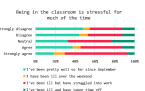


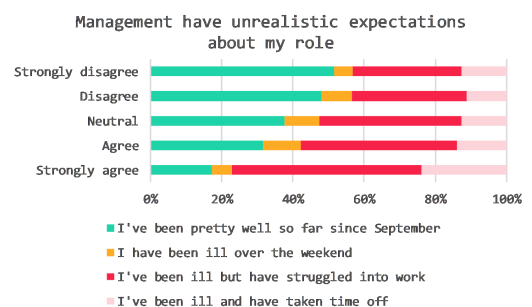
# Teacher Illness And The Role Of Managers

Teachers are often struck with mutant colds in the first weeks of term as children's germier hands are once again all over classrooms. So we the Teacher Tapp panellists if they had taken time off for illness over the past half-term. A lot of teachers said they were ill but struggled into work (37%). A smaller number were ill and stayed home (13%). But, we wondered, does anything else we know about panellists indicate who was most likely to be ill and what might influence why someone battles into school even when they are sick? Union leaders frequently point to stress as a reason for time off. Could people who feel the classroom is a stressful place become ill more frequently and severely? We looked, and the picture is fuzzy:



People who strongly agree their classroom is stressful were the most likely to feel ill but also the least likely to take time off.

However, the pattern across the sample is fuzzy. Neutral people on stress appear to be sick more often than those who find the classroom stressful. It's not straightforward. But a pattern did emerge when looking at management expectations:



The more a person feels their manager has unrealistic expectations, the more likely they were to (a) be ill, & (b) take time off work.

The pattern held up, fairly uniformly, across the sample. This is not surprising. The Whitehall Studies, conducted between 1967 and 1977, looked at sickness and mortality rates among civil servants. At the time, psychologists believed that people in management positions suffered the most stress and would, therefore, die first. Actually, the study concluded that people in jobs with less autonomy had the most stress due to the pressures placed on them by managers. Lack of clarity in their job role particularly affected blood pressure which then influenced a range of other serious illnesses. So what? Ultimately, managers -- for the health of your staff -- you must be realistic and clear about your expectations. If you find sickness is

high, it will be worth doing a survey on this matter to see if clarity is something you need to work on. \*\*\* 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) \*

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