

# Review of Teacher expertise in the Global South, written by Jason Anderson (2023). Cambridge University Press, 304 pp. ISBN 978-1-009-2848-51.

*Azadeh Moladoost*

Over the past few decades, teacher expertise has gained prominence in educational research, with extensive studies shaping a prototype of teacher expertise (e.g., Anderson & Taner, 2023; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). However, the scarcity of available scholarships from a southern perspective reveals a predominant focus on the global north. As Connell (2014) argues, the utilization of southern viewpoints in applied social sciences is increasingly important yet often overlooked. Consequently, recognizing the significance of teacher expertise across diverse educational settings becomes a crucial need, particularly in the global south. This effort is vital because a partial portrayal of teacher expertise inspired by northern prototypes not only limits our understanding but also deprives us of potential advantages. In this context, Anderson's contributions stand out, offering profound insights into teacher expertise through an intricate exploration within the global south and nurturing a comprehensive understanding that appreciates varying contexts.

The initial chapter begins with an engaging vignette set in a classroom in Eritrea, providing context within the global south. The author then proceeds to offer an enlightening explanation of the term 'Global South' while displaying a keen awareness of its nuances in the delineation of the Global South. The author also provides background insights about himself as a teacher and teacher trainer; acknowledging his unique standpoint and the potential biases that could creep into his writings and interpretations. His claim, "This experience has provided me with well-contextualized opportunities to look at issues of quality and culture from different perspectives " (Anderson, 2023, p. 6), is substantiated later through meticulous interpretations. Throughout the book, the author's pedagogical voice resonates, creating a cohesive narrative from a seasoned teacher and researcher. For example, in the concluding section of the first chapter, he makes his paradigmatic position clear while effectively presenting a major research debate to the reader.

In the introduction, the author presents certain assertions: "there are many capable teachers working in the global south and we can learn a great deal from them" (Anderson, 2023, p. 2). This invites the reader to contemplate whether he can convincingly substantiate them in subsequent chapters. Furthermore, to me, these appear to be rhetorical assumptions employed by the author to raise awareness of the deep-seated biases towards the global south. Overall, this thoughtfully composed introduction primes the reader by acquainting them with the context, subject matter, and the prominent existing gaps.

In chapter 2, Anderson aptly endeavors to establish a functional definition of an expert teacher. In this pursuit, he engages in a thorough exploration of the complexities inherent in defining a nuanced term such as expert teacher. He considers it superior to 'experience' or 'effectiveness' in encapsulating the concept's extensive scope, its 'fuzzy core', and profound implications. Aligned with the book's objective, the author strives to render its relevance within the global south context. Simultaneously, he seeks to

present a comprehensive picture by delving into the interconnectedness and the intricate process of deriving meaning from instances of teacher expertise.

In Chapter 3, "The Expert Teacher Prototype," while introducing Sternberg and Horvath's (1995) prototype of an expert teacher, his thorough and critical analysis of over one hundred studies primarily centered in northern regions significantly underscores the notable gap in our comprehension of an expert teacher from a southern perspective. He subsequently presents a revised and updated representation of the prototype, derived from his meticulous review. The author guides you through cultivating an enhanced understanding of the expert teacher by examining existing literature and aiming to incorporate a previously overlooked part: the global south.

Chapter 4, "Effective Teaching in Low-Income Countries," strives to restore equilibrium by presenting evidence of effective teaching drawn from low-income countries. He lays the groundwork by addressing the challenges specific to the global south. Engaging with the contextual nature of effective teaching, he highlights teacher quality as a pivotal contributor to effective learning, all the while scrutinizing pertinent literature from the global south. To lend coherence to his analyses, he draws a comparative thread between the findings of chapters three and four, which aptly culminates in his critical reflections.

Chapter 5 serves as the opening segment of a five-chapter series outlining the author's findings on teacher expertise in India's low-income context. Drawing from his fieldwork in India, the author successfully enhances our understanding of teacher expertise, transcending the northern vs. southern dichotomy. The chapter covers numerous crucial aspects, including participant recruitment, participatory project planning, data analysis, and the progression from the initial stages to the final study outcomes. Furthermore, the author's comprehensive update on participant selection criteria could serve as a strategic guide for researchers in the field. This pragmatic approach is a notable feature of this book. While exploring a previously overlooked perspective, it also serves as a valuable practical research companion, imparting a wealth of knowledge about the research process. This is particularly beneficial for novice researchers interested in teacher expertise. Similar practical insights can be found in later chapters, such as six and seven, which aim to provide a detailed description of pedagogic practices and offer practical takeaways for teachers.

An exceptional attribute of Chapter 6, "A Portrait of Teacher Expertise," lies in its ethnographic portrayal of teacher expertise. Instead of solely engaging in theoretical discourse, he offers an intricate narrative account of Noorjahan (one of his participant teachers), describing the context, background, and practice examples. This narrative-like depiction includes various quotes, excerpts from lessons, and various data sources such as images and quantitative data. It captures the reader's attention and invites them to take the next step toward fostering a more comprehensive grasp of teacher expertise.

Chapter 7 employs Stake's notion of the 'quintain' (Stake, 2006) to enhance the understanding of a comparative case study of this nature. First, the author presents an intricate description of the commonalities discerned among the eight participant teachers. This encompasses their beliefs, interpersonal interactions, language usage, curriculum implementation and planning, classroom methodologies, knowledge foundation, reflection, and professionalism. The contextualized exploration of these eight teachers' practices can serve as a wellspring of inspiration for other educators operating within analogous settings. By amalgamating elements such as Sternberg and Horvath's (1995) prototype for teacher expertise, the narrative account of Noorjahan's expert teacher portrayal (Chapter 6), and even the criteria for recruiting expert teachers for research objectives (Chapter 5), a substantial portrayal of teacher expertise is emerging. Subsequently, the author further enriches this depiction in Chapters 7, 8, and 9, where both similarities and distinctions are incorporated to culminate in a comprehensive portrayal.

In Chapter 8, the concept of 'Diversity in Expertise' is investigated by delineating contextual dissimilarities unveiled through cross-case analysis of the teachers involved in Anderson's study. While he structures his discourse on disparities around understanding the subject matter and the extent of control exercised, he claims that divergences among participants can be explained within this framework. He also

dives into this divergence in the context of Bernstein's educational sociology, particularly the concepts of classification and framing (Bernstein, 2000). The author illustrates how contextual constraints can impact teachers' interpretation of the subject—English in this instance—especially when their autonomy is curtailed.

In Chapter 9, "Teacher Expertise in the Global South," Anderson attempts to address the fundamental inquiry: To what extent do the participants, exemplifying expert teachers in the global south, exhibit distinctions in their practices, cognition, and personal attributes compared to expert teachers in the global North? In my opinion, this chapter embodies the essence of the entire book. He juxtaposes his findings with existing research predominantly influenced by Northern perspectives on teacher expertise. Systematically, he identifies parallels and disparities between his participants and those from previous studies. Both these resemblances and differences hold significance. Firstly, they aid in identifying fundamental traits of teacher expertise. Secondly, they shed light on challenges and contextual factors. Ultimately, he acknowledges that while the intricate concept of learner-centered education may have a notable role, many expert teacher practices could not be interpreted with reference to learner-centered practices.

In Chapter 10, Anderson updates the picture first presented at the beginning of the journey by integrating significant findings from teacher expertise in the global south. He acknowledges the contextual and practitioner differences that contribute to variable factors and focuses on the 'family resemblances' of expert teachers. With this effort, he aims to revise the north-centered understanding of the teacher expertise prototype following Sternberg and Horvath's model (1995). This new framework holds the potential for further exploration in research, curriculum development, teacher education, and international development. However, Anderson also recognizes that, in addition to the pedagogic practices and southern components of the framework that require further work, this framework could benefit from development and refinement through future research.

Chapter 11 stands out as a pivotal section in Anderson's work, where he diverges from his own research findings to offer further insights and hint readers for future directions in research and practice. In this chapter, he delves into the concept of Southern theory, urging for ongoing dialogue and refinement of this perspective, drawing inspiration from scholars like Connell (2007) and Hickling-Hudson (2009). Anderson aligns with previous scholars, including Connell (2007), Santos (2014), Comaroff and Comaroff (2012), Pennycook and Makoni (2020), and Visvanathan (2009), in emphasizing the importance of learning from the Global South rather than merely writing about it. Furthermore, building upon Canagarajah's (1999) ideas, he underscores the immediate necessity for a critically complementing element: a contextually sensitive theory, referred to as practical Southern theory to address the pressing needs of practitioners. In the latter part of Chapter 11, Anderson outlines his vision for implementing collaborative inquiry as an integral part of sustainable professional development. This approach aims to cultivate an endogenous understanding of context-specific expertise, independent of exogenous factors such as the global north.

In the concluding chapter, Anderson revisits the two claims he initially put forth in the book's introduction. Drawing upon original data collected during his fieldwork in India and presenting it with meticulous detail, he effectively substantiates these claims. His approach to delineating teacher expertise leaves the reader with a thorough and satisfying comprehension of teacher expertise in general and from the global south perspective in particular.

One of the book's standout strengths lies in its carefully structured presentation of materials, coupled with a cohesive flow that guides the reader on an enlightening journey. The reader will find pleasure in a combination of theoretical explanations and critical literature reviews, interspersed with participant narratives. This is followed by revisited conceptual discussions, creating a dynamic and reader-friendly content structure. Another interesting aspect that enhances the book's potential for self-development and might be of interest to teachers is that while reading the book they will encounter numerous insights

that prompt them to self-reflect, monitor their own practices, and discover ways to self-enhancement; nothing is more inspiring for development and improvement than reading a rigorous description of expert teacher practices.

Whether you are a teacher, researcher, policymaker, or educational administrator, this well-crafted book offers valuable takeaways. Anderson's meticulous and methodical examinations of teacher expertise and successful research endeavors have not just positioned his own contributions within the existing body of literature but have also opened a substantial path for future research and application.

## References

- Anderson, J. (2023). *Teacher expertise in the Global South: Theory, research, and evidence*. (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009284837>
- Anderson, J., & Taner, G. (2023). Building the expert teacher prototype: A metasummary of teacher expertise studies in primary and secondary education. *Educational Research Review*, 38, 100485. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2022.100485>.
- Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique* (Revised ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. L. (2012). *Theory from the South: Or, how Euro-America is evolving toward Africa*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2012.694169>
- Connell, R. (2007). *Southern theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science*. Allen & Unwin.
- Connell, R. (2014). Using southern theory: Decolonizing social thought in theory, research and application. *Planning Theory*, 13(2), 210–223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095213499216>
- Hickling-Hudson, A. (2009). 'Southern theory' and its dynamics for postcolonial education. *Counterpoints*, 369, 365–375.
- Pennycook, A., & Makoni, S. (2020). *Innovations and challenges in applied linguistics from the Global South*. Routledge.
- Santos, B. D. S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge.
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. Guilford Press.
- Sternberg, R. J., & Horvath, J. A. (1995). A prototype view of expert teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 24(6), 9–17. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X024006009>.
- Visvanathan, S. (2009). The search for cognitive justice. *Knowledge in question: A symposium on interrogating knowledge and questioning in science*. [https://www.india-seminar.com/2009/597/597\\_shiv\\_visvanathan.htm](https://www.india-seminar.com/2009/597/597_shiv_visvanathan.htm)

## About the author

**Azadeh Moladoost** is a Ph.D. student at the University of Warwick. She has more than ten years of teaching experience and has instructed various courses, including English for specific purposes, linguistics, psycholinguistics, phonetics, and general English. Currently, she serves as a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. Azadeh's research interests encompass teachers' professional development and the psychology of both teachers and learners. You can contact her via email at [Azadeh.Moladoost@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Azadeh.Moladoost@warwick.ac.uk).