

The Effects of Working Abroad on the Development of Teaching Skills

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Abstract: Teaching overseas has always been a great opportunity for academic and social development. Teachers who have international experiences stand a better chance of not only developing their teaching skills, communication skills and classroom management but also learning new languages and about other cultures. Teaching abroad can help teachers promote their skills for efficiency and effectiveness. It is important to stress that teachers with international experience can teach effectively and contribute to the achievement of their students more. This paper focuses on the effects of working abroad as a teacher on the development of teaching skills.

Keywords: Working Abroad, Teaching, Development, Skills

1. Introduction

The huge technological development and sociological changes in the twenty-first century require that all societies adapt to them and renew conditions. It is not possible to maintain a social life without being aware of these developments and changes. This social transformation increase communication skills among individuals, allow them to recognize different cultures, develop business associations at a high level and enable people to compete globally and think solution-oriented.

The qualities that individuals should have gradually become different today. Undoubtedly, education plays the most important role in this situation. Teachers undertake a variety of responsibilities in bringing new skills and values to education in the long run. Teachers are seen not only as technical personnel but also as the role model for students in the modern society. These expectations from teachers indicate that teaching as a career has a high status in the society. Throughout the history of mankind, teaching profession is accepted as the most respected occupation because it is a bridge between social values for future generations and those who need information. In all developed cultures, knowledge holders are highly valued and knowledgeable teachers are always respected.

Education provides many important functions such as socialization by transferring the knowledge to next generations, discovery of individual skills and their improvement. The basic functions of education systems depends on the quality of teachers. For this reason, the way to improve educational outcomes in a country primarily depends on improving qualifications of teachers. As teachers are the most vital

element of education system, the effort and concern of raising qualified teachers have always been an important part the society's agenda.

2. Literature Review

Teachers are not only engaged in knowledge transferring to students but also they are also philosophers, sociologists, pedagogues, psychologists and good technocrats. In general, the role of the teaching profession is to improve students' achievement and personal development. Hence, in the rapidly changing world, it is vital to encourage teachers' development, increase their competencies and skills. In terms of teaching career, teaching proficiencies are defined as the knowledge, skills and attitudes that teachers need to possess in order to fulfill the teaching profession effectively and productively. Achieving the goals designed in the field of education is closely related to the qualifications and proficiencies of the teachers who guide this process. If a novelty in education is not reflected in the learning environment by teachers, it is obvious that the intended goal cannot be reached.

Thinkers attributed a special value to teaching while generating ideas about individual and social development. Plato said that people who can provide peace on earth are teachers, and Diogenes said that he does not recognize a more honorable profession than teaching. Schools have an important place in social improvement. The quality of education given in the schools is directly proportional to the improvement of teacher qualifications. It is not possible to increase the success of schools, personal development and success of students without qualified teachers. Therefore, institutions that educate teachers have a lot of responsibilities. Some standards are needed to train teachers in the desired quality.

People consider teaching profession as a significant career because teachers make contributions to society by making difference in the lives of generations. Research in many developed European countries has shown that the major reason for taking up a career as a teacher is to work with children and young people to expand their knowledge (Watt et al., 2012). Watt and colleagues also list the general reasons for choosing a teaching profession as a career:

- a. enable social equity to be strengthened
- b. social effects
- c. social contribution
- d. eagerness to work with children and young

It is possible to say that working abroad can help teachers to become qualified teachers. Teachers while working abroad need to pay attention to some pedagogical issues in order to be accepted by their students. For example, students can have difficulty in understanding a topic that a teacher teaches. This problem occurs because of the different teaching style of the teacher or difference in curriculum. In other words, the curriculum the teacher encounters abroad might differ from the one in his/her own country. The teacher may have to explain a topic that he/she has never told before; yet, he/she needs to teach in a simple and clear way so that all students can understand. This requirement helps teachers to develop new strategies that they have never used before while teaching abroad. Through observing the needs and learnign styles of their students, teachers improve their teaching abilities. It is important to note that, international experience allows teachers to develop their teaching skills. As teachers need to teach in an

environment which is new for them, they come up with creative ideas to help their students understand easily.

Teachers working abroad learn new methods and integrate them into their own classes when they go back to their countries. These newly learnt methods allow teachers to change their roles in the classroom. For example, they change the focus from teacher-centered approach to student-centered approach. As teachers want to be appreciated by the administration and students, they become more tolerant to students while teaching abroad and they tolerate mistakes of their students more. One of the positive aspects of international experience is to give teachers a new role in the classroom. Casale-Giannola (2000) expresses that the teachers' experience at the end of international experience will increase.

Janusch (2007) investigated the experiences of teachers who worked abroad. The study yielded that teachers adopted a student-centered teaching although they preferred teacher-centered teaching before international experience. The study also found that teachers who participated in the study changed their ideas about homework and decided to make students more active. Janusch stated that teachers after international experience gave more importance to communication in the classroom.

It is true that working as a teacher abroad help teachers gain positive experiences. It is evident that this experience will bring benefits to teachers in terms of teaching methods and principles. Wilson (1984) made four different studies on teachers who worked abroad. In one of these studies, Wilson studied the experiences of 12 American teachers who went to Nigeria. Before leaving Nigeria, these teachers expressed that their lives changed to a large extent. Nigerian experience evolved into a sense of self-confidence for them. They developed their teaching profession and started to use more materials in their lessons. Moreover, teachers implemented new different methods by using materials which they learnt while working abroad. The teachers even used real life experiences as lesson materials to motivate their students.

Wilson (1984) also studied the experiences of American teachers who went to Tanzania and Zimbabwe and found that international experience had a very positive effect on teachers. Teachers who participated in the study expressed that after international experience they became very sensitive to the method they used in their lessons and they also stated that they became very enthusiastic about the teaching profession. Teachers expressed that they always seek for different ways of teaching in order to help students understand better now. Also, teachers stated that they use true stories from abroad to motivate their students for better achievement. Listening to stories of people belonging to an unknown culture can be interesting for students. Teachers mentioned that their commitment and dedication towards their school and their students increased. Committed teachers are both physically and spiritually ready to do the act of teaching (Celik & Yildiz, 2017). Commitment is an essential need for successful teaching and committed teachers play a significant role in the development of their students (Mart, 2013). Furthermore, a passionate teacher has emotional, and motivational qualities which he/she can use to derive students towards their personal and professional goals (Mart & Deniz, 2013).

Casale-Giannola (2000) argued that teachers who work abroad develop their abilities in areas such as subject matter knowledge, new teaching methods, and different curriculum applications. It is important to stress that these factors hold a very important place in education to encourage students to accomplish better. While working abroad teachers constantly endeavor to develop their subject matter knowledge in

order to be useful to their students. At the same time, they seek for different ways of presenting knowledge which makes great contribution to the enhancement of their teaching skills. Teachers while working abroad have an opportunity to observe how teachers in other countries teach in their lessons. Teachers learn new teaching strategies from their colleagues and promote their teaching skills. In other words, teachers through using experiences of their colleagues abroad allow teachers to perform their profession in a better way.

In another study by Rapoport (2008) it was found that teachers developed their teaching skills while working abroad. Through observing how their colleagues teach, they learnt new teaching strategies and implemented them when they went back to their countries. Rapoport also argues that teachers with international experience learn how to use games effectively in teaching process. Also teachers who worked abroad found a better opportunity to enhance their cultural, historical and geographical knowledge which teachers can use to motivate their students.

3. Conclusion

Working abroad provides a good opportunity for teachers to develop their teaching abilities. New curriculum teachers have to implement abroad allows them to produce new ideas in terms of teaching. In order to teach effectively, teachers need to try new teaching strategies. At the same time, they will develop their subject matter knowledge. Working abroad allows teachers to observe how teachers in other countries teach. Teachers can learn about classroom management, developing lesson materials, useful ways to motivate students, integrating technology into lessons, and creating a classroom environment in which students can easily communicate with each other and teacher.

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