

Reculturing Schools

Dr. Jane Huffman visits the National Taiwan Normal University



In March of this year, Dr. Jane Huffman traveled to Taipei, Taiwan as part of the visiting Scholar Program at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). She was invited to collaborate with leaders in their school improvement efforts. Taiwan is in the process of reculturing their schools and their leaders are working with educators from other countries including the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. Their goal is to improve accountability procedures for student testing and overall student achievement. They are also focusing on strengthening administrator preparation programs.

Dr. Huffman presented lectures at universities and visited K-12 schools in Taipei and surrounding cities, where she observed classes, presented information about professional learning communities, and engaged in dialogue regarding curriculum, assessment and accountability measures in schools. The Taiwanese hope to develop best practices for Taiwanese student achievement based on the knowledge gained from visits such as Dr. Huffman's. They are committed to learning about our educational system's norms, values, vision, and goals.

Dr. Huffman was hosted by Professor Peiyong Chen of the NTNU Educational Policy Department and three graduate students who took great care of her for the duration of her two week stay. She says they were gracious hosts, "formal, polite, attentive and sincere". The graduate students were very eager to gain as much knowledge and experience from Dr. Huffman as possible during her brief stay and asked for her opinions and guidance on their dissertations and future goals. They also enjoyed some cultural knowledge by experiencing American traditional meals. They participated in shopping for ingredients and then cooking fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy with Dr. Huffman!

Dr. Huffman was inspired by the Taiwanese sincerity and excitement about learning. Based on her experiences, she is encouraged to pursue other international efforts to continue the dialogue regarding professional learning communities. She is also investigating additional funding to continue to work with NTNU and other international universities on collaborative efforts related to school improvement. Dr. Huffman is co-author of a new book, *Demystifying Professional Learning Communities*, to be published later this year.

