

Teachers

Upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills to deliver quality education for all Filipino children

Philippines SEA-PLM 2019



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Context

Teachers play a central role in the education system by ensuring high quality instruction so that all children attain desirable learning outcomes. In this sense, it is critical that teachers are well-equipped with appropriate subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge and are deployed in areas where they are needed most.

In the Philippines, teacher candidates must earn a four-year degree diploma and pass the Board Licensure Exam for Professional Teachers (BELPT) to be eligible to teach in public schools. However, pre-service teacher preparation alone does not necessarily equip teachers with sufficient knowledge and skills to teach in the classroom. To fill the weakness of pre-service training, the reskilling and upskilling of teachers are a key component of *Sulong Edukalidad*, which is a nationwide initiative formulated in 2019 to improve the quality of education. While teachers do not have an organized professional development program, the Department of Education (DepEd) works with the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) to strengthen continuing professional development for teachers.



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Analysis and Key Findings

Although less than 10% of teachers receive training in subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge and skills before entering the classroom, some are supported with continuous professional development opportunities to enhance their skills after joining the teaching force

Pedagogical training enables teachers to acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver quality education, and is essential to promoting student achievement. However, data suggest that the majority of teachers in Grade 5 did not receive pre-service training in teaching foundational skills in the classroom.¹ For example, among those with less than two years of teaching experience, only 7% had training in mathematics before they entered the classroom, followed by 8% in reading, and 13% in writing (**Figure 1.1**) The figures essentially remain unchanged even among teachers with longer teaching experience. About 5% to 6% of those with more than two decades of teaching experience had received pre-service training in reading, writing, and mathematics.

In-service training opportunities are also still limited for the early career teachers. About 6% of teachers with less than two years of experience had in-service training in writing, 14% in mathematics and 17% in reading. However, teachers are likely to receive in-service training in foundational skills throughout their teaching career. While 6% of teachers with less than two years of teaching experience received in-service training in writing, the figure is 41% for those with more than 20 years of service. These findings imply that although a small share of teachers receive training in reading, writing, and mathematics before entering the classroom, some are supported with continuous professional development opportunities to enhance their skills after joining the teaching force.

Similarly, a high proportion of teachers also did not have pre-service training in other aspects of pedagogy. For example, only 13% of new teachers with less than two years of experience had training in inclusive education,² 19% in differentiated instruction, and 21% in student assessment prior to taking on the teaching profession (**Figure 1.2**). Teachers tend to receive in-service training in some aspects of pedagogy in the course of their career. For instance, more than 50% of teachers were trained in differentiated instruction during their two to five years of service. However, there are other aspects of pedagogy such as inclusive education, for which in-service training is still limited; less than 35% of teachers with more than 20 years of experience have undergone in-service training in inclusive education. Furthermore, although the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in education has been amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, on average, 10% of Grade 5 teachers had pre-service training on the use of ICT in the classroom and less than 40% received in-service training in 2019.

Figure 1.1: Percentage of Grade 5 teachers who received pre-service and in-service training by subjects and years of teaching experience

	Pre-Service Training			In-Service Training		
	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Less than 2 years	8	13	7	17	6	14
2-5 years	10	13	9	40	32	29
6-10 years	4	6	8	38	32	28
11-20 years	4	4	6	46	38	40
More than 20 years	5	6	5	47	41	41
Average	6	8	7	41	33	34

Source: Philippines SEA-PLM 2019

1. In SEA-PLM 2019, a teacher questionnaire examined teachers' education and training, and their attitudes about their school, classroom resources and practices. It was given to teachers of the sampled Grade 5 students. Results were self-reported by the teachers and represent their opinions.
 2. The existing DepEd inclusion programs include Special Education (SPED), Indigenous People's Education (IPEd), Madrasah Education Program (MEP), Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Last Mile Schools, Multigrade Program, and Alternative Delivery Modes (ADM).

Figure 1.2: Percentage of Grade 5 teachers who received pre-service and in-service training by pedagogical aspects and years of teaching experience

	Pre-Service Training					In-Service Training				
	Inclusive Education	Differentiated Instruction	Student Assessment	Classroom Management	ICT	Inclusive Education	Differentiated Instruction	Student Assessment	Classroom Management	ICT
Less than 2 years	13	19	21	27	26	5	17	20	22	13
2-5 years	9	2	10	13	13	18	55	42	38	34
6-10 years	6	5	1	4	6	23	48	43	43	32
11-20 years	8	4	6	5	8	29	51	47	49	46
More than 20 years	5	4	3	5	7	35	51	45	49	49
Average	7	5	7	8	10	25	47	42	43	39

Source: Philippines SEA-PLM 2019

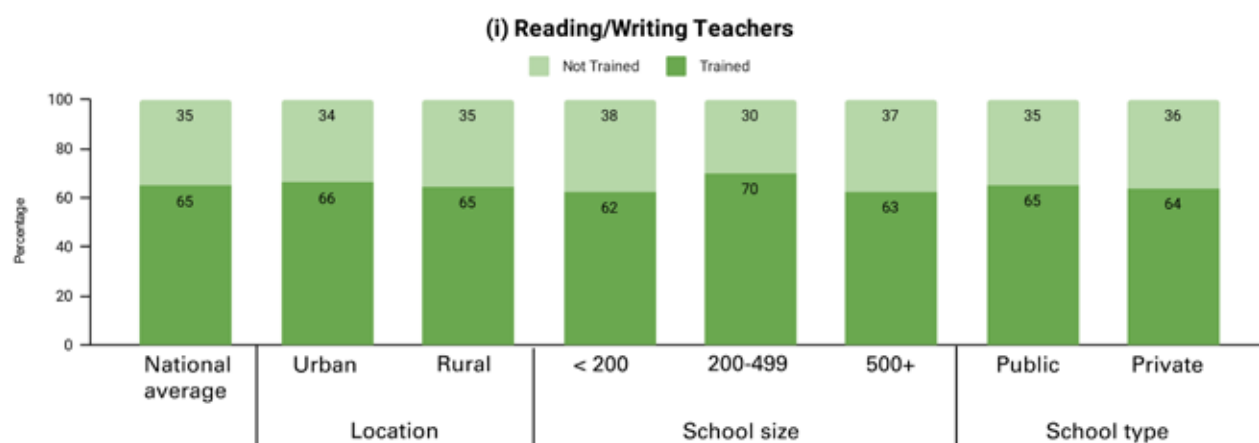
More than two-thirds of reading and writing teachers and mathematics teachers have received subject-matter training in reading and writing as well as mathematics

Teachers play a vital role in raising students' learning performance. In particular, quality teachers have a strong impact on low-performing students and contribute to closing the gap in learning outcomes between advantaged and disadvantaged children.³ As such, it is crucial to ensure that trained teachers are equitably allocated across the country to realize the right to quality education for all children.

According to SEA-PLM 2019, about 40% of Grade 5 teachers teach reading and writing. Among those, 65% received either pre-service or in-service training, or both types of training in reading and writing. Examining the distribution of trained reading and writing teachers across the Philippines, it was found that there are no large differences in the share of trained teachers between urban-rural classification⁴ and school type, while medium-sized schools (200 to 499 children) are slightly more likely to have trained reading and writing teachers (**Figure 2 (i)**).

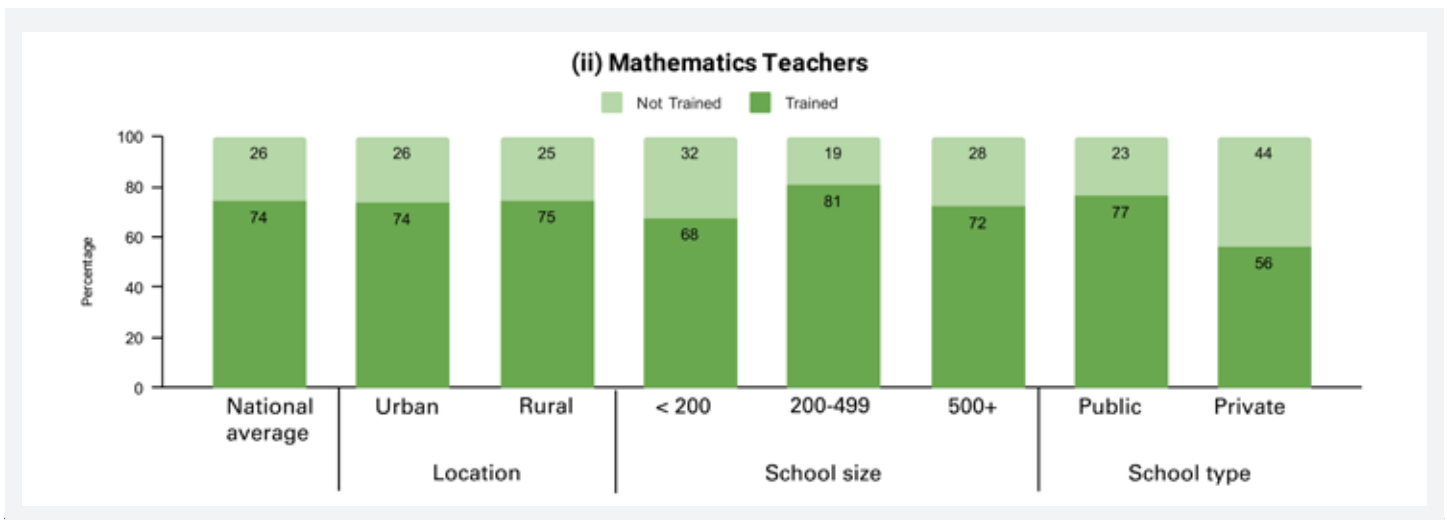
Similarly, 28% of Grade 5 teachers teach mathematics and 74% of those have received subject-matter training in mathematics. It is noteworthy that private schools have a lesser share of trained mathematics teachers. Specifically, 56% of trained mathematics teachers are in private schools, compared to 77% in public schools (**Figure 2 (ii)**). This could be because private schools in the Philippines are privately run entities that have to follow the government curriculum, but are allowed to manage their own teacher recruitment policy and practice.

Figure 2: Distribution of trained Grade 5 teachers by subject, location, school size, and school type



Source: Philippines SEA-PLM 2019

3. UNESCO. (2014). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4. Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All*. Paris: UNESCO.
 4. Large city and city are categorized as urban; and village, small town, and town are grouped as rural.



Source: Philippines SEA-PLM 2019

Box 1: The provision of a special hardship allowance for public school teachers

Imbalances in the distribution of teachers can be attributed to various factors. For instance, teachers might be reluctant to work in challenging areas due to the shortage of basic infrastructure, poor accessibility, and safety concerns. To recruit, retain, and encourage teachers to work in hard-to-reach areas, DepEd initiated the provision of a special hardship allowance for public school teachers under Republic Act No. 4670 in 1966. Teachers who are exposed to hardship such as difficulty in commuting and other hazards peculiar to the workplace may receive additional compensation. To respond to the need to update the special hardship allowance, UNICEF Philippines supported the conduct of a study via the *Data Must Speak Initiative* to generate evidence from the identification of recipients to the actual payment of allowance. In 2021, DepEd released a hardship index in DepEd Order No. 039, s. 2021 to determine the levels of special allowances for teachers working in the most challenging areas.

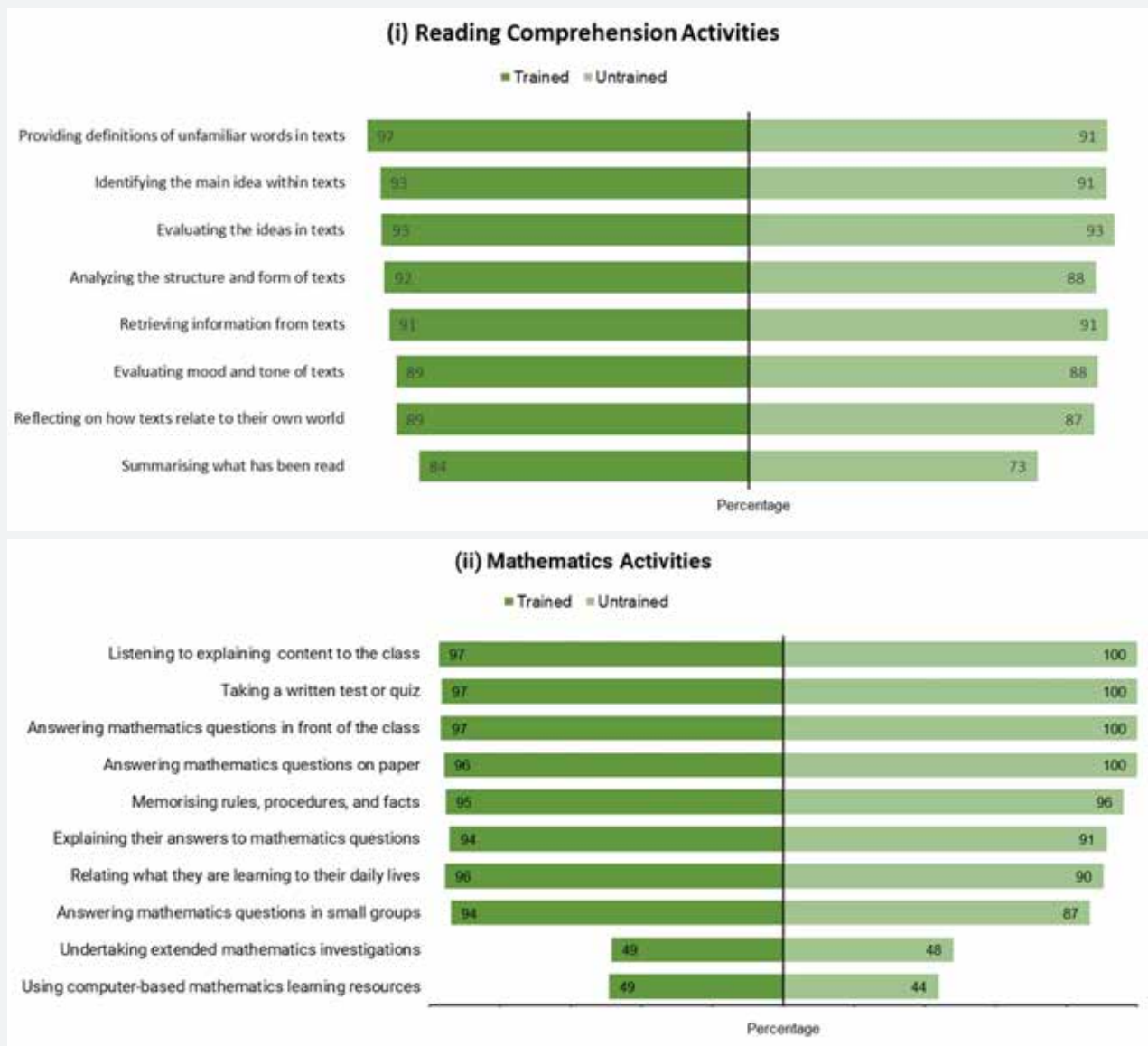
There is no large difference in the conduct of classroom learning activities in foundational skills between trained and untrained reading, writing, and mathematics teachers

Examining students' learning activities by the status of teacher training, there is no large difference in the number of activities students complete in the classroom as reported by trained and untrained teachers. Specifically, 73% of trained reading and writing teachers reported that their students complete the full eight reading comprehension activities, as described by SEA-PLM 2019, at least once a week or more in the class, while the figure is 65% for untrained teachers. Looking into specific activities, trained teachers are slightly more likely to report that their students complete activities such as "providing definition of unfamiliar words in text (6 percentage points more)" and "summarizing what has been read (11 percentage points more)" weekly or more often, compared to untrained teachers (**Figure 3 (i)**).

Similarly, 35% of trained mathematics teachers reported that their students complete the full 10 mathematics activities, as described by SEA-PLM 2019, at least once a week or more, compared to 37% for untrained teachers. In specific mathematics activities, while there is no major difference in the conduct of activities between trained and untrained mathematics teachers, trained teachers are marginally more likely to complete activities such as "relating what students are learning in mathematics to their daily lives (6 percentage points more)" and "answering mathematics questions in small groups (7 percentage points more)" in the classroom (**Figure 3 (ii)**).

The findings suggest the conduct of learning activities by subject-matter teachers, which does not find a large difference between trained and untrained teachers. It is important to note that children's learning performance is affected not only by teachers, but also by various other factors. Therefore, teachers' training status alone does not determine the effectiveness of children's learning.

Figure 3: Percentage of Grade 5 students who complete (i) reading comprehension activities and (ii) mathematics activities at least once a week or more as reported by teachers, by status of teacher training



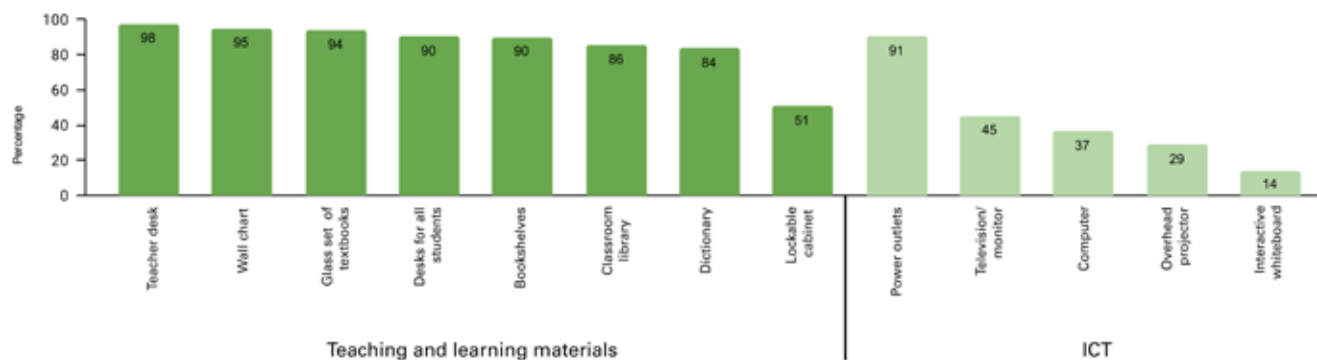
Source: Philippines SEA-PLM 2019

Box 2: Closing a gap in access to teaching and learning materials in the classroom

In addition to training opportunities, teachers' pedagogical approaches and interactions with students may also be influenced by the availability of teaching and learning materials, which can help improve student learning outcomes. In the Philippines, the majority of Grade 5 students and teachers had access to general teaching and learning materials in the classroom, such as teacher desks (98%), wall charts (95%), and class set of textbooks (94%), in 2019 (Figure 4).

However, access to ICT in classrooms was largely limited. While most Grade 5 students had access to power outlets (91%), less than half had ICT and digital learning platforms in classrooms, including televisions and monitors (45%) and computers (37%). In the context of COVID-19 and beyond in the new normal, the provision of digital technologies will play a key role in mitigating the digital divide across the country.

Figure 4: Percentage of Grade 5 students by access to teaching and learning materials in the classroom



Source: Adapted from UNICEF, 2021⁵

Recommendations

The analysis shows that teachers do not have sufficient training in subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge and skills before entering the classroom. Yet, some receive continuous professional development opportunities throughout their teaching career. This results in 87% of Grade 5 teachers having received some types of training before or after becoming a teacher. However, only 65% to 75% of reading, writing, and mathematics teachers have received subject-matter training. Moreover, knowledge and skills gaps in some aspects of pedagogy are yet to be filled by the existing in-service training opportunities.

Based on this analysis, the following recommendations may strengthen the capacity of teachers to deliver quality education for all children.



Upgrade the quality of pre-service training to ensure new teachers are equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills when entering the classroom

Pre-service training determines the quality of new teachers. However, SEA-PLM 2019 revealed that less than 10% of Grade 5 teachers had pre-service training in content knowledge and pedagogical skills. While a slightly larger share of early career teachers had been trained in these aspects before becoming teachers, compared to senior teachers, the findings highlight the need to enhance pre-service teacher training programs. Pre-service training is provided at teacher education institutions, which are governed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), while DepEd still has a strong influence on the teacher education curriculum. It is recommended to have regular consultations between teacher education institutions and DepEd curriculum planners to ensure teacher education programs properly reflect the K to 12 school curriculum. In addition to foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, the 21st century skills of problem solving, information literacy, and critical thinking should be embedded in the teacher education curriculum. Moreover, pre-service training should be closely linked to school practices. To achieve this, pre-service training programs could strengthen practicum training so that teacher candidates are exposed to the full scope of school activities before becoming a teacher.



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5. UNICEF (2022). *SEA-PLM 2019 Latest Evidence in Basic Education: Supporting teacher to improve learning in 6 Southeast Asian countries*. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



Provide high-quality in-service training opportunities that improve teacher competencies and lead to changed behavior in the classroom

As the majority of Grade 5 teachers did not receive pre-service training in subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, in-service training plays a key role in ensuring that teachers have sufficient competencies to teach in the classroom. On the other hand, opportunities for in-service training are still limited as less than half of Grade 5 teachers had received in-service training in reading, writing, and mathematics in their teaching career. In this sense, it is vital to expand high-quality in-service training opportunities, especially for teachers without a degree in education. Evidence from other countries suggests that collaboration among teachers may strengthen their teaching competencies.⁶ Therefore, peer-to-peer learning in Learning Action Cells (LAC), which is implemented by a national policy as a school-based continuous professional development strategy for teachers, should be invested in so that teachers can share knowledge and critically reflect curriculum and classroom practices with each other as in-service learning sessions. Moreover, other evidence suggests that school principals in high-performing schools have higher levels of engagement with teachers.⁷ As such, it is crucial to strengthen the instructional leadership of school principals to guide and mentor teachers through in-service coaching, while fostering a trusting and respecting environment within schools. Furthermore, teachers must be provided with training and professional development programs that are tailored to their specific needs. For example, instead of catering to mass training or generic training for teachers, they can be provided with training by specialization or based on the academic subjects that they are handling. Lastly, it is critical to establish systematic and robust teacher professional development programs beyond one-off training initiatives, in which the content reflects the need for subject-matter and pedagogical reskilling and upskilling and the quality of training is standardized. In this sense, DepEd's initiative to transform the NEAP could play a key role in enhancing professional development programs for teachers.



Build the capacity of teachers to adapt to teaching and learning under the new normal

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed teaching and learning practices. Yet, teachers still play a crucial role in maintaining learning continuity. As such, teacher training opportunities should be upgraded and expanded to adapt to teaching and learning under the new normal. For instance, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a heightened importance of ICT in education in blended distance learning. However, as of 2019, only 10% of Grade 5 teachers had received pre-service training in ICT before becoming a teacher and 39% have attended in-service training in their teaching career. Moreover, in order to identify potential learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, learning assessments should be utilized at the school level to prevent further deterioration of learning performance. In 2019, 7% of Grade 5 teachers had pre-service training in student assessments and 42% were trained via continuous teacher professional development. To recoup learning loss, learning remediation must also be put in place, prioritizing foundational skills. To better adjust to teaching and learning under the new normal, training opportunities should be further expanded to capacitate teachers to use ICT in education, conduct the assessment of foundational skills, and implement remedial programs according to learners' needs.



6. See for example: UNICEF Laos. (2022). *Policy Brief 1: Investing in Teacher Capacity - the Key to Effective Learning*.

7. UNICEF Laos.(2022). *Policy Brief 2: School Principals in Highly Effective Schools – Who Are They and Which Good Practices Do They Adopt?*



Collect more data and conduct research on teacher effectiveness

More information and research are needed to understand teacher effectiveness and help design and implement policies to address the gaps. For instance, the teacher questionnaire of SEA-PLM 2019 examines teachers' education and training background and their attitudes about school, classroom resources, and practices among teachers of the sampled Grade 5 students. However, the questionnaire does not fully capture a holistic view of the teaching profession in Grade 5. In the next round of SEA-PLM, the teacher questionnaire could be further expanded (e.g., investigate teachers' professional development needs as the current one only asks about participation in training and questions on more general pedagogical support for teachers such as the preparation of lesson plans, checking students' in-class work and homework, and communication with parents). Additionally, in SEA-PLM or other studies or data collection, it would be relevant to examine relationships between teachers and school leaders. Furthermore, teacher assessment can be conducted to test the content knowledge of teachers and look into how it is linked with student performance. These additions may provide better insights into teacher effectiveness on children's learning performance.



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SEA-PLM 2019 Datasets:

To access and download SEA-PLM 2019 datasets, codebooks, background questionnaires, and a data user manual, please submit a registration form via the link below:

<https://link.seameo.org/SEAPLMDatasets>

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