

Asian Perspectives on Education

Inclusivity and Diversity

Edited by

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and

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Series in Education



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Foreword

John J. Wheeler

East Tennessee State University

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to provide this brief introduction to the edited book, *Asian Perspectives on Education: Inclusivity and Diversity* by Dr. Jie Zhang and Dr. Natalie Sarrazin of SUNY Brockport. The authors have selected a very important and socially relevant topic concerning diversity and inclusion from an Asian perspective. Given we are a global society the exchange of viewpoints on the important issues of how best to embrace and promote diversity and inclusion across all facets of our society is most important. It is important to recognize that there are social and cultural influences that still impact equity and inclusion for many as these ideals become more prevalent globally. The importance and urgency of this book cannot be over-emphasized, especially in the wake of the pandemic and the racism experienced by many Asian Americans during the outbreak of Covid-19. It is essential we have informed dialogue to avoid such blatant discrimination and misunderstanding that only leads to further isolation and marginalization within our society. Cultural competence is an essential component required of professionals across disciplines and it is a goal we must strive towards, given the global interdependence we are experiencing throughout the world. This book provides an opportunity to better understand these socially relevant issues of diversity and inclusion from an Asian perspective.

In closing, I have witnessed how Dr. Zhang and Dr. Huang (a contributor) to this text made their personal and professional journeys to America and have excelled in their respective careers in spite of the challenges that assimilating into a new culture and new homeland can bring. Having served as their doctoral advisor, it brings me great joy to see such a book as this come to fruition. Drs. Zhang and Sarrazin have conceptualized a relevant text with contributions from many experienced professionals that provide a meaningful lens from which to better understand an Asian perspective on diversity and inclusion across multiple settings, ages and contexts. I believe that this book can serve to provide a valuable resource and reference within the literature. I commend the editors and contributors for their contributions to this important book.

Introduction

Concepts of inclusivity and diversity in education are well-known in the West. The trend towards greater inclusion is the result of decades of growing awareness of marginalized identities, with its roots in the 1960s Civil Rights and the 1970s feminist movements, and through to the 2000s recognition of people with different abilities. The early Civil Rights and women's movement led the way to the multicultural movement of the 1980s and 1990s which expanded to include today's emphasis on diversity. Several seminal works took these movements forward into the field of education. Banks' *Education in the 80s: Multiethnic education* (1981) and *Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals* (1989), captured the progressive and activist vision of the Civil Rights movement. Banks' legacy was to enact the ideals situating them in an educational setting – where pedagogical leanings at the time remained highly reflective of white, middle-class societal norms. Davidman & Davidman's *Teaching with a multicultural perspective: A practical guide* (1997) introduced a pedagogical framework with concrete steps to assist classroom teachers in incorporating multicultural material into lesson plans and help them frame questions from a multicultural perspective (1997). Their text became a guide for educators and school systems to implement the goals of expanding educational opportunities.

As with all shifting cultural and political ideas, the terms themselves are ever-evolving. What was multi-ethnic and multicultural in the 1960s–90s is more often referred to as diversity, and the practice of separate treatment for students with special needs in earlier decades gave way to the inclusive classroom and expansion of teacher training that exists today. Regardless of the evolution of terminology, however, basic questions must continue to be answered to situate and recalibrate concepts to reflect the cultural shifts and the moment in which they are applied. Therefore, we can choose to recognize diversity, question what diversity is, or, more significantly, ask to whom or to what diversity is referring. We can also ask who is included and what inclusion means, or if we want to include a certain group at all. All the while, we must anticipate that the terms and even the questions will shift according to context, culture, institutional construction and goals, and the current political climate.

Given the increased state of cultural and educational interconnectedness, it is advised to be aware of global efforts towards equity and diversity. Many cultures have a long history of inclusion unique to their cultural and historical identity and needs, which has, in recent years, expanded into a liberalized curriculum, greatly influenced by the United Nations' 1948 Declaration on

Human Rights. This policy statement advocated for increased access to education at the elementary level and was the first step toward equity. Before an educational philosophy embraces the ideas of diversity and equity, the educational system needs to recognize that it is “diverse” and has decided to create goals that disperse specific ideas of diversity and inclusion into the curriculum. For example, diversity in an Indian school means that there is acceptance of a range of castes and socio-economic levels which are quite different in construction to what is familiar in the West. Although India has always had different castes, it took legislation to recognize that all castes and classes should be educated – something that only recently occurred. In Indonesia, diversity includes the changing cultural climate that mandates girls’ donning of a hijab in the classroom. These examples infer that there is a level of equality to the discussion that must be acknowledged. Beyond ideas and social constructions of diversity is the relationship between diversity and inclusion. Does inclusion manifest through diversity? According to Tienda, diversity does not automatically imply inclusion, but a diverse student body can lead to inclusion if the pedagogical benefits of the institution are realized (2013, p. 467).

The global recognition of diversity and inclusion is recent but growing in importance as evidenced by extensive scholarship on the subject. Sanger and Gleason’s recent book *Diversity and inclusion in global higher education: Lessons from across Asia* (2020) explores the phenomenon of diversity and inclusion in Asian contexts, with case studies focused on higher education. Chan’s *Asia Pacific education: Diversity, challenges, and changes* (2012) focuses on Asia’s diversity in secondary education but primarily in secondary education and uses a student-centered approach. Phillipson’s *Learning diversity in the Chinese classroom: Context and practice for students with special needs* (2007) addresses diversity in China with respect to children with special needs. All these texts, and numerous others contribute to the scholarship in this burgeoning area of inquiry, particularly as Asian countries engage in a cultural willingness of a democratic trend towards educational access and awareness.

The use of inclusion and diversity as a lens of discovery is not only synchronically topical but provides an important outlet for unheard voices and marginalized perspectives otherwise silenced or ignored in education and Asian literature. This text allows room for individual Asian voices and perspectives both in and outside the classroom, and in all levels of education from lower elementary through higher education. The idea of “Asia” is contested in the literature as a concept in terms of unification in any sense, e.g., regionally, economically, and politically (see Duara [1995] 2019; Acharya, 2010), which makes a book of this nature challenging. The book does not attempt to represent each region in Asia, nor does it comprehensively include a limited or unified range of subjects. On the other hand, the book does not limit Asia to a

geographic region and includes voices from Asian perspectives in the U.S. as well.

The chapters in this book contribute to the widening body of knowledge concerning global issues in educational diversity and equity from an Asian perspective. While the chapters highlight the differences in theoretical structures and perceptions of diversity and equity, they also illustrate the similarities by describing “on the ground” struggles associated with experiences in daily classroom life and envisioning changes in an educational setting regardless of cultural affinity. In addition, the book provides several chapters rooted in the pandemic that describe attempts to overcome the limitations of COVID-19 on teaching and learning, while championing the possibilities that the largely forced technology required us to utilize.

The lens by which the book is written combines multiple streams of diversity and inclusion with that of K-12 and higher education in an Asian context. Indeed, this book was inspired by a panel presented at the 2021 New York Conference on Asian Studies (NYCAS) on the very topic of inclusivity and diversity in Asian education. Most of the original papers on the panel were devoted to the impact of COVID, the book’s purview grew as additional authors joined the project supplementing the original presenters. This expanded version broadened the original focus from an exclusively COVID-centered one to one that allowed the exploration of a wider geographic area and cultural area as well as new subjects. In addition, because many of the authors worked within the chronological limitations of COVID, that perspective is represented here as well. Our text also includes a focus on individuals with disabilities, multicultural education, and cross-disciplinary efforts across cultures. This book covers broader topics regarding inclusivity and diversity in education from multiple Asian perspectives and ranges from various educational levels (that is, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions), different school settings (that is, public and private schools), and a variety of Asian countries and areas (that is, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, and Taiwan), as well as Asians studying and working in the United States.

The collection of the chapters emphasizes the inclusion of individual voices and gives a well-rounded representation of the issues through theoretical focus, practical applications, and research studies. Meanwhile, the authors of this compilation hail from a range of international institutions and countries or countries of origin, including Bangladesh, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, and the United States.

The book includes ten individual chapters, plus a foreword and an introduction, and aims to address issues of inclusivity and diversity in education from multiple Asian perspectives. Its structure falls into four major categories. Part 1: The Pandemic addresses COVID’s impact on access to education in Asia and

Asian students studying in higher education institutions in the United States. Part 2: Identity and Gender discusses concerns in Asian schools and experiences people of Asian origin have in institutions in the United States. Part 3: The Curriculum examines ways to enhance inclusivity and diversity in Asian education. Part 4: Different Abilities investigates the status, challenges, and education people with disabilities encounter in Asia. Each of these four parts is composed of two to four chapters, in which the authors discuss a wide variety of topics in depth. While the focus of this book is situated on two main areas— inclusion and diversity, it also addresses issues of access. The COVID chapters, for example, research the impact of the pandemic on access, inclusion, and diversity in different educational environments, in keeping with the main trajectory of the inclusion and diversity theme. An examination of the impact of COVID-19 on access to inclusion and diversity is critical for historical and educational researchers.

Part 1: The Pandemic

Part 1 addresses COVID's impact on access to education in Asia and Asian students studying in higher education institutions in the United States.

Chapter 1

The Pandemic Made it (Im)Possible: Remote Teaching in the People's Republic of China by Rebecca Ehrenwirth, University of Applied Sciences/SDI Munich, Germany

Chapter 1 discusses the challenges of the pandemic on remote teaching in the People's Republic of China (PRC), such as the limited access to certain online learning platforms, tools, and video communication software. It also shows how the online learning experience changed the students' learning behaviors in China.

Chapter 1, "The Pandemic Made it (Im)Possible: Remote Teaching in the PRC", raises the question if the pandemic made teaching and learning in the PRC more diverse and inclusive, since it opened the door for online teaching. It discusses various ways in which online teaching can be more inclusive since different online tools can be used in order to engage different types of students. The chapter also considers how online teaching can help students become more independent learners while respecting their individual needs. Finally, the chapter illustrates how the pandemic allowed for a more diverse teaching approach as the students were able to continue learning from/with different teachers (from the PRC and abroad) and experience various teaching styles.

At the same time, on the basis of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, Chapter 1 highlights how institutional/political restrictions can affect inclusivity in a

virtual classroom, for instance, when certain “infrastructure” such as a stable wifi-connection, free and unhindered access to online tools and a comfortable learning environment are not provided for the students. The chapter speaks to the fact that the pandemic in the PRC had the potential to challenge the traditional view of teacher-centered learning and substitute it with a more student-centered approach, permitting more diversity in the classroom, and how certain conditions, such as the Great Firewall and the rigid examination system still get in the way of making the virtual classroom more inclusive and diverse.

Chapter 2

Shiyuyuanwei (Expectations vs. Reality): Understanding Chinese International Students' Adjustments Under COVID-19 by Zhaoying Chen, George Washington University, Jocelyn Lai, University of Washington in St. Louis, Hongdi Wang, & Jessica L. Borelli, University of California, Irvine, the United States

Chapter 2 reports the results of a mixed methods study with Chinese international students (CIS) studying in a large West Coast university in the United States on their learning experiences during the pandemic. The authors also offer implications for how higher education institutions can support students' adjustment.

Chapter 2, “*Shiyuyuanwei (Expectations vs. Reality): Understanding Chinese International Students' Adjustments Under COVID-19*”, focuses on the educational experiences of Chinese international students (CIS) during the COVID-19 pandemic. CIS students often study abroad to gain a global perspective. However, the pandemic resulted in unprecedented shifts in the way students learn. In addition to the acculturative challenges of studying abroad, CIS faced unique challenges in remote learning, adjusting to new living conditions, and experiencing anti-Asian hate discrimination during the pandemic, all while receiving little attention and support from their educational institutions. To understand CIS educational experiences, this chapter first provides historical background for the motives for studying abroad among CIS and provides novel, qualitative insights demonstrating how acculturative and academic challenges among CIS emerged during the pandemic. It highlights how CIS remained resilient and how social support influenced their adjustment, shaping their views regarding the quality of their education.

This chapter aligns with the book's first objective to research the pandemic's impact on access, inclusion, and diversity in different educational environments among Asian students. CIS is an understudied yet important sub-group of the Asian population that pursues higher education. They maintain close ties with their native country while perceiving Chinese or Asian culture as their dominant

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Author Biographies

Lubna Alzayyat is a doctoral candidate (ABD) in Special Education at Duquesne University. Her research focuses on developing culturally responsive, evidence-based behavioral interventions for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from minority backgrounds. Alzayyat holds a Master's degree in Special Education from Duquesne University and is pursuing Board Certification as a Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

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Sanchali Chakraborty has completed her Master of Arts in Education and works in Woodstock School, India. Her research interests are early childhood education, primary education, music education, young children and she is always looking forward to meaningful growth opportunities. She loves to read, travel, and try new cuisines.

Dr. Xiaohan Chen has earned her doctoral degree in Special Education and is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst at the doctoral level. She currently serves as the supervisor of the behavior department at a special education school in California. Dr. Chen has extensive experience in both research and practice within the field of autism intervention.

Zhaoying Chen is a current doctoral graduate student in the Clinical Psychology PhD program at George Washington University. She completed her master's degree in Counseling Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania in 2020. Her current research focuses on the role of genetic and environmental factors in child emotional regulation.

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Dr. Ann Huang is an Associate Professor in the Special Education program in the Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership, School of Education. Her research interests mainly focus on assessments and education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Learning Disabilities (LD). Dr. Huang also specializes in evidence-based behavioral interventions and instructional strategies for students with challenging behaviors and learning difficulties, based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and Positive Behavior Supports.

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Dr. Jocelyn Lai is currently a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, working with Dr. Tammy English and Dr. Renee Thompson. Her research involves using multi-method approaches (physiological, behavioral, subjective assessments) to examine individual differences and the contextual factors related to how emotions are experienced and regulated in everyday life. Further, her work considers culture as a key sociocultural context in understanding emotion and emotion regulation and how it relates to health and interpersonal outcomes.

Ann M. Giralico Pearlman is a Senior Instructional Design Specialist Emeritus at the State University of New York (SUNY) Brockport. She was the Principal Investigator of the IF² & IFCN Investment Fund (2017-2018) on Developing International Networked Courses, and is presently an adjunct faculty member of the Department of Journalism, Broadcasting & Public Relations at the University. As the former Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Coordinator at SUNY Brockport, she led the COIL Standing Committee, coordinating and supporting faculty members to plan and deliver international virtual exchange courses.

Dr. Natalie Sarrazin is a Professor of Music at SUNY Brockport in New York. She is an ethnomusicologist and music educator with research focusing on Indian Popular Music and Music Education and pedagogy in India.

Hongdi Wang is a Researcher at the THRIVE Lab at the University of California, Irvine. Her research focuses on the mental health of emerging adults within a cross-cultural context.

Dr. Daiki Yamashita is a Lecturer at Yamaguchi University, Japan. His research interests include Curriculum Studies and History of Education. He received the Early Career Researcher's Award in 2022 from the Japan Society of Educational History in Asia. The latest book "*The Creation of Curriculum Standards for Language Education in Modern China: Hu Shih's Contemplation and Practice*" is going to be published soon from Kyushu University Press.

Dr. Jie Zhang is a Professor of Special Education in the Department of Education and Human Development at SUNY Brockport. She also serves as the Interim Chair of the Department of Educational Administration and Founder of the International Faculty and Staff Association. Her academic interests include children with disabilities, children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

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