

## Journal of Learning for Development - JL4D, Vol 1, No 2 (2014)

# Moon, Bob. (2013). *Teacher Education and the Challenge of Development: A Global Analysis*. New York: Routledge.

*Mike Younger*

VOL. 1, No. 2

This is a wide-ranging, ambitious book that sets out to explore the connectivities between teacher education and the development agenda, in the context of low- and middle-income economies. In four distinct sections, it brings together authors who have engaged centrally with the debates over the last two decades to explore international dilemmas about teacher supply and teacher quality, contextualised within large population countries and other countries within the global South, and explores new strategies for teacher education and teacher development.

The first section of the book analyses assumptions that underlie the present structures of teacher education, presenting a sharp and incisive discussion of the capacity of large-scale, teacher education systems to produce an adequate supply of appropriately trained teachers. The links between the characteristics and qualities of teachers and pupil achievement are highlighted, and issues of ongoing teacher professional development, teachers' working conditions and teacher retention, within a context of economic and cost constraint, are explored with clarity and penetration.

Section 2 provides four case studies (China, Nigeria, India and Brazil) which focus on governments' responses to the challenges of teacher supply where school systems are both large and growing rapidly. There is some unevenness here, in both length and depth of analysis, but there is nonetheless a fascinating detail and perceptive analysis of change and progress in the individual countries. The balance between local and national initiatives and modes of control, the impact of regional tensions and inequalities, different approaches to teacher education and professional development, and the extent to which educational performance has shown genuine improvements, are recurring themes, explored to a greater or lesser degree in each context.

In the third section, a range of research studies address the dimensions of quality teaching and teachers, with a refreshing and innovative focus on the lives of teachers, how they make sense of their roles and exist meaningfully as teachers within the context of very challenging working conditions, and, crucially, how they succeed in their mission to educate. Taking a different perspective from the all too familiar rhetoric of absentee, unqualified, poor quality teachers, this focus on teachers' lives in Ghana, Pakistan, Sudan and Tanzania is rich, insightful and imaginative, and offers a vital lens for further research on effective teachers and teaching.

New strategies for teacher education and teacher development provide the focus for the concluding section of this volume. Here, the evidence from the previous chapters is drawn together to challenge the predominance of traditional campus based models of teacher training. Thus, it is here, in chapters by Anamuah-Mensah et al and by Power that the potential of new models, developed through needs analysis and structured around networks, hubs and banks, are reviewed, and the role of mobile communications and open educational resources are explored. In a powerful and critically reflective final chapter, Moon and Umar propose a reorientation of the teacher education and development agenda, through an analysis based not just on the numbers of teachers required and the nature and length of pre-service training but on a re-examination of the nature and staffing of the initial and continuing teacher education curriculum, the support offered to teachers in their posts, particularly to women teachers working in rural contexts, and how to achieve change in the discourse within which teachers lead their professional lives.

This volume is, then, a welcome addition to the literature on teacher education within the context of the global South and the goals of the Education For All (EFA) agenda. It offers a considered, perceptive and holistic overview, and gives voice to some new directions for our consideration. It is particularly refreshing to have an opportunity to focus on the in-depth case studies of China, India, Nigeria and Brazil, although there is a feeling perhaps of a missed opportunity here to examine in more detail the circumstances and pre-conditions which have sparked the genuine improvements in educational performance in some of those contexts, improvements which are merely hinted at in the introduction to Section 2 (pp. 53-54). Similarly, the research studies in Section 3 offer a freshness and vitality which present new perspectives and an originality that should prompt new direction in our teaching and research; here, particularly, the focus on women teachers is deservedly addressed in some detail, and the chapters by Tao (on teacher capabilities in Tanzanian primary schools) and by Aslam and Kingdom (on teacher practices which influence pupils' achievements) are invaluable additions to the literature.

Inevitably there are quibbles: final editing might have been tighter (page numbers are missing in the text on p. 54; social networking has had a profound effect, rather than a profound affect, on p. 87; some sentences lack verbs, as on p. 101), and the freedom offered by the editor and the variety of styles adopted by the 22 contributors mean that some chapters are more rigorous and convincing than others. At times, too, fascinating issues are raised but not developed in sufficient detail for this reader: Dembele and Miaro II's overview of promising paths in pedagogical innovations (pp. 194-195), for example, promises a rich discussion which does not materialise; equally, Moon and Umar's sevenfold analysis, offered as a concluding chapter, merits much more discussion and might perhaps have provided a structure for the whole volume. Finally, despite its title, much of the focus of the volume is on the continuing education and professional development of teachers, and more attention to pre-service initial teacher education would have ensured a more balanced volume.

Despite these reservations, however, there is no doubt that this is an invaluable addition to the global debate, in the context of EFA. The authors offer new perspectives on well-known themes, present case studies which raise new issues and yet more challenges for policy-makers, teacher educators and academics, and suggest new directions for research and for policy.

---

**Mike Younger** works at Cambridge University. E-mail: [mry20@cam.ac.uk](mailto:mry20@cam.ac.uk)