

*Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments:
First results from the OECD Teaching and Learning
International Survey*

TALIS

*OECD Briefing Note
For Austria*

OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) provides the first internationally comparative perspective on the conditions of teaching and learning, based on data from over 70,000 teachers and school principals who represent lower secondary teachers in the 23 participating countries.

TALIS examines important aspects of professional development; teacher beliefs, attitudes and practices; teacher appraisal and feedback; and school leadership. TALIS looks at these factors through the eyes of teachers and school principals. This innovative approach was chosen in order to examine how the intended school and teacher policies of education systems are actually perceived and implemented in schools and classrooms, recognising that the best intentions will only yield results if effectively and consistently implemented in the frontline.

This note contextualises key findings for **Austria** with international trends among countries participating in TALIS, under the headings: conditions for effective learning, preparing and supporting a high-quality teaching force, improving teaching practice, supporting effective teaching through appraisal and feedback and shaping the development of teachers through effective school leadership.

TALIS Initial Report, as well as its executive summary, all data and web-only tables, can be downloaded free of charge at www.oecd.org/edu/TALIS.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE, JOB SATISFACTION AND TEACHERS BELIEF IN THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

Classroom climate not only has been shown to affect student outcomes and attainment but is a prominent policy issue. Student behaviour and the creation of a safe and productive learning environment can be a challenging dimension of teachers' work. How successful teachers feel they are with regard to their students' education can be linked to productivity and can influence people's actions in the workplace. When teachers envisage effective teaching as a skill that can be acquired, this feeling of self-efficacy can help them better analyse and solve problems. Conversely, those teachers confronting a low feeling of self-efficacy can experience self-doubt and become preoccupied with evaluative concerns if efforts proved unsuccessful.

One teacher in four in most countries (13 out of 23) loses at least 30% of lesson time because of disruptive student behaviour or administrative tasks, and some teachers lose more than half.

At least half of teachers in all countries spend 80% or more of the lesson time on teaching and learning. However, often time is lost because students are disruptive or because teachers have to deal with administrative tasks. One teacher in four in most countries loses at least 30% of lesson time to these two factors, and some teachers lose more than half (Figure 4.10).

Teachers were also asked about their relations with students as an indicator of school climate. Teacher-student relations varied considerably within countries, although Norway stood out as a country in which over 95% of teachers reported better relations with students than the international median (Figure 4.13).

- Austrian teachers report a positive classroom disciplinary climate compared to other participating countries (3rd rank - Table 7.3) and spend a percentage of classroom time on actual teaching and learning similar to the TALIS average (Table 4.18web).

Teachers in the same school vary in terms of job satisfaction and belief in their effectiveness.

TALIS asked teachers about their job satisfaction and about how successful they feel they are with regard to their students' education (self-efficacy). Norwegian teachers stand out as well above average on both measures. High scores for job satisfaction were also reported by teachers in Austria and Belgium (FI), while the opposite was true particularly in Hungary. Korean teachers were on average the least positive about their self-efficacy compared with other countries (Figure 4.15). Around 90% of overall variation on these measures is among teachers within schools.

- Teachers in Austria reported a level of job satisfaction above the TALIS average (4th rank - Table 4.19).
- Teachers in Austria reported a level of self-efficacy above the TALIS average (7th rank - Table 7.2).

Teachers who have undertaken more professional development tend to feel better equipped to deal with teaching challenges...

In around half of the countries (Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Portugal and Slovenia), teachers who had received more professional development reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy (Table 7.5a). TALIS also suggests that teachers' participation in professional development goes hand in hand with their mastery of a wider array of methods to use in the classroom, even if it is not clear to what extent professional development triggers or responds to the adoption of new techniques (Table 4.7).

- In Austria, professional development was linked to greater self-efficacy after controlling for teacher background and socio-economic characteristics but not once controlling for other aspects of teaching and school (Table 7.5a).

...but professional development and intervention need to be targeted at individual teachers.

TALIS identifies close associations between factors such as a positive school climate, teaching beliefs, co-operation between teachers, teacher job satisfaction, professional development, and the adoption of different teaching techniques (Table 4.12). For all of these factors, much of the variation identified was in differences among individual teachers rather than among schools or countries (e.g. Figure 4.3). The implication is that by

addressing teachers' attitudes, beliefs and practices as a whole, there is scope for considerable improvement in teaching and learning, but this may require individualised support for teachers rather than just whole-school or system-wide interventions.

Teacher appraisal and feedback can be important instruments to raise self-efficacy, and public recognition can reinforce this relationship.

In a number of countries, the appraisal and feedback which teachers receive is mirrored in the beliefs in their own teaching abilities, in other words, the more feedback they receive on their work in specific areas, the more they trust in their abilities to address their respective teaching challenges (Table 7.7a). However, this relationship is not always visible when other factors are accounted for, suggesting that third factors are at play too. In some countries teachers reported higher levels of self-efficacy when they had received public recognition for the improvements and innovations in connection with the appraisal (Austria, Belgium (Fl.), Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Malta, Norway and Spain) and also when innovative practices were part of appraisal and feedback (Brazil, Iceland and Portugal) (Table 7.7a).

School evaluation and teacher appraisal show less relationship with classroom climate, in particular once other factors have been taken into account (Table 7.7). School evaluation was also not markedly associated with teacher efficacy (Table 7.7a).

- The factors found to be significantly associated with disciplinary classroom climate in Austria are: female teachers, teachers employed on a full-time basis, teachers with more years of experience, teachers with better teacher-student relations, teachers using more structured teaching practices, teachers using more student-oriented teaching practices, teachers using less enhanced activities in their teaching, teachers more frequently exchanging and coordinating their teaching but less frequently engaging in professional collaboration, and teachers in schools where the school principal is less likely to report a lack of personnel hindering instruction
- Factors that were associated with increased self-efficacy among Austrian teachers are: teachers being employed on a full-time basis, teachers having fewer years of experience, teachers with stronger beliefs about instruction, full-time employment, better teacher-student relations, teachers who are more likely to teach well-structured lessons, teachers who use student-oriented practices, teacher who use less enhanced teaching activities, teachers who engage more in professional collaboration, teachers who receive public recognition following teacher appraisal and/or feedback and teachers in schools where the school principal is less likely to report a shortage of materials hindering instruction.

Some teaching practices are more closely associated with classroom climate and self-efficacy than others.

Structured teaching practices were associated with a good classroom disciplinary climate in around half of the countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium (Fl), Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Portugal and Spain), and in some cases this effect was strong (Table 7.6). These practices were also associated with greater teacher self-efficacy in around the same number of countries, many the same ones (Australia, Austria, Belgium (Fl), Iceland, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Portugal and Spain). Similar results were found for teachers who adopted student-oriented teaching practices but the number of countries where such positive associations were evident was smaller (Table 7.6a).

Teacher co-operation tended not to be strongly associated with classroom disciplinary climate, but in just under half of the countries teachers who engage in more progressive forms of professional collaboration such as team teaching were more likely to feel more effective in their teaching (Austria, Belgium (Fl.), Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Korea, Poland, Portugal and Spain) (Table 7.6a).

PREPARING AND SUPPORTING A HIGH QUALITY TEACHING FORCE

Education systems seek to provide teachers with opportunities for on-going professional development to fully prepare them for their work and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce. TALIS examined the take-up of professional development, the degree of unsatisfied demand for development and the factors that support or hinder meeting development needs.

Several findings from TALIS underline the need for a better preparation of teachers.

More than one teacher in three is in a school whose principal thinks that the school suffers from a shortage of qualified teachers (Table 2.5). This ranges from 12% in Poland to the great majority in Estonia, Mexico and Turkey.

The factors hindering instruction that school principals most frequently cite are a lack of equipment and a lack of instructional support personnel. There is a strong relationship between schools in which a shortage of instructional support staff and of other support staff hinders instruction, an indication that a squeeze on non-teacher resources can affect these two problems together. On the other hand there seems to be no correspondence between a shortage of qualified teachers and average class size. TALIS also found that in some countries, negative aspects of teacher behaviour such as absenteeism or lack of pedagogical preparation often hinder instruction. In Italy and Mexico for example, the majority of teachers are in schools whose principals thought that unprepared teachers hindered instruction (Table 2.8).

- Teachers in Austria are more likely than average across participating countries to work in schools where the school principal reports that instruction is hindered to some extent or a lot by a lack of qualified teachers (49%), a lack of instructional support personnel (69%), and a lack of other support personnel (78%) (Table 2.5).

The great majority of teachers participate in professional development...

Nearly nine teachers in ten reported taking part in a structured professional development activity during the 18 months preceding the survey. This is generally a high participation rate, but there is considerable variation in: *i)* The proportion of teachers participating in different countries: in Denmark, the Slovak Republic and Turkey, one in four reported no professional development. Given the broad definition of professional development used in the survey, this may be a concern (Table 3.1). *ii)* The intensity of participation: in some countries teachers' average participation is a handful of days a year, while in Mexico and Korea it is 30 days or more (Table 3.1). *iii)* Equity issues raised by the participation of various groups within countries: older teachers for example are under-represented and within-country variation is greatest in Korea, Spain, Italy, Poland and Mexico (Tables 3.1a and Table 3.1d). *iv)* The type of professional development activities (Table 3.2).

On average among the participating countries, some 51% of teachers' professional development was compulsory (Table 3.1). The proportion ranged from about one-third or less in Austria, Belgium (Fl.), Denmark and Portugal to 78% in Malta and as high as 88% in Malaysia. The countries with the highest number of compulsory days on average were Mexico, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy and Korea and those with the lowest were Austria, Belgium (Fl.) and Ireland.

- Teachers in Austria were more likely to participate in some professional development over the previous 18 months but the length of that training was lower than the TALIS average (11 days compared to the TALIS average of 15) (Table 3.1).
- Teachers in Austria with an initial education qualification of a Bachelor degree (or equivalent) were more likely to take more days of professional development (14 days) than those with lower or higher levels of qualifications (Table 3.1a).

...but half do not think this meets their needs...

Although the great majority of teachers received some professional development over the previous 18 months, 55% on average reported that they would have liked more. However, teachers' views on this varied widely: In Belgium (Fl.) and Slovenia, two-thirds of teachers felt that they had received enough professional development, while in Brazil, Malaysia and Mexico, over 80% did not. While some degree of unmet need can be expected, its extent in some of the countries will need closer examination (Table 3.3).

- Less than half of teachers (45%) wanted to participate in more professional development than they did in the previous 18 months (Table 3.3).

...with unmet demand concentrated in areas relating to dealing with heterogeneous learning groups, ICT and student behaviour.

Teachers' demand for more professional development appears concentrated in certain areas. In particular, one teacher in three reports a high level of need for teaching students with special learning needs. This indicates a serious issue in terms of teachers' capacity to deal with heterogeneous learning groups. Teachers also frequently mentioned ICT teaching and student behaviour as areas in which they required more development (Table 3.4). It is noteworthy in this context that one teacher in four in most countries reports losing at least 30% of learning time because of disruptive student behaviour or administrative tasks. Since the greatest amount of variation in loss of teaching time is among different teachers within schools, policy attention will need to focus on addressing the skills and dispositions of individual teachers, rather than improving overall school climate and discipline.

- In Austria, teachers' demand for more professional development focuses on behaviour problem and special need students (Table 3.4).

Policy makers and practitioners need to ensure that incentives and support for professional development are better aligned with the types of activity that are effective in meeting teachers' needs.

The great majority of teachers reported that the professional development they take part in, across a range of activities, had a moderate or high impact. The greatest perceived impact is in teacher research and qualification programmes (Table 3.8). Yet relatively few participate in this type of activity and those who do often feel frustrated by the lack of sufficient time to devote to them.

- The most common forms of professional development completed by teachers in Austria were informal dialogue to improve teaching (92%), courses and workshops (92%), and reading professional literature (89%) (Table 3.2).
- The forms of professional development that more teachers reported in Austria as having a moderate or high impact upon their development were qualification programmes (89% of teachers who undertook this form of professional development) individual and collaborative research (88%), and were informal dialogue to improve teaching (85%) (Table 3.8).

Two-thirds of teachers paid nothing for their professional development...

On average in TALIS countries, two-thirds of teachers paid nothing for the professional development they participated in, and a similar proportion received time from their employers to undertake it. This indicates a significant investment in teachers' professional development on the part of schools and public authorities (Table 3.5).

- Less than half (44%) of teachers in Austria paid none of the costs of their professional development.

...but free participation is not the only way to stimulate participation.

However, where teachers paid for their own development, they tended to do more. Those who paid the full cost undertook over twice as much training as those who received it free (Table 3.5a). This partly reflects the fact that courses that are paid for tend to lead to professional qualifications and are more time-consuming. Teachers paying for their professional development are also more likely to feel that they need more than they get. This suggests that free provision is not necessarily the only way of stimulating participation.

- Teachers in Austria who paid all of the costs of their professional development undertook nearly double the number of days of professional development than teachers who paid for none of the costs (15 days compared to 8 days) (Table 3.5a).

IMPROVING TEACHING PRACTICE

Teachers' beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving educational processes. TALIS examines a variety of these which previous research has shown to be relevant to school improvement and effectiveness.

Teachers tend to be more inclined to see their role as supporting active learning rather than directly transmitting information...

Two alternative views of teaching emphasise, on the one hand, the teacher's role in transmitting knowledge and providing correct solutions, and on the other, the teacher's role as a facilitator of active learning by students who seek out solutions for themselves. The latter "constructivist" view of teaching generally has more support among the teachers surveyed today than the former "direct transmission" view (Figure 4.2), particularly so in Northern and Western European countries, Australia and Korea but less so in Southern Europe, Brazil or Malaysia.

...Nevertheless, structured practices are more common than student-oriented practices, or project work...

In the classroom, teachers in all countries reported using practices aimed at ensuring learning is well structured ("structuring practices") more often than they used student-oriented practices, such as adapting teaching to individual needs. Both of these teaching practices are used more often than activities such as project work ("enhanced activities"), which require more active participation by the student. This pattern is true in every country (Figure 4.4). Since each of these practices can raise student achievement, there may be scope for countries that make less use of student-oriented and enhanced activities to improve their results by using them more.

It is notable that the domination of structuring practices among countries is to some extent contrary to the general preference for constructivist beliefs, which would be expected to be more closely aligned to student-oriented practices. The factors that prevent teachers from putting their beliefs about teaching into practice require further investigation but this may nevertheless be a source of frustration for teachers.

Teachers of mathematics place greater emphasis on structuring. Teachers in the humanities report that they are relatively more likely to assign project work and other forms of enhanced activities, and in arts and subjects that teach practical skills, to use more student-oriented practices (Figure 4.5).

- Teachers in Austria favoured constructivist beliefs about instruction compared to direct transmission beliefs about instruction to a greater degree than teachers in all participating countries except Iceland. As with other countries, teachers in Austria were more likely to use structured teaching practices than student oriented teaching practices and using enhanced teaching activities in the classroom (Figures 4.2 and 4.4).

There is also scope for strengthening teachers' collaboration, beyond exchanging ideas.

In all countries, co-operation by teachers takes the form of exchanging and co-ordinating ideas and information more often than direct professional collaboration such as team teaching (Figure 4.7). However, there are big differences among countries, with professional collaboration relatively more common in the Slovak Republic, Turkey and Poland and much less common in the Slovenia, Belgium (Fl.) and Spain. Generally, there seems scope to enhance this form of co-operation, which research has shown to raise school effectiveness.

- Teachers in Austria were more likely than most other participating country to favour the simpler exchange and coordination for teaching rather than more in-depth professional collaboration (Figure 4.7).

Teacher-student relations vary across countries, but most variation is within schools, suggesting that some teachers need extra support to establish an effective learning environment.

Teachers were asked about their relations with students as an indicator of school climate. Within countries, a considerable amount of variation is due to differences among schools, but two-thirds of all variation is among teachers regardless of school or country differences. This suggests that some teachers need extra support to ensure a climate in which to teach effectively.

- Compared with other countries, teachers in Austria report there being relatively good levels of teacher-student relations (Figure 4.13).

Countries with a high mean score for classroom disciplinary climate also have comparatively high mean scores for time on task. This is the case for Estonia and to a lesser extent for Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia.

- Teachers in Austria reported relatively high levels of classroom disciplinary climate and time on task (Figure 4.11).

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE TEACHING THROUGH APPRAISAL AND FEEDBACK

TALIS shows that strong school-level evaluation tends to feed through to better teacher appraisal and feedback, which in turn can feed through to improvements in the classroom. This is true not just for evaluation in general but for specific aspects of teaching, such as teaching students from diverse backgrounds. These links provide important policy levers for policy makers and useful guidance for shaping the framework for evaluating schools to facilitate and improve the work of teachers.

Teachers tend to feel positive about their appraisal and feedback, and see this as having an impact on their teaching skills...

An important finding of TALIS is that teachers generally respond positively to appraisal and feedback (Table 5.7a). They report that it is fair and helpful for their work and that it increases their job satisfaction and to a lesser extent their job security. In addition, teachers report that it significantly increases their development as teachers (Table 5.7 and Figures 5.8-5.13). Teachers' positive perceptions of appraisal and feedback show that it is possible to overcome concerns that have previously been raised about such practices.

Over eight teachers in ten reported that they had received some kind of appraisal or feedback on their work and most were carried out by school principals or other teachers within their school (Table 5.3).

- The frequency of teacher appraisal and feedback in Austria is around the TALIS average. 11% of teachers in Austria reported never receiving appraisal or feedback on their work in their school from any source (table 5.3).
- Teachers in Austria tend to be more likely to agree that their appraisal and feedback was a fair assessment of their work and helpful in the development of their work as a teacher (Table 5.7).

...and see this as having an impact on their teaching skills...

Not only do teachers report that the appraisal and feedback they receive improves their teaching skills, they also report that it leads to changes in specific aspects of their teaching. Greater emphasis on an aspect of teachers' work in appraisal and feedback is more likely to lead to changes in that area (Figure 5.8-Figure 5.13).

Between 70% and 80% of teachers work in schools whose school principal reported that school evaluations had an effect on feedback to the school, the appraisal of management and teachers, and helping teachers improve their teaching skills (Table 5.2). This shows why school-level evaluation can be an important driver of school improvement.

- School evaluations are relatively less common in Austria. Over one-third of teachers in Austria work in schools that had not had an evaluation in the previous 5 years (35.2% versus 13.8% TALIS average - Table 5.1).
- When school evaluations do occur, the impact upon various aspects of schools is less frequent than in other participating countries. More common impacts are those on the performance feedback to the school, performance appraisal of the school management, the appraisal of teachers and the assistance provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills (Table 5.2).

But the framework for evaluating education in schools is weak in a number of areas and countries...

At the same time, on average across TALIS countries 13% of teachers receive no appraisal and feedback on their work as teachers in their school. This was particularly apparent in Ireland and Portugal where over one-quarter of teachers had no appraisal and feedback and in Italy and Spain where around half of teachers had none (Table 5.3).

Furthermore on average just under one-third of teachers (30.4%) across TALIS countries worked in schools that had not been subject to external evaluation in the previous five years. An average of one-fifth (20.2%) worked in schools that had not conducted a self-evaluation (Table 5.1).

In schools that are not evaluated, teachers are less likely to benefit from appraisal or feedback, as is the case of Korea, for example. This suggests that where school evaluation takes place, appraisal and feedback for individual teachers is encouraged.

...and teachers do not receive recognition for effective teaching...

As shown in Figure 5.7, on average across TALIS countries, three-quarters of teachers report that they would receive no recognition for increasing the quality of their work. A similar proportion report that they would receive no recognition for being more innovative in their teaching. In addition, only around one half of teachers across TALIS countries reported that their school principal used effective methods to determine teachers' performance (Table 5.9).

Additionally, three-quarters of teachers reported that, in their school, the most effective teachers do not receive the most recognition and that their school principal does not take steps to alter the monetary rewards of a persistently underperforming teacher (Table 5.9). A similar proportion reported that, in their school, teachers would not be dismissed because of sustained poor performance.

The lack of recognition and incentives for teachers to develop their teaching and improve their effectiveness runs counter to efforts to lift school improvement. The resources devoted to countless school improvement initiatives across countries are not matched with either incentives or recognition for teachers to improve their own effectiveness. It would appear that an appraisal system and career structure that focuses upon and promotes innovation and effectiveness would better assist school improvement programmes and efforts to increase school effectiveness.

In schools that are not evaluated, teachers are less likely to benefit from appraisal or feedback. In Korea, for example, a teacher in a school that has not been evaluated is more than twice as likely not to receive appraisal or feedback as one in a school that has been evaluated. This suggests that where school evaluation takes place, appraisal and feedback for individual teachers is encouraged.

- In Austria, more than in most other participating countries, teachers work in schools where poor performing teachers are not dismissed nor have their monetary rewards altered for sustained poor performance. In addition, over half of teachers in Austria believe that their school principal does not use effective methods to determine whether teachers are performing well or badly (Table 5.9).
- Just over 85% of teachers in Austria believe they will receive no recognition for improving the quality or level of innovation in their teaching. This has an impact across the school as nearly 90% of teachers believe that the most effective teachers in their school do not receive the most rewards for their work (Table 5.9).

...and feedback tends to have limited impact on material reward systems or career advancement...

School evaluations and teacher appraisal and feedback have little financial impact. On average across TALIS countries, only around 10% of teachers' appraisal and feedback is linked to any kind of monetary reward and for only 16% is it linked to career advancement (Table 5.5). In addition, school evaluations are linked to the remuneration of only one-quarter of teachers and less than four teachers in ten work in schools where school evaluations are linked to the school budget (Table 5.2).

- The evaluative framework of school education has relatively little impact in Austria. School evaluations and teacher appraisal and feedback have less impact on teachers compared to most other participating countries. For example, almost no teachers report a monetary impact from the appraisal and feedback they receive and only 5% report an impact on their career advancement (Table 5.5).

SHAPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS THROUGH EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

School leadership plays a vital role in teachers' working lives and on their effectiveness. A revolution in the model of school leadership in recent years has seen a substantial shift from a largely bureaucratic administration to a paradigm of "leadership for learning" with the school principal as instructional leader. TALIS is the first international survey to address in detail the management behaviour and style of school principals in secondary schools and to look at the presence of new trends in school leadership and their impact on teachers.

Instructional leadership often goes hand in hand with administrative leadership.

Instructional leadership (actions to support or improve teachers' instruction and to set the school's goals and curriculum development) is present particularly in Brazil and Slovenia. Although, in the same countries, administrative leadership (actions to support or improve teachers' instruction and to set the school's goals and curriculum development) is also visible (Table 6.7).

Countries where administrative leadership is particularly evident are Bulgaria and Malaysia, whereas the opposite is true most notably in Denmark. Overall, school principals who are strong instructional leaders are more likely to be strong administrative leaders as well. This contradicts the notion that these are alternative styles.

- School principals in Austria are less likely than in most other participating countries to favour instructional school leadership.

Leadership style has little association with teachers' beliefs, attitudes or practices...

A school's leadership style has no pronounced relation to teachers' beliefs about teaching, to their teaching practices or to classroom climate (Tables 6.4, 6.5 and 6.7).

- This was also found to be true in Austria.

...but often relates to the ways in which teachers are appraised, and the link between appraisal and professional development.

In more than half of the TALIS countries there is a greater chance of teacher appraisal recognising the participation in professional development by teachers in schools where strong instructional leadership is present (Table 6.9). In most countries, school principals in such schools are also more likely to use further professional development to address teachers' weaknesses identified in appraisals.

- In Austria, school principals are more likely to favour instructional school leadership if they work in a school with a larger student-teacher ratio, have more frequent school evaluations, emphasise student test scores as a criteria for school evaluations, have teacher appraisals that focus upon student test scores and the retention and pass rates of students and have appraisals that lead to development plans for teachers. (Tables 6.9 and 6.12).

A PROFILE OF LOWER SECONDARY TEACHERS AND THEIR SCHOOLS

TALIS establishes a profile of lower secondary teachers and their schools in order to contextualise its findings.

Teachers in lower secondary schools are mostly female...

In every TALIS country, most teachers are female: almost 70%, on average, rising to 80-85% in Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Mexico, Spain and Turkey are more balanced, with over 40% of male teachers (Table 2.1).

On the other hand, only 45% of school principals across countries are female, suggesting a "glass ceiling" for promotion possibilities within schools (Table 2.1).

- 68% of teachers and 29% of school principals in Austria are female (Table 2.1).

...and the workforce is ageing.

In most cases, the majority of teachers are over 40. On average across TALIS countries, the percentage of teachers over 50 is 27%, which is nearly double the percentage of teachers under 30 (15%). In Austria, Italy and Norway 40% or more of teachers are over 50 and less than 10% are under 30 (Table 2.1). Many countries will soon need to replace a large number of retiring teachers.

- The age distribution of the teacher workforce in Austria is older than many other participating countries with over 40% of teachers being at or over 50 years of age (Table 2.1).

Most teachers are long-serving and on permanent contracts.

Across TALIS countries some 85% of teachers are on permanent contracts. Over 60% have taught for more than ten years, and in Austria and Italy the majority have over 20 years of service (Table 2.3).

However, some teachers, particularly those first entering the profession, face the uncertainty and challenge of a fixed-term contract usually of a year or less. In Brazil, Iceland, Ireland and Portugal, at least one teacher in four is on a fixed-term contract (Table 2.3). For many, these are requirements that must be successfully fulfilled before being granted a permanent contract. Policy makers need to balance the advantages of supporting an experienced, long-serving teaching force against the need for dynamism and “new blood”.

- 89% of teachers in Austria are permanently employed. A further 9% are on fixed-term contracts of less than 1 school year (Table 2.3).

Schools have autonomy over many things, but generally not teachers’ pay.

Three-quarters of teachers are in schools whose principals have little say over their pay. On the other hand, the great majority teach in schools with wide autonomy in other areas: around two-thirds teach in schools with considerable responsibility for hiring and firing, three-quarters in schools which formulate the school budget, and 95% in schools which establish their disciplinary procedures (Table 2.7).

- School autonomy in Austria is relatively low offering the opportunity to place more responsibilities at the school level to empower school principals. Just fewer than one-third of teachers work in schools that select teachers for hire compared to the TALIS average of 68%. In addition, just 1% of teachers work in schools that have considerable responsibility for establishing teachers’ starting salaries or determining teachers’ salary increases compared to the TALIS average of around one-quarter of teachers.