

Chapter 4

Teacher appraisal

Teacher appraisal is the least developed component within the Luxembourgish evaluation and assessment framework. At present there is no way of knowing the quality of pedagogy in Luxembourg since the effectiveness of classroom practice is not appraised. The chapter presents main features of the teaching profession in Luxembourg, as well as an overview of current teacher appraisal procedures, those responsible for teacher appraisal and how the results of teacher appraisal are used. Based on an analysis of strengths and challenges in the current approach, the chapter presents a set of recommendations to develop a system for teacher appraisal in Luxembourg aiming to provide feedback for improvement and to reward effective teaching.

This chapter looks at approaches to teacher appraisal within the overall evaluation and assessment framework in Luxembourg. Teacher appraisal refers to the evaluation of individual teachers to make a judgement about their performance. Teacher appraisal has typically two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve teachers' own practices by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – the improvement function. Second, it aims to ensure that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – the accountability function (Santiago and Benavides, 2009).

Context and features

Teacher appraisal procedures

Teacher appraisal is not regulated by law and no formal procedures exist to evaluate the performance of permanent teachers. The only existing requirement relates to the 24-month probationary period for entrants into the profession. In fundamental education, (in the absence of a school principal) the hierarchical head of the teachers is the local authority inspector (the *inspecteur*) who evaluates the teacher at the end of the probationary period and makes a recommendation about the teacher's permanent employment. The large majority of beginning teachers move onto a permanent contract as civil servants. In secondary education, the 24-month probationary period corresponds to the period of acquisition of the pedagogical training (*stage pédagogique*), and ends with an examination to access a regular teaching post. The only other occasion in which a formal appraisal is required, is when a fundamental education teacher requests a move to a teaching post in another school, in which case an appraisal is carried out by the relevant *inspecteurs*.

However, teachers are under the authority of the *inspecteurs* in fundamental education and the school principals (*directeurs*) in secondary education. This means that the *inspecteurs* in fundamental education and *directeurs* in secondary education take responsibility for the performance of teachers and have the right to inspect teachers' work. In theory this implies that teachers are to be evaluated by *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* but often this right is not exercised, also because no formal procedures exist and few consequences of teacher appraisal can be enforced.

In fundamental education, the *inspecteurs* may evaluate teachers on their own initiative with no prior notice. Given the vast range of responsibilities they have and the great number of teachers under their responsibility, the regular appraisal of all teachers is not undertaken.¹ *Inspecteurs* tend to concentrate their appraisal and feedback on beginning teachers, those teachers associated with weak student results and teachers for whom performance issues have been raised. The appraisal of a teacher typically involves classroom observation followed by an exchange between the teacher and the *inspecteur* which includes professional feedback. The main aspects assessed concern the teaching style, class management, the social climate and the quality of the content and the teaching. *Inspecteurs* also monitor the pertinence of the material taught, the ability of the teacher to follow a competencies-based approach and his/her compliance with working hour regulations.

In secondary education, the *directeur* represents the MENFP in ensuring the school is run satisfactorily and complies with national legislation. S/he takes responsibility for the school's teaching staff both ensuring its effective performance and its professional development. *Directeurs* can evaluate individual teachers, including through classroom observation and the suggestion of a professional development plan. In practice, however,

directeurs seldom undertake the appraisal of individual teachers and do not systematically provide professional feedback. Nonetheless, according to civil service regulations, *directeurs* are supposed to hold regular interviews with teachers with the aim of promoting dialogue, establishing common objectives and monitoring work achievements.

There is no guidance provided at the central level on how to evaluate teacher performance. Each *inspecteur* and *directeur* defines his/her own appraisal criteria and no appraisal framework exists. In particular, there are no shared appraisal criteria among *inspecteurs* and professional judgments are purely based on the *inspecteurs'* personal conception of quality teaching and learning.

Competencies to assess and to use feedback

The *inspecteurs* are the main source of feedback for teachers in fundamental education. Requirements to become an *inspecteur* include a minimum of five years as a teacher in fundamental education and a master's degree in a field related to fundamental education. *Inspecteurs* also need to pass a national recruitment examination (*concours de recrutement*) and be approved in their two-year induction period (*stage*). The *inspecteurs* themselves are accountable to the general *inspecteur*, but they are not appraised. In secondary education, the key role in teacher feedback is exercised by the *directeurs*. These are typically former experienced teachers who are appointed by the Minister as *directeurs* following an open competition. They do not necessarily undergo specific training for school leadership before taking up their post and have typically no training to appraise the teachers. However, as they regularly participate in examination juries to appraise beginning teachers, they generally have some experience with appraisal criteria.

Using appraisal results

In fundamental education, teacher appraisal undertaken by *inspecteurs* seeks mostly to ensure compliance with national regulations and ensure that minimum standards of performance are achieved, *i.e.* students achieve the national learning objectives. The *inspecteur*, if s/he deems it necessary, can recommend the teacher specific professional development activities so identified weaknesses are addressed. When recommendations are made, the *inspecteur* follows up on the progress by the teacher a few weeks after the original appraisal. In general terms, the feedback provided by the *inspecteur* may inform the teacher's professional development. The assessment by the *inspecteurs* has no consequences for the teacher's career or influence on pay levels. Only in extreme cases of underperformance or when teachers do not respect regulations may *inspecteurs* initiate a disciplinary procedure to remove teachers from their post. Evaluations by *inspecteurs* are also regularly transmitted to the Minister and considered as valuable feedback on the implementation of reforms and the challenges faced by teachers in their daily work.

In secondary education, little information exists about the impact of the professional feedback provided by *directeurs*. It is expected that it informs the professional development activities of the teacher, ideally in close linkage to the needs of the school and the local community, but there is little evidence that that is the case. *Directeurs* cannot formally devise consequences of their assessments, *i.e.* they cannot mandate professional development activities and there is no impact on promotions, the speed at which the teacher progresses in the career or pay levels. If an underperforming teacher is identified, the *directeur* has few mechanisms to finding a solution.

Box 4.1 The teaching profession in Luxembourg – Main features

Employment status

The vast majority of teachers working in the public sector are civil servants. In some special cases, they are salaried employees of the State either with a fixed-term contract or an indefinite contract. Pay and working conditions are governed centrally by the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFP) and follow the general rules established for public sector workers. Teachers working in the small private sector are salaried employees of schools' organisers, which determine salaries and working conditions. As civil servants, teachers are employed on *indefinite term contracts* and can only be dismissed on very specific circumstances such as redundancy (*e.g.* due to declining enrolments), serious misconduct, imprisonment, or loss of the Luxembourgish nationality. Dismissal on the grounds of underperformance is nearly unheard of in the Luxembourgish school system.

Prerequisites to become a teacher and teacher recruitment

To obtain regular employment as a teacher in Luxembourg, individuals need to meet four requirements. First, they need a recognised qualification, which for fundamental education teachers is usually a teacher education degree offered in Luxembourg (or equivalent in a foreign country), and for secondary education teachers is usually the relevant higher education degree followed by a two-year programme in pedagogy. Second, they need to show good knowledge of the three official languages (Luxembourgish, German and French) and an appreciation of the legislation and regulations applicable to the school system. Third, they need to pass a national recruitment examination (*Concours de recrutement*). This examination consists of a number of tests in areas such as methodology and didactics, subject expertise, Luxembourgish culture, and learning planning. Finally, access to the profession is only granted if, in the national recruitment competition, the individual is ranked above a given threshold which is defined by the teacher vacancies available in the public school system. The national recruitment competition is typically organised once a year. Civil servant status can only be granted following the successful completion of a 24-month probationary period.

Teacher recruitment and appointments of teachers are the responsibility of the MENFP. The Ministry also takes responsibility for the deployment of teachers to schools, even if for fundamental education it does so following the advice of districts (*communes*). For beginning teachers, their initial teaching position depends on the available vacancies as well as the preferences they express which are more likely to be met if the teacher ranks highly in the national recruitment competition. As the teacher develops more experience, seniority becomes the main criterion for access to a teaching post.

Salary and career structure

Teaching is a flat profession in Luxembourg and there is a single salary scale essentially based on years of service. Teachers reach the top of the salary scale after 30 years of service. Salary levels are by far the highest in the OECD area. After 15 years of experience, teacher salaries in Luxembourg are 1.7, 2.4 and 2.2 times higher than the OECD average in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education respectively (see Annex D). Opportunities for promotion and more responsibility within the teaching profession are practically inexistent. The only real promotion possibility for teachers is to become a *directeur* (or a member of the school management team) at the secondary level or an *inspecteur* at the fundamental education level. Teachers can also be seconded to the MENFP.

Box 4.1 The teaching profession in Luxembourg – Main features (*continued*)

Initial teacher education

The initial education of teachers for fundamental education follows a concurrent model – academic subjects are studied alongside educational and professional studies throughout the duration of the course. It is offered by the University of Luxembourg through its four-year *Professional Bachelor in Educational Sciences*. The initial education of teachers for secondary education follows a consecutive model – a programme of professional training in pedagogy and teaching that is taken after having completed a first degree in a discipline related to the subjects taught in schools. The professional training programme is co-ordinated by the University of Luxembourg and involves practice in schools.

Teachers' roles and responsibilities

Because of the centralised school system, teachers work in a tight regulatory environment even if the current trend is to grant greater levels of autonomy to teachers. Working hours are regulated. For instance for primary education (Cycles 2 through 4 of fundamental education), teachers are supposed to teach 23 lessons a week, provide 54 hours per year of pedagogical support, and make available 126 working hours per year in the interest of the school and students. Similar requirements exist in secondary education. Teachers follow the curriculum and use schoolbooks determined by *ad hoc* committees (*commissions de programmes*) and approved by the MENFP. They choose their teaching methods and student assessment methods.

In fundamental education, in addition to their teaching duties, teachers are part of pedagogical teams within the school (typically organised by cycle within fundamental education) and they can also be a cycle co-ordinator. Teachers can also be part of the school committee (including its president), which has responsibilities over the organisation of the work within the school (see Chapter 1). At the secondary level, similar roles exist such as subject area co-ordinator and liaison with the programmes' commissions.

Strengths

Teachers have some opportunities to receive informal feedback on their performance

In addition to feedback provided by *inspecteurs* and *directeurs*, there are some opportunities for teachers to obtain professional feedback. These typically arise out of teamwork, a prominent feature of fundamental schools. In fundamental education, the work of pedagogical teams within educational cycles provides occasions for peer learning and exchange of views and perspectives on teaching practices. Pedagogical teams typically meet every week and discuss issues such as students' learning progress, preparation of lessons and support for students, including approaches to homework. Teachers can also be part of school committees and therefore have opportunities to share responsibility for the organisation of work within the school. These arrangements greatly facilitate communication between teachers in fundamental schools. More recently the creation of the role of the special support teacher (*instituteur-ressources*), an experienced teacher working closely with the *inspecteur*, who has deep knowledge of educational sciences who is made available to a few schools to assist with their school development, creates opportunities for teachers to receive feedback from an experienced professional.

Similarly, but to a lesser extent, in secondary education teamwork within subject areas provides opportunities for peer learning. Also, each class has a teacher council that

oversees teaching and learning, student progress and discipline. There is also a body of all the teachers in the school (*Conférence des Professeurs*) which produces recommendations to the *directeur* or the MENFP on school matters. In addition, the *directeur* is expected to establish a regular dialogue with teachers, following civil service regulations.

School self-appraisal constitutes the other main opportunity for professional reflection. This is being encouraged through the preparation of the School Development Plan (PRS, *Plan de Réussite Scolaire* in fundamental education and the suggested PDS, *Plan de Développement Scolaire* in secondary education), an opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning practices and best strategies to achieve student learning objectives at the school level. It is expected that fundamental schools put in place the PRS as part of systematic work on quality improvement, including the quality of the teaching and learning. The implementation of the PRS is underway in fundamental education and the implementation of PDS on a voluntary basis started in secondary education in 2011 (see Chapter 5).

Current reforms in fundamental education are strengthening teachers' autonomy and improving the professional dialogue among teachers

A number of current reforms in the Luxembourgish education system are significantly impacting on the work of teachers. The recently introduced competencies-based approach to student learning is widening the field of action of the teachers giving them more freedom in terms of differentiated teaching strategies to address students' learning needs. It is also leading to new approaches to student assessment which seek to enhance the motivation of students. In addition, the competencies-based approach is having implications for both teachers' teamwork and the way teachers communicate with students and parents. Moreover, the development of a curriculum on the basis of competencies has involved the participation of teachers in working groups to which the Ministry and foreign experts also contribute. The reorganisation of fundamental education into four 2-year cycles is also changing the organisation of work among teachers, including opportunities for further teamwork. Finally, the introduction of national monitoring with standardised tests is raising teachers' awareness about taking responsibility for students achieving the learning objectives and goals set by the national government.

The suitable implementation of the competencies-based approach by teachers, including whether teachers understand and are familiar with the cross-curricular assessment of student skills, is also the subject of a specific appraisal of teachers' work by *inspecteurs*. As of 2009/10, *inspecteurs* are required to monitor the implementation of the reform and provide feedback on the difficulties faced by the teachers. The MENFP also regularly collects feedback from the schools through interviews and meetings in order to support and facilitate the work of the schools. This results in an additional opportunity for teachers to receive professional feedback from *inspecteurs* and the MENFP.

Interactions with inspecteurs and directeurs provide opportunities for professional feedback

Teachers are granted opportunities to engage in a professional interaction with *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* benefitting from a climate of some proximity with them. For instance, it is estimated that each *inspecteur* visits around 150 teachers per year (about 50% of the teachers under his/her responsibility). This allows teaching practices, student

results and the implementation of reforms to be discussed to the benefit of a teacher's practice. However, the different roles the *inspecteur* plays conditions the nature of the interaction with the teacher. *Inspecteurs* have a support function in assisting teachers with the improvement of their practices and guiding school development. Nonetheless, s/he also has a control function and represents the Ministry in ensuring that the law, decrees and directives are being enforced in the schools s/he manages. This includes guaranteeing teachers perform satisfactorily and parents' complaints are addressed. A similar situation occurs at the secondary level. While *directeurs* are expected to engage in a continuing dialogue with teachers, providing regular feedback for the improvement of their practice, they also represent the MENFP in ensuring the school and the teachers comply with national legislation.

A probationary period for teachers is well established

A probationary period for newly qualified teachers is well established in Luxembourg. Beginning teachers follow a two-year induction programme at the end of which they are required to pass an examination to gain access to a permanent post as a civil servant. In secondary education, beginning teachers are supervised both by professors of the University of Luxembourg (who take responsibility for the pedagogical training) and by more experienced teachers who act as their tutors. The tutor closely accompanies the work of the beginning teacher and provides individualised feedback and support. After successfully completing the induction programme, the beginning teacher must be evaluated by a 5-person jury consisting of a state commissioner, a *directeur* and three teachers. The final examination is based on two appraised lessons, a pedagogical project (*travail de candidature*), preparation of student assessment instruments and an assessment of the school legislation.

Hence, the school system does have mechanisms to identify those new recruits who struggle to perform well on the job or find that it does not meet their expectations. The formal probationary process for new teachers provides an opportunity for both new teachers and educational authorities to assess whether teaching is the right career for them. Beginning teachers have the opportunity to work in a stable and well-supported school environment, and the decision is taken following a formal appraisal. Appropriately, the successful completion of the probationary period is acknowledged as a major step in the teaching career.

There are requirements and provisions for the professional development of teachers

Teachers are required to undertake eight hours of certified professional development each school year. The MENFP organises professional development activities, determines priority areas and may establish given professional development activities as mandatory for teachers. The latter is particularly the case in fundamental education. A key role is played by a Division within the SCRIPT, the Institute for Continuing Training for Teaching and Education Staff in Schools (*Institut de formation continue du personnel enseignant et éducatif des écoles et des lycées*). It promotes, co-ordinates and organises professional development activities for teachers; provides advice to schools on their professional development plans; and certifies the professional development activities that teachers undertake. Teachers' professional development is intended to respond to teachers' individual needs as well as the needs of schools, local communities and the school system. However, as explained below, there are considerable challenges in linking teacher appraisal, professional development and school development.

Challenges

There is no profession-wide agreement on what counts as accomplished teaching

In Luxembourg, there are no teaching standards, a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. There are no performance criteria and a reference against which teachers are appraised. For instance, in fundamental education, *inspecteurs* do not use a common set of appraisal criteria and rely on their own concept of accomplished teaching and learning. Teaching standards are essential to guide any fair and effective system of teacher appraisal given the need to have a common reference of what counts as accomplished teaching (OECD, 2005). The absence of teaching standards weakens the capacity for the school system to effectively assess teacher performance, including in the professional interactions established with *inspecteurs* and *directeurs*. Teaching standards are a key element in any teacher appraisal system as they provide the credible reference for making judgments about teacher competence. In addition, there is a lack of agreed procedures and instruments to appraise the performance of teachers so standards of reliability, validity and fairness can be met.

Teacher appraisal is incipient and plays little role in improving teaching practices

The appraisal of permanent teachers is an incipient practice in Luxembourg. Newly qualified teachers undergo a 2-year induction programme which concludes with a thorough appraisal of their performance to gain access to a permanent position. However, following such probationary process, there is no expectation that each teacher has his or her practice appraised and receives feedback for improvement. According to the PISA 2009 survey, the following proportion of Luxembourgish 15-year-old students are in schools where the *directeur* reported the following methods were used the previous year to monitor the practice of teachers at their school: *i*) Principal or senior staff observations of classes, 53.9% (against an OECD average of 68.9%); *ii*) Teacher peer review, 38.0% (against an OECD average of 56.8%); and *iii*) Observation of classes by persons external to the school, 10.0% (against an OECD average of 28.3%) (see Annex D). In addition, according to the same survey, only 8.0% of Luxembourgish 15-year-old students are in schools where the *directeur* reported that student achievement data are used in the evaluation of teachers' performance (lowest figure among OECD countries, against an average of 44.2%, see Annex D).

The existing teacher appraisal practices are the initiative of individual *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* and depend essentially on their availability, the importance they confer to teacher appraisal and the evaluation ethos created in schools. As such, there is great variation between schools in the way teacher appraisal and feedback is conceptualised and carried out. The OECD review team gained the impression that in most instances there is a very light touch to it but there are cases of more elaborate processes, including classroom observation and peer feedback. Given their wide responsibilities, *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* have little time to perform classroom observation and to engage in a closer analysis of teacher performance. This is reinforced by small leadership teams in schools. Therefore there are no guarantees in Luxembourgish schools that approaches to teacher appraisal and feedback are addressing the real issues and complexities of teaching and learning and contributing to the improvement of teaching practices. There is no mechanism to ensure minimum standards for teacher appraisal processes in schools and so there is no guarantee each teacher receives proper professional feedback. This also means that there is no systematic means to identify and address underperformance. In

addition, a limited focus on teacher appraisal runs the risk of sending teachers an implicit message that their work is not important.

Teacher appraisal is perceived as a threat rather than an opportunity for improvement

In general, there seems to be an issue about how teacher appraisal is perceived by teachers. The OECD review team perceived a defensive culture among Luxembourgish teachers in which external interventions are seen as a threat and an attempt to control rather than a tool for quality development. In part, this reading might result from the fact that visits by *inspecteurs* are most frequently triggered by either the identification of problems or complaints by parents.

In addition, the OECD review team did not have the perception that Luxembourgish teachers are generally eager and willing to receive feedback. Teachers clearly did not convey to the OECD review team that they appreciated the time the *inspecteur* or *directeur* took to visit their classrooms or provide them with feedback. This might be partly explained by teachers' concern that an appraisal could be associated with performance rewards, including pay levels. However, it also relates to the lack of culture for sharing classroom practice, especially at the upper secondary level. Once tenure is obtained, teaching practices remain largely unexamined for the teacher's working life.

There are few instruments to provide formal recognition to teachers

Teacher appraisal at the school level is not perceived as a mechanism to reward teachers. For instance, accomplished teaching is not rewarded with either monetary or non-monetary rewards. Time allowances, sabbatical periods, opportunities for school-based research, support for post-graduate study, or opportunities for in-service education are not established in Luxembourg as instruments to provide formal recognition to teachers. Also, the principle of associating good performance to career progression is not in place in Luxembourg.

Teachers could benefit from more pedagogical leadership

In Luxembourg, instructional leadership in schools is not a system-wide expectation. At the secondary level, *directeurs* do not have to undergo specific training for school leadership and the specific career of school leader does not exist. Most of those currently responsible for schools developed competencies on the job. The OECD review team gained the impression that *directeurs* are overwhelmed with tasks at the schools and, in general, they do not seem to have the time to engage properly in the coaching, monitoring and appraisal of teachers. The result is that schools tend to be administered rather than led. In fundamental education, each *inspecteur* oversees all the schools in his/her district (*arrondissement*) – in some cases, more than ten schools – and assumes a range of roles notably ensuring compliance with national regulations. This considerably limits their capacity to engage in instructional leadership.

There are missing links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development

The OECD review team formed the view that the provision of professional development is not thoroughly planned, fragmented and not systematically linked to teacher appraisal (or, more precisely, to the professional interactions between teachers

and *inspecteurs* and *directeurs*). In most cases professional development activities undertaken by teachers do not derive from an assessment of needs made through teacher appraisal. Without a clear link to professional development opportunities, appraisal practices are not sufficient to improve teacher performance, and as a result, often become a meaningless exercise that encounters mistrust – or at best apathy – on the part of teachers being evaluated (Danielson, 2001; Milanowski and Kimball, 2003; Margo *et al.*, 2008).

There is also scope to better link professional development to school development. In our view, school development could better explore its links to the appraisal of teaching practice. This is in part due to the limited time *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* have for instructional leadership and the limited extent to which professional development activities are linked to the results of teacher appraisal. But it also results of the fact that professional development activities are mostly an individual choice of the teacher which is often not associated with school development needs. As a recent development, the role of the special support teacher (*instituteur-ressources*), as an expert in teaching practices, might bring improvements to the co-ordination of professional development within schools.

The absence of career opportunities for effective teachers undermines the role of teacher appraisal

There does not seem to be a formal career path for effective teachers. The role of *inspecteur* or *directeur* is not regarded as a major step in the teaching career and no other steps exist. There are few opportunities for promotion, greater recognition and more responsibility. These involve cycle co-ordinator and member of the school committee in fundamental schools and head of department in secondary education. However, such roles are not formally recognised in the teaching career. This is likely to undermine the potentially powerful links between teacher appraisal, professional development and career development.

Policy recommendations

Meaningful teacher evaluation, which is understood as an accurate appraisal of the effectiveness of teaching, its strengths and areas for development, followed by feedback, coaching, support and opportunities for professional development, is central to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning and raise educational performance. It is also essential to celebrate, recognise and reward the work of teachers.

The autonomy of permanent teachers in Luxembourg needs to be properly balanced by accountability for the quality of the service provided if it is to be consistent with the usual concept of autonomy within a public service. At present there is no way of knowing the quality of pedagogy in Luxembourg since the effectiveness of classroom practice is not appraised. Luxembourg's performance in international comparisons of student outcomes suggests that much can be done to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, since the country does not suffer from teacher shortages² or other significant inadequacies of infrastructure. This is also important in light of the substantial investment the education system makes on teachers. In Luxembourg, teachers' salaries are by far the highest in the OECD area and the compensation of teachers takes a large share of current expenditure on pre-tertiary education (75.1%, the third highest figure in the OECD area, against an OECD average of 63.8%) (see Annex D).

In order to make teacher appraisal more effective in Luxembourg, the OECD review team proposes the following approach:

- develop teaching standards and align them with student learning objectives
- create a career structure with key stages
- introduce a system of teacher certification to determine career progression
- establish a school-based component predominantly dedicated to developmental evaluation
- ensure links between developmental evaluation and career progression evaluation
- reinforce the instructional leadership of the *inspecteurs* and *directeurs*
- strengthen the links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development
- articulate school evaluation and teacher appraisal

The detailed suggestions and the associated arguments are provided below (see Santiago and Benavides, 2009, for a detailed conceptual framework for teacher appraisal).

Develop teaching standards and align them with student learning objectives

A national framework of teaching standards is essential as a reference for teacher appraisal. The development of a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do should be a priority in Luxembourg. The preparation of a profile of teacher competencies should be based on the national student learning objectives. Teachers' work and the knowledge and skills that they need to be effective must reflect the student learning objectives that schools are aiming to achieve. The development of teaching standards could benefit from the expertise gained in developing the learning objectives and descriptions of related skills for students.

In recognition of the variety of tasks and responsibilities in today's schools and the teaching expertise developed while on the job, teaching standards should express different levels of performance such as competent teacher, established teacher, and accomplished/expert teacher. These should reflect teachers' roles in schools and the knowledge and skills that they need to acquire to be effective at the different stages of their careers to achieve student learning objectives. They need to reflect the sophistication and complexity of what effective teachers are expected to know and be able to do; be informed by research; and benefit from the ownership and responsibility of the teaching profession. It also needs to be ensured that the teaching standards provide the common basis to organise the key elements of the teaching profession such as initial teacher education, teacher certification (see below), teachers' professional development, career advancement and, of course, teacher appraisal. Clear, well-structured and widely supported teaching standards can be a powerful mechanism for aligning the various elements involved in developing teachers' knowledge and skills (OECD, 2005).

A reference contribution in this area is the Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (1996, 2007), which is articulated to provide at the same time "a 'road map' to guide novice teachers through their initial classroom experiences, a structure to help experienced professionals become more effective, and a means to focus improvement

efforts”. The *Framework* groups teachers’ responsibilities into four major areas further divided into components:

- *Planning and preparation*: demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy; demonstrating knowledge of students; selecting instructional goals; designing coherent instruction; assessing student learning.
- *The classroom environment*: creating an environment of respect and rapport; establishing a culture for learning; managing classroom procedures; managing student behaviour and organising physical space.
- *Instruction*: communicating clearly and accurately; using questioning and discussion techniques; engaging students in learning; providing feedback to students; demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.
- *Professional responsibilities*: reflecting on teaching; maintaining accurate records; communicating with families; contributing to the school and community; growing and developing professionally; showing professionalism.

This framework has influenced a large number of teacher appraisal systems around the world. An example can be found in the *Professional Standards for Teachers* in England (TDA, 2007). These standards cover all aspects grouped into “professional attributes” – including relationships with children and young people, “professional knowledge and judgment” and “professional skills”. Moreover, the standards differentiate in several stages from what can be expected of the newly qualified teacher to the standard expected of excellent and advanced skills teachers (see Santiago *et al.*, 2009, for further details).

The work of a teacher involves considerably more than the instructional activities associated with student learning. It is therefore appropriate that teacher standards consider professional responsibilities less directly related to the teaching itself. This recognises the fact that the demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex and teachers have their areas of responsibility broadened. Some examples are: working and planning in teams; projects between schools; management and shared leadership; providing professional advice to parents; building community partnerships for learning; and participation in professional development (OECD, 2005).

Create a career structure with key stages

The OECD review team has noted that the absence of career opportunities for effective teachers undermines the role of teacher appraisal. Schools and teachers could benefit from a career structure for teachers that comprised (say) three key stages: competent teacher; established teacher, and accomplished/expert teacher. The different stages in the career should be associated with distinct roles and responsibilities in schools associated with given levels of teaching expertise. Access to each of the key stages could be associated with formal processes of appraisal through a system of teacher certification (see below).

The career structure for teachers should match the different levels of expertise reflected in teaching standards. Such alignment would reflect the principle of rewarding teachers for accomplishing higher levels of expertise through career advancement and would strengthen the linkages between roles and responsibilities in schools (as reflected in career structures) and the levels of expertise needed to perform them (as reflected in teaching standards). A career structure for teachers reflecting different levels of expertise

is likely to enhance the links between teacher appraisal, professional development and career development.

Introduce a system of teacher certification to determine career progression

The teaching profession in Luxembourg would benefit from teacher appraisal at key stages in the teaching career to formalise the principle of advancement on merit associated with career opportunities for effective teachers. In most organisations, increased seniority or promotion bring increased responsibility and more demanding leadership and management roles. Such appraisals, which are more summative in nature, need to have a stronger component external to the school and more formal processes. They could be organised through a system of teacher certification with (say) access to three key stages: competent teacher, established teacher; and accomplished/expert teacher. It could be a mostly school-based process led by the teacher’s hierarchical superior (*inspecteur* or *directeur*) but it should include an element of externality such as an accredited external evaluator, typically a teacher from another school with expertise in the same area as the teacher being appraised. The latter would seek to ensure the fairness of appraisals across schools. The formal appraisal could partly build on the experience gained in organising the examination to access a permanent post as a civil servant at the end of the probationary period. The completion of the probationary period could correspond to the access of the first stage in the career as “competent teacher”.

Teacher appraisal for certification would have as its main purposes holding teachers accountable for their practice, determining advancement in the career, and informing the professional development plan of the teacher. This approach would convey the message that reaching high standards of performance is the main road to career advancement in the profession. It would also permit the identification of underperforming teachers and propose ways to address their shortcomings. Access to levels of certification beyond “competent” level should be through a voluntary application process and teachers should be required to periodically maintain their certification status when not applying to a promotion.

Reference criteria

The appraisal system associated with the certification process should be founded on the national framework of teaching standards. It is also important that teacher appraisal for certification takes account of the school context, and includes the views of the school leader. Schools have to respond to different needs depending on the local context and face different circumstances. Hence it is desirable that an individual teacher is evaluated against reference standards with criteria that account for the school’s objectives and context.

Instruments

Teacher appraisal for certification could rely on three core instruments: classroom observation, self-appraisal and documentation of practices in a simplified portfolio. It should be firmly rooted in classroom observation. Teaching practices and evidence of learning are above all displayed while teachers interact with their students in the classroom. It should also involve an opportunity for teachers to express their own views about their performance, and reflect on the personal, organisational and institutional factors that had an impact on their teaching. The portfolio should allow teachers to mention specific ways in which they consider that their professional practices are promoting student learning, and could include elements such as: lesson plans and teaching materials, samples of student work and commentaries on student assessment

examples, teacher's self-reported questionnaires and reflection sheets (see Isoré, 2009). Given the high stakes of appraisal for certification, decisions must draw on several types of evidence, rely on multiple independent evaluators and should encompass the full scope of the work of the teacher.

Training

External evaluators would receive specific training for this function, in particular in standards-based methods for assessing evidence of teacher performance, and would need to be accredited by the proper organisation. Evaluators need be trained to assess teachers according to the limited evidence they gather, the criteria of good teaching and the corresponding levels to attain certification. Second, evaluators should be trained to also provide constructive feedback to the teacher for further practice improvement.³ Also, substantial activities for professional development on how to best use appraisal processes should be offered to teachers. It is vitally important that teachers are provided with support to understand the appraisal procedures and to benefit from appraisal results. It is also expected that appraisal and feedback become core aspects offered in initial teacher education. The expectation is that teachers engaging in reflective practice, studying their own methods of instruction and assessment, and sharing their experience with their peers in schools, becomes a routine part of professional life. Finally, if teacher certification is essentially school based, it would also be desirable to establish moderation processes to ensure consistency of school approaches to appraisal for teacher certification.

Consequences

The main decision refers to the certification for teachers to access the key stages of the profession, including passing the probationary period. This would be in accordance with the career structure, with each key stage associated with pay levels to be agreed in national agreements between the employers and the teacher unions. This would ensure a link between teacher appraisal results and career progression, therefore establishing an indirect link with pay levels. This is a desirable option as direct links between teacher performance and pay have produced mixed results, according to the research literature (Harvey-Beavis, 2003; OECD, 2005). The evidence of the overall impact of bonus pay can be contentious and potentially divisive (OECD, 2005). It is also important that appraisal for certification informs the professional development plan for the teacher.

Establish a school-based component predominantly dedicated to developmental evaluation

The OECD review team recommends a stronger focus on teacher appraisal for improvement purposes (*i.e.* developmental appraisal). Given that there are risks that the improvement function is hampered by the high-stakes teacher appraisal associated to the certification process, we propose that a component predominantly dedicated to developmental appraisal, fully internal to the school, be created.⁴

This development appraisal would have as its main purpose the continuous improvement of teaching practices in the school. It would be an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers, and the school leader (or members of the management group). The reference standards would be the teaching standards but with school-based indicators and criteria. This appraisal should also take account of the school objectives and context. The main outcome would be feedback on teaching performance as well as on the overall contribution to the school, which would lead to a plan for professional

development. It can be low-key and low-cost, and include self-appraisal, peer appraisal, classroom observation, and structured conversations and regular feedback by the school leader and experienced peers. The key aspect is that it should result in a meaningful report with recommendations for professional development. This developmental appraisal could build on identified best practices of current interactions of teachers with *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* but would need to be more formalised.

There are advantages to having the *inspecteur* or *directeur* and/or other teachers as the assessors in developmental appraisal given their familiarity with the context in which teachers work, their awareness of the school needs and their ability to provide quick and informed feedback to the teacher. However, it might prove difficult for the *inspecteurs* or *directeurs* to undertake the thorough assessment of each teacher in the school. In addition, most of these professionals have no prior training in evaluation methods and might not have the content expertise relevant to the teaching areas of the teacher being evaluated. Hence, it might prove valuable to build capacity in appraisal methods at the school level by preparing members of the management group or accomplished/expert teachers to undertake specific appraisal functions within the school. The role of the special support teacher (*instituteur-ressources*) could be particularly relevant in developing such capacity.

In order to guarantee the systematic and coherent application of developmental evaluation across schools in Luxembourg, it would be important to undertake the external validation of the respective school processes. Therefore, considerations to introduce an external element to school evaluation (see Chapter 5) should include the audit of the processes in place to organise developmental evaluation, holding either the *inspecteur* or the *directeur* accountable as necessary.

Ensure links between developmental evaluation and career progression evaluation

Developmental appraisal and appraisal for certification cannot be disconnected from each other. A possible link is that appraisal for certification needs to take into account the qualitative assessments produced through developmental appraisal, including the recommendations made for areas of improvement. Developmental appraisal should also have a function of identifying sustained underperformance. Similarly, results of teacher certification assessments can also inform the professional development of individual teachers.

Reinforce the instructional leadership of the inspecteurs and directeurs

School leadership and management arrangements are crucially important to the effective implementation of teacher appraisal. Education systems have increasingly recognised the importance of school leadership in raising standards, as substantiated in an OECD report (Pont *et al.*, 2008). Teacher appraisal will only succeed in raising educational standards if the *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* take direct responsibility for exerting instructional leadership and for assuming the quality of education in their schools. *Inspecteurs* and *directeurs* are also more likely to provide informal continuing feedback to the teacher throughout the year and not only during the formal appraisal process. More generally, they are essential to make performance improvement a strategic imperative, and to promote a culture where teacher appraisal is indispensable to teacher and school policies (Heneman *et al.*, 2007; Robinson, 2007; Pont *et al.*, 2008).

Therefore the recruitment, initial preparation, professional development and evaluation of school leaders should be given great importance. In Luxembourg, this reinforces the case for rethinking school leadership in fundamental education so each school benefits from a dedicated leadership team. In addition, school leaders need to spend appropriate time on their instructional role. Also, it is our view that the concept of shared leadership needs to be more firmly embedded in schools, to support existing leaders and allow them to concentrate on their instructional role. At the present moment, *inspecteurs* and *directeurs* generally need better personnel support, and better training in human resource management, including teacher appraisal. School leaders need to build teams and distribute leadership responsibility to others, particularly their deputies, heads of department, cycle co-ordinators and senior teachers, all of whom should be pedagogical leaders and role models in their own right. Skilled leaders can help foster a sense of ownership and purpose in the way that teachers approach their job, provide professional autonomy to teachers and help teachers achieve job satisfaction and continue to develop professionally (OECD, 2005).

The ability to appraise effective practice is so crucial to their role that school leaders should have priority in the training provided for teacher appraisal. An offer targeted at school leaders could focus on human resources development and school quality assurance, including school self-evaluation. This would involve personnel management, including aspects such as structured interactions with teachers, setting of objectives, linking school objectives to personnel development plans, making use of various sources of information on teaching quality, development of instruments, and strategies to use appraisal results. It would cover both the aspects dealing with developmental appraisal and those involved with appraisal for certification. It would also seem beneficial to extend this training to other members of the school management team with a view to concentrate responsibility for the development of expertise on teacher appraisal within the school on this particular group.

Strengthen the links between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development

The linkages between teacher appraisal, professional development and school development need to be reinforced. Teacher appraisal is unlikely to produce effective results if it is not appropriately linked to professional development which, in turn, needs to be associated with school development if the improvement of teaching practices is to meet the school's needs. Schools that associate the identified individual needs with the school priorities, and that also manage to develop the corresponding professional development activities, are likely to perform well (Ofsted, 2006). Schools can learn from the strengths of effective teachers and implement professional development programmes that respond to their weaknesses. Schools should have autonomy to determine how teacher appraisal results feed into teacher professional and school development plans. School instructional leadership plays the key role in ensuring the effectiveness of this link. Another key element is the resources made available for professional and school development.

Articulate school evaluation and teacher appraisal

Analysis from TALIS (OECD, 2009) suggests that school evaluations can be an essential component of an evaluative framework which can foster and potentially shape teacher appraisal and feedback. Given that the systems of school evaluation and teacher appraisal and feedback have both the objective of maintaining standards and improving

student performance, there are likely to be great benefits from the synergies between school evaluation and teacher appraisal. To achieve the greatest impact, the focus of school evaluation should either be linked to or have an effect on the focus of teacher appraisal (OECD, 2009). Given the prominence of school self-evaluation in Luxembourg, it is important to ensure the centrality of the appraisal of teaching quality and the appraisal of individual teachers within this exercise. The quality of teaching and the learning results of students are predominantly regarded as a responsibility of groups of teachers or of the school as a whole. In this light, school self-evaluation needs also to put emphasis on assessing the appropriateness of mechanisms both for internal developmental appraisal and for following up on the results of appraisal for certification. Further, any considerations to introduce an external review of schools (see Chapter 5) should comprise the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and also, as indicated above, the external validation of the processes in place to organise developmental appraisal.

Notes

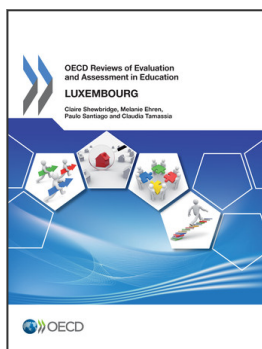
1. In Luxembourg, there are 21 inspectors who have each approximately 320 teachers under their responsibility.
2. The ratio of students to teaching staff is particularly favourable in Luxembourg. It is the second lowest in the OECD area in secondary education at 9.1 (against an OECD average of 13.7) and the 6th lowest in primary education at 12.1 (against an OECD average of 16.4) (see Annex D).
3. For further details on the range of characteristics and competencies for evaluators see, for example, Santiago *et al.* (2009).
4. Combining both the improvement and accountability functions into a single teacher evaluation process raises difficult challenges. When the evaluation is oriented towards the improvement of practice within schools, teachers are typically open to reveal their weaknesses, in the expectation that conveying that information will lead to more effective decisions on developmental needs and training. However, when teachers are confronted with potential consequences of evaluation on their career and salary, the inclination to reveal weak aspects of performance is reduced, *i.e.* the improvement function is jeopardised.

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