

Being a Teacher in a World in Transition.

Bridging Cultures & Co-Creating Knowledge About 21st Century Global Teacher Experiences

Introduction & Framing

This symposium, part of a larger global project which brought together 25 researchers across 10 countries, investigates how teachers' lives and professional experiences are shaped by national reform efforts, socio-political contexts, and systemic change. Individual research studies combined qualitative and quantitative data analyses to identify themes relevant to specific national contexts of each research team.

A comparative lens subsequently was used across studies to develop thematic insights into the “globalization” of the teaching profession, while allowing for nuanced understandings of how national contexts shape the experiences of teachers. This symposium sheds light on global “management models” of the teaching profession toward similar goals (e.g. teacher deprofessionalization; standardization) and drawing from similar ideologies across educational systems including accountability, inclusion, personal responsibility, privatization, and neoliberalism. Concomitantly, the symposium offers nuance in analyzing global trends by discussing country-specific impacts of professional reforms in education in two countries: Australia and Taiwan. Although educational reform movements are trending in similar directions, they affect teachers differently. Factors impacting teachers' retention and sense of agency differ from one country to another, and certain groups of teachers may experience variable vulnerability to educational reform efforts. Given this, context-informed, systemic change must be investigated if global “crises” in teaching are to be addressed. Instead of looking for one-size-fits-all problems or solutions, we must understand the “global” as mediated by the “local” and continue seeking ways to better understand our own contexts, other national contexts, and global trends.

Paper 1: Introducing the Global Phenomena through Teacher's Everyday Lives

Julien Tourneville

Drawing from 10 research studies across 5 continents that include the voices and experiences of teachers, this presentation highlights the link between recent policies in education and teachers' evolving experiences, expectations, roles. For this presentation, we combine a broad overview of themes globally, to discuss how research on teachers' everyday lives can provide insight into modern systemic evolutions of the profession and by extension how teaching environments shape the ways the profession is embodied and experienced.

Paper 2: Structuring the Social Architecture of Curriculum Reform in Two Taiwanese Elementary Schools

Yi-Hwa Liou, Li-Chun Cheng, and Cheng-Han Chiang

This presentation examines how organizational structures and social networks shape teacher agency during curriculum reform. Drawing on longitudinal social network analysis and qualitative interviews, the study investigates how leadership arrangements, collaboration routines, and role-based relationships influence teachers' participation in reform. Using a mixed-methods, multi-case design, the study focuses on two Taiwanese elementary schools implementing a recent nationwide policy emphasizing learner-centered design and expanded school responsibilities. Findings show that teacher agency emerges both through both formal roles and embedded practices such as co-planning, information sharing, and boundary-spanning interactions. The presentation conceptualizes teacher agency as a dynamic, socially situated process and underscores the importance of designing schools as relational and structural ecosystems that support networked and distributed forms of influence and sustained engagement. The study offers practical insights into fostering teacher-led change through intentional organizational design.

Paper 3: Reclaiming teacher being and agency in the Australian context

Jessica Gannaway and Nadine Crane

In Australia, contradictory forces run at odds with each other. Australia has been an enthusiastic early adopter of many standardizing reforms associated with the Global Education Reform Movement. Simultaneously, decades of advocacy have resulted in hard-won changes to curriculum and teacher professional standards related to Indigenous knowledges and teachers' role in reconciliation. While attempts are often made to instrumentalize and standardize teachers' work as related to reconciling unceded lands and the violence of colonial legacies, there is an inherent contradiction between such emotionally weighty work and instrumentalist models that neoliberal discourses construct. These siloed instrumentalist and relational discourses create a fragmentation in profession identities and hinder meaningful developments in reparative work. This presentation examines interviews with educators speaking about the challenges of showcasing Indigenous knowledges in their classrooms, attending to discourses that drive these dialogues. We posit limitations of current discursive framing, and suggest possibilities for reorienting toward relationality.

Paper 4: Diverse but Not Heterogenous: Globalization in Context

Betina Hsieh

The goal of our international symposium is to highlight how teachers across diverse educational systems navigate persistent conditions of educational instability by better understanding how teachers' experiences, their understandings of and ability to engage in their roles, their contexts of teaching, and the expectations placed upon them through "democratizing" educational reforms are evolving across multiple countries and continents. The final presentation provides a synthesis and cross-sectional analysis of key takeaways across previous presentations, and more broadly, from the international program presented in paper 1, highlighting three key themes: instability as an outcome rather than an indicator of transition; an impossible ethic as a

common ground across nations; and variations across countries indicating fundamental shifts to teachers' roles in the twenty-first century.