Teaching in Focus #29

Supporting and guiding novice teachers: Evidence from TALIS 2018

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Supporting and guiding novice teachers: Evidence from TALIS 2018

- On average across the OECD, novice teachers are more likely than experienced teachers to consider "benefitting the socially disadvantaged" as a motivating factor in joining the teaching profession.
- Novice teachers represent 19% of the teacher population across the OECD, but are overrepresented in schools with high concentrations of socio-economically disadvantaged students (22%).
- On average across the OECD, novice teachers tend to feel less confident in their teaching skills than their more experienced colleagues. For example, 78% of novice teachers feel that they can control disruptive behaviour in their classroom, compared to 87% of experienced teachers.
- While a majority of school principals consider mentoring to be highly important, only 22% of novice teachers, on average across the OECD, have an assigned mentor.

Novice teachers bring new energy and ideas to schools and classrooms that could improve the learning environment of students, if harnessed correctly. At the same time, novice teachers are, by definition, inexperienced in some aspects concerning classroom practices and schoolwork. As is the case for any other profession, novice teachers need time, support and guidance to improve their skills and adapt to the tasks they are confronted with on a regular basis. Thus, providing novice teachers with adequate support in their initial years is a key challenge of developing teaching as a profession.

This *Teaching in Focus* brief will explore the motivations, working conditions, confidence levels and support structure of novice teachers. For the purposes of this brief, novice teachers are defined as lower secondary teachers with up to five years of teaching experience, while experienced teachers are defined as lower secondary teachers with more than five years of teaching experience.

What is TALIS?

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), established in 2008, is the first major international survey of teachers and school leaders on different aspects that affect student learning. It gives a voice to teachers and school leaders, allowing them to provide input into educational policy analysis and development in key areas.

The international target population for TALIS 2018 is lower secondary teachers and their school leaders in mainstream public and private schools. In each country, a representative sample of 4 000 teachers and their school principals from 200 schools was randomly selected for the 2018 study. Across all survey components, approximatively 260 000 teachers responded to the survey, representing more than 8 million teachers in 48 participating countries and economies.

An OECD average is estimated based on the arithmetic average of lower secondary teacher data across the 31 OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS. The report refers to the average teacher "across the OECD" as equivalent shorthand for the average teacher "across the 31 OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS".

More information is available at www.oecd.org/education/talis.

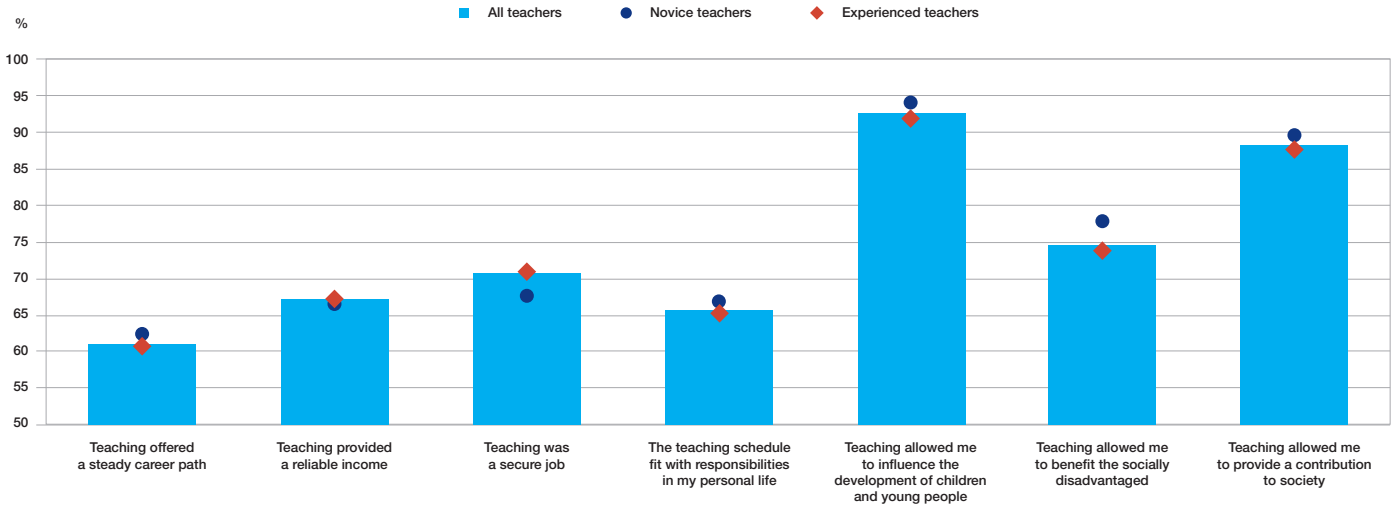
What is unique about novice teachers?

Although, on average across the OECD, there are no major differences in the overall levels of motivation between novice and experienced teachers, novice teachers are more likely than their experienced colleagues to consider "benefitting the socially disadvantaged" as a factor of moderate or high importance (Figure 1). At the same time, novice teachers across the OECD are less likely to consider job security a factor of moderate or high importance in joining the profession.

TALIS 2018 data have shown that novice teachers feel slightly more confident in implementing innovative classroom practices – such as supporting student learning using digital technology – than their more experienced colleagues. It is likely that this is related to a stronger command of information and communication technologies (ICT) among novice teachers.

Figure 1. Motivations to become a teacher, by teachers' teaching experience

Percentage of lower secondary teachers who report that the following elements were of "moderate" or "high" importance in becoming a teacher (OECD average-31)



Note: Non-significant differences between experienced teachers (with more than five years of experience) and novice teachers (with up to five years of experience) are displayed with opaque colours

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table I.4.1, https://doi.org/10.1787/888933933083.

Novice teachers are more likely than experienced teachers to participate in innovative topics of continuous professional development (CPD) that specifically target student groups with unique learning requirements, such as "teaching students with special needs", "communicating with people from different cultures or countries" and "teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting"

Working environment of novice teachers

The motivation and innovation brought by novice teachers can clash with challenging and unsupportive working environments. TALIS 2018 shows that novice teachers tend to work in more challenging environments than their more experienced colleagues. While novice teachers represent 19% of the teacher population across the OECD, they are overrepresented in schools with high concentrations of socio-economically disadvantaged students (22%) and students with a migrant background (23%) (Figure 2). In other words, teachers with less experience tend to be allocated to school settings that require more experienced teachers, which also means that disadvantaged students have unequal access to experienced teachers. Novice teachers report that they work in innovative environments less often than their more experienced colleagues. On average across the OECD, more experienced than novice teachers report that their colleagues are open to change (a difference of 5 percentage points).

The tasks and pressures of working in challenging school environments, as well as the perceived lack of innovation, could affect teachers' motivation and retention if they are not supported adequately. TALIS data show that, on average across OECD countries and economies, 22% of novice teachers would like to change to another school if possible, compared to 19% of more experienced teachers.

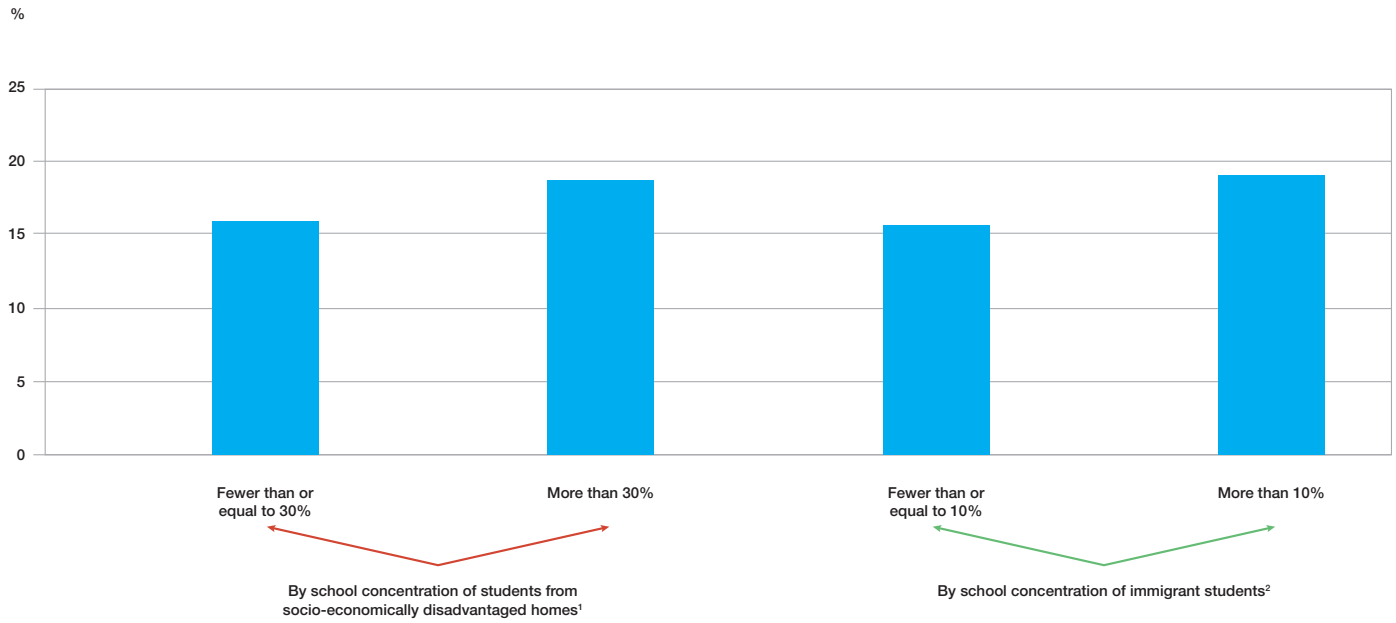
Novice teachers' sense of confidence in teaching practices

Although novice teachers work in more challenging environments (Figure 2), they are less likely than more experienced teachers to be confident in their teaching practices. On average across the OECD, novice teachers tend to be slightly less satisfied with their performance in their school than more experienced teachers (90% of novice teachers compared to 93% of more experienced teachers).

Teacher self-efficacy reflects the level of confidence that teachers have in delivering quality instruction. On average across the OECD, novice teachers tend to feel less confident in their teaching skills than their more experienced colleagues. For example, 78% of novice teachers feel that they can control disruptive behaviour in their classroom, compared to 87% of experienced teachers. The largest differences (15 or more percentage points) between novice and more experienced teachers in this self-reported capacity are found in the Czech Republic, France, Japan, Norway and Spain (Figure 3).

Figure 2. School allocation of novice teachers

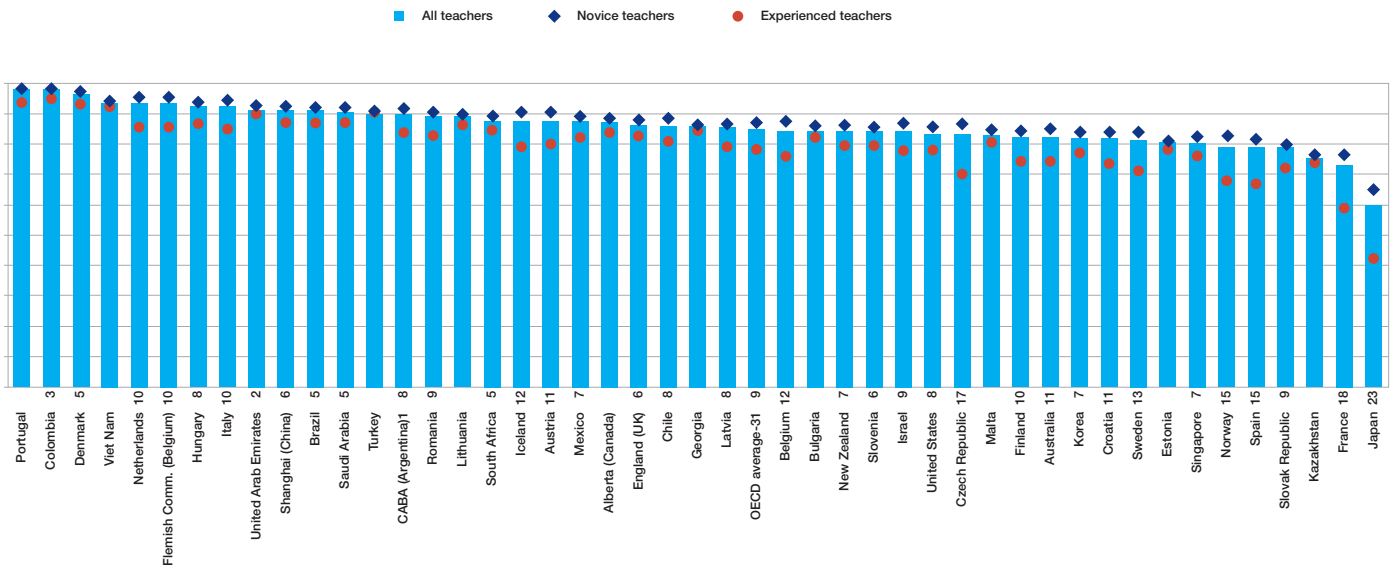
Percentage of novice lower secondary teachers, by school characteristics (OECD average-31)



1. "Socio-economically disadvantaged homes" refers to homes lacking the basic necessities or advantages of life, such as adequate housing, nutrition or medical care.
2. "Immigrant students" refers to "students who are immigrants or with a migrant background", as reported by the school principal.
Note: Novice teachers are teachers with up to five years of teaching experience.
Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table I.4.32, https://doi.org/10.1787/888933933083.

Figure 3. Controlling disruptive behaviour, by teachers' teaching experience

Percentage of lower secondary teachers who feel "quite a bit" or "a lot" that they can control disruptive behaviour in the classroom



1. CABA (Argentina): Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina.
Note: Statistically significant differences between experienced teachers (with more than five years of experience) and novice teachers (with up to five years of experience) is shown in percentage point next to the country/economy name.
Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of teachers who feel they can control disruptive behaviour in the classroom "quite a bit" or "a lot".
Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table I.2.20, https://doi.org/10.1787/888933933045.

The lack of confidence novice teachers may experience in terms of classroom management is echoed in the participation of teachers in related CPD. On average across the OECD, teachers with over five years of experience are more likely to participate in CPD related to "student behaviour and classroom management" by an average of 6 percentage points.

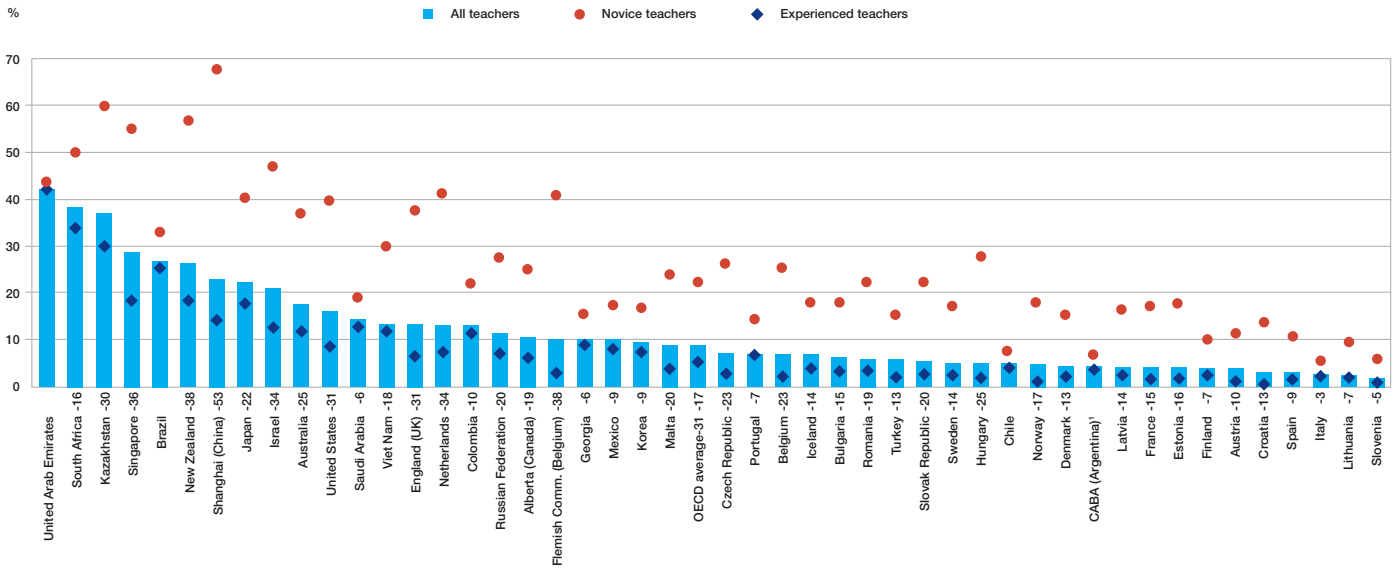
Supporting novice teachers

Education systems and schools can create mechanisms to motivate teachers and support them in their initial years, such as through induction and mentoring. Although induction activities are designed not only for novice teachers but also teachers new to the school, they can be a critical mechanism for novice teachers as they ease their transition from the theoretical aspect of their initial training to the practice of their everyday work. On average across the OECD, only 38% of teachers have participated in some form of induction activity. Nevertheless, the percentage of participation is higher for novice teachers than more experienced teachers: 39% of experienced teachers have never participated in induction activities compared to 34% of novice teachers.

Mentoring is a support structure in schools where more experienced teachers support less experienced teachers. While a majority of school principals consider mentoring to be highly important for teachers' work and student performance, only 22% of teachers with up to five years of teaching experience have an assigned mentor, on average across the OECD (Figure 4). There are substantial cross-country variations in the prevalence of mentoring programmes for novice teachers: only between 5% and 10% of novice teachers have an assigned mentor in Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Argentina), Chile, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Slovenia and Spain; whereas more than 50% of novice teachers have an assigned mentor in Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Shanghai (China) and Singapore.

Figure 4. Peer mentoring, by teachers' teaching experience

Percentage of lower secondary teachers who have an assigned mentor as part of a formal arrangement at the school



1. CABA (Argentina): Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Note: Mentoring is defined as a support structure in schools where more experienced teachers support less experienced teachers.

Statistically significant differences between experienced teachers (with more than five years of experience) and novice teachers (with up to five years of experience) are shown next to the country/economy name.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of lower secondary teachers who have an assigned mentor.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table I.4.64, https://doi.org/10.1787/888933933083.

One possible mechanism to support teachers new to the profession is to reduce their workload to help them cope with their duties. For example, novice teachers can use this spare time for more planning and preparation of their lessons or for analysing their students' work, resulting in better teaching. On average across the OECD, novice teachers work one hour less per week in total than teachers with more than five years of experience. However, after adjusting for employment status, these differences in working hours between novice and experienced teachers are not significant for most TALIS countries and economies. This is because novice teachers tend to work part-time more often than experienced teachers. Nevertheless, the time assigned to novice teachers could be carefully examined by reducing their teaching workload and allowing more time for support, i.e. induction and mentoring activities.

The bottom line

Education systems may seek to support novice teachers through the following mechanisms.

- Review how novice teachers are distributed across schools with a view to assigning them to less challenging working environments in their first placements. Encourage more experienced teachers to work in disadvantaged schools to reduce the need to staff them with less experienced teachers.
- School leaders have a role to play in easing the transition of recent graduates to the profession by providing the induction and coaching they need, allocating them to less challenging classes, making sure that their teaching assignments allow some degree of efficiency gain in lesson preparation, or pairing them with more experienced teachers in joint teaching arrangements.
- Financial support could be provided to schools to enable the recruitment of novice teachers on a full-time basis, but with a reduced teaching load to allow more time for training.

Visit

www.oecd.org/education/talis/

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For more information

OECD (2019), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en. This report explores the knowledge and skills dimension of teacher and school leader professionalism.

OECD (forthcoming), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris. This report will be published in early 2020 and will focus on prestige, career opportunities, collaborative culture, and responsibility and autonomy.

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