

Germain, Martha Hawkes. *Worldly Teachers: Cultural Learning and Pedagogy*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1998. 263 pages. \$68 (hard). ISBN 089789572x

Reviewed by Robbin D. Crabtree

When I first picked up *Worldly Teachers*, I had just finished teaching a summer course in a MA-TESOL program in southern Brazil, and had just begun a year of teaching undergraduate courses in Communication and Media Studies in Madrid, Spain. Not surprisingly, I found the book fascinating and useful. Martha Hawkes Germain writes about six veteran U.S. teachers who have studied about, taught, and lived abroad, arguing that intensive international experience profoundly affects a teacher's life and work. She includes reflections about culture shock, friendships across borders, fundamental personal transformation, pedagogical issues, and school reform. It is a valuable book for any teacher who has had or hopes to have a similar experience.

Germain sets up her discussion by describing the current situation in education: "overwhelmingly white middle class females are preparing to become teachers of an increasingly diverse ethnic array of students" (p. xv). She argues that international experience can motivate veteran teachers toward more introspection, increase their empathy, and create a desire to learn more. Relying on the work and philosophies of writers like John Dewey, Henry Giroux, and Paulo Freire, she relates the changes produced through international experience to models of ideal teachers who are intellectual, self-reflective, and passionate social agents. Her discussion in chapter 1, aptly titled "Crossing Borders: Opening Minds," is both theoretical and inspirational. Yet she does not avoid a healthy process of self-critique; Germain acknowledges issues such as cultural imperialism as manifest in past educational settings around the world.

While this book should be of great interest to teachers, it is also valuable as an example of qualitative research. Germain provides a lengthy and compelling discussion of her research methods, including exploration of the power of narrative and using the long interview, while clearly delineating rigid criteria for choosing her participants. She interviewed veteran teachers who had studied their host culture (China or Japan in all six cases) in depth, who engaged in a cross-cultural experience of at least six months that involved significant face-to-face interactions within the culture including living with a family and/or teaching classes, and who attempted to learn the language. Her interviews included explorations of each teacher's background and pedagogy before international experience, reflections on the various aspects of the international experience itself, and a discussion of personal, pedagogical, and structural changes produced because of the international experience.

In the first part of the book, Germain introduces readers to each of the teachers in her study. She explores aspects of each teacher's family background and life history, including his or her learning style and preparation. She follows this up by comparing the six teachers' approaches to teaching in their host countries. This produces an interesting discussion of cultural variations in expectations and pedagogical practices that is useful for teachers planning to go abroad, or those teaching in multicultural U.S. settings. In the middle chapters, Germain discusses the living circumstances of each teacher in their host country, recognizing that this was a crucial aspect of

each teacher's ability to adapt, success in the classroom, and overall experience. She then considers the critical moment of coming home, and the often surprising ways that reverse culture shock produces further transformation among the teachers. In Chapter 8, entitled "Different as Teachers," Germain discusses the ways the international experience impacted the teachers' work back in the U.S.: "All but one of these teachers clearly felt they were better teachers for having the international experience" (p. 165). She offers excellent examples of the ways pedagogy changed for these teachers, including some concrete ideas for classroom activities.

In the final chapters, Germain pursues the nature of this transformation more fully, delineating the ways teachers were transformed personally, professionally, and sometimes, politically. There is fascinating evidence that some of these teachers became agents of change, not only in their own classrooms and schools, but in their districts and communities, as well, sometimes reaching through to national policy and international consortia. Included in this discussion are specific illustrations of the important ways that these teachers were able to reform and transform their own schools (and sometimes school districts), as well. Finally, Germain follows through by giving concrete recommendations to administrators and teachers, including the types of people who are most likely to succeed internationally, the ways schools can support their teachers to do international work, and the ways teachers can serve as important resources in their schools and districts when they return. In an extremely clear fashion, the appendix is a reiteration of these key points.

Throughout this book, Germain weaves the voices of these six teachers, and their stories are worth reading. The author has an uncanny ability to analyze and synthesize these voices and experiences very incisively, creating a vivid story about education, international experience, and personal growth, finally gleaned concrete, clear, and valuable recommendations. In all, this book can be very instructive to teachers who have been or are preparing to go abroad, administrators who want to develop and support these teachers, and those who are looking to globalize their curricula and encourage related professional development opportunities. Additionally, the book can be quite valuable for education and pedagogical theory scholars, for those (like me) who study cross-cultural adjustment, and for qualitative researchers who want a good example of executing and reporting life story research. Finally, *Worldly Teachers* should be *de rigeur* in teacher-education programs, where globalism and multiculturalism are the pre-eminent conditions of the twenty-first century.