



Content list available at <http://ijltr.urmia.ac.ir>

***Iranian Journal
of
Language Teaching Research
(Book Review)***



International Research, Policy and Practice in Teacher Education: Insider Perspective, Jean Murray, Anja Swennen, Clare Kosnik (Eds.). Springer Nature Switzerland AG (2019). i-xv, 216 pp., ISBN 978-3-030-01610-4(pbk)

Boudjemaa Dendenne ^a, Ali Derakhshan ^{b,*}

^a *École Normale Supérieure, Sétif, Algeria*


^b *Golestan University, Iran*

In the age of globalization and international competitiveness, teacher education (TE) emerges as a national necessity in governments' attempts to promote "knowledge societies" (p. 1). The primary impetus behind *International Research, Policy and Practice in Teacher Education: Insider Perspectives*, edited by Jean Murray, Anja Swennen, and Clare Kosnik, is to deepen our understanding of how teacher educators' perspectives as insiders could make changes in policy, research, and practice. In addition to an Afterword chapter, the volume amalgamates 13 chapters written by twenty-five authors. In the Preface, A. Lin Goodwin brings into light the inconsistencies, quick sands, and anxieties that teacher educators (TEs) have to live by. For example, even after joining academia, TE is still regarded "as a field without a knowledge base" (p. v). Despite the close inspection over their job, TEs do not totally submit to the policy makers' directives. For Goodwin, this collection comes at an opportune moment when the world is witnessing a "global reform movement" (p. vi).

The introductory chapter tackles the implicit side and the impact of policy shifts on TE. The editors delineate some critical issues in TE, like the move into academia, the practicum/practice turn, the theory-practice, and university-school dichotomies. Chapter 2, by Päivi Hökkä, Matti Rautiainen, Tiina Silander, and Anneli Eteläpelto, delves into "collective agency-promoting leadership" (p. 15) practices in the Finnish context. The authors provide an in-depth account of how four school administrators collaboratively attend to three critical issues in their endeavor to build collective leadership: creating collective leadership practices, enhancing the agency of staff, and building leaders' collective agency. The authors wrap up stating firmly that "the era of individually based leadership is over (p. 26)".

* Corresponding author: Department of English Language & Literature, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran
Email address: a.derkhshan@gu.ac.ir

© Urmia University Press

 10.30466/ijltr.2019.120740

Chapter 3, written by Simone White, is a case study of a typical partnership between a school and a university in Australia. The author underlines the practicum orientation of partnerships as portrayed in official documents. Analyzing the interviews of three TEds reveals the sources of frustration, where lack of symmetry and mutuality are among the obstacles to “real partnership” (p. 40). In Chapter 4, Catherine Furlong and Maeve O’Brien, exploring teacher educator identities in an Irish context, elaborate on three major findings. First, TEds in more traditional colleges ratify an identity of a practicing teacher while TEds coming from universities are more subject specialists. Second, Irish institutions’ directives orient towards shaping the TEds’ identity into a teacher identity whereas TEds position themselves alternately in teacher and academic posts, “a tightrope walker” (p. 55) situation. Third, assessment practices tend to intensify tensions of performance and performativity for TEds.

Chapter 5, by Clare Kosnik, Pooja Dharamshi, and Lydia Menna, depicts a qualitative study on English TEds’ use of digital technologies in TE programs (in Canada, the USA, Australia, and England). While the interviewed teachers concur with each other in the usefulness and purposeful implementation of digital technologies in TE, the stark disparity lies in the actual use of these technologies (Torsani, 2016). Only few skillful TEds employ technology for the co-construction of knowledge. In Chapter 6, Cheryl J. Craig attempts to answer a central question exploring a less-researched area in TE: “what preservice, practicing teachers and teacher educators need in order to feel sustained in their careers?” (p. 79). Via her personal narrative enquiry, the author highlights the crucial importance of stories, counter narratives, knowledge communities, and the dire need of transformation in teaching and TE.

Drawing on her personal experience, in Chapter 7, Clive Beck demonstrates how TEds in Canada model a constructivist/reflective pedagogy, which they often advocate in theory, and how to transmit it to teacher students. Beck reckons that such a pedagogy in TE programs should be built on (1) integration of theory and practice, (2) relevance of subject teaching, (3) avoidance of heavy readings/lecturing, (4) giving voices/choices to all students, (5) flexibility and engagement, (6) individuality of assignments, (7) professionalism, and (8) connection of programs to practicum experiences.

Using biographical research methodology with two male and one female Dutch primary TEds, Anja Swennen and Monique Volman in Chapter 8, aptly illuminate how these three TEds construct their professional identity during three periods of Teachers Colleges, Pedagogical Academy, and Pedagogical Academy Primary Education (1952-to date) in the Netherlands. The findings reveal that their professional identity is impacted not only by their personal history but by their context of TE as well. The findings of this study could have been enriched had the authors collected data from more participants.

Set in the Norwegian context, Chapter 9, written by Marit Ulvik and Kari Smith, inquires into the role of higher education-based TEds’ competence from their own and student teachers’ viewpoints. Based on data gathered through a questionnaire and interviews, the authors cogently articulate that TEds need to reconcile theory and practice through action research and inquiry-based learning, culminating in practical wisdom. Besides, student teachers report that they are in need of pre-service teacher education, prioritizing critical reflections, practical skills as well as TEds’ teaching skills and personal attributes.

Drawing on an interpretive qualitative design using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, Jean Murray, Gerry Czerniawski, and Patti Barber in Chapter 10 flesh out how 442 student teachers perceived and valued their TEds’ identities, forms of knowledge, and attitudes. In their eyes, experiential knowledge of school teaching, subject knowledge, and certain

interpersonal skills such as adopting the ethos of care and responsibility for student progression are prioritized.

In their contribution, Corinne van Velzen, Monique Volman, and Mieke Brekelmans, in Chapter 11, acclimatize to collaborative mentoring approach (CMA), modeling, and scaffolding as mentoring tools during co-teaching of five different teams of mentors and student teachers. The authors adroitly conclude that CMA is more effective than traditional mentoring activities and that co-teaching is deemed a promising mentoring approach although it is time consuming, and requires expertise and practice to share responsibilities.

Chapter 12, by Gerry Czerniawski, Warren Kidd, and Jean Murray, contextualizes school- and university-based TE in England from the viewpoints of 22 interviewed TEds. The authors' findings corroborate that there exist some differences between school- and university-based TE regarding the interpretations of the knowledge, skills, ethics, values, attributes as well as the role of educational research and different pathways to becoming a teacher. The authors warn that school-based teaching system "risks the marginalization and eventual disappearance of a theory-informed future teaching profession" (p. 183).

Situated in the ethnomethodological framework in the Republic of Ireland, the penultimate chapter draws on six exploratory and interpretive case studies. Rose Dolan conceptualizes the strategies employed by pre-service TEds to transmute their knowledge-in-action into knowledge-of-practice and intermingle the theoretical underpinnings with the practical knowledge, to become second-order-practitioners. Intrapersonal and interpersonal processes, face-to-face interactions, professional conversations, and group meetings are the strategies enumerated that can inform policy makers for both specific induction and professional development for TEds. The findings of the study reported in this chapter could have benefited the readers had the author triangulated the data through observation and questionnaires. The last chapter, Afterword, by the editors, stresses the fact that policy changes have led to some considerable shifts (in professional identities, roles, epistemologies, practices, values, autonomy, agency etc.) for TEds, mentors, and teachers as insiders. The authors pose some insightful questions to be taken into consideration in future research.

The book has offered many merits; however, the "international" in the book's title is seemingly questionable. As the book does not go well beyond Europe and the Anglo world, it cannot be perceived by the target readership as truly "international", but rather as "Anglo-European". The focus on the developed world may inhibit, we would argue, the studies' findings from being taken-for-granted in other contexts. Therefore, given the idiosyncrasies and the non-generalizability of each practicing context, the volume's studies can be (and should be) duplicated in other contexts. The role of multilingualism as one of the dominant social and political dimensions of language classrooms is indubitable. Since the present volume views TE internationally, it merits dedicating some space to translanguaging. TEds and student teachers can adopt translanguaging practices to strategically renegotiate the incremental norms for representing their identities and knowledge (Hillman, Graham, & Eslami, 2019).

All in all, this thoroughly thought-provoking book can be of great interest to a wide range of readership in TE such as student teachers, TEds, and policy makers. Particularly, foreign language practitioners and researchers stand to enormously benefit from this timely and valuable contribution, given that many of the issues discussed, like autonomy, agency, and identity are gaining momentum in their domain. Moreover, the insider perspective adopted enables policy makers to assess how their reforms are being perceived and mediated.

References

- Hillman, S., Graham, K. M., & Eslami, Z. R. (2019). Teachers' translanguaging ideologies and practices at an international branch campus in Qatar. *English Teaching & Learning*, 43(1), 41-63.
- Torsani, S. (2016). *CALL teacher education: Language teachers and technology integration*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.