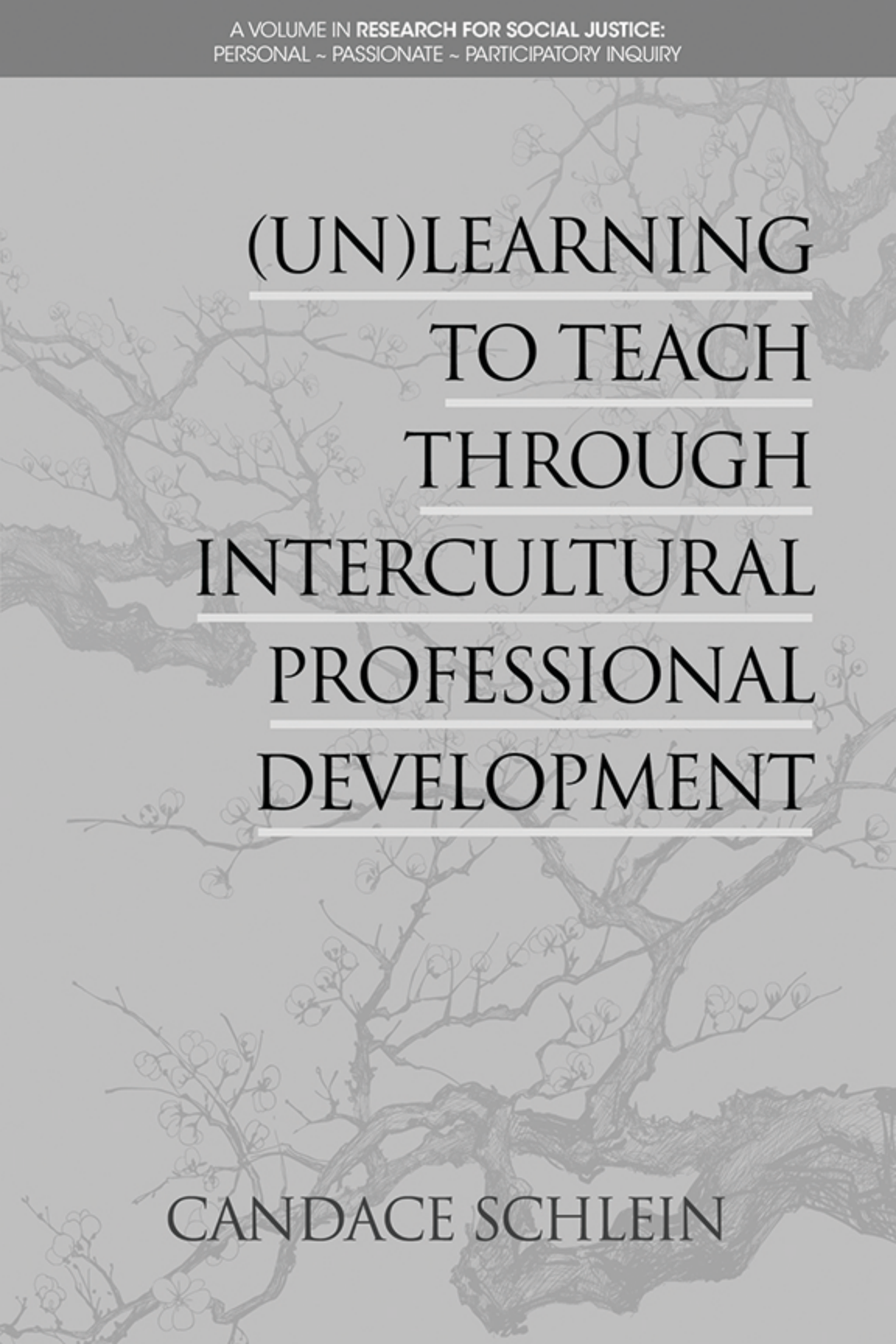


A VOLUME IN RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:
PERSONAL ~ PASSIONATE ~ PARTICIPATORY INQUIRY



(UN)LEARNING
TO TEACH
THROUGH
INTERCULTURAL
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

CANDACE SCHLEIN

(Un)Learning to Teach Through Intercultural Professional Development

A volume in
Research for Social Justice: Personal~Passionate~Participatory Inquiry
Ming Fang He and JoAnn Phillion, *Series Editors*

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(Un)Learning to Teach Through Intercultural Professional Development

Candace Schlein

University of Missouri-Kansas City



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Series Foreword

Research for Social Justice: Personal~Passionate~Participatory Inquiry

Research for Social Justice: Personal~Passionate~Participatory Inquiry is a book series which features social justice research on life in schools, families, and communities. This work connects the personal with the political, the theoretical with the practical, and research with social and educational change. The inquiries demonstrate three distinct and interconnected qualities. Each is personal, compelled by values and experiences researchers bring to the work. Each is passionate, grounded in a commitment to social justice concerns of people and places under consideration. Each is participatory, built on long-term, heart-felt engagement, and shared efforts. The principle aspects of the inquiries that distinguish them from others are that researchers are not detached observers, nor putatively objective recorders, but active participants in schools, families, and communities. Researchers engaged in this form of inquiry have explicit research agendas that focus on equity, equality, and social justice. Rather than aiming solely at traditional educational research outcomes, positive social and educational change is the focal outcome of inquiry.

Researchers engaged in personal~passionate~participatory inquiry in this series are diverse and their inquiries are far ranging in terms of content, people, and geographic locations studied. Their studies reflect new

and exciting ways of researching and representing experiences of disenfranchised, underrepresented, and invisible groups, and challenge stereotypical or deficit perspectives on these groups. It is our hope that this book series will inspire preservice and in-service teachers, educators, educational researchers, administrators, and educational policy makers to commit to the enactment of educational and social change that fosters equity, equality, and social justice.

The works in this book series draw on diverse research traditions which promote social justice (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009) and the “Democratic Ideal” (Dewey, 1916, pp. 86–88) in education and life. The work of Du Bois (1903/1994), Cooper (1892/1988), Woodson (1933/1977), Freire (1970), and Ayers (2006) has also influenced social justice work in terms of its emphasis on the emancipatory, participatory, and social activist aspects of research. This work builds upon narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Schubert & Ayers, 1999), particularly cross-cultural and multicultural narrative inquiry (He, 2003; He & Phillion, 2008; Phillion & He, 2008; Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005) in response to recognition of the complexity of human experience in increasingly diversified societies. These researchers incorporate narrative, story, autobiography, memoir, fiction, oral history, documentary film, painting, and poetry into inquiries. One special quality of their inquiries that distinguish them from other forms of educational research lies in understanding experience in its own terms rather than categorizing experience according to predetermined structures and theories (Phillion, 1999). Their inquiries are “peopled” with characters, rather than filled with categories and labels. In some forms of traditional educational research, experience is seen, shaped, and written about by the researcher using theoretically derived forms; in effect the experience is determined by the theory. Experience is the starting point of these inquiries and is in the forefront at every stage of research. Their inquiries arise from experiences of researchers and participants, rather than being formulated as abstract research questions, and they proceed by continual reference to experience as field texts are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and as meanings are crafted.

Researchers engaged in this form of inquiry also draw on critical race theory (Gutierrez-Jones, 2001; hook, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2003; Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999; Stovall, 2005, 2016) and use stories to disclose hidden and silenced narratives of suppressed and underrepresented groups to counter meta-narratives that portray these groups as deficient and inferior. They ask themselves questions about what is missing from the *official story* that will make the problems of the oppressed more understandable. By telling counter stories, researchers recognize the importance of

commitment to equity and social justice and their obligation to link inquiry to social and educational change. The explicit aim of democratic and social justice work is to engage with oppressed groups and individuals and empower them to take effective action toward more just and humane conditions.

Three distinct and interconnected qualities, *personal~passionate~participatory*, permeate the process of these social justice inquiries. Researchers not only collect, but often live in the stories of people with whom they engage in inquiry. They position stories collected in historical, sociopolitical, economic, linguistic, and cultural contexts, and contextualize their inquiries within struggles of underrepresented individuals and groups. Stories are presented in life-like ways; readers vicariously experience complexities, contradictions, and dilemmas of people's lives. There is a sense of "being there" and a sense of urgency for change. The stories told challenge orthodoxy, awaken critical consciousness, and create possibilities for change.

The work featured in this book series, embedded in life in schools, communities, and societies on the one hand, and powerful ideas of being human with strong commitment to a just society on the other, are at the heart of social justice work. Researchers begin with conscious reflection on experience to challenge assumptions, "to raise embarrassing questions," and "to confront orthodoxy and dogma" (Ayers, 2006, p. 85). They listen to "issues that marginalized or disadvantaged people speak of with excitement, anger, fear, or hope . . ." (Ayers, 2006, p. 88). They learn directly from individuals and communities about problems and obstacles they face and explore possible solutions by drawing upon the experience and knowledge of participants. Researchers demonstrate strong commitment to the plight of their participants and the injustice embedded in the larger society. This commitment permeates every aspect of life, begins with small changes, and expands to larger contexts.

Personal~passionate~participatory inquiry thrives on the researcher's passionate involvement, strong commitment, and unfaltering advocacy for disenfranchised, underrepresented, and invisible individuals and groups. This passion, commitment, and advocacy can not be cultivated in isolation. Rather, it calls for researchers to work with allies in schools and communities, to take to heart the shared concerns of individuals and groups, to build a community to develop strategies for the enactment of educational and social change that fosters equity, equality, social justice, freedom, and human possibility. Such a community can only flourish when the efforts of researchers join with the efforts of all educational stakeholders—preservice and in-service teachers, educators, administrators, educational policy makers, students, parents, and community members. We hope that the inquiries featured in this series will help social justice researchers and workers

of this community move beyond boundaries, transgress orthodoxies, and build a participatory movement to promote a more balanced, fair, and equitable human condition. An expanded community, such as this, embodies possibilities and creates hope for more fulfilling, more equitable, more humane lives in an increasingly diversifying world.

—Ming Fang He
JoAnn Phillion

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Acknowledgments

I would like to dedicate this book to the memory and the life of my younger cousin, Ilan Raikles. Ilan and I grew up like siblings and dear friends. In his short life, Ilan displayed an enormous amount of courage and a great strength of character in the face of suffering a difficult and life-long battle with Cystic Fibrosis, multiple surgeries, and intermittent periods of hospitalization. Despite his disease, or perhaps because of it, Ilan was the most unique individual that I have ever met. He was never afraid to live life to the fullest, and he confidently strove to reach all of his dreams, regardless of the numerous obstacles that stood in his way. Ilan was an accomplished drummer, playing with several local bands and jamming regularly with celebrity rock stars in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. He was also a gifted artist and computer graphic artist, whose work received recognition at art exhibitions. Ilan never saw challenges, just experiences for which he dove headfirst.

When I decided to go to Japan, Ilan was the only person who had understood my need to live abroad, and he encouraged me to do what made me happy. When I came home for a visit, he celebrated by taking me out for sushi and quizzing me about life in Japan. During the first year of my doctoral studies, Ilan got sick once again. I traveled to Montreal to visit him. I wore a wig and made him laugh. We talked about my studies at graduate school, and he told me that he was still thinking about what he wanted to do when he grew up.

I was amazed at the courage that he had to continue to dream at a time when the doctors around him declared that his body was in a stage

of irreversible rejection due to the double lung transplant that he had received a few years before. That transplant had been a double-edged sword for Ilan. For a few years, he was able to live like many other people who did not face illness with every breath and every step. At the same time, although it prolonged his life and increased the quality of his experiences, it was also the ultimate cause of his passing.

During that conversation, I told Ilan how proud I was of him. He looked at me incredulously, and I can still hear his infectious laughter echoing in my head, a sound I miss so much. He could not see how strong he had always been, how hard he had always worked to reach his goals, how impossible it was that he continued against the odds to dream.

I went back to Toronto to continue my classes. A few weeks later, toward the end of the fall semester, Ilan left this world. For a long time, I did not think that I could carry on with my studies. Everything seemed so pointless without Ilan. Then, I thought about the way that he had lived his life. I realized that Ilan would never have given up going for what he wanted or believed in, and with that resolve, I continued to pursue my doctorate and to carry on with an academic career. This book was completed as the culmination of some of my goals because of Ilan and for Ilan. I think of you and love you always.

This book is also dedicated to my grandmother, Ida, who taught me throughout my life the value of receiving an education and of being an educator. You always reveled in my academic accomplishments and challenged me to do more while living those experiences vicariously through me.

My husband, Jim, deserves an impossibly great measure of recognition and thanks. You have always been unbelievably supportive and understanding and you have enriched my life and my work in countless ways.

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Prologue

This book comprises an examination of novice teachers' experiences in schools, education systems, and cultures of schooling across the contexts of Hong Kong, Japan, and Canada. Drawing on a narrative inquiry approach, I made use of experience as a starting point for making sense of both professional and personal encounters in local and foreign settings. I consulted the literature to provide sketches of schooling in the relevant settings and systems of education and created narrative profiles of life, teaching, and learning through interviews, school and classroom observations, individual journals, arts-based written exercises, and reflective field notes with educator participants. This culminated in a comparative-descriptive understanding of education in Hong Kong and Japan as experienced by Canadian teachers.

This work is significant, since within my research text, I go beyond within-society concepts of countries, cultures, and schools. Instead, I aimed to shed light on how people make sense of shifting landscapes in an era of intercultural communication and interaction. The stories that I analyzed within my research text provide detailed accounts of lessons on teaching and living as foreigners in Northeast Asian countries. Importantly, within this book I made a careful argument grounded in narrative examples that challenges common psycho-social notions related to crossing cultures, and I indicate the possibilities of fine, nuanced qualities of cultural immersion and re-acculturation.

Curricular Implication for Equity and Social Justice

Furthermore, as a research text about educators and teaching, my research also has important curricular implications for equity and social justice. Due to rises in immigration and the birth of children into immigrant families, classrooms in North America—and indeed classes worldwide—are becoming increasingly culturally diverse. For example, in the United States in 2013, there were 13,424 foreign-born households, which has risen dramatically from 4,099 households in 2000 (Trevelyan et al., 2016). As a result, intricate issues related to intercultural encounters have risen to the foreground in teaching and learning situations and within dialogue about education. Consequently, there is a growing need for teachers to understand intercultural experiences and their influence on curricular interactions. Knowledge of cultures and cultures of schooling is further acknowledged as a crucial focus for establishing social justice and equity through culturally relevant education. This study underscores how an effective way to address intercultural movement and intercultural teaching is via intercultural professional interaction.

In this book, I explored how teachers in foreign countries adapt to working with students and colleagues who have divergent perspectives on education, and I demonstrated the way this shapes educators' curricular vantages. Since the average North American teacher originates from a White, middle class background (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), where more than 80% of teachers are White (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), there is a cultural and experiential discrepancy between teachers and their students in multicultural educational environments. I analyzed my participants' and my own stories of professional practice in Hong Kong and Japan and highlighted how intercultural teaching relates to local, multicultural education via the deliberation over our experiences in classrooms upon our reentries to North America.

The findings of this study demonstrated the interrelation of successful curricular interactions among culturally, ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse students in local classrooms and experiences teaching abroad, thereby exhibiting the educational and social worth of intercultural teaching initiatives and the internationalizing of teacher education (Shaklee & Baily, 2012). Teachers who participate in intercultural teaching exchanges accumulate valuable knowledge of and experience with a variety of cultures and cultures of schooling. Moreover, international teaching experiences parallel the complexity of the exchange that takes place with newcomers to diverse schools. Intercultural teaching aids educators in gaining insight into some of the qualitative facets of crossing cultures

that affect the curriculum for many students. As a result of the findings of this study, I suggest international intercultural teaching placements and study abroad teacher education experiences as essential for educators' acquisition of beneficial experience and knowledge in terms of improving education in culturally pluralistic school settings. This inquiry is thus of great consequence to addressing the critical societal challenge of training teachers to meet the needs of culturally, ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse student populations toward the goal of social justice and equity in education. My research contributes greatly to furthering education for social justice and equity via lending insight into the value of intercultural teacher training as a form of teacher education that has the potential to unpack issues pertaining to social justice and equity (Rahatzad, Dockrill, & Phillion, 2017; Sharma, 2017).

This book further offers qualitative methodological innovations that attend to issues of voice, story, and the intertwining of researcher and participant roles. These innovations are therefore important for shedding light on research methodology that might be socially just and equitable. For example, I carved out ways to develop my study into a self-study with co-participants. Within my study I set out to examine the dynamics of co-participation between a researcher and participants and to explore the potential of employing a combination of various forms of oral and written discourse for uncovering layered and unconscious stories of culture and identity. I therefore fashioned novel ways of accessing data and interacting in qualitative research that serve as important methodological contributions to the theory and practice of qualitative research, particularly with respect to identity and culture. I discuss here some of the distinct methodological features of this study via deliberation over the social justice and equitable methodological stance of my work in terms of data collection and representation and the researcher–participant relationship.

Beyond Rapport: Researcher and Participant Co-Participation

In developing a novel path for qualitative research co-participation, I extended my research data collection to include pieces of my own reflective writing and field notes from participant observation at a school. While other inquiries entail co-biography (Schubert & Ayers, 1992), the way that I participated in my study contained distinctive qualities that furthered my investigation in terms of creating resonance (Conle, 1996; Schlein, 2010) and bringing about insights into my experiences and those of my co-participants. I did not simply conduct my investigation alongside my co-participants. I interacted with my co-participants and reflected on their

experiences during my investigation, and I also engaged with them in the inquiry, which led me to experience growth, and to learn about my cultural identity and my teacher identity while investigating my co-participants' personal and professional journeys of culture and identity. As such, this inquiry illustrated a way in which to perform an intensive and intertwined experiential qualitative research landscape in relationship with participants.

Dreams as Field Texts: Accessing and Honoring Hidden Stories

During the early stages of my field text collection, I recorded in my field notes two dreams that I had and combined them as one dream text. I recognized that the dream text served as a subconscious story of my own process of re-acculturation to Canada and Canadian schooling. I also identified significant imagery from my story that indicated elements of my emergent cultural identity, which further touched upon my co-participants' stories of culture and identity. Moreover, when I shared my dream story with my co-participants, they each stated that they identified strongly with the symbolic imagery depicting the shifting landscapes of intercultural identity construction.

Following this prologue, I begin this book with the dream text to introduce the internal and external components of my experiences with intercultural teaching. Additionally, I made use of the dream text throughout this text as a metaphor, beginning chapters with portions of the dream text to deliberate in new ways on experiential aspects of my co-participants' and my own intercultural situations in relation to the themes of culture and identity. My use of a dream text within this book represents an important contribution to qualitative research, since I highlight the value of acknowledging dreams as a source of experiential stories that illuminate the literal and symbolic possibilities of attending to both conscious and subconscious stories. While dreams have been employed as data in the field of psychology, few qualitative studies in education makes use of dreams, especially as a resource for inquiring into issues of culture and identity among teachers and students as rooted in social justice and equity.

Eclectic Data Collection: Uncovering Layered Stories of Culture and Identity

The experience of teaching across various cultures comprised an intermingling of professional, cultural, and individual experiential features. I

understand that ephemeral issues of identity and culture may not be easily conveyed through verbal discourse. Therefore, I explored the use of eclectic data collection to develop a qualitative research methodology for uncovering elements of identity and cultural experiences. While qualitative work may lend itself to expressive representation forms (Ely, 2007), within my study I concurrently employed several methods for uncovering my stories of experience and those of my co-participants. This culminated in a study that engaged with an eclectic accumulation of a variety of narrative, storied, practical, and experiential resources. In turn, in writing this research text, I also intermingled diverse ways of representing my inquiry. As a result, this book is a research text that incorporates interview transcription excerpts, a children's story, a dream text, a split text, a metaphor, discussion on curricular theories, a poem, and other types of reflective accounts. Offering a variety of ways to tell our experiences allowed me to capture subconscious stories and to gain insight into connections among experiences that were not immediately apparent. For example, discussion of a text on Chinese education led two of my co-participants to identify tensions and to challenge their notions related to their cultural identities. As a result, one co-participant rewrote a literary excerpt within her individual journal from the vantage of her experiences as a teacher in Hong Kong.

Qualitative research involves the study of contextually situated human experiences in interaction with people. For this reason, factors related to the relationship of the researcher to participants and to the phenomenon of interest, and those dealing with manners of observing and analyzing experiential qualities are key for qualitative investigations. I highlight below my use of dream texts, metaphors, eclectic data collection and representation methods, and co-participation as pertinent contributions to qualitative research practice and theory for the study of culture and identity. Furthermore, I importantly illustrate more broadly the potential of nontraditional and varied forms of data collection, and the inclusion of responsive and organic methods of integrating the researcher into investigations for creating new possibilities for conducting and thinking about social justice in education and educational equity.