

**Book Review: Language teachers
identity and wellbeing, Anne
Feryok (2024), 269 pp., £34.95,
Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-800-41701-
4, Multilingual Matters.**

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It is not hard to imagine that teachers face significant challenges, and in recent years, the relationship between teacher identity and wellbeing gained enormous momentum—and its impact on both personal corners and professional experiences—has garnered increasing attention. Teacher identity refers to how educators perceive themselves in their roles, shaped by their beliefs, values, and experiences. Wellbeing encompasses emotional, psychological, and social aspects of health, contentment, and fulfillment. As the demands of teaching continue to grow in complexity, understanding the dynamic interplay between these two factors becomes essential, not only for the growth of individual teachers but also for the quality of teacher education. For language teachers, the complexity of their identity and wellbeing are amplified by the need to balance personal, professional, and cultural roles. *Language Teacher Identity and Wellbeing*, edited by Anne Feryok, examines this critical intersection, exploring how the evolving identities of language teachers and their wellbeing influence each other across diverse cultural and institutional contexts.

The title “*Language Teacher Identity and Wellbeing*” takes a thorough, well-organized approach to its topics. The two major elements presented in the title are discussed later in the book, with their interactions and relationships alternately elaborated in separate parts. Unlike books with subtitles, the title of this book is very broad, suggesting its emphasis on the wide scope and breadth of the content. The book

thoroughly explores the concepts of Language Teacher Identity (LTI) and Wellbeing, divided into three main thematic sections for investigation: Knowing (Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4), Developing (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9), and Practicing (Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Part 1 (Chapters 1-4) explores the conceptualization and theory behind the interaction between teacher identity and wellbeing in their professional experiences, delving into chapters that discuss the teacher's cultural identity and wellbeing of Māori language teachers, the holistic wellbeing of multilingual teachers of color, the emotional aspects of belonging and identity formation, and the use of critical autoethnography for teacher wellbeing. Then the scholars touch on the examination of the wellbeing of new student teachers as they develop their professional identity, focusing on how this process influences their overall wellbeing in Part 2 (Chapters 5-9). Featured with concepts on the life balance of a Labrador Inuttitut teacher, the impact of identity tensions on job satisfaction, the interplay between student-teacher identity and wellbeing in a bilingual program, etc. Next, Part 3 (Chapters 10-14) investigates the complex relationship between language teachers' identities and wellbeing within the unique cultural and institutional settings where they work. The researchers examine the journeys of Inuit and Yup'ik language teachers, the effects of China's "Double Reduction" policy on private tutors, and so on.

One of the major contributions of this book lies in its thorough exploration of the research subjects. It not only investigates the diverse relationships between LTI and wellbeing across various cultural, social, and educational contexts but also brings attention to the wide array of research methodologies used. This offers new contexts to previous work (Zhao, 2022), which predominantly adopts a Western perspective—focusing on research subjects from Austria and the UK and exploring English-language teaching within English-speaking regions. This book broadens the scope by addressing a much more diverse set of cultural backgrounds. It includes discussions of unique cultural contexts, such as the Māori language community in Chapter 1, Inuit language teachers (Chapter 5), English teachers in Iran (Chapter 6), and English teachers in China (Chapter 11). It aims to encompass research on LTI and Wellbeing across diverse cultural contexts within the same volume. By covering a wide range of cultural and institutional contexts, the book not only enriches our understanding of the relationship between teacher identity and wellbeing but also breaks away from the traditional Western-centric view, offering a more comprehensive perspective on the teaching experiences of educators worldwide.

This cross-cultural perspective is particularly significant because different cultural and social contexts profoundly influence the formation and development of teacher identity and wellbeing. These concepts are highly socially constructed and are shaped by the culture and educational systems in which teachers operate. In some regions, the social status of teachers, educational systems, cultural identities, and values may be vastly different from those in other regions, resulting in significant variations in

teachers' self-perception and emotional wellbeing. By exploring such diverse research contexts, this book provides a deeper understanding of how cultural factors shape teachers' professional experiences. This cross-cultural approach not only offers rich material for academic research but also provides valuable insights for educational policymakers, teacher trainers, and administrators on how to better support teachers' professional development and wellbeing in a globalized context.

The book's broad exploration of its research subjects is not only reflected in the case chapters but also in the diversity of researchers, research qualitative methods, and theoretical perspectives it employs. For instance, Chapter 2 of Part 1 approaches the issue of racialized identity through post-structuralism and critical theory. It uses dialogue journal entries and poetry to explore how racism and power structures operate within the teaching system. In Chapter 6 of Part 2, semi-structured interviews are used to collect data on the stress teachers experience in their teaching roles and how this affects their job satisfaction, further investigating the relationship between new teachers' identity tensions and job satisfaction. In Part 3, a narrative framework and semi-structured interviews are employed to explore the connection between emotions as a mediator of LTI and Wellbeing from an ecological perspective. The diverse range of research methods not only enriches the understanding of the relationship between teacher identity and wellbeing but also highlights the book's unique contribution in both depth and breadth of research.

This book offers readers a chance to rethink how the roles of language teachers and their wellbeing are intertwined. Weaving together personal stories and research, the book encourages educators to broaden their conception of both the challenges they face and how their identity is intertwined with their practice while acknowledging the reciprocal relationship between being well and being able to teach well. It may motivate teachers to reflect on their daily practices and consider what they can do to improve their spot in the work-life balance quadrant. The book also fosters empathy and gears the readers to understand the special position that the language teachers hold in the classroom and outside. Whether you are an educator or someone involved in teacher training, it is full of valuable insights into the psychological side of teaching. The book's focus on cultural diversity makes it especially relevant for those interested in teaching in different contexts, promoting awareness of the diverse issues teachers face globally. This book offers more than just academic insights; it encourages self-reflection and fosters a sense of community among teachers who may feel isolated in their experiences.

While the book focuses on the challenges teachers face, its appeal extends beyond just language educators. It is likely to resonate with teacher educators and student teachers, who are closely connected to the lives and experiences of teachers. Additionally, the book could be valuable for higher education students who are considering a career in teaching, providing them with an insightful glimpse into the realities of the profession they are about to enter. By exploring the complex dynamics

of teacher identity and wellbeing, it offers a deeper understanding of what lies ahead for those choosing this career path.

“*Language Teacher Identity and Wellbeing*” is positioned as an essential resource for anyone interested in the human side of language education, highlighting the importance of teacher wellbeing and identity in the process of language teaching and learning. It fills a gap in the related fields that have been enriched by some works (Karpava, 2023; Morton & Gray, 2022) by simultaneously investigating the study of two concepts that have not been addressed together thoroughly: teacher identity and wellbeing, examining both individually and their interplay.

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