Anna Sullivan
Bruce Johnson
Michele Simons   *Editors*

Attracting and Keeping the Best Teachers

Issues and Opportunities

Springer

Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education

Volume 16

Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education disseminates original, research informed writing on the connections between teacher learning and professionalism in schools and higher education. Global in their coverage, the texts deal with the problems and practices of the field in different national and international cultural, policy and practice contexts. The methodology employed encompasses a broad spectrum of conceptual, theoretical, philosophical and empirical research activities. The series explicitly encompasses both the fields of schools and higher education.

The subject areas covered by the series are: professional learning in schools; contexts for professional learning; professional learning in higher education; change; the (new) meanings of professionalism in schools and higher education; training and development in schools and higher education; the 'well-being' agenda in schools and higher education; autonomy, compliance and effectiveness in schools and higher education; principal leadership in schools and higher education; middle-level leadership in schools and higher education.

More information about this series at http://www.springer.com/series/7908

Anna Sullivan • Bruce Johnson
Michele Simons

Editors

Attracting and Keeping the Best Teachers

Issues and Opportunities

Editors
Anna Sullivan
School of Education
University of South Australia
Adelaide, SA, Australia

Bruce Johnson
School of Education
University of South Australia
Adelaide, SA, Australia

Michele Simons
School of Education
Western Sydney University
Sydney, NSW, Australia

Acknowledgments

To the authors who contributed to this book, we thank you for your generosity and willingness to contribute to this book. Collectively, we hope that these chapters contribute to a greater understanding of the issues related to attracting and keeping the best teachers.

We would like to thank Kate Leeson for her assistance in managing the production and editing of the final draft. Her attention to detail and her patience is appreciated.

Contents

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

Check for updates

Anna Sullivan, Bruce Johnson, and Michele Simons

Abstract This chapter establishes the importance of attracting and retaining quality teachers to the profession. The chapter outlines emerging international concerns about changes in the teacher labour market and the importance of promoting early career teacher retention as demand for teachers intensifies. The chapter outlines the structure of the book and briefly describes each chapter and the contributions they make to the overall aims of the book.

1.1   Introduction

Effective planning and management of the teacher workforce is an ongoing concern of governments and education systems due to the difficulties of predicting the impact of economic, demographic and social factors on teacher supply and demand. Even sophisticated attempts at modelling teacher supply and demand are confounded by unpredictable changes in:

- The age, gender and location of qualified teachers seeking employment
- The numbers enrolling in teacher education courses and attrition levels from those courses
- Teachers' retirement intentions and behaviour across different locations, schooling levels and subject fields
- 'Non-retirement separations' or teacher attrition rates
- Teacher mobility across, and migration into, different countries

A. Sullivan (✉) · B. Johnson
School of Education, University of South Australia, Adelaide, SA, Australia
e-mail: anna.sullivan@unisa.edu.au; bruce.johnson@unisa.edu.au

M. Simons
School of Education, Western Sydney University, Sydney, NSW, Australia
e-mail: michele.simons@westernsydney.edu.au

- Student enrolments at different locations and schooling levels and within different education systems
- Student subject choices

In this introductory chapter, we highlight the extent of the problem of teacher attrition by drawing on research from developed countries and OECD projections for developing countries. We do this to establish the underlying rationale for this book – that downward trends in the supply of teachers, coupled with dramatic rises in the demand for teachers, necessitate an urgent reappraisal of how schooling systems and individual schools can retain quality teachers. We examine why the problems associated with attracting and retaining teachers to the profession continue to exist despite efforts to address the problems. To do this, we focus on retention because it is one of the factors that is most responsive to positive intervention in the complex field of teacher workforce management.

The retention of teachers in the profession continues to be an important issue in many countries (Craig 2017). Concerns about teacher shortages, the costs associated with teacher attrition and the impact of high teacher turnover on student achievement dominate the literature (e.g. Sutcher et al. 2016). In particular, teacher attrition is a major social, economic and educational problem because:

- Educating teachers who leave the profession early is a wasteful and inefficient use of public funds.
- Educational funding is diverted from school resources and facilities to recruitment and replacement.
- Schools are destabilised and disrupted by high staff turnover.
- Schools lose the expertise of new, high-achieving graduates.
- Student learning is compromised.
- The individual's costs are high when graduates' personal and career aspirations and plans are thwarted due to a negative transition to the teaching profession.

A recent collation of international research on teacher attrition 'International teacher attrition: multiperspective views' (Craig 2017) reported research on why teachers leave the profession. Some of these studies reported that teachers leaving the profession might be a positive move on a personal level (Smith and Ulvik 2017; Yinon and Orland-Barak 2017). This builds on earlier research that examines the tensions between attrition as a form of personal resilience and the situated and systemic failures to better support teachers to meet their professional and personal requirements (Sullivan and Johnson 2012). However, as Kelchtermans (2017) argues, teacher attrition and retention are interconnected as an 'educational issue', and there is a 'need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons' (p. 961). This need to retain good teachers is more pressing because of a diminishing supply of teachers.

The problem of teacher supply is a worldwide issue. There are extensive media reports of a current and impending teacher supply crisis in Germany (Isenson 2018), Sweden (Local 2017), Australia (Smith 2018), the United States (Picchi 2018), New Zealand (Newshub Staff 2018) and England (Syal 2018). The issue is so serious that the OECD has published the following projections of anticipated teacher shortages:

> By 2030, countries must recruit a total of 68.8 million teachers: 24.4 million primary school teachers and 44.4 million secondary school teachers …
>
> Of the 24.4 million teachers needed for universal primary education (UPE), 21 million will replace teachers who leave the workforce. The remaining 3.4 million, however, are additional teachers who are needed to expand access to school and underwrite education quality by reducing the numbers of children in each class to a maximum of 40.
>
> The need for additional teachers is even greater at the secondary level, with a total of 44.4 million teachers need by 2030, of which 27.6 million are to replace those who leave and an additional 16.7 million to ensure that every pupil is in a classroom with no more than 25 students per teacher on average. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016, p. 1)

Whilst these figures are global projections, the nature and extent of teacher shortages vary across and within countries. There are teacher shortages in certain subjects, geographical areas, levels of schooling and in 'hard-to-staff' schools. For example:

- There are widespread shortages of mathematics and science teachers in England (Foster 2018), the United States (Sutcher et al. 2016), New Zealand (New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association 2018) and Australia (Weldon 2015).
- Countries like Germany are experiencing a shortage of primary school teachers (Isenson 2018).
- There are teacher shortages in 'hard-to-staff', low-SES schools in the United States (Sutcher et al. 2016), England (Foster 2018) and Australia (Weldon 2015).

The overall shortage of teachers is due to an increased demand for and decreased supply of teachers. A growing population is contributing significantly to the demand for more teachers in many countries (e.g. Sutcher et al. 2016; UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016; Weldon 2015). Compounding the demand for more teachers is a waning supply of teachers because (a) fewer people are attracted to the profession of teaching (Bahr and Ferreira 2018; Foster 2018) and (b) too many teachers are leaving the profession before retirement (Sutcher et al. 2016). Overall, these supply and demand pressures are contributing to a shortage of teachers in many jurisdictions.

   The problem of teacher attrition has been well researched, yet recently it has been argued that 'Teacher attrition, [is] a perennial problem receiving heightened attention due to its intensity, complexity, and spread' (Craig 2017, p. 859). Whilst the extent of teacher attrition in some countries is unclear due to inadequate datasets (den Brok et al. 2017; Weldon 2018), we understand many of the reasons for high attrition rates. In countries like Australia, for example, major policy changes have been introduced over the last decade. These include developing a national curriculum, implementing a National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and creating the 'My School' website to compare schools and results. More recent initiatives have targeted teacher quality and school performance. In many cases, these policy initiatives closely resemble those in other countries and constitute what Lingard (2014) calls 'policy plagiarism'. These changes have had a

profound effect on teachers and the conditions under which they work. There is now a greater emphasis in Australia on:

- School markets
- Test-based accountability
- Literacy and numeracy
- School 'winners' and 'losers'
- Criticism of teacher quality
- Performance pay
- School autonomy
- Undermining of the concept of public education (Graham 2013, p. 5)

These problems are shared in other countries, and they are compounded by cultural and structural issues. For example, teaching is largely recognised as a feminised profession and predominantly comprised of women (Moreau 2019). Moreau (2019) points to the body of research that has 'explored more specifically their career progression, including in relation to the conflicting relationship between paid and unpaid work and to how recruitment and promotion criteria and more broadly school cultures disadvantage women' (p. 5). She explains that the 'overall proportion of women in teaching fluctuates considerably across segments of the teaching labour market with, however, women consistently concentrating in the less prestigious and (financially) less rewarding segments' (p. 9).

A variety of studies of teachers' employment patterns and general welfare suggests that the effects of the problems for teachers have been profound. For example, in Australia:

- Up to 50% of new graduates leave the profession within 5 years of entry (Gallant and Riley 2014).
- Many low-SES and remote schools continue to be 'hard to staff' (Sullivan and Johnson 2012).
- The cost of mental health services for teachers doubled from 2010 to 2014 (ABC News 2015).
- Over a half of the teachers responding to a survey about student behaviour reported being stressed (Sullivan et al. 2013).

In times of teacher shortages, education systems 'cope' in a variety of ways by increasing class sizes (Sutcher et al. 2016), recruiting less qualified teachers (Foster 2018; Sutcher et al. 2016) and allocating teachers to teach outside of their field of expertise (Weldon 2016). Clearly, these ways of addressing a lack of teachers undermine the quality of education.

Governments have introduced policy initiatives that focus on increasing the teacher workforce by attending to the attraction of 'quality' teachers, but they have been criticised for not attending to teacher retention. For example, the government policy responses in many states in the United States, which are experiencing serious teacher shortages, have typically focused on new teacher recruitment and training, but there has been a lack of focus on retaining teachers (Sutcher et al. 2016). There have been moves to quickly recruit new teachers via 'employment-based pathways'

such as Teach for America. However, research indicates that such pathways are problematic because 'teachers with little preparation tend to leave at rates two to three times as high as those who have had a comprehensive preparation before they enter' (Sutcher et al. 2016, p. 4).

Governments that aim to develop and enact policy solutions that promote the retention of teachers need to understand the labour market and, more importantly, the complex relationship between retention and the development of the teaching workforce.

1.2 Early Career Teachers

In the context of teacher shortages, the gaze has turned to early career teachers because their attrition rates are high and there is a pressing need to retain them. Rather than dwell on the negative causes and consequences of high early career teacher attrition, this book builds on previous research which focused on the positive policy and practice contexts that support graduate teachers in their first years of teaching (e.g. Johnson et al. 2014, 2016; Sullivan and Johnson 2012; Sullivan and Morrison 2014).

In many countries, few concessions are given to early career teachers as they negotiate complex roles during their transition from their teacher education programs to the profession. Early career teachers are under increased pressure not only to be 'classroom ready' but also to perform at the same levels as more experienced colleagues. The focus has been on supporting them by providing induction programs, mentoring and extra release time from face-to-face teaching (Howe 2006; Sullivan and Morrison 2014). These types of support often position early career teachers as 'lacking' key knowledge and skills. Such a focus on the individual teacher ignores the broader contextual and systemic influences that are playing out across the teaching profession and reflects a growing preoccupation with deficit views of early career teachers (Day and Sachs 2004; Johnson et al. 2016).

Our earlier research showed that the nature of early career teachers' work threatens their retention as they transition to the profession (Johnson et al. 2016), and it needs to be reformed to 'address issues of intensification and performativity'. We explained:

> … common supports such as appointing mentors, providing induction programs and reducing teaching loads do not reframe early career teachers' work but locate them as the 'problem' and thus needing 'fixing'. This requires rethinking! Continuing to 'tinker' with the work of early career teachers will not suffice; rather, intellectual and collegial re-imagining of teachers' work is required. We need a much broader conversation around how we might begin the task of rethinking the nature of early career teachers' work. (p. 67)

This book challenges this type of thinking about early career teachers and their work. It offers a close and critical analysis of policies related to the work of early career teachers and how they are supported during this critical period of their working lives when they are vulnerable to being lost from the profession. It provides

good examples of practice which illustrate how early career teachers can be supported to transition into the profession in ways which are agentic for their development and which enable the profession as a whole to capitalise on the new knowledge and skills that these teachers bring to their classrooms and their students.

1.3 Assembling This Book

In 2015, we were conducting an Australian Research Council-funded project[1] to gain an understanding of the ways in which school leaders promote the retention of newly appointed teachers. As we were grappling with issues that were being debated internationally, we decided to bring together experts who could advance our research and ultimately the field of teacher development. In July 2015, we held a 3-day summit on 'Early career teacher retention: Bringing international perspectives from research to policy and practice' in Sydney, Australia. The summit was intended to be an innovative, provocative and question-raising forum addressing the pressing issue of teacher attrition and retention. The invited experts were asked to draft a chapter addressing some key provocations that drew on existing research and map possibilities for advancing the field. Two experts attending the summit were allocated to act as 'main reviewers' and the other experts acted as 'general reviewers'. In preparation for the summit, the main reviewers were asked to carefully examine the drafts and provide feedback addressing the following questions:

- Do you have any questions for the author/s?
- What do you like most about the chapter?
- What do you think is the main argument? Is the argument clear?
- What theoretical resources would you recommend?
- Do you have any suggestions for improvement?
- In what ways will the chapter contribute to the overall theme of a book on teacher retention?

At the summit, the authors presented their chapters to the summit participants. The main reviewers provided their feedback, and this was followed by a roundtable discussion that involved a broader discussion about each chapter and its significance to the overall theme of the book. An allocated moderator for each chapter provided a summary of the main points for the author to consider for revision.

Following this intense review process at the early stage of conception, the authors then addressed the suggestions for improvement and resubmitted their chapters. As editors of the book, we embarked on a considered editorial process which led to further revisions of the chapters. The final accepted chapters form this book.

---

[1] The Retaining Quality Teachers Study was funded by the Australian Research Council Linkage Grant Scheme (LP130100830). See www.rqt.edu.au for further detail.

1.4 How This Book Is Organised

There are ten chapters in this book, organised in two parts.

1.4.1 Part I

The process of retaining early career teachers is difficult to define, because it is multifaceted and complex. A number of perspectives which embrace the interrelated processes of attraction, recruitment, induction and development of early career teachers are required to help better understand the problem and to shed light on new ways of considering theory, policy and practice. The chapters in Part I of the book consider these broad issues from an international perspective. They are intentionally provocative and challenge the normative and political nature of teaching and education. More specifically, the chapters examine how policies and practices impact on what happens in schools and what it means to be a teacher and to teach.

In Chap. 1, 'Introduction', we have explained why this book is important. We have also outlined the structure of the book and provided an overview of each chapter.

In Chap. 2, 'Unpacking Teacher Quality: Key Issues for Early Career Teachers', Maria Flores argues that the concept of 'teacher quality' is used extensively in educational discourse, but it is often very narrowly defined and used in simplistic ways. Flores reports on a large empirical study undertaken in Portugal to help understand the international issues related to teacher quality in the workforce. She argues that the 'view of teachers as leaders of learning lies at the heart of the view of teacher quality'. Importantly, Flores maintains that teacher quality needs to take account of political, social, professional and personal contexts.

In Chap. 3, '"Classroom-Ready Teachers": Gaps, Silences and Contradictions in the Australian Report into Teacher Education', Barry Down and Anna Sullivan present a critical policy analysis of a recent Australian report that claims that the quality of Australian teachers is being compromised by poor teacher preparation. They locate their analysis within a broader social context in which a 'manufactured crisis' over teacher quality is being played out in political circles and mainstream media. They identify the key values and assumptions inherent in the report and expose the contradictions within its policy discourses. Their examination of the dynamics of the 'conservative restoration' promoted in the report sheds light on the logic used to justify greater regulation, compliance and conformity in the field of teacher preparation.

In Chap. 4, 'Shifting the Frame: Representations of Early Career Teachers in the Australian Print Media', Nicole Mockler analyses two sets of Australian media texts to examine how early career teachers have been represented at different times in mainstream media. She identifies a significant change from a period in the late 1990s when early career teachers were implicated in hopeful attempts to address

problems in the teaching profession to the current era in which early career teachers are positioned as one of the causes of deficiencies in Australian schools. This shift in the representation of early career teachers as 'problems' is seen as the source of justifications for greater accountability, accreditation and regulation in teacher education.

In Chap. 5, 'Early Career Teachers and Their Need for Support: Thinking Again', Geert Kelchtermans identifies the pervasive deficit views about early career teachers. He argues that common teacher induction practices such as providing mentors are well intended but often have negative consequences. Kelchtermans maintains that new teachers enter the profession with strengths and experiences which should be valued. With this in mind, he offers three new ways to frame early career teachers: agentic, networked and an asset. This chapter challenges dominant thinking about early career teachers and what would help them as they transition to the profession, leading to their retention.

1.4.2   Part II

Rather than focus on how to 'fix' early career teachers, there is a need to reconsider the policies and practices that create the 'problem' and offer other ways forward. The chapters in the second part of the book draw on some of the bigger issues identified in the first part of the book and address the following key questions:

- What ideas dominate current thinking about practices relating to the retention of early career teachers?
- What are the policy drivers for current practices?
- What key ideologies justify these approaches?
- How can we present ethical alternatives to current approaches?

Each chapter addresses a theme related to the issue of early career teacher retention, contributing to a greater understanding of how we can rethink the work of early career teachers so that they can transition to the profession successfully.

In Chap. 6, 'How School Leaders Attract, Recruit, Develop and Retain the Early Career Teachers They Want: Positives and Paradoxes', Bruce Johnson, Anna Sullivan, Michele Simons and Judy Peters discuss how school leaders influence new teachers and foster their professional commitment. They identify the micropolitical activities that school leaders deliberately use to promote the engagement and retention of the early career teachers they want to keep. They present data and analyses which reveal the dilemmas and paradoxes that school leaders encounter when they attempt to reconcile the competing demands of different stakeholders in the staffing process. They contrast the mostly benevolent actions of leaders with their often-unintended consequences to establish the need for ongoing critical reflection about the impact on early career teachers of taken-for-granted human resources processes.

In Chap. 7, 'Reforming Replacement Teaching: A Game Changer for the Development of Early Career Teaching?', Barbara Preston exposes the parlous conditions early career teachers experience when they enter the profession as temporary replacement teachers. She implicates poor pay and conditions and low professional status as factors that contribute to high levels of early career teacher attrition. She argues for the 'professionalisation of replacement teaching' involving a number of interrelated strategies designed to position relief teaching as a desirable option for experienced teachers. Linked to this is her controversial call for early career teachers to be denied entry to the profession through replacement teaching by regulating and reorganising the forms and areas of work open to early career teachers.

In Chap. 8, 'Connecting Theory and Practice: Collaborative Figured Worlds', Jamie Sisson offers a critique of the dominant pre-service teacher education model, which promotes an artificial and contrived distinction between educational theory and practice. She explores the sources of the theory–practice divide by examining the values and assumptions that underpin the dominant discourses used in teacher education programs. She proposes a more collaborative approach that breaks down barriers between pre-service teaching students, school-based teachers and university teacher educators. She argues that positioning these actors as 'co-learners' and 'co-educators' challenges deficit perceptions of pre-service teachers and promotes a more ethical alternative to contemporary, university-based teacher education.

In Chap. 9, 'Recruiting, Retaining and Supporting Early Career Teachers for Rural Schools', Simone White examines a policy mechanism aimed at attracting and recruiting teachers to difficult-to-staff schools in rural Australia. She argues that incentives are often used to attract and retain teachers, but that they ignore the nature of rural contexts and might actually exacerbate the overall problems faced by rural schools. White challenges negative views of rural schools and repositions them as sites that have rich benefits for early career teachers. She argues that pre-service teacher education should raise awareness of the benefits of working in rural schools. This chapter has important implications for understanding the complexities of the attraction, recruitment, development and retention process more broadly.

In Chap. 10, 'Quality Retention and Resilience in the Middle and Later Years of Teaching', Christopher Day provides us with a reasoned and timely reminder that the quality of the teaching profession does not reside solely with the newest entrants to the profession. He argues that retention, in and of itself, is not sufficient to ensure a quality teaching workforce; instead, he makes a case for quality retention based on an enriched notion of teacher resilience. This form of resilience does not just embrace the innate capacities of individual teachers; it is both a psychological and sociocultural phenomenon which can enable teachers to move from 'coping' to managing and having the 'bounce back' required to meet the intellectual and emotional challenges that make up teachers' work. This chapter is important for the insights it offers for those concerned with developing and nurturing resilience as part of quality retention processes for teachers.

1.5 Summary

This book aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the issues related to the retention of teachers, particularly early career teachers. The chapters examine how policies and practices impact on what happens in schools and what it means to be a teacher and teach. Their insights into the issue of retention contribute to a greater understanding of how we can rethink the work of early career teachers so that they can transition to the profession successfully.

References

ABC News. (2015, November 13). Teachers mental health under the microscope. *ABC News*. http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-13/teachers-mental-health-under-the-microscope/6937506

Bahr, N., & Ferreira, J.-A. (2018, April 16). Seven reasons people no longer want to be teachers. *The Conversation*. https://theconversation.com/seven-reasons-people-no-longer-want-to-be-teachers-94580

Craig, C. J. (2017). International teacher attrition: Multiperspective views. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 859–862. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1360860.

Day, C., & Sachs, J. (2004). Professionalism, performativity and empowerment: Discourses in the politics, policies and purposes of continuing professional development. In C. Day & J. Sachs (Eds.), *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers* (pp. 3–32). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

den Brok, P., Wubbels, T., & van Tartwijk, J. (2017). Exploring beginning teachers' attrition in the Netherlands. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 881–895. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1360859

Foster, D. (2018). *Teacher recruitment and retention in England.* House of Commons Library Briefing paper number 7222. London: UK Parliament. http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/31729/1/CBP-7222.pdf

Gallant, A., & Riley, P. (2014). Early career teacher attrition: New thoughts on an intractable problem. *Teacher Development, 18*(4), 562–580.

Graham, J. (2013). Educational reform and its antidotes. *Global Education Reform Movement, 9*(3), 5–10.

Howe, E. R. (2006). Exemplary teacher induction: An international review. *Educational Philosophy & Theory, 38*(3), 287–297.

Isenson, N. (2018, August 27). Germany is desperate for teachers. *DW.* https://www.dw.com/en/germany-is-desperate-for-teachers/a-45246978

Johnson, B., Down, B., Le Cornu, R., Peters, J., Sullivan, A. M., Pearce, J., & Hunter, J. (2014). Promoting early career teacher resilience: A framework for understanding and acting. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 20*(5), 530–546.

Johnson, B., Down, B., Le Cornu, R., Peters, J., Sullivan, A., Pearce, J., & Hunter, J. (2016). *Promoting early career teacher resilience: A socio-cultural and critical guide to action.* London: Routledge.

Kelchtermans, G. (2017). 'Should I stay or should I go?': Unpacking teacher attrition/retention as an educational issue. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 961–977. https://doi.org/10.1080/135406 02.2017.1379793

Lingard, B. (2014, November 1–5). *Constituting a 'systemless system' of schooling: The responsibilization of schools, principals and teachers*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane.

Local. (2017, December 19). Swedish schools under pressure to recruit 77,000 teachers. *The Local*. https://www.thelocal.se/20171219/swedish-schools-under-pressure-to-recruit-77000-teachers

Moreau, M.-P. (2019). *Teachers, gender and the feminisation debate*. Abingdon: Routledge.

New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. (2018). *Secondary School Staffing Survey report 2018*. Wellington: New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association. https://www.ppta.org.nz/assets/Uploads/2018-Secondary-Staffing-Survey-report.pdf

Newshub Staff. (2018, July 31). New Zealand's teacher shortage expected to reach crisis point by 2030. *Newshub*. https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2018/07/new-zealand-s-teacher-shortage-expected-to-reach-crisis-point-by-2030.html

Picchi, A. (2018, August 23). School's back in session, but many teachers aren't returning. *Moneywatch*. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/americas-new-education-crisis-a-teacher-shortage/

Smith, K., & Ulvik, M. (2017). Leaving teaching: Lack of resilience or sign of agency? *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 928–945. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1358706

Smith, A. (2018, June 18). 900 extra teachers to help meet shortages in maths and science. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/900-extra-teachers-to-help-meet-shortages-in-maths-and-science-20180617-p4zm0k.html

Sullivan, A. M., & Johnson, B. (2012). Questionable practices? Relying on individual teacher resilience in remote schools. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education, 22*(3), 101–116.

Sullivan, A. M., Johnson, B., Conway, R. N. F., Owens, L. D., & Taddeo, C. (2013). *Punish them or engage them? Teachers' views on student behaviours in the classroom. Behaviour at School Study: Technical Report 1*. Adelaide: University of South Australia.

Sullivan, A. M., & Morrison, C. (2014). Enacting policy: The capacity of school leaders to support early career teachers through policy work. *Australian Educational Researcher, 41*(5), 603–620. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-014-0155-y.

Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto: Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/A_Coming_Crisis_in_Teaching_REPORT.pdf

Syal, R. (2018, January 31). Teacher shortage leaves English schools in crisis, watchdog says. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jan/31/teacher-shortage-leaves-english-schools-in-crisis-watchdog-says

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2016). *The world needs almost 69 million new teachers to reach the 2030 Education goals*. Paris: UNESCO. http://uis.unesco.org/en/files/fs39-world-needs-almost-69-million-new-teachers-reach-2030-education-goals-2016-en-pdf

Weldon, P. (2015). *The teacher workforce in Australia: Supply, demand and data issues*. Policy insights no 2. Camberwell: ACER. https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=policyinsights

Weldon, P. (2016). *Out-of-field teaching in Australian secondary schools*. Policy insights no. 6. Camberwell: ACER. https://research.acer.edu.au/policyinsights/6/.

Weldon, P. (2018). Early career teacher attrition in Australia: Evidence, definition, classification and measurement. *Australian Journal of Education, 62*(1), 61–78. https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944117752478.

Yinon, H., & Orland-Barak, L. (2017). Career stories of Israeli teachers who left teaching: A salutogenic view of teacher attrition. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 914–927. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1361398

Part I
Examining Issues Related to Retaining Early Career Teachers

Chapter 2
Unpacking Teacher Quality: Key Issues for Early Career Teachers

Maria Assunção Flores

Abstract Teacher quality is seen as a key factor influencing the quality of education. However, while there is consensus on the importance of quality teachers for improving teaching and learning in schools, there is less agreement on how to define and assess quality. The aim of the chapter is twofold: (i) to identify and contrast the ways in which teacher quality has been defined internationally and (ii) to analyse (and deconstruct) the term "quality", drawing upon empirical evidence from diverse stakeholders. Teacher quality has often been defined narrowly and related to standards, performativity and managerialism. However, it is also possible to identify more comprehensive understandings of teacher quality which take into account contextual, professional, political and personal dimensions. Contradictory trends may be identified in the ways in which teacher professionalism has been defined as well as in real conditions of teachers' work in schools and classrooms. The chapter discusses the view of teachers as leaders of learning and its core dimensions, namely, motivation, resilience, innovation of practice and committed professionalism, and it concludes with key issues for early career teachers.

2.1 Introduction

Teacher quality has been a hot topic and a political priority (Flores 2012b, 2016b). It has been identified as one of the most important school-related factors influencing student achievement (Darling-Hammond 2000; Hattie 2003; Darling-Hammond et al. 2005; Barber and Mourshed 2007). School reform and changes in teacher education programs worldwide have been driven by globalisation and by governmental pressure to enhance the quality of teachers and teaching. In general, the drivers of change in education are related to the need to do well in international

M. A. Flores (✉)
University of Minho, Braga, Portugal
e-mail: aflores@ie.uminho.pt

assessments but also to the need to meet the challenges created by social, scientific, technological and cultural transformations.

Teacher quality is seen as a key factor influencing the quality of education. However, while there is consensus on the importance of quality teachers for improving teaching and learning in schools, there is less agreement on how to define and assess quality. As Darling-Hammond suggests (2013), there has been growing recognition that expert teachers and leaders are key players in improving student learning, and therefore the highest-achieving nations make substantial investments in teacher quality. She argues that in top-ranked nations supports for teaching have included universal high-quality teacher education, expert mentoring for beginners, ongoing professional learning, leadership development and equitable, competitive salaries.

Concerns about performativity, funding challenges and external compliance have had implications for academics and also for teacher educators: "competition rather than cooperation came to be seen as a key driver of quality with accountability measured by performativity and compliance with raising achievement as key" (Alcorn 2014, p. 447). In many contexts, a rather narrow view of teacher quality related to standards, performativity and managerialism may be identified. It is therefore essential to overcome a "naïve view of teacher quality" which has been associated with "a linear relationship between policy and educational outcomes without accounting for school culture, resources and communities" (Mayer 2014, p. 471). Focusing on England, Maguire (2014) argues for the need to ensure teacher quality "by reforming teaching at source by regulating and controlling initial teacher education" (p. 779). She discussed the "technology of erasure" which relates to "the erasure of the work of progressive and reforming teacher educationalists who have in different times attempted to produce new ways of using school-based experiences to produce new forms of teacher (and trainee teacher) knowledge" (p. 780).

In other countries, however, it is possible to identify high-quality systems leading to the preparation and development of high-quality teachers. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), these systems, found in Finland, Singapore, Canada and Australia, despite their differences, include "multiple, coherent and complementary components associated with recruiting, developing, and retaining talented individuals to support the overall goal of ensuring that each school is populated by effective teachers" (p. 294). Amongst other issues are the recruitment of highly able candidates into high-quality programs and the connection between theory and practice through thoughtful coursework and the integration of high-quality clinical work in settings where good practice is supported (Darling-Hammond 2017, p. 306). The ways in which different countries look at teacher quality, teacher competences and standards and the priorities for teacher education depend upon the wider social and cultural context, the policy environment as well as the views and aims of education and the role ascribed to teachers in curriculum development.

This chapter analyses – and deconstructs – the concept of teacher quality by looking at both international research literature and policy texts, as well as at the perspectives of various stakeholders (head teachers, teachers and pupils). Data are drawn from a wider piece of research which included a national survey of teachers in mainland Portugal (n = 2702), interviews with head teachers (n = 11) and focus

groups with teachers (n = 99) and pupils (n = 108). I argue that, in many contexts, teacher quality has been associated with a rather narrow view which is related to standards, performativity and managerialism. However, it is also possible to identify more comprehensive understandings of teacher quality which take into account contextual, professional, political and personal dimensions. Contradictory trends may be identified in the ways in which teacher professionalism has been defined as well as in real conditions of teachers' work in schools and classrooms. This chapter looks at these contradictory trends and discusses the implications for teacher education and for rethinking issues of quality for early career teachers. In the next section, I will look at trends and tensions in attempts to define and assess quality, drawing upon international research literature and policy texts.

2.2 Unpacking Quality: What Does the Literature Tell?

The notion of quality has been widely used in education by policymakers, academics, researchers and other stakeholders. Teacher quality, quality education, quality teaching and quality teacher education are but few examples that may be found in the literature. "Quality" has been subject to sometimes uncritical understandings and to simplistic and narrow views, many of which have been associated with performative cultures marked by accountability and a standardised conception of education. Ng (2015, p. 307) states that the term quality education is "vague and perhaps over-used" and that "there is a high degree of eclecticism in its definition, rhetoric and practice" (p. 308).

It is often argued that quality teaching depends on quality teachers and that quality teachers depend greatly on the quality of teacher education programs. However, it is possible to identify a wide array of understandings of teacher quality and teacher education quality in diverse contexts (Darling-Hammond and Lieberman 2012; Hilton et al. 2013; Laurie et al. 2016). For instance, in Europe, quality teachers have been described as those "equipped with the ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity, and adapt to the needs of individual learners as well as groups" (EC 2013, p. 7) and "quality initial teacher education is associated with teachers' knowledge, skills and commitment" (EU 2009, p. 8).

Similarly, the European Commission defines quality teaching as enabling students to achieve "successful learning outcomes, by developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners need in order to realise their full potential both as individuals and as active members of society and the workforce" (EU 2014, p. 1). A cross-national study of teacher education in nine countries suggested that initial teacher education quality had become a major issue (Conway et al. 2009). The report identified a number of principles underpinning quality teacher education, particularly the quality of knowledge integration, opportunities for observation, thoughtful feedback and critical reflection on classroom and school situations, and professional values and identity.