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AN APPRECIATIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN *EAST* AND *WEST*

Ann Brooks¹, Qi Sun²

ABSTRACT: In the context of globalized world, many countries have encountered similar changes and challenges. Learning from one another becomes critical to better understand the strengths and limitations of different theoretical and methodological approaches of education and adult education in particular. International and comparative education have historically demonstrated an effective way of learning from each other. Yet learning from each other seems to become very limited. Instead, learning from the *West* has become the norm due to its dominant economic position, a legacy of colonialism, the exportation of education, and the development of English as the lingua franca of scholarly publishing and interchange (Altbach, 2008).

The purpose of this dialogue is to begin to document the interchange between academic adult educators in the context of increased contact between Asian and Western students, faculty, and institutions. Within this context, understanding perceptions and infusing learning between East and West helps to create new opportunities for more equal learning, authentic exchange, and collaborative development for adult education theory and practice. Thus, conscious learning equally becomes critical for meaningful and mindful dialogues and exchanges during the learning process between each other.

The dialogue is part of a larger study intended to help provide both Eastern and Western perceptions and views on issues and visions in the processes of learning from each other. In recent centuries, North American and European institutions and thoughts have dominated the world's scholarly and scientific cultures (Altbach, 2008; Chou, Lin & Chiu, 2013; Merriam and Associates, 2007). However, that is changing as the East makes significant economic and human investments in developing strong educational systems and research traditions. This does not ignore the rich cultural heritage that preceded the modern/postmodern era.

We will invite participants to collaborative dialogue, using an appreciative inquiry approach. We will engage in a focused small group conversation on (a) what are the best elements of the current exchange of ideas and interchange in higher education between “East” and “West”, and (b) what our hopes are for how this interaction can best develop.

This dialogue will enable us to seek patterns and deepen our understanding on developing and enhancing the “third space” for more equal and conscious learning and exchange from the other. This study offers a lens through which to view how authentic exchange and more equal learning from each other may truly happen. It will contribute to the theory development and resolve practical issues for the field.

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