



INTERCULTURAL RECIPROCAL LEARNING IN
CHINESE AND WESTERN EDUCATION

West-East Reciprocal Learning in Teacher Education

From Knowing to Doing

Edited by Shijing Xu · Yibing Liu
Zuochen Zhang · Michael Connelly · Chenkai Chi



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Intercultural Reciprocal Learning in Chinese and Western Education


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This book series grows out of the current global interest and turmoil over comparative education and its role in international competition. The specific series grows out of two ongoing educational programs which are integrated in the partnership, the University of Windsor-Southwest University Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program and the Shanghai-Toronto-Beijing Sister School Network. These programs provide a comprehensive educational approach ranging from preschool to teacher education programs. This framework provides a structure for a set of ongoing Canada-China research teams in school curriculum and teacher education areas. The overall aim of the Partnership program, and therefore of the proposed book series, is to draw on school and university educational programs to create a comprehensive cross-cultural knowledge base and understanding of school education, teacher education and the cultural contexts for education in China and the West.


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CHAPTER 10

Professional Development of Chinese University-Based Teacher Educators Working as Guide Professors in the Reciprocal Learning Program

Na Wu and Yibing Liu

INTRODUCTION

Similar to the Monk Xuanzang (玄奘) who in the classic Chinese tale *Journey to the West* (西游记) journeys to India with his four disciples in search of original Buddhist sutras, I (one of the chapter authors) joined the SWU RLP 2016 Cohort as their Guide Teacher, hoping to learn from the West and bring new ideas and knowledge back to China from Canada. However, unlike the one-directional learning described in the famous journey, we

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were also encouraged to introduce ways of knowing in China to the West. As a guide professor, I devoted considerable time and energy to managing the cohort's daily routines and fostering their learning and growth, which left little time or room for me to reflect on my personal gains and losses in the program despite being conscious of having learned significantly. Writing a chapter for this book on the Reciprocal Learning Program has given me an opportunity to reflect on my learning experience and especially on my changing perspectives on teacher education in a globalized world. The constant reflection on what I learned in the program encouraged positive changes in my personal and professional development. (Wu, reflection journal, May 17, 2016)

This self-reflection by Wu, a teacher educator from Southwest University (SWU) who worked as a guide professor in the Teacher Education Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP), reveals the program's positive impacts on her professional development as a teacher educator. Similarly, other university-based teacher educators involved in the RLP echo this sentiment. The RLP has offered an exceptional international experience not only for pre-service teachers (Xu, 2019a, 2019b; Xu et al., 2015), but also a dynamic cross-cultural and reciprocal learning environment for the educators themselves. In this setting, these teacher educators have not only developed their intercultural knowledge and cross-cultural communication skills to fulfill their responsibilities of guiding exchange pre-service teachers, but also expanded their horizons for teacher education in China.

As one SWU faculty member and teacher educator, Wu's recognition of the impacts of her RLP experience aligns with previous studies suggesting that cross-cultural experiences are valuable to the personal and professional growth of teacher educators who teach or coach teachers or pre-service teachers in universities (Lunenberg et al., 2014; Leutwyler & Lausset, 2016; Marx & Moss, 2011). Existing research from the field, cross-cultural learning, and teacher educators training have shown that teacher educators often engage in a process of learning, unlearning, and relearning. This process is instrumental in transforming their professional beliefs, knowledge, and practices. Such transformation is deemed crucial for enhancing teacher educators' international mindedness, globalized perspectives, and a range of skills including pedagogical, instructional, intercultural, technological, and interpersonal skills (Collier, 2022; Gillespie et al., 2020).

However, the existing literature lacks a comprehensive understanding of how cross-cultural and collaborative mentoring experiences guided by the concept of "reciprocal learning" (Xu, 2011; Xu & Connelly, 2017,

2022) could contribute to the professional development of university-based teacher educators. Moreover, few studies have yet paid attention to the sustainable effects of short-term cross-cultural teaching experiences on teacher educators, especially from the perspective of teacher educators' self-reflections and evaluations. To close this literature gap and identify insights for teacher educators' professional development, this chapter aims to explore the RLP experiences of five SWU teacher educators who worked as guide professors for the program's Chinese exchange pre-service teachers who learn and teach in Canada for three months. It specifically examines how these educators integrate their cross-cultural work and reciprocal learning experiences into their own professional development. This chapter is guided by the research question: How does the RLP experience of SWU teacher educators working as guide professors promote their professional development?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We have adopted a qualitative approach rooted in a basic understanding of narrative inquiry. Through our participation in the larger SSHRC Partnership Grant Project, we have learned that narrative inquiry as a research methodology can help discover and describe the lived experiences of SWU teacher educators (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, Xu & Connelly, 2009). Five SWU teacher educators who previously served as guide professors for Chinese exchange pre-service teachers in the RLP were selected as research participants. The participants served not only as guide professors, offering support to Chinese pre-service teachers during challenges, but also actively participated in a variety of the RLP's cross-cultural activities. For instance, they frequently visited the classes where the pre-service teachers were placed in schools in Windsor, Canada, as well as sat in on their weekly discussion sessions. Dr. Shijing Xu and her team at University of Windsor (UW) organized the weekly debriefing sessions, requesting that the Chinese pre-service teachers work in groups to share their observations and reflections of their Canadian school placements. In these sessions, each year's guide professor would also engage in the discussions. For our narrative inquiry, we gathered field notes and reflective journals from each guide professor, written throughout their RLP experience, including the pre-departure, mid-program, and post-arrival periods. In these materials, participants, guided by the philosophy of narrative inquiry and reciprocal learning, recorded what they did, observed, and thought in

a narratively flowing yet critical way. In the present study, five guide professors were invited as research participants to individually engage in narrative style semi-structured interviews to talk about their expectations, feelings, understanding, achievements, challenges, and difficulties related to their professional development during and after the RLP. The individual interviews were audio recorded, with each participant's consent, for the purpose of transcription. The demographic information of each participant is listed in Table 10.1. All the participants had worked as lecturers in teacher education courses or as consultants providing guidance to pre-service teachers for their teaching practice. They had adequate English communication skills and three had learned or taught in English-speaking countries before participating in the RLP.

A qualitative thematic coding (Saldana, 2016) was employed to analyze the data including the field notes, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews. This analysis aimed to identify significant statements in the reflective journals that pertained to their own professional development. From these statements, meanings were formulated and subsequently organized into common themes. The data coding process was conducted manually by two researchers to establish inter-coder reliability. This process encompassed three stages: initial coding, focused coding, and axial coding. In the initial coding stage, researchers studied, retold, and paraphrased words and sentences in the original data and coded them accordingly. Next, researchers invited the participants to confirm if the paraphrased text accurately represented their thoughts. Then, during the focused coding, the researchers selected and compared the initial codes to identify any recurring patterns and the most significant initial codes. Finally, the axial coding phase categorized the focused codes into themes reflecting major aspects of professional development promoted by the RLP.

Both researchers of this study are SWU teacher educators, with Wu having served as a guide professor and Liu as the Dean of SWU College of Teacher Education in charge of the university's teacher education programs and also as the host supervisor for Canadian RLP participants' international internships in Chongqing China. Our direct involvement in the RLP not only allowed us to understand the stories participants related to a specific time and context, but also increased the trustworthiness of data analysis and theme identification. Finally, we employed an inductive approach to analyze the narratives and stories into reoccurring themes, which formulated the essential structure of university-based teacher educators' professional development promoted by the RLP.

Table 10.1 Demographic data of participants in the study

<i>Participants (pseudonyms)</i>	<i>Prof. Ju</i>	<i>Prof. Lu</i>	<i>Prof. Gong</i>	<i>Prof. Yang</i>	<i>Prof. Wu</i>
Gender	F	F	F	F	F
Education	PhD	MA	MA	PhD	PhD
Major/Minor	English/ Education	English/Social Science/ Education	English/ Education	English/Social Science/ Education	English/ Education
Ages group (years)	35-40	45-50	45-50	35-40	35-40
Previous international learning/Teaching experiences (years) in English-speaking countries	2	0	1	0	0.5
Range of experience as university-based teacher educators (years)	10-15	20-25	20-25	5-10	10-15
Length of working as guide professor for the RLP (months)	6	3	6	3	3

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

University-based teacher educators have multiple professional roles and responsibilities related to teaching, research, administration, and leadership. Previous studies (e.g., Lunenberg et al., 2014; Kosnik et al., 2015; Olsen & Buchanan, 2017; MacPhail et al., 2018; Cochran-Smith et al., 2019) attempting to describe teacher educators' work have identified a variety of roles common to university-based teacher educators: "teachers of teachers," "coaches," "researchers," "curriculum developers," "leaders of learning communities," "gate keepers responsible for admission to the teaching profession," and even "brokers responsible for facilitation of collaboration between schools and teacher education institutions." Such combination of roles clearly requires them to be in constant professional development. Especially in recent years, with the increasing scale and scope of globalization in teacher education, plenty of overseas learning, training, and exchange programs have been developed and improved to promote professional development of pre-service teachers in China (e.g., Li & Edwards, 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Zha et al., 2019). In this scenario, university-based teacher educators, as both researchers and practitioners in teacher education, are encouraged to learn on the job and participate in international communication to maintain current professional knowledge and skills.

The RLP provided SWU teacher educators a rewarding working and learning experience, improving their professional skills, and enhancing their understanding of teacher education in an increasingly globalized world. In most cases, Chinese university-based teacher educators are perceived as "teachers-of-teachers," "researchers," or "teachers in higher education" (Liang et al., 2023, p. 104). They seldom reconcile themselves to other responsibilities and expectations. However, working as guide professors in the RLP required university-based teacher educators to take on more responsibilities, which enriched their experience of being teacher educators. Our participants reported that leading and mentoring pre-service teachers in the cross-cultural environment had been challenging but fulfilling, in their words:

I did a lot of research online, talked about the trip with my colleagues who had overseas learning experiences in Canada, and communicated with Canadian exchange student teachers before departure... I thought I was well prepared and could help students (pre-service teachers) to adjust

themselves to the new environment... however, I still had a hard time... for example, when I discussed with students [pre-service teachers] about something happening in Canadian classrooms, which none of us had encountered before, and could not find out what was going on, I always acted like or was treated like an “experienced teacher” who could provide a definite explanation. However, I was quite aware that I also had too limited school visit experience to give a full explanation, and what I could give them was mostly from academic studies and theories... my knowledge of teaching and learning was always refreshed every time my students [pre-service teachers] and I took part in the weekly reflections with Canadian university professors, graduates, and schoolteachers... I do appreciate and enjoy the RLP experience, which not only enriched my academic experience but also improved my interest in field study. (Lu, interview, March 3, 2019)

In examining the collected data, four themes relevant to university-based teacher educators’ gains in professional development from the RLP emerged: reflective practice in research and teaching; cultural awareness and intercultural skills; mentoring and developing competencies; and social and interpersonal skills.

Reflective Practice in Research and Teaching

University-based teacher educators are encouraged to conduct research on their working practice and regularly reflect on their teaching and learning, which is believed to raise awareness of potential mismatches between long-held beliefs and actual practice, enabling an “unlearn and learn” process, and helping to update their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Smith, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2005; Loughran, 2014). The RLP experience deepened university-based teacher educators’ understanding of what it means to be a reflective practitioner and researcher. Participants reported that they usually wrote working diaries about their teaching and research, kept records of students, and discussed and received feedback from colleagues. And they were quite aware of the importance of reflective practice in the teaching profession and always required that pre-service teachers make individual or group reflections. The RLP encouraged everyone involved to write reflection journals, participate in reflective meetings, and be reflective thinkers and decision makers. In such a scenario, university-based teacher educators enhanced and updated their knowledge and skills of reflective thinking and practice. The following statements represent their thoughts on this point:

I was suggested to write reflective journals at the first meeting with Prof. Xu. I accepted and thought it was necessary for us to record what happened during the program... however, I later found that the word “reflection” was heard almost every day... I was asked to collect students’ [pre-service teachers] field notes and reflective journals... students [pre-service teachers] constantly asked how to write an appropriate reflective journal... we need to have reflective meetings with students [pre-service teachers] and Canadian program leaders. (Gong, interview, March 12, 2019)

The RLP emphasizes reflection very much, which aroused my research interest in this field... I was very familiar with Chinese ways of reflective journal writing, and I know Western scholars might have different ways of doing it, I’d like to make explorations on differences in reflective thinking and practice between Chinese and Western approaches. (Wu, reflection journal, May 16, 2016)

The RLP experience promoted dialectical and reflective thinking among our university-based teacher educators. Earlier studies (e.g., Taggart & Wilson, 1998; Van Manen, 1977; Valli, 1990, 1997) have shown that different levels of reflective thinking could result in different focuses in reflective practice. Taggart and Wilson (1998), in line with Van Manen’s (1977) levels of reflectivity, constructed a reflective thinking pyramid, representing three levels of reflective thinking: technical, contextual, and dialectical. The reflective thinking pyramid has been reinterpreted and developed in the wake of researchers such as Collier (1999) and Ballard (2006), who generally agree that at the dialectical or highest level of reflective thinking, educators contemplate on teaching practice in a broad-minded manner, with ethical, moral, or social concerns. The ability to make defensible choices with consideration of equality, justice, caring, and emancipation is also indicative of reflecting at a dialectical level. Research participants mentioned that their reflection practices in research and teaching became more concerned about the social and moral aspects of education after the RLP:

The social and cultural diversity in Canadian universities and schools was a hot topic in students’ [pre-service teachers] reflective journals and our reflective meetings... we talked about social justice, disadvantaged groups, inclusive education, and other relevant topics... As a university-based teacher educator, I know that we must prepare future teachers to work within communities, honor the differences of their students, and recognize the

sociocultural aspects of education in a changing world... I've developed a habit to question moral and social issues of education. (Gong, interview, March 12, 2019)

I wrote a series of journal articles on teacher empowerment after discussing with my colleagues. They felt a little bit surprised by the topic I chose and thought it was not a good research topic for a language teacher educator... but I really don't think language teacher educators should just conduct research on language teaching... The Windsor experience reinforced my belief that we need to expand our research scope and both our teaching and students in the larger social environment. (Wu, interview, March 3, 2019)

Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Skills

It is predictable that the RLP would enhance SWU teacher educators' understanding and awareness about Canadian culture, as well as their ability to adapt to different cultural situations and perspectives. The research participants confirmed this and reported their increased intention to be culturally responsive mentors and help facilitate culturally responsive awareness in the pre-service teachers themselves. They became more culturally sensitive, more open to new ideas that may conflict with values of Chinese culture, more willing to modify their behaviors as an indication of respect for people of other cultures, and more likely to view themselves as global citizens:

Although the exchange pre-service teachers working with me had strong language abilities and had learned about Canadian cultures, they still met difficulties in communication with local people sometimes because of different communication style... I'm glad that they always had a critical mind to avoid culturally stereotyping others, which would surely make them into successful global citizens... Some of them are now learning or working in foreign countries, I've learned a lot from them and made more friends from different countries... I believe I could be a global citizen like them. (Gong, interview, March 12, 2019)

When the SWU teacher educators were in Canada, they encouraged exchange pre-service teachers to interact with their Canadian cohort, university professors, schoolteachers, and students to nurture their confidence and competence as culturally responsive educators. They agreed on the strategy of encouraging pre-service teachers to learn and strive for

intercultural empathy, which they believed was key to adapting to a new culture. This idea is supported by previous studies (Broome, 1991, 2009; Meconi et al., 2014; Mullavey-O’Byrne, 1997) indicating that people exposed to new cultures should not only accept cultural differences but try to empathize with others and change their behaviors when interacting with them. One research participant mentioned that she managed to foster an empathetic culture in her cohort by adapting her style to communicate with them the way they prefer. And she also believed that empathy is a professional competence teacher educators should develop. After returning to China, SWU teacher educators emphasized that the RLP experience made them more empathetic communicators. They consciously interweaved concepts of diversity, equity, equality, and inclusion throughout their teaching practices, and urged prospective teachers to pay closer attention to the cultural dimensions of education.

Few of us, my students [pre-service teachers] and I, had previously had the opportunity to be immersed in such a diverse culture before the RLP... we came to realize that cultures are not synonymous with countries, cultural differences and conflicts do exist in the classroom teaching... Although Chinese culture is harmoniously blended, prospective teachers should also be facilitated to understand their specific culture and its influences on their teaching styles, embrace cultural diversity in their classroom, and help students adapt to mainstream cultures. (Yang, interview, March 11, 2019)

SWU teacher educators also noticed the importance of working as “cultural workers” (Freire et al., 2018) to prevent exchange pre-service teachers from tending to the extremes of either xenocentrism or ethnocentrism. According to research participants, before they visited Canada, some had had a tendency to value Western culture over Chinese culture and assumed that the education system in Canada was always better than that in China. When they did their school placements in Windsor, they preferred to highlight the best features of the school’s approach to education and to try and understand the downsides of the education system in Canada. In order to make pre-service teachers realize that an appreciation for another culture should not preclude individuals from studying it with a critical eye, Dr. Xu, her research team, and SWU teacher educators initiated reflective meetings with the exchange pre-service teachers to discuss and compare cultural and educational features in both countries. In this way, exchange teachers gradually developed a measured attitude toward different cultures and reinforced their confidence in Chinese culture:

My students [pre-service teachers] were impressed by Canadian teachers' positive and friendly attitudes toward students. Some of them complained that Chinese teachers, compared with Canadian teachers, are too strict with students and even sometimes hinder students' development. So concluded that Canadian teachers are better in some way... I advised them to discuss news about a teachers' strike in Ontario at that time and to write reflective journals... later they reported that they found Canadian teachers' teaching and educational practices to be influenced by Canadian culture and values... they agreed that strict teachers educate strong and purposeful individuals... I realized that it is critical for us to guide pre-service teachers to think about curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching practice from a cultural perspective. (Ju, interview, March 11, 2019)

To sum up, the RLP experience made SWU teacher educators more aware of their professional roles as intercultural educators and to constantly develop their professional competencies to equip prospective teachers with intercultural teaching abilities. Some research participants told us that they always facilitated dialogue about global issues in class, using respectful, inclusive, and culturally relevant teaching strategies to promote multiple perspectives among students. One mentioned that, in a persuasive writing class, she encouraged students to express their views on the international social movement, Black Lives Matter, using mind mapping to discuss, organize, and present their ideas from diverse perspectives:

When I discussed controversial news with students in class, students usually quoted from the mainstream media to make their points and then put these points into their writing. It made their essays mirror each other unconsciously. In the past, I took it as an appropriate way to construct a publicly relevant essay and sometimes even guided students to accept these points. However, I gradually recognized that students could also develop their creative ideas if teachers provided better ways to elicit these ideas... I facilitated every student to use mind maps to talk about Black Lives Matter from the historical, cultural, social, economic, and other perspectives... After collecting these mind maps and essays, I found all the students in the class gave me a lot of surprises. (Wu, interview, March 11, 2019)

Apart from this expanded sense of their own roles, participants also emphasized that they interacted with students in a way that supported student learning from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. This approach was deliberately chosen to demonstrate and model intercultural competency within the classroom setting.

Mentoring and Developing Competencies

Mentoring is an integral part of teacher education, vital to changing attitudes and beliefs, and improving personal and professional knowledge and skills of teacher educators and trainees (Michael, 2008). A recurring comment from the research participants was that they really believed the RLP was academically sound and culturally relevant for both the exchange pre-service teachers and themselves. They acknowledged that they served as change agents to help pre-service teachers reap the full benefits from this unusual experiential learning experience and to enhance the professional development aspects of the undertaking. Their assistance to exchange pre-service teachers mainly focused on providing cultural mentoring and guiding them to analyze and reflect on practice. In this process, SWU teacher educators had to modify their mentoring styles, which in the process fostered their own professional development.

SWU teacher educators noticed that they should be “learning brokers” as they assisted exchange pre-service teachers in finding resources such as people, books, software, websites, and other information about Canada. Participants voiced that cultural mentoring was quite necessary for a cross-cultural exchange program. With the help of the RLP organizers, they guided Chinese pre-service teachers to find information about Canadian culture, invited experts to give lectures on Canadian education, and designed activities to provide opportunities for Chinese pre-service teachers and their Canadian cohort to communicate with one another. What they did not only facilitated connections between the study-abroad and prior experiences of pre-service teachers, but also changed their understanding of mentorship. One research participant reiterated how the RLP experience brought her to a new understanding of mentoring:

As a professor working in universities, I always thought that I just needed to provide my students with academic guidance which, in my mind, was mainly about how to teach in theory. And I was confident in this field... The RLP experience made me realize that my students expected more from me... I should find helpers and learn to be a go-between, helping students find knowledge resources other than being a knowledge resource... Being a mentor, in most cases, means being an intermediary that links individual students with learning opportunities. (Gong, interview, March 12, 2019)

Research participants emphasized that the skills involved in being a “learning broker” need to be developed in practice, such as working in

programs or cooperating with people in teaching. One research participant, who currently worked as a department leader responsible for international communication and exchange in teacher education and research, articulated that successful teacher education involves a wide range of integrated knowledge and skills that can only be delivered by teams and networks, not by individuals; therefore, university-based teacher educators should work with others to provide appropriate professional development opportunities. She further explained that university-based teacher educators are obliged to “open the right door” for pre-service teachers, allowing them to interact with their peers, other teacher educators, schoolteachers and students, and people with access to important resources. In order to do this, university-based teacher educators must understand the complexities of the situations that pre-service teachers might enter into and be capable of finding resources and opportunities to assist them. For example, another research participant described what she did to provide visibility for pre-service teachers:

Last year, I was assigned to work as a university mentor for pre-service teachers in the internship. I did research about the community where their internship school was, and invited one teacher there who was my former student to introduce school-based courses to pre-service teachers... I visited the school myself regularly and communicated with school mentors, students, principals, trying to find more to assist pre-service teachers in this new environment... I just intended to make certain that these pre-service teachers’ abilities were noticed, and they could reach their desired goals. (Yang, interview, March 11, 2019)

Social and Interpersonal Skills

Just like previous research on faculty-led study-abroad programs (O’Neal, 1995, p. 28; Rasch, 2001, p. 75) found that faculty members had a wide range of responsibilities and concerns, even including attentiveness to students on a personal level. They need to look after students’ physical and mental health, their safety and well-being, and the overall relationship and group dynamics of team members. Research participants reported that they were not accustomed to handling problems related to pre-service teachers’ personal lives at the beginning of the program because when in China, they could seek the assistance of tutors, counselors, or administrative staff. They explained that university-based teacher educators, in their

on-campus roles as professors, had no obligations to respond to students' social, mental, and physical concerns. On the other hand, research participants also admitted that they had developed close relationships with the exchange teacher candidates in their groups while abroad.

Research participants stated that their relationships with the exchange pre-service teachers became more intimate than their ordinary connections with students on campus. They each acknowledged that they kept in touch with former exchange pre-service teachers. When asked about why they valued their relationships with former exchange pre-service teachers, they agreed that sharing the RLP experience together offered them opportunities to view the students more holistically, to discover more about each other as individuals, which made it easy to connect over points in common. They expressed the appreciation for this opportunity to connect with the pre-service teachers, and detailed the influence it had on their teaching in their on-campus classroom:

The program group arranged exchange pre-service teachers and I to live in the same house, where we got more chances to interact with each other... We cooked meals together, shared a bathroom, had conversations at night, went shopping and travelled together... We saw each other outside of our prescribed roles and the barriers between us were quickly lowered... They are all excellent people, we soon became friends. (Wu, interview, March 11, 2019)

The unique connection with students [pre-service teachers] left me a lasting impression. They impressed me not just by their academic achievements or teaching skills, but as a human being... It reminded me that I need to know the different sides of students [pre-service teachers]. It seemed that I had only seen them in the academic setting... This has helped me because I often teach large classes of more than 100 students. It's really difficult to teach so many students and see the individual. I just see their names and student IDs and only remember those who performed well in classroom in most of cases... Now I have become more aware that every student has their own story and I'm more willing to interact with them, respond to their questions or needs... I feel I can better relate to my students now. (Yang, interview, March 2019)

Research participants stressed the importance of interpersonal communication skills, which they employed to establish positive relationships between themselves and the student cohort, and to generate a congenial team atmosphere. They discussed how they overcame challenges related

to maintaining their authority as guide professors while also having good relationships with the pre-service teachers as friends. They commented that although, in most cases, they had previously known how to develop positive relationships with students, they still had to improve their interpersonal communication skills in a new environment. In the reflective interview, they noted how their approaches to dealing with interpersonal relationships with exchange pre-service teachers in Canada were different from when in China. These differences could be demonstrated by the Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behavior, which provides a widely acclaimed framework for studying student-teacher interactions (Korthagen & Evelein, 2016). It seemed that, when Chinese university-based teacher educators were in Canada, they tended to be relatively more cooperative, helpful, friendly, and considerate, allowed more freedom to the pre-service teachers, and more easily developed positive emotional attachments to each other:

My students [pre-service teachers] had to face adjustment challenges, even went through emotional crises, feeling insecure, anxiety, and culture shock in this cross-cultural environment... I was responsible for helping them cope with the difficult situation and guiding them getting accustomed to this new living and learning environment... I had been an efficient but aloof teacher in my students eyes, but at that time I knew that I should be supportive and available... developing a good relationship with them is also beneficial for my management; actually I learned a lot from them. (Ju, interview, March 11, 2019)

The connection between SWU teacher educators and pre-service teachers was beneficial not only for the exchange pre-service teachers, but for the teacher educators themselves and their future students as well. Research participants claimed that the RLP experience enhanced their understanding of both personal and professional relationships in different cultures and inspired them to establish good personal relationships with students and other stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS

This research makes a significant contribution to the relatively limited body of scholarship on the benefits that university-based teacher educators can derive from participating in short-term, faculty-led, reciprocal-learning teacher education programs abroad. It helps to augment the more

extensive body of literature that primarily focuses on the gains of pre-service teachers from educational experiences in these contexts. The findings conclude that the RLP, characterized by its emphasis on reciprocal learning and shared responsibility, not only broadened pre-service teachers' horizons in education but also enhanced the professional understanding and practices of university-based teacher educators. The mutual adaptation and reciprocity of the RLP provided Chinese university-based teacher educators opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, and ideas that could later be applied to enhance their teaching, research, and overall professional or personal development.

Chinese university-based teacher educators in this study identified four major benefits to participating in the RLP, some of which are due to the well-designed program beyond being merely general consequences of international learning programs. The reciprocal learning philosophy and practices advocated by the RLP brought out specific benefits to university-based teacher educators, such as an expansion of personal and academic networks, a deeper acquaintance with and knowledge of students, and a habit of keeping reflective journals. The RLP fostered a supportive and positive environment for all the exchange pre-service teachers and team members. For university-based teacher educators in the program, the RLP constituted an effective learning community, which fostered the sharing of experiences and meaning, facilitating an active knowledge-building process through open discussions, collective reflection, and sustained assistance.

Due to the benefits of the RLP to both pre-service teachers and teacher educators, we strongly encourage colleges and universities to provide a variety of similar international opportunities. Future studies could be conducted to examine how overseas learning programs such as those described here could be better organized for the benefit of both faculty and students and to provide valuable opportunities for university-based teacher educators' professional development.

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