



TEACHING IN THE FLAT WORLD

LEARNING FROM HIGH-PERFORMING SYSTEMS

Linda Darling-Hammond
Robert Rothman

with contributions by

Pasi Sahlberg, Barry Pervin, Carol Campbell, and Tan Lay Choo



Contents

Acknowledgments

vii

1. Developing Effective Teaching: Why Search Globally?	1
<i>Linda Darling-Hammond and Robert Rothman</i>	
Examining Systems	2
Examining Policies in the United States	4
The Organization of This Book	4
2. Teaching Quality Initiatives in the United States	6
<i>Robert Rothman and Linda Darling-Hammond</i>	
Teachers in the United States	9
Recruitment and Distribution	11
Preparation	13
Ongoing Professional Development	18
Evaluation and Career Paths	21
School Leadership	25
What's Missing? A System	27
3. Developing Effective Teachers and School Leaders: The Case of Finland	30
<i>Pasi Sahlberg</i>	
The Teacher in Finnish Society	30
Recruiting the Best	32
Preparing Them Well	34
Hiring, Evaluation, and Retention	37

Professional Learning and Development	38
Engagement in Curriculum and Assessment Development	40
Career Development and Leadership	42
Development of School Leaders	42
Lessons from Finland's Success	43
4. Systems for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness and Quality: Ontario, Canada	45
<i>Barry Pervin and Carol Campbell</i>	
Government Priorities	46
Teacher Effectiveness and Quality: From Teacher Testing to Teacher Development	47
Teacher Recruitment	48
Teacher Preparation, Continuing Professional Development, and Capacity Building	49
Leadership Effectiveness	54
Capacity Building Through Job-Embedded Professional Learning and Collaborative Practice	59
Lessons Learned	61
5. Creating Effective Teachers and Leaders in Singapore	63
<i>Tan Lay Choo and Linda Darling-Hammond</i>	
Context	63
Recruiting and Keeping Top Candidates	65
Preparing Teachers Well	66
Ongoing Professional Learning for Teachers	68
Career Development and Leadership	70
Lessons Learned	74
6. Lessons from Successful Systems	76
<i>Linda Darling-Hammond and Robert Rothman</i>	
Lesson 1: It Takes a System	76

Contents	v
Lesson 2: Get It Right from the Start	79
Lesson 3: Make Teaching an Attractive Profession	82
Lesson 4: Invest in Continual Learning	85
Lesson 5: Putting Sufficient Resources Where They Are Most Needed	87
Lesson 6: Proactively Recruit and Develop High-Quality Leadership	88
Conclusion	90
References	91
About the Authors	99

© Hawker Brownlow Education

Developing Effective Teaching

Why Search Globally?

*Linda Darling-Hammond
Robert Rothman*

In the United States, teacher quality has clearly risen to the top of the education policy agenda. At the start of the Obama administration, the U.S. Department of Education identified the issue as one of four key elements in its Race to the Top competition, which allocated \$4 billion to states that adopted specific policies and proposed strategies for implementing them. Since then, the department and major philanthropies have developed an aggressive agenda around “teacher effectiveness,” and more than 30 states, responding to Race to the Top and other federal incentives, adopted laws revamping teacher education and evaluation systems, hoping to ensure that teachers are successful in the classroom.

While educators and policymakers generally agree that enabling teachers to improve student learning is one of the most significant ways to raise student achievement, there are heated disagreements about the most useful ways to do this. The conviction that teachers are important is backed up by research. The evidence is clear that teaching is one of the most important school-related factors in student achievement (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 1996, 1997; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007), and improving teachers’ capacities to teach all students well can raise overall student achievement levels (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

The evidence base for the wide-ranging policy proposals for improving teacher effectiveness, however, is less clear. Some proposals have been studied—certain teacher preparation designs, induction and professional development approaches, specific evaluation strategies, and compensation reforms. And some—though certainly not all—findings are consistent

across studies. At the same time, particular policies are only useful if, together, they result in talented people wanting to become educators, having effective pathways to allow them to do so, and working in contexts that help them become and remain effective, and continue to learn and improve. These outcomes can only result from a system in which all the components work together to produce the overarching goal of a consistently well-prepared educator workforce that can provide effective teaching for all students.

It does little good, for example, to develop a strategy that raises standards for teaching if there are insufficient incentives to attract enough individuals who can meet the standards. Similarly, if lowering the standards addresses the problem of shortages, but then the less-prepared entrants leave at high rates, creating churn and instability in the teaching force, the solution has merely created another problem. And if new evaluation systems weed out more teachers but meanwhile lower morale and chase good teachers away, districts may win the teacher evaluation battle, only to lose the quality teaching war.

EXAMINING SYSTEMS

For these reasons and others, we have chosen to examine how high-performing nations create coherent *systems* for developing consistently strong teaching. The countries featured in this volume have well-developed and effective systems for recruiting, preparing, developing, and retaining teachers and school leaders. Examining their efforts is valuable for a number of reasons:

- First, they broaden the view of what is possible. Too often, policymakers remain stuck with conventional ideas, bound by precedents in their own context, and are unable to see options that might be available and successful. By providing policymakers with an expanded view of the policy choices that might be available, comparisons can expand the toolbox.
- Second, international comparisons show how ideas work in practice at the system level. By exploring other systems in depth, policymakers can see what the implementation challenges are, how other nations dealt with them, and what remains to be solved. Such explorations

Expanded
policy choices
can expand the
toolbox.

can help enable policymakers to put in place new policies with a clearer eye.

For its examination of teacher effectiveness policies, we looked to Finland, Ontario (Canada), and Singapore. These jurisdictions have attracted a great deal of attention in U.S. education policy circles recently, and with good reason. Most significantly, they get good results: They are among the highest-performing jurisdictions in international tests of student achievement, and their results are among the most equitable in the world. The gaps between the lowest-performing and highest-performing students in Finland, Ontario, and Singapore are much smaller than in the United States, and the average performance is quite high (OECD, 2010b, 2013).

These jurisdictions also represent models that the United States can learn from. Although the nations are considerably smaller than the United States as a whole, they are equivalent in size to substantial U.S. states, where most education policy is made and takes effect. In terms of population, Finland is about the size of Colorado; Ontario is slightly larger than Illinois; and Singapore is about the size of Minnesota. This is especially relevant because, in the United States, education systems are operated by states, which have responsibility for virtually all of the key functions associated with developing a human capital system for schools.

In addition, the jurisdictions we examine are increasingly diverse in student population—some even more so than the typical American state. Finland, the most homogeneous, has recently attracted growing numbers of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa, and some schools in Helsinki serve a majority of immigrant students. Despite the fact that many immigrant families and youth arrive with much lower levels of education, these schools still show achievement levels that are similar to other schools'. About a fourth of Ontario's residents are from outside Canada, a ratio higher than most states in the United States. And Singapore has a number of minority groups speaking four official languages (and many more unofficial ones), representing the diverse communities that make up that nation-state.

Finland, Ontario, and Singapore also provide important lessons for discussions of policies to develop teacher and school leader effectiveness. All attribute their educational success in large measure to their efforts to recruit, prepare, develop, and retain a strong educator workforce within a purposeful human capital system.

The jurisdictions we examine are increasingly diverse—some even more so than the typical American state.

EXAMINING POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES

The fact that we look to other nations to provide lessons about how systems may be organized to accomplish effective teaching does not mean that there are not important lessons to learn from our own experience. Because of our 50-state federalist system and our traditions of local control, the United States has one of the most diverse education systems in the world. In almost every arena, there are highly effective policies, practices, and institutions that are the envy of others in the world, including the countries we examined, who study and emulate them.

In addition, there is more intensive research about the outcomes of these approaches in the United States than anywhere else. This means that we understand a great deal about what works under what circumstances—as well as what doesn't work—from which we and others can learn. We share these findings here as well, to set the context for cross-country learning.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

In Chapter 2 of this volume we describe the diverse range of practices and policies regarding teachers and school leadership in the United States and some of what has been learned about the effects of many of them. We also examine recent reforms and their odds for improving teaching. We highlight elements of success, while we also illuminate the challenges of a policy landscape that changes frequently and is often not well aligned or coherent.

In Chapters 3–5 we examine, in turn, the systems for developing effective teachers and school leaders in Finland, Ontario, and Singapore, respectively. Each of these chapters is authored by one or more scholars from the relevant jurisdiction, with extensive knowledge of the history and current status of policy and practice in that system. The chapters treat questions of recruitment, preparation, induction, professional learning, and evaluation for teachers and school leaders.

We learn that while each has a systemic approach, each places somewhat different emphases on different aspects of the system: In Finland, preservice preparation for teachers is a linchpin that anchors the other components. In Ontario, innovative and widespread inservice development

We understand a great deal about what works under what circumstances—as well as what doesn't work.

While each [jurisdiction] has a systemic approach, each places somewhat different emphases.

performs this function; there is a special emphasis on preparing and supporting both teacher and administrative leaders. In Singapore, career development systems are a major centerpiece of the overall approach to effectiveness. These are like lenses of a prism that one looks through to illuminate the entire enterprise.

Finally, in Chapter 6 we draw common lessons from across these chapters, in hope that the entire picture comes into focus in ways that can be instructive to educators and policymakers from many distinctive contexts. We hope this book will be helpful to educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking strategies that can strengthen the teaching profession and ultimately help design systems that expand learning opportunities for all children.

© Hawker Brownlow Education