



# Educational Research Institute

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EDUCATIONAL  
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## TIME AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS



HUMAN CAPITAL  
NATIONAL COHESION STRATEGY

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entuzjaści  
edukacji

EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN  
SOCIAL FUND





The research of the Institute's Teacher Research Unit is underpinned by the belief that the quality of teaching staff is the core determinant of the success of the education system. Research undertaken by the Unit covers the broad characteristics of teachers, in terms of demographic and socioeconomic factors as well as attitudes, beliefs and lifestyle of teachers.

The Teacher Research Unit also conducts institutional analyses of the teaching profession, with special focus on legislation and its effects.

Implemented and scheduled research covers the teacher labour market, the teaching profession and teaching competencies.

Research is co-funded by European Union through the Operating Programme Human Capital of the European Social Fund.

## STUDY ORIGINS

Representatives of the teacher trade unions first pointed out the need for a survey of teachers' time and working conditions. After numerous discussions, the project was undertaken in 2010 by the Educational Research Institute.

A qualitative survey was conducted in spring 2011 to verify the preliminary list of teachers' work activities.

It also helped to refine the concept of the study and its methodology.

The quantitative study commenced in November 2011 and ran for more than a year until December 2012.

The study was conducted as a part of the system level project "Quality and effectiveness of education strengthening of institutional research capabilities".

## WHAT WAS THE MAIN GOAL OF THE STUDY?

The goal of the study was to:

- identify time allocated by teachers within a typical timetabled school week to performance of work activities and factors for their variability;
- describe the complexity of teachers' working day and highlight different approaches to the teaching profession.

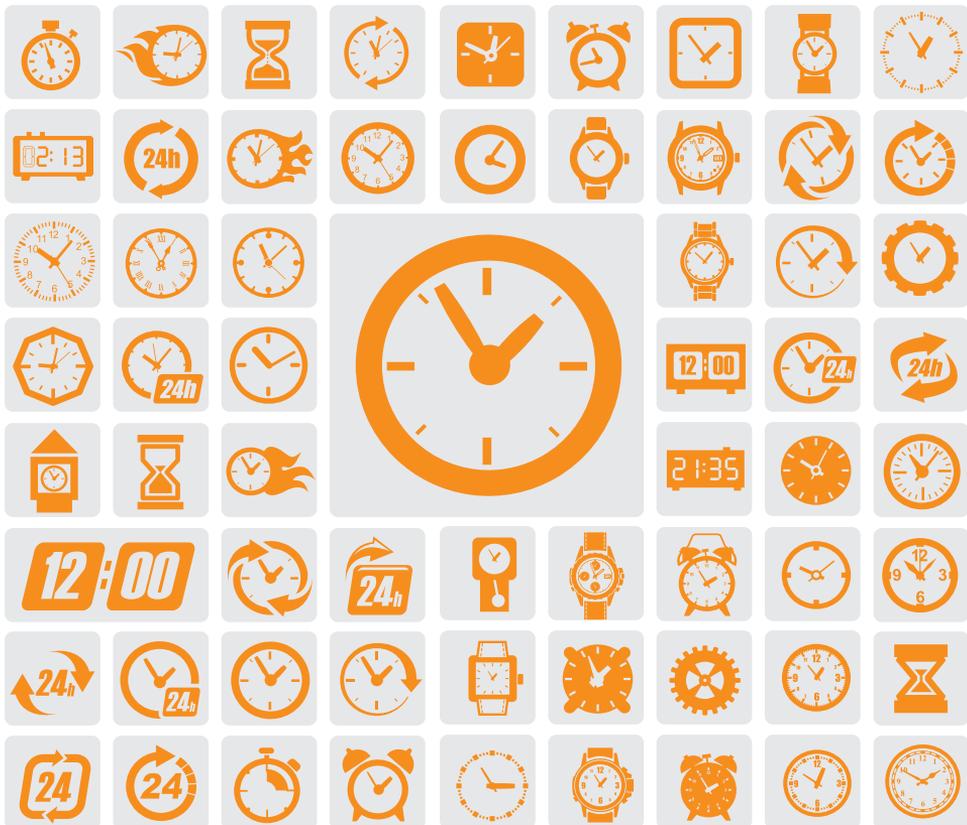


## HOW CAN WE MEASURE WORKING TIME?

Given the specific nature of teaching, work time measurements can only be based on **declarations of respondents** (a questionnaire filled in by teachers themselves or with the interviewer's help, investigating an "average" week, the past week or the past day or two) and **observations of their behaviour**.

We have selected the first method as the second would not contribute to a higher reliability of data and would be significantly more costly. As noted by social psychologists, observed individuals (who are aware of this fact) tend to modify their behaviour.

Measuring working time on the basis of declarations is prone to errors resulting from limited memory of interviewees, problems with estimating the duration of individual activities and other factors. There is also a tendency (not always a conscious one) to present oneself and one's professional group in a good light.



## HOW DID WE CARRY OUT THE SURVEY?

This investigation of time and working conditions of teachers was carried out on a representative random sample. The two research techniques employed – Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and Computer Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI) – were preceded by a qualitative survey.

The qualitative survey covered 24 focus group interviews and involved the development of a list of teachers' working activities and a glossary of terms which could be used to relate the main quantitative surveys. Thanks to it terms and concepts corresponded to the actual teaching situation and were compatible with the ways used by teachers to describe themselves.

The quantitative survey involved the use of two techniques.

The first was CAPI. This involved the respondent recalling the course of a randomly selected day (usually the day before the interview) and the time spent on work related activities on that day (Day After Recall, DAR). The survey covered a sample of 2,617 teachers from 477 schools which may be also regarded as a representative sample for 2,617 teaching days. CAPI interviews covered all days of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays as in the qualitative surveys teachers stressed that many of them were involved with their work over weekend.

The second was web interview (CAWI) focussed on time allocated by respondents to performance of individual work related activities in a typical week, frequency of various list of teachers' working activities and the time spent on them once. Interviews were conducted on a random sample of 4,762 teachers from 921 schools.

Applying both techniques at the same time helped researchers to use their advantages. The simplified list of activities was used for CAPI. As a result, some categories were split to enable researchers to aggregate time dedicated to their performance. A highly detailed list of activities was applied for CAWI, ruling out simple aggregation but providing findings about each, even rare work activity, its frequency and estimated duration.

Results obtained from both components of the survey are complementary.

High reliability of the applied research methodology and techniques is confirmed by the fact that average working time estimates obtained by CAPI and CAWI were very similar.

## HOW WERE TEACHERS SAMPLED FOR THE STUDY?

The sampling was driven by the SIO database (Educational Information System). First, schools from subgroups determined by the size of municipality and the type of school were selected and later teachers from these schools were sampled .

## WHO WAS STUDIED?

The study covered teachers of general subjects from elementary, lower secondary, general upper secondary, secondary and basic vocational schools.

The study did not investigate work time of teachers of professional subjects, teachers from art schools or special schools as each of these groups is so specific that it would require a separate research approach, specially adapted research tools and methodology.

Sampling for the survey was ultimately random and therefore, the researched community reflects the diversity of the teacher community.

### Basic characteristics of teachers in the study

	CAWI component	CAPI component
<b>Number of participants</b>	4,762	2,617
<b>Gender</b>	80% females and 20% males	79% females and 21% males
<b>Age</b>	from 22 to 66 years, median age 41.6 yrs	from 22 to 70 years, median age 42.5 yrs
<b>Seniority</b>	from 0 to 48 years, median 17.7	from 1 to 47 years, median 18.5
<b>Education</b>	96% master's degree	97% master's degree
<b>Degree of promotion</b>	over fifty percent of respondents (56%) were certified teachers, 26% – nominated, 15% – contract and 2% trainee teachers.	over fifty percent of respondents (57%) were certified teachers, 27% – nominated, 14% – contract and 2% trainee teachers.

## TEACHER ACTIVITIES

During CAWI interviews respondents were asked about the frequency of activities from the list compiled during the qualitative survey. **Five activities:** planning and preparation for lessons, teaching, planning and preparation for extracurricular classes, teaching extracurricular classes and marking assignments were activities **performed by over fifty percent of teachers at least once a week**. In addition to the top five activities, teachers kept class registers, but this activity was “detached” from others (for instance, teaching lessons). There were also activities rarely performed by teachers but which took up a lot of time. Over 70% of teachers took part in excursions at least once a semester, which on average required 15 hours. There were also activities performed by few teachers, which were nevertheless time-consuming, for instance, preparations for class outings to the countryside (20% of teachers, at least once a year and average duration 78 hours). There were also niche activities which consume relatively little time, for example, every thirteenth teacher was responsible for the school colour party, usually three or four times per semester, which on average took up approx. two hours. And finally, there was a category of activities which many teachers performed several times per semester but consumed up to several hours. At least 77% of teachers took part in teacher-parent meetings (2 hours), while 45% participated in staff meetings lasting three hours, three or four times per semester.

**Teachers’ weekly work time was described in reference to three elements: the number of teachers performing a given activity, its frequency and duration.** Analysing the working time of teachers, it was valuable to inspect activities which are not performed daily but were numerous and eventually added to their working time.



## TEACHERS' WORKING TIME

Results of the study identified the five daily activities which accounted for how most working time was spent. These activities included: teaching, planning and preparation for lessons, planning and preparation for extracurricular classes, teaching extracurricular classes and marking.

60% of teachers were employed full-time by a school or a cluster of schools and taught from 18 to 27 lessons per week, were not employed elsewhere and did not hold any other positions which would have had an impact on their workload.

CAPI interviews indicated that the working time of such teachers for 5 daily activities totalled 34 hours and 35 minutes. Keeping records of the teaching process and school activities took up only about 6% of their total working time. Individual interactions with parents accounted for barely 1.3% of time on average. Teachers spent 4% of their time on self-development and professional development.

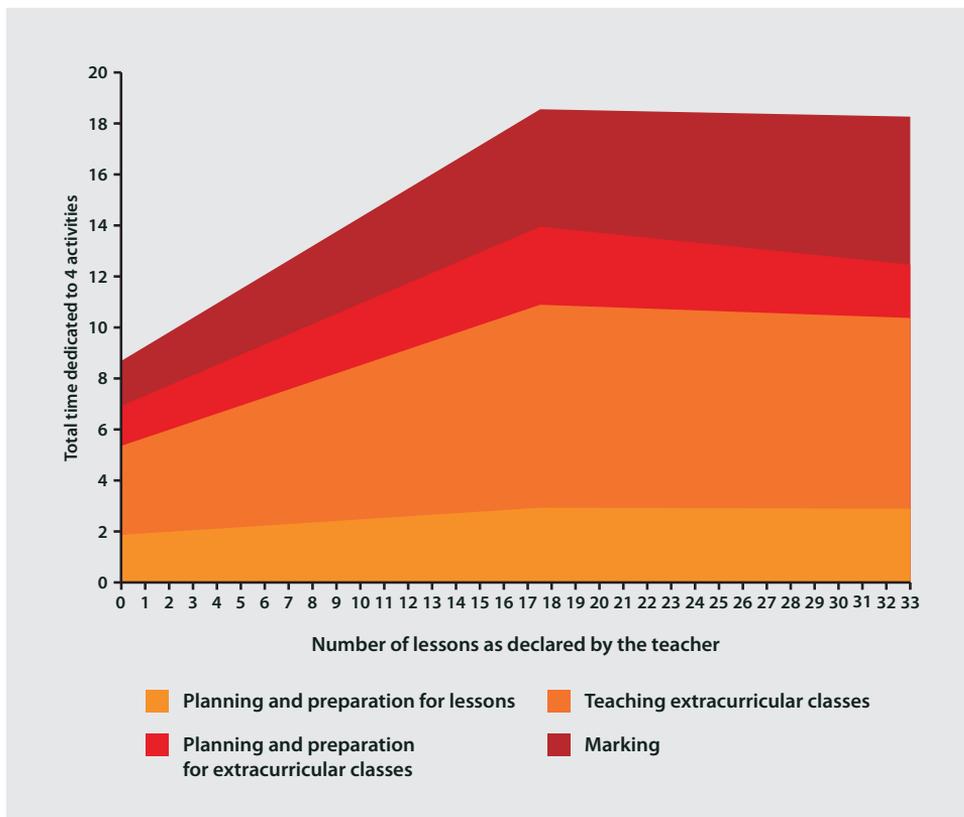
### Time spent by teachers on individual professional activities (CAPI)

Activity	Duration	Share in total time
Teaching	20.5 lessons	32.9%
Teaching extracurricular classes	2 hours 10 minutes	4.7%
Planning and preparation for lessons	7 hours 05 minutes	15.3%
Planning and preparation for extracurricular classes	3 hours 00 minutes	6.4%
Preparation for and marking (evaluation)	7 hours 20 minutes	15.6%
Keeping records of teaching and school activities	2 hours 55 minutes	6.1%
Self-development and professional development	1 hour 50 minutes	3.9%
Other (including meetings with parents, teachers, excursions, exams and "others")	7 hours 10 minutes	15.1%

## THE NUMBER OF LESSONS AND TEACHERS' WORKING TIME – AN ASTONISHING RELATIONSHIP

It would seem that there was a simple relationship: each hour of lessons taught by a teacher called for a specific, fixed load of work outside school. In other words, the more lessons taught, the more time teachers needed to allocate to activities such as planning and preparation for lessons and marking. It seemed, however, that if a teacher had at least one full teaching hours required, his or her working time remained rather stable. In other words, whether a teacher had 18, 20 or 25 teaching hours, other activities generally took up the same amount of time.

**The relationship between the numbers of lessons taught per week and time allocated to planning and preparation for lessons, planning and preparation for extracurricular classes, teaching extracurricular classes and marking**



## WORK AT SCHOOL, WORK AT HOME, TEAM WORK

Slightly more than fifty percent (53%) of teachers preferred to do their individual work at home, and only 8% opted to do it at school. However, the overwhelming majority (92%) of teachers were rather or strongly satisfied with working conditions at the school.

Reasons most often indicated by teachers to explain why they preferred to work at home included: silence, peace, good conditions to concentrate and better access to Internet, computer or printer. Teachers also mentioned access to essential materials, including their private libraries, no place to work on their own at school plus more comfortable working conditions at home. Some teachers found it also important that they were able to work at home at any time.

In "Teamwork at school", published by the Centre for Education Development, Małgorzata Osińska listed the benefits of teamwork, including reinforcement of the potential of team members, greater work efficiency, improvement of communication skills, chances to exchange experiences or to have more influence on decision-making or modelling the performance of pupils. In the light of the survey, the following questions arose:

- what could be done to encourage teachers to work at school more often and more willingly;
- how could teamwork be encouraged by changing working conditions in schools?



## MORE IN THE REPORT

The full version of the report on time and working conditions of teacher is available on the website of the Educational Research Institute: [www.ibe.edu.pl](http://www.ibe.edu.pl)

## CONTACT

Please contact us. Email address of the Teacher Research Unit: [zban@ibe.edu.pl](mailto:zban@ibe.edu.pl). We look forward to your comments and opinions.



## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Educational Research Institute (IBE) is an independent research entity conducting interdisciplinary scientific research into operations and effectiveness of the Polish education system.

The Institute:

- carries out research,
- creates databases describing the education system and educational research,
- develops educational tools for school principals and teachers,
- is a major source of information on the state of the Polish education,
- promotes good practice.

The Institute employs over 150 researchers – educators, sociologists, psychologists, economists, political scientists and representatives of other disciplines of science – eminent experts in their respective areas with diverse experience in scientific research and from teaching, public administration and non-government organisations.

The Institute is implementing projects at system level:

- “Quality and effectiveness of education – strengthening of institutional research capabilities” – Education Enthusiasts,
- “The development of terms of reference for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Register for lifelong learning”,
- “Research on development of methods to estimate educational value added”,
- “Nationwide testing of third-grader skills”.

The website of the Educational Research Institute is a source of the latest information about research conducted by the Institute and its results. It is also a platform where IBE publishes tools reinforcing the education system, expert analyses, info about conferences and seminars: [www.ibe.edu.pl](http://www.ibe.edu.pl)

Subscription to Education Enthusiasts newsletter is the best way to receive the latest news from the project. The newsletter features interviews with Institute’s experts and their contributions to the discussion dedicated to the Polish education system. To receive the newsletter, fill in the order form on project website: [www.eduentuzjasci.pl](http://www.eduentuzjasci.pl)