



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale

This PDF was generated automatically.
Visit www.worldsofeducation.org to read online.

Issue no

44

Dec 2014

Worlds of *Education*



Listening to teachers



Reading teacher policy



Next steps in teacher policy



Teaching around the world



Overview

Editorial

- Editorial Introduction to Worlds of Education

Articles

- Listening to teachers - to inform policy
- Introduction of TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey)
- Teaching around the world What can TALIS tell us?
- Next steps in teacher policy Clarifying dangerous half truths
- Teacher policy - where next? Four lessons for strengthening teacher strategies in national education plans to achieve post-2015 education goals
- Reading teacher policy - and making it count
- Flip the System



Editorial

Editorial : Introduction to Worlds of Education

This edition of Worlds of Education celebrates the successful completion of the first phase of EI's Quality for Education campaign. The response has been enormous. Our campaign for all children and young people to be taught by sufficient and properly qualified teachers has stimulated a massive response from education policy makers across the world. Global organisations such as UNESCO and OECD have enthusiastically endorsed EI's key objectives.

empty

*Editorial**Introduction to Worlds of Education*

By: Fred van Leeuwen

Theme: About EI

*Unite rally in India*

This edition of Worlds of Education celebrates the successful completion of the first phase of EI's Quality for Education campaign. The response has been enormous. Our campaign for all children and young people to be taught by sufficient and properly qualified teachers has stimulated a massive response from education policy makers across the world. Global organisations such as UNESCO and OECD have enthusiastically endorsed EI's key objectives.

More importantly our campaign has received the enthusiastic endorsement of classroom teachers. Testament to that was the magnificent panel of teachers at our culmination event at the UN in New York in September who movingly outlined their hopes and aspirations for the young people they taught and for their profession.

This Worlds of Education celebrates teachers and teaching. In a way it is a special edition because it features world class writers focusing on the future of the teaching profession.

The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 (TALIS) is one of the most comprehensive international studies of teachers' views currently being undertaken. The former OECD Project Leader for TALIS, Kristen Weatherby, succinctly describes its important findings.

As Guntars Catlaks, EI's Research Co-ordinator, explains, EI's Research Board believed that as the TALIS findings were so important for teachers that independent academic analysis was worthwhile. Linda Darling Hammond provides a fascinating new picture of teachers' views from the TALIS data. And in his hard hitting article Michael Fullan warns against the dangers of misinterpretation of the TALIS data and any individual 'cherry-picking' of TALIS conclusions. Both articles are written by globally renowned researchers with a history of studying education systems.

Pauline Rose, the former Director of UNESCO's Education Global Monitoring Report, provides a unique picture of the



challenges and opportunities facing developing countries in supporting the growth of their teaching professions.

Jelmer Evers, a classroom teacher from the Netherlands, gives us a preview of the book that he and his teacher colleague Rene Kneyber are editing which is based on their popular pamphlet published in the Netherlands, 'Flipping the System' and which will describe the reforms all countries need to take to empower the teaching profession.

Last but not least, Hugh MacLean the Open Society Foundations' Education Support Programme, records the voices of teachers in developing in order to illustrate his powerful argument that in order for countries to improve their education systems the teaching profession must be empowered to take charge of teacher policy.

Every article contains vital messages for teachers and policy makers alike. Equally vital are your views and comments on them!

Fred Van Leeuwen General Secretary, Education International.

About the Author



Fred van Leeuwen

General Secretary of Education International

Listening to teachers

- to inform policy

By: Kristen Weatherby

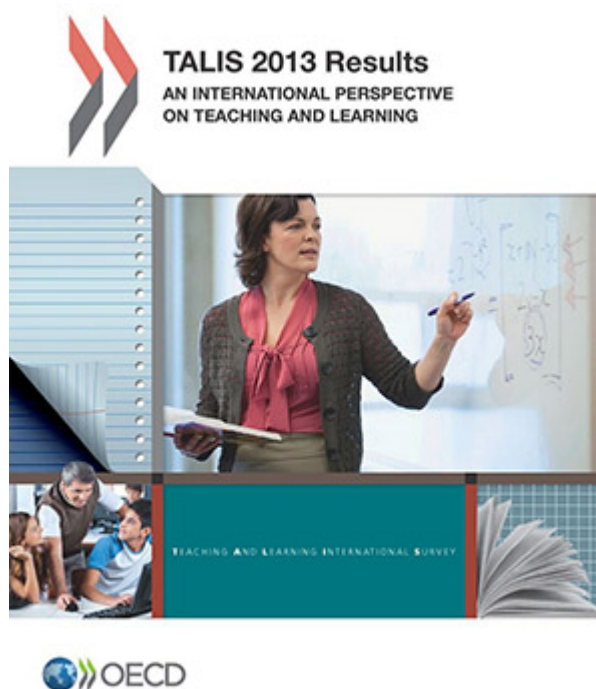
Theme: Mobilising for Quality Education



Unesco - GMR 2013/2014

The results of the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) were released in June of this year with great fanfare in countries around the world. Over 100,000 teachers and school leaders from 34 countries took part in the survey, which focuses on the working conditions of lower-secondary teachers and the learning environment in their schools. TALIS provides countries with internationally comparative data in areas that research tells us contribute to effective teaching, such as teacher background and initial training, professional development and support, school leadership, appraisal and feedback on teaching and job satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy.

More and more countries are looking beyond their own borders for evidence of the most successful and efficient policies and practices in order to improve the lives of their citizens. The [findings from TALIS](#) provide a wealth of information to education policy makers. At the [Informal Ministerial Meeting launching the TALIS results in Tokyo](#), Ministers from 16 countries discussed the findings from TALIS and how they might impact teacher policy in their countries. Ministers recognised the importance of framing education as a knowledge-intensive profession in order to be better able to attract the highest-quality candidates into the profession.



Do teachers think their profession is valued?

One of the most surprising findings from TALIS 2013 is related to this notion of developing teaching as a profession, and shows us that there is a long way to go in this regard in many countries. TALIS data indicate that on average, less than a third of teachers around the world feel that teaching as a profession is valued by their societies. This number is quite a bit lower in some countries, with fewer than one in ten teachers in Croatia, France, the Slovak Republic, Spain and Sweden believing that teaching is a valued profession.

This is an important finding because of the implications it might have toward the recruitment and retention of high-quality candidates into the teaching profession in some countries. Developing teaching as a profession that is on par with other knowledge-worker professions (such as medicine, law and business) is necessary in order to be able to attract the best candidates into teaching. Interestingly, TALIS data also points towards approaches to increase teachers' perceived value of the profession. Teachers who report being able to participate in decision-making at a school level are also more likely to report that their profession is valued by society. Empowering teachers by giving them decision-making responsibilities is also positively related to job satisfaction and teachers' reported confidence in their own abilities (self-efficacy). Thus distributed leadership and decision-making at a school level might not only take some tasks off over-burdened principals' plates (and enable them to spend more time on things like instructional leadership), but it also has an important impact on teachers as well.

What feedback do teachers receive on their teaching?

We learned from TALIS that most teachers report the formal appraisal they receive on their teaching leads to positive changes in their teaching practices. Yet in many countries, teachers are still largely left alone, receiving little or no feedback on their teaching. Across TALIS countries, slightly more than half of teachers on average feel that the appraisal and feedback systems in their schools are only used to fulfil administrative requirements.

Teacher appraisal and feedback needs to be made more meaningful to teachers. Systems of appraisal and feedback should be about helping all teachers to improve, rather than about punishment for the underperformance of a few. Linking appraisal and feedback to professional development will also provide teachers with increased opportunities for growth. Teachers should receive feedback from multiple actors, using multiple measures, and one of the outcomes of this feedback should be a professional development plan that is based on the areas in which teachers need improvement.

Are teachers working together?



One source of feedback that many teachers do not have access to is feedback from other teachers in their own school. Only 42% of teachers on average across countries report receiving feedback on their teaching from other teachers as part of the appraisal process, while 45% of teachers across countries report never observing their colleagues teach and providing them with feedback. In many countries, peer feedback is commonplace, with teachers working together to develop lessons, review them and suggest areas for improvement of practice. Yet across countries, TALIS data show that teachers are far more likely to participate in surface-level exchange and co-ordination activities (such as exchanging teaching materials) than they are to collaborate on a deeper level in ways such as team teaching or participating in collaborative professional learning.

Teacher collaboration is important for many reasons. TALIS data indicate that teachers who engage in collaborative practices with other teachers also report higher levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of self-efficacy. In addition, activities such as team teaching or observing peers and providing feedback are great examples of effective professional development in that they can be sustained activities, they are provided within the teacher's school context and they are performed with colleagues.

What does all of this mean?

We know that education systems in many countries need to change in order to provide better opportunities for all students to receive a higher-quality education. And while many aspects of education systems need rethinking, research tells us that teachers are the most important within-school influence on student achievement. Thus improving teaching is crucial to improving an education system.

But what does this really mean? There are two sides to this story. The first involves ensuring that the best possible candidates enter the teaching in the first place – and stay. Countries need to think about how to make the teaching profession more attractive to university graduates and provide a path for career progression that will encourage teachers to continue teaching.

The second aspect is helping teachers already in the profession improve their practice. This entails providing teachers with regular appraisal and feedback on their teaching practice that are tied to professional development opportunities targeted toward their needs. Teachers should be given opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in an in-depth manner so that they are both developing interpersonal relationships and contributing to a culture of reflective practice in their schools.

But policy reforms aren't all that are needed here. Teachers and school leaders must take responsibility and be active participants in the change process as well. The OECD also produced [A Teachers' Guide to TALIS](#) which uses the TALIS findings and, backed by research literature and the large body of OECD work on education, offers insights and advice to teachers and school leaders on how they can improve teaching and learning in their schools.

About the Author



Kristen Weatherby

Former Project Leader for the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013. She is currently studying for a PhD at the University of London's Institute of Education.

Introduction of TALIS

(Teaching and Learning International Survey)

By: Guntars Catlaks

Theme: Mobilising for Quality Education



TALIS 2013 Results

AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
ON TEACHING AND LEARNING



Talis publication

TALIS is the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey. It is the only international survey to focus on the teaching environment and the working conditions of teachers in schools and it aims to fill important information gaps in the international comparisons of education systems.

As such TALIS offers a unique 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 allows countries to identify other countries facing similar challenges and to learn from other policy approaches. The first survey results were published in 2009 and proved to be immensely influential in fostering the debate on teachers' policy at international level – in particular providing background information for International Summits on Teaching Profession (ISTP) organised annually by OECD, Education International and a host government.

Education International, while remaining critical, was thoroughly involved in the development of TALIS survey through teacher representative bodies, in particular the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) at the OECD. Because TALIS provides very rich data base which, however, is open for interpretation, EI Research Institute in 2014 decided to commission a special independent study on TALIS 2013 findings to Linda Darling-Hammond, well known academic from University of Stanford, US to analyse the findings from teaching profession perspective. The Executive Summary of this study is offered here alongside the article by Kirsten Wetherby from OECD.

About the Author



Guntars Catlaks

Research Coordinator, Education International

Teaching around the world

What can TALIS tell us?

By: Linda Darling Hammond

Theme: Mobilising for Quality Education



School in Lower Saxony - 2012, Julian Stratenschulte, DPA, Reporters

The Teaching and Learning International Survey of 2013 (TALIS) – representing the views of teachers and principals in lower secondary schools from 34 jurisdictions around the world -- tells us a great deal about the conditions for teaching in different countries today, and what these may mean for the future of the teaching force and the quality of teaching. Among the most salient findings are the following:

Teacher Supply

Perhaps in part as a function of recent economic downturns, shortages of personnel and materials are noticeable many countries. On average:

- 38% of teachers work in schools where the principal reports that a shortage of qualified or well-performing teachers hinders the school's capacity to provide quality instruction. These rates were above 70% in Japan and the Netherlands. Across jurisdictions, reported shortages were particularly acute and widespread with respect to teachers of special needs students.
- 47% of teachers worked in schools in which their principals reported that a shortage of support personnel hinders the school's capacity to provide quality instruction. This rate was above 50% in 13 of 34 jurisdictions and above 70% in Italy, Japan, and Spain.
- More than a quarter of teachers work in schools in which principals reported that a shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials hinders the school's capacity to provide quality instruction. These rates were above 50% in Italy and Estonia, and above 75% in the Slovak Republic and Romania.

Equitable teacher distribution is also problematic in some countries. In 13 jurisdictions, experienced teachers were much less likely to work in schools with more disadvantaged students. The disparities were greatest in Alberta, Estonia, Flanders, Romania, and Sweden. In Sweden, for example, experienced teachers were half as likely as their inexperienced colleagues



to work in schools with more than 30% of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes. By contrast, in just four jurisdictions – Brazil, Latvia, Mexico, and the Netherlands – experienced teachers were more likely to work in more disadvantaged schools.

These differences may be influenced by policy. Recent reforms in Brazil, for example, have helped increase funding and equalize educational spending across states and municipalities; raised teacher salaries, particularly in the poorer section of the country; and enacted teaching standards. All of these strategies help to support teachers and may increase retention in disadvantaged areas.

Teaching Conditions

Class size is one of the teaching conditions that teachers have traditionally reported matters to them in their efforts to meet the needs of their students. Class size varies considerably across jurisdictions, ranging from 17 students per classroom to more than 30, with an average of 24 students per class.

We found a significant relationship between class sizes and teacher shortages across countries. Jurisdictions in which principals reported very few shortages -- such as Finland, Iceland, Denmark, and Poland -- were also those with smaller average class sizes (below 20), whereas nations with high rates of shortages -- such as Japan, Mexico, and Chile -- had class sizes well above 30.

One of the most surprising findings from TALIS was that on average, less than a third of teachers (31%) indicated that the teaching profession is valued in their society. Teachers were most likely to report their profession is valued in Malaysia (at 88% of teachers), followed by Singapore, Abu Dhabi, and Korea, where two-thirds of teachers agreed. At the other end of the scale, only 4% of teachers in the Slovak Republic, and 5% in France and Sweden, thought their profession was valued.

Societal value placed on teaching was found to be positively correlated with student achievement on PISA. Societies express this regard in a range of ways. Social value placed on teaching is related to teachers' salaries relative to other college educated workers and teachers' involvement in professional decision making within schools. Social value placed on teaching is also related to the amount of time teachers have for collaboration, which in turn is significantly related to teachers' views that the "advantages outweigh the disadvantages" of teaching – an indicator of job satisfaction.

Time for collaboration varies widely across countries. Around the world, teachers reported working an average of 38 hours a week, ranging from over 50 hours a week in Japan, to less than 30 hours in Chile and Italy. This time is structured very differently in terms of the amount that teachers work directly with students in relation to the time they have for planning, collaborating with their colleagues, grading papers, and meeting one on one with students or parents. On average, teachers taught classes an average of 19 hours per week, but teachers in the United States taught 40% more, at an average of 27 hours a week, while teachers in Finland and Norway taught only about 15 hours per week.

TALIS data show that lack of time proves to be a major barrier to professional learning for many teachers. In addition, TALIS data indicate teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction are associated with the opportunities they have for collaboration, which vary widely. Part of the reason teacher collaboration is so valued is that it enhances teachers' knowledge, skills, and efficacy, which in turn, makes teaching less stressful and more satisfying.

While more than 80% of teachers reported having engaged in some form of collaborative professional learning, only 63% had done so more than once in the previous 12 months. In some jurisdictions (e.g. Finland, the Slovak Republic, and Flanders) over 40% of teachers had not engaged in any collaborative learning activities.

Similarly, in some countries, opportunities for collaborative engagement were commonplace. More than 80% of teachers in Japan reported observing other teachers' classes and providing feedback at least twice a year, and over 50% of teachers in each of Mexico, the Slovak Republic, Denmark, Italy, and Japan reported teaching jointly in the same class at least five times a year.

However, 45% of teachers had never observed another teacher's class – a proportion that exceeded three-quarters in Brazil, France, Iceland, Flanders, and Spain. Similarly 42% reported never teaching jointly as a team in the same class. This



indicates that in many countries, a significant proportion of teachers still teach largely in isolation, and may be missing out on valuable opportunities to collaborate, receive feedback, and learn from their colleagues.

Teacher Preparation and Development

Across TALIS jurisdictions, the proportion of teachers who have completed a **teacher education** program is very high. On average, 90% of teachers had completed a program. However, the content of teacher education varies noticeably across (and sometimes within) jurisdictions. Many fewer teachers have had training in content, pedagogy, and supervised practice for the areas they teach. About two-thirds of teachers have received training in each of these areas for all the subjects they teach. Only 57% of teachers had received formal teacher training in *all* of these areas – that is, content, pedagogy, *and* supervised practice -- for all the subjects they teach. This proportion ranged from over 80% in Poland, Croatia, and Bulgaria, to less than 40% in Alberta, Norway, Spain, and Italy.

Rates of teacher training were associated with higher levels of student achievement at the jurisdiction level. In addition, greater feelings of preparedness were significantly related to teachers' job satisfaction and feelings of self-efficacy, particularly their ability to use a variety of assessment strategies, provide alternative explanations to students, and to help students think critically.

Not surprisingly, TALIS teachers tended to feel more prepared in terms of the content, pedagogy, and practice of the subjects they teach when they had received formal training in these domains. Other research underscores that teachers tend to feel better prepared and more efficacious when they have had higher quality preparation and induction, and that feelings of self-efficacy are related to teachers' measured effectiveness in promoting student learning gains.

Despite its well-established benefits, **induction** for beginning teachers is not routinely available across jurisdictions. About two-thirds of teachers work in schools where principals report access to formal induction programs for teachers new to the profession. This ranges from more than 95% in Singapore, England, Malaysia, and Australia to less than a quarter of teachers in Spain, Poland, and Portugal.

Despite principals' reports of access to induction, only about half of teachers with less than three years of experience reported having participated in formal programs. Differences of greater than 30 percentage points between access and participation were noted for Finland, France, Japan, Serbia, and the Slovak Republic. This may be because of uneven implementation across schools, especially if specific funding and structures are not available to ensure that mentors have been selected and given time to support beginners, or that other aspects of the program (seminars, joint planning time) are made available in a school. Other school pressures, heavy teaching workloads, scheduling conflicts, or the absence of resources can all act as potential barriers to participation. This discrepancy deserves further exploration, given the importance of induction to teacher retention and effectiveness.

Participation in induction programs can also be influenced by teachers' status as full- or part-time, or their contract status. In some jurisdictions, many teachers – especially beginners – are on short-term contracts. In some cases, these teachers are not eligible for formal induction programs that are made available to longer-term employees.

Access to different forms of **professional development** is also uneven. Although 88% of teachers indicated that they had taken part in some kind of professional development during the past twelve months, usually in the form of workshops or courses, there was wide variation in the amount of professional development teachers could access, and the conditions under which they did so.

About two-thirds of teachers did not pay for the professional development they undertook during the previous 12 months, but this ranged from 93% of teachers in England, to just 25% in Korea. Similarly, the proportion of teachers who received scheduled time for professional development activities during working hours ranged from 88% in Malaysia to 15% in Portugal, with an average of 55% across countries. Time was a key variable: The most commonly reported barrier to participation in professional development was conflict with teachers working schedules, reported by just over half of teachers. Participation rates tended to be higher where there scheduled time for professional learning activities during regular work hours.

A significant proportion of teachers (39%) also reported that their participation was inhibited by a lack of relevant professional

development offered. At the same time, TALIS identified a number of areas in which teachers' expressed a desire for more professional development opportunities. The most prominent area was in teaching students with special needs, which was cited by 22% of teachers across jurisdictions. Other data suggested that relatively few teachers had had access to such learning opportunities. Teachers who had completed a teacher training program were much less likely to say that they felt a need for professional development in this area, suggesting that this need could be met either by ensuring greater access to more comprehensive pre-service preparation, or by organizing more in-service training.

Teachers in TALIS generally reported that professional development activities impacted their teaching. In each of the 14 content areas surveyed in TALIS, an average of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of teachers who participated in specific kinds of professional development reported that it had a moderate or large impact on their teaching. In each case, a plurality of teachers designated the impact as "moderate," rather than "large."

These data do not reveal, however, whether the impact of professional development varied based on how it was designed and conducted. Other research shows that professional development is most effective in improving teachers' instructional practice and contributing to student learning when it is continuous and sustained, is closely connected to the work of teachers in the classroom, fosters teacher professional collaboration, and coherently relates to broader school reform efforts.

Teacher Collaboration

Perhaps the strongest set of findings in TALIS were those associated with teacher collaboration, which appeared as an important element of learning, influence on practice, and influence on job satisfaction and self-efficacy, which are in turn related to teacher retention and effectiveness. More than any other policy area, actions that support collaborative learning among teachers appear to hold promise for improving the quality of teaching and the long-term commitment of teachers.

TALIS analyses reinforce the findings of previous research with respect to teachers' participation in collaborative forms of professional development. Professional collaboration was significantly and positively related to each of the following professional development activities: mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching (31 jurisdictions), individual or collaborative research on a topic of professional interest (30 jurisdictions), and participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers (26 jurisdictions).

However, relatively few teachers experienced these kinds of opportunities across jurisdictions. For example, only 31% had participated in a professional development network, which proves to be strongly related to teachers' practices (see below.)

Collaboration opportunities were also strong related to teacher self-efficacy – teachers' confidence in their abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities that allow them to attain their educational goals. Self-efficacy is an attribute of particular interest, as it has been linked in many studies with increased instructional quality, the use of innovative practices, and teacher contributions to student achievement gains. Greater teacher self-efficacy has also been linked with increased teacher job satisfaction and lower rates of burnout.

TALIS data show that frequent engagement in teacher professional collaboration was positively associated with self-efficacy, which was heightened by all of the following:

- engaging in collaborative activities five times a year or more
- team teaching
- observing other teachers' classes and providing feedback,
- engaging in joint activities across different classes and ages
- participation in collaborative professional learning

The last of these – collaboration in professional learning opportunities – was associated with greater self-efficacy across jurisdictions, and was linked with greater teacher job satisfaction in 21 of these. This suggests that when teachers are engaged in collaborative practices that enhance their individual and collective teaching capabilities, they not only feel more confident in their abilities to teach, to engage students and to manage class behaviour, but also tend to find greater enjoyment in their work.

Given the power of teacher collaboration to transform practice (see below) and improve student learning, as well as to



enhance teacher efficacy and satisfaction, collaborative professional learning opportunities like mentoring, peer observation and coaching, collaborative research, and teacher networks should be encouraged. As the official TALIS report noted:

If policy makers want to promote professional collaboration, these types of professional development activities, which are associated with this outcome, could be the focus of future policy efforts. (OECD, 2014b, p. 168)

Teaching Practices

Collaborative and effective professional learning opportunities were found to be associated with teachers' practices, especially with respect to those that encourage what are commonly referred to as "21st century skills" -- problem solving, inquiry, critical thinking, and collaboration, for example.

The vast majority of teachers indicated that they agree with these goals for instruction: Over 90% agreed that their role is to "facilitate students' own inquiry", and over 80% of teachers agreed that thinking and reasoning are more important than content, and that students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own.

However, a minority of teachers reported that they frequently engage in practices consistent with these goals and views, including what TALIS called 'active' teaching practices, such as students working in small groups to come up with a joint solution to a problem or task; undertaking projects that require at least one week to complete; and conducting projects requiring students to work with interactive computer technology.

While the use of such practices can certainly be influenced by national or state curriculum and examination systems, they are also influenced by teachers' initial preparation and later training. Teachers who reported they were well prepared by their teacher education program in pedagogy were much more likely to use small group problem-solving, for example. Participating in a network of teachers was also related to the increased use of small group work and the use of ICT.

Teachers' engagement in individual or collaborative research, in observation visits to other schools, in mentoring, and in peer observation and coaching was also associated with greater use of active learning practices.

With respect to assessment practices, the TALIS data indicate that teachers employ a wide range of assessment methods to guide their teaching and offer feedback to students, commonly receive feedback both on their assessment methods and student outcomes, and find greater confidence and satisfaction in their teaching when they receive feedback and appraisal linked to evidence of student learning.

Together, these findings suggest that teachers' opportunities for collaboration and feedback about what they are doing and what students are learning— both pre-service and in-service —can support the greater use of active teaching practices, foster attention to student learning, and enhance teachers' satisfaction.

School Leadership and Climate

While most teachers agreed that they experienced "a collaborative school culture characterized by mutual support," there were noticeable differences in the degree to which principals and teachers reported this kind of climate. For example, across TALIS jurisdictions, 95% of principals agreed with this statement (with responses ranging from 83% in France to 100% in Norway). However, the average for teachers was 79%, ranging from 66% of teachers in England to 93% of teachers in Norway.

Teachers were significantly more likely to indicate the existence of a collaborative school culture in jurisdictions where they also reported that staff had opportunities to participate in decision-making, suggesting a positive association between distributed leadership and a collaborative school climate. Teachers' involvement in school decision making was also linked with self-efficacy in most jurisdictions, and with job satisfaction (with very large effect sizes) in all jurisdictions.

However, teachers and principals differed in the extent to which they perceived opportunities for staff decision-making, and there was no association between principals' reporting of staff opportunities for decision-making and teachers' perceptions that they experienced a collaborative culture. More than 90% of principals in each jurisdiction reported that teachers had opportunities to actively participate in school decisions, as compared with 74% of teachers, an average difference of 24



percentage points. The greatest differences were found in England, where the average rate of agreement from teachers was below 60%, and principals' and teachers' reports were apart by 32 percentage points.

TALIS data showed that principals' leadership styles are related to the professional working climate for teachers. Where principals engaged in distributed leadership, teachers were more likely to perceive a school climate of mutual respect. Principals who employed distributed leadership practices were also more likely to report satisfaction with their own jobs. A mutually respectful working climate was related not only to teachers' job satisfaction, but to also to that of principals' in a large majority of jurisdictions.

Teachers were also more likely to report a mutually respectful climate when principals reported the use of instructional leadership practices. The data indicate that when principals spend a greater proportion of their time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks, they are more likely to spend more time observing classroom instruction, and to encourage teacher cooperation and professional learning at both the individual and school levels.

In TALIS, instructional leadership was also associated with the use of teacher appraisal to develop staff capabilities. For example, instructional leaders were more likely to create a development plan for each teacher or appoint a teacher mentor to help improve teaching, or both, following formal teacher appraisal. By contrast, instructional leadership was rarely associated with non-renewal of teacher contracts or with changes in teachers' salaries following appraisal. Instructional leaders seem more focused on using appraisal to support teacher learning than to apply rewards and sanctions.

School leadership research shows that instructional leadership is positively associated with student outcomes, with one study finding that "promoting and participating in teacher learning and development" had at least twice the effect size of other commonly used leadership practices (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009).

Across TALIS jurisdictions there was a wide variety in the self-reported use of instructional leadership practices among school principals. For example, 98% of principals in Malaysia reported that they "often" or "very often" took action to support cooperation among teachers to develop new teaching practices, compared with just 34% of principals in Japan (OECD, 2014b, p. 296 Table 3.2)

Not all principals have had the opportunity to learn instructional leadership practices. While principals generally bring a great deal of experience as teachers to their role (21 years on average), fewer than half had undertaken principals' training before taking on the role. Across all jurisdictions, an average of 22% of principals reported having received no instructional leadership training either before or after becoming a principal. Although nearly universal in the United States (98%), and above 90% in eleven jurisdictions, training in instructional leadership was below 60% in four jurisdictions.

Supporting strong preparation before principals take on this important role, and ensuring that pre- and in-service training include support for instructional leadership and distributed leadership are policy moves that could make a big difference in both teachers' and principals' learning, practice, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction.

Appraisal and Feedback

In recent years, a number of nations have placed more emphasis on teacher appraisal. Nearly all teachers in TALIS jurisdictions (93%) receive some kind of formal appraisal. An exception is Italy, where 70% of teachers indicated they are generally never formally appraised.

Practices, however, range widely. Classroom observations are nearly universal in England, the United States, Malaysia, and Poland, whereas fewer than half of teachers are observed in Finland, Spain, Italy, and Iceland. Teachers receive feedback from multiple sources, including school principals (54%), members of the school management team (49%) and other teachers in the school (42%), but these sources – and their influences-- also differ significantly from one place to the next.

For example, in the United States, where teachers report high levels of feedback from principals (85%) and low levels of feedback from teachers (only 27%), teachers found feedback less useful than in many other countries where peers were more involved. This may be because the feedback that teachers receive from peers is more targeted and relevant for the specific students and curricular content being taught, or because it is aimed at improvement rather than personnel



decisions.

The TALIS data show that most teachers feel the feedback they receive influences their work. On average, 62% of teachers indicated that feedback had a moderate or large positive influence on their teaching practice, and just over half of teachers reported positive impacts on their classroom management (56%), knowledge and understanding of subject matter (54%), and use of student assessments to improve learning (59%).

At the same time, about half of teachers agreed that appraisal and feedback are largely done for administrative purposes, and fewer than half agreed that appraisal and feedback were based on a thorough assessment of their teaching. A significant proportion (43%) reported that appraisal and feedback systems in their school have little impact on classroom practice. Teachers' job satisfaction was lower when teachers felt that appraisal was conducted for largely administrative purposes and higher when teachers felt it was useful for their teaching.

Together these findings suggest that teachers welcome feedback that enhances their teaching capabilities, and is connected to students' learning. Teacher appraisal systems are more likely to be effective when they lead to high-quality professional learning, and are viewed as providing meaningful feedback to improve student learning. By contrast, systems of appraisal that serve largely administrative purposes or as focused primarily on high-stakes personnel decisions may serve to lower the desirability of teaching, as other research has suggested.

Recommendations

The data in TALIS 2013 provide important insights into the policies that can support and strengthen teaching, and lead to high quality learning for students. Among these policy implications are the following:

1. **Communicate value for the profession of teaching** by recognizing teachers' professionalism and involving teachers in decision making.
2. **Ensure adequate and equitable resources** to address current shortages of teachers, support personnel, and instructional materials.
3. **Establish incentives to ensure an adequate supply of teachers for all fields and communities**, including special education teachers and teachers in schools serving disadvantaged students.
4. **Provide comprehensive, high-quality preparation** in content, pedagogy, and classroom practice to support active teaching strategies, teacher efficacy, and student achievement.
5. **Support induction for novices** with the funding and support structures that can ensure mentoring, collaborative planning opportunities, and .
6. **Provide time for collaboration and professional learning** so that teachers have opportunities to observe and receive feedback from peers and improve their instructional practices.
7. **Encourage high-quality professional development relevant to teachers' needs** which can promote collaborative school practices associated with teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction.
8. **Identify potential leaders and provide them with training as instructional leaders**, so that they can promote improvement in teaching and a climate of mutual respect in schools.
9. **Encourage distributed leadership and shared decision making** which enhances collaborative practices and both principal and teacher job satisfaction.
10. **Center teacher appraisal and feedback on improving teaching quality** and link them to high-quality professional learning in order to enhance teachers' skills and self-efficacy.

Educating students with the competencies required for the knowledge economies of the 21st century has increased the complexity of teaching. High-performing education systems tend to be those where the teaching profession is valued in society, that are able to attract high-quality individuals into teaching, train them well, and retain them in the profession by putting in place supports that address the working conditions in the schools they work, and support their ongoing professional learning. TALIS tells us that valuing teaching and teacher learning, restructuring the work of teaching to enable

greater professional collaboration, and providing meaningful feedback to teachers to support their work can help create a more attractive and efficacious teaching workforce.

About the Author



Linda Darling Hammond

Currently Charles E Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University. <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/node/46>

Next steps in teacher policy

Clarifying dangerous half truths

By: Michael Fullan

Theme: Mobilising for Quality Education



A day in a life: Ghana

A dangerous half-truth is a finding or statement that has some merit, but falls short because it fails to state under what conditions it is true. Such findings can be easily misinterpreted by eager or biased policy makers who rush to put policies in place that turn out to be superficial or harmful to the cause of student learning. Four examples are feedback, professional development, principal instructional leadership, and school autonomy.

All four of these have a role but are only effective under certain conditions. The TALIS 2013 survey and its findings conducted by OECD is a case in point (OECD, 2014). The report presents findings from their survey of teachers and principals in 34 countries. Its half-truths make it easy for policy makers to go down the wrong track. TALIS has done us a service for tabling the key issues, but we now must interpret the findings with some precision.

In this paper I present six ideas that in combination lead to greater performance of the teaching profession as a whole and thus, greater education achievement of students. We don't need a long list, but we do need a small number of factors that make a difference because of their *interactive effect*. In health for example you don't want to put a lot of emphasis on exercise unless you combine it with a good diet, and getting eight hours sleep.

The six factors, most of which receive half-truth endorsement in TALIS 2013 are:

1. High expectations for students.
2. Peer motivation.
3. Feedback
4. Leadership at the school level.
5. Connected autonomy.
6. Investment of resources and the re-positioning of accountability



To repeat, it is the *combination of the six* and their interactive effects that make the difference. Andy Hargreaves and I (2012) have made the basic case for the improvement of the teaching profession by showing that the *Professional capital of teachers* is the agenda -- defined as i) human capital (the quality of the individual), ii) social capital (the quality of the group), and iii) decisional capital (expertise in judgment and decision making). The six factors above generate greater professional capital and have greater impact on the performance of teachers and students.

1. High expectations for students and educators

Policies need to create the expectations and belief that all students can achieve regardless of background and postal code. These uplifting visions (to use Hargreaves et al's term, 2014) must be accompanied by policies and strategies that represent the means to accomplish the goals (the other five factors above). Above all it must be accompanied by the firm belief and expectation that principals and teachers are the heroes that will get us there. Standards for teachers and administrators should be established to reflect these expectations, and should be enforced through the other five factors.

2. Peer motivation

If there one factor that has the greatest impact on performance in any organization it is 'peer motivation'. For any task that is more than rudimentary collaborative cultures with a purpose win hands down over any other strategy (effective collaborative cultures are built on social and decisional capital). The TALIS report contains this finding but it is buried in half-truths. Every time the report refers to a half-truth finding—feedback is critical, professional development is important, autonomy can help etc— it fails to stress that it is only when these factors are combined with collaborative cultures that they have their desired impact. Even the relatively weak measure of “teachers who report using collaborative practices five times a year” is positively related to self-efficacy and job satisfaction”. Imagine the impact if deep collaborative cultures were to be implemented. Moreover, it is not self-efficacy that is key, but rather *collective efficacy* (which encompasses self-efficacy). Collective efficacy includes teachers having more influence over school decisions which they do in collaborative cultures through formal and informal means, literally on a daily basis.

In any case, policy makers need to bite the bullet on this one: *invest in purposeful peer learning across the six factors*. The payoff will be multiplicative.

As we say, if you want to change the group use the group to change the group.

3. Feedback

In all walks of life constructive feedback is the key to growth. Equally it is the most difficult to get right. TALIS finds that 60% of teachers report that feedback leads to improvement, but also finds that 50% of teachers say that teacher appraisals are undertaken “simply to fulfill administrative requirements”: another half-truth that cries out for clarity. The question is ‘under what conditions will feedback thrive’. We know the answer: when the culture fosters development over dismissal, candor over superficiality, specificity over nothingness, transparency over opaqueness, evidence over whim, and helpful colleagues and school leaders over isolation. Feedback in short, requires evidence and quality data, and a culture committed to acting on what they find. Collaborative cultures contain more of these elements than any teacher appraisal tool. Purposeful day-to-day learning is the key (because it is full of natural and ubiquitous feedback)-- buttressed by, not driven by, appraisal, and professional learning.

4. Leadership at the school level

I recently wrote a book on, *The principal: Three keys for maximizing impact*. I did this because there was a growing confusion about the principal as instructional leader. Many jurisdictions were loading up the principal with formal appraisal requirements (the kind that led TALIS teachers to say that the experience was perfunctory). Effective practice on the contrary is quite clear. Principals ‘who participate as lead learners’ alongside teachers make the difference. These leaders basically orchestrate the other five factors on our six-factor list. Principals thus become indirect, but *all the more explicit* in their impact on the school. (The other two keys incidentally are ‘change agent’, and ‘system player’—the latter is wrapped up in factor 5).

In addition to clarifying the role of the principal there are several other aspects of school leadership pertaining to teachers as leaders.

5. Connected autonomy



Basically TALIS finds (although they wouldn't say it this way) that atomistic autonomy is the enemy of system performance. Autonomy over what and under what conditions is the question. Many jurisdictions are granting new degrees of autonomy for schools and districts, and my policy advice is that they better be careful. Schools and districts do need freedom from current top-down compliant driven bureaucracies, but once again it needs to be framed around certain conditions. The following two sets of conditions should be officially established by policy. One, with autonomy comes three 'connected requirements': i) develop intra-school collaborative cultures, ii) work in purposeful networks of schools, and iii) engage proactively in implementing state priorities (assuming the latter are consistent with the six factors in this article). These three forms constitute connected autonomy. The second set of conditions is that autonomy be framed within obligations relative to factors one and six.

6. Invest resources and reposition accountability

All economic analyses conclude that it is not the amount of expenditure that matters but how it is spent. The major emphasis should be on implementing the high expectations agenda contained in factor one. Teachers should be paid enough to take money off the table as an issue; performance pay is a disaster; differential pay for leadership responsibilities and related competency based development is desirable, and investing in conditions and practices that support factors two through five is essential. Investing in collaborative cultures and networks for example should be a priority. Other investments in teacher development and professional learning will be important but only in the context of change policies that aim to change culture.

With respect to accountability policy makers should base the approach on the following: i) In situations of very low teacher capacity more scripted approaches may be essential, and well as the use of direct accountability actions (in situations, for example, when teachers frequently don't show up for work); ii) the major investment and accountability stance should be based on development--investing in the professional capital of teachers as we have defined it. The approach to accountability should be to place primary emphasis on developing 'internal accountability' which sets the conditions for the group to be transparently accountability within itself, and externally to authorities and the public (see Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, and Hargreaves, in press), and iv) under these conditions external accountability should be employed to remove teachers who should not be in the profession, and to act in cases of persistently ineffective schools and districts. Peer reviews or other mechanisms can be effective in these cases.

External accountability requires further explanation. In my view we first had to criticize punitive-based forms of accountability such as school inspections, and certain teacher evaluation schemes because they so obviously undercut the development of the profession as a whole. Now that we are able to establish the developmental agenda, as I have in this paper we need to re-introduce accountability more explicitly, including its more hard nosed forms. High expectations, investing in development and being committed to both internal and external accountability are an essential and powerful combination.

Conclusion

Less than one-third of TALIS teachers believe that teaching is a valued profession in their society. This low level of respect is a function of the limited presence of the forces associated with the six factors that I have described in this article. Change these factors and you get better performance, greater self-and collective efficacy, and ultimately a more self and other respected profession.

I haven't commented on the different roles of government, unions and school systems. The agenda I have described is a unifying one. Talented schools help weak teachers, and attract strong ones. Talented teachers leave weak schools and weak professions. Good collaboration reduces bad variation (defined as ineffective teaching) because it generates consistent effective practices. Good interrelated policies well implemented produce effective, sustainable self-generating professions. It is time to take the next steps in teacher policy that I have outlined in this paper.

References

Fullan, M. (2014). *The principal: Three keys for maximizing impact*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M., Rincon-Gallardo, S., and Hargreaves, A. (in press). Professional capital as accountability. (Stanford: EPPA)

series).

Hargreaves, A. and Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital*. New York: Teachers Collage Press.

Hargreaves, A., Boyle, A., And Harris, A. (2014). *Uplifting leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley brand.

OECD (2014). *TALIS 2013: An international perspective on teaching and learning*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

About the Author



Michael Fullan

He is a worldwide authority educational reforms with a mandate of helping to achieve the moral purpose of all children learning. www.michaelfullan.ca

Teacher policy - where next?

Four lessons for strengthening teacher strategies in national education plans to achieve post-2015 education goals

By: Pauline Rose

Theme: Mobilising for Quality Education



Of the 250 million children not learning the basics, around half have spent at least four years in school. To address this learning crisis, policymakers need to invest in reforms to strengthen the quality of teachers and teaching.

All too often, however, teacher reforms do not feature strongly in national education plans and, where they do, they do not pay sufficient attention to addressing the needs of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who are most at risk of not achieving their potential. Based on a review of national education plans for the [2013/4 Education for All Global Monitoring Report](#), this article identifies four lessons for strengthening teacher strategies if post-2015 goal of 'equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all' is to be achieved.

To overcome the global learning crisis, the 2013/4 Education for All Global Monitoring Report identifies the need for a mix of reforms to attract and retain the best teachers, improve teacher education, deploy teachers more fairly, and provide incentives in the form of better salaries and attractive career paths. Education plans are an important first step to showing a commitment to such reforms, and providing a benchmark against which policymakers can be held to account. A review of 40 education plans in poorer countries found that, while plans often referred to such strategies in some form, they generally did not pay sufficient attention to breaking the cycle of disadvantage (Hunt, 2014).

Amongst the 40 plans, there are a few promising examples on teacher recruitment and training: Kenya's plan includes in-service training aimed at boosting the learning of primary school leavers in poorly performing districts. South Africa's plan goes into more detail than most, highlighting recruitment of new teachers as key in reaching required learning standards. Cambodia, Ghana, Liberia and Papua New Guinea provide scholarships for trainees from disadvantaged areas, often people with specific language skills.

Training for non-formal education teachers is included in 11 of the 40 plans. Uganda emphasizes working with NGO providers to expand primary education to disadvantaged rural and urban areas, including by training teachers in these

schools and developing a costed plan to fund their salaries through the government payroll.

The most popular teacher strategy for addressing disadvantage in learning, included in 28 of the 40 plans, is the deployment of teachers to disadvantaged areas. This is important given the unequal distribution of teachers within countries which often leaves remote rural areas and urban slums with an insufficient number of teachers, and so extremely large classes. Cambodia's plan is notable for including strategies to deploy teachers – especially those from targeted areas and ethnic groups – to the areas where they are most needed. Overall, about 95% of new graduates from teacher training colleges are to be assigned to understaffed schools and to disadvantaged and remote areas every year.

Of the 28 policy documents that address teacher deployment, 22 include incentives, particularly focusing on housing and monetary incentives. In 17 of the policies, housing incentives are mentioned as a way to encourage teacher deployment to difficult areas, and 9 include a monetary allowance. Nigeria proposes a promotion incentive for teachers deployed to disadvantaged areas. Given the importance of female teachers to support girls' education in Afghanistan, the country's plan aims to increase the number of female teachers by 50% by 2014 through monetary and housing incentives for female teachers, and special teacher training programmes for women in remote areas and women who do not meet current qualification requirements. However, experience of implementing such incentive policies has mixed outcomes, largely because the incentives are not always sufficient to encourage the best teachers to work in the most challenging environments (Mulkeen, 2013).

Plans are more likely to include specific strategies for making teachers accountable to deliver better results than to propose reforms to motivate teachers to support disadvantaged learners through career promotion. Among the 40 plans, 14 focus on teacher accountability for children's learning and 20 include a teacher performance management system or competency framework to monitor and guide teacher practice. Performance-related pay for teachers is proposed in Cambodia, Jamaica, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. In Jamaica, for example, performance-based pay is intended to foster a culture in which teachers apply the curriculum and so improve learning outcomes. Yet, the EFA Global Monitoring Report identifies that evidence on implementing such systems effectively, even in countries with reasonably sophisticated information systems, is weak suggesting caution is needed.

Policies can only be effective if those responsible for implementing them are involved in shaping them. However policy-makers rarely consult teachers or their unions in the design of strategies to improve education quality and equitable learning outcomes. Excluding teachers not only is demoralizing but is also likely to lead to inappropriate policies that cannot be implemented effectively. In a survey in Indonesia, for example, policy-makers favoured promotion opportunities, which only 20% of teachers surveyed considered important, compared with 49% who viewed improving classroom teaching and learning resources as critical (Broekman, 2013). In Turkey, teachers only became involved at the implementation stage of the 2004 curriculum reform. They were highly critical of its design, with many teachers were concerned that the substantial reductions in teaching time built into the new curriculum would lower pupils' academic performance (Altinyelken and Verger, 2013).

In some countries, the engagement of teacher unions has improved policies aimed at helping disadvantaged groups. In Bolivia, for example, the Confederation of Rural Education Teachers was instrumental in improving education quality among indigenous groups by highlighting the need for bilingual, multicultural education. Its promotion of instruction in the indigenous languages contributed to a decrease in illiteracy. The confederation is the chief advocate of education tailored for indigenous groups and peasants, historically excluded from the education system, and indigenous education rights are now enshrined in the constitution, providing a legal basis on which to advocate for improvements (Gindin and Finger, 2013).

Even where appropriate strategies are identified, they fall at the hurdle of implementation due to insufficient resources. Only 16 of the 40 policy documents reviewed in the EFA Global Monitoring Report included a budget breakdown detailing teaching and learning costs. The costs that were most often included were for teacher education, textbooks and learning materials. Even where plans provide a budget breakdown, very few identify expenditures aimed at overcoming the disadvantage.

Bangladesh is an exception. Its plan presents financial projections associated with strategies to improve learning linked to key indicators designed to measure progress, such as children's level of learning according to their grade and the subject, the number of schools that receive new textbooks in the first month of the year, and the percentage of teachers receiving continuous professional development. Providing a detailed analysis of financing needs shows that domestic resources are likely not to be sufficient to cover the costs – the plan identifies that 28% of the teaching and learning component would need to be financed by aid.



Finally, proposals for post-2015 education targets aim to improve equitable quality and learning and, more specifically to ensure sufficient numbers of quality teachers to achieve this objective. The global framework will only be achieved if such targets are also covered in education plans, adapted to the national context as appropriate, such that targets are tracked within countries. Yet, national targets rarely go beyond ones on school access, and even these often do not include ones aimed at narrowing inequality gaps other than in relation to gender. Only four country plans reviewed intend to track progress in inequality in learning beyond gender. One of the exceptions is Sri Lanka, which sets specific regional targets for mathematics and native language, with higher increases expected for lower performing regions.

Four lessons emerge for the future of teacher policies. First, policymakers need to identify the right mix of policies in particular contexts to ensure quality teachers and teaching that is focused on the most disadvantaged - paying attention to recruitment, training, deployment and incentives. Second, to achieve the right mix of reforms, teachers need to be part of the policymaking process. Thirdly, it will only be possible to implement strategies in the education plans effectively if sufficient funds are available - the costs of identified strategies aimed at improving teaching and learning need to be carefully assessed, ensuring that they are backed by the resources to implement them. Finally, the plans need to include specific national targets aimed at overcoming inequalities in learning, accompanied by ones related to increasing numbers and strengthening the quality of teachers to achieve this, if we are to overcome the global learning crisis by 2030.

References

Altinyelken, H. K. and Verger, A. 2013. The recontextualisation of global education reforms: insights from the case studies. Verger, A., Altinyelken, H. and de Koning, M. (eds), *Global Managerial Education Reforms and Teachers: Emerging Policies, Controversies and Issues in Developing Contexts*. Brussels: Education International Research Institute, pp. 141–155

Broekman, A. 2013. The rationale and effects of accountability policies on the work and motivation of teachers: evidence from Indonesia. Verger, A., Altinyelken, H. and de Koning, M. (eds), *Global Managerial Education Reforms and Teachers: Emerging Policies, Controversies and Issues in Developing Contexts*. Brussels, Education International Research Institute, pp. 19–36.

Gindin, J. and Finger, L. 2013. Promoting education quality: the role of teacher unions in Latin America. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4.

Hunt, F. 2013. Review of national policies on learning and teaching. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4.

Mulkeen, A. 2013. Teacher Policy in Primary and Secondary Education in Development Cooperation. Bonn: Germany, Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. (Discussion Paper.)

UNESCO. 2014. *Education for All Global Monitoring Report. Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All*. Paris: UNESCO.

About the Author



Pauline Rose

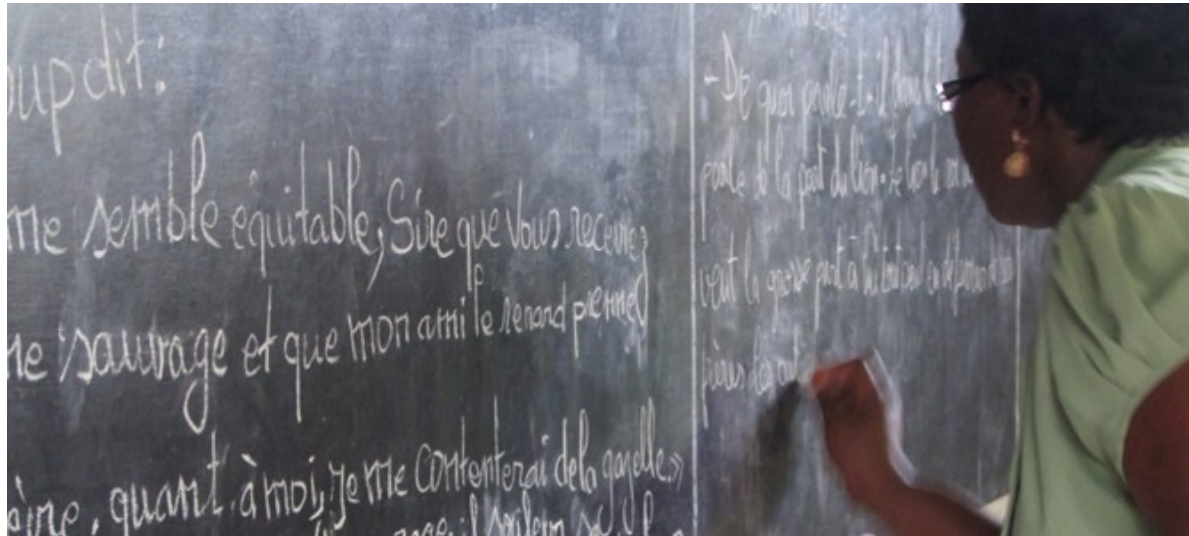
She is Professor of International Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge and was director of UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report until 2014.

Reading teacher policy

- and making it count

By: Hugh McLean

Theme: Mobilising for Quality Education



A day in a life in Guinea

Teacher policy is typically something that happens to teachers; it should be something teachers make happen. All comprehensive efforts to reform national education systems, whatever their driving vision, whether they start with exams systems, redeveloping the curriculum or consolidating schools, inevitably boil down to key questions about teachers.

Who is attracted to the profession? How are they trained? Who completes and qualifies as a teacher? How are they deployed? What are their working conditions? How are they supported to provide quality education? How long do they stay in the job? Mostly, the answers to these and the other central questions facing education reform are decided by policy-makers, donors and technocrats, few of whom have knowledge or experience of teaching. A recent EFA survey finds that 88% of teachers are not consulted on matters that affect their professional lives^[1]. Efforts to consult teachers on education reform are seldom in its making; they are usually just an afterthought.

This article draws on the wisdom of the five teachers in Education International's documentary, [Teachers: A Day in A Life](#), by Augustin Demichelis and Mar Candela, to explore key concerns for education policy and teacher policy. It considers how these might frame a teacher target under the education goal in the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Kpassagou Pulchérie from the State secondary school, Hédranawoé Collège, in Togo, teaches French to a class of 105 children in what she describes as a building for cattle: its roof is full of holes, it leaks inside when it rains and is far too hot otherwise. Her children come from poor families; they pay for their education and school meals and often cannot afford to come to school, they sit three to a desk. Of the 80 year-three students, only four have the book they need for her lessons.

"I would be lying if I knew all their names."

She says education is a human right and that the state should do more to support teachers, she pays for photocopies herself



when she feels she can't do without the text. She is a skilled and forceful presence in her packed class.

"Who can tell me what equitable means?" she asks the 105 faces.

A hand shoots up. "It means fair."

"Very good!" she says. "Give him a clap."

The class readily responds: clap-clap-clap, clap-clap-clap, clap, clap, clap!

Kpassagou knows what needs to be done: "There are challenges we need to overcome to have quality schools. On an infrastructural level we need to assess pre-existing buildings and build schools to relieve the overcrowded ones. On a structural level we need reform. The curricula are all the same and are outdated. Nothing changes. If we could change the curricula and adapt them to modern-day realities, this would help us and our children. On a staffing level there is still a lack of personnel. There aren't enough teachers. We need to recruit more and give them proper training. I think that the training they give us is very rushed. This training doesn't help a teacher give a class."

Sharmistra Sharma, a contract teacher in Ghazibad, India, also teaches in a poor primary school. She has only 25 students in her class; her students are given free books and lunch and uniforms as well. She is a contract teacher: paid roughly only half the rate of a permanent teacher, for only 11 months of the year, no benefits. She attends in-service training and studies every evening after her housework, she hopes to become a permanent teacher once she is qualified. She also has clear ideas about what is needed to support quality education: "My dream school would be equipped with all the necessary facilities and promote the holistic development of the child. Poor children come here to study, but their needs are not satisfied. Some kids do well at school, but without resources they cannot reach their full potential."

Javier Iriate is deputy head at a second-chance school in Buenos Aires that aims to provide an inclusive quality education. He insists there is no such thing as a "one-size-fits-all teacher" or an instruction manual for teaching. For him, it is the education system that fails rather than students, although it is the students who embody that failure and carry its stigma. The task of education at his school is to "get rid of that idea" and work to rebuild confidence and self-esteem.

The teachers in *A Day in a Life* think that a particular sense of duty is required for teaching: Javier describes a "universal idea" that he considers links all teachers: "a desire to do something for others." Julie Martineau, a literature teacher at École Louis-Phillipe-Paré in Quebec became a teacher because she wanted to "create a better world" and when she realised "she could not do this on her own." David De Coster, who teaches at a public school in Brussels, considers that teaching "takes on its full meaning" when it engages under-stimulated children and that the "real teachers and those who do this job with real mastery are those associated with so-called bad schools." Sharmistra describes a sense of calling: "From a very early age, I always dreamt of becoming a teacher. I wanted to help children in some way. That is why I entered the profession." As Michael Fullan once put it, "scratch a teacher, you'll find a moral purpose."^[ii]

This is the starting point for sound teacher policy: attract the right people. What follows then, as [a major review of the recent literature](#) shows, is the need to ensure good quality initial training, particularly to ensure adequate subject knowledge, and sufficient investment in schools to ensure they are fully functioning, adequately equipped and structurally sound.^[iii] In other words: professional qualifications and professional standards. These are the prerequisites for quality education outcomes.

The task of building genuine teacher professionalism must take this insight a step further. For a profession is not made from individual excellence; it is a collective endeavour built on collaboration between good teachers and support for teachers aspiring to be good. The Canadian teacher Julie, empathises with her colleagues in other countries where she knows the conditions are more difficult than her own; she understands that "everyone wins no matter where they live, if the majority of people in the world have a high quality public education." This sense of professional solidarity shows the way forward for progressive unionism also. It will take determined action by teachers, not mere sentiment, to shape education policy proactively to strengthen teacher professionalism and public education. The Belgian teacher, David, recognises that all the gains won in the past are the results of determined struggles and union victories; that they are not permanent and can be stripped away. "We know that social gains are never truly gained," he says. "We have to keep on fighting for them."



The distinction between qualified and quality teachers, for example, is determinedly blurred in Britain's eccentric national politics, largely because of the current government's desire to recruit non-qualified teachers into academies and free schools. While this makes for [comic parliamentary debate](#) in Westminster [\[iv\]](#), DfID's objections to "qualified teachers" in the target language for the Post 2015 education goal risks corroding the teaching profession globally. There is incontrovertible evidence that quality education depends on quality teaching: jettisoning teacher qualifications is not the way to ensure it. In fact, in the current policy climate it's not certain that there will be any mention at all of teachers in the education goal.

The way forward for education policy, according to the teacher Javier's view, is that "the school should accompany and guarantee the right (to education)." He testifies that Argentinian schools inherited the State's failures in the 1990s, when it adopted the "neo-liberal model in which school is a service not a right." The teacher David considers that "quality public education does not adhere to the logic of commodification or marketing." For him, such thinking is as a consequence of a society in which citizens have become consumers: "a citizen answers to ethics..., convictions and ideals, a consumer only answers to his or her wallet and buying power."

An [advisor](#) to Michael Gove, current ideologue and former British Secretary of State for Education, proposed that schools should be run like supermarkets by professional managers. Supermarkets work because, he maintained, "they get very high performance out of mediocre people." [\[v\]](#) Crass notions like this reflect the market-logic for public sector reforms preferred by many governments; they hold deep threats for teacher professionalism.

This is why teachers must step forward to shape the policies that affect their professional lives. They are the ones who are in touch with young children every day; they see when policies are not working. They will not be thanked and they will need to remember why they became teachers in the first place.

Footnotes

[\[i\]](#) Education International (2014) Teachers Assessing Education for All: Perspectives from the Classroom. A su

[\[ii\]](#) Michael Fullan (1990) [Teachers Must Become Change Agents](#)

[\[iii\]](#) Glewwe, Hanushek, Humpage & Ravina (2011) School Resources and Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Review fo the Literature from 1990 to 2010

[\[iv\]](#) [Parliamentary Hansard for Commons Debates \(2013\) Columns 943-980, 30th October, 2013](#)

[\[v\]](#) Dominic Cummings (2013) Essay on Odyssean Eduation, See his blog at <http://dominiccummings.wordpress.com/>

[About the Author](#)



Hugh McLean

Hugh McLean is the director of the Open Society Education Support Program (OSF).
<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/people/hugh-mclean>

Flip the System

By: Jelmer Evers

Theme: Mobilising for Quality Education



*Teachers as monkeys trained to perform tricks in the circus for yet another measly peanut. That is how Rene Kneyber and I began our book *The Alternative*. (Evers & Kneyber, 2013) In the Netherlands education as a whole and the teaching profession were under siege. More and more teachers were being treated as another cog in the machine and teacher morale was low. Rene and I are both teachers, and in stark contrast to the monkey analogy we see ourselves as highly qualified professionals acting with professional pride. And yet, here we were.*

How did we get here? As we didn't see any chance of real change on the horizon we came up with the idea to explore an alternative to current destructive educational policies. The book turned into a combined effort by Dutch teachers and (international) researchers like Andy Hargreaves, Howard Gardner and Gert Biesta to name a few. The goal was to find out how we came to be in this situation and how we could turn things around for the better.

The last twenty years or so has seen a profound shift in educational policies. Before, education was treated as a public good in the hands of trusted professionals, but gradually politicians turned to neo-liberal policies to reform education. In this paradigm schools should be subjected to market discipline and schools and teachers should be held accountable to a set of key performance indicators. (Visser, 2013) Introduced in the nineties in the United Kingdom and the United States it has since then spread across the globe in several different guises from Western Europe to Chili. Pasi Sahlberg coined these policies the "Global Education Reform Movement" (GERM) (Sahlberg, 2011) The speed with which these policies proliferated was also due to the introduction of the PISA reports by the OECD. Everytime Education at a Glance comes out countries are subjected to a barrage of apocalyptic cries of impending doom and "Sputnik moments" by pundits. One moment the Finns are overtaking you and the next time it's whizz-kids from Shanghai. (Dillon, 2010) International ranking has become the norm and educational policy has turned into an international rat-race. Tellingly the first goal of educational policy stated by the current Dutch government is to be in an unidentified "Top 5" of best educational systems.

Although late to the party, the Netherlands hasn't been immune to neo-liberal policies. Politicians came to regard public sectors as inefficient and should be opened up to market policies. Schools were given more autonomy financially, whilst at the same time a strict set of accountability measures were introduced that were overseen by an inspectorate to assure quality control. Before the inspectorate was a critical friend, but now protocols and a narrow set of indicators infused the

Dutch education system with a “blame culture”. Punitive accountability became the norm.

Of course education isn't a market, and schools aren't companies. At best it turned education into a quasi-market. It all boiled down to a very utilitarian view of education: what is the value being added to our children? *“Anything you measure will impel a person to optimize his score on that metric. What you measure is what you get.”* says Daniel Ariely in an article on business performance and CEO pay. (Ariely, 2010) In the case of education this turned out to be standardized test scores. So standardized high stakes testing became the norm and as a result teachers and schools started teaching to the test. It all turned out to be nothing more than managerial and statistical fata morgana of course, as every teacher and school leader could have told politicians. (van der Wateren, 2013)

No child left behind? It turned out to be exactly the opposite. Children are being left behind. In The Alternative we not only identified “the system” as the main culprit. Teachers and school leaders bear part of the blame as well. Responsibility for children was being externalized, outsourced, to the system, to the metrics. In this mindset student became a risk for the results of the school. Schools (teachers!) started to refuse taking students in or push them to a lower level. Instead of fostering a culture of growth and nurturing we started to avoid risk. And worse, schools often went beyond what the rules asked of us. In this sense teachers became *voluntary slaves*. (Jansen, 2013) A profession with a strong sense of moral purpose, professional identity and professional pride, would have refused to go along and offered an alternative.



Education is all about risk. The learning of an individual child isn't something that can be easily measured. Every child is unique and the outcomes are unpredictable. This renders every comparison and introduction of standardization mute to a certain extent. Moreover education is more than acquiring skills and knowledge. Good teachers know this, good teachers know that education is also a normative and ethical endeavor. Yet at the same time these external accountability arose from a concern over the quality of education.

In order to address the quality of education we first need to answer what education is for. ‘Good’ education has, according to the philosopher Gert Biesta, three functions, purposes and domains: *qualification*, *socialization* and *subjectification*. *Qualification* is the aim of education to teach children certain skills and knowledge. *Socialization* is teaching children to adapt to the existing order of society and *subjectification* is in many respects the direct inverse of socialization: education always has an effect on the subject, the person, and through subjectification education tries to bring about the uniqueness of every person. (Biesta, 2010)

The power of Biesta's framework not only undermines any attempt to privatize and market the education system, it also resonates with teachers who recognize these type of decisions and values in their practice. It also firmly gives teachers a



language to *re-place* themselves into the center of education. To stretch the point even further it highlights that good education is in fact non-governable. Good education is always a risk, as Biesta put it recently: *The Beautiful Risk of Education*. (Biesta, 2012)

The question of the quality of education is therefore also a question relating to the discretionary space of teachers, as the course of action of teachers cannot be prescribed teachers have to have a certain amount of room for personal decision making. However, this space cannot be limitless. Educational practice always resides within societal boundaries and as a profession teachers must address and take responsibility for societal concerns about quality. Instead of taking a passive stance teachers must be pro-active and build up professional capital and earn that trust. (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012)

To achieve professional capital and allow teachers to articulate an educational language the system has to be infused with forms of distributed leadership, on all levels. We call this *Flip the System*. Instead of being accountable to the system, the system has to be accountable to the interaction in the classrooms and schools. But just letting teachers call the shots isn't good enough. Teachers working alone and in isolation doesn't equal taking responsibility. Teachers and schools should hold themselves accountable in *partnerships* with school leaders and administrators in professional learning communities.

On the school level research on teacher-led schools has shown that they achieve good results, have a low turnover rate and high teacher self-efficacy. More importantly teachers take responsibility for every child within the school community because there is no one else to shift the responsibility to. (Dirkswager & Farris-Berg, 2012) As Hargreaves has stated: responsibility is the remainder that is left when accountability has been subtracted.

Flipping the system also extends to the educational system as a whole. Teachers' expertise should be capitalized and put to good use. Part of the success in systems like Singapore is that teachers operate on all levels, including the ministry. Teachers shouldn't be proxies for someone else's ideas, but designers and agents of change. We concluded *The Alternative* with a set of recommendations:

- 1) Collective autonomy within schools
- 2) Support rather than control. More assistants, less managers.
- 3) Innovation funds for teachers
- 4) Collective autonomy within a system
- 5) An independent teacher council
- 6) Different teacher leadership roles
- 7) Peer review as a means of taking charge of quality control

It was also call to action. *'If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when? If we don't act who will?'* Right from the start *The Alternative* garnered a lot of attention. At the book launch the secretary accepted the book out of our hands and after a month and a half it was already being discussed in parliament. Over the past year part of our ideas have evolved into an initiative with the ruling coalition parties called *Learning Together* with the intention of putting many of our recommendations into practice. The profession is feeling increasingly empowered, illustrated by a growing number of initiatives of teacher leadership and professional learning communities, supported by the unions. *The Alternative* is being put into practice. Teachers are learning to speak a new language, teachers are becoming more engaged and the system is evolving accordingly.

Our thinking has further evolved as well. We've come to the conclusion that teachers should connect globally as well. Worldwide teachers are struggling with many of the same issues we identified. And at the same time, once you start looking, it isn't hard to find inspirational examples and good practices of teachers taking matters into their own hands. Educational



policy is increasingly influenced by global trends and actors, including corporations and NGO's. At the same time grass roots movements are springing up everywhere, accelerated by social media and supported by unions and teacher organizations. They form a global embryonic web of teachers working to reclaim and shape education.

That is why we are working with Education International on an international successor to The Alternative: Flip the System. Teachers and researchers from across the globe will work together to reflect upon best practices and show the way forward. Contributors include Andy Hargreaves, Ann Lieberman, John Bangs, Pak Tee Ng, Gert Biesta, Tom Bennet, Eva Hartel to name a few. The intention is to publish the book in the spring of 2015, hopefully at the International Summit on the Teaching Profession in Canada. Teachers should be front and center in education worldwide and Flip the System will be a small step in making that a reality.

For more information see www.flip-the-system.org, www.unite4education.org and follow @jelmerevers and @rkneyber on Twitter

References

Ariely, D. (2010). You are what you measure. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(6), 38.

Biesta, G. J. J. (2010). *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy (Interventions: Education, Philosophy, and Culture)* (p. 160). Paradigm.

Biesta, G. J. J. (2012). *The Beautiful Risk of Education* (p. 178). Paradigm Publishers.

Dillon, S. (2010). In PISA Test, Top Scores From Shanghai Stun Experts. *New York Times*. New York.

Dirkswager, E., & Farris-Berg, K. (2012). *Trusting teachers with school success?: what happens when teachers call the shots*. Lanham Md: R & L Education.

Evers, J., & Kneyber, R. (2013). *Het alternatief?: weg met de afrekencultuur in het onderwijs!* Amsterdam: Boom.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School* (p. 240). Teachers College Press; 1 edition.

Jansen, T. (2013). Van vrijwillige slaven tot voortrekkers. In J. Evers & R. Kneyber (Eds.), *Het Alternatief: weg met de afrekencultuur in het onderwijs* (pp. 12–18). Amsterdam: boom.

Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish lessons?: what can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Van der Wateren, D. (2013). Zin en onzin van testen, vergelijken en afrekenen. In J. Evers & R. Kneyber (Eds.), *Het Alternatief: weg met de afrekencultuur in het onderwijs* (pp. 40–58). Amsterdam: Boom.

Visser, A. (2013). Marktfilosofie en onderwijsutopie. In J. Evers & R. Kneyber (Eds.), *Het Alternatief: weg met de afrekencultuur in het onderwijs* (pp. 19–29). Amsterdam: Boom.

About the Author



Jelmer Evers

He is teacher in UniC, an innovative school in Utrecht, Netherlands. He is also a well known blogger and speaker on innovation in education. <http://www.jelmerevers.nl/>