

TALIS 2018 RESULTS: PRIMARY EDUCATION

The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is an international, large-scale survey of teachers, school leaders and the learning environment in schools. This note presents findings based on the reports of teachers and school leaders in primary education (ISCED level 1) in mainstream public and private schools. Some data from teachers and school leaders in lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) are noted throughout the document as points of comparison.

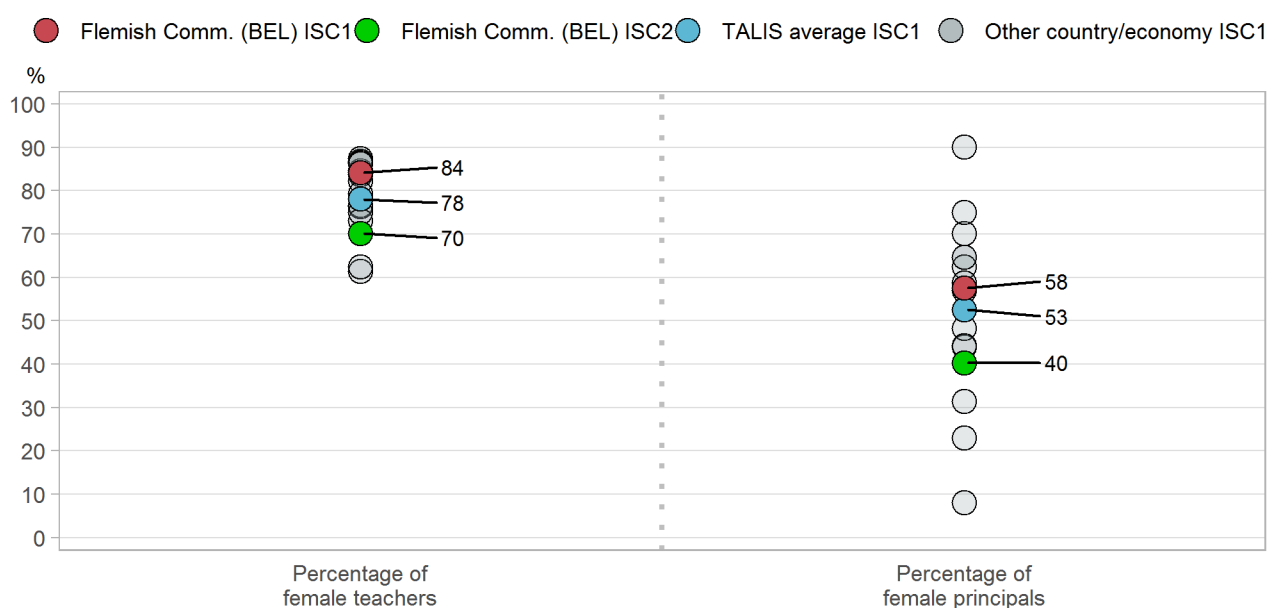
Flemish Community of Belgium

I. Who are today's principals and teachers in primary education?

- In the Flemish Community of Belgium, teachers in primary education are, on average, 40 years old, which is lower than the average age of teachers across the countries and economies participating in TALIS for primary education (41 years old). Furthermore, 24% of teachers in primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium are age 50 and above (average across participating countries and economies 23%). Notwithstanding possible changes due to the size of the student population and changes in class size, this means that the Flemish Community of Belgium will have to renew about one in four members of its teaching workforce over the next decade or so.

Figure 1. Gender profiles of teachers and school leaders

Results based on responses of teachers and principals in primary and lower secondary education



Notes: ISC1 stands for ISCED level 1 and refers to values concerning primary education. ISC 2 stands for ISCED level 2 and refers to values concerning lower secondary education. Only countries and economies with available data are shown.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Tables 2.9 and 2.12.

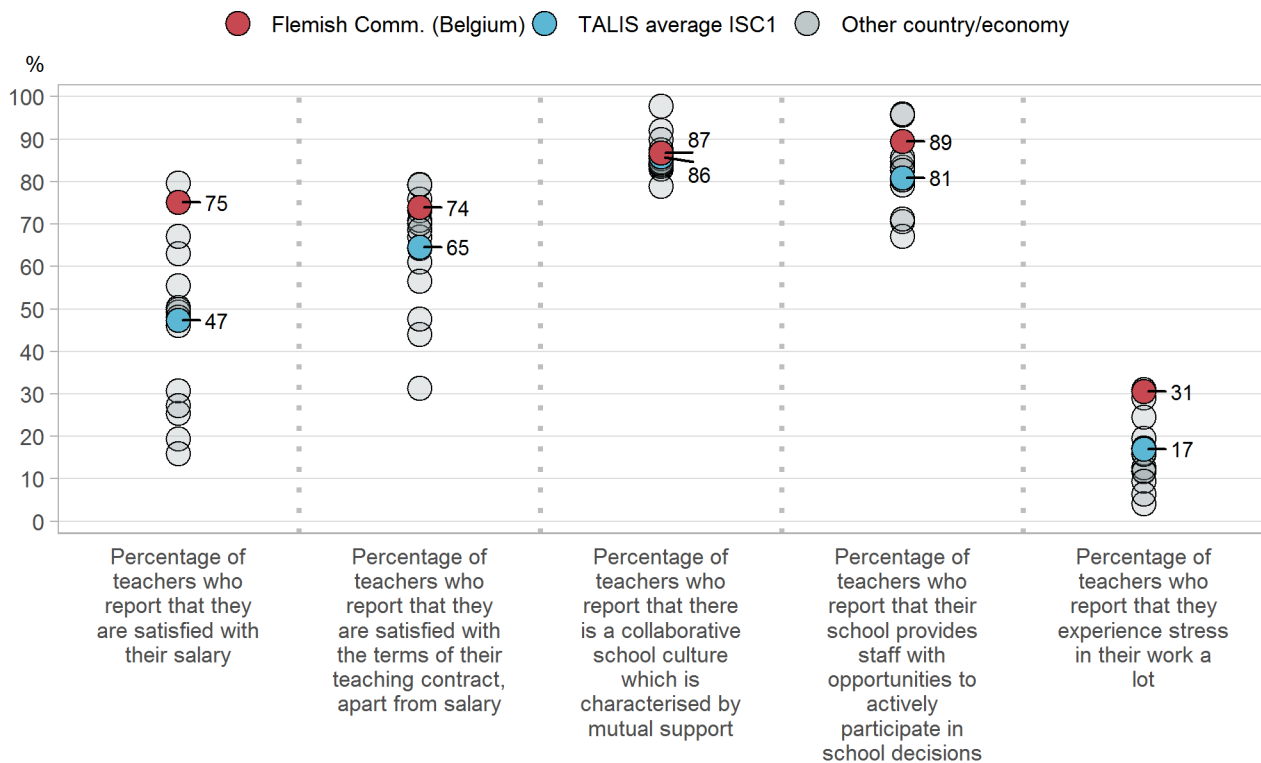
- In the Flemish Community of Belgium, teachers in primary education have, on average, a total of 17 years working as teachers, which is higher than the average in the countries and economies participating in TALIS (16 years). Furthermore, teachers in primary education have, on average, a total of 1 years of experience in other non-educational roles (average across participating countries and economies 2 years), compared to 2 years on average in lower secondary education.
- Information about the gender distribution of the teacher and principal workforces makes it possible to gauge the degree of gender imbalance in the teaching profession and of gender disparities in the scope for promotion to leadership positions. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 58% of principals in primary education are women, compared to 84% of teachers. In lower secondary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 40% of principals are women, compared to 70% of teachers.
- Career stability, mobility and working conditions could play a large role in teachers' reported levels of satisfaction. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 83% of teachers in primary education have a permanent contract (an ongoing contract with no fixed end-point before the age of retirement) (average across participating countries and economies 84%). At the same time, 73% of teachers in primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium are employed full-time (across all their employments), which is lower than the average in the countries and economies participating in TALIS (84%).

II. What teachers say about their jobs in primary education?

- The status of the teaching profession can be an important factor for recruiting and retaining teachers. To get a sense of the perceived status of the teaching profession, TALIS 2018 asked teachers whether they believe that the teaching profession is valued in society. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 31% of teachers in primary education “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that their profession is valued in society, which is lower than the average across participating countries and economies (36%).
- TALIS defines job satisfaction as the sense of fulfilment and gratification that teachers get from their work. Job satisfaction may have a positive association with teachers' attitudes towards their work and with their performance. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 93% of teachers in primary education reported that, all in all, they are satisfied with their job (average across participating countries and economies 90%). Moreover, 74% of teachers in primary education are satisfied with the terms of their teaching contract (apart from salary) (average across participating countries and economies 65%). In the Flemish Community of Belgium 75% of teachers in primary education reported being satisfied with their salaries (average across participating countries and economies 47%).
- Teachers' perceptions of their colleagues and school environments are also crucial factors in teachers' satisfaction. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 87% of teachers in primary education reported that there is a collaborative school culture that is characterised by mutual support (average across participating countries and economies 86%). Moreover, a crucial component of teachers' work satisfaction is having the opportunity of being heard in their workplace: 89% of teachers in primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium reported that their school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions. (average across participating countries and economies 81%).

Figure 2. Teachers' working conditions, stress and satisfaction

Results based on responses of teachers in primary education



Notes: ISC1 stands for ISCED level 1 and refers to values concerning primary education. Only countries and economies with available data are shown.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Tables 5.9, 6.19 and 6.24.

- Acute stress at work can be associated with teachers' job satisfaction and their intention to continue teaching. Furthermore, stressful environments and situations may affect the practices and motivation of teachers and principals, and even student achievement. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 31% of teachers in primary education reported experiencing stress in their work "a lot", which is higher than the average across participating countries and economies (17%).
- Almost half of the teachers in primary education in the countries and economies participating in TALIS reported that having too much administrative work is a source of stress they experience at work "quite a bit" or "a lot". In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the three most prevalent sources of stress teachers in primary education experienced at work "quite a bit" or "a lot" are having too much administrative work, modifying lessons for students with special needs and keeping up with changing requirements. In lower secondary education, the three most prevalent sources of stress were having too much administrative work, keeping up with changing requirements and being held responsible for students' achievement.

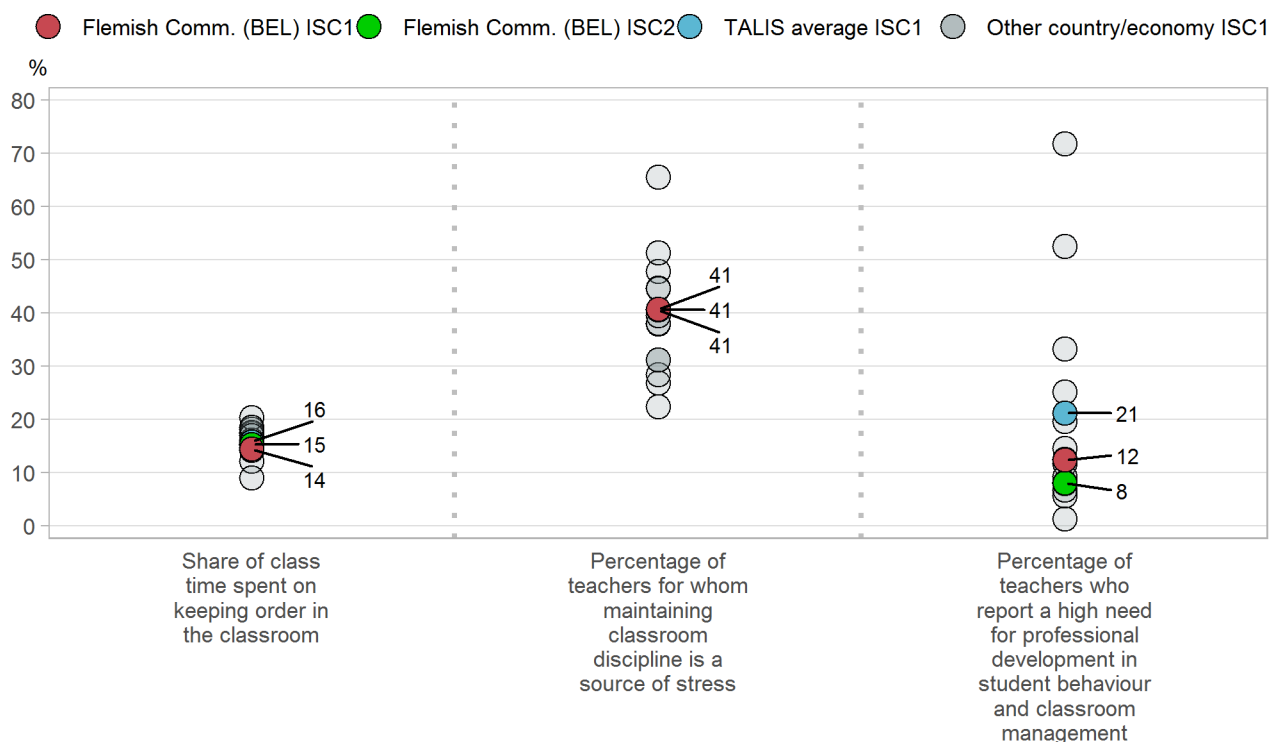
III. What practices are teachers in primary education using in the classroom?

- Among the range of instructional practices TALIS asked teachers about, those aimed at enhancing clarity of instruction are widely applied across the countries and economies participating in TALIS in primary education. For instance, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 89% of teachers in primary education explained to their students what they expect them to learn (average 89%). But practices

involving student cognitive activation, which are known to be important for student learning, are less widespread. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 48% of teachers in primary education reported frequently asking students to decide on their own procedures for solving complex tasks.

Figure 3. Classroom management time, practices and training

Results based on responses of teachers in primary and lower secondary education



Notes: ISC1 stands for ISCED level 1 and refers to values concerning primary education. ISC 2 stands for ISCED level 2 and refers to values concerning lower secondary education. Only countries and economies with available data are shown.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Tables 3.26, 4.23 and 6.30.

- All this being said, practices related to classroom management seem to be a focus for stress and further need of training for teachers in primary education. During a typical lesson, teachers in primary education spent 14% of classroom time on keeping order in the classroom, on average in the Flemish Community of Belgium, which is lower than the average of time spent in lower secondary education (15%). Furthermore, 41% of teachers in primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium reported maintaining classroom discipline as a source of stress, compared to 41% in lower secondary education. The level of stress could be pushing teachers to seek further training in this area. In the case of the Flemish Community of Belgium, 12% of teachers in primary education reported a high need for professional development in student behaviour and classroom management, compared to 8% of teachers in lower secondary education.

IV. How are teachers and school leaders trained in primary education?

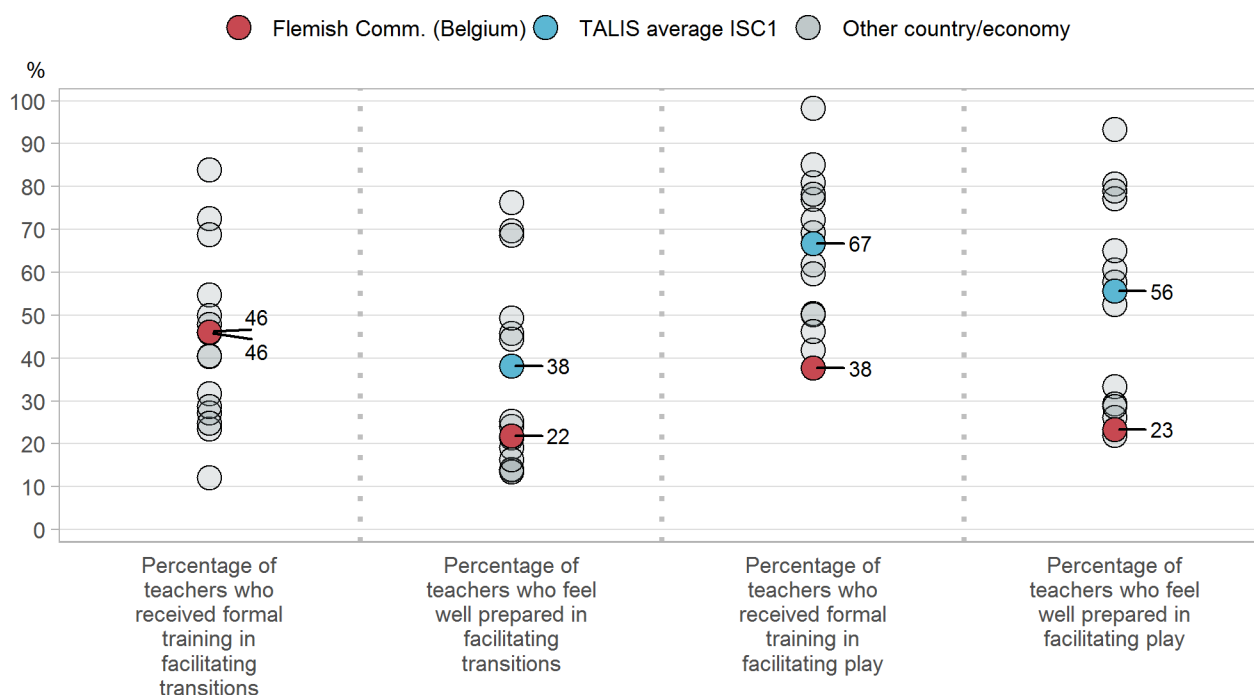
- During their initial education and training, 95% of teachers in primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium were instructed on subject content, pedagogy and classroom practice of some or all of the subjects they teach – a share that is higher than the average for teachers in lower secondary education (86%). In addition, 24% of teachers in primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium reported having participated in some kind of formal or informal induction when

they joined their current school (with an average of 34% across participating countries and economies), compared to 48% of teachers in lower secondary education.

- While school principals across the OECD generally consider mentoring to be important for teachers' work and students' performance, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 21% of novice teachers (those with up to 5 years of experience) in primary education have an assigned mentor, compared to 26% on average across the countries and economies participating in TALIS.
- Taking part in some kind of in-service training is commonplace among teachers and principals in the Flemish Community of Belgium, with 98% of teachers in primary education (with a lower secondary education average of 97%) and 100% of principals in primary education (lower secondary education average 100%) attending at least one professional development activity in the year prior to the survey.
- TALIS results highlight the need for education systems to improve both pre-service and in-service training opportunities on facilitating transitions and play-based learning. Transitions from pre-primary education are a crucial milestone for students, as primary education marks the beginning of formal classroom learning, which is different from the learning environment of students in early childhood education (ECE). The role played by teachers during this transition transcends academic learning, moving into the social and emotional learning of young students.
- In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 46% of teachers in primary education received formal training in facilitating students' transitions from ECE to primary education and 22% reported to feel well prepared in this area. Initial training in facilitating play was reported by 38% of teachers in primary education, although a smaller share (23%) of teachers expressed feeling well prepared in this area. That being said, on average across the participating countries and economies in primary education, the implementation of cognitive practices was more frequent among teachers who had training in facilitating transitions than among those who didn't.

Figure 4. Training in facilitating transitions and play

Results based on responses of teachers in primary education



Notes: ISC1 stands for ISCED level 1 and refers to values concerning primary education. Only countries and economies with available data are shown.

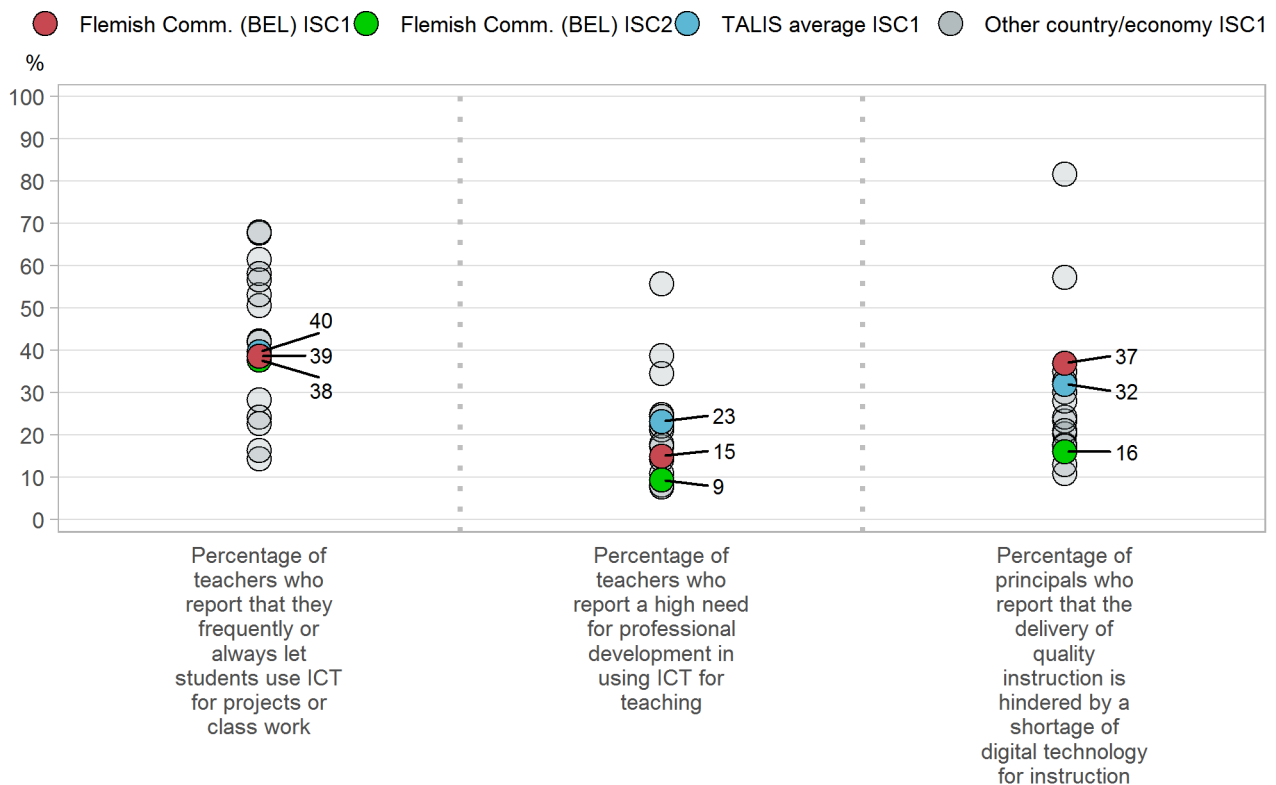
Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table 3.10.

V. Supporting and strengthening ICT for teaching in primary education

- The implementation of information and communication technologies (ICT) to support digital learning has gained unprecedented significance during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it allows instruction and learning to continue when physical interactions between teachers and students are no longer possible. However, the effectiveness of such tools will be limited if they are not accompanied by a sufficient level of command of ICT among both teachers and students.
- On average in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 39% of teachers in primary education "frequently" or "always" let students use ICT for projects or class work (with an average of 40% across participating countries and economies), which is higher than the average in lower secondary education (38%).
- Regarding the training that teachers in primary education receive in this area, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 49% of teachers in primary education reported that the "use of ICT for teaching" had been included in their formal education or training, and 24% of teachers on average felt prepared to teach in such settings when they finished their studies.

Figure 5. A snapshot of supporting and strengthening ICT for teaching

Results based on responses of teachers and principals in primary and lower secondary education



Notes: ISC1 stands for ISCED level 1 and refers to values concerning primary education. ISC 2 stands for ISCED level 2 and refers to values concerning lower secondary education. Only countries and economies with available data are shown.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Tables 3.31, 4.23 and 5.28.

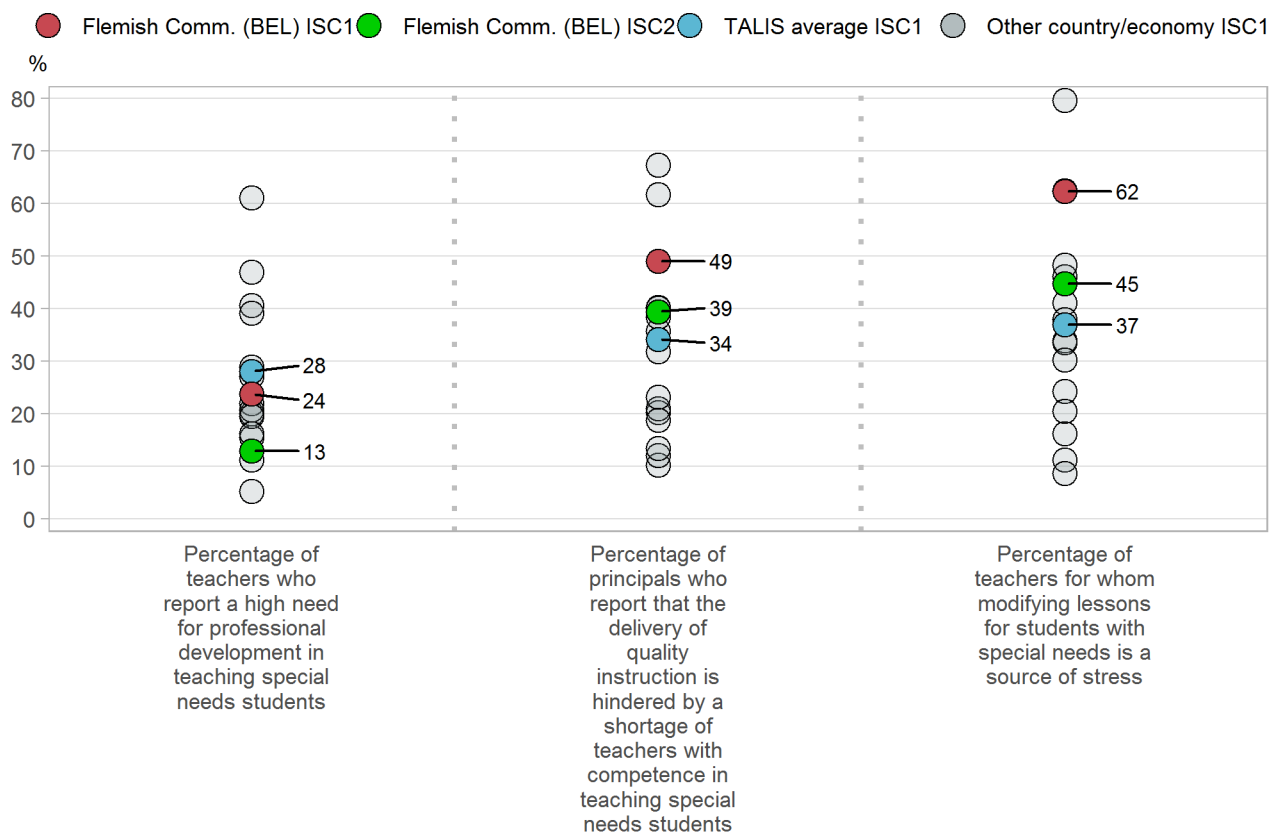
- Furthermore, in The Flemish Community of Belgium 15% of teachers in primary education reported a high need for training in the use of ICT for teaching, compared to 9% in lower secondary education.
- Finally, on average in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 37% of school principals in primary education reported that delivery of quality instruction in their school is hindered by a shortage or inadequacy of digital technology for instruction (compared to 32% across the countries and economies participating in TALIS).

VI. Teaching students with diverse ability levels and needs in primary education

- Policies promoting the inclusion of students with special needs have been at the forefront of modern education systems. Training in teaching students with special needs is the professional development topic with the highest percentage of teachers in primary education reporting a high need for it – 24% in the Flemish Community of Belgium (compared to 13% in lower secondary education).
- On average in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 49% (with an average of 34% across participating countries and economies) of school principals in primary education reported that delivery of quality instruction in their school is hindered by a shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs (compared to 39% in lower secondary education).

Figure 6. A snapshot of teaching students with diverse ability levels and needs

Results based on responses of teachers and principals in primary and lower secondary education



Notes: ISC1 stands for ISCED level 1 and refers to values concerning primary education. ISC 2 stands for ISCED level 2 and refers to values concerning lower secondary education. Only countries and economies with available data are shown.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Tables 4.24, 5.27 and 6.30.

- The challenges and demands of preparing lessons for students with special needs can be daunting for teachers. In the Flemish Community of Belgium 62% of teachers reported that modifying lessons for students with special needs is a source of stress for their job “quite a bit” or “a lot” (compared to 37% on average across participating countries and economies). For the case of lower secondary education, 45% of teachers in the Flemish Community of Belgium reported modifying lessons as a source of stress.

Key features of TALIS 2018

TALIS uses questionnaires administered to teachers and their school principals to gather data. Its main goal is to generate internationally comparable information relevant to developing and implementing policies focused on school leaders, teachers and teaching, with an emphasis on those 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.

- Nine main themes were selected for inclusion in the TALIS 2018 survey: teachers’ instructional practices; school leadership; teachers’ professional practices; teacher education and initial preparation; teacher feedback and development; school climate; job satisfaction; teacher human resource issues and stakeholder relations; and teacher self-efficacy. Two cross-cutting themes were added to this list: innovation; and equity and diversity.

- The international target population for TALIS is composed of lower secondary teachers and their school leaders in mainstream public and private schools. Fifteen countries and economies, including the Flemish Community of Belgium, also surveyed teachers and school leaders in their primary education schools (ISCED level 1).
- In each country/economy, a representative sample of 4 000 teachers and their school principals from 200 schools was randomly selected for the study. Across all survey components, approximately 260 000 teachers responded to the survey, representing more than 8 million teachers in the 48 participating countries and economies. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, 3 122 lower secondary teachers and 188 principals completed the TALIS questionnaires. In the case of primary education, 2 662 teachers and 184 principals completed the TALIS questionnaires.
- All results presented in this country note can be found in the publication *Teachers Getting the Best out of Their Students: From Primary to Upper Secondary Education*, published on 28 September 2021. The sources of the data for Section I are: Tables 2.1, 2.5, 2.9, 2.12, 6.1 and 6.4; for Section II are: Tables 2.18, 5.9, 6.16, 6.19, 6.24, 6.29 and 6.30; for Section III are: Tables 3.30, 3.26, 3.31, 4.23 and 6.30; for Section IV are: Tables 3.10, 3.14, 3.32, 4.4, 4.9, 4.13 and 4.16; for Section V are: Tables 3.7, 3.13, 3.31, 4.24 and 5.28; and for Section VI are: Tables 4.24, 5.27 and 6.30.
- The production of the country notes has been automatised in R software following syntaxes developed by Markus Schwabe.


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References

OECD (2021), *Teachers Getting the Best out of Their Students: From Primary to Upper Secondary Education*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5bc5cd4e-en>.

For more information on TALIS 2018 visit <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/>

Data can be found also on line by following the **StatLinks**  under the tables and charts in the publication.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using: <http://gpseducation.oecd.org/>.

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