

Institution: University College London		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 23 Education		
Title of case study: Teacher workload: influencing government policy		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
John Jerrim John Micklewright Rebecca Allen	Professor Professor Reader/Professor	January 2010 to present July 2009 – May 2015 September 2008 – December 2018
Andrew Jenkins Sam Sims	Associate Professor Research Associate/Lecturer	August 2000 to present July 2018 to present (PhD student from 2015)
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013 to 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Excessive teacher workload is linked to challenges with teacher recruitment, retention, job satisfaction and mental health. Until recently there has been little robust evidence illustrating how many hours teachers work per week, what they spend time upon, how this has changed over time and how England compares with other countries' education systems. Research by Jerrim and colleagues has foregrounded the issue, underpinned national debate and resulted in substantial policy action, including the Department for Education establishing independent review groups; committing to measuring teacher workload biannually; publishing advice and guidance to schools on how workload can be reduced; and funding collaborative projects to reduce workload.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Initial research on teacher workload was based upon the Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) 2013 project. This was a collaboration between the UCL Institute of Education (IOE) and RM Education (survey provider), commissioned by the Department for Education (R1). The work involved collecting questionnaire data from a nationally-representative sample of around 150 schools and 2,500 lower secondary school teachers in England. The same survey was also conducted in over 30 other countries. Teachers were asked various questions about their workload, including total working hours as well as time spent on tasks such as planning and marking. The key finding underpinning the impact was that lower secondary teachers in England work longer hours each week than teachers in most other developed countries (R1). Moreover, this difference in workload was not due to teachers in England having more contact teaching time with their pupils. It was driven by their having more marking, lesson preparation, management and administrative duties than teachers in other parts of the world (R1).</p> <p>Jerrim and colleagues assisted in designing the survey, including adapting the questions for use within the context of the English education system, as well as developing and testing a set of additional questions (many about teacher-workload) that were added to the TALIS survey for England (R2, R3). They then analysed the data to produce the TALIS 2013 national report for England, published in June 2014. This Department for Education Research Report, written by Micklewright, Jerrim, Allen and Jenkins, is where the key findings detailed above were first documented (R1). Moreover, several of the new questions that the IOE researchers initially</p>		

developed have been adapted and integrated to be asked in other countries in the 2018 edition of the OECD's TALIS survey (R2).

The team also evidenced the impact of excessive workload on teacher wellbeing and job satisfaction (R4), highlighting how workload is not simply about number of hours worked; it is also about teachers feeling in control of their work. Teachers who report their workload as 'unmanageable' have lower levels of job satisfaction.

Sims and Jerrim were then commissioned by the Department for Education to produce a follow-up analysis, using data from the 2018 wave of TALIS (GBP102,600). The main output from this project was a 240-page report released in June 2019. This provided new evidence about teacher workload, and whether progress had been made in reducing the workload of lower-secondary teachers between 2013 and 2018, including the first international comparative evidence on primary teacher workload. It showed that as for secondary teachers, the workload of primary teachers in England is high by international standards (R2).

In January 2020, Jerrim and colleagues published a report, based on research funded by the Nuffield Foundation (GBP232,810), which extends their research by adding new sources of information. These include the UK Labour Force Survey and the UK Time Use Diaries as well as the Teacher Tapp phone app. Analysis of these rich data resources suggests that teachers were working about as many hours in 2015 as they were in 2000. In addition, the time they spend on non-teaching tasks still exceeds that spent teaching by the same margin, suggesting that policy initiatives have so far failed to reduce teachers' working hours and that more radical action may need to be taken in order to fix this problem (R5).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1 Micklewright, J., Jerrim, J., Vignoles, A., Jenkins, A., Allen, R., Ilie, S., Bellarbre, E., Barrera, F. & Hein, C. (2014) [Teachers in England's Secondary Schools: Evidence from TALIS 2013. Research Report](#). London: Department for Education.

PI was John Micklewright. Sponsor: the Department for Education. Grant 2012–2014.

R2 Jerrim, J. & Sims, S. (2019) [Teachers in England's Secondary Schools: Evidence from TALIS 2018](#). London: Department for Education Research Report.

R3 Sims, S. & Jerrim, J. (2020) [TALIS 2018: teacher working conditions, turnover and attrition. Statistical working paper](#). London: Department for Education.

R4 Sims, S. (2017) [TALIS 2013: Working Conditions, Teacher Job Satisfaction and Retention. Statistical working paper](#). London: Department for Education.

R5 Allen, R., Benhenda, A., Jerrim, J. & Sims, S. (2020) New evidence on teachers' working hours in England. An empirical analysis of four datasets, *Research Papers in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1736616>

Quality research indicators: grants awarded through competitive funding from Nuffield and the Department for Education.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

It has long been accepted that teaching is a demanding, if rewarding, profession. Yet for a long time there was little robust, nationally representative evidence for England illustrating just how many hours teachers work per week, the activities that they spend this time upon, how this has (or has not) changed over time and how this compares to other education systems across the world. Over the past seven years, Jerrim and colleagues have been filling this gap in the evidence base via quantitative analysis of several large-scale data sources, resulting in important changes to government policy and significant impact on public discourse as a result of widespread media coverage in specialist and general channels.

The initial breakthrough came in 2014 when the IOE team authored the national Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) 2013 report for England which highlighted the striking

finding that lower secondary school teachers in England were working much longer hours than teachers in other countries (**R1**). This was the first time that this had been established using internationally comparable data. Evidence of the impact of the research within the Department of Education can be found in the 2016 report on Teacher Workload by The Education Policy Institute (**S1**). The lead author of this government report is a former Government Economist who was head of the Teachers and Teaching Analysis team at the time the TALIS 2013 report was written and released. He summarises the chain of events in the introduction:

'[TALIS 2013] showed that [England's] lower secondary (key stage 3) teachers worked significantly longer hours than their counterparts in most other jurisdictions (OECD, 2014a). In response, the then Secretary of State for Education Nicky Morgan launched the Workload Challenge in 2014. This obtained views from over 40,000 school staff on the causes of, and solutions to, the problem of unnecessary workload (Gibson et al., 2015). In response to the concerns raised, the Government announced a new protocol to prevent hasty implementation of curriculum changes (Department for Education, 2015b), and Ofsted provided guidance to make clear that they did not expect teachers to be carrying out specific and burdensome activities for the sake of satisfying inspectors (Ofsted, 2015). It also launched three profession-led policy reviews into lesson planning, marking policies and data management. These reported in March 2016 with recommendations for school leaders on good practice in preventing unnecessary workload' (S1, p. 11).

The report evidences the direct instrumental impact achieved by the research, with the Department for Education and other key agencies taking decisive action to reduce teacher workload in direct response to the research findings. This includes (a) setting up three independent review groups; (b) developing a bi-annual teacher workload survey based upon the TALIS questions; (c) reducing schools' data burden; (d) improving guidance to schools on the issue of workload; (e) funding groups of schools to carry out collaborative projects into reducing workload and (f) publishing advice and guidance to initial teacher educators on how to reduce workload. The influence on government policy went in tandem with substantial attention to the research findings from the media, think-tanks and teaching unions upon its public release. This generated substantial conceptual impact, galvanising and informing debate by highlighting the long hours teachers in England work and the impact of this on the profession. This is confirmed in testimony from the National Education Union (NEU):

'Your research has significantly increased the National Education Union's understanding about the key issue of teachers' working hours and has helped us to understand the limitations with current approaches the government are using to measure the working hours of teachers. It has brought to our attention the critical role that working hours – particularly the time teachers spend on marking and lesson planning – has upon teacher wellbeing' (S2).

Further evidence of the link between the research and the Department for Education's policy action is the letter provided by a former MP who was Minister for Schools when our TALIS 2013 report was produced. He noted the impact it had (**S3**) within the Department for Education:

'...the research results from TALIS 2013, first discovered in the Institute of Education's 2014 report, had significant impact within the Department for Education and subsequent policy interventions. The finding about teacher workload was particularly striking. It helped lead to the Department for Education launching the 'workload challenge' of 2014. ...this then led to a number of tangible policy responses, including the department setting up numerous policy reviews into different aspects of teacher workload, renewed guidance from Ofsted and influenced protocols around the changes that were being made to the national curriculum at the time'.

This is confirmed on the TALIS website (**S4**), where the Department for Education's endorsement of the survey states that: *'Findings from the previous TALIS survey in 2013 influenced the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development and were a key driver of the 2014 Workload Challenge'*.

Since the production of the initial research report, the research team has continued to build the evidence base on teacher workload and to generate impact. Allen, who was Director of the Centre for Education Improvement Science at the time, chaired the Department for Education's teacher workload advisory group in 2018 (**S5**). This group produced a series of recommendations to government on how workload can be reduced for schools by addressing the 'audit culture' and stripping out data management activity that doesn't add value, and leads to teacher burnout and anxiety. These recommendations were accepted by the government in full, demonstrating the lasting instrumental impact of the research (**S6**). The work has also had impact internationally. As evidenced within the letter provided by the lead analyst for the TALIS 2013 study at the OECD, the report written by the team had significant impact on the international development of the TALIS study, including the questions and topics to be including in future rounds of the study (**S7**). This letter highlights the IOE's work as an example of how an effective national report can influence policy development:

'First, the IOE team developed a number of additional national questions that were included in the TALIS 2013 study including several about teacher workload. These provided important additional information that was not gathered in other countries and had a significant impact upon the future development of the TALIS study. This included the development of topics and questions that could be included in future TALIS waves.'

Further analysis of the TALIS 2013 data by Dr Sam Sims has contributed to the Department for Education's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (**S8**), which highlights how unmanageable workloads are leading teachers to become less satisfied in their jobs. The strategy directly references the IOE's research (**R4**), noting that *'less than half of teachers' working time is spent directly on teaching'* and committing to reforming the accountability system that *'distracts teachers from teaching'*. This influence on policy has been significantly helped by interventions from professional bodies, who have used the research to underpin their policy 'asks' of government, as confirmed by the NEU:

'Your work has been vital to provide the necessary evidence to underpin our arguments when discussing teacher workload issues with the Department for Education and the government. Workload is a huge issue for our members and your comprehensive data analysis, using robust methods, clearly illustrates the points that need to be addressed. (R3). We have used your research evidence in our policy development and responses to the Department for Education's Workload Advisory Group. This includes our development of a Life Balance for Teachers Model Policy Checklist, our calls for a teacher time budget and how we have responded to results from the 2019 DfE Teacher Workload Survey' (S2).

The Department for Education commissioned Jerrim and Sims to conduct follow-up research using the TALIS 2018 study (published in June 2019). This was the first attempt to re-measure teacher workload using comparable data since the TALIS 2013 study, making it the first piece of evidence as to whether the policies put in place by the Department for Education have led to a reduction in workload (**R2**). It also provided the first internationally comparable evidence on the workload of primary school staff. This work has already had significant reach within the education community. In the week the results were released, blogs and tweets by Sims and Jerrim made over 40,000 Twitter impressions and received over 250 media engagements. It is currently playing a central role in policy development within the Department for Education.

Follow up research reviewing four different datasets (**R5**) confirmed that five years of government initiatives to reduce workloads have had little impact on the total number of hours worked. This galvanised very significant media coverage and was highlighted by influential

organisations such as the Institute for Government and Education Support, and in media outlets such as FE News, Croner-i, SchoolsImprovement.net and Mr Jones's Whiteboard. The Guardian ran two articles about the research, including an editorial (S9), which noted '*No other school system in the industrial world gouges so many hours out of its staff*'. The research was also highlighted by the National Education Union in an opinion piece (S10) '*Last month, the UCL published a compelling historical study of teacher workload which showed that one in four teachers work 60-hour weeks. This is completely unacceptable. That study also cast doubt on whether the most recent DfE workload surveys were accurate*', further evidence of how the team has ensured discussion of teacher workload is kept at the forefront of education policy and debate.

In summary, the research conducted by Jerrim and colleagues since 2013 has had substantial conceptual and instrumental impact. The work has been used for policy development both by education unions and within the Department for Education. It has helped to underpin many of the key policies around teacher workload implemented by the Department for Education over the last five years, while also stimulating much media interest and public debate. The work of the IOE team has also had impact outside of the UK, including having a significant impact on the international development of the TALIS study.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- S1** [Teacher workload and professional development in England's secondary schools](#): insights from TALIS, Education Policy Institute (2016). The author of the report was a civil servant in the Department for Education at the time of the TALIS 2013 report.
- S2** Testimonial from Lead Policy Officer for workload at the National Education Union.
- S3** Testimonial from Minister for Schools.
- S4** TALIS 2018 [England website](#).
- S5** [Terms of reference and membership](#) for the Department for Education Workload Advisory Groups.
- S6** [Department for Education Policy response](#) on teacher workload
- S7** Testimonial from lead analyst for the TALIS 2013 study at the OECD.
- S8** [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), Department for Education 2019 (p.11).
- S9** [The Guardian view on teacher workloads: big lessons to learn](#) (Guardian Editorial September 2019).
- S10** National Education Union: [NEU comment on DfE Teacher Workload Survey](#) (October 2019).