



Introduction

In some countries the concept – not to mention the use – of teacher appraisal sparks discussion just about wherever and whenever it is mentioned. According to what criteria? Who decides? And what should the results of teacher appraisals be used for? However, education stakeholders are beginning to find some agreement in the idea that teacher appraisal can be a key lever for increasing the focus on teaching quality and continuous professional development for teachers, in keeping with the growing recognition that the quality of teaching affects student learning outcomes. Highly visible teacher appraisal also provides opportunities to incentivise, recognise and reward teaching competence and high performance. This, in turn, may help address concerns about the attractiveness of teaching as a career choice and about the image and status of teachers in a number of OECD countries, including teachers' feelings that their work is not sufficiently valued. Since formative appraisal can also help to raise teachers' self efficacy, it is a key component of effective teacher policies.

Effective teacher appraisal can also help schools to become sensitive to individual talent, performance and motivation by allowing teachers to progress in their career and take on new roles and responsibilities based on evaluations of their performance. As more and more parents demand quality education for their children, teacher appraisals provide a way for schools to be accountable for the quality of education in their classrooms and to address underperformance among teachers.

There are large variations in approaches to teacher appraisal, ranging from highly sophisticated national systems to informal approaches left entirely to the discretion of individual schools. Evidence from the OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS)¹ indicates that teachers who received appraisal and feedback generally had positive views of these processes. Overall, a large majority of teachers (83.2% on average across TALIS countries) who had received appraisal and feedback considered them to be fair assessments of their work, and most of them (78.6%) found that they were helpful in developing their work as teachers (Figure 0.1). These are important findings, showing that representative samples of teachers across countries report largely positive experiences with their own appraisal processes (OECD, 2009).

It can be difficult to introduce teacher appraisals into a system or school where no regular appraisals existed previously. There may be resistance to teacher appraisal among certain groups in the school system borne of a lack of evaluation, feedback and sharing of practices among teachers. There can be significant organisational and capacity challenges to implementation, including limited professional expertise among evaluators; schools that are unprepared to conduct appraisals; limited understanding among teachers of the purposes and uses of appraisals; a sense of unfairness by those teachers being appraised; an excessive workload; and a reluctance among teachers to accept the legitimacy of the evaluators. Schools or jurisdictions may also lack the resources needed for quality teacher-appraisal procedures, particularly the time needed for developmental work, observational evaluation and feedback. In fact, data from TALIS show that several countries find it difficult to ensure that all teachers systematically receive effective appraisal and feedback from their employers. Just over half of the teachers in TALIS countries had never received any appraisal or feedback from an external source, such as an inspector, which limits these teachers' possibilities to receive validation of their work by an external entity. Although internal appraisal was more frequent across countries, 22% of teachers indicated that they had never received any appraisal or feedback from their principal, and 28.6% had never received feedback from other teachers or members of the school-management team. Overall, 13.4% of teachers had never received any feedback or appraisal of their work in the school from any source. These teachers are missing out on an opportunity to receive professional advice from their colleagues and supervisors, and may be less likely than others to engage in focused professional learning and continuously improve their practice (see Figure 0.2; OECD, 2009).

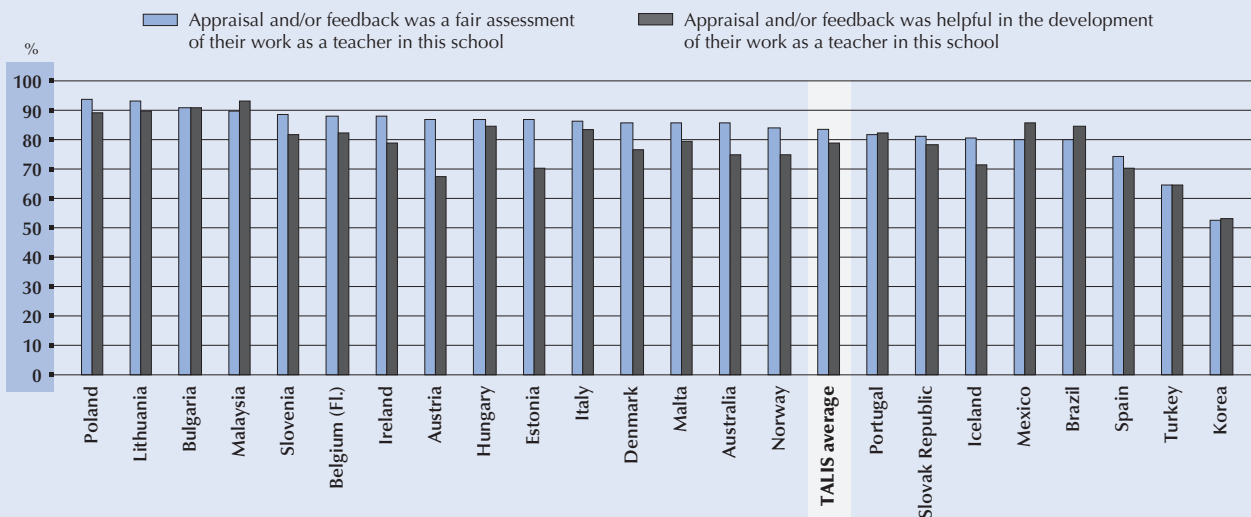
Developing teacher-appraisal systems may be costly and challenging to implement, but it is critical to reconcile the demands for educational quality, the enhancement of teaching practices through professional development, and the recognition of teacher knowledge, skills and competencies. The expectation is that engaging in reflective practice, studying his or her own teaching methods, and sharing experience with peers in schools become a routine part of a teacher's professional life.



Figure 0.1

Teachers' impressions of the appraisal and/or feedback they received (2007-08)

Percentage of lower-secondary teachers who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the appraisal and/or feedback they had received

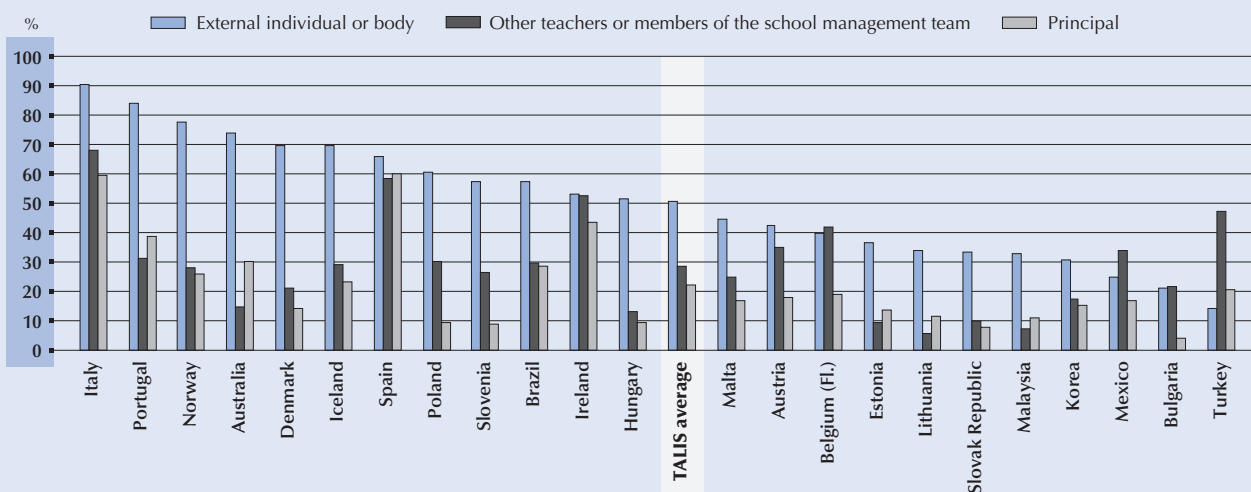


Source: OECD, TALIS Database.

Figure 0.2

Teachers missing out on appraisal and feedback opportunities (2007-08)

Percentage of lower-secondary teachers who reported that they had never received any appraisal and/or feedback from the following sources



Source: OECD, TALIS Database.

Research highlights the importance of systematic approaches to teacher appraisal that support continuous learning for individual teachers throughout a career and for the profession as a whole. Such appraisal needs to be based on a shared understanding of good teaching and be part of well-aligned procedures for teacher preparation, registration or certification, induction and mentoring, support structures and professional learning opportunities. It needs to be based on designs that are already proven effective, draw on multiple instruments of evaluation, be conducted by well-trained evaluators, offer differentiated appraisal approaches for teachers at various stages of their careers, provide for teachers' active participation in the process, and be followed up by suggestions for improvement and continuous learning opportunities.

It is also important to consider that a high-quality teaching profession needs to be built around a wide range of inter-related and mutually reinforcing policies:

- making teaching an attractive career choice in order to draw in the best possible candidates;
- ensuring high-quality initial teacher training and providing induction and mentoring programmes once a teacher has entered the profession;
- basing teacher professionalism on an evidence-based understanding of effective learning, providing teachers with a rich repertoire of teaching strategies, and fostering collaborative practice;
- offering effective in-service professional development to update and renew skills and knowledge;
- establishing attractive employment conditions, compensation systems and career structures in order to retain good teachers and provide a stimulating context for professional growth;
- supporting teachers with effective school leaders; and
- engaging teachers as active agents in educational reform and innovation.

These broader policies will not result in sustainable change without effective teacher-appraisal systems; but without a comprehensive and shared view on teacher professionalism, appraisal systems will not succeed either.

Given that teacher-appraisal systems are still a work-in-progress in most countries, it was an appealing idea to gather together key stakeholders in education to explore the various ways countries and jurisdictions are addressing the issue. To this end, the third International Summit on the Teaching Profession, held in Amsterdam in March 2013 and hosted by the Netherlands, the OECD and Education International, brought together education ministers, union leaders and other teacher leaders from high-performing and rapidly improving education systems, as measured by the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), to discuss how teacher quality is defined and what standards are set and by whom; what systems are in place for teacher evaluation and how evaluations are conducted; and how teacher evaluation contributes to school improvement and teacher self-efficacy.

This publication underpins the 2013 Summit with available research about effective approaches to teacher appraisal and examples of reforms that have produced specific results, show promise or illustrate imaginative ways of implementing change. The publication is largely based on the OECD *Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes* (see Box 0.2) as well as analyses from the OECD 2008 *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS). Countries that are represented at the Summit but did not participate in the OECD review carried out a special survey in order to provide comparable data.

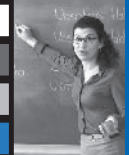
The publication looks at the governance of appraisal systems, including how standards for teacher appraisal are established and by whom; at approaches and procedures for teacher appraisal and developing capacity for implementing them; and at how appraisal results are used and the consequences that may follow. The analysis is complemented with text boxes that illustrate proven or promising practices in countries.

Box 0.1 Approaches to teacher appraisal

Teacher appraisal refers to the evaluation of individual teachers to judge their performance and/or provide feedback to help improve their practice. Countries use a range of different approaches: appraisal that completes a probationary period; appraisal as part of performance management, which may include registration processes; regular appraisals; and appraisals for promotion and reward schemes.

Completion of probation refers to the appraisal of individual teachers after they have completed a delimited period of time, after entering the profession, during which the school leader or leadership team can evaluate the competence and progress of the new teacher, monitor specific aspects of his or her performance, and identify professional-development needs. It is a period of adjustment during which teachers may also benefit from induction and mentoring arrangements. Upon successful completion of the probationary period, teachers may receive a promotion or apply for fully registered teaching status.

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Performance management refers to the formal teacher-appraisal processes designed to ensure that individual and organisational goals are met. This includes all types of appraisal related to managing and developing a teacher's career. As such, performance management is part of wider processes and systems for measuring, monitoring and enhancing the performance of teachers. It includes processes such as teacher registration, regular appraisals and appraisals for promotion.

Teacher registration, or certification, processes officially confirm teachers as competent for teaching. Advancement to fully registered teaching status typically occurs upon completion of a probationary period and/or following an appraisal against registration/certification criteria. The process typically involves external evaluators or a national agency responsible for teacher registration. In some countries, teachers have to renew their registration every few years.

Regular appraisal is usually a process internal to the school, regulated by general labour-law provisions requiring teachers' employers to regularly evaluate their employees' performance. In some countries, there are prescriptions as to the way such performance-management appraisals should be implemented; in other countries, school leaders are autonomous in designing appraisals for performance management. The process is generally connected to a discussion and plan regarding the teacher's working conditions, responsibilities, professional development, and career and salary advancement.

Appraisal for promotion is a process that is separate from regular teacher appraisals in some countries. It is often voluntary and takes place in relation to decisions on employment status. Many countries do not have a specific process for this type of appraisal but integrate this function into regular teacher appraisals.

Reward schemes involve teacher appraisals that are explicitly designed to identify a select number of high-performing teachers to acknowledge their teaching competence and performance through rewards or one-off salary increases.

Box 0.2 The OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

The *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes* was launched in late 2009 to provide analysis and policy advice to countries on how assessment and evaluation can be embedded within a consistent framework to bring about real gains in performance across the school system. The Review looked at the various components of evaluation and assessment frameworks that countries use with the aim of improving student outcomes. These include student assessments, teacher evaluations, school evaluations, school leader evaluations, and system evaluations. The main objectives were to: synthesise research-based evidence on the impact of evaluation and assessment strategies; identify innovative and successful policy initiatives and practices; facilitate exchanges of lessons and experiences among countries; and identify policy options for policy makers to consider.

Twenty-five systems (24 countries) were engaged in the Review: Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Belgium (French Community), Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland).

The Review focused on the policy implications of the available evidence on the impact of evaluation and assessment policies in a wide range of national settings. Evidence analysed included the relevant academic and policy papers published in peer-reviewed journals, detailed information provided by countries on their evaluation and assessment policies, and views and perspectives collected from a wide range of stakeholders in a variety of countries.

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The work was undertaken through a combination of desk-based analysis and country reviews. This was complemented with four meetings of the OECD Group of National Experts on Evaluation and Assessment, the body responsible for overseeing the Review. The work was organised in three phases:

An analytical phase, to draw together evidence-based policy lessons from international data, research and analysis. The analytical phase used several means – literature reviews (11 papers produced), 24 country background reports (CBRs) and data analyses – to analyse the factors that shape evaluation and assessment in school systems and develop an analytical framework. The CBRs were prepared in response to a common set of issues and questions, and used a common framework to facilitate comparative analysis and maximise the opportunities for countries to learn from each other. They were prepared in consultation with the OECD Secretariat and, to the extent possible, included evidence on the impact of policies.

A country review phase, to provide policy advice to individual countries tailored to the issues of interest in those countries. Advice was based on international evidence combined with evidence obtained by a team of experts visiting the country. For each country visited, a team of up to five reviewers (including at least two OECD Secretariat members) analysed the CBR and then undertook an intensive visit of about eight days. Each visit included meetings with a wide variety of stakeholders (e.g. education authorities, professional teacher organisations; parents' organisations; students' organisations; teacher educators; researchers; and groups of students, teachers and school leaders at the schools visited). The 14 review visits involved 28 reviewers external to the OECD with a range of research and policy backgrounds. Overall, the external review teams visited about 90 schools and met with about 2 800 individuals.

A synthesis phase, to prepare a final report blending analytic and review evidence and providing overall policy conclusions. The synthesis report includes detailed information on features of countries' evaluation and assessment frameworks collected through a questionnaire prepared by the OECD Secretariat.

The OECD Review was conducted in co-operation with a range of international organisations to reduce duplication and develop synergies. Social partners were also involved through the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD. The work of the Review is available at www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

Source: OECD (forthcoming), *Final Synthesis Report from the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes*, OECD Publishing.

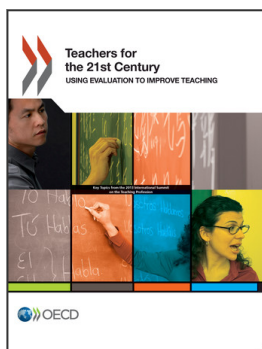


Notes

1. The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey was implemented in 2007-08, covering lower secondary education; 23 countries participated (OECD, 2009). The results derived from TALIS are based on self-reports from teachers and principals and therefore represent their opinions, perceptions, beliefs and their accounts of their activities. Further information is available at www.oecd.org/edu/talis.

References

OECD (2009), *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264072992-en>.



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