



Do universities have a role in the education and training of teachers? An international analysis of policy and practice

edited by Bob Moon, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, 270 pp., £31.50 (paperback), ISBN 13-9781107571907

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BOOK REVIEWS

Do universities have a role in the education and training of teachers? An international analysis of policy and practice, edited by Bob Moon, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, 270 pp., £31.50 (paperback), ISBN 13-9781107571907

The roles of universities in teacher education (TE) have long been questioned (Moon 2013). To meet this challenge, the book under review presents the policies and practices of TE in 12 countries across five continents around the globe and manages to uncover the mysteries of how universities play their roles in TE.

The whole book is organised into 14 chapters, which can be further grouped as introduction and summary (Chapters 1 and 14), and descriptions of TE in 12 countries/areas (Chapters 2 to 13). Chapter 1 presents the aims of researching the roles of universities in TE and offers a brief introduction of each chapter. Chapter 14 summarises the whole book and examines five implications drawn from the 12 cases. The rest generally follow the format of briefly reviewing the history of TE development in each country, examining the reasons behind the problems of TE, exploring the roles of universities in TE, and finally providing solutions to future TE. In addition to these general patterns of storytelling to introduce TE in each nation, these 12 chapters have their own foci as follows.

Chapters 2 to 5, 7 and 8 portray the picture of TE in six developed countries. Chapter 2 sheds light on the practice of TE in Finland and elaborates on the positive effects of the collaborative guided-teaching practice between university teachers and local schoolteachers. Chapter 3 pays tribute to the efforts made by the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway in researching how to carry out effective teacher education. Chapter 4 carries out a transnational analysis on the roles of teachers in the UK, positing that teacher educators in universities should redefine their professional identities in order to promote their roles in TE. Chapter 5 elaborates on the contributions of reforms (1990–2015) to pre-service teacher training in France and argues that overlooking student teachers' needs in training has caused some problems. Chapter 7 points out a tendency in which teacher colleges are being marginalised in educating pre-service teachers in the USA, because of the decrease of governmental investment and emergence of non-university TE programmes. Chapter 8 makes an in-depth analysis of the current status of education faculties in the Australian university system and proposes the solutions to change the status, for example, by paying due attention to connecting with local schools and offering more teaching practice for students in TE programmes.

Chapters 9–11 tell us about TE in three developing countries, India, China and Chile. Chapter 9 mainly talks about the roles played by the Teacher Education Institution – Department of Education (TEI-DOE) in India. Chapter 10 focuses on how Chinese teacher education universities or colleges are endeavouring to improve the qualities of pre-service and in-service teacher education. Chapter 11 points out the contributions of research on TE by the centres in the Chilean leading universities to the development of teacher education.

Chapters 6, 12 and 13 delineate the political, economic, religious, ideological, and historical factors in TE to further highlight the roles of universities in Mediterranean (for example, Malta) and African countries (South Africa and Uganda). For example, Eloff, in Chapter 12, argues that

the shutdown of teacher training colleges, multilingualism and the imbalance between doing research and training pre-service teachers slow down the development of TE in South Africa.

Bob Moon, the editor of this book, manages to convince the readers of the vital roles of universities in TE via presenting 12 cases in different nations. This evidence-based way of organising the whole book reinforces the readers' positive answers to the question 'Do universities have a role in the education and training of teachers?' as the title of the book asks. The roles of universities in TE discussed in this book provide us with several thought-provoking implications for teacher education in the future, some of which are worth revisiting. Firstly, future TE programmes should design more research-based and practice-oriented modules. It is suggested that in teacher training programmes, teachers should learn how to conduct educational research, whose positive effects have been demonstrated by the successful example of Finnish teacher education. In addition, encouraging more teaching practice is advised as a good way of cultivating high-level pre-service teachers. The book further claims 'this [research-based] interest, if linked to a stronger focus on practice, could provide an important dimension to rethinking the approach to university-led teacher education' (p. 255) to underscore the importance of research and practice in TE.

Secondly, universities, as a major force in TE, should endeavour to provide both pre- and in-service teacher education, the latter to engage graduates with a sustainable professional development. The third point is to suggest that university-led TE could be carried out more effectively and achievably by considering local political, economic, geographical, ideological factors. Every country has its special features within various contexts of TE, which means that no single pattern should be copied or followed. Many examples and numerous suggestions for TE programme design in different countries have been demonstrated in the book. For example, Chapter 13 argues that teacher-training institutions at all levels should adjust to changes in school syllabus. In the reform to maximise the functions of universities in TE and to empower the university-school collaboration, universities should make gradual steps in taking collaboration further. The last point implied by the book is that university-led TE should fully prepare for the challenges from non-university TE institutions because, as some of the chapters in this book have demonstrated (e.g. Chapter 7, teacher education in USA), many non-university TE programmes have emerged in educating pre- or in-service teachers. To meet this challenge, as different cases in this book suggest, education faculties in universities should consider tightening their collaboration with local schools, thereby encouraging them to offer more teaching practice to students.

On the whole, this book opens a window to TE in different nations, exploring the ways of enhancing the roles of universities in TE, and leaving the scope for further research on university-led TE. It is suitable for education policymakers, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers who have an interest in teacher education.

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The teacher gap, by Rebecca Allen and Sam Sims, London, Routledge, 2018, 156 pp., £14.99 (pbk), ISBN 9781138730892

In educational research we identify questions for investigation and report on the findings to provide a better understanding of the question and potentially effect positive change. *The Teacher Gap* (2018) initially suggests three questions, or ‘teacher gaps’, that require exploration:

- (1) What is the difference between the importance of teachers and how they are treated?
- (2) What is the difference in the number of teachers needed and those we have?
- (3) What is the difference in the quality of the teachers we need and the quality we have?

As context for these questions the reader is offered Professor Rob Coe’s (2013) stark statement on education in England at the start and close of the book that ‘standards have not risen; teaching has not improved’ (Coe 2013 cited in Allen and Sims 2018, 1). The stagnation of the English education (and inference of accountability for this and thereby potential solutions) is adopted as the framework for exploring the authors’ exploration of teaching as a profession, teacher supply and teaching quality in the classroom.

Initial teacher education in England is a pluralistic system, with all of the varied models, as the authors point out, being ‘almost entirely front-loaded’ (18). What they mean by this is that we expect our teachers to learn how to do the job effectively in a short period of time (although the undergraduate routes into teaching are not mentioned and do take three years), rather than hone and develop their skills as teachers over an extended period of time, for example as the medical profession do. The authors call for a two year pre-qualification ‘training’ phase and an additional four year period ‘development’ phase leading to full qualification (122).

This solution for teaching as a sustainable and effective profession appears akin to the professional formation required in further education (FE). Professional formation is expected, but not funded, within FE once an individual has qualified to teach at the level of the Diploma in Education and Training (DET) or Certificate in Education and Training (CET). These qualifications may be within or without a university accredited Post or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) respectively. Professional formation leads to the professional recognition of QTLS (qualified teacher learning and skills), which gives parity in the school sector to FE teachers. While the intention of professional formation is to support continuing professional development (CPD) for FE teachers, its execution through voluntary paid membership of the professional body, the Society of Education and Training, and lack of funding in FE to support teachers engaging with CPD, has resulted in low participation. This needs to act as a warning to policy makers on how to implement professional formation for the school sector.