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Across the U.S., classrooms are culturally rich, and yet the demographics of our teaching workforce do not typically align with the students they teach. Thus, impactful and sustainable programs for facilitating global and intercultural learning for pre-service and in-service teachers are essential if educators are going to succeed in working effectively with diverse student populations. Internationalizing the many facets of teacher education and in-service learning offers a timely and compelling way forward, ensuring that teachers are fully prepared for the reality of today’s schools and classrooms while students are equipped with essential skills and knowledge to thrive in our global society.

It is no longer sufficient that teachers explore intercultural and global learning in the abstract—from the confines of their campus or classroom—we must foster programs that offer direct learning experiences around the globe.

Faculty-led programs have been the hallmark of study abroad programming for generations. Yet, education majors account for a very small percentage of students who participate in such direct international experiences. Issues pertaining to program design, licensure, accreditation, and cost are often noted as significant barriers to such participation. Yet, a growing number of institutions of higher education have made significant strides in the development of study abroad programs for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Although international student teaching remains a popular option, other models include short duration programs, discipline specific study-tour experiences, post-student teaching internships, teacher exchanges, and early program clinic work in international settings. A common element of each model is the exposure to and/or immersion in culturally rich international settings often beyond the ones lived by participants, placing them in the position to question the many privileges of a prevailing culture. That is, such international programming is designed to help educators consider global issues, culture, and culturally sustaining pedagogies from beyond the dominant lens often held by those individuals.

Significant advances in pre-departure and post-program re-entry coursework have occurred in recent years as candidates are formally encouraged to critically reflect on their understandings of identity, culture, and global perspectives. That is, international experiences are more meaningfully connected into their work back home. There are advances in research as well beyond reports merely detailing study abroad student satisfaction ratings, and a complex and important series of narratives and recommendations are emerging. This book serves as an excellent example conveying such recent advances in the field.

This contributed volume makes an important step in the advancement of our knowledge in the design, implementation and impact on both teachers and pupils of faculty-led study abroad programs. Encompassing a comprehensive range of program designs and challenges, the chapters bring a conceptually informed and pragmatic perspective on issues relevant to culturally and globally-minded professional learning for both in-service and pre-service teachers. Topics across the chapters range from teacher
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exchanges to disciplinary-specific learning opportunities. They address teachers at many grade levels leveraging research methodologies that do not sidestep the rich and complex nature underpinning the internationalization of teacher education and in-service professional learning. Issues of language, culture, pedagogy, and diversity are all approached with a contemporary lens as issues of power and privilege serve to bridge the various narratives. Recommendations informed by data offer P-12 pre-service and in-service teachers, school administrators, higher education faculty, and educational researchers a comprehensive resource that extends the boundaries of our understandings.

The future of schooling across the U.S. hangs in the balance as programs and initiatives seek to short-cut or even end-run teacher development and learning across the professional lifespan of educators. Successful teaching and impactful learning in our culturally complex and rich society demands formidable program models that explicitly bring intercultural and global learning to the forefront of what great educators do every single day. All students in every school deserve nothing less. My aim is that every teacher will have the opportunity to participate in a meaningful international experience as a central element to their professional learning and development. Such an ambitious goal will require innovation, collaboration, and prioritization. This book advances our understandings and perspectives on key issues of internationalizing the teaching profession as a step to realizing that dream.

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