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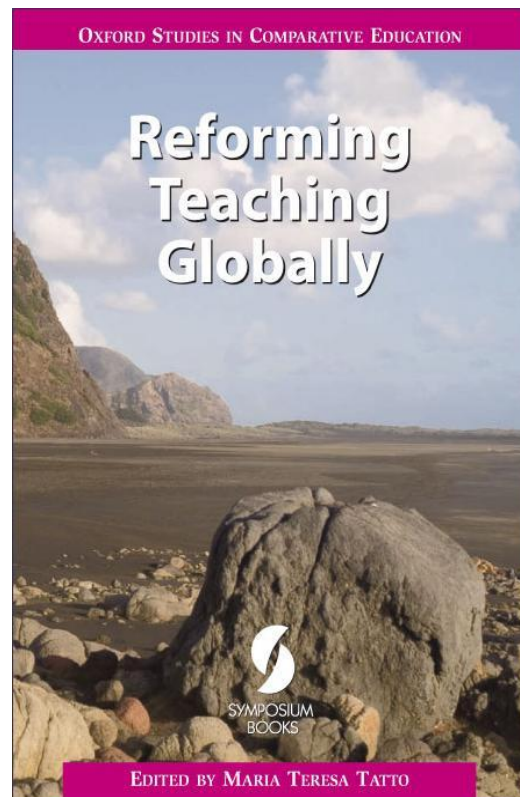
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Introduction

Overview

Reforming Teaching Globally begins with the promise of shedding light on how teaching is affected by the movement of reform discourses of restructuring, accountability, achievement, and quality. By taking us inside ten national contexts, the authors introduce us to the ways internal and global forces interact resulting in educational change that affects teachers and the conceptualization of teaching. “At this time of vigorous change in education and particularly in teacher-related policy, international comparisons are essential to explore how the multiplicity of forces unleashed by ongoing global educational reforms are currently affecting teachers and teaching” (p. 7). Indeed, an attraction of this compilation is the shift in focus away from examining reform outcomes toward examining reform processes while critiquing one particular discourse—accountability, throughout the investigations.

Accountability mechanisms, Tatto suggests in her brief introduction, may not be new to



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education systems, but the number of them at multiple levels of educational institutions in the context of global reform of schools is noteworthy. Curricular standards, high-stakes testing, new teacher credentials, institutional accreditation, and performance incentives all are aimed at taking teachers to task for their students' achievement. Often these mechanisms are linked back to national goals of improving global economic performance and are "general and acontextual" (p. 10). The compilation with its focus on teachers pushes us to consider the impact such decontextualized accountability standards have on the epistemological foundations of national education systems: What knowledge should be taught in this so-called moment of globalization? Who is qualified to teach this knowledge? How should the "ideal teacher" (p. 15) be educated?

This compilation makes clear that the nature of accountability schemes called for in global teacher reforms merits further scrutiny, particularly from national perspectives. However the argument of the book (explicitly stated on page 15) does not push aside the fact that the intensive educational restructuring the book content examines is taking place in a globalization era. Instead, Tatto situates the national-level reforms within a broader global process of restructuring economic, political and social institutions. It is the last group of institutions into which teacher education and teacher's work takes place and thus Tatto astutely pushes the reader to contemplate the multiple meanings embedded within the term social and how globalization is shaping those meanings. How are globalization era reforms affecting different societies' definitions of "the ideal person" and the "*ideal teacher for the ideal person*" (author's emphasis, p. 15)? The thesis of the book, clearly stated near the beginning of the introduction, is that decontextualized accountability measures for teachers and teaching are "taking control of education away from teachers and teacher educators . . . and eliminating the very

mechanisms that can help teacher to effectively increase education quality" (p. 13). Many of the chapters ironically reveal this phenomenon.

The edited collection has a simple and straightforward format beginning with a brief introduction written by Maria Teresa Tatto, the editor. In eleven pages, Tatto outlines a theoretical approach to the worldwide trend in teacher reform. The rest of the book consists of two parts containing five chapters each and a brief conclusion authored by Tatto and David N. Plank. Part I of the book is titled "Reform Emphasising Increased Control over Teachers' Work and Performance." This section introduces the reader to China, Germany, Bulgaria, Canada, and then to the United States. (Each chapter is described separately below.) It is not unclear why these five countries are presented together as one section. Unfortunately, no section introduction is included, leaving the reader with the task of drawing her / his own assumptions as to why these five national cases fit together under the selected title. Each chapter is structured differently, presenting a first challenge to the reader who wishes to compare / contrast cross-national teacher reform. Part II of the book is titled "Reform Emphasising Teachers' Professional Knowledge and Discretion." In this section the reader travels to Mexico, Chile, Japan, Philippines, and Guinea. Again, the editors do not reveal to the reader the rationale for the grouping of these national cases beyond the title.

Review Structure

Our review continues with a brief descriptive overview of the ten nations analyzed in the order in which they are arranged in the book. We provide subtitles to denote the division of the chapters into the two book parts mentioned above. Lastly, a critical analysis of the book's ability to meet its intended goal is presented.

Reforms Emphasising Increased Control over Teachers' Work and Performance

Dilemmas in Reforming China's Teaching: Assuring "Quality" in Professional Development

The thesis of this chapter resides in the struggle China faces not only to reform education but to move teachers unwilling to change their old way of behaving and thinking. Of these reforms China seeks to address the inequalities and lack of opportunity many Chinese face. This chapter therefore, intends to explore the challenges China faces in regards to building new accountability systems and increase the professional development of teachers. Two contrasting vignettes are presented to illustrate the diverse contexts of teachers' work. Due to its size, both in population and land mass, it is difficult to unify teachers work across China. These two vignettes speak from the teachers' perspectives regarding the effect of educational reform. A clear illustration is drawn; despite the countries attempt to unify the educational system, the workload and obstacles teachers face is as varied as the country itself. Depending on what part of the country a teacher is working, the experience of teaching will be very different in regards to how educational reforms affect their work.

The Impact of Global Tendencies on the German Teacher Education System.

This chapter canvases an illustration regarding the backdrop in which Germany's educational system rests. Germany's educational system has preserved, relatively unchanged through both World Wars and although once considered a strength, these traditional ways have more recently contribute to limitations, causing educational reform to be slow. Additionally, historical, political, and socio-economic considerations are explored regarding the country's resistance to change. From this perspective, the current chapter focuses on the educational transition from

state controlled to university-controlled teacher educational programs along with the subsequent accountability programs. This leads into a larger discussion regarding the globalization of teacher education in Germany through reforms such as the European Union. Although a throughout analysis is provided, there lacks the personal account of how such changes impact the lives and work of teachers in Germany today.

The Influence of the World Educational Changes on the Teacher Educational System in Bulgaria

The present chapter seeks to explore the incongruence regarding in the stability the Bulgarian educational system has maintained despite the changes in their economy and social status of teachers. Through democratic reform Bulgarian teachers, once considered highly respectable individuals, teachers have diminished their status due to the fact that children are less competitive on entrance exams. The consequences of these changes are discussed effecting both teachers pay and the school resources. In order to illustrate these effects, a case study is provided on the general effects of mathematics teachers. This analysis highlights the Bulgarian philosophy, such that math teachers should be highly trained in their subject matter and as a result lack pedagogical training and the diverse ability to teach in other subject matters.

Ontario, Canada: The State Asserts its Voice or Accountability Supersedes Responsibility.

The current chapter seeks to explore how reforms are changing teachers' lives and work in Canada. This is discussed in the context of the changing curriculum, qualifications, and teacher education. The chapter leads into a discussion of the irony that increasing the professional status of teachers brings to the management and higher level of control over schools. The chapter closes with a discussion regarding the governing bodies that control the structure in

which teachers' work is controlled along with accountability measures that are formed in between these structures. Although this is done in the context of the impact these reforms have had on the lives of teachers, it lacks a vivid example to illustrate on a personal level the effects on teachers.

The New Accountability and Teachers' Work in Urban High Schools in the USA.

The focus of the current chapter remains in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) regarding the systems of reforms created in order to promote accountability in CPS schools. The chapter presents a discussion on the development of these reforms, stemming in response to the huge deficit CPS school boards faced and subsequent cuts state legislatures made. Funding and state aid was thus decreased until CPS were able to increase student performance. In order to speak to the experiences of teachers in CPS schools, the author refers to a high school in which he calls "Colson." This illustration helps the reader to understand how schools were shaped by the reforms and how these policies changed teachers' work.

Reforms Emphasising Teachers' Professional Knowledge and Discretion

Mexico's Educational Reform and the Reshaping of Accountability on Teachers' Development and Work

The present chapter seeks to illustrate the current status of the Mexican educational system. Specifically, the Mexican government controls many of the administrative (i.e., school calendar, textbooks), educational (i.e., syllabi, curricula), and teacher training (i.e., programs, evaluative procedures) mandates. It has not been until more recent years that reforms have allowed educators more room regarding educational decision. Thus, in the context of low quality education, this chapter seeks to discuss both the historical and present reforms affecting all aspects of

education and their influence on the present Mexican educational system. As illustrated, however, that a discrepancy remains between these changes occurring in law and the implantations of these practices by teachers in the classroom.

Teachers and Accountability: the case of Chile.

The current chapter seeks to explore educational reform in regards to accountability, standards, evaluation, and incentives specific to how these changes have impacted and shaped teachers' work in Chile. A discussion follows centered on teacher training and policies regarding in-service evaluation of teachers' work. In order to increase the quality of teachers in Chile, two systems have been enacted. The first is a voluntary accreditation system that university undergraduate programs can subscribe to and the second is the enactment of law that requires the performance of teachers to be evaluated. The present chapter seeks to understand how these reforms have shaped and ensured the quality of teachers in Chile. To do this the author relies on dated Chilean legislation from the 90s along with his own personal experience.

Teacher Accountability and Curriculum Reform in Japan: a multi-level analysis of the 'Rainbow Plan'.

The present chapter provides a both a historical perspective and multi-level analysis of the adoption of the "Rainbow Plan" in Japan. As a result of a decreasing population of young adults, concern has stirred regarding the number of individuals that will enter the work force. Critical to Japanese government are reforms to the educational system that decrease the pressure and stress many children are placed under. Such change is occurring through the adoption of the Rainbow Plan. Thus, the current chapter details the goals and policies of the Rainbow Plan, as the Japanese government seeks to move away from the emphasis on test scores

and entrance exams and towards a national curriculum that includes “integrated studies” and mandates a shorter school week. These reforms help to both cut school cost and also reduce the stress and problem behaviors that have emerged in many of the Japanese schools.

Teacher Education and Accountability Policies for Improving Teaching Effectiveness in the Philippines.

The current chapter seeks to illustrate that despite the push from legislation to make education the most important priority for government spending, these efforts paid off in so far as increasing enrollment rates and completion rates through school, but did not increase poor test scores. Thus, to this day the Philippines continue to focus their attention on improving their educational system. Reforms regarding accountability and teacher quality and competence were made engendering such policies similar to the No Child Left Behind Act in the United States. As true in many countries, the effects of these policies are not always as in intended. The current chapter seeks to caution the read of these policies through the context of the Philippian experience.

Accountability in the Context of Teacher Empowerment: the Guinean experience.

The current chapter seeks to examine the reform system in Guinea which has predominately focuses on the reintegration of French into the school system. Historically, reforms during the socialist Cultural Revolution banned the use of French language only allowing the use of Guinean to be taught in school. However, upon the death of the Guinea leader, Sekou Toure, French return to the schools although not easily as it has not taught in 16 years. Thus, the current chapter focuses on the implementation of policies that have required the restructuring of curriculum for teachers and the construction of language upgrading centers throughout the

country. Teachers’ education has thus required enrollment in these centers. Many teachers have resisted this approach and more recent reforms have focused on policies to help the development, training, and professional practice of teachers in Guinea.

Critical Analysis and Conclusions

As the reader makes their way around the world, a narrative begins to emerge from within the national contexts, blending together at times into what may be a global narrative of teacher reform. Without the different names to the various education laws or reform efforts, the proposed changes blur together even within diverse contexts. Yet the content is not easily digested as a whole. The editors provide no assistance to those interested in making sense of the interconnections (and disjuncture) of national education reforms, leaving the reader with many unanswered questions about the connections and disconnections of the chapters. The same questions are left unanswered about the editor’s decision to divide the chapters into two sections. In reality, the compilation reads as many books-in-the-making. We found the collection to be more palatable when digested one nation at a time; we do not recommend the book be read cover-to-cover. The book would be most useful as an addition to a graduate-level comparative and international educational policy course.

The chapters that remain vivid and differentiated in our minds after reading the compilation are those that dive below the national reform discourse surface to provide a view of education policy from teachers’ perspectives. So much print has been dedicated to tracing out policy discourse, disconnected from the person’s who must interpret and practice the reform in a nation’s classroom. The selections that utilize teachers’ interpretation and practice of reforms—often to compare and contrast intra-national reform processes—contribute

important insight on the reform of teachers' work at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In a moment when the publishing complex frowns upon single case studies and mention of "a case" is a death notice for education research, the editors (and their publisher) should be commended for providing the educational community with in-depth views of one particular facet of national education reforms. The presentation of single-nation cases reveals the importance of national context in shaping education reform discourses into distinct processes of educational change. The compilation provides powerful examples that speak to the continued importance of historical, socio-cultural, political, and economic contexts in shaping teachers' work, attempts to reform that work, and education, more generally.

Nevertheless, the book is titled such that the reader will pick it up to learn about global trends affecting teachers' work. The title and the organization of the book content could be approached as a global case study of

education reform of teachers' work from particular localities. However, even if interpreted as such the lack of cross-national or regional analysis in the compilation leaves the reader craving a comparative perspective that sheds light on the reform of teaching globally. Without further justification for the book's title and arrangement of content, the reader is left to analyze and theorize global teacher reform on their own. In other words, the reader who picks up the book with the aim of learning more about reform of teachers' work from a global perspective may be disappointed. No cross-national, regional, or global analysis is provided. The vital work of theorizing the movement of reform discourse and text has been left for others to complete. What would that last, desired and anticipated chapter to the book reveal? How is education reform in China, Germany, Bulgaria, Canada, United States, Mexico, Chile, Japan, Philippines, and Guinea similar and different *and* shaped by the global movement of policy discourses and texts?

EDITOR /AUTHOR


Maria Teresa Tatto is an associate professor at the College of Education in Michigan State University. Her research is characterized by the use of an international-comparative framework to study educational reform and educational policy and their impact on schooling--particularly the role of teachers, teaching, and learning - within varied organizational, economic, political, and social contexts. Tatto is currently the director and principal investigator for the Teacher Education and Development Study in Mathematics or TEDS-M. This is the first comparative large-scale study to examine the institutions, processes and outcomes of teacher preparation and induction in close to 20 countries. This groundbreaking comparative study with a seven-year span (2002-2009) includes countries in Latin America, North America, Europe, Eurasia (Russia), Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The study is sponsored by the IEA and is funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation and the participating countries.

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