

World Yearbook of Education 2025: The Teaching Profession in a Globalizing World: Governance, Career, Learning, edited by Xavier Dumay, Lynn Paine, and Tore Bernt Sorensen

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In the field of international comparative education, the World Yearbook of Education series has long served as a vital resource for educators, policymakers, and researchers. The 2025 edition, *The Teaching Profession in a Globalizing World: Governance, Career, Learning*, edited by Xavier Dumay, Tore Bernt Sorensen, and Lynn Paine, continues this tradition, providing a critical and timely examination of the structural transformations shaping the teaching profession today. Building on prior volumes (see e.g., Rizvi and Lingard 2009), this collection offers fresh insights into the complex interplay between global policy discourses and national educational systems, with a particular focus on the consequences for teacher identity, autonomy, and learning.

The editors frame the volume around the notion of “global governance” in education, a concept that reflects the shifting power dynamics from nation-states to transnational actors such as the OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), the World Bank, and philanthropic foundations (Ball 2012). They argue that these global forces increasingly shape national teacher policies, often through mechanisms of soft governance and policy borrowing. Crucially, they position the teaching profession as both a target and an agent within these shifting structures, capable of both compliance and resistance.



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Part 1 of the volume—focused on governance, policy, and control—lays the foundation by illustrating how new regimes of accountability and performativity are redefining the social contract between teachers and society. Notably, the chapters by Pasi Sahlberg and by Gita Steiner-Khamisi explore how global benchmarks and rankings such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) not only influence national curricula but also recalibrate the expectations placed on teachers. This resonates with broader literature on the “governance by numbers” trend in education reform (Grek 2009), where quantification serves both as a policy tool and a political strategy. The contributors in this section offer rich empirical cases that expose the tensions between professional judgement and standardised outcomes.

Building on these dynamics, Part 2 turns to the structure of teachers’ careers, bringing to light the increasingly precarious and fragmented nature of professional trajectories. The contributors argue that neoliberal labour market reforms have weakened the coherence of teaching as a profession, replacing career ladders with more individualised and competitive models of advancement. For example, the case studies from Chile and England reflect a growing reliance on temporary contracts and performance-based assessments. This echoes earlier critiques by Apple (2006), who warned of the “deprofessionalisation” of teaching under market-driven policies. Importantly, the authors do not treat this shift as unidirectional; several chapters also highlight emerging models of collective organisation and solidarity, offering glimpses of renewal and reform from within.

Part 3 delves into professional learning and development, emphasising the significance of teacher agency in navigating policy shifts. A recurring theme in this section is the shift from externally mandated professional development (PD) to more collaborative and enquiry-based models. The chapter by Cochran-Smith, for instance, underscores the value of practitioner research and professional learning communities (PLCs) in resisting top-down mandates and reclaiming pedagogical purpose. This aligns with recent scholarship that calls for repositioning teachers as knowledge producers rather than passive recipients of policy (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2015). However, contributors are careful not to romanticise agency; structural constraints—particularly time, funding, and leadership support—continue to limit meaningful engagement in PD across contexts.

Part 4 explores globalisation and resistance, presenting some of the most compelling and hopeful narratives in the book. Drawing from “ethnographic” work in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Korea, and the United States, these chapters document how teachers mobilise local knowledge and professional networks to resist harmful reforms and assert alternative visions of education. The contributors challenge deficit narratives about teachers, illustrating instead how they innovate, adapt, and reclaim agency in diverse policy environments. The resistance portrayed here is not simply oppositional but strategic and constructive, echoing Sachs’s (2003) notion of the “activist professional”. One particularly notable chapter explores how indigenous teachers in Canada engage in

culturally sustaining pedagogy as a form of *epistemic resistance*, a topic increasingly salient in decolonial education discourse (Battiste 2014).

Overall, this volume succeeds in its goal to situate the teaching profession within the evolving architecture of global governance. It demonstrates how international frameworks influence everyday professional practice while avoiding reductive accounts that dismiss national and local complexities. The editors' emphasis on comparative methodology ensures that insights are grounded in diverse geopolitical realities, thus enriching our understanding of both convergence and divergence in teacher policy across contexts.

From a scholarly perspective, the volume is valuable not only for its empirical richness but also for its conceptual clarity. It speaks directly to current debates in the sociology of education and educational policy studies, particularly around professionalism, accountability, and global policy networks. The chapters collectively push us to rethink the dichotomy between global and local, demonstrating how teachers inhabit—and negotiate—multiple scales of governance simultaneously.

Constructive critiques are nonetheless warranted. While the volume effectively illustrates macro-level policy trends and local responses, the voices of classroom teachers themselves are occasionally mediated through academic analysis rather than being directly centred. A more fieldwork-based and grounded approach, including first-person narratives or teacher-authored contributions, might have further enhanced the book's commitment to professional agency. Moreover, the volume could have engaged more deeply with postcolonial perspectives, especially given its global scope. The inclusion of indigenous epistemologies and Southern theories, though present in certain chapters, remains underdeveloped.

That said, *World Yearbook of Education 2025* is an impressive scholarly achievement. It offers a balanced blend of critique and possibility, conceptual rigour and empirical depth. For researchers, policymakers, and teacher educators seeking to understand how the teaching profession is being reconfigured in the age of globalisation, this volume will be an indispensable reference. It not only maps the challenges but also amplifies the resilience and creativity of teachers across the world—a timely reminder of the enduring significance of public education.

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