

This book is also a valuable addition to teacher education curricula, as Arab newcomer students are a growing group of students in Canadian schools. The book offers a nuanced perspective on the complexity of Arab newcomers' experiences in Canada, and highlights the importance of teachers and school personnel as critical supports.

Elizabeth BUCKNER (✉)

University of Toronto

E-mail: elizabeth.buckner@utoronto.ca

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*Pre-service Teacher Education and Induction in Southwest China: A Narrative Inquiry through Cross-Cultural Teacher Development.* Ju Huang. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. XVII+182pp., (paperback), 69.99€, ISBN: 978-3-319-96478-2.

Teacher education is a contested field that involves the negotiation of various forces. From a traditional perspective, teacher education is a national project, and its primary goal is to serve the economic and social development of a nation. In the past few decades, the trend of globalization has been sweeping across almost every corner of the world. People, materials, and ideas have been transcending national borders at an astonishing magnitude. This irreversible trend challenges the traditional, nationalistic view of teacher education and calls for new approaches to preparing educators for the increasingly interconnected world.

Dr. Huang's book, *Pre-service Teacher Education and Induction in Southwest China: A Narrative Inquiry through Cross-Cultural Teacher Development*, reports on a study that examines the influence of an innovative study-abroad program on teachers' development and socialization. In Chapters 1 to 3, Dr. Huang lays out the background of the study and explains that her engagement with the Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program (shortened as "RLP" hereafter) as a guide teacher and graduate assistant led to the birth of this study.

The RLP is a teacher education study abroad program jointly established by the University of Windsor in Canada and the Southwest University in China. The core value and purpose of the RLP is to facilitate reciprocal learning between Chinese and Canadian teacher education students through three-month immersive professional learning experiences in the “other” side and follow-up activities after the students return to their home contexts. Chapters 4 to 7 are the “gems” of the book. In these chapters, Dr. Huang reports on the key findings of her narrative inquiry into four Chinese teachers’ (i.e., Shan, Siyuan, Hailiang, and Weiguo) experiences with RLP. Each of the four chapters focuses on one participant. Dr. Huang retells the teachers’ experiences and perspectives in the same chronological order and with the unique, storied themes and sub-themes that have emerged from the participants’ experiences. In Chapters 8 to 10, Dr. Huang discusses multiple implications this study can suggest for teacher education research and practice internationally. In conclusion, Dr. Huang argues that a bidirectional, inquiry-oriented, and collaborative study abroad experience coupled with sustained professional support before, during, and after the study abroad, can advance teacher candidates’ professional development and socialization into the teaching profession in powerful ways.

Three big ideas have emerged from my reading of the book, which I believe can enrich the continuing discussion on how to prepare teachers in the increasingly “flat,” interdependent, and fast-changing world.<sup>1</sup> First, this book makes a convincing case of how cross-cultural experiences trigger teachers to reflect. Reflection is a fundamental mechanism undergirding teachers’ learning and development.<sup>2</sup> The participants of the RLP had the chance to get out of their own “water” and immerse themselves in a new culture. The various and many new phenomena they observed in the new culture triggered reflection. For instance, Shan was surprised by Canadian teachers’ prioritizing of students’ intrinsic motivation for learning. Hailiang was impressed that his Canadian colleagues tied teaching tightly to students’ real lives. Given the high density and intensity of the new phenomenon experienced in cross-cultural settings, the pre-service teachers obtained a new and useful reference to reflect on their deep-seated missions, beliefs, and identities about teaching. Such in-depth

<sup>1</sup> Friedman, T. F. (2005). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

<sup>2</sup> Korthagen, F., & Vasalos, A. (2005). Levels in reflection: Core reflection as a means to enhance professional growth. *Teachers and Teaching*, 11(1), 47–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354060042000337093>

reflection can raise teachers' consciousness and critical (re)examination of their basic assumptions about teaching, which would further lead to various levels of professional change.

Second, this book suggests that a bidirectional study abroad program helps nurture reciprocal teacher learning. Citing Schlein (2007),<sup>3</sup> Dr. Huang points out that the existing literature on teachers' cross-cultural experiences "can be categorized as either 'memoir' or 'adventure travel'" (p. 26). A bidirectional design is a feature that distinguishes RLP from many other study-abroad programs. The Chinese and Canadian participants each have the chance to give as a knowledgeable insider and take as an outsider who knows little about a new sociocultural context, to show their hospitality as a host and explore a different society as a visitor. The two-way design enabled participants to switch perspectives, resonate, empathize with one another, and actively engage with various communities at different learning sites.<sup>4</sup>

The third strength of this book is that it characterizes the dynamic process of how cross-cultural experiences interplay with other factors in shaping teacher development. The first few years of teaching are a pivotal phase of a teacher's career development. During this phase, teachers consolidate and further develop their professional dispositions, identities, knowledge, as well as the skills that they have learned in their pre-service education. Using the four Chinese teachers as examples, Dr. Huang portrays how cross-cultural experiences intersect with personal histories, interpersonal networks, school contexts, sociocultural legacy, and education reform discourses in shaping teachers' work and lives over a relatively long period. This type of evidence is rare in the existent literature and thus is valuable for deepening our understanding of the roles of study abroad experiences in preparing and developing teachers.

This book also raises several intriguing questions that Dr. Huang and readers could explore further. First, all four participants happened to be male. How did gender explicitly or implicitly play a role in the stories told? How should study-abroad programs and researchers consider gender and other critical social constructs in their future work? Furthermore, as the book reports, the

<sup>3</sup> Schlein, C. M. (2007). *(Un)learning to teach: A narrative inquiry into the experiences of Canadian teacher-returnees from Northeast Asia* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto.

<sup>4</sup> Cushner, K. (2007). The role of experience in the making of internationally-minded teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 34(1), 27–39.

participants' cross-cultural experiences seemed to be quite positive. Were there any not-so-positive experiences? If yes, what would be the implications of those experiences for teacher development? If the participants stayed for a year or longer, would their perceptions be transformed in any way and if so, why? Did the Canadian participants also unanimously and positively favor their cross-cultural experiences in China? How could program designers and teacher educators help candidate teachers gain a deep understanding of the historical, sociocultural, and even political foundations of the seemingly new phenomena they see during a short period? Many of these questions are beyond the intended scope of this book, but they are worthy of further exploration.

There is no best education in the world, but there are many educators who "never lose their initial aspiration" (*bu wang chuxin* 不忘初心, p. 49) of giving their best to students. This book (re)tells the stories of four Chinese pre-service teachers pursuing their initial aspiration to become teachers under the influence of a transformative cross-cultural experience. As an educator and teacher educator benefiting from cross-cultural experience myself, I strongly resonated with the teachers' sustained ambition and efforts to become better selves, in an interconnecting world, during uncertain times, and for students. You are highly likely to share my feelings and thoughts once you read the book.

LIAO Wei (✉)  
Beijing Normal University  
E-mail: liaowei@bnu.edu.cn

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*Teacher Education in Professional Learning Communities: Lessons from the Reciprocal Learning Project.* Xuefeng Huang. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. XXV+209pp., (paperback), 62.39€, ISBN: 978-3-030-06313-9.

The project on which Xuefeng Huang's *Teacher Education in Professional Learning Communities* is based was the last of a series of Canadian projects responding, in a sense, to the significant migration of Chinese families to Canada, in