

# What Teachers Tapped This Week #21 – 19th February 2018

Tappsters! We got more than 1,900 users on one day last week. This is even more impressive given some people were on half-term. So thank you! The dash to 2,000 continues as ever! Here's a 1-page [black-and-white easy-print](#) sheet to help. Stick it on Facebook, share on Twitter, give to everyone at your kids' birthday party, etc, etc. Right, onto this week's findings.

## 1. [Multiplication checks](#)

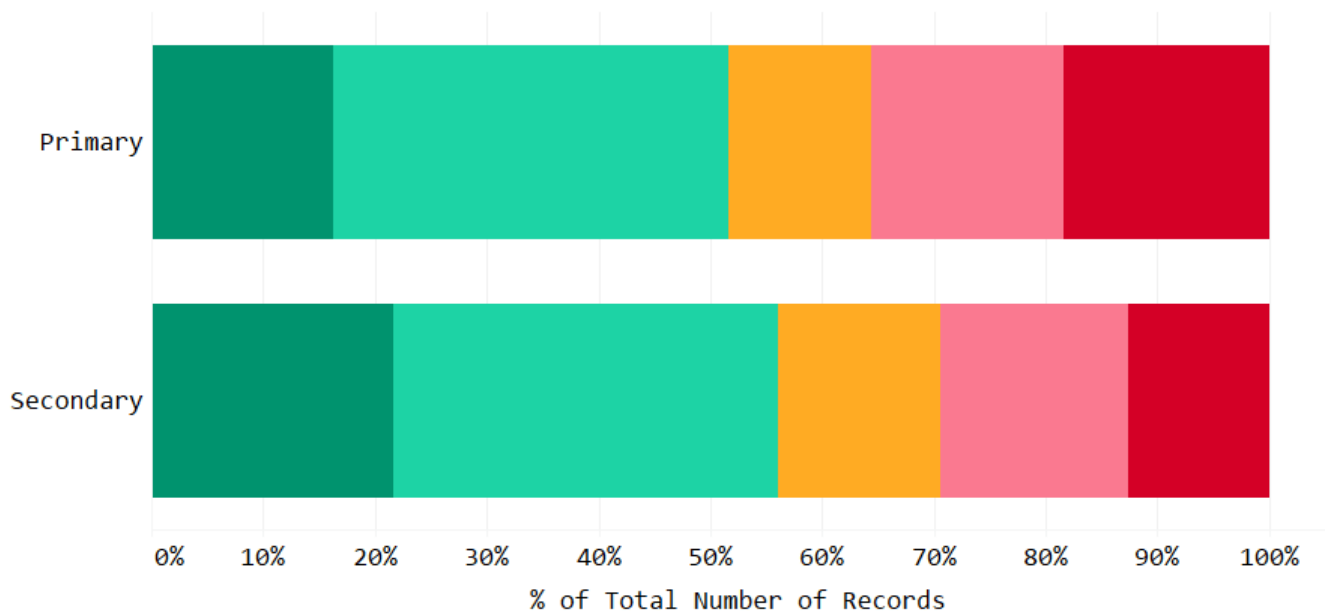
The Telegraph ran a front-page story announcing a new online times table check for Year 4 pupils from 2019. In truth, the story wasn't new. It has been known for ages. But it was a good way to get everyone chatting about the rights and wrongs of the policy again. Lots of the media debate showed teachers and parents who were very angry about the tests. But we found teachers were more positive about the multiplication check than negative – with 53% agreeing, and only 33% disagreeing. (The rest were ambivalent).

From 2019, children in year 4 will be required to sit an online multiplication check to test how well they know their times tables. To what extent do you agree with this policy?



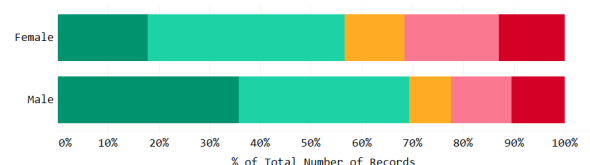
Primary and secondary teachers didn't differ in their opinions too much either. (So it's not as if this is a divide between those who will have to administer the tests, versus those who won't).

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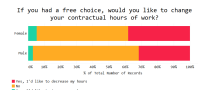
We wanted to see if maths teachers felt differently to other subject teachers. When we asked the question, however, we didn't have a big enough sample of maths teachers to make the numbers worthwhile. So we'll have to wait a bit longer. (This is why you need to tell more colleagues to join Teacher Tapp!) One thing we've looked at in a few places this week is gender. Women were less enthused by the multiplication check than men. Men were twice as likely to strongly agree with the check, and about half as likely to sit on the fence and pick 'neither'. This adds up to about a 10% difference in strength of opinion towards the tests, but women were still more likely to be positive than not.

From 2019, children in year 4 will be required to sit an online multiplication check to test how well they know their times tables. To what extent do you agree with this policy?



We haven't analysed the media coverage on this topic, but it would be interesting to know if teachers were represented as more positive or negative towards the test. Certainly our data suggests a positive skew. 2. [Who wants to teach forever?](#) A concern for teaching is that so many teachers leave the profession within their first three years. But what about beyond that? Among Teacher Tappers, only 48% think it's "most likely" they will still be a teacher by retirement. Put that another way: half of teachers don't expect to stay in the job forever.

In fact, among our users only half think it's most likely they will still be teaching in even ten years. Some of this will be affected by age. But lots of our users are under 55, so something interesting is going on here. There's more for us to analyse here. We already know the reasons for people leaving a school vary [depending on the school's Ofsted grade](#). What is driving the way people feel about their future outside of the profession? We'll be figuring it out... 3. [Flexible working may not be a feminist issue](#) There is a big push for more flexible-working within teaching. The government sees it as a solution to the teacher shortage, and flexi-time is considered a way of making the job more family-friendly, particularly for women. But is it true that flexi-working is really about family life? We've looked before at whether or not teachers who are parents make different choices about a 4-day versus 5-day week and... they don't! ([see point 3 here](#)). This week we discovered that 39% of teachers would like to DECREASE their working hours. But did it vary by gender? Um. Not that much.



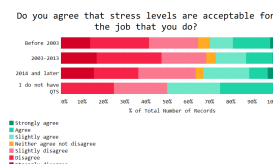
Women were slightly more likely to want to decrease their hours, but they were also more likely to want to increase their hours. It seems some women (and a smaller proportion of men) are in part-time jobs but would actually prefer not to be. What may be surprising is that so many men would reduce their hours if they could. In the current debate about women's rights, it's worth remembering that our male users turn out to have very similar wants and needs on many aspects of work conditions.

#### 4. [Stress: also an equal issue](#)

Seeing as we were looking at gender, we decided to look at another aspect separated on this variable. Stress is often considered a problem. Previously we've found a [fuzzy picture](#) as to whether or not stress makes a difference to people's likelihood to be ill, or to want to leave. We are going to look into it again, and once everyone is back from half-term we can ask better questions (eg. how stressed were you TODAY), but for now, we asked a general question: Teachers were more likely to feel their stress levels were unacceptable than acceptable. But did this vary by gender? Again, we found it didn't make that much difference...



We also thought we'd look to see if it changed with years of experience...

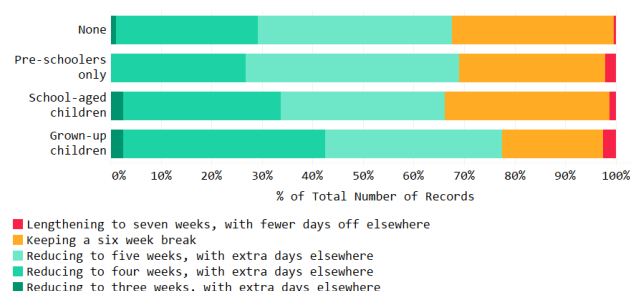


And found the only real difference was with people who don't have QTS (they're a small number among our users). We know that teachers in the profession between 5 and 10 years report the highest amount of workload, so it's perhaps not surprising that the 2003-2013 group were most likely to feel their stress level was unacceptable. But the differences weren't big enough to spark alarm bells just yet. Once again this means that 'stress' hasn't been a particularly useful concept for us to look at. Perhaps we need to think about what we all really mean when we use the word 'stress', and find a more suitable one.

## 5. [Does having a child change your feeling about summer holidays?](#)

Continuing the theme of parents/flexi-working, we asked this week about the school holiday calendar. Teachers often say they like the idea of a two-week October half-term ([see point 3 here](#)) but they are also quite wedded to a long summer break. Do preferences change depending on your parental status? Yes – a little.

Most state schools currently have a summer break of almost six weeks. Every year there are discussions about whether to shorten this and re-distribute the days elsewhere in the year (e.g. longer October break). Which of these would you prefer?



Teachers with grown-up children were the least wedded to the six-week break! In their case they were happy to spread around the dates (and had the highest rates of support for a 3-week summer). Those with no children were almost evenly divided between six, five and four weeks. This is interesting because it shows what people think when they are not necessarily worried about aligning with their own children – and it's not consistent. In fact, it's almost as if teachers don't much mind between four, five or six weeks. What appears to drive preferences is something around childcare, and how that differs for people with pre-schoolers, school-aged children, or those who are older. Perhaps this is why so many areas that [trial changes to holidays](#) ending up going backwards and forwards on the issue!

6. Finally, as ever, we learned that you really love our daily tips, so here are the links for last week:

[IQ and education](#) [How reliable are KS2 tests?](#) [12 ways to get better at inclusion](#) [Using Engelman in the classroom](#) [Our memory is not as good as we think](#) [Six ways visuals can help pupil learning](#) \*

Right folks – over and out for another week...

In the meantime, please keep sharing what we are doing. Remember, we need more of you before we can do the really exciting and detailed analysis! Here's the [powerpoint slide \(with script\)](#), a [PDF](#), and a [black-and-white one-pager](#) to help out with that. \*\* Enjoyed this post and want to join our Teacher Tapp panel? Sign up via the [iPhone App Store](#) or the [Android App Store](#). You can also check out more at [www.teachertapp.com](http://www.teachertapp.com)