KEY INSIGHT: Baseline classroom observations found only 32% of classes scored >70% in teaching practice quality, highlighting opportunities for improvement

Opportunity EduFinance analysed 468 baseline classroom observations taken at partner EduQuality schools between late 2020 and 2021. Observations evaluate student engagement and teaching approaches aligned with best practice techniques shared in EduQuality Teacher Mentor Professional Development sessions. Sample data will continue to be collected annually to understand whether teaching practices shift over time. This Key Insight shares observations collected through baseline data prior to the delivery of teacher training.

Classroom Observation Total Scores

Key finding #1 – EduFinance’s scoring methodology provides significant differentiation of quality – enabling EduFinance to identify improvements in coming years.

Most observed classes had a total score between 60-70%. 15% of classes scored <50% overall, with 32% of classes scoring >70%. Only 6 classes achieved between 80-90%, and no classes achieved above 90%.

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
CLASSEMM ROOM OBSERVATIONS
BASELINE FINDINGS

Teaching Practice. The Classroom Observation tool evaluates multiple aspects of teaching practices that are cross-cutting best practices for instruction. In three areas, observers document whether the practice was used (yes/no), while in four areas, observers score on a 4-level scale based on set criteria in the coding manual. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>74.57%</td>
<td>25.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson curriculum</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Life Connections</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
<td>61.11%</td>
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Key finding #2 – Nearly 75% of teachers set expectations for the learners during the lesson, but most teachers do not connect the lesson to real life for learners to better understand. Only 39% of lessons referenced a real-life connection to the lesson topic.

Key finding #3 – Teachers do not actively use learner discussion in their teaching practice. 91% of classes had <5 minutes of discussion time with learners, with 52% reporting no discussion time. 33% of these classes included >5 minutes of lecture time, with 13% of classes including >10 minutes of lecture.
Key finding #4 – The majority of teacher were scored as medium in the practices of active learning, explanation and supportive classroom culture.

- However, less than 1 in 3 teachers used techniques to check for learner understanding throughout the lesson.
- Under Supportive Classroom Culture, 14% of teachers 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.
Key finding #5 – The majority of classes had \(<19\) learners present, with an average class size between 16-19 learners, excluding Rwanda. In Rwanda, the average class size was 32 learners, nearly double the average class sizes in Kenya, Ghana and Zambia.

Key finding #6 – Less than 1 in 4 teachers observed had a lesson plan for the class, but plans shared were of high quality. Of the 468 classes observed, 134 (24%) of teachers were able to show the M&E Specialist a lesson plan. Of the lesson plans shared, 96% included a learning activity, 94% were learner centered, and 90% had an assessment of the lesson. Of these three key features, only 83% of plans contained all three.
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 #9 – Material preparation was the most common reason a learning activity was not taking place, most often observed early in the class. Preparing or Passing Materials was observed most often (33%), followed by ‘Preparing to Write or Waiting’ (21%) and ‘Disciplining’ (14%).

Reason Learners not engaged in a Learning Activity during Snapshots

Overall Reasons

- Preparing or Passing Materials: 33.3%
- Preparing to Write: 21.1%
- Organising Attendance: 14.6%
- Disciplining: 13.2%
- Teacher Absent: 7.3%
- Other: 6.5%

Reasons By Snapshots #1 - 4

- Snapshot 1: 13.2%
- Snapshot 2: 3.4%
- Snapshot 3: 4.9%
- Snapshot 4: 4.7%

Key finding #7 – The vast majority of class time was spent on learning activities, observed in 94.3% of total snapshots. Learning activities were lowest in Snapshot #1 – taken 5 minutes into the lesson – but were more consistent during each of the other snapshots.

Key finding #8 – Most learners are engaged during learning activities, with 94% of learners observed on-task across all snapshots.
Key finding #10 – Nearly all learners had desks, and posters on classroom walls were common but rarely referenced during the lesson. 70.3% of classrooms had at least one poster, but the poster was only referenced in 7.2% of lessons. Learner work was displayed in less than 1/3 of classrooms (29.5%).

Key finding #11 – The most commonly available and used material for learners was a notebook. 94.4% of learners had a notebook, which was used in 83.1% of lessons. In comparison, only 1 in 3 learners (35%) had a textbook and only 19.9% of lessons used the textbook. Less than 3% of classes had any ICT present in the classroom.

Key finding #12 – Chalkboards were used in nearly all lessons, while hands-on learning materials were infrequently utilized during lesson. Teachers used hands-on learning materials during only 7.1% of observed lessons.
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 were collected across 4 countries from April 2021 - January 2022, observing a total of 468 classes. The COB tool captures background information including subject and grade, as well as learner engagement snapshots, materials & learning environment, planning & record keeping, and quality of teaching practice.

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 – 4 points
- 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.