

What Teachers Tapped This Week #4 – 9th October 2017

We hit the 1,000 user milestone! Thank you for helping us get the Teacher Tapp message out there. Especially those of you who shared during staff briefings, TeachMeets, etc.

The race to 2,000 users is now on! Please share our helpful [sign-up instructions](#) with colleagues.

So, what did your tapping help us learn this week? Read on...

1. We Know Why You're So Busy!

Over the past fortnight, we have asked lots of question about teacher's daily routines. How long you commute, if you mark in front of the television, and so on. We want to use the power of Teacher Tapp to build a picture of what teachers really do with their day so that we can find out if certain working habits are making teachers more unhappy and whether long hours are the only way to achieve high educational standards at schools. For example, are people who travel a long way to work more likely to leave at the end of the year? We may believe that's likely to be true. But is it? One thing we have noticed over the past few weeks is that:

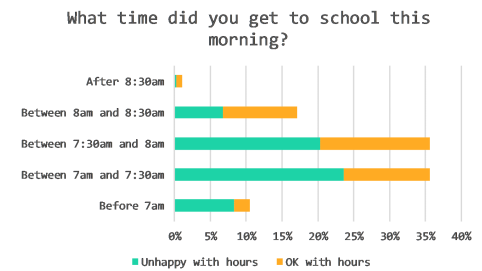
- Around 40% of teachers get to work before 7.30am
- Around 40% spend over an hour commuting each day
- Around 40% mark in front of the television during an evening

We also know that on the specific day we asked:

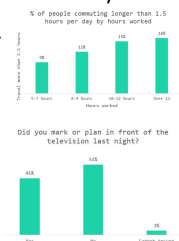
- Almost 70% of teachers said they worked more than 10 hours
- Around 22% said they had worked more than 12 hours

Okay, this is interesting, but why does it matter?

We've shown this graph before, but it's worth showing again.



First, the people who get to work super early are the least happy with their working hours. One of the reasons why teachers get to school so early is that teaching is a job where you cannot be late. There is no nudge time. Year 6 are going to be at the door at 8.45am whether you are there or not. And you have to be there. Commutes go wrong, however. Motorways block. Trains delay. Hence, teachers often leave very early so they can be sure they are in school on-time. However, this appears to add to the length of the day in a way that affects how people feel about their hours. Commute times are also worth pondering. The percentage of people who said they travelled for more than 45 minutes in each direction (1.5 hours per day) was highest in the category who said they worked for more than 12 hours per day. This could be because teachers who work further away happen to work longer hours, or it could be that teachers are adding their commuting time into their "hours worked".



Finally, we asked how many teachers marked or planned in front of the television:

Given the specificity of the question - i.e. in front of the television - this is a substantial percentage. Marking in front of the television is definitely more enjoyable than doing it in silence in a study, but it is also a less efficient way to mark. This creates difficulties when we ask how many hours you work each day - if you include 3 hours marking in front of the television, should we count this as 3 hours or as less?

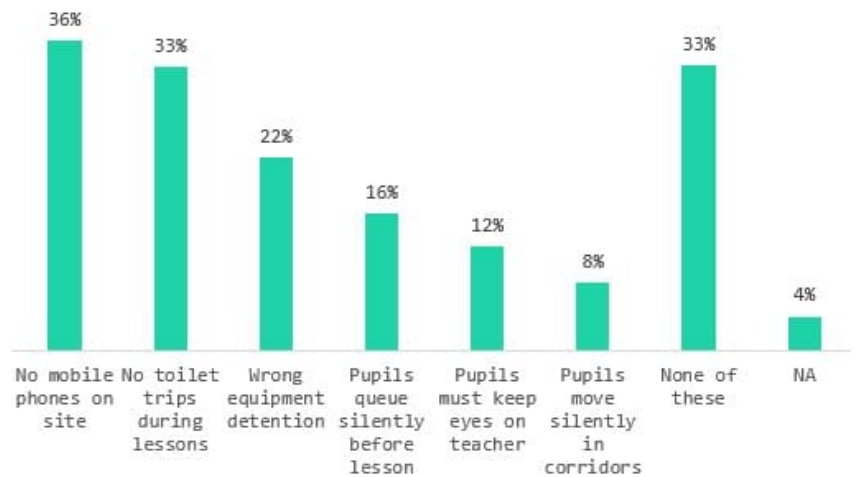
We are starting to build up this picture of a group of teachers who are getting to work early, are reporting they work over 12 hours, they have a very long commute, and are marking in front of the television. In these cases, we think the 12 hour plus working days probably includes some of the 1.5 hours commuting time simply because it is sandwiched between their school hours and evening preparation. And we know it is being stretched out by marking in front of the television.

So what now? Well, teachers can't always control the geography of their job, but working days like this aren't sustainable over a long career. What can you do to help yourself, or your staff, to change them?

2. Shhh ?... silent corridors in vogue

After a school hit the headlines for having super-strict behaviour guidelines we decided to test if their policies were unusual.

Does your school use these behaviour policies?

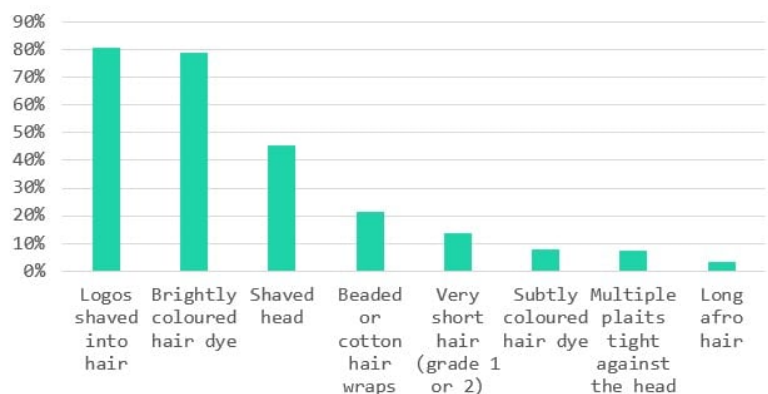


Even the most unusual policy - making pupils walk silently in corridors - is reportedly used in the schools where 8% of Teacher Tapp panelists work. Also, two-thirds of respondents said their schools used at least one of the strictest behaviour policies. This suggests that such policies are not quite as rare as commentators on social media thought. (What, me? Never! Ok, I mean me...) That said, we appreciate our sample of 1,000 users may be unusual. For example, some schools have signed up all of their teachers while others don't know we exist. In the background, we are starting to examine how representative our sample is. On some important factors, Tappsters are looking more representative than we expected! In other areas, we know we will need to work on re-weighting our sample. We will be revealing more on this soon. Stay tuned!

3. Shaved heads are extreme; braids are not ?

One of the most opaque lines in school policy is 'no extreme haircuts allowed'. What does this mean?! We asked, and you answered:

Is this an 'extreme' hairstyle?

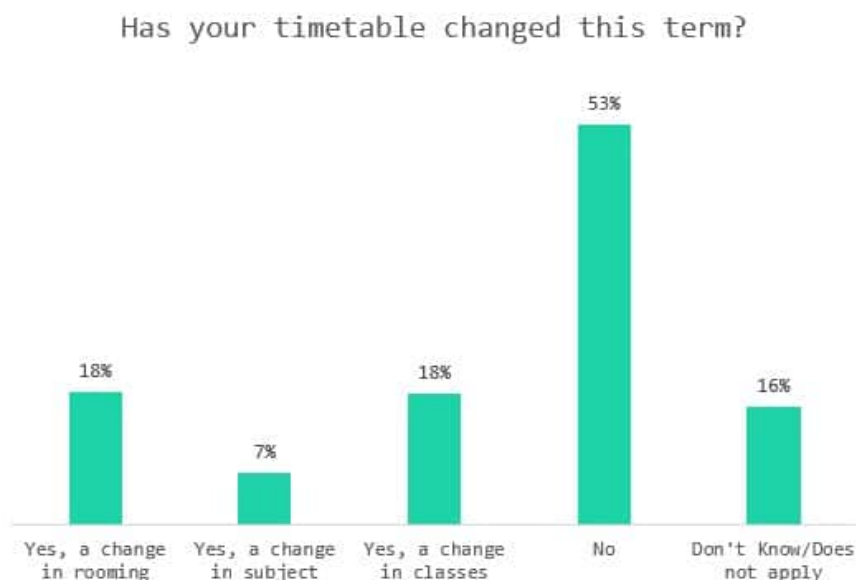


[This blog](#) gives a lot more detail about why the findings are cheering. But the main thing to know is that if your school has banned shaved-in logos, brightly dyed hair, and shaved heads, then you are not alone. If you are sending home kids with subtly dyed hair and afros, then you pretty much are.

4. Timetables change A LOT in the first month of term

"Hi Mr X, can we have a word? I've just received a copy of the new timetable and it seems you

are going to be teaching health and social care..." Those were the dreaded words I would utter every September when, inevitably, around week 3 of the term, there would be a timetable fiddle, and I'd suddenly gain a new member of staff onto my BTEC team. Usually a staff member with no interest or experience in the subject. Sighs all round. ? Alas, I am not alone. Of the 1,000 teachers answering our questions this week, 7% had their timetabled subjects changed since the start of term.



Plus, almost one in five (18%) of teachers said they experienced a change in rooming, while another 18% said they changed their class. Such abrupt changes play havoc with lesson planning. The hours spent creating resources, or seating plans, are suddenly gone. No wonder so many teachers spend their evenings running to catch up (see point 1).

5. One in five teachers had a parent who was a teacher (this is way more than it should be)

One in 64 working adults is a teacher. One in 40 is a teacher at some point over their lifetime. Doing the crudest maths on this, in which each person has two parents each with a one in 40 chance of being a teacher, we would only expect one in 20 (5%) of a random sample to have parents who are teachers. But the rate is FOUR TIMES HIGHER than this: roughly 20% of teachers have a parent who is also a teacher. If the government wants to save money in recruitment costs, it could start targeting ads at teacher's kids. After all, they are most likely to become the next generation of classroom practitioners!

6. And finally, we learned this week that you really really like the Teacher Tapp tips – so here are the links for last week:

- [Cognitive load theory in practice](#)
- [How to never mark work](#)
- [The problem of finding content for lesson plans](#)
- [Disciplined Inquiry for teachers](#)
- [Inside no excuses schools](#)
- [Escaping the data-driven paradigm of educational excellence](#)

Thank you for working with us for another week. Until next time! *** 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