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## 5

# Teachers and Teaching

This chapter will present the main points arising from the OECD team's discussions with key personnel in the education sector on teacher recruitment, preparation and working conditions; a detailed analysis of teacher education and training programmes, both initial and in-service; and the team's findings and recommendations.



## INTRODUCTION

The central contribution of teachers and teaching to the promotion of a high quality education system has been confirmed in a wide range of international research. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that, of all the in-school variables that can add value to the achievements of the students, the quality of teaching is the most significant. This is made clear in the OECD PISA 2009 Report (OECD, 2010), which states “The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and principals, since student learning is ultimately the product of what goes on in classrooms.” It is also recognised in OECD report *Teachers Matter* (OECD, 2005, p. 26), where it is stated that: “Of those variables which are potentially open to policy influence, factors involving teachers and teaching are the most important influences on student learning.” (Rivikin, et al., 2005, p. 419) state that: “High quality instruction throughout primary school could substantially offset disadvantages associated with low economic background.” It follows that significant improvements in the quality of education are unlikely to be achieved in the absence of high quality teacher education programmes and a working environment that provides appropriate supports, challenges and rewards.

Many of the issues highlighted in the rest of this chapter, and many of our findings and recommendations are likely to apply also to teachers in other regions of Spain. A recent OECD report, *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession – Lessons from around the world* (OECD, 2011a), brings together evidence from PISA, *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators* (OECD, 2011b) and OECD’s 2008 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in which Spain participated (OECD, 2009). This report identified the conditions in which high-quality teaching is most likely to flourish, and the countries where those conditions exist to the fullest extent. Only rarely was Spain among those countries. For example:

- Of 23 TALIS countries, Spain had the third highest percentage of teachers who got no mentoring or induction. The percentage of teachers who got no induction was more than twice the TALIS average. The percentage who got no mentoring was more than 2.5 times the TALIS average.
- Spain supported a relatively low percentage of its teachers to undertake professional development (in-service training). The percentage of teachers whose full training costs were met was some 10 percentage points below the TALIS average; only 30% were allowed to take in-service training during scheduled teaching hours, compared to a TALIS average of over 50%; and only 5% received a salary supplement for training, compared to 12% across all TALIS countries. Given this lack of support, it was very creditable that the number of training days undertaken by teachers in Spain paying some or all of their own costs was marginally higher than the TALIS average number of days.
- At 45%, the percentage of Spanish teachers who had had no appraisal in the last 18 months was more than three times the TALIS average, the second highest after Italy; and appraisal was relatively unlikely to impact on Spanish teachers’ careers.
- Where appraisal of Spanish teachers was undertaken, student results were considered **slightly** more important and helping students with Special Educational Needs **considerably** more important than the TALIS average; on the other hand, introducing innovative practices and undertaking professional development were considerably less important.
- Spanish teachers were less likely than teachers in the average TALIS country to be dismissed or have their pay reduced because of persistent underperformance. They were also less likely than teachers in the average TALIS country to receive financial or other rewards if they were more innovative or improved the quality of their teaching.
- Compared to Europe’s highest-performing PISA countries, the grounds on which Spanish teachers could receive additional payments were relatively few, and largely unrelated to performance or taking on extra duties. Both Finland and the Netherlands reward outstanding teaching performance, successful completion of professional development activities, teaching more classes or hours than required by the full-time contract, special tasks such as career guidance or counselling, leading extra-curricular activities and teaching students with special educational needs. In Spain none of these things are rewarded – except completion of professional development activities, which in some regions (not the Canary Islands) is a condition for receiving six-yearly service increments.
- The only indicator on which Spain ranked highly was on making teaching an attractive profession in pay terms. Comparing salaries of teachers with 15 years of experience to earnings for all full-time workers aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education, Spanish teachers earned 26% more. Teachers in all the other 18 OECD countries for which data was available earned less, ranging from 3% less in Germany to 50% less in the Czech Republic (OECD average: 21% less) (OECD, 2011b, Table D3.1).

## TEACHERS’ TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Teachers in the Canary Islands are part of the Spanish Civil Service and so are covered by civil service terms and conditions of employment. As civil servants, they are contracted to work a 37.5 hour week and have jobs for life. There is no early retirement scheme for civil servants, though individuals may apply for early retirement if health problems render them unable to continue working.

A teacher’s working week is organised as follows. Primary teachers teach for 25 hours a week and have to be present in school for a total of 28 hours. The rest of their working time, which can be spent out of school, is allocated for activities such as class preparation, examining students’ homework and marking assessments. Secondary teachers teach for 18 hours a week and have to be present in school for a total of 24 hours, with the remainder spent as for their primary counterparts.



Some teachers are also tutors. Tutors spend at least one hour a week with each student tutored, so have a reduced load of other teaching. During tutoring sessions, students' progress and other issues related to their schooling are discussed. Tutor groups consist of 25 students at primary level and 30 students at secondary. Tutors are designated by the school principal to monitor students' learning progress, serve as advisors to other teachers in the school, and report their observations to the principal. Tutors also play a vital role in communications with parents; two hours per week are reserved for discussions with students' families. To date, teachers at secondary level who serve as tutors have received very little pedagogical training for this role; though the team understands that a new training model is in preparation.

### Teacher recruitment

Teachers are appointed to schools by officials in the Canary Islands Ministry of Education, who select them from lists of those successful in competitions, which must be open to teachers from anywhere in Spain. The rules governing both the competitions and the selection of teachers for appointment to particular vacancies are laid down nationally. All candidates must have passed the general civil service exam. The rules require candidates for permanent teaching appointments to be considered for vacancies according to a points system, also laid down nationally. The points system is heavily weighted in favour of teachers with greater seniority, much to the dissatisfaction of younger and newly qualified teachers who find it difficult to gain employment, and the principals of public schools who have no input into the selection process for staff in their schools. Supply teachers in the Canary Islands are recruited and appointed on a similar basis.

Once in a permanent appointment, teachers can apply for a change of school if they wish. In this situation too, the points system weighted towards seniority applies; in public schools, a more junior teacher already in the post will have to vacate it if a more senior colleague wants it, regardless of the preferences of the school's principal. Consequently, the more senior and experienced, but possibly less up to date members of the profession can be found in the more desirable/sought after schools, with a preponderance of younger and less experienced teachers in the less desirable schools and more remote rural and smaller island areas. This can in turn lead to an imbalance in the age profile of teachers in public schools. Established schools in popular locations, such as the bigger cities, tend to have few, if any, young teachers who would bring with them new ideas and modern teaching methodologies to share with the more experienced staff, while young and inexperienced teachers in other schools have fewer more experienced role models to induct them into the profession. Once in public schools, the more senior teachers also get first choice of the classes they will teach.

However, the 2011 OECD report on high-quality teaching pointed out that "credentials and years of experience [...] have been shown to be weak indicators of teacher effectiveness" (OECD, 2011a). The report also observed that good pay and other policies to encourage talented people to enter teaching "are unlikely to pay off if high-quality candidates find it hard to gain teaching posts. The best candidates, who are likely to have good job prospects outside teaching, may not be willing to wait in a lengthy queue or endure a succession of short-term teaching assignments in difficult schools. Well structured and resourced selection processes and programmes of induction that ensure that the best candidates get the available jobs are therefore critical. Reducing the weight given to seniority in ranking applicants for teaching vacancies can also help reduce the risk that new teachers will be disproportionately assigned to difficult schools."

### The teaching career

Discussions with various groups of administrators, teacher unions, parents, employers and teachers indicated to the OECD team that teachers do not enjoy a particularly high status in the Islands. The team was informed that, thanks to major improvements achieved over the past thirty years, this scenario is slowly changing. The omens for the future seem positive, if the opportunities now presenting themselves are grasped.

From visits to schools and discussions with the staff, the team learned a great deal about the conditions under which schools in the Canary Islands operate and the challenges their teachers meet in their daily work. While the limited number of schools the team was able to visit in the time available may not be representative of all schools in the system, those schools seemed bright, spacious, welcoming and reasonably well resourced. The teachers the team met were open, cheerful and frank in their evaluations of their working conditions; they appeared to be deriving satisfaction and fulfilment from their work, and were committed to their students' welfare. The team found that many of the conditions conducive to providing a rich and supportive learning environment were present in the schools visited. On the whole, school infrastructure in the Canary Islands compares favourably with that found in many similarly developed countries.

Teachers in the Canary Islands also mentioned, however, that they face a number of problems. A number of school staff spoke of the lack of support among a significant number of parents for the schools and for their children's educational welfare. This lack of engagement on the part of some parents remains, despite initiatives such as early school openings; provision of breakfast for needy students and after-school tuition for pupils experiencing difficulties; and open days, family days and courses for parents. Other problems mentioned included student absenteeism, high failure rates, and the numbers repeating classes. School staff also complained of teacher absenteeism and a failure to provide timely substitutions, which added to the workload of the colleagues then required to cover their classes.

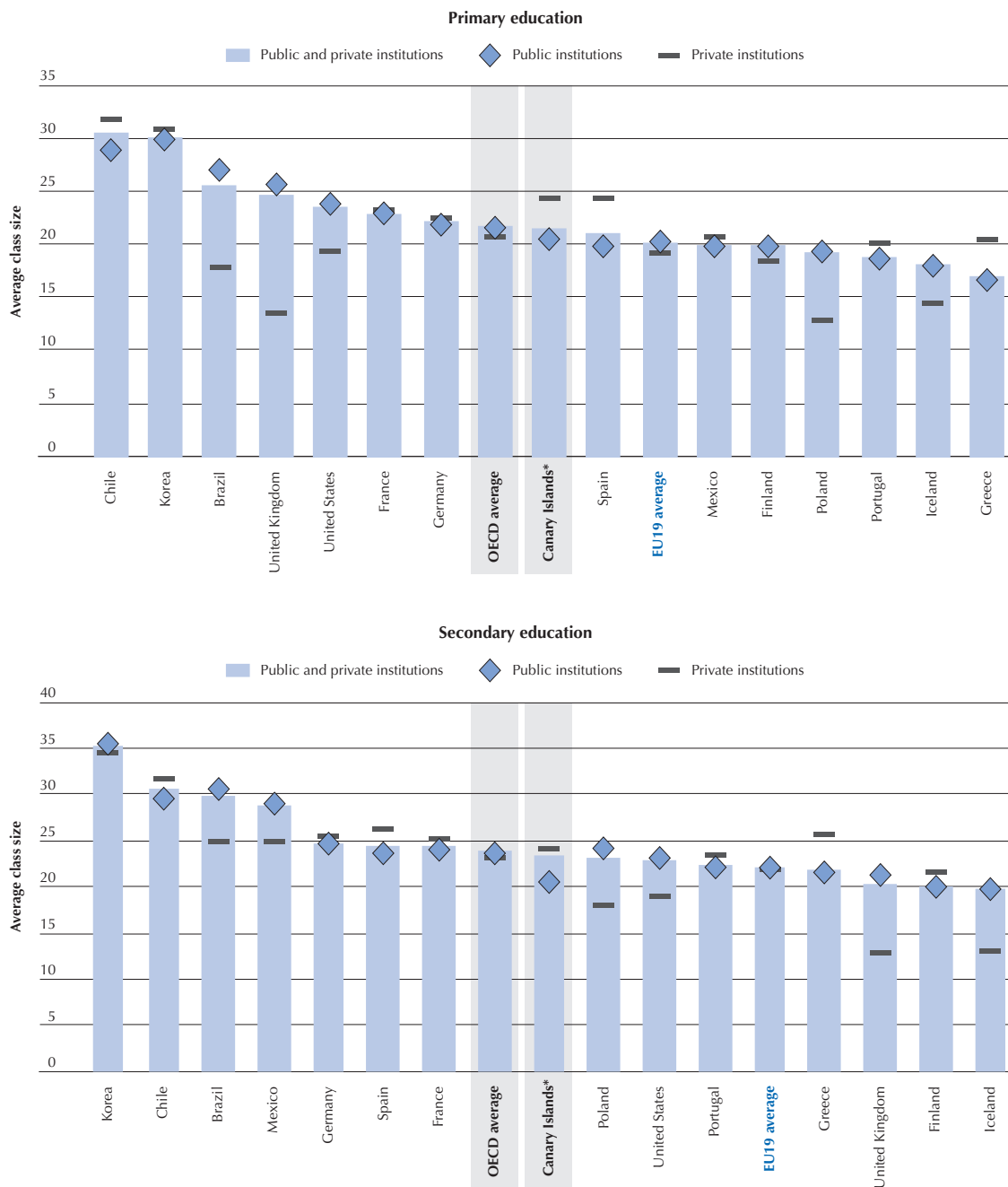


More centrally related to the classroom performance of teachers are the challenges they encounter in dealing with diversity in the classroom. Teachers appear ill-equipped to cater for the span of student abilities and student motivation to be found in the typical Canary Islands classroom. They complain that many students do not appreciate the value of education as a foundation for life after school: as one put it, “Students do not have a culture based on personal effort.” Teachers usually respond by making high numbers repeat the year, which – as Chapter 4 has shown – reduces students’ motivation further and rarely resolves their performance issues.

PISA evidence suggests that at least some poor student performance may be teacher-related. PISA created an *index of teacher-related factors* affecting the school climate and influencing student learning, based on school principals’ reports on the extent to which – in their view – learning in their schools was hindered by *i)* teachers’ low expectations of students, *ii)* poor student-teacher relations, *iii)* absenteeism among teachers, *iv)* staff resistance to change, *v)* teachers not meeting individual students’ needs,

Figure 5.1

### Average class size, by type of institution and level of education (2009)



\*Year of reference 2009/10.

Source: OECD, 2011 and Consejería, 2011.



vi) teachers being too strict with students and vii) students not being encouraged to achieve their full potential. Positive values on the index reflect principals' perceptions that these teacher-related behaviours hinder learning to a lesser extent than the OECD average; negative values reflect perceptions that these behaviours hinder learning to a greater extent than the OECD average. The results for regions in Spain are very interesting. Spain as a whole scores 0.10 on this index, better than the OECD average of -0.09. A number of regions have positive scores, the highest being Asturias with 0.25; Andalusia, Castile and Leon and Catalonia with 0.22; the Basque Country with 0.17; and Murcia with 0.14. Several regions are on or very near the OECD average, including Ceuta and Melilla, Galicia, Navarre and Cantabria. The Canary Islands' score is not only negative, but also the lowest of any Spanish region in PISA, at -0.31.

PISA also has an *index of teacher-student relations*, based on the answers students gave to five questions. One of them is whether they agree that "If I need extra help, I will receive it from my teachers". Only 68% of Spanish students agreed, compared to 79% across the OECD: among EU countries, only Austria (67%) and Greece (63%) had lower percentages. In the Canary Islands, 73% of students agreed; this is above the average for Spain but still below the OECD average. These results give reason to assume that in the Islands as in Spain as a whole, insufficient attention is given to responding to students needing extra help, both in classrooms and in teacher training.

Some teachers suggested to the OECD team that they could give students more help and individual attention if class sizes were smaller and pupil-teacher ratios lower. Figure 5.1 compares primary and secondary class sizes in the Canary Islands 2009/10<sup>1</sup> with those in a selection of OECD countries in 2009 (figures from *Education at a Glance 2011*), the latest year available. These figures show that classes in the Islands are higher than average for EU19 countries, but lower than average across the OECD.

Table 5.1 compares the student-teacher ratios in secondary education of the Spanish regions participating in PISA. The table shows that the Canary Islands' ratio of 10.9 is higher than some, lower than others. However, the four regions with the highest reading scores in PISA (Castile and Leon, Madrid, La Rioja and Catalonia – see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2) all have significantly higher student-teacher ratios than the Canary Islands.

Similarly, the PISA 2009 database shows that none of the 10 countries with the highest reading scores in PISA had lower student-teacher ratios than the Canary Islands. Finland, shown in Figure 5.1 as having lower average secondary class sizes than the Canary Islands, had a student-teacher ratio of 11.2. The rest of the top 10 had ratios ranging from Shanghai-China's 14.1 to Korea's 17.2. PISA research on how system resources are related to student outcomes confirms this observation and shows that average class size for the language of instruction explains only a marginal part of the performance variation between countries. It is more cost-effective to invest in teacher quality than in class size reductions (OECD, 2010).

To sum up, the statistical evidence suggests neither that the size of classes faces Canary Islands teachers with unusual challenges, nor that the Islands would find it worthwhile to invest in lowering student-teacher ratios.

**Table 5.1 Student-teacher ratios in Spanish regions**

	Student/teacher ratio	
	Ratio	Standard Error
Galicia	10.2	(0.27)
Navarre	10.4	(0.19)
Balearic Islands	10.4	(0.62)
Asturias	10.4	(0.31)
Cantabria	10.6	(0.31)
Basque Country	10.8	(0.22)
Canary Islands	10.9	(0.59)
Ceuta and Melilla	11.4	(0.03)
Murcia	11.4	(0.51)
Castile and Leon	11.5	(0.47)
Aragon	11.9	(0.31)
Andalusia	12.2	(0.25)
La Rioja	12.7	(0.03)
Madrid	13.1	(0.43)
Catalonia	13.5	(0.95)

Source: OECD PISA 2009 database.



## Teacher pay and rewards

Teachers in many systems are experiencing increased pressure and workloads and are expected to do more with less, due to difficult economic circumstances and in some cases reductions in salary. Teachers in the Canary Islands are in a similar position. While such conditions may be unavoidable, they can profoundly affect the morale of the profession and the commitment of teachers. In the Islands – though this was not apparent in the teachers interviewed – the team heard that the teaching cadre as a whole is demoralised, both by the challenges of teaching and by the 5% reduction in salaries last year, followed by a pay freeze this year. (The reduction and freeze applied to all civil servants, as part of the Spanish government’s response to the economic crisis.) One estimate the team heard was that 80% of teachers were demoralised and disaffected. Teachers feel unappreciated – by the Canary Islands authorities, by the general public and by parents. They have some reason to feel this way: the OECD team was informed that many parents and members of the public incline to the view that teachers in the Canary Islands have generous working conditions and pay, but are not achieving very good results for the students and should be more willing than many are to undertake in-service training.

Different views were expressed about teachers’ salaries, with some groups contending that teachers were adequately compensated and others taking the opposite view. The President of the Canary Islands government told the OECD team that teachers in the Islands are well-paid by Spanish standards: as Chapter 3 shows, this is certainly true of starting salaries. Moreover, Spanish standards are generous by comparison with OECD standards generally. However it is clear that there is no career structure through which teachers can progress through the various stages of their career as they acquire new skills, whether in teaching or in management and leadership. Salary increases are “automatic”, and there are no rewards for achieving good or improved results. Opportunities for promotion are quite limited; the rewards for those who do progress are very modest and do not compensate for the additional work and responsibilities involved.

This was also cited as one reason for the low take-up of in-service courses. In the Canary Islands, participation in in-service training is entirely voluntary. There is no incentive or reward for undertaking it, except for young teachers who earn extra points which may help them to be selected for a permanent appointment – unless they are competing with a more senior teacher, in which case experience trumps training. Some other regions of Spain make the payment of 6-yearly increments conditional on having undertaken in-service training.

## OECD team views

The terms and conditions of service for Canary Islands teachers pose serious issues which, if not addressed, will continue to limit the contribution teachers can make to raising the Islands’ low results. Most of these are linked to the civil service terms and conditions under which teachers operate. Many can only be dealt with through national level discussions; a few can be addressed using discretion available at the regional level. Key issues include the teacher recruitment and deployment system; the lack of a proper career structure for teachers; current pay structures, which offer little encouragement to teachers to improve their pupils’ performance, or their own; and deficiencies in teacher training, particularly in-service training.

Teachers appear happy with their civil service status, but most other stakeholders told the team that it leads to a number of problems. This is not so much because they are civil servants, as because of the particular terms civil servants have in Spain, underpinned by national law which is difficult to change. For example, teachers have tenure (jobs for life as civil servants). A senior Inspector suggested that the OECD team’s report should “underline 14 times” the major problems this causes throughout the system. It makes it virtually impossible to dismiss teachers or arrange their early retirement, whatever they do and however ineffective they may be. It inhibits school organisation or reorganisation – the context of the Inspector’s suggestion was a request from a high-performing, popular post-secondary school to add a class, which could not be granted because it would then attract students away from other, unpopular local schools and leave their tenured teachers without posts. It obliges the regional government officials to appoint the most experienced candidates to posts, ahead of younger, better-trained teachers, leaving many young, better-trained teachers unable to find jobs or use their training, which is a waste of training costs and talent. It entitles any teacher to refuse to take refresher or in-service training: the team’s interlocutors agreed that there might well be teachers in the public school system who had had none in the 20 or 30 years since they finished initial teacher training. And because civil servants are prohibited from taking up any work of a private nature, teachers of vocational subjects are not able to return to industry, even temporarily, to refresh their skills and subject knowledge.

Difficult as change may be, it seems to the OECD team essential that the Canary Islands government develops proposals for change, for discussion with Spain’s national government. The role and responsibilities of a teacher are so different from the role and responsibilities of the average government official, that it seems seriously inappropriate to insist that their terms and conditions must be identical. Teachers need to have their own special status – as public servants rather than civil servants – and to have terms and conditions that help, rather than hinder, the achievement of educational objectives. This offers Canary Islands teachers the best chance of regaining public respect. Where it is not feasible to introduce particular changes for teachers already in the profession, it would at least be desirable to introduce them for new entrants.



The **teacher recruitment and deployment** system is a clear example of civil service arrangements producing sub-optimal results. Currently, the suitability of teaching applicants is judged by whether they pass the civil service exam: but passing this exam is no guarantee of possessing all the talents and skills a good teacher needs.

But what is a good guarantee? A recent consultation document from the English Department for Education reviewed the lessons from international experience, as follows.<sup>2</sup> First, the world's best-performing systems draw their teachers from the highest-achieving third of graduates. Some of the most successful countries, like Finland and South Korea, draw from the top ten per cent. In recruiting teachers, the approach of these countries is generally to set a very high standard for entry to training and to train only the number of teachers they will need, rather than training more than they need and giving schools greater choice of qualified applicants. Secondly, while there is no single, simple set of teacher characteristics that will be effective in all circumstances, there are identifiable talents which can reliably be used to select teachers. For example, it is a constant finding that effective teachers are intellectually capable and able to think, communicate and plan systematically. Studies show that teachers with good subject knowledge are more effective. And certain personal characteristics have been found to be shared by effective teachers: sustained commitment, resilience, perseverance and motivation, as well as high overall levels of literacy and numeracy, strong interpersonal and communication skills, a willingness to learn and a motivation to teach. In the best education systems, tests of these characteristics and qualities underpin rigorous pre-entry selection of candidates for teacher training. Those who do not have the subject knowledge or interpersonal skills, who have unrealistic expectations or lack commitment to teaching can be discouraged before they start. In Finland, for example, there is a multi-stage process of teacher selection: 1) a national screening process involving a 300-question multiple choice assessment which tests literacy, numeracy and problem-solving; 2) university-based tests that evaluate candidates' ability to process information, think critically and synthesise data; 3) university-based interviews which assess candidates' motivation to teach, motivation to learn, communication skills and emotional intelligence.

The OECD team heard that in the Canary Islands, teacher trainees have not in the past come from the highest ability tranche. Quality has risen recently, though it is not clear that teaching has yet been made sufficiently attractive as a profession to be able to limit recruitment to the highest-achieving third of graduates. It would be desirable to raise the minimum ability requirement as soon as possible, and to test teacher training applicants for a range of other personal characteristics important for good teachers, along the lines of Finland's system.

It is also important to find ways of reforming current arrangements for selecting and appointing teachers to particular schools. It may be right for regional officials to prepare lists of those qualified for appointment and formally to make the appointments, but the school principal (advised by the School Council) should be allowed to select from the lists the best person to fill the vacancy, because the school principal knows the needs of the school best. If this cannot be achieved immediately, as an interim measure principals should at least be given the right to either accept or refuse candidates proposed by the regional authority, and assign them to specific classes according to the needs of the school. More is said about this in Chapter 6.

The OECD team suggests that more should be done to give teachers a better **career structure**. In Chapter 6 the creation, particularly in secondary schools, of a number of promotional posts aimed at supporting the principal in the management and leadership of the school is recommended. These posts would give the teachers who fill them development experience which would boost their credentials for becoming principals in due course. This would need to be tied to improvements in incentives for becoming principals.

It is also recommended that an early retirement scheme be introduced, to enable teachers to leave the profession on honourable terms before the normal retirement age if they cease to be fully effective, for medical or any other reasons. In the interests of students – which should be paramount – those who cannot any longer make the necessary contribution should have the opportunity of making way gracefully for those who can. This reform is likely to require negotiations with the national government.

Teachers' **pay structures** were discussed in Chapter 3, which noted that teachers' salaries in the Canary Islands are much higher than in other European and OECD countries in both relative and absolute terms. However pay scales are unusually flat, particularly for primary teachers, and financial incentives for improvement or progression during a teaching career relatively poor.

The OECD team does not suggest reducing salary levels. To address the lack of improvement and incentives, it is recommended that instead the Islands authorities provide incentives to reward outstanding performance (standardised tests would help to establish the evidence base for this) and engagement in professional development.

The Canary Islands government appears to have the discretion to do all or most of the above by adjusting current bonus payments and attaching different conditions to them. The government should use this discretion creatively to encourage and reward teachers who demonstrate results that benefit their students.

The team also notes that there are issues in the Canary Islands with providing teachers for the smaller and remoter islands and for schools outside urban areas, despite the extra allowances already paid for the former. Australia provides incentive packages to



attract teachers to rural areas. South Australia, for example, provides teaching scholarships of AUD 10 000 (~EUR 7 500) a year for two years to students from rural locations offered permanent employment in a rural school. In Queensland the rural area incentive scheme offers such benefits as cash, extended leave and induction programmes for new teachers who commit to teach in rural areas. New South Wales has piloted a retention benefit programme to attract and retain teachers in difficult-to-staff positions and schools. Starting in 2002, teachers who complete their initial two/three years' service in a hard-to-staff area are paid an annual retention bonus of AUD 5 000 (~EUR 3 750) for up to five years. New South Wales also offers rent subsidies of up to 90% in certain rural areas (Ladd, 2007). It would seem from this research that to persuade staff to stay in remote or disadvantaged areas, incentives need to be long term and built into the overall salary structure, rather than be limited to temporary bonuses. Many countries are faced with this issue and it is difficult to provide incentive packages that fit all needs. Such packages are however a public marker of the value placed on teaching in the non-desirable areas, and send a clear message to the education stakeholders and the general public on the importance of equity in the system.

The ProComp programme in the city of Denver, Colorado, adjusts teachers' pay for all the purposes discussed above – see Box 5.1.

### Box 5.1 **The ProComp programme in Denver, Colorado**

The city of Denver, Colorado had two goals for its ProComp programme:\* to increase student achievement; and to attract and retain high quality teachers. The programme was designed in partnership with teacher organisations, in this case between the Denver Classroom Teachers Association and Denver Public Schools. It rewards teachers for their professional accomplishments while linking pay to student achievement.

ProComp has four components that allow teachers to build earnings through nine elements:

- **Knowledge and Skills** – Teachers earn compensation for acquiring and demonstrating knowledge and skills by completing annual professional development units and earning additional graduate degrees and national certificates. They may be reimbursed up to USD 1 000 (~EUR 730) annually, USD 4 000 (~EUR 2 920) in their lifetime for tuition and repayment of student loans.
- **Professional Evaluation** – Teachers will be recognised for their classroom skill by receiving salary increases every three years for satisfactory evaluations.
- **Student Growth** – Teachers will be rewarded for the academic growth of their students. They can earn compensation for meeting annual objectives, for exceeding growth goals and for working in a school judged distinguished based on academic gains and other factors.
- **Market Incentives** – Bonuses can assist the district and schools in meeting specific needs. Teachers in hard to serve schools – those faced with academic challenges – can earn annual bonuses. Bonuses will be available to those filling hard to staff positions – assignments which historically have shortages of qualified applicants.

\*See <http://denverprocomp.dpsk12.org>.

Source: Denver Public Schools website-Procomp programme overview.

The OECD team finds it hard to understand why teachers are permitted to spend less than their full weekly working hours (37.5 hours) either working in school or on call for school purposes. Education Ministry senior officials were unable to defend this practice, which must make it very difficult for school principals and senior managers to arrange staff meetings, in-service training, and opportunities for learning from peers. It is recommended that this concession be reviewed.

During fieldwork, the OECD team was told by regional government officials that some of the adjustments suggested in this and other chapters could be difficult or impossible to achieve while the terms and conditions of Canary Islands teachers remain identical to those of Spanish civil servants generally. It is therefore recommended that the regional government reviews all of teachers' terms and conditions; considers whether they all remain appropriate for the specific job teachers do and the achievement of education system objectives; and, if not, takes steps to change them. It is recognised that the regional government could not make such changes on its own authority; the national government will need to be involved and its consent obtained.





## TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The term “continuum of teacher education” describes those formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage as lifelong learners during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and late career support, with each stage merging seamlessly into the next and interconnecting in a dynamic way with each of the others (Ireland: The Teaching Council).

### Initial teacher training

Initial training is provided in two public universities in the Canary Islands, the University of La Laguna and the University of Las Palmas, where degree programmes for nursery, primary and secondary teachers and in social education are provided. The OECD team had discussions with the rectors, deans, lecturers and students in both institutions.

Rectors and deans noted that the teaching profession does not command high status among the general public. This has had some impact on the quality of candidates attracted to teaching. In the past, entrants to initial teacher education programmes have come from the average to low range of achievement, although more recently the demand for places has increased, with a consequent increase in the academic quality of the candidates.

Candidates for nursery and primary teaching enter university on completion of, or shortly after, upper secondary education and follow a four-year degree programme (which was until recently a three-year programme). Applicants for secondary teaching enter their programme having already completed a five-year degree, and take a one-year Master’s programme designed to prepare them for teaching at secondary level. Until very recently, secondary teachers received minimal preparation, typically on courses lasting just two months. The team understands that the new Master’s programme started only in 2010/11; therefore, all of the teachers in post in secondary schools visited had this minimal preparation. The OECD team was told that many current teachers do not see the value of the new Master’s programme; they see their role as simply to transmit the content of the subjects on the curriculum. This legacy may explain the fact that only 140 of the 160 places available on the University of Las Palmas’s current Master’s course were taken up. The OECD team was also told that the teaching style of many secondary teachers is still to stand at the front of the class and deliver knowledge content to students, rarely checking whether students understand the meaning of what they are being taught or how to apply it. Indeed the team was told that some old-style teachers only require students to memorise what has been delivered, to earn a pass in their tests. This teaching style is not conducive to good results in PISA, or good education more widely.

Dropout rates on the training programme for primary teachers average around 15%: they are somewhat lower for the nursery programme. Main reasons cited for dropout are social problems, inability to meet the costs of tuition and failure. Dropout rates on the Master’s programme for secondary teachers amount to 5%: the most common cause of dropout is the student’s realisation that he or she does not have a vocation for teaching.

### Structure of the programmes

The programmes have been adapted to meet the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) requirements. The distribution of credits is shown in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 Distribution of credits in initial teacher training programmes**

Distribution of Credits: Primary					
Basic Training	Basic	Optional	Work Experience	Project	Total
60	100	30	44	6	240
Distribution of Credits: Secondary					
Theory/Fundamentals of education		Curriculum/Pedagogy		Teaching Practice	
24		24		12	

Source: Canary Islands Education Ministry, University of La Laguna.

At primary level, modules in Basic Training include the theoretical foundations (psychology, sociology), curriculum studies and didactics. Optional modules include special education support needs, the design and practical application of work units in languages (French and English) and music.

The secondary programme, which extends over one academic year, is distributed across four areas – educational theory (24 credits), nine specialities including didactics plus general teaching skills or pedagogies (24 credits), and external teaching practice (12 credits).



### Teaching practice during initial teacher training

According to the information received from universities, teaching practice in schools (the practicum) takes place in the second term of the secondary programme and in the third and fourth years of the primary programme. Students coming to the end of their primary programmes at La Laguna told the OECD team that they would like to have had some teaching practice in the first two years of their courses as well; they suggested that there is little value in spending 2-3 years mastering teaching theory if, when you finally encounter real students, you realise that you are not cut out for teaching. And all students interviewed felt that the time allowed for teaching practice (18% of course credits for primary, 20% for secondary) was insufficient.

Interviews with personnel from the two universities disclosed some differences in the selection of schools for teaching practice. The University of Las Palmas indicated that the schools generally volunteered to take students on teaching practice. Teacher tutors in the schools provide support for the trainees and allocate 60% of the marks for this component of the course, with the university tutor allocating the remaining 40%. In the event, the tutors collaborate throughout all stages of the process. It also emerged that school tutors volunteer for this task, rather than being selected on the basis of their special skills as teachers, and that they receive no formal training for the duties undertaken. In the University of La Laguna, however, the team was informed that the Ministry recently released a resolution outlining a set of criteria which schools should meet in order to be licensed for teaching practice. Innovativeness would appear to be among the most important. The intention seems to be that teaching practice will in the future be carried out only in the good or even very good schools, even though these may not be representative of the majority of the schools in the system. At the moment there are 80 licensed schools.

Both universities agreed that insufficient time is allocated to teaching practice, particularly at secondary level where there is a culture – already mentioned – that teaching skills are less important than transmitting the content of the curriculum. Thus the teaching of basic linguistic and mathematical literacy, application of knowledge, problem-solving and analysis are neglected.

Comments from a number of stakeholders suggest that primary teachers are more skilled in didactics and in coping with diversity than their secondary counterparts. It is acknowledged, however, that the challenges to be addressed at the upper age group are different and include a more demanding curriculum, which can lead to a gradual disillusionment with school among a significant section of the student population, and more challenging behaviour patterns. Newly qualified teachers are experiencing these challenges for the first time, while many of their more experienced colleagues have not had the benefit of adequate preparation for entry into the profession or targeted in-service programmes to support them in their work. Feedback from some of the students on the programmes indicated a wish to have the teaching methodologies relevant to their own teaching in the schools modelled by the lecturers on their programmes. Students on secondary level programmes mentioned that their study programmes give too much weight to curriculum and subject knowledge while neglecting necessary pedagogical training.

### Teaching for diversity, teaching for all

A recurring theme in discussions with administrators, teachers, university personnel, parents and teacher unions has been the challenges which teachers experience in coping with different learning abilities. It appears that teachers have been trained to teach to the norm or to higher levels of ability rather than adjust to different learning styles within a classroom. Teachers claim that they do not have the requisite skills to address these challenges, while teacher trainees claim that insufficient emphasis is given to teaching practice in initial education programmes. It emerged from discussion that only a minority of staff involved in teacher education programmes have training in pedagogy or previous training or experience as schoolteachers. Furthermore, the team was informed on a visit to the University of La Laguna that staff from 58 departments are involved in teaching the secondary teacher programme, including the relevant subject pedagogies, even though the majority are said to have had no training in didactics. The team was also led to believe that the Education Faculty did not have its own establishment of staff specifically dedicated to the provision of programmes in teacher education.

### Other issues

University faculties claim to have little contact with schools for the purpose of providing continuing professional learning programmes for established teachers or for conducting research. They cite heavy workload commitments as the main reason for this. In recognition of the limits of initial teacher preparation programmes, mentoring programmes for new graduates in their first year in post have been established in many developed countries. These are aimed at assisting the graduates in making the transition from university and part-time teaching practice to full-time teaching. No such assistance is available in the Canaries. In the absence of support systems such as mentoring, a robust probation system is necessary so as to ensure that the seal of admission to the profession is merited. The probation arrangements currently in place in the Canary Islands are far from robust: the team learnt that probation is conducted on a sampling basis only, presumably because of time pressures on the inspectors who have responsibility for this.

### OECD team views

The initial teacher training programmes at nursery and primary levels are well established. The secondary programme is of more recent origin. Both programmes have been designed to conform to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).



However, the currency of the ECTS is training time and credits awarded; it does not ensure equivalent outcomes. Team members talked to a small number of student teachers who had completed, or nearly completed, their nursery and primary courses. Some felt quite strongly that the course had not equipped them with the practical teaching and class control skills they needed to cope with the challenges they met in classrooms during their teaching practice – although the primary course includes pedagogy and psychology these were taught as theory rather than as practice. Another point students made is that they should receive more teaching practice in schools throughout their courses.

The OECD team notes that student teachers on the nursery and primary programmes seem to have a fairly heavy schedule; and bearing in mind the age of most entrants, it is important that some provision is made for their personal and social development.

The post-graduate programme for secondary teachers started in 2010/11. While it is a major improvement on the previous programme, providing a high quality programme in just one year (effectively from September to June) is a challenge. It cannot help that the education faculties do not have staff specifically dedicated to programmes at this level, or that the staff working on the programme are often specialists in particular subjects, rather than in pedagogy. The students' degree courses should have given them enough knowledge of their subjects not to need much more during their teaching course – though as the Spanish system requires secondary teachers to teach across very broad subject areas (for example a biologist may also have to teach physics and chemistry), perhaps this cannot be assumed. The OECD team suggests that it might be useful for faculties to recruit, as part-time lecturers, practising teachers identified for their excellence both as subject and pedagogical experts, to supplement any gaps which may arise in the syllabus and also contribute to the teaching of subject specific methodologies. This would help to address the frequently voiced criticism of many teacher education programmes that the pedagogical skills required at school level are not modelled throughout the programme.

In secondary as in other programmes, the time allocated to teaching practice is deemed inadequate. The policy of entering into contractual arrangements with schools which is being developed in the University of La Laguna is to be commended and should be extended. It is crucially important to choose suitable schools for the practicum, and to offer teaching practice opportunities throughout the course, not just in the later stages.

The OECD team also suggests that all initial teacher training programmes should include elements addressing the major issues of concern in the system, including promoting literacy and numeracy across the curriculum; strategies to tackle failure and absenteeism and minimise dropout; mixed-ability teaching; addressing the needs of diverse student bodies and wide ability ranges effectively within the same classroom; and dealing with bad behaviour and low-level disruption. The team recommends that the Education Ministry sets out a revised prospectus for initial teacher training incorporating all these aspects, first in a policy document and then, following consultation, in a new decree.

The team recognises that all the additions the team has recommended to the secondary teacher training programme may be difficult to accommodate within the programme's current one-year length (in effect, two terms, each lasting four months). The team suggests that the Government considers, in consultation with the universities, whether this course needs to be lengthened or made more intensive or both.

Newly qualified teachers also require good induction programmes to support them through the first year of full-time teaching, and a formal process of probation needs to be introduced. Tried and tested models can be found in many systems (see for example the General Teaching Council for Scotland). Finally, staff in the education faculties of the universities should develop closer involvement with schools, so that they can collaborate on the provision of credit-bearing in-service training programmes and on research into educational policy and practice.

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Even the best-developed and most effective initial teacher education programmes would not claim to prepare their graduates for a lifelong career in the classroom. At best, initial programmes provide newly qualified teachers with the knowledge and skills they will need for the first five years of their teaching career. Thereafter, all teachers need to update their skills at regular intervals as they progress through the various career stages, and experience new challenges which the designers of their initial training programme neither prepared them for, nor indeed predicted.

In-service programmes are mainly provided by the Teacher Training Centres. More recently, the provision of e-learning courses has resulted in an increase in the number of teachers engaged in in-service activities. However, take-up of the programmes appears to be poor – much poorer, the OECD team understands, than in other systems. In-service training is neither compulsory nor actively promoted, except in a few schools (the OECD team visited one that reserved Monday afternoon for staff meetings and in-service training). Neither are there any real incentives for teachers to engage in it, except for younger teachers seeking first jobs, as already mentioned, and in the case of some projects promoted by the regional authority. The language promotion project (CLIL) is one example. Teachers involved in this project must undertake specially-designed in-service programmes; the teachers the team met



who had attended these programmes rated them highly. While the teachers participating were given some financial assistance, they had had to pay some training costs themselves, and had been willing to do so.

The Inspectorate provide support and advice to school management and teachers, and may advise that in-service training should be undertaken in connection with the school's education project, or by particular teachers. However, the Education Faculties in the universities have minimal contact with schools and no involvement in in-service provision.

While teachers' weekly schedule includes a number of hours in which they are not obliged to teach classes or even be at school – hours which in theory present opportunities for in-service training and in-school professional collaboration – it seems that most teachers are reluctant to engage in in-service training during those hours, taking the view that they will only do it if released from some teaching commitments. E-training has the advantage that it can be undertaken by teachers at home, but two disadvantages: first, that practical teaching skills involving interaction with and management of students cannot be mastered on line and secondly, that there is no peer support or opportunity to learn from peers' experience.

### OECD team views

In the OECD team's view, the lack of obligatory and free-of-charge in-service training provision in the Canary Islands, and the reluctance of teachers who need it most to undertake it, are extremely serious problems. Unless they are remedied, it will be almost impossible to tackle the many issues the system needs to address if the goal of providing a high quality education for all is to be achieved. Finding the remedies is the joint responsibility of the regional government and the teaching profession. The government needs to ensure that high quality programmes are made available and that teachers are given every encouragement to participate, within their working but non-classroom hours. In-service training should take priority over all other purposes to which those hours are currently put, not least because teachers will be far more effective at planning lessons, marking homework and doing assessments once they have been trained. Where policies are introduced which require updating of teachers' skills, participation in specially-designed courses should be mandatory. In other situations, teachers should feel an obligation as professionals to engage in learning as a means of honing and perfecting the art and craft of teaching.

Participating in professional learning activities need not disrupt schools' regular functioning. Valuable learning opportunities can be embedded in the on-going life of the school. Small-scale innovations designed to address school issues can usefully link school improvement and teacher development. One model for this, proposed by Hargreaves and Hopkins (1994) among others, involves school stakeholders in conducting a whole-school review, identifying strengths and weaknesses and agreeing priorities for change which can then be planned and implemented through a series of small-scale action research projects leading to incremental improvements. This model has the incidental benefits of encouraging teachers to become involved in school issues beyond the narrow confines of their own classrooms, and facilitating the development of a collaborative culture. A whole-school approach may be a particularly effective way of addressing issues like absenteeism, repetition, failure and dropout, because everyone in the school will have taken part in designing the solutions and will feel ownership of the process. Whole-school reviews also encourage a culture of in-school evaluation. Schools engaged in these reviews could be supported by personnel from the Teaching Centres or from the university education faculties.

Forging a partnership between institutions at different levels of the education system is difficult in any country. Mandates and expectations for staff and the institutions themselves are different. However in order to make university-based teacher preparation relevant, and to encourage teaching staff to be more engaged in a teaching and learning process as part of their professional identity, most countries now consider this partnership to be crucial. Since the 1990s, many countries have instituted "Professional Development Schools" in which university faculty either teach or mentor at school level.

The models vary in how the interaction takes place. In some, education students undergoing a placement are tutored at the school by both school and university faculty. In others, university classes are held on school premises where space allows. In all cases the effort is to link schools and school staff better with research and learning. Continuing research documents the benefits of this approach. Apart from the technical benefit to trainees and the schools, university staff have the chance to interact more fully with schools and school staff benefit from their perceived increase in status (Jeffery and Polleck, 2010). One example is given in Box 5.2.

The team recommends that for in-service training, as for initial teacher training, the reform process be launched by the Education Ministry issuing a policy document and proposals for making available a much wider range of in-service training to many more teachers than take it up now – bearing in mind that it is practical classroom skills that most need reinforcing, and that these skills cannot easily be taught or assessed on-line. The proposals should offer individual teachers clear guidance on the training they need to acquire in-service, which will vary according to what initial training they had, when they had it, what they have learnt since and which age-group they will be teaching. SYNTAX Teachers who have completed the full range of training suggested in the guidance should be eligible for a special title or status, as well as for a higher point on the pay scale under the revised pay arrangements recommended above. And bearing in mind the TALIS finding recorded above that in Spain, teachers often have to pay for some or all of their in-service training themselves, the Canary Islands Education Ministry should also encourage training take-up by meeting the full costs of approved training.



### Box 5.2 **Arlington School System, the State of Virginia, United States**

The Arlington Public Schools System has Professional Development School (PDS) arrangements with George Mason and Marymount Universities and a series of elementary schools. The underlying goals of the arrangements are: 1) To provide university students with the best possible pre-service experience in order to ensure high quality new teacher candidates; 2) To provide Arlington Public Schools teachers with the knowledge and support needed to work most effectively with pre-service teacher candidates; 3) To create a partnership between the individual school and university in order to give the schools access to university resources including educational research projects.

University interns spend a semester or a year in schools and act as substitute teachers for a number of days, receiving standard pay for substitutes as a contribution to their tuition fees. Each university provides a faculty member who is responsible for the PDS programme at each school, and for supervising and evaluating the interns.<sup>1</sup> This form of university-school partnership also takes place in other countries and there are useful guidelines on how to make the best of this approach.<sup>2</sup>

*Source:* Arlington Public Schools, [www.arlington.k12.va.us/page/1259](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/page/1259), and Teitel, Lee (2003), *The Professional Development Schools Handbook: Starting, Sustaining, and Assessing Partnerships That Improve Student Learning*, Corwin Press.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The regional government should review all of **teachers' current terms and conditions**; consider whether they all remain appropriate for the specific job teachers do and the achievement of education system objectives; and, if not, take steps to change them. It is recognised that the regional government could not make such changes on its own authority; the national government will need to be involved and its consent obtained.
- The **teacher recruitment** system should be reformed, so as to recruit more trainees from among the highest-achieving graduates and to filter applicants for personal characteristics important for teaching success as in Finland. **Deployment** arrangements should be changed so as to give school principals more say in appointments and teacher assignments within the school.
- To create a better **career structure**, promotional posts aimed at supporting the principal in the management and leadership of the school should be created.
- **Pay and rewards** structures should be revised. Suggested changes include different, more flexible scales; engaging new entrants on the basis of qualifications and contracts rather than tenure; enabling teachers to earn a higher maximum than at present if they achieve good student outcomes or undertake specified extra duties; and making service increments conditional on undertaking in-service training.
- An **early retirement** scheme should be introduced, to allow teachers who cease to be fully effective an honourable exit from the profession.
- Better **financial incentives** should be available to teachers for improving their pupils' performance, or their own, or for taking up hard-to fill posts.
- Teachers should be expected to spend their full **weekly working hours** (37.5 hours) in school, or on call for school purposes including staff meetings and in-service training.
- **Initial teacher training** programmes should address major issues of concern, such as improving literacy and numeracy, tackling failure, absenteeism and dropout, teaching mixed abilities, addressing the needs of diverse students and dealing with bad behaviour. The government should draw up a revised prospectus for initial training including these aspects, and should consider whether the secondary programme needs to be lengthened, after consultation with the relevant universities.
- Improvements are recommended in the timing, length and quality of **the teaching practice component** in initial teacher training.
- In their first year in post, newly-trained teachers should have formal **induction** programmes and be on properly-supervised **probation**.
- All teachers should be expected to update their skills at regular intervals through **in-service training**. Unless action is taken to remedy the current lack of in-service training provision and non-participation by older teachers who most need it, school standards will remain low. The government should ensure that high quality programmes are made available and that teachers participate, within their working but non-classroom hours, and should meet the full costs of approved in-service training.
- Closer working relationships should be developed between the teacher training faculties in **universities and the school system**, including for in-service teacher training and education research. Teacher training should be done by full-time dedicated staff, qualified in pedagogy.



## Notes

1. Figures from the Ministry of Education of Canary Islands.
2. UK Department for Education, *Training Our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers – An Improvement Strategy for Discussion*, London, June 2011.

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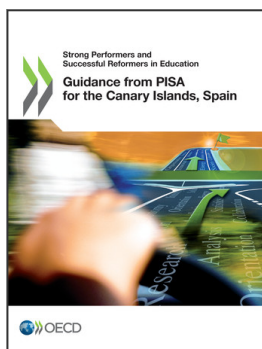
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