Teacher underperformance in Flemish primary and secondary schools: Co-workers' experiences, views and responses

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Abstract

International research indicates that two to fifteen per cent of teachers perform below standard. These underperforming teachers can have a profound negative impact on their students and schools. As teamwork is indispensable in today's education, co-workers are important stakeholders to include in research on teacher underperformance. With this study, we aim to raise awareness of the experiences of co-worker underperformance, impact on co-workers, and how co-workers perceive their role in responding. The findings of our survey study in primary and secondary schools indicate that the majority of Flemish teachers has recently encountered incidents of teacher underperformance in their teams. This concerns very diverse types of underperformance, including student-related and team-related types. Often, the underperformance is perceived as severe, long-lasting, and having internal causes, and impacting on team members and the team work. Flemish teachers are not convinced they are responsible or authorised to respond to the underperformance or convinced that responding would be useful. Our results also indicate that confrontation and support/advice are the least common co-worker responses. Teachers perceive 'tolerance' as the most common principal response. These findings raise important questions about the role of co-workers in dealing with teacher underperformance and highlight the need to pay attention to these co-workers when studying or addressing teacher underperformance.

Keywords: Underperforming teachers, Co-workers' responses, Performance management, survey study

1. Introduction

International research estimates the incidence of teacher underperformance to be between two to fifteen per cent (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). These underperforming teachers have a profound impact on students' learning, wellbeing and motivation (Kaye, 2004; Zhang, 2007). In addition, their principals experience considerable stress and worries when dealing with the underperformance (Causey, 2010; Goe, Bell & Little, 2008; Page, 2016). Moreover, underperforming teachers can cause frustration, concern and despair among co-workers, who's morale and energy are eroded by the underperformance, the difficult collaboration with the underperformer, and/or parent and student complaints (Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007; Page, 2016). Organisational research suggests that this impact on co-workers is related to the team's interdependence and the social intensity of the job (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004), and these are increasing in education. Teacher collaboration and the professional community have become vital for teacher development and school effectiveness (Tam, 2015; Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). Because of this, co-workers may be more aware of certain performance problems (Richardson, Wheeless, & Cunningham, 2008). Moreover, they have a potentially important role to fulfil in responding to the underperformance, since research suggests that co-workers can influence each other's performance and professional development, and can help to remediate poor teacher performance (Cheng, 2014; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2011). In addition, accountability could be considered as a task of the educational community because teachers are professionals and their teamwork is vital for educational quality

(Tuytens & Devos, 2012).

In Flanders, official numbers are lacking, but a study in secondary education found that principals considered 12% of their teachers to underperform in one or more job domains. In particular, student-tailored teaching and student evaluation, implementing innovations, dealing with problematic student behaviour and motivating students were considered as frequent areas of underperformance. Moreover, underperforming teachers often had a too narrow view of their duties (Plas & Vanhoof, 2016). To learn more about the perspective of teachers, Van Den Ouweland, Vanhoof & Van den Bossche (2019b) performed an exploratory study, in which they interviewed teachers about team members' underperformance. All teachers in this study had recent experiences with cases of co-worker underperformance and often expressed negative emotions, such as frustration, anger, and disappointment towards the underperforming teacher, and additional concerns about limited principal responses. The underperformance often impacted one's workload, as well as the team work and team atmosphere. Moreover, they expressed doubts about their role in dealing with the underperformance. The findings of this study indicated the need for a large scale study on co-workers to open up discussion about this important but sensitive topic, and to further our understanding about how Flemish teachers perceive and experience teacher underperformance in their schools, and tend to respond to it. With this large-scale study, we aim to increase awareness and understanding of co-workers' perceptions, to inform about this problem and how it can be managed. This was translated into two research questions:

• What are Flemish teachers' experiences with, and perceptions of the incidence and nature of teacher underperformance in their schools?
• What are Flemish teachers' views on responding to underperforming co-workers, as well as their actual responses to this underperformance?

2. Literature review

In this section, we will discuss our conceptualisation of teacher underperformance, as well as the existing literature on co-workers' responses.

2.1 Teachers' work performance and underperformance
Teacher underperformance is multidimensional and dynamic

Being a teacher is a comprehensive, multidimensional job (Kelly, Ang, Chong, & Hu, 2008; Yariv, 2004). Student-related roles include, among others, student assessment and class management (Stronge, Ward & Grant, 2011). Other roles go beyond teaching, such as collaborating with co-workers and parents and remaining up-to-date with curriculum changes and innovations (Cheng & Tsui, 1999). Therefore, underperformance may include both teaching and non-teaching underperformance. Research on teachers' perceptions of teacher underperformance found that teachers rated 'difficulty working as part of a team' to be the second most important factor, after classroom behaviours (Menuey, 2007). In the organizational literature, a distinction is made between task underperformance and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB). Task underperformance concerns performing one's tasks/roles below standard, and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) or misbehaviours are "volitional acts by employees that potentially violate the legitimate interests of, or do harm to, an organisation or its stakeholders" (Marcus, Taylor, Hastings, Sturm, & Weigelt, 2016, p.204). Examples of task underperformance are inadequate classroom management and difficulties in dealing with student diversity. Teachers' CWB include inappropriate behaviour towards students and co-workers, and an intentional lack of effort (Page, 2016; Richardson et al., 2008). Typically, underperforming teachers present a cluster of difficulties, not just a single one (Wragg, Haynes, Phil, Wragg, & Chamberlin, 1999).

Teacher underperformance can have

individual and/or job-related causes. These include inadequate management or supervision, team-related factors, job demands and organisational resources inherent to teachers' jobs, and individual shortcomings and personal resources (Monteiro, Wilson & Beyer, 2013; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003). In addition, work performance is not static: during one's career, there can be more long-term and more contemporary changes in performance, and potential periods of underperformance (Alessandri, Borgogni, & Truxillo, 2015; Day & Gu, 2007).

In their recent qualitative study, Van Den Ouweland et al. (2019b) found that teachers encountered different types of co-worker underperformance, including TUP and CWB, and both teaching and non-teaching types of underperformance. Some were one-time incidents or short term, others long term. Teachers perceived multiple causes, including lack of competences, resilience or motivation, inadequate views on teaching, bad personality, and school-related, task-related, student-related and private factors.

'Underperformance' implies a value-laden standard
The term 'underperformance' implies that a teacher performs below a certain standard. Researchers and policy makers have established teacher standards and frameworks based on educational research (e.g., Danielson, 1996; Doherty, Hilberg, Epaloose, & Tharp, 2002). These can be used to label someone as underperforming. But especially in education, this is difficult to objectify, value-laden and context-dependent; 'the best teacher' does not exist (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Day & Gu, 2007). Different stakeholders, such as principals, parents, and governments, all have their own views on good teaching (Moreland, 2009; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg et al., 1999). Therefore, principals and teachers are confronted with diverse, sometimes contradictory, and constantly evolving demands and expectations (Ingle, Rutledge, & Bishop, 2011; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2010).

Organizational research indicates that organisations can explicate performance standards in formal performance expectations and goals (Gibbons & Weingart, 2001; Martin & Manning, 1995) and incorporate them in organizational processes, practices (e.g. work patterns) and policies (e.g. work rules, professional development opportunities) (Hora & Anderson, 2012; Morris, Hong, Chiu, & Liu, 2015; Sandlund, Olin-Scheller, Nyroos, Jakobsen, & Nahnfeldt, 2011). Moreover, performance norms also originate in socialization processes and social comparison (wat others do, which behaviour is discussed and (dis)approved by others) (Gibbons & Weingart, 2001; Morris et al., 2015; Rennesund & Saksvik, 2010). Moreover, individuals also have personal performance standards, originating in individual experiences, their self-image and self-evaluation (Earley & Erez, 1991; Morris et al., 2015).

In Flanders, as a guideline for teacher education and schools, the Government has introduced a general teacher job profile with teacher roles and related competences. This job profile includes ten work domains including the teacher as a facilitator of learning and development processes, and member of the school team (Aelterman, Meysman, Troch, Vanlaer, & Verkens, 2008), but schools have the autonomy to create job descriptions and evaluation criteria, as long as student attainment targets are reached (OECD, 2014; Penninckx, Vanhoof & Van Petegem, 2011). Van Den Ouweland et al. (2019a) studied how Flemish principals and teachers perceived 'underperformance' in two of these job domains, i.e. what they perceived to be a minimal level of accepted performance, and what was insufficient. They found that standards were not very detailed or explicit, and teachers and principals mostly referred to them as personal standards, based on personal visions and life experiences, rather than derived from a clear, school-based standard.

A broad definition of teacher under-performance
In the literature different terms are used to indicate that a teacher performs below

standard; for example, 'ineffective teacher' (Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2013); 'poorly performing teacher' (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003); 'incompetent teacher' (Cheng, 2014), and 'challenging teacher' (Yariv, 2004). Together with this diverse terminology, broad definitions of teacher underperformance are used in educational studies. Often, they include a list of work domains which need to be considered when judging teacher underperformance, and this is left to the judgment of school principals. Bridges (1992) for example, defines teacher incompetence as "a persistent failure in one or more of the following domains: failure to maintain discipline, failure to treat students properly, failure to impart subject matter effectively, failure to accept teaching advice from superiors, failure to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter being taught, and failure to produce the intended or desired results in the classroom" (p.15). Yariv and Kass (2017) talk about 'struggling teachers' who are "veteran staff members who have worked for more than five years and still face substantial and ongoing difficulties at work; teachers whose performance, according to the principal, is below the expected norm" (p.2).

Since it was our aim to study all possible types of underperformance that teachers perceive to encounter in their schools, and it was not our ambition to develop a detailed teacher performance framework, we opted for a broad definition of teacher underperformance. More specifically, the following definition was chosen: *an underperforming teacher is one who: performs below the standard; in one or more teaching and/or non-teaching work domains; at one or more moments. This underperformance may concern task underperformance and/or CWB.* This definition leaves room for new insights into how co-workers experience incidents of teacher underperformance that are important to them and/or affect them (Yariv, 2004). This definition has implications for how our results have to be understood. First, it implies that possibly not all team members would perceive these teachers to be underperforming

nor that, for example, the principal or students would perceive this to be the case. Second, this study does not only concern teachers who are perceived to be overall and/or long-term underperformers, but it also concerns teachers who underperform in one specific domain and/or for a short period of time.

2.2 Co-workers' views on responding and their responses

While research on teachers' responses in education is scarce, research in other work sectors has studied different types of co-worker responses. This research is grouped together into three research strands: attribution theory studies, research on peer reports of CWB and deviance, and voice and silence research. Attribution studies make a distinction between helping and punishing, and prosocial (e.g., advising) and antisocial reactions (e.g., silent treatment) (Struthers, Miller, Boudens, & Briggs, 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004). The following categorisation of responses is often used: compensating for the underperformance (e.g., taking on some of the underperformer's tasks), training the underperformer (e.g., advising the underperformer), motivating/confronting the underperformer (e.g., pointing out the consequences of the poor performance), and rejecting the underperformer (e.g., avoiding further interactions) (Ferguson, Ormiston & Moon, 2010; Jackson & LePine, 2003). Studies on peer reporting of CWB and voice and silence studies include responses directed towards third parties, i.e. speaking up or remaining silent to one's supervisor and/or other co-workers (Morrison, 2014; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). While peer reporting focuses on the reporting of underperformance, voice and silence research has a broader focus. It studies why and when workers speak up or remain silent with their supervisors and/or co-workers about workplace issues and perceived injustices more in general, including performance problems. This research has found that co-workers' underperformance is one of the issues that is hardest for workers to voice (Brinsfield, 2009; Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003).

To obtain a broad view on co-worker responses the following responses are studied: confronting the underperformer, reporting the underperformance to the principal or other co-workers, distancing oneself from the underperformer, providing the underperformer with support or advice, and compensating for the underperformance. In a previous qualitative study, Van Den Ouweland et al. (2019b) found examples of all these responses, but in most cases, co-worker responses were well thought through and careful. Teachers also expressed numerous concerns about responding: i.e., which impact responding would have on the underperformer, on themselves and their relationship, whether it would be appropriate for them as co-workers to judge the underperformance and to take action, and whether it was their own or their principals' responsibility to respond. In organizational research, similar considerations have been found. For example, voice and silence studies have found that co-workers may fear the negative consequences of raising the issue (e.g., retaliation, harming the underperformer) or find it futile to respond (e.g., believe that speaking up will not make a difference) (Knoll & van Dick, 2013a; van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). These considerations have been linked to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Attribution theory also suggests that co-workers consider the possibility of change and possible consequences of responding (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Weiner, 2010). Second, co-workers may feel responsible to voice certain problems out of a feeling of obligation towards the organisation or the underperformer. This can be explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Bowling & Lyons, 2015). Moreover, employees differ in whether they perceive voice to be part of their jobs, or believe that speaking up is disruptive (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Milliken et al., 2003; Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joireman, 2008).

In line with this research evidence, we will study co-workers' views on the use of responding to a team member's underperformance, as well as how they perceive their own responsibility and authority to respond.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

Our study was executed in Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. To reach a large sample of Flemish teachers, we used a survey methodology. The study was performed in primary and secondary schools, which target children between 3 and 18 years old. From all secondary and primary schools in Flanders (with at least 10 teachers in the team), a random sample of schools was selected to participate in our study. Schools were sorted based on type and team size. Of the 3414 schools in Flanders, 306 schools were selected, of which 38 schools spontaneously were willing to participate. Given this exceeded the predetermined aim for number of participating schools, the recruitment of additional schools was stopped at that time. These schools represented all school types in Flanders (denominational schools, Flemish Community schools, and province/municipality schools), with a range of team sizes (10-400 teachers). In all these schools combined, 833 teachers returned the survey. Since some questionnaires had too many missing data, 708 questionnaires were analysed, from 16 primary schools, and 22 secondary schools. In the primary schools, 7 to 29 teachers participated, who represented 50 to 100% of their teams. In the secondary schools, 12 to 67 teachers participated, who represented 15 to 75% of their teams. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents were male and 71% were female. Thirty-two per cent worked in primary education and 68% in secondary education. Their mean age was 42, with 17 years of experience as a teacher, and 14 years of experience in their current schools. Twenty-two per cent was non-tenured (with a fixed-term contract or permanent contract) and 78% was tenured. Participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose and method of the study, as well as participants' rights, since teacher underperformance is a difficult and sensitive topic, and our study required both principals' and teachers' willingness to cooperate. Participation was anonymous and voluntary. We emphasized that school and participant names would not

be disclosed and did not ask to name underperforming colleagues. The Ethics Committee of the University of Antwerp also approved the study.

3.2 Method and instrument

Participants were requested to: "*think of a recent example of an underperforming co-worker, i.e. a co-worker who performed below the expectations, in one or more domains, according to your perception. The underperformance may concern task performance (working with students, team work and/or school tasks), or the behaviour of the co-worker*". This is an example of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) developed by Flanagan (1954), which aims to yield in-depth, contextualised accounts of real-life experiences that are selected by the respondents themselves and are important to them (Gremler, 2004; Hughes, Williamson & Lloyd, 2007). We chose this technique of focusing on real examples of teacher underperformance because most existing studies (in other work sectors, as well as the few studies in education) used vignettes or hypothetical cases to study co-worker responses (Ferguson et al., 2010; Richardson et al., 2008). Therefore, they studied co-workers' intentions or attitudes rather than their actual responses (Struthers et al., 2001). These might differ considerably because of the complex social and emotional nature of responding to teacher underperformance (Painter, 2000).

The survey is added in Appendix. As explained, we formulated a broad definition of underperformance, since we did not want to 'push' the respondents in a certain conceptual direction. Since this is the first large scale study on the topic, we prompted them to think of an example they spontaneously remembered. Sixty-nine per cent of our respondents indicated that they knew a recent example of an underperforming teacher. These respondents were then presented with an exhaustive list of possible types of underperformance, based on the Flemish teacher job profile and our previous qualitative study on the topic (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Next, we asked

them to indicate what caused the underperformance in their perception. This list included: lack of competences, resilience and motivation, an inadequate vision of teaching, bad personality, and school-related, task-related, student-related and private factors (based on our literature review and previous study). We also requested respondents to rate the severity of the underperformance, and asked about the quality, intensity and nature of their relationship with the underperformer (i.e.; working in the same department, in the same projects or working groups, or teaching common students). Next, we included items on the impact of the underperformance, i.e., causing frustrations and concerns, the impact of the underperformance on one's own performance and workload, and the impact on the team (based on the types of impact found in our qualitative study). In addition, to get a broader picture of other responses in the school, we also asked how their principals and other team members responded to the underperformance. These items were based on previous studies on principal and co-worker responses (Kaye, 2004; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016; Yariv & Coleman, 2005). As these situational characteristics were quite straightforward items, and we could not further extend the survey completion time for our respondents, it was decided to study them with one item-questions (5-point Likert scales).

As existing measures to study respondents' views on responding to the incidents were not available, and these were more complex constructs, we developed a scale based on our literature review and previous qualitative study (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). This scale included items on how respondents perceived the necessity to respond, their responsibility and authority to respond, and the use of responding (3 items per scale on 5-point Likert scale). Confirmatory factor analysis showed good fit (RMSEA = 0.043; CFI = 0.974; TLI = 0.964), and Cronbach's alphas were: responsibility 0.78, necessity 0.7, mandate 0.83, use 0.72. Respondents' actual responses to the underperformance were measured with items based on a

validated peer response measure by Jackson and LePine (2003), which was adapted for our research aims and to which items on report of the underperformance were added. The following responses were studied: confrontation, support/advice, distance, compensation, report to principal, report to other co-workers. Responses were measured with 3-4 items on a 5-point Likert scale. Confirmatory factor analysis again showed good fit (RMSEA = 0.041; CFI = 0.967; TLI = 0.961), with the following Cronbach's alpha values: confrontation 0.90, report to principal 0.94, distance 0.88, support 0.78, compensation 0.83, report to co-workers 0.76.

The last part of the survey included questions for all respondents, also those respondents who indicated not to know a recent example of an underperforming teacher. For them, a skip logic to this last section was added to the survey. To understand our respondents' general views on responding, independent of the specific cases, the survey included items on how they generally felt about responding to underperforming team members. We also asked our respondents whether their principals had a clear vision on co-workers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers, and how their principals perceived co-worker' roles in responding and reporting teacher underperformance. These items were also measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Finally, respondents received a list of specific types of underperformance (the same list as was used for the cases). For each type, they were requested to indicate the percentage of teachers in their schools they perceived to be underperforming. While we realise that teachers cannot be aware of all underperformance cases in their schools and this merely represents their subjective view/ estimate, we wished to get a notion of their opinion on the magnitude of the problem.

To make sure questions were clear and unambiguous, we asked six teachers to pilot the survey, by filling it in out loud or be giving feedback in writing on unclear/difficult items and on their general perception of the survey.

3.3 Analysis

Because of the descriptive nature of our research aims, descriptive statistics were calculated. However, because of the nested nature of our data (teachers nested in schools), and the fact that the numbers of teachers differed between schools, we also checked our findings for school effects. Therefore, we calculated both the general mean of the responses of all 708 teachers (see 'teacher mean' in Tables 1-4), as well as the mean of all 38 schools (see 'school mean' in Tables 1-4). Only small differences between these means were found, with a maximum difference of 0.19 (on a scale of 1 to 5). We also calculated Intra Class Correlations (ICC) for each variable as well as the variances between and within schools. The largest ICC was 0.20. Variances between schools were small, and variances within schools were significantly larger. Together, these analyses suggest that school effects were small. Therefore, the report of our findings is based on analyses at the teacher level, and not at the school level.

4. Results

4.1 Reported examples of teacher underperformance

Respondents were requested to think of a recent example of a co-worker who they perceived to be underperforming. Sixty-nine per cent of our respondents indicated to know such an example. Our respondents most often worked in the same project or work group as the underperforming teacher (M=3.46, SD=1.53) or taught common students (M=3.38, SD=1.62). The quality of the working relationship with the underperformer was considered to be rather negative to neutral (M=2.74, SD=1.20), and the collaboration was not that intense (M=2.47, SD=1.29).

The most reported examples of underperformance concerned the cooperation with or consultation of co-workers (M=4.09, SD=1.02); contributing to work groups, projects or other school tasks (M=4.08, SD=1.13); intentional lack of effort (M=4.00, SD=1.13); and following up on agreements and task allocations (M=3.92, SD=1.20).

Table 1
Underperformance and underperformer characteristics in the reported cases

Theme	Item(s)	Min	Max	Teacher mean	School mean	Total variance	Standard deviation	ICC
Knowledge of recent example	Knowing a recent example of an underperforming co-worker	0	1	0.69	0.66	0.21	0.46	0.08
Age underperformer	Age of the underperformer	22	62	44.31	44.60	91.77	9.58	0.11
Relationship intensity	Intensity of working relationship with underperformer	1	5	2.47	2.53	1.67	1.29	0.00
Relationship quality	Quality of working relationship with underperformer	1	5	2.74	2.73	1.43	1.20	0.03
Relationship type	Working in the same department as the underperformer	1	5	3.30	3.25	3.02	1.74	0.03
	Working on the same school project or in the same working group	1	5	3.46	3.35	2.33	1.53	0.01
	Meeting each other outside school/ private relationship	1	5	1.66	1.71	1.37	1.17	0.04
	Teaching common students	1	5	3.38	3.28	2.64	1.62	0.10
Type of underperformance	Quality of teaching content	1	5	3.73	3.68	1.48	1.22	0.13
	Quality of instruction/didactics	1	5	3.81	3.76	1.45	1.20	0.13
	Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development	1	5	3.81	3.80	1.38	1.17	0.02
	Raising students	1	5	3.66	3.60	1.46	1.21	0.17
	Handling diversity in the classroom/differentiation	1	5	3.59	3.59	1.44	1.20	0.05
	Classroom management, creating a favourable learning climate	1	5	3.74	3.72	1.46	1.21	0.12
	Consulting and collaborating with colleagues	1	5	4.09	4.00	1.04	1.02	0.01
	Following up on agreements and task allocations	1	5	3.92	3.78	1.45	1.20	0.08
	Contributing to working groups, projects or other school tasks	1	5	4.08	4.02	1.28	1.13	0.04
	Fulfilling administrative tasks	1	5	3.76	3.64	1.55	1.24	0.02
	Cooperation with parents or others	1	5	3.38	3.38	1.41	1.19	0.01
	Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards students	1	5	2.63	2.69	1.92	1.39	0.19
	Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers	1	5	2.74	2.74	2.16	1.47	0.12
	Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements	1	5	3.04	2.99	1.89	1.37	0.16
	Intentional lack of effort	1	5	4.00	3.90	1.28	1.13	0.07
	Illegitimate absences	1	5	2.38	2.30	2.08	1.44	0.09

Table 1(continued)
Underperformance and underperformer characteristics in the reported cases

Severity of the underperformance	1	5	3.94	3.93	0.58	0.76	0.12
Duration of underperformance							
One-time incident	0	1	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.00
Less than one school year	0	1	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.20	0.03
More than one school year	0	1	0.24	0.22	0.19	0.44	0.00
Ongoing	0	1	0.77	0.77	0.18	0.42	0.00
Self-observed	0	1	0.92	0.91	0.08	0.28	0.01
Detection of underperformance							
Informed by underperformer	0	1	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.32	0.00
Informed by other co-worker(s)	0	1	0.55	0.54	0.25	0.50	0.00
Informed by principal	0	1	0.12	0.15	0.10	0.32	0.07
Informed by student(s)	0	1	0.42	0.39	0.25	0.50	0.17
Informed by parent(s)	0	1	0.22	0.24	0.17	0.41	0.01
Cause of underperformance							
Lack of (up to date) knowledge or skills	1	5	3.14	3.17	1.93	1.39	0.05
Demotivation	1	5	3.72	3.64	1.41	1.19	0.09
Faulty vision on education or the teacher's job	1	5	3.48	3.45	1.38	1.17	0.13
Limited psychological strength/resilience	1	5	3.21	3.22	1.69	1.30	0.01
Bad character or personality	1	5	4.27	4.24	0.68	0.82	0.04
Private circumstances	1	5	2.78	2.78	1.90	1.38	0.08
Students	1	5	1.73	1.75	0.89	0.94	0.04
Task allocation	1	5	2.08	2.14	1.40	1.18	0.04
Principal or school policy	1	5	2.63	2.54	1.72	1.31	0.02
Impact of underperformance							
Causing frustrations/concerns	1	5	3.96	3.93	1.24	1.11	0.02
Burdening one's workload	1	5	3.69	3.67	1.71	1.31	0.03
Negative impact on one's performance	1	5	2.18	2.12	1.53	1.24	0.01
Harming the team (team work or atmosphere)	1	5	3.90	3.80	1.23	1.11	0.09

Some student-related types of underperformance also received high scores, especially evaluating and monitoring students' learning progress (M=3.81, SD=1.17) and the quality of instruction or didactics (M=3.81, SD=1.20). The least reported types of underperformance were CWB's: inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers (M=2.74, SD=1.47) and students (M=2.63, SD=1.39), and illegitimate absences (M=2.38, SD=1.44) (see Table 1 for the other types of underperformance). Standard deviations (SD) for these CWB's were among the highest standard deviations found in our study.

Our respondents perceived that the incidents were quite severe, with a mean score of 3.94 (SD=0.76). Seventy-seven per cent of the cases were still going on at the time of completing the survey. Of the other cases, 83% were long-lasting (one school year or longer), 14% lasted less than one school year, and 3% concerned one-time incidents. In 92% of the cases, respondents witnessed the underperformance themselves. Respondents were also informed by co-workers (55%), students (42%), parents (22%), the principal (12%), and/or by the underperforming teacher him/herself (11%). Standard deviations for these items were rather low, ranging from 0.10 to 0.44 for duration of the underperformance, and from 0.32 to 0.50 for types of detection.

Our respondents perceived the underperformance to be caused mostly by internal causes: bad character/personality (M=4.27, SD=0.82), demotivation (M=3.72, SD=1.19) and a faulty vision on education or the teacher's job (M=3.48, SD=1.17) (see Table 1 for other studied causes of underperformance). As shown in Table 1, while bad character has a low SD of 0.82, some other causes had high SD's, especially lack of knowledge/skills (SD=1.39) and private circumstances (SD=1.38). The underperformance mostly caused concerns and frustrations with respondents (M=3.96, SD=1.11), harmed the team (teamwork or atmosphere) (M=3.90, SD=1.11) and burdened the respondent's workload (M=3.69, SD=1.31). Respondents rather did not perceive that their own performance was compromised by their co-worker's underperformance (M=2.18, SD=1.24).

Respondents perceived that other team members were mostly aware of the underperformance (M=1.78, SD=1.00). These team members most often reported the underperformance to the principal (M=3.50, SD=1.34), distanced themselves from the underperformer (M=3.49, SD=1.22), ignored/tolerated the underperformance (M=3.48, SD=1.17) or compensated for the underperformance (M=3.42, SD=1.24). As shown, 'report to principal' had the highest SD of team members' responses. Their team members responded the least by confronting (M=2.99, SD=1.27) and supporting the underperforming teacher (M=2.71, SD=1.24). Concerning principal responses, our respondents perceived that their principals were mostly aware of the underperformance (M=2.00, SD=1.34). The highest scores were given to tolerating or ignoring the underperformance (M=3.32, SD=1.32) and confronting the underperforming teacher (M=3.06, SD=1.49). The lowest scores were given to report to third parties (M=1.87, SD=1.27) and dismissal (M=1.17, SD=0.70) (see Table 2 for other principal and team members' responses). Concerning standard deviations, except for dismissal, which had a low SD of 0.70, principal responses had high SD's in our study, ranging from 1.27 to 1.49.

4.2 Respondents' views on and responses to the reported examples

Our respondents considered it necessary for someone to respond (M=4.37, SD=0.66) to the reported cases. However, they were only slightly positive about it being their own task/responsibility to respond (M=3.26, SD=1.06), and slightly negative about having the authority to respond (M=2.82, SD=1.11). Respondents on average were also rather negative about the perceived use of responding (M=2.50, SD=0.98). Concerning their actual responses to the underperformance, our respondents mostly discussed the underperformance with other co-workers (M=3.62, SD=1.00) or compensated for the underperformance (M=3.39, SD=1.17).

Table 2

Co-workers' views on responding and co-workers', principals' and other team members' responses to the reported cases

Theme	Items	Min	Max	Teacher mean	School mean	Total variance	Standard deviation	ICC
Co-workers' views on responding	Necessity for someone to respond	1	5	4.37	4.32	0.43	0.66	0.03
	My task/responsibility to respond	1	5	3.26	3.19	1.13	1.06	0.02
	My mandate/authority to respond	1	5	2.82	2.85	1.23	1.11	0.02
	Perceived use of responding	1	5	2.50	2.61	0.96	0.98	0.04
Co-workers' responses	Confront/speak up to the underperformer	1	5	2.57	2.62	1.52	1.23	0.06
	Report to/discuss with principal	1	5	3.18	3.20	2.17	1.47	0.09
	Distance oneself from the underperformer	1	5	3.01	2.91	1.37	1.17	0.00
	Compensate for the underperformance	1	5	3.39	3.36	1.38	1.17	0.00
	Support/advise the underperformer	1	5	2.57	2.67	1.08	1.04	0.08
	Report to/discuss with other colleagues	1	5	3.62	3.51	1.00	1.00	0.06
Principals' responses	Unaware	1	5	2.00	1.96	1.79	1.34	0.06
	Ignore/tolerate	1	5	3.32	3.21	1.74	1.32	0.05
	Confront	1	5	3.06	3.20	2.22	1.49	0.14
	Formal warning, sanction or negative evaluation	1	5	2.05	2.16	1.72	1.31	0.08
	Coaching or support	1	5	2.37	2.50	1.72	1.31	0.13
	Dismissal	1	5	1.17	1.17	0.49	0.70	0.09
	Compensating measures (e.g., limiting responsibilities)	1	5	2.36	2.44	2.01	1.42	0.04
	Report to third parties (e.g., governing body)	1	5	1.87	2.05	1.61	1.27	0.19
	Asking teachers for help	1	5	2.34	2.53	1.83	1.35	0.12
	Close monitoring	1	5	2.53	2.70	1.81	1.35	0.18
Other team members' responses	Unaware	1	5	1.78	1.80	1.00	1.00	0.10
	Ignore/tolerate	1	5	3.48	3.41	1.38	1.17	0.05
	Confront	1	5	2.99	2.99	1.62	1.27	0.05
	Distance	1	5	3.49	3.44	1.50	1.22	0.06
	Advise or support	1	5	2.71	2.87	1.54	1.24	0.01
	Compensate	1	5	3.42	3.38	1.55	1.24	0.00
	Report to principal	1	5	3.50	3.49	1.79	1.34	0.10

Our respondents responded the least by providing support/advice (M= 2.57, SD=1.04) or confronting the underperformer (M=2.57, SD=1.23) (see Table 2 for other responses). In line with team members' responses, 'report to principal' also had the highest SD among co-workers' responses, i.e. a SD of 1.47.

4.3 General views on responding to underperforming co-workers and the incidence of underperformance

Regardless of the reported examples of teacher underperformance, we also asked about our respondents' general views on responding to underperforming co-workers.

Table 3
Co-workers' and principals' general views on responding to underperforming teachers

Theme	Items	Min	Max	Teacher mean	School mean	Total variance	Standard deviation	ICC
Co-workers' general views on responding	My responsibility to take action when a co-worker underperforms	1	5	3.04	3.08	1.14	1.07	0.04
	Appropriate to respond in my position	1	5	2.78	2.77	1.39	1.18	0.04
	Okay for co-workers to respond to under-performing co-workers	1	5	3.77	3.76	0.96	0.98	0.03
	Feel comfortable to respond to under-performing co-workers	1	5	1.96	2.03	1.03	1.01	0.02
	In my nature/personality to respond to under-performing co-workers	1	5	2.67	2.66	1.49	1.22	0.05
Principals' views on responding	It is a teacher's job to respond to under-performing co-workers	1	5	3.29	3.32	1.14	1.07	0.12
	Teachers should report underperformance to principal	1	5	3.19	3.23	1.38	1.17	0.07
	Principal has a clear view on co-workers' role	1	5	2.78	2.84	1.48	1.22	0.20

On average, our respondents answered neutrally about it being their responsibility to respond (M=3.04, SD=1.07) when a co-worker underperforms. While our respondents answered slightly positively when asked whether it is okay for co-workers to respond to a teacher's underperformance (M=3.77, SD=0.98), they answered slightly negatively about it being appropriate for themselves to respond (M=2.78, SD=1.18). They also reported that reacting to underperforming co-workers made them feel rather uncomfortable (M =1.96, SD=1.01), and respondents felt that it was rather not in their nature to respond (M=2.67, SD=1.22). When asked whether their principals expected co-workers to respond to or report teacher underperformance, mean responses were slightly positive (M=3.29 and 3.19, SD=1.07 and 1.17, respectively). When questioned whether their principals had a clear view on the co-worker's role, their mean answer was slightly negative (M=2.78, SD=1.22) (see Table 3).

Table 4 represents the incidence of teacher underperformance in schools, according to our respondents. As shown, of the 708 respondents, a large number of respondents left his question open. The results were also skewed to the left. Therefore, the median and the distribution of answers is also presented in the table. Task underperformance domains (including both teaching- and non-teaching domains) received median scores between 15 and 20%: respondents perceived 15 to 20% of their team members to underperform in areas including classroom management and instruction, collaboration with colleagues and parents, and administrative work. The distribution in answers is remarkable: while most respondents reported an incidence of 1-20%, 21-26% of the respondents perceived the incidence to be higher than 50%. This was not the case for CWB's, where most respondents reported low incidents. Median scores were 6-10% for CWB's, meaning that our respondents considered 6 to 10% of their co-workers to exhibit CWB's such as intentional lack of effort and inappropriate or negative behaviours towards students or colleagues.

5. Discussion

Research indicates that underperforming teachers can have a profound impact on

Table 4
Incidence of teacher underperformance in Flemish schools, according to respondents

Type of underperformance	N	Teacher mean	Teacher median	School mean	0%	1-5%	6-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	>50%
Handling diversity in the classroom/differentiation	372	31.9	20	30.5	7.5%	12.9%	14.2%	16.4%	11.0%	6.7%	4.8%	26.3%
Contributing to working groups, projects or other school tasks	420	31.3	20	31.4	6.4%	12.4%	13.6%	18.8%	11.4%	6.4%	7.6%	23.3%
Fulfilling administrative tasks	399	31.0	20	28.7	6.0%	11.8%	17.3%	18.0%	12.0%	4.3%	6.0%	24.6%
Following up on agreements and task allocations	420	29.9	20	27.8	4.8%	14.0%	16.7%	19.0%	11.9%	5.9%	4.3%	23.3%
Consulting and collaborating with colleagues	410	30.0	19	29.3	6.3%	15.6%	15.9%	20.0%	9.3%	6.8%	1.7%	24.4%
Quality of instruction/didactics	371	29.1	18	26.6	6.2%	15.4%	16.2%	22.1%	8.6%	4.0%	3.2%	24.3%
Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development	384	29.6	17	28.8	5.5%	13.8%	20.1%	19.8%	6.8%	6.5%	3.9%	23.7%
Quality of teaching content	353	29.1	17	27.4	6.2%	16.7%	16.1%	20.1%	9.1%	6.5%	1.7%	23.5%
Classroom management, creating a favourable learning climate	393	28.1	17	26.3	6.1%	14.2%	18.8%	20.9%	9.9%	2.8%	5.9%	21.3%
Cooperation with parents or others	345	28.5	15	26.9	8.1%	15.4%	18.0%	16.8%	10.1%	3.8%	3.5%	24.3%
Intentional lack of effort	357	18.5	10	17.0	9.5%	20.7%	21.3%	20.2%	10.0%	5.9%	3.6%	8.7%
Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements	342	16.1	10	15.1	13.7%	24.6%	20.5%	17.3%	8.5%	4.1%	3.5%	7.9%
Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers	348	14.5	8	13.6	14.4%	28.2%	22.4%	16.7%	5.2%	4.0%	1.1%	8.0%
Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards students	324	13.2	7	12.4	18.2%	28.1%	18.0%	16.7%	7.4%	4.6%	1.5%	5.6%
Illegitimate absences	286	14.5	6	12.9	20.3%	28.3%	17.1%	11.9%	10.9%	14.0%	1.0%	9.1%

Note: N=number of respondents, columns with % represent the distribution of answers.

students and schools (Causey, 2010; Kaye, 2004; Page, 2016). In Flanders, we know little about teacher underperformance and how it is addressed. It is certainly not an easy topic to discuss, but because of its impact, it is essential to raise awareness about the problem and how it can be managed, and to learn about the experiences of important stakeholders. One important group of stakeholders are co-workers, since teaching is more and more seen as a team effort (Tuytens & Devos, 2012). In this study, we therefore aimed to study co-workers' experiences with, and responses to teacher underperformance. Our findings are based on the judgments of individual co-workers and should therefore be interpreted as such. Results not only include overall or long-term underperformance, but also concern teachers who underperform in one specific domain and/or for a short period of time.

The majority of our respondents knew recent examples of teacher underperformance in their schools, and – based on the median scores – respondents perceived the incidence of teacher underperformance in different performance domains to be 6-20%, dependent on the type of underperformance. Our results therefore indicate that, according to teachers, teacher underperformance is far from exceptional. Many teachers are faced with the problem, observe/experience it first hand or are informed by team members or students. Teachers' experiences with underperforming co-workers concern both teachers they work with on school tasks (e.g., work groups), as teachers with common students. Co-workers of underperforming teachers often experience concerns and frustrations, and an increased workload due to the underperformance. Moreover, the teamwork and team atmosphere can also be affected. Similar findings about the negative impact on co-workers were found in previous research (Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007; Page, 2016). Our results indicate that even when co-workers in Flemish schools perceive that someone has to respond to an underperforming teacher, they are not convinced that it is their task to respond or that it is appropriate for them to respond, nor are they convinced that they are able to impact on

the underperformance. Also, in general, teachers appear to feel rather uncomfortable responding to underperformance. Moreover, principals' views on the role of co-workers are not very clear for teachers.

Concerning co-worker responses, our findings indicate that teachers most often report the underperformance to the principal or compensate for the underperformance (e.g., by taking over certain tasks). Speaking up to and supporting the underperformer are the least common responses of co-workers. Compared to the other studied responses, however, these are the two most active, direct responses that have immediate potential to impact on the underperformance. This suggests that the potential of co-worker involvement in remediating underperformance in underused in schools (Cheng, 2014; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2011). Research indicates that it is important that co-workers respond for different reasons (Morrison, 2014). When co-workers keep silent, or even distance themselves from the underperforming teacher, they may possibly sustain or even worsen the underperformance, which may cause further harm to everyone affected by the underperformance. Moreover, the underperforming teacher may remain unaware that others perceive him/her to be underperforming. In this regard, we found that 'having a faulty vision on teaching' was reported as one of the most common reasons for the underperformance. Since teacher underperformance is not a black-and-white subject (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003), speaking up and providing advice can be a learning opportunity and an opportunity to discuss and create a shared vision on good performance, which may also foster teachers' collaboration (Vangrieken et al., 2015).

Concerning recommendations for educational policy and practice, our findings indicate that we should pay attention to the impact that teacher underperformance can have on team members, and that we need to open the debate about co-workers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers. Can we expect co-workers to speak up or to take action? Do we tolerate teachers remaining silent? Do we expect them to respond directly

to a teacher they perceive to be underperforming? While we do not want to put the blame on individual teachers or to hold them individually accountable for their responses (Painter, 2000), quality education is a shared responsibility (Tuytens & Devos, 2012), and support is needed for teachers to respond, facilitated by principals and policy makers. In this regard, research suggests that a school-wide discussion of performance expectations helps to create a shared vision on what good performance entails and what is expected. When there is more 'performance talk' in organisations, it is easier to discuss teacher underperformance when it develops and to hold teachers accountable for their actions (Aguinis, Joo, & Gottfredson, 2011; Armstrong & Baron, 2014; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996, Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019a). Secondly, it is important to create a vision on the role of co-workers in dealing with teacher underperformance, to facilitate feedback and performance discussions. In Flanders, we do not have a long tradition of teacher evaluation (mandated teacher evaluation was introduced by the government in 2007), and there are no formal programmes or systems of peer evaluation, assistance or monitoring. There are also few formal structures for co-workers to provide feedback, and international comparative research indicates that Flemish education scores low on professional community characteristics, such as peer feedback, deprivatised practices, and joint teaching (Lomos, 2017; OECD, 2014). In this regard, earlier research has also suggested that the structural, micro political and cultural work environment, and existing norms of privacy and autonomy in education, might explain why teachers often collaborate on a relatively superficial level, are reluctant to discuss their performance or to provide peer feedback, and perceive limited success of peer coaching (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Kelchtermans, 2006; Vangrieken et al., 2015).

Concerning principal responses, ignoring/ tolerating the underperformance received a higher mean score than confrontation, monitoring or support, and while respondents perceived the incidents to be severe and long-lasting, formal measures received the lowest score. Of course, our respondents might not have been aware of their principals' responses and principals could/should address teacher underperformance confidentially (Page, 2016), but it is clear that principal responses are limited in the eyes of Flemish teachers. This perception is important as previous research found that co-workers' morale and perceptions of fairness may be affected when they perceive that their principal ignores or tolerates the underperformance (Cheng, 2014; Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Although our findings suggest that most teachers do not perceive that teacher underperformance has an immediate impact on their own performance, research warrants that injustice perceptions (i.e. when the principal does not respond, does not recognize the impact on co-workers, or in case of perceived injustice in teachers' workload) and self-suppression can affect one's work performance, well-being and job attitudes over time and provoke future silence about workplace issues and concerns, and even staff turnover (Knoll & van Dick, 2013b; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013).

Our study is not without its limitations, and we would like to make some recommendations for further research. First, we must emphasise that we studied underperformance in the perception of co-workers, using a very broad definition of teacher underperformance. This means that a wide range of underperformance was studied, and research suggests that different types and causes of underperformance often co-exist (Wragg et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011). We did not study possible clusters or combinations of problems nor the extent of the underperformance in this study though. For further research, we recommend taking the broader picture of the performance into account. Second, others involved could have different perceptions of the underperformance, and it is possible that our respondents were unaware of their principals' or other co-workers' actions. Therefore, it is opportune for follow-up research to triangulate data sources by including different parties involved, for example, students and their

parents, the principal, co-workers, and ideally also the alleged underperforming teacher, to gain a more complete picture of the underperformance and how it affects and is dealt with by these different parties. Also observations can complement the study and judgement of the (under)performance of teachers. Third, we relied on our respondents' memories and reports of the studied examples of teacher underperformance, which may be distorted or incomplete (FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). However, for this reason, we asked for recent examples. Longitudinal case study research would allow us to study cases in real time and could also provide more insight into the dynamics and impact of peer responses on underperformance. In this regard, our research topic could be considered as an emerging phenomenon (Kozlowski, Chao, Grand, Braun, & Kuljanin, 2013), in which co-workers' responses evolve and are influenced by other teachers' and principals' responses, creating collective responses, and in which responses, in turn, impact on the underperformance, which may provoke new responses, and so on. These dynamics could not be captured in our cross-sectional research. Fourth, follow-up research needs to focus on studying explanations and facilitating/hindering factors for different co-worker responses, e.g., how different types of responses relate to different types of underperformance, causes of under-performance and relationship characteristics, views on responding, and to certain individual and school characteristics. In addition, it would be interesting to study schools that have succeeded in facilitating peer responses, for example, in case study research. Finally, we would like to emphasise that teacher underperformance is a challenging research topic and for ethical reasons, it is hard to nearly impossible for researchers to identify and address alleged underperforming teachers (Yariv & Kass, 2017). Confidentiality, voluntariness and privacy are vital in this research area. In this regard, we cannot rule out a selection bias in our study, since we are unsure why certain schools were unwilling to participate, and which teachers did not fill in the survey and why.

Despite these limitations, our findings provide more insight into how teachers in Flanders perceive the nature and incidence of teacher underperformance in their schools. Moreover, they delineate teachers' experiences of, views on and responses to this underperformance. These findings raise important questions about the role of co-workers in dealing with teacher underperformance and highlight the need to pay attention to co-workers when studying or handling teacher underperformance.

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Loth Van den Ouweland verdedigde haar doctoraal proefschrift aan de Universiteit Antwerpen. Momenteel is zij tewerkgesteld aan de Karel de Grote Hogeschool Antwerpen. **Jan Vanhoof** en **Piet Van den Bossche** zijn beiden als hoogleraar verbonden aan het Departement voor Onderwijs- en Opleidingswetenschappen (Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen) van de Universiteit Antwerpen. Zij maken deel uit van de onderzoeksgroep Edubron. Piet Van den Bossche is daarnaast ook verbonden aan de School of Business & Economics van de Universiteit van Maastricht.

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Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Leraaronderpresteren: Ervaringen, visies en reacties van collega-leraren

Internationaal onderzoek toont aan dat twee tot vijftien procent van de leraren onder de standaard presteert. Deze onderpresterende leraren kunnen een ernstige impact hebben op hun leerlingen en scholen. Omdat teamwerk essentieel is geworden in het onderwijs, zijn ook collega's belangrijke stakeholders geworden in onderzoek naar leraaronderpresteren. Met deze studie willen we dan ook de ervaringen van, en de impact op collega's onder de aandacht brengen, alsook hoe ze hun rol zien in het reageren op het onderpresteren. De bevindingen van onze surveystudie in basis- en secundaire scholen tonen aan dat de meerderheid van de leraren recentelijk met leraaronderpresteren in zijn/haar team werd geconfronteerd. Dit betreft diverse problemen, en zowel student-gerelateerde als team-gerelateerde vormen van onderpresteren. Vaak wordt het onderpresteren aanzien als ernstig en langdurig, heeft het interne oorzaken, en heeft het een impact op teamleden en het teamwerk. Desondanks voelen Vlaamse leraren zich niet altijd verantwoordelijk of geautoriseerd om te reageren of denken ze dat dat niet nuttig zou zijn. Verder blijkt uit onze resultaten dat confrontatie en steun/advies de minst vaak voorkomende reacties van collega's zijn, en dat leraren 'tolerantie' beschouwen als de meest voorkomende reactie van hun directies. Deze bevindingen roepen belangrijke vragen op omtrent de rol van collega's in het omgaan met leraaronderpresteren en tonen aan dat het noodzakelijk is om aandacht te hebben voor deze collega's bij het bestuderen of aanpakken van leraaronderpresteren.

Kernwoorden: Onderpresterende leraren, Reacties teamleden, Performantiemanagement, Survey-onderzoek

Appendix 1: Survey

Your experiences with underperforming co-workers.

Think of a recent example (*in the course of the past 2 school years*) of an underperforming co-worker, i.e. a co-worker who performed below the expectations, in one or more domains, according to your perception. The underperformance may concern task performance (working with students, team work and/or school tasks), or the behaviour of the co-worker.

Think of this co-worker when answering the questions below.

Here you can find some statements about the type of underperformance of your co-worker. This concerns your perception. There are no right or wrong answers.

My colleague did not or not adequately perform his/her tasks in...
(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- Handling diversity in the classroom/ differentiation
- Contributing to working groups, projects or other school tasks
- Fulfilling administrative tasks
- Following up on agreements and task allocations
- Consulting and collaborating with colleagues
- Quality of instruction/didactics
- Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development
- Quality of teaching content
- Classroom management, creating a favorable learning climate
- Cooperation with parents or others

My co-worker acted counterproductively or negatively, or misbehaved, concerning…
(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- Intentional lack of effort

- Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements
- Inappropriate or unethical behavior towards co-workers
- Inappropriate or unethical behavior towards students
- Illegitimate absences

How serious was the underperformance?
(Answering options: Not serious at all, Rather not serious, neutral, Rather serious, Very serious)

How long did the underperformance last, according to you?

- It was a one-time incident
- The underperformance lasted less than one school year
- The underperformance lasted more than one school year
- The underperformance is still ongoing
- Do not know

How did you detect the underperformance? (multiple answers possible)

- I detected or observed it myself
- I was informed by the underperformer
- I was informed by informed by other co-worker(s)
- I was informed by my principal
- I was informed by student(s)
- I was informed by parent(s)

Here are a number of statements about the impact of your co-worker's underperformance. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.
(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- The underperformance caused me a lot of frustrations/ concerns
- The underperformance burdened my workload
- The underperformance had a negative impact on my performance
- The underperformance harmed the team (team work or atmosphere)

Here are a number of statements about the causes of your co-worker's underperformance. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement. This concerns your perception. There are no right or wrong answers.

(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- My colleague lacked the necessary (up to date) knowledge or skills
- My colleague was not motivated
- My colleague had a faulty vision on education or the teacher's job
- My colleague had limited psychological strength/resilience
- The cause was my colleague's bad character or personality
- The cause was related to my colleague's private life
- The cause were pupils/students
- The cause was task allocation
- The cause was my principal or school policy

Here are a number of statements about your working relationship with the co-worker, in the time period preceding his/her underperformance. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.

(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- We had an intense collaboration/working relationship
- We had a good collaboration/working relationship
- We worked in the same department
- We worked on the same school project or in the same working group
- We met each other outside school/ private relationship
- We taught common students

How did your principal respond to the underperformance? Please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.

(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- My principal was not aware of the underperformance.
- My principal has tolerated or ignored underperformance.
- My principal confronted my colleague about underperformance.
- My principal has given my colleague a formal warning, sanction or negative evaluation.
- My principal coached or provided support to my colleague to address the underperformance.
- The principal fired my colleague.
- The principal took compensating measures (e.g. reduced responsibilities from my colleague).
- The principal informed third parties (e.g. school board) about the underperformance.
- My principal asked me and/or other teachers to respond to the underperformance.
- My principal monitored the underperformance closely.

How did your other co-workers respond to the underperformance?

(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- My other co-workers were not aware of the situation.
- (Some) other co-workers have tolerated or ignored the underperformance.
- (Some) other co-workers talked to my co-worker about the underperformance.
- (Some) other co-workers have distanced themselves from my co-worker.
- (Some) other co-workers have supported or coached my co-worker to deal with underperformance.
- (Some) other co-workers have tried to compensate for the underperformance as much as possible.
- (Some) other c co-workers have informed the principal about the underperformance.

Your views on responding and responses

Your view on responding to the underperformance.

Think of the underperforming co-worker, when answering the questions below. How did you think about responding to the underperformance, when you learned about it? Please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.

(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- I thought it was necessary for someone to respond.
- I thought it was unnecessary for anyone to respond to the underperformance.
- I thought someone should take action.
- I did not consider it my responsibility to take action.
- I felt it was my duty to respond to the underperformance.
- I thought I should do something.
- I felt I had the right to respond to the underperformance
- I felt that I would be out of line for me to react to the underperformance.
- I did not think it was appropriate to respond to the underperformance in my position.
- I didn't think I could influence the underperformance in any way, even if I took action.
- I thought if I responded, I would have a positive impact on the underperformance.
- I thought if I responded, it would improve my working relationship with my colleague.

Your responses to the underperformance.

Here you find some statements about the way in which you responded to the underperformance. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.

(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- I spoke to my co-worker about the underperformance.
- I pointed out to my co-worker the consequences of his/ her underperformance.
- I asked my co-worker to do something about the underperformance.
- I explained to my co-worker why I had trouble with the underperformance.
- I informed the principal about the underperformance.
- I asked the principal to take action.
- I explained to my principal why I perceived this as underperformance.
- I made my principal aware of the consequences of the underperformance.
- I distanced myself from my co-worker (in the period of underperformance).
- I tried to avoid my co-worker as much as possible (in the period of underperformance).
- From then on I tried to reduce my cooperation with my co-worker to a minimum.
- I decided to ignore my co-worker (in the period of underperformance).
- I (temporarily) took over one or more tasks or responsibilities from my co-worker.
- I tried to minimize the damage of the underperformance.
- I tried to compensate for the underperformance as much as possible.
- I advised my co-worker how to address his / her underperformance.
- I supported my co-worker emotionally during the period of underperformance.
- I offered my co-worker help to improve his / her underperformance
- I showed understanding to my co-worker for the underperformance.
- I informed other co-workers about the underperformance.
- I explained to other co-workers why I perceived this as underperformance.
- I offered a listening ear to co-workers who wanted to talk to me about the situation.

General views and experiences

Your general views on responding to underperforming co-workers.

The statements below do not longer concern your co-worker, but concern responding to underperforming co-workers in general (i.e. co-workers who underperform at some moment, in some domain). Please indicate to what extent

you agree with each statement.
(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

- As a teacher, I have the responsibility to take action when a co-worker underperforms.
- It is inappropriate to respond to a co-worker's underperformance from my position.
- It should be possible for co-workers to respond to each other's underperformance.
- I feel comfortable reacting when a co-worker underperforms.
- It is not in my character / personality to respond to underperforming co-workers.

Your principal's vision on co-worker responses.
Please indicate to what extent you agree with the statements below. This concerns your perception. There are no right or wrong answers. (In case you have more than one principal, please give your global judgment for the team of principals.)
(Answering options: Totally disagree, Rather disagree, Agree nor disagree, Rather agree, Totally agree, Do not know/does not apply)

My principal…

- considers it to (partly) be the task of teachers to respond to an underachieving colleague.
- wants teachers to notify him / her when a co-worker underperforms.
- has a clear vision of the role that teachers have when a co-worker underperforms.

Your perception of the incidence of teacher underperformance
This is the last question of this survey. What percentage of teachers in your school do you think are currently underperforming in each of the areas below? This is about your global estimate.

Performing one's job below the expectations, concerning:

- Quality of teaching content
- Quality of instruction/didactics

- Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development
- Handling classroom diversity or differentiation
- Classroom management; creating a favorable learning climate
- Consulting or collaborating with colleagues
- Following up on agreements or task allocations
- Contributing to work groups, projects or other school tasks
- Fulfilling administrative tasks
- Cooperation with parents or third parties

Posing counterproductive behavior, regarding:

- Inappropriate or unethical behavior towards students
- Inappropriate or unethical behavior towards co-workers
- Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements
- Intentional lack of effort
- Illegitimate absences

Thank you for your time! If you have any comments or questions, please write them here: