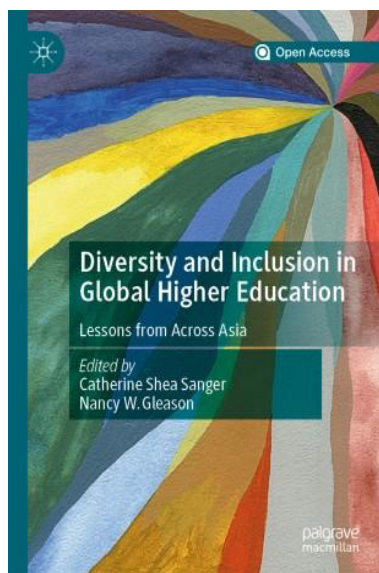


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Diversity and Inclusion in Global Higher Education: Lessons From Across Asia

Shea Sanger, C., & Gleason, N. W. (Eds.), 2020. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. EBook. ISBN 13 978-981-15-1628-3

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Amid internationalization in higher education, modern classrooms have become diversified, which provides both opportunities and challenges for educators and institutions. In response to changing trends and transformative developments in Asian higher education, the editors of *Diversity and Inclusion in Global Higher Education: Lessons from Across Asia* argue that classroom diversity can deepen students' learning potential when adequately harnessed and matched with inclusive pedagogy. This edited volume of contributions provides rich insights and practical strategies for cultivating diversity and inclusion in diverse settings in Asia and beyond.

This volume addresses issues in terms of inclusive pedagogy, curriculum design, and institutional leadership. In her introduction, Catherine Sanger highlights global trends in diversity, analyzes the need to bridge the gap between diversity and inclusion, and then offers an overview of the goals and contents of the following four sections. Part one (Chapters 2–5) focuses on the pedagogy of inclusion by discussing the teaching frameworks, rubrics of assessment, and teaching of adult learners and students in

the context of Confucian heritage culture (CHC). Chapter 2 introduces two broad teaching frameworks, inclusive pedagogy and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), with actionable strategies and techniques for inclusive teaching and learning practices. The author particularly emphasizes that “educators should be conscious and critical” in practicing and reflecting on their pedagogical approaches (p. 61). Chapter 3 describes the use of instructional rubrics in diverse classrooms and positions them as an essential technique of inclusive assessment, helping to build transparency in teaching expectations, enhance students’ academic performance, and benefit instructors’ reflective practices. Chapter 4 discusses the importance of attending to adult learners’ learning processes based on a survey of science learners’ needs by integrating literature on adult learners’ characteristics. Chapter 5 argues for the importance of being sensitive to students’ cultural contexts when instructors implement innovative pedagogy. Author Shelen Ho illustrates how the pedagogical models of flipped classrooms and team-based learning (TBL) could enhance the HOTS skills (creativity, innovation, and higher-order thinking) among CHC learners in Asian contexts when these models are appropriately implemented. The author specifies the attitudes toward traditional values and culture should be evaluative rather than superficial.

Part two (Chapters 6–8) explores cases of curricular innovations at liberal arts institutions that focus on diversity and inclusion. Chapter 6 introduces the creation of a new curriculum based on the liberal arts approach at a college in Singapore. By showcasing the efforts involved in selecting appropriate texts, drawing on both Asian traditions and students’ life experiences, the author emphasizes how the review and renewal of curriculum is an ongoing effort. Chapter 7 describes the design, implementation, and evaluation of a service-learning program based at a liberal arts university in Japan. Despite the positive outcome of the program, which encourages students to reflect on themselves and society through community-engaged service, the authors point out that two components, positionality and critical perspective, were missing in the original program design. Chapter 8 presents the case of a writing center within a liberal arts university in India, which crafted a space for critical thinking and engagement in interdisciplinary studies. The chapter highlights the principles and strategies used to cater to students’ learning needs for language and academic writing skills across dialects and disciplines.

Part three (Chapters 9 and 10) explores the support for two marginalized student populations in the Asian higher education context: LGBTQ groups and women. Chapter 9 discusses challenges that LGBTQ students face in certain “hostile and ambivalent” Asian universities (p. 257), develops theoretical frameworks and strategies to improve the inclusion of LGBTQ students, and advocates for the creation of safe spaces at both individual and institutional levels by increasing the visibility of LGBTQ students and providing the resources they need. Chapter 10 discusses gender inequality by focusing on the historical and institutional factors that contribute to the exclusion of women from higher education in Asia and the inequalities that they have faced in employment.

Drawing on women's experiences in local institutions, the authors call for actions empowering women to achieve their full potential by prioritizing their needs and concerns, and pointing toward needed reforms at government and institutional levels. The fourth section (Chapter 11) offers recommendations for strategically implementing academic leadership that prioritizes inclusive pedagogy and curriculum design across Asian institutions.

This edited volume does a wonderful job of providing ideas and examples that center on inclusion and diversity across Asian institutions. The collected contribution as a whole makes the case for why a holistic and inclusive approach is essential to diversity in education by exploring both theoretical concepts and pedagogical practices, integrating diverse voices and analytical methods, as well as reflecting on the challenges and opportunities posed by diversifying student populations. Guided by such holistic perspective, this book critically intertwines and evaluates related studies on Western liberal arts educational institutions by showcasing how innovations are manifested in the local contexts of Asian universities. Compared to most diversity and inclusion literature from a North American context, this edited volume explores the different dimensions of diversity and inclusion that attend higher educational contexts in Asia. By claiming to add new understandings to existing scholarship, the authors are also wary of falling into the distinctive dichotomy of "Western/Eastern," "Foreign/Asian," such as when distinguishing differences of the learning styles among students—although some research still claims the role of culture or region in shaping how students learn. Perhaps additional arguments and reflections on practical "lessons" (not only in terms of best practices but also in terms of conflicts or misalignment) for how to integrate the so-called Western curriculum into local contexts could be added to future editions, so as to benefit a wider group of educators across distinct institutional types and contexts.

Diversity does not automatically equal inclusion. As the authors claim, to enhance students' learning qualities and potentials, diversity needs to "go hand in hand with deliberate and enthusiastic inclusions" (p. 17). Additionally, this book contributes to an ongoing dialog that seeks ways to support diversity and inclusion on campuses across Asia, primarily through the lens of liberal arts educational approaches. *Diversity and Inclusion in Global Higher Education: Lessons from Across Asia* is a worthwhile read for faculty, administrators, students, policymakers, and government officials interested in integrating diversity and inclusion into their teaching, learning, and administration. This book is also a reliable source that can be utilized as a training tool for effective design and implementation of inclusive pedagogy, curriculum leadership, and strategic institutional innovations in promoting accessible and inclusive higher education. By offering valuable resources, this volume inspires both new and experienced educators to reflect on their pedagogical practices and take actions to enhance their innovative teaching, curriculum design, and leadership through greater awareness of their specific contexts.

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