



Improving school climate and students' opportunities to learn

- Almost one in three teachers across countries participating in the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reports having more than 10% of potentially disruptive students with behaviour problems in their classes.
- Teachers with more than one in ten students with behaviour problems spend almost twice as much time keeping order in the classroom than their peers with less than 10% of such students in their class.
- Behaviour issues such as intimidation or verbal abuse among students are associated with student absenteeism.
- Schools that promote participation of students, teachers and parents in school decisions, combined with a culture of shared responsibility and mutual support, tend to have lower incidence of student misbehaviour.

What is TALIS?

TALIS is the first international survey examining teaching and learning environments in schools. It asks teachers and school principals about their work, their schools and their classrooms. This cross-country analysis helps countries identify others facing similar challenges and learn about their policies.

TALIS 2013 focused on lower secondary education teachers and their principals. It sampled 200 schools in more than 30 countries and 20 teachers as well as the principal in each school.

More information available at www.oecd.org/talis

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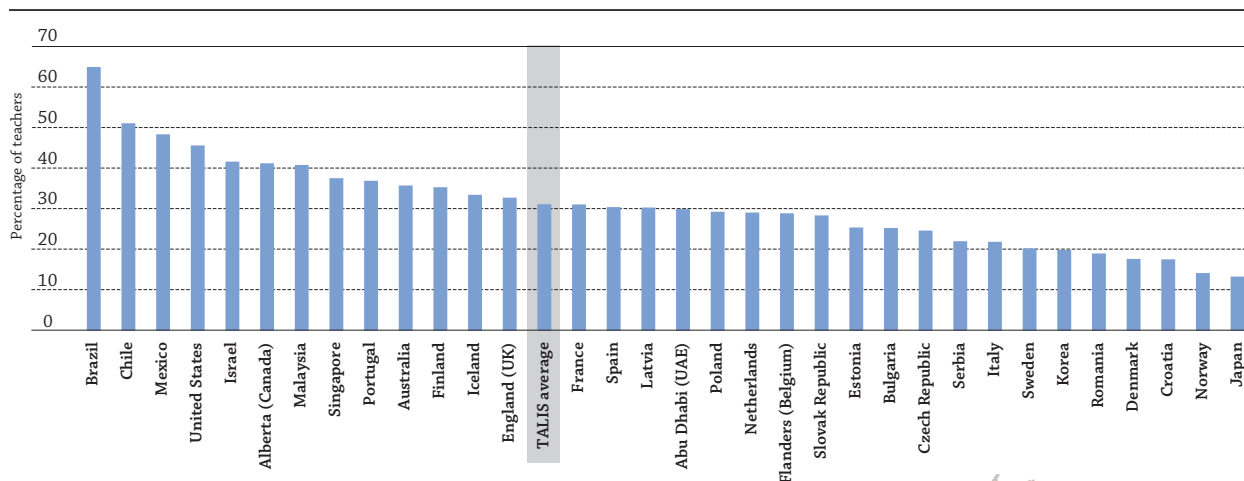
Classroom composition, disruptive behaviour and classroom learning

Time allocated for classroom learning is a necessary but not sufficient condition for educating students. Indeed, there are many factors which can reduce the actual classroom learning time. Among these, TALIS 2013 investigates particularly student absenteeism and behaviour problems.

Almost one in three teachers across TALIS participating countries and economies reports having more than 10% of students with behaviour problems in their classes, that is students who are likely to disrupt classroom learning. But there are many differences between countries: around 10% of teachers in Norway report more than 10% of students with behaviour problems but as many as 60% of teachers report the same in Brazil.



Figure 1 • **Percentage of teachers who report having more than 10% of students with behaviour problems in their classrooms**



Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database.

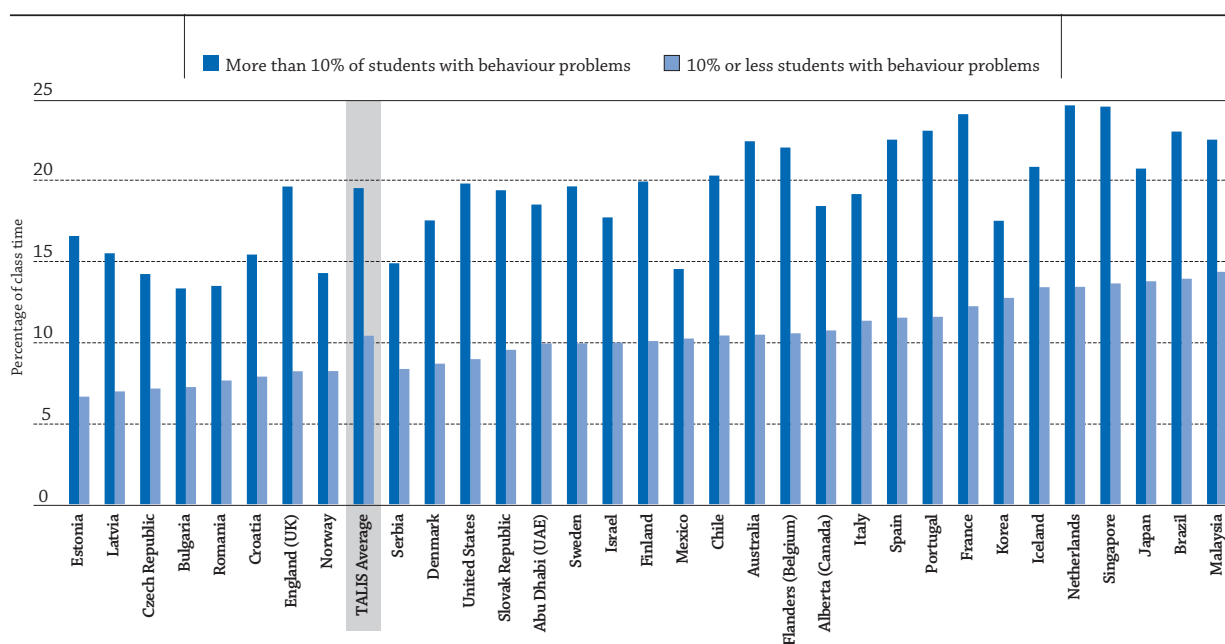
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In all TALIS 2013 countries and economies, teachers who report having higher proportions of students with behaviour problems in their classrooms are also the ones who report spending more time keeping order in the classroom (19% of class time against 10% for countries with lower proportions of such students, on average; see Figure 2). Thus, the more challenging the classrooms, the more teaching time is taken up by order-keeping – almost twice as much, on average.

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Figure 2 • **Average proportion of class time spent keeping order in the classroom, by the proportion of students with behaviour problems in the classroom**



Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database.



Student absenteeism

In addition to time lost in the classroom when teachers are keeping order instead of teaching, students miss out on opportunities to learn when they are regularly absent from classes.

Across all TALIS countries and economies, 39% of teachers work in schools where absenteeism of students occurs every week. Yet in Alberta (Canada), Finland, Sweden and the United States, the problem is even more severe, with more than 60% of teachers working in schools where principals report that students are absent on a weekly basis.

What this means in practice

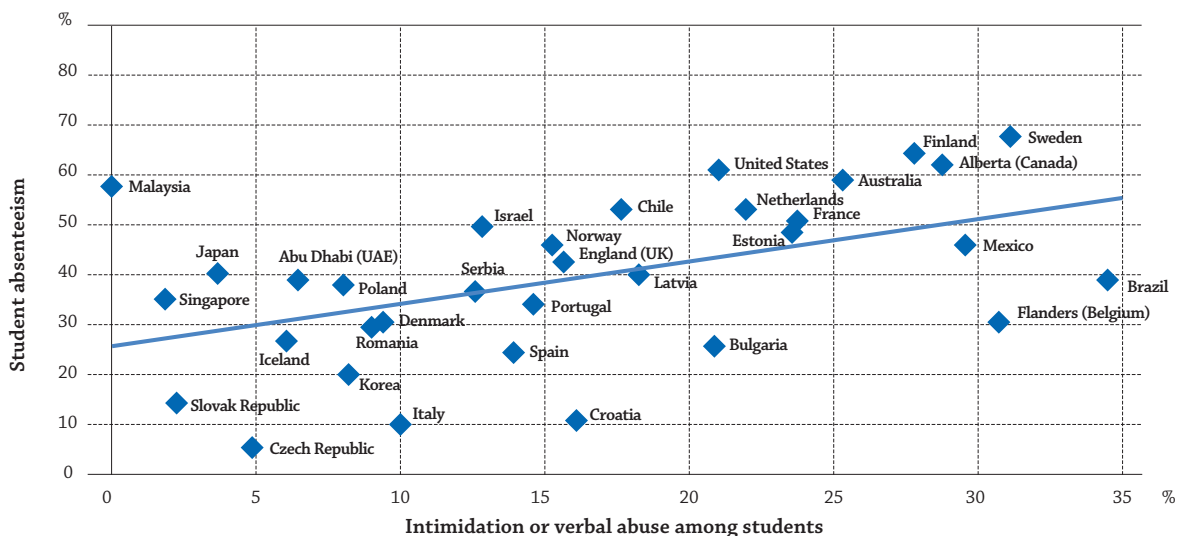
Students miss school for many reasons, including illness or family responsibilities. But some students do not attend school or are disruptive because they do not see a value in being there. Schools with particularly high rates of absenteeism need to work on motivating their students. Students who experience meaningful work with an optimal degree of challenge (neither too low nor too high) are confident that they can meet the demands and are more motivated to attend and participate in schooling (Porter, 2006; Willms et al., 2009).

Student intimidation and verbal abuse

Intimidation or verbal abuse among students can be another challenge to learning. Across TALIS countries and economies, 16% of teachers work in schools where the principals report that intimidation or verbal abuse occurs at least on a weekly basis. However, in Alberta (Canada), Australia, Brazil, Finland, Flanders (Belgium), Mexico and Sweden, at least one in four teachers works in a school where the principal reports student intimidation and abuse on a weekly basis.

TALIS countries and economies with higher levels of student intimidation or verbal abuse are also more likely to have a higher incidence of student absenteeism (See Figure 3). Thus, these negative aspects can reinforce each other and together bring about a negative learning environment.

Figure 3 • **Relationship between intimidation or verbal abuse among students and student absenteeism¹**



1. Pearson correlation index $r = 0.50$.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database.

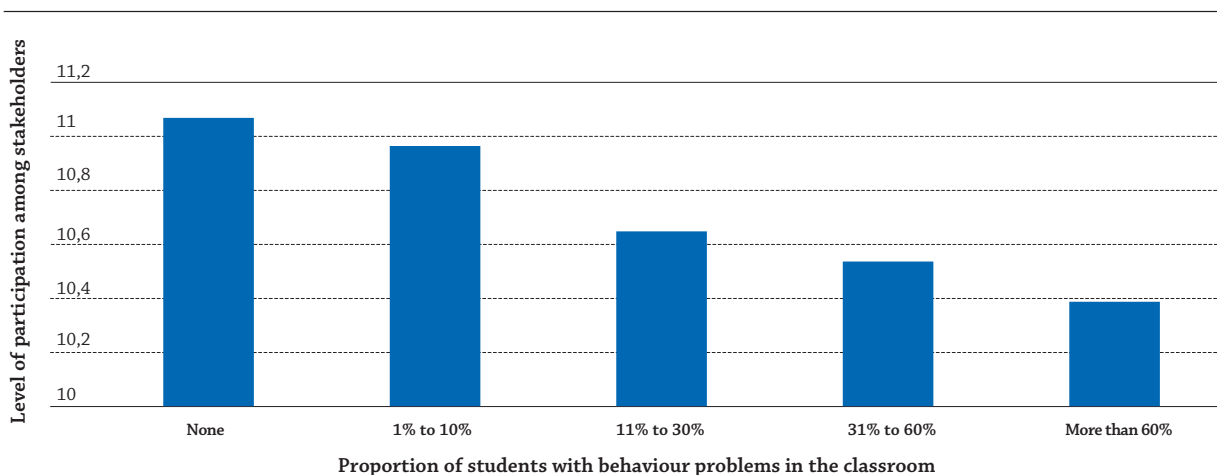


School climate and time for learning

Building a positive school culture can be beneficial for learning. This can happen by involving students, parents and teachers in school decisions. Indeed, across TALIS countries and economies, teachers who report working in schools with higher levels of participation among stakeholders² are less likely to report high proportions of students with behaviour problems in their classrooms (see Figure 4). These results indicate that promoting the participation of stakeholders in school decisions, combined with a culture of shared responsibility and mutual support, can bring about a more positive student behaviour and learning environment.

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Figure 4 • Relationship between the reported level of participation among stakeholders and the proportion of students with behaviour problems in the classroom



Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database.

The bottom line Disruptive student behaviour reduces teaching time and thus opportunities for learning for all students in a classroom and it is also related to student attendance in school. Schools can help to mitigate these challenges by promoting initiatives for positive relationships among students and between students, parents and teachers. For instance, involving students, parents and teachers in school decisions and helping to create or improve a culture of shared responsibility is likely to increase student engagement and positive behaviour (Porter, 2006).

References

Porter, L. (2006), *Behaviour in Schools: Theory and Practice for Teachers*, Open University Press, Maidenhead.
 Willms, J., S. Friesen and P. Milton (2009), *What Did You Do in School Today? Transforming Classrooms through Social, Academic and Intellectual Engagement*, First National Report, Canadian Education Association, Toronto.

2. The TALIS index of participation among stakeholders comprises questions about students, parents and staff's participation in school decisions and whether the school culture is characterised by mutual support and shared responsibility. It ranges from 4.11 to 15.77.

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To learn more

OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris.
 OECD (2014), *A Teachers' Guide to TALIS 2013*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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