

# Introduction

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## *Abstract*

*This issue of *Thresholds in Education* brings descriptions, arguments, and studies from and about international educators' work to the attention of American educators in teacher education or K-12 settings. In an era of "America First," we need to continue to learn from our global partners in the human endeavor of education. Included is a qualitative portrait of a Japanese educator relying on educational foundations; description of an intercultural educational experience that began in Iceland; the process and results of teachers' self-directed in-service learning; a reflection on globalizations influence on education; and, the process and results of traveling internationally with teacher education and social work students to shape and widen their perspectives as professionals.*

**Keywords:** *teacher education; intercultural education; teacher in-service; educational foundations as tools; self-perception as a professional teacher*

This special issue of *Thresholds in Education* seeks to bring descriptions, arguments, and studies from and about international educators' work to the attention of American educators in teacher education or K-12 settings. In an era of "America First," we need to continue to learn from our global partners in the very human endeavor of education. The question posed was: What can American educators learn from international education?

In the first essay, Ellen Motohashi, an educator in Japan, writes a qualitative portrait of a Japanese educator who, while challenged by colleagues, renewed her spirit and success by holding on to her core philosophical and pedagogical beliefs. She found her way in learning to effectively deal with diversity after a career working with a homogenous population.

In Iceland the concepts of cultural and linguistic diversity are being developed and celebrated in the educational system as well in the greater community. Kristin Vilhjalmsdottir, an Intercultural project manager at the Reykjavik City Library explains the programs and projects used to familiarize the country with the new human landscapes of Iceland.

Three educators and administrators from Pennsylvania, Laura Miller, Jennifer Motter, and Vanessa Sral, explore the application of heutagogy (self-directed learning), a philosophy out of Australia and applied in the United Kingdom, to teacher professional development.

Amy Kelly, an elementary teacher from Illinois, writes about globalization and its standardizing influence on education, commerce, and society. She explains her need to be aware of the pressures of standardization, and the work it takes to maintain focus on students as individuals in the face of standardization in education.

The final essay looks not to a specific culture or country for ideas to be applied to American education, but rather considers how visiting and experiencing any other country can influence American pre-service teachers. David Tack and Jeremy Carney, a teacher educator from North

Dakota and social work educator from Minnesota, explore how international travel and cultural experiences influenced their students' awareness of what it is like to be an outsider and how that impacted professional identities. The writers advocate global experience for students, to learn from international experience and professionals.