



Executive Summary

Our view of teachers is coloured by our own experience as students. This firsthand – and often dated – knowledge is augmented by the portrayal of teachers and their working conditions in the media. Thus, in many countries, the traditional view of teaching is one in which teachers work alone in classrooms, behind closed doors, often with larger numbers of students than they can realistically handle. In some countries, teaching is seen as a job without real career prospects that young people enter if they cannot get into a better one. The fact that pay tends to be lower than that of other college graduates is compensated for by the fact that teachers often enjoy more holiday time and are seen as working fewer hours than their colleagues in other fields.

The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) asks teachers and school leaders about the conditions that contribute to the learning environments in their schools. In so doing, it also verifies – and dispels – many of the myths that exist about teachers today. For example, when teachers are asked about class size and whether it has any detrimental effects on their job satisfaction or feelings of effectiveness as a teacher, their responses reveal that it is not the number of students in a class but the type of students (such as students with behavioural issues) that has the strongest association with the teacher's job satisfaction and feelings of self-efficacy.

TALIS data also indicate that most teachers are still teaching largely in isolation, as over half of teachers report very rarely or never team-teaching with colleagues, and two-thirds report the same rates for observing their colleagues teach. Some 46% of teachers report never receiving feedback on their teaching from their school leader, and 51% have never received feedback from other members of the school management. Only slightly more than a third of teachers in TALIS countries report that the feedback they receive on their teaching leads to a moderate or large positive change in the likelihood of career advancement. Similarly, less than a third of teachers believe that if a teacher is consistently under-performing, he or she would be dismissed.

Teachers also report that they work an average of 38 hours per week across countries, which could be considered an average work week for many fields. On average, half of teachers' time is spent teaching and half is spent on all of the other daily tasks that are required of teachers.

WHO ARE OUR TEACHERS AND WHERE ARE THEY WORKING?

The majority of lower secondary teachers are women in all countries surveyed, except for Japan. In fact, in 22 countries, at least two-thirds of teachers are women. While the average age of teachers across countries is 43, several countries may face significant teacher shortages as large numbers of teachers approach retirement age.

On average, teachers are well-educated, with the majority reporting that they completed university or equivalent education and a programme to prepare them for becoming a teacher. In addition, teachers whose formal training included the specific content, pedagogy and classroom practice of the subjects they teach report feeling better prepared for teaching.

Today's learning environments are, on average, well-resourced and relationships reported amongst the teaching staff and between teachers and students are generally positive. However, more than a third of teachers work in schools with significant staffing shortages of qualified teachers, teachers for students with special needs, and support personnel.

WHO ARE OUR SCHOOL LEADERS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

In contrast to the population of lower secondary school teachers, half of the school leaders in TALIS schools are men. Principals are also well-educated, with the majority reporting that they completed tertiary education. At least three-quarters of principals report that this education included programmes in school administration, teacher preparation or instructional leadership.

While principals report spending the most time (41%), on average, managing human and material resources, planning, and reporting, they increasingly distribute leadership and decision-making tasks, which can benefit both the teachers and the principals themselves. Indeed, principals with heavy workloads who distribute tasks and decision making less also report lower levels of job satisfaction.

Distributing leadership also saves principals valuable time for what some consider the most important task: instructional leadership. Principals who report more instructional leadership tend to spend more time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks and are more likely to observe classroom teaching as part of the formal appraisal of teachers' work. In some countries, these principals more often report using the results of student performance and evaluations to develop the school's educational goals and programmes.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO TEACHERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES?

As with the first cycle of TALIS in 2008, most lower secondary teachers report that they participate in professional development activities. In TALIS 2013, an average of 88% of teachers in lower secondary education report engaging in professional development in the previous year. The reasons most often cited by teachers for not participating in professional development activities are conflicts with work schedules and the absence of incentives for participation. In general, teachers report higher participation rates in professional development in countries where they also report higher levels of financial support. In some cases, even when monetary support is not offered, teachers who are offered non-monetary support, such as scheduled time for activities during the school day, report participating in professional development.

Formal teacher induction programmes are also shown to be important activities for teachers, although many teachers aren't taking advantage of this opportunity. TALIS data show that teachers' participation in formal induction programmes is an important predictor of their participation in professional development in later years. In addition, in 17 countries and economies, teachers who report having participated in a formal induction programme in the past are more likely to report that they currently act as a mentor for other teachers. However, even though most school principals report that induction programmes are available, not even half of teachers, on average, report that they participated in one during their first regular teaching job.

HOW ARE TEACHER APPRAISALS AND FEEDBACK USED?

Formal performance appraisal and feedback on practice help teachers improve. Teachers surveyed in TALIS agree that appraisals are helpful, as more than six in ten teachers report that appraisals lead to positive changes in their teaching practices, and more than half report that appraisals lead to positive changes in both their use of student assessments and their classroom-management practices. More than eight in ten teachers work in schools where formal appraisals at least sometimes lead to teacher development or training plans.

Yet the outcomes or impact of appraisal seem less apparent to the teachers surveyed in TALIS. Almost half of teachers report that appraisal and feedback are undertaken simply to fulfil administrative requirements. Annual increments in teacher pay are awarded regardless of the outcome of formal teacher appraisal in all but about one-fifth of schools. Some 44% of teachers work in schools whose principal reports that formal teacher appraisal never results in a change in a teacher's career advancement.

TALIS teachers receive formal or informal feedback on their practice in a variety of ways, from a variety of sources. Almost 80% of teachers report receiving feedback following classroom observation, and nearly two-thirds report receiving feedback following an analysis of student test scores. Nearly nine in ten teachers report that student performance, teachers' pedagogical competency in their subject, and classroom management are strongly emphasised in the feedback they receive.



WHAT HAPPENS BEHIND CLASSROOM DOORS?

It is perhaps reassuring to learn that teachers in TALIS report that the majority of their classroom time is actually spent teaching. While teachers report spending about 80% of their time on teaching and learning, on average, approximately one in four teachers in more than half of the participating countries report losing at least 30% of their time to classroom disruptions and administrative tasks.

In spite of these disruptions, roughly two-thirds of teachers report a positive classroom climate, and these teachers are more likely to use active teaching practices, such as small group work, projects requiring more than a week for students to complete, and information and communication technologies. Teachers who report participating in professional development activities involving individual and collaborative research, observation visits to other schools, or a network of teachers are also more likely to use these practices.

WHAT GIVES TEACHERS GREATER JOB SATISFACTION?

As might be expected, in most TALIS countries and economies, teachers with more than five years of teaching experience report a stronger belief in their ability to teach (self-efficacy), as do teachers who work with their colleagues. In almost all countries, teachers who report participating in collaborative professional learning at least five times a year report notably greater self-efficacy.

TALIS findings show that, in nearly all countries, when teachers perceive that appraisal and feedback lead to changes in their teaching practice, they also report greater job satisfaction. When teachers believe that appraisal and feedback is performed only for administrative purposes they report less job satisfaction. In addition, teachers who report that they participate in decision making at school also report greater job satisfaction. Indeed, although fewer than a third of teachers believe that teaching is a valued profession in their country, those teachers who report that they can contribute to school decisions are more likely to report that teaching is valued in their society.

Teacher-student relations have an exceptionally powerful influence over teachers' job satisfaction. In almost all countries, when teachers have more students with behavioural problems, they report significantly less job satisfaction.

While TALIS offers a wealth of information to education policy makers, it is also an important resource for teachers and school leaders, who are at the heart of the survey. To discover how teachers and school leaders can use the findings from TALIS to improve teaching and learning in their schools, consult *A Teachers' Guide to TALIS 2013: Teaching and Learning International Survey*, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264216075-en>.