learning activities were observed in **95%** of midline snapshots, on average. Learning activities were lowest in Snapshot #1 – taken 5 minutes into the lesson – but were more consistent during each of the other snapshots.
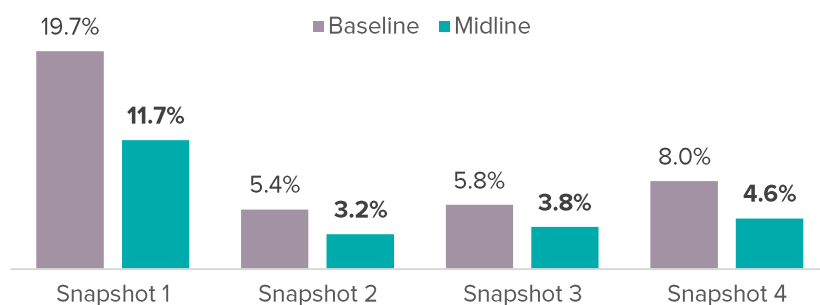
A **Learning Activity** was taking place during **95%** of all snapshots at **midline**

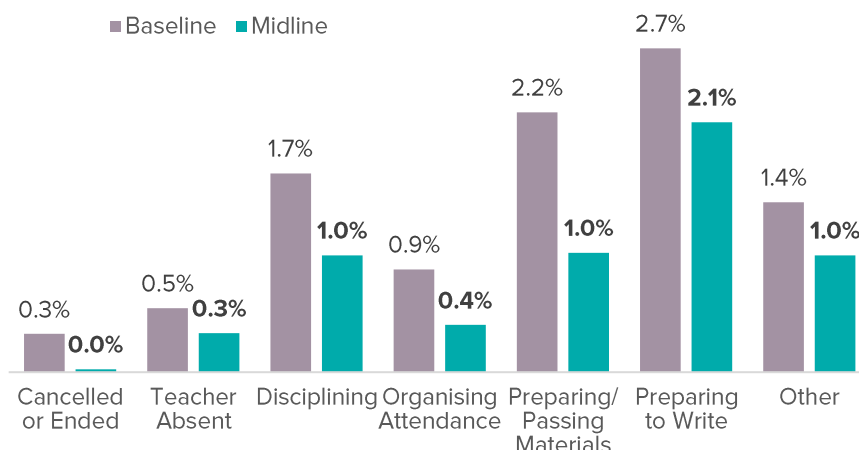|	#1	#2	#3	#4
Baseline	84%	95%	94%	93%
Midline	90%	97%	96%	96%

KEY FINDING 9. **More learners are engaged during learning activities,** with **89%** of learners observed on-task across all snapshots at midline, an increase from 84% at baseline.
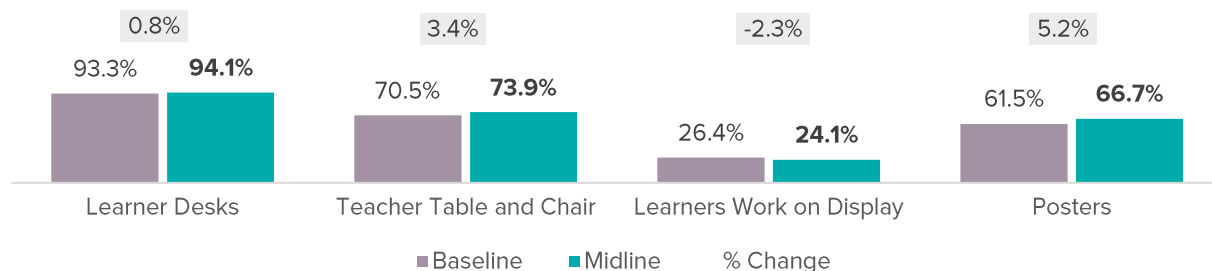
% of Classrooms not Engaged in Learning Activity

■ Baseline ■ Midline

	Snapshot 1	Snapshot 2	Snapshot 3	Snapshot 4
Baseline	19.7%	5.4%	5.8%	8.0%
Midline	11.7%	3.2%	3.8%	4.6%

84% Baseline
89% Midline
Learners on Task

16% Baseline
11% Midline
Learners not on Task

Reason Classroom not Engaged in Learning Activity

■ Baseline ■ Midline

	Cancelled or Ended	Teacher Absent	Disciplining	Organising Attendance	Preparing/ Passing Materials	Preparing to Write	Other
Baseline	0.3%	0.5%	1.7%	0.9%	2.2%	2.7%	1.4%
Midline	0.0%	0.3%	1.0%	0.4%	1.0%	2.1%	1.0%

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Class Furniture & Visual Displays

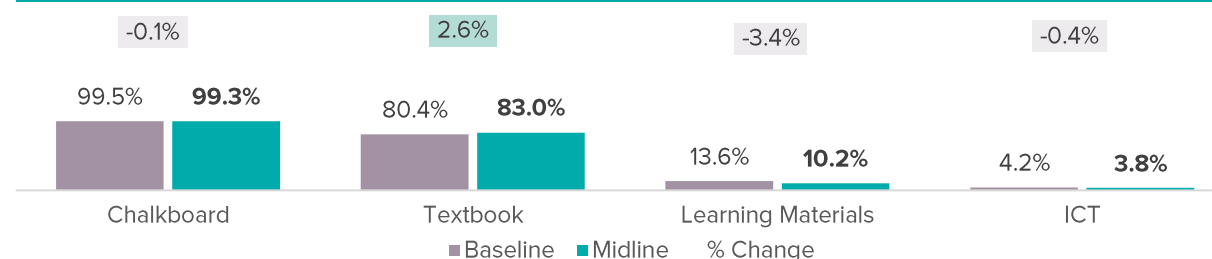|	Learner Desks	Teacher Table and Chair	Learners Work on Display	Posters
% Change	0.8%	3.4%	-2.3%	5.2%
Baseline	93.3%	70.5%	26.4%	61.5%
Midline	**94.1%**	**73.9%**	**24.1%**	**66.7%**

■Baseline ■Midline ■% Change

KEY FINDING 10. **2 out of 3 classrooms now have posters on walls, while learner work displays remain less common. 66.7%** of classrooms had at least one poster, an increase from 61.5% at baseline. However, learner work was displayed in less than 1 in 4 classrooms observed (24.1%).

Materials for Learners

	Notebooks	Textbooks	Learning Materials	ICT (Class)	ICT (Individual)
% Change	2.6%	2.1%	5.7%	0.1%	-0.8%
Baseline	92.4%	29.2%	9.3%	1.5%	1.4%
Midline	**95.0%**	**31.3%**	**15.0%**	**1.6%**	**0.7%**

■Baseline ■Midline % Change
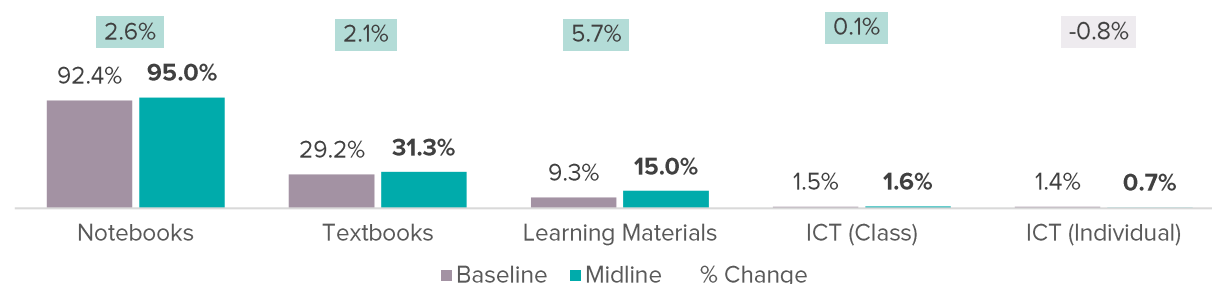
KEY FINDING 11. **Learners observed with notebooks, textbooks and learning materials slightly increased over baseline, though most learners still lack textbooks and learning materials.** 15.0% of learners had learning materials, the largest increase over baseline (9.3%). However, less than 1 out of 3 learners (31.3%) had a textbook. 95% of learners had a notebook with them, an increase from 92.4%. ICT remains extremely low in observed classrooms.
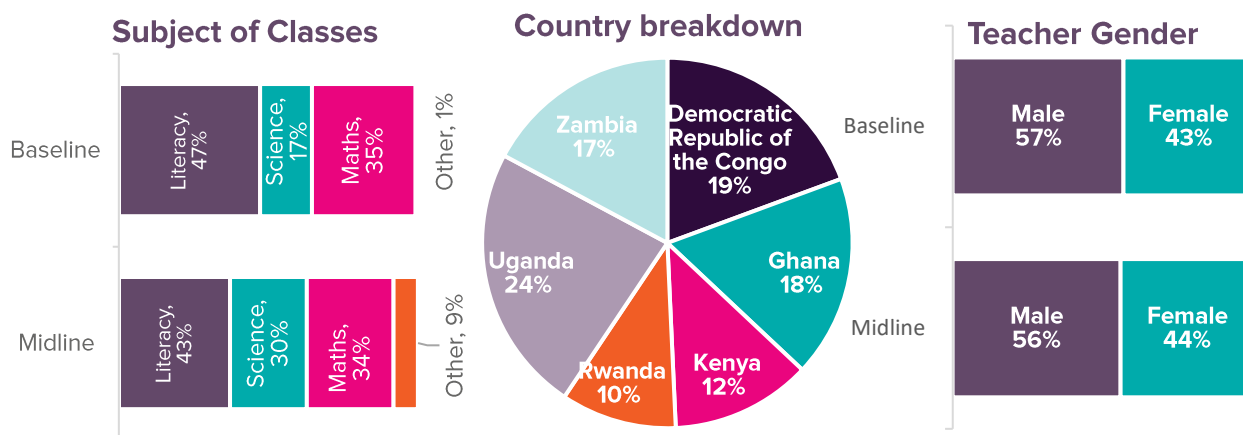
Materials for Teachers

	Chalkboard	Textbook	Learning Materials	ICT
% Change	-0.1%	2.6%	-3.4%	-0.4%
Baseline	99.5%	80.4%	13.6%	4.2%
Midline	**99.3%**	**83.0%**	**10.2%**	**3.8%**

■Baseline ■Midline % Change

KEY FINDING 12. **Most teachers have a chalkboard and teacher textbook in the classroom, with no significant changes since baseline.** Observed presence of learning materials saw a slight decrease at midline (10.2%) and ICT for teachers remains extremely uncommon.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS
MIDLINE FINDINGS

METHODOLOGY & NOTES

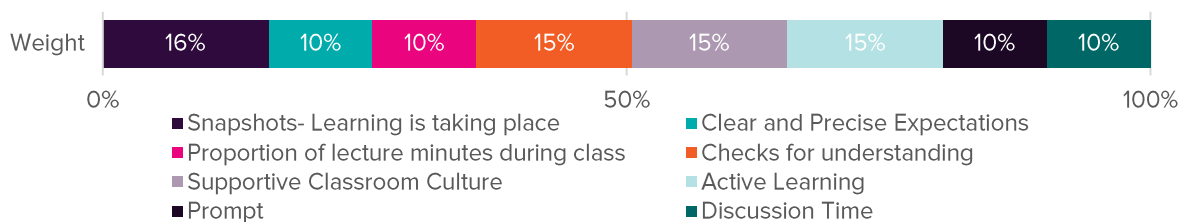**The Classroom Observation Tool (COB) is part of EduFinance's Monitoring & Evaluation toolkit.** This bespoke tool that aims to gather valid and reliable data on the in-class teaching practices, student engagement and classroom environment at Opportunity EduFinance partner schools. COB baselines in this analysis were collected from **6 countries** (DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia) between April 2021 - June 2023, observing a total of **927 classes in the baseline** and **1,070 in the midline**. The COB tool captures background information including subject and grade level, as well as learner engagement snapshots, materials & learning environment, planning & record keeping, and quality of teaching practice.

Subject of Classes

Baseline: Literacy, 47% | Science, 17% | Maths, 35% | Other, 1%

Midline: Literacy, 43% | Science, 30% | Maths, 34% | Other, 9%

Country breakdown

- Democratic Republic of the Congo 19%
- Ghana 18%
- Kenya 12%
- Rwanda 10%
- Uganda 24%
- Zambia 17%

Teacher Gender

Baseline: Male 57% | Female 43%

Midline: Male 56% | Female 44%

Calculating overall score. An overall (or Total) score was calculated for **each class based on the point scale below.** Unless otherwise noted, 0 points were awarded if the expectation of the indicator was not met.

- If learning was taking place during a **snapshot** and learners were on task **–** 4 points maximum
- If there were **clear & precise expectations set** for learners **–** 10 points
- If the teacher spent <30% of class time **lecturing -** 10 points
- If class started **on time** - 10 points, with a point deducted for every minute of lateness up to 10
- The ratio of discussion vs. lecture is measured, with 10 points awarded for no lecture time.
- The following teaching approaches were scored by observer ranking: Checks for learner understanding, Supportive classroom culture and Active learning were all ranked either none (0), low (5), medium (10) or high (15).

All components other than the snapshots are direct measures of teaching practice, which are internationally recognized and EduQuality programme-aligned indicators of learner-centred teaching.

Weight: 16% | 10% | 10% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 10% | 10%

0% .... 50% 100%

- ■ Snapshots- Learning is taking place
- ■ Clear and Precise Expectations
- ■ Proportion of lecture minutes during class
- ■ Checks for understanding
- ■ Supportive Classroom Culture
- ■ Active Learning
- ■ Prompt
- ■ Discussion Time

The Education Quality program of Opportunity EduFinance partners with affordable schools in low- and middle-income countries to continue improving the quality of education for learners. This includes Teacher Mentor Professional Development sessions that provide hands-on, interactive training on best practice teaching techniques, with a pedagogical focus on literacy. Training also equips mentors to deliver professional development training and coaching to peer teachers. Topics include:

- Engaging all Learners
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Phonics
- Planning a Lesson
- Checking for Understanding
- Leading Teacher Professional Development
- Leading Coaching