Executive summary

Most of us will interact with teachers during at least two stages of our lives, first as students, and later on as parents. It is no surprise, then, that societies worldwide often feel heavily invested in the teaching profession and its development. Indeed, few professions are as debated, examined and re-examined as teaching, especially by those who are not themselves practitioners. But teachers, in turn, are also invested in the societies they serve: 90% of them say that the chance to contribute to society and influence children's development was an important reason for becoming a teacher, according to the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS).

TALIS aims to make the voice of teachers and school leaders heard all the way up to the policy level. The survey asks teachers about their working life in school, covering everything from their school environment and how they interact with colleagues, to their teaching practices and participation in continuous professional development. TALIS also covers the experience of school leaders, addressing areas such as their role in school policy implementation, their concerns about school resources and their own professional development and training.

Following on from the first two cycles of TALIS in 2008 and 2013, the results from this third cycle examine the level of professionalism in teaching and to what extent teachers see their profession as offering relevant and attractive careers. Professionalism is analysed in TALIS 2018 by looking at five pillars: the knowledge and skills required to teach; the perceived prestige of the profession; career opportunities; the collaborative culture among teachers; and the level of professional responsibility and autonomy of teachers and school leaders.

This first volume, *Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, focuses on the first pillar: the knowledge and skills involved in the work. It first looks at how teachers apply their knowledge and skills in the classroom in the form of teaching practices, with due attention given to the demographics of the workforce and socio-cultural makeup of classrooms and the school climate that provide the context of learning environments. It then assesses the ways in which teachers acquired their knowledge and skills during their early education and training, as well as the steps they take to develop them through continuous professional development.

WHAT PRACTICES ARE TEACHERS USING IN THE CLASSROOM AND HOW HAS THIS CHANGED?

During a typical lesson, practices centred on managing the class and ensuring clarity of instruction are widely applied in OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS, with at least two-thirds of teachers frequently relying on these practices. What is less prevalent, however, is the use of practices that involve student cognitive activation (i.e. getting students to evaluate information and apply knowledge in order to solve a problem), despite their high potential leverage on student learning. Only around half of teachers adopt this approach.

In OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS, only 78% of a typical lesson is dedicated to teaching, with the remainder of the time spent keeping order or dealing with classroom administrative tasks. In around half of the countries that participate in TALIS, this represents a decrease in time spent on actual teaching and learning in class over the last five to ten years.

Student assessment represents a key part of the learning process, and research shows that the way teachers choose to assess their students in class can have a marked effect on learning outcomes. In OECD countries participating in TALIS, 79% of teachers routinely assess their students' progress by observing them and providing immediate feedback, while 77% of teachers report administering their own assessment to their students. Only 41% of teachers allow students to evaluate their own progress. Overall, however, more teachers tend to report frequently using student assessment practices in 2018 than in 2013.

Schools appear to be recognising the value of innovative teaching in responding to the challenges of the 21st century. The vast majority of teachers and school leaders say that their schools are open to innovative practices and have the capacity to adopt them. On average across OECD countries in TALIS, 78% of teachers also report that they and their colleagues help each other implement new ideas. However, teachers in Europe and millennial teachers are less likely to report such openness to innovation.

HOW HAVE TEACHERS AND THEIR CLASSROOMS CHANGED OVER TIME?

The average age of teachers in OECD countries participating in TALIS is 44, but there is considerable variation across countries. In a number of countries, the teaching workforce has aged over the last five to ten years, with a few examples of significant age increases between 2013 and 2018. Those countries will face the challenge of attracting and preparing large numbers of new teachers in the coming years, unless they also experience declines in student numbers.

A corrigendum has been issued for this page. See: https://www.oecd.org/about/publishing/Corrigendum_TALIS-2018-Results-Volume-I.pdf

In terms of classroom environments, relations between students and teachers have improved in most countries since 2008, with 95% of teachers agreeing that students and teachers usually get on well with each other. However, 14% of principals report regular acts of intimidation or bullying among their students. These incidents have decreased in a number of countries since 2013, but increased in others.

Recent changes in migration flows have affected the makeup of classrooms. Almost one-third of teachers in OECD countries in TALIS report that they work in schools where at least 1% of the student population are refugees, and 17% of teachers work in schools where at least 10% of the students have a migrant background.

Ninety-five per cent of school leaders report that their teachers believe that children and young people should learn that people of different cultures have a lot in common. In terms of school diversity policy, a large majority of schools in OECD countries and economies in TALIS that have a multicultural student body have integrated global issues throughout the curriculum, as well as teaching their students how to deal with ethnic and cultural discrimination – 80% of teachers report working in schools where this is the case.

WHY DO TEACHERS JOIN THE PROFESSION AND HOW ARE THEY PREPARED IN THE EARLY YEARS?

Teaching was the first-choice career for two out of three teachers in OECD countries participating in TALIS. But this is true for only 59% of male teachers, compared to 70% of female teachers. While 90% of teachers cite the opportunity to contribute to children's development and society as a major motivation to join the profession, only 61% say that the steady career path offered by teaching was an important part of their decision making.

During their education and training, teachers were instructed first and foremost on subject content, pedagogy and classroom practice. The next most common area of instruction was student behaviour and classroom management, which was included in the training of 72% of teachers in OECD countries and economies in TALIS. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) for teaching (56%) and teaching in a multicultural setting (35%) were, however, more rarely included in training.

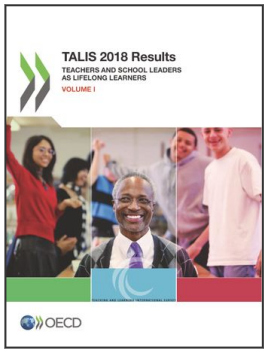
When teachers reach the stage of actually teaching, upon completing their initial preparation, only 38% of them participate in some kind of formal or informal induction in their first school, despite the positive impact of induction processes on novice teachers' transition to school and perceived efficacy. At the same time, while school principals also generally consider mentoring to be important for teachers' work and students' performance, only 22% of novice teachers have an assigned mentor, on average across OECD countries and economies in TALIS.

WHAT KIND OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DO TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS PARTICIPATE IN AND HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT IT?

Taking part in some kind of in-service training is commonplace among teachers and principals in the OECD countries and economies that participate in TALIS, with more than 90% of teachers and principals having attended at least one professional development activity in the year prior to the survey. Attending courses and seminars outside of school is one of the most popular types of professional development for teachers – more than 70% participate in this kind of training. Only 44% of teachers, however, participate in training based on peer learning and networking, despite the fact that collaborative learning is one of the aspects of training that teachers in TALIS identify as the most impactful. Indeed, teachers also report that professional development based on collaboration and collaborative approaches to teaching is among the most impactful for them.

Eighty-two per cent of teachers report that the training had a positive impact on their teaching practice. Teachers who report participating in such impactful training also tend to display higher levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

But some areas of professional development are still lacking, according to teachers. Developing advanced ICT skills is one area in which teachers say that they need more training, along with teaching in multicultural/multilingual settings and teaching students with special needs. Around half of teachers and principals also report that their participation in the professional development available to them is restricted by scheduling conflicts and lack of incentives.



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