

# Foreword

Never has the importance of teachers been so clear. Many of us remember a teacher who transmitted a passion for knowledge, pushed us to develop our talents and skills, and equipped us with a compass to find our views and values. It is in the classroom that many of our hopes and dreams first took root. The Covid-19 pandemic has reiterated that the impact of teachers goes far beyond the classroom, and that teachers play a central and frontline role in our societies.

Nevertheless, we still know very little about what constitutes impactful teaching. We have only scratched the surface of what quality teaching looks like and what practices make a difference to student outcomes. By looking directly into the classroom, Global Teaching InSights has aimed to address these critical questions that lie at the heart of our future efforts to improve education.

The Study has trialled new research methods to provide a fairer and fuller account of the complexities and nuances of teaching in different classrooms. It is the first international study of teaching to draw upon a wide range of measures, including observing lessons, examining teaching materials, asking teachers and students, and measuring student outcomes, in order to build a picture of teaching that is as comprehensive as possible.

Across the eight participating countries and economies, the findings show that teachers are likely to manage the classroom well, provide students with some social-emotional support and deliver instruction of reasonable quality. There are notable differences, however, in teaching and students' learning opportunities across schools which suggests that we can still do more to support every teacher to raise the quality and equity of our education systems.

As we look for ways to support the teaching profession, this report can provide areas for professional dialogue and growth. In particular, it can inform important discussions on ways to strengthen instruction in the classroom. For example, this study finds that students have many opportunities to practice different methods and skills, but the level of cognitive challenge of the tasks could be raised to help them develop a stronger understanding of the underlying rationale behind these and how they can be applied.

The Study also shows areas where we can further empower teachers to experiment. If you step into a classroom today, you are likely to see an orderly classroom with the teacher leading it from the front. There are times when such a classroom structure can be very effective and beneficial, but there may also be times when more innovative structures are needed to help students develop important skills that the world demands of young people today, such as agency, collaboration and responsibility. Similarly, other than for communication purposes, technology remains surprisingly absent from lessons even if it has transformed almost every aspect of our modern lives.

The considerable differences observed in teaching approaches between countries, even if the Study only looked at one topic of mathematics, exemplify the considerable promise of learning from each other. After all, classrooms and schools are united by many common challenges and the expertise of the teaching profession is one of its greatest and most untapped resources. To facilitate peer learning across borders, the OECD has just launched the Global Teaching InSights initiative, which showcases the findings of the

Study through classroom videos and provides an open platform for dialogue, learning and collaboration around teaching at a global scale.

There is no better moment than now for such a global conversation. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced school closures and disrupted our long held notions of learning and education. Even more, it has shaken societies around the world to their very foundations. It has highlighted that we must strive to build societies that are strong and adaptive, who have the creativity and the cohesion to rebuild in the wake of crises. At the end, the strength of a society rests upon the quality of the skills and knowledge of its citizens, and ultimately the teachers who are at the frontline helping students to create a world that is better and fairer than before.



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