

# SNAPSHOTS

Global Assessment // Local Impact

ISSN 2652-1555 (Online)

ISSUE 21 / MAY 2025



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## Teacher experience and self-efficacy in the classroom

The most recent OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey enables educators, policymakers and the wider community to compare Australian students with each other, as well as with their counterparts across the world.

PISA measures the extent to which 15-year-old students near the end of compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills that young adults need to meet the challenges of the future. PISA also collects teacher questionnaire data to gain insights into teaching practices, learning activities and the school environment.

Teacher self-efficacy refers to a teacher's belief in their capability to help students learn and to influence their activities, effort and persistence in the classroom. This issue of *Snapshots* examines teacher self-efficacy in the classroom in relation to 3 competencies: classroom management, instruction, and student engagement. It focuses on differences in these competencies between novice teachers (5 years' experience or less) compared to their experienced colleagues (5 years' experience or more).

The concept of self-efficacy is grounded in psychologist Albert Bandura's broader theory of self-efficacy, where a person's confidence in their abilities significantly influences their motivation, persistence and overall performance (Bandura, 1977).

Teachers with high self-efficacy are confident in their ability to positively influence student learning; they display enthusiasm, commitment to teaching, positive expectations and a proactive teaching style while creating a supportive and engaging classroom environment. In contrast, those with low self-efficacy avoid planning challenging activities, lack persistence with struggling students, invest little effort in sourcing materials, and do not modify their teaching methods to enhance student understanding (Nwoko et al., 2025).

## Teacher self-efficacy in classroom management

Teacher self-efficacy in classroom management refers to teachers' beliefs about their ability to establish an orderly learning environment and, therefore, effectively manage disruptive student behaviour, set classroom guidelines, expectations and rules (Brouwers et al., 2000).

In the PISA 2022 teacher questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate their self-efficacy in classroom management and to indicate the extent to which they used various classroom management practices (not at all, to some extent, quite a bit, a lot).

From the list of classroom management practices shown in Table 1, overall, novice teachers reported being significantly less confident in classroom management than experienced teachers. Novice teachers in particular reported less confidence in *controlling disruptive behaviour in the classroom* and *calming a student who is disruptive or noisy* than their experienced colleagues.

In addition, PISA 2022 also asked teachers about their perceived need for professional development (PD) in classroom management and student behaviour. Table 2 shows nearly half the novice teachers (48%) reported they felt they had a moderate-to-high need for PD in classroom management and student behaviour compared to their experienced colleagues (15%).

**Table 1** Percentages of teachers who reported they used classroom management practices quite a bit or a lot, by teaching experience

| In your teaching, to what extent can you ...       | Novice teachers (N) (%) | Experienced teachers (E) (%) | Difference in percentage points (N – E) |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| control disruptive behaviour in the classroom      | 76                      | 85                           | -9 ▼                                    |
| calm a student who is disruptive or noisy          | 75                      | 83                           | -8 ▼                                    |
| get students to follow classroom rules             | 86                      | 92                           | -6 ▼                                    |
| make my expectations about student behaviour clear | 90                      | 95                           | -5 ▼                                    |

▼ Novice teachers significantly lower than experienced teachers

**Table 2** Teacher-perceived need for PD in classroom management and student behaviour

| I have a ...                                                            | Novice teachers<br>(N) (%) | Experienced teachers<br>(E) (%) | Difference in percentage points<br>(N – E) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| moderate/high need for PD in classroom management and student behaviour | 48                         | 15                              | 33 ▲                                       |

▲ Novice teachers significantly higher than experienced teachers

Teachers were also asked how much of their training had been dedicated to classroom management and teacher–student interaction. They were also asked about the proportion of PD they had undertaken in the last 12 months that had been dedicated to this competency (Table 3).

Table 3 shows that on average, novice teachers reported 45% of their training had been dedicated to classroom management and teacher–student interaction, which was significantly higher than experienced teachers who reported about one-third of their training (34%) had focused on these topics.

Novice teachers also reported that on average, 53% of their PD in the last 12 months had been dedicated to classroom management and

teacher–student interaction, which was significantly higher than their experienced colleagues (46%).

### How confident are teachers in the classroom setting?<sup>1</sup>

Teacher self-efficacy in instruction refers to teachers' beliefs about whether they feel confident in using a wide range of teaching practices and assessment strategies (OECD, 2014).

In PISA 2022, teachers were asked to rate their self-efficacy in the classroom setting by indicating the extent to which they were confident in using a variety of strategies and alternative assessment approaches in the classroom (not at all, to some extent, quite a bit, a lot).

**Table 3** Training and professional development dedicated to classroom management and teacher–student interaction

| Proportion of my time spent in ...                                                          | Percentage of time spent by novice teachers<br>(N) (%) | Percentage of time spent by experienced teachers<br>(E) (%) | Difference in percentage points<br>(N – E) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| training dedicated to classroom management and teacher–student interaction                  | 45                                                     | 34                                                          | 11 ▲                                       |
| PD in the last 12 months dedicated to classroom management and teacher–student interaction. | 53                                                     | 46                                                          | 7 ▲                                        |

▲ Novice teachers significantly higher than experienced teachers

<sup>1</sup> The phrase 'classroom setting' is used in this issue of *Snapshots*; the OECD uses the phrase 'instructional setting'.

**Table 4** Teachers who reported using a variety of strategies and alternative assessment approaches quite a bit or a lot, by teaching experience

| In your teaching, to what extent can you ...                                 | Novice teachers (N) (%) | Experienced teachers (E) (%) | Difference in percentage points (N – E) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| use a variety of assessment strategies                                       | 83                      | 89                           | -6 ▼                                    |
| implement alternative instructional strategies in my classroom               | 83                      | 88                           | -5 ▼                                    |
| craft good questions for my students                                         | 87                      | 92                           | -5 ▼                                    |
| provide an alternative explanation, for example, when students are confused. | 95                      | 96                           | -1 ●                                    |

● No significant difference between novice and experienced teachers

▼ Novice teachers significantly lower than experienced teachers

From the list of teaching practices and assessment strategies (shown in Table 4), overall, irrespective of years of experience, all teachers were confident with the frequency in which they used various assessment strategies and alternative learning strategies. However, novice teachers reported being less confident than their experienced colleagues and reported lower confidence in *using a variety of assessment strategies* than their experienced colleagues. There was no difference between experienced or novice teachers in the frequency with which they *provide an alternative explanation, for example, when students are confused*.

## How confident are teachers in maintaining positive relations with students?

Maintaining positive relations with students refers to teachers' beliefs about the emotional and cognitive support they can give their students and their ability to motivate student learning (OECD, 2014).

The teacher questionnaire asked teachers to rate the extent to which they were confident in their ability to maintain positive relations with students

(not at all, to some extent, quite a bit, a lot).

Table 5 shows the list of emotional and cognitive support approaches teachers can give their students.

Irrespective of years of teaching experience, teachers reported significantly different levels of confidence in using each of these approaches. Out of all the approaches, teachers reported the lowest confidence in *motivating students who show low interest in school work*; 56% of novice teachers and 69% of experienced teachers reporting feeling confident a bit or quite a lot. Novice teachers and experienced teachers reported similar confidence in their ability to *get students to believe they can do well in school* (83% and 86% respectively).

On average, teachers reported high levels of self-efficacy in the different domains of teaching. The areas in which the differences between novice and experienced teachers were most evident were in classroom management and in the use of a variety of strategies and alternative assessment approaches.

**Table 5** Teachers who reported confidence in developing positive relations with students quite a bit or a lot, by teaching experience

| In your teaching, to what extent can you ...            | Novice teachers<br>(N) (%) | Experienced teachers<br>(E) (%) | Difference in percentage points<br>(N – E) |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| motivate students who show low interest in school work  | 56                         | 69                              | -13 ▼                                      |
| help my students value learning                         | 74                         | 82                              | -8 ▼                                       |
| help students think critically                          | 78                         | 85                              | -7 ▼                                       |
| get students to believe they can do well in school work | 83                         | 86                              | -3 ▼                                       |

▼ Novice teachers significantly lower than experienced teachers



## ASK YOURSELF:

- How confident do you feel in your ability to create a positive learning environment?
- Do you feel supported in responding to challenges in the classroom?
- Do you feel your professional development needs are being met?

## Further reading

*PISA 2022. Reporting Australia's results. Volume I: Student performance and equity in education*

*PISA 2022. Reporting Australia's results. Volume II. Student and school characteristics*

*PISA in Brief 2022. Student performance and equity in education*

## References

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