

Preface

Background

For over three decades, globalization as a force of societal change has helped world leaders to revamp their school systems for international competitiveness and to alter the direction of teaching and learning in schools. Policy-makers in education have been quick to grasp information about the accomplishments of schools in other nations. Attractive packages are picked and translated into policies with transplantation in mind. The schools and their teachers are asked to conform to reform mandates. Teacher education programs are expected to accommodate policy implementation.

When schools are slow in responding to the requirements of reform, their inefficacies are being delineated. When teachers, who are designated as the spearhead of reform, question the wisdom of reform measures, their effectiveness is challenged. The programs that nurtured teachers are also deemed ineffectual. Today, a chorus of criticisms against teacher quality can be heard, suggesting a worldwide impeachment of the quality of schooling, teachers, and teacher education programs.

Instead of contesting widespread cynicism, we invited fellow educators and researchers to join us in addressing critical issues regarding teachers and teacher education so that their quality can be enhanced. This book is the collective contribution by the keynote speakers we invited to the Second Global Teacher Education Summit held in October 2014, Beijing. By linking teacher education to teacher and student learning, we sought to provide a platform for an international and cross-cultural dialogue with educators and researchers from different parts of the world so that a broad view on the improvement of teachers and teacher education quality could be established. By initiating an inquiry into the practice, innovation, and policy of teacher and student learning, we hope to draw attention to the accomplishments of teachers and to derive meaning from innovative ideas and research findings for a well-balanced approach to teacher education.

Summary of the Book

With the general theme of “Quality of Teacher Education and Learning: Theory and Practice”, the book contains four subthemes as follows: (1) innovative ideas and practices in teacher learning and teacher preparation; (2) challenges and new trends in teacher education; (3) rethinking the meaning of teacher quality; and (4) roles and identities of teachers.

In Part I, there are three chapters contributing to the theme of teacher learning and teacher preparation, and how teacher education institutions could improve the program according to conceptual and empirical studies. Goodwin introduced two innovative practices in teacher education: teaching residences and teacher leadership online. She discussed the benefits, challenges, and contextual considerations of each practice. Clarke and Collins examined the motivations of cooperating teachers in student teacher practicum in five countries. They mainly used large-scale questionnaires for data collection and analysis. In the interview with Hansen, he invited readers to think about the teacher as a person in the world. This study helps us to rethink the meaning of teacher quality and takes innovative practice in teacher education and teacher learning.

In Part II, the theme is challenges and new trends in teacher education. Zhu proposed a concept of teaching as a “holistic profession” to reflect his thoughts on the new traits in teaching and teacher education. Loughran explored teaching and learning about teaching through the lens of foundation principles for teacher education, principles that are able to be explicated, enacted, and valued in developing teacher education programs of quality. Paine examined the marginalizing of voices of teacher educators in global discussions about teacher education and invited teacher educators to frame globalization imperatives in social and cultural rather than entirely economic terms.

In Part III, we invited authors and readers to rethink the meaning of teacher quality in these testing times. In his chapter, Day highlighted three areas which are key indicators of teacher quality and which are likely to be influenced directly and indirectly by school principals: professional autonomy; professional capital; teacher commitment, well-being; and expertise. Gu proposed a relational concept of resilience with teachers, leaders, and pupils and called for attention to be focused on teachers’ everyday resilience. Zhu’s chapter adopted the narrative approach to call attention to the affective dimension of teachers and teacher education.

In Part IV, the theme focused on roles and identities of teachers in history and in the current globalized time. Lo and Ye’s chapter traced historical data along the theoretical routes of Chinese officialism and new institutionalism, and delineated several possible answers on the submission of Chinese teachers to state power and on their excessive attention given to examination preparation. Craig used Schwab’s theory of teachers as self-moving living things to propose the sustaining of teachers as the best-loved self in teacher education. Using narrative inquiry, she researched pre-service teachers, experienced teachers, and teachers who quit the profession on this identity of teachers as best-loved selves. In the final chapter, Meijer suggested

that teacher education should pay attention to the unmeasurable dimension of teacher identity. She further discussed the social elements of identity development: identification and separation, as well as the intro-psychological elements played in identity learning: crisis, transformation, and resistance. She finally posed questions on what teacher training programs should do to promote teachers' identity development.

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