

Executive Summary

This report examines the working lives of new teachers through the TALIS 2008 survey of lower-secondary teachers and schools. New teachers are defined as having two years or less of teaching experience.

In most countries, new teachers assume virtually the same teaching responsibilities as more experienced teachers, but they report that they often lack the necessary classroom management skills for effective teaching and learning. Their classrooms often have insufficient time devoted to teaching and learning and poorer disciplinary climate.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN TEACHERS

Comparisons are made between new and more experienced teachers. Differences are highlighted and policy implications discussed. An important issue to consider is: how should differences between new and more experienced teachers be interpreted? Is a smaller difference preferable to a large one? For example, new teachers report lower levels of self-efficacy and classroom teaching time. On average across TALIS 2008 countries, 73% of new teachers' classroom time was spent on actual teaching and learning compared to 79% of more experienced teachers' classes. While any reduction in actual teaching and learning surely has a negative impact on students, the difference between new and more experienced teachers can be interpreted in numerous ways. On the one hand, a minimal difference in self-efficacy or teaching time between new and more experienced teachers could show that the quality of graduates and initial teacher education are effectively preparing new teachers for the rigours of classroom teaching. On the other hand, a minimal difference could highlight a lack of effective professional learning and constructive appraisal and feedback received by more experienced teachers. If teachers are truly working in schools that are 'learning organisations' then should we expect a large difference in self-efficacy and teaching time between new and more experienced teachers? If so, how large should these differences be? This report does not make assumptions about these questions but does attempt to highlight the multiple policy implications that can be drawn from the data.

TIME SPENT TEACHING

New teachers spent a smaller proportion of their time on actual teaching than their more experienced peers: On average¹, less than three-quarters of new teachers' classroom time was spent on actual teaching and learning. The main reason for this is the greater percentage of class time that new teachers spent on keeping order in the classroom. On average, 18% of new teachers' class time was spent trying to keep order in classrooms compared to 13% for more experienced teachers. Unfortunately, some new teachers are clearly struggling to provide

effective instruction in their classrooms. On average, one-quarter of new teachers spent one-quarter of class time keeping order amongst their students. In addition, 10% of new teachers spent at least 40% of their class time keeping order in the classroom. Obviously, this results in significant reductions in effective teaching and learning for students.

DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

New teachers are aware of their shortcomings and reported that they had strong developmental needs in these areas. In general, new teachers had greater developmental needs compared with more experienced teachers, particularly to develop skills to create more teaching and learning time in class. On average, nearly one-third of new teachers reported that they had a high level of need for professional development for effectively addressing student discipline and behaviour problems. In addition, 25% of new teachers reported that they had a high level of need for professional development to improve their classroom management skills, compared to 12% of more experienced teachers.

Despite these differences, in most countries, new teachers assumed virtually the same responsibilities as more experienced teachers in schools. On average, new teachers spent slightly more time on lesson planning and slightly less time teaching students and performing administrative duties, but the magnitude of these differences is, in most countries, small.

The small size of these differences in teaching duties is important considering that new teachers report lower levels of self-efficacy and actual teaching and learning in their classes. If a school (or a school system) is trying to maximise the effectiveness of its teaching, it would have its more effective teachers spending more time teaching. Instead, there is little job differentiation between new and more experienced teachers. In most countries, teachers were likely to have spent similar amounts of time teaching in the first year of their careers as they were in the last. If addressed, this small difference could offer significant opportunities for improved school effectiveness.

In general, new teachers were less likely to have undertaken professional development in the 18 months prior to the TALIS survey. This may be partly due to the fact that a number of new teachers had not yet been in their jobs for the 18 months prior to the TALIS 2008 survey. However, of those teachers who participated in professional development, the intensity of participation was slightly greater for those who were newer to the profession.

Importantly, new teachers considered their professional development to have a large impact on their development as a teacher. This is encouraging news for the resources invested in professional development and provides a rationale for further investments in the development of new teachers.

Problems with classroom management did not appear to result in substantially different teaching practices. As with more experienced teachers, structured teaching practices were used more frequently by new teachers than student-oriented and activity enhanced teaching practices. There were few differences between new and more experienced teachers in their use of these practices in any TALIS 2008 country.

Greater differences were found in the teaching beliefs of new compared to more experienced teachers. The endorsement of constructivist (e.g. emphasis on teacher's role as a facilitator of



active learning by students who seek out solutions for themselves) over direct transmission beliefs (e.g. emphasis on teachers' role in transmitting knowledge and providing correct solutions) about effective instruction is, in most TALIS 2008 countries, more pronounced amongst new teachers.

Most new teachers worked in schools with mentoring or induction programmes. This may be a valuable source of professional learning for some new teachers who report lower levels of self-efficacy and reduced effective teaching time in their classes.

However, these programmes may not be providing new teachers with the support and feedback they require. New teachers who worked in schools with induction or mentoring programmes were not more likely to receive more frequent appraisal and feedback than other new teachers. In fact, of the new teachers who work in schools with such programmes, on average, nearly half report that the programmes do not facilitate regular feedback. Overall, there was little relationship between whether or not new teachers worked in schools with induction or mentoring programmes and various aspects of the appraisal and feedback they received.

APPRAISAL AND FEEDBACK

Given the benefits to teachers of constructive feedback based on an accurate appraisal of classroom teaching to improve teaching, it may be a concern for some countries that there is no relationship between mentoring and induction programmes and the amount of appraisal and feedback received by new teachers. Both mentoring and induction programmes can take many forms. Some will provide continual feedback and professional learning for new teachers, while others will focus more on 'introductory sessions' that explain the operation and layout of the school. Some may also focus more on professional development. Similarly, mentoring programmes may include one or just a few meetings, while others will provide continual engagement that helps new teachers succeed in their roles. The data indicate that most mentoring and induction programmes do not provide the regular feedback that can improve classroom teaching that new teachers consider beneficial.

Nearly nine in ten new teachers considered the appraisal and feedback they received to be a fair assessment of their work and helpful in their development as a teacher. This is encouraging for countries looking to further develop the effectiveness of new teachers and provide support for them in the beginning of their careers.

In addition, over one-quarter of new teachers strongly agreed that their appraisal and feedback was helpful in the development of their work compared to only 16% of more experienced teachers. Taking a school-wide perspective, nearly two-thirds of new teachers reported that a development or training plan is established to improve the work of teachers in their school.

It is also encouraging that new teachers considered that the appraisal and feedback they received had a positive impact on their job security and job satisfaction. While this was also true for more experienced teachers, the impact is larger for new teachers. Fifty-eight per cent of new teachers reported that the appraisal and feedback they received increased their job satisfaction (compared to 51% for more experienced teachers), and 43% reported that it increased their job security (compared to 33% for more experienced teachers).

This may also explain why more new teachers, particularly in some TALIS 2008 countries, considered that their school principal used effective methods to assess teachers' performances in their school.

New teachers were generally more favourable about their own appraisal and feedback. However, their perceptions of the significance and consequences (both positive and negative) stemming from appraisal and feedback in their school more generally were very different. Like all teachers, new teachers considered that there were substantial problems with the lack of recognition of effective and quality teaching, and there were few consequences for under-performing teachers. In a number of TALIS 2008 countries, new teachers had significantly poorer perceptions of the role of appraisal and feedback in their schools. New teachers were often more likely to report that teachers in their school would not be dismissed because of sustained poor performance. In addition, only just over a quarter of new teachers believed that they would receive any recognition if they improved the quality of their teaching or were more innovative in their classroom practices.

NOTE

1. Throughout this report, the average refers to the average across TALIS 2008 countries.