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Reviewed by Daniel Kirk
University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
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The effects of globalizing forces on educational systems have gained a place in current educational discourse, as pedagogical practices have moved into the global arena. As teachers and educators become interconnected, through the flow of ideas and practice, supported by ever-evolving technological advances, the opportunity to share best practice and collaborate becomes embedded in standard educational conversations. In *Teaching and Learning*, McInerney and Liem present a collection of examples of innovative educational practices from around the world, drawing on many different traditions and systems. In the opening chapter, the editors ask the question “what is ‘best practice?’” (p.3), moving on to explore this construct, attempting to answer the question in the context of the scope of the volume. McInerney and Liem decide on exploring best practice in education in terms of it being an effective and repeatable process, proven over time and accepted by practitioners. As we read the volume, keeping this understanding of best practice in mind, it seems a sensible approach, as the

About the Authors

Dennis M. McInerney is Professor and Associate Dean for Research is at the National Institute for Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

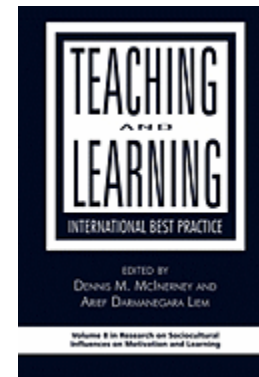
Arief D. Liem, PhD, is an educational and psychological researcher with 10 years research experience in large-scale nationally representative research projects and collaborations with internationally renowned researchers in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Israel, Philippines, and Singapore.

various contributors share their experiences of teaching and learning, presenting a diverse array of examples and contextual difference.

From a structural view, the volume is divided into three distinct sections. Part I, *Best Practices for Optimal Learning Environment, Instruction, and Teacher Training*, contains six chapters with a focus on examining a range of constructivist approaches to teaching and learning. With several chapters offering theoretical and philosophical overviews, along with specific case studies, the contents of Part I draw on current practice and pedagogical traditions to highlight many contextual factors that play a role in the process of teaching and learning. One of the striking elements of Part I was the similarities that exist across sociocultural boundaries, encompassing practice, issues and policies, something we as educators often forget, as we become focused on the 'here and now' of our own situations.

Part II, *Best Practices for Student Motivation, Learning, Self-concept, and Social Process*, moves the reader toward examining some of the factors that engage student learning, offering examples and case studies could be adapted to suit various and varied cultural, geographical, and contextual settings. Several of the chapters in Part II look at the motivational and emotional elements of the learning process, seeking to understand how young learners adapt to teaching styles and make sense of their learning experiences. These explorations, placed against a contextual understanding of the learner, provide pointers for us to explore our own practice, and examine how we teach in relation to the social and cultural experiences of our students. Not understanding where our students are, where their experiences and motivations lie, and how they view themselves as active and effective learners, leaves us, educators, in a weakened position in relation to being effective practitioners, serving our students. The chapters in Part II guide us through many aspects of this process.

The final section of the volume, Part III, *Best Practices for Learners with Special Needs*, presents four diverse chapters, exploring how successful teaching and learning strategies and approaches can be employed to serve the educational needs of student with specific learning difficulties or provision. Although a short



section, Part III is a fundamental part of the conversation regarding Teaching and Learning, and one that can so often be overlooked or tackled superficially. In inclusive education systems and classrooms, the educational provision of all learners needs to be addressed, and the chapters in this section offer us insights into what is working and how it is employed. The strategies discussed can be applied to all students, but allow provision to be made for those with specific needs, a good example of differentiated learning practice.

Overall, the volume presents an interesting and useful insight into successful teaching and learning practices from a diverse range of contexts. The tone and content of the text are presented in a way that makes it accessible to teachers, researchers, university faculty, and other stakeholders with a professional interest in pedagogical issues, particularly from a comparative stance. Through the contributors, Australia, Asia, Europe, and the United States, are represented. The book is only limited in so much as it does not draw upon any of the exemplary work being carried out in South America, the Middle East and Central European arenas. This is not to say that such omissions detract from the volume, but that a possible second volume could encompass a wider set of geographical (and, therefore, cultural and social) situations.

About the Reviewer

Daniel Kirk, PhD, Assistant Professor, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Daniel received his PhD in Language and Literacy Education from the University of Georgia. Daniel gained a BA (Honors) degree in English, a postgraduate teacher certification and a Master of Arts (Education) degree from the University of Sunderland, UK. He has taught secondary English and Literature in the UK, Qatar, Bermuda and Dubai. His research interests focus on the preparation of new teachers from an international comparative stance.
Email: dkirk@aus.edu.



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