

TALIS

OECD Teaching
and Learning
International
Survey

A new, international survey of teachers and school principals, exploring:

- The role and functioning of school leadership
- How teachers' work is appraised and the feedback they receive
- Teachers' opportunities for professional development
- Approaches to teaching and learning in the classroom



The development of the new OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey programme (TALIS) is a significant contribution to the OECD evidence base on education. Never before have we had the opportunity to gain such an understanding of the teaching and learning environment inside schools and how these contrast between and within countries. In providing this, TALIS will help countries to review and develop policies that create the conditions for effective schooling.

Barbara Ischinger
OECD Director of Education

What TALIS is about

TALIS is the new OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey. It is the first international survey to focus on the learning environment and the working conditions of teachers in schools and it aims to fill important information gaps in the international comparisons of education systems. TALIS offers an opportunity for teachers and school principals to give their input into education analysis and policy development in some key policy areas. Cross-country analysis from TALIS will allow countries to identify other countries facing similar challenges and to learn from other policy approaches. The survey is currently being conducted in 24 countries across four continents, and other countries may join the survey at a later stage.

Who is to be surveyed in TALIS

TALIS surveys teachers of lower secondary education and the principals of the schools in which they work. Separate questionnaires for teachers and principals have been developed by an international expert group and have been discussed throughout their development with teacher representative bodies, in particular the Trades Union Advisory Council (TUAC) at the OECD. Each questionnaire takes about 45 minutes to complete. The TALIS survey can also be completed on line and the structure of the questionnaires has been adapted for computer use.

The survey responses are entirely confidential and at no time will the names of individual teachers, principals or schools be identified.

Within participating countries, schools as well as teachers within schools, are randomly selected to take part in TALIS. For each country – except for smaller countries – some 200 schools and 20 teachers within each of these schools are sampled.

Countries participating in TALIS*

OECD countries			Partner countries
Australia	Ireland	Poland	Brazil
Austria	Italy	Portugal	Bulgaria
Belgium (Flemish Community)	Korea	Spain	Estonia
Denmark	Mexico	Slovak Republic	Lithuania
Hungary	Netherlands	Turkey	Malta
Iceland	Norway		Malaysia
			Slovenia

* As of January 2008

Issues to be examined in TALIS

Countries participating in TALIS have chosen to focus the survey on the following key aspects of the learning environment, which can influence the quality of teaching and learning in schools:

- The leadership and management of schools- the roles adopted by school leaders, given increasing accountability and devolution of educational authority and the impact this has on the learning environment in schools and the work of teachers (complementing the current OECD thematic review on school leadership).
- The appraisal of teachers' work in schools and the form and nature of the feedback they receive, as well as the use of outcomes from these processes to reward and develop teachers. Linked to this, the professional development that teachers undertake and how this is connected to appraisal systems, how it is supported by school leaders and how it impacts on classroom practices.
- The profiles of countries with regard to teaching practices, activities, beliefs and attitudes, and how these vary according to teacher background characteristics.

What TALIS will tell us about school leadership

Research has shown the important influence that the leadership of schools can have on the educational outcomes of students. TALIS will provide a profile of school leadership within countries and will illustrate how this profile varies between schools within countries and within different contexts.

School principals' approach to leadership and management will be summarised in terms of the extent to which various activities are performed. These profiles will, for instance, indicate the different roles that school leaders adopt, including how much of an instructional leadership role is taken.

Not only will TALIS describe how schools are led and managed, but it will allow an examination of the school environment that is created by different approaches. The school environment will be characterised by, for instance, the degree of professional co-operation and collaboration between teachers, the level of teacher morale and job satisfaction, and the nature of student and teacher relations.

It is also important when examining these relationships to understand the context and conditions in which the school operates. In particular, TALIS will examine how school leadership interacts with the learning environment given the degree of autonomy that the school and its leadership have and the accountability frameworks to which the school is subject.

What TALIS will tell us about how good teaching is recognised and rewarded in schools

The systems and practices for reviewing the work of teachers, recognising and rewarding good teaching, and meeting teachers' development needs can be vital in developing and retaining effective teachers. TALIS will examine how teachers' work is appraised and how they receive feedback on their work, how frequently this occurs, who is involved in the process and what the outcomes are.

Together with information about the extent and type of school evaluation, analysis of the survey responses will reveal the degree to which these processes are motivated by administrative, accountability or developmental aims, and how different models shape the school environment. Analysis of these responses will throw light on the following questions:

- How do different appraisal/feedback systems reward good teachers and support their development needs?
- How are different systems associated with the extent of cooperation between teachers, their job satisfaction and job security?
- How do different systems influence teachers' teaching practices?

What TALIS will tell us about teachers' professional development

There are strong demands for teachers to continuously update their knowledge and skills, so access to good quality, professional development is vital. TALIS will reveal how well the development needs of teachers are being met, by looking at:

- The amount and type of professional development undertaken
- The support provided for undertaking professional development and the barriers encountered
- The impact that different forms of professional development has had on teachers' work
- The types of development needs that teachers feel they have
- Systems of induction and mentoring for new teachers

What TALIS will tell us about teaching practices and beliefs

The quality of the learning environment at the classroom level is, influenced by the teaching methods and classroom practices used by teachers. TALIS will not measure the effectiveness of teachers or of different teaching practices. Rather, it will contrast profiles of teaching practices, attitudes and beliefs among the participating countries. In terms of teaching practices, survey responses from teachers in TALIS will be summarised to examine whether different teaching practices can be identified, such as practices that tend to focus on direction from the teacher and others that are more open-ended in their approach.

Complementing this, TALIS will also provide a comparative picture of teachers' beliefs about teaching. This picture will, for example, contrast traditional views on teaching (such as direct transmission) with non-traditional views.

Together, analysis of the survey responses will allow investigation of how teaching practices and beliefs vary according to various school, teacher and classroom characteristics (including the climate of the school) and how they correlate with teachers' professional activities (such as professional development activities or collaboration with other teachers).

Further information

A successful field test of the questionnaires and the survey procedures was carried out in all countries during 2007 and the survey has gone “live” in Australia, Brazil, Korea and Malaysia and will do so in the rest of the countries between February and May 2008. The first international report from TALIS will be published in mid-2009, after which a number of thematic reports will be published.

For more information on TALIS, please contact:

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ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

The OECD groups 30 member countries sharing a commitment to democratic government and the market economy and provides a unique forum for them to discuss, develop and refine economic and social policies. The OECD's mission is to promote policies designed to:

- Achieve sustainable economic growth and employment and rising standards of living in member countries while maintaining financial stability, so contributing to the development of the world economy
- Assist sound economic expansion in member countries and other countries in the process of economic development
- Contribute to growth in world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis

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DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION

The OECD views education within a “cradle-to-grave” framework of lifelong learning. Its work recognises that people learn in a wide variety of settings: formal settings, such as in schools and colleges; informal, such as the workplace; and non-formal, such as in daily life and through the media. Internationally comparable statistics and indicators underpin the work but it has a strong qualitative dimension as well. The aim ultimately is produce policy recommendations that increase both the quality and equity of education systems. The OECD’s work on education is relevant, not only for government and local authorities, but also for civil society, researchers, professional practitioners and an informed lay audience. The extent of the audience is evident in the public discussion and debate that OECD publications on education often generate.

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