

Teaching Abroad: Why Teachers Prefer Teaching Overseas

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Received: October 7, 2017 Accepted: November 22, 2017 Online Published: December 1, 2017

doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v4i3p182

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 can contribute to the achievement of their students more. This paper focuses on five reasons why teachers prefer teaching overseas.

Keywords: Working Abroad, Teaching, Development, Skills

1. Introduction

It is true that the need for globally skilled people has been increasing as globalization raises new threats. Education has the major role in promoting skills individuals have and teachers are at the core of every education system. Teaching overseas has always been a great opportunity for academic and social development. Within this context, working abroad benefits teachers to meet the needs of their students. When teachers work abroad they develop their teaching skills, foreign language proficiency, learn how to acquire and use information, develop decision-making ability, improve their communication skills, and increase their ability to respond to different situations. Moreover, they learn about other people and their cultures, display positive interactions with different group of people, learn how to respect others from diverse groups, and tolerance. This paper tries to explain five reasons why teachers work abroad.

2. Commitment to the Teaching Profession

The greatest contribution to education is made by teachers who are dedicated to their goals. Dedicated teachers are different from others. The characteristics of dedicated teachers according to Fox (1964) are as follows:

1. They have a high desire to be a good teacher: the most important feature of a dedicated teacher is the enthusiasm they display for teaching. Dedicated teachers like to work with children and young people and help people in society to reach their goals. As teachers, they like their job, students, and other teachers they work with.

2. They are more than information providers: devoted teachers know that education is more than collecting information. The most prominent role of dedicated teachers is to awaken the curiosity of students to learn. They follow the developments and innovations in their field and take into account the questions from their students and endeavor to respond them in the best way.
3. They are aware that every individual is valuable: The dedicated teachers are aware that students differ in terms of motivation, intelligence, and understanding; thus, take these differences into account while teaching. They do not group their students as intelligent, moderate or slow learners. Rather, they help each student with their development. Dedicated teachers not only assist their students in academic development but also help them with their moral development.
4. They carry out their professional responsibilities: Dedicated teachers know their responsibilities towards students, colleagues, administrators, and parents. They show responsibility to improve education, the quality of teaching, and promote teachers' social status.

The most obvious feature that committed teachers need for effectiveness is subject matter knowledge. Reynolds and Muijs (1999) state that good knowledge in their fields allow teachers to meet almost all needs of students. Ferguson and Womack (1993) argue that good field knowledge is a major factor in student achievement. Dedicated teachers are aware of good field knowledge to inspire their students for academic development.

Other features of dedicated and effective teachers are as follows:

1. Effective teachers know that individual differences can occur hence they teach by taking into account the skills and abilities of students.
2. Communication skills in teaching are very important. Dedicated teachers can establish, good communication with students. It can be said that teachers who lack communication skills will not have a good dialogue with their students.
3. Committed teachers have self-confidence. Teacher self-confidence influences learning quality according to Bandura (1997). If teachers believe and trust in themselves, they achieve a lot in class.
4. Effective teachers are passionate about their profession. Wolk (2001) argues that passionate teachers can create an effective classroom environment. Gurney (2007) states that if teachers are enthusiastic about what they do, they will have an interaction with the class which will allow learning to turn into a work of pleasure. Dedicated teachers through being passionate and enthusiastic can not only motivate their students but also increase their success.
5. Respect, justice and equality are important concepts in the eyes of students, and as Stronge et al. (2004) states, students expect from teachers respect, justice and equality in all matters. Dedicated teachers are aware of these expectations thus they are willing to respect their students everywhere and they always endeavor to be fair in every aspect.
6. Dedicated teachers always try to develop themselves in their profession to be effective and efficient (Mart, 2013). If necessary, they can work with other teachers and benefit from their ideas.
7. Caring is an important feature of dedicated teachers. They give utmost attention to the ideas of their students and listen to them everywhere. Stronge et al. (2004) argue that when teachers are

gentle, careful, and motivating towards students, they make more impression on them. Dedicated teachers are aware that caring about students is a key role in success.

Teachers, while working abroad, develop their teaching skills from their colleagues. They learn new teaching strategies, material development, subject matter knowledge, and technology integration into education. They observe other teachers and benefit from their experiences. International experience help teachers with classroom management, establishment of good relationship with students, and understanding students better. Above all, they bring these experiences into their own countries. Their commitment to their profession, students and schools increase. These factors are essential for making difference in students' achievement.

3. Financial Problems

Dolton, Oscar and Gutierrez (2011) argue that if teachers get a good salary, the quality of teaching will be high. They offer two reasons why a good salary will increase qualifications in the teaching profession:

1. If teaching profession is well-paid, more successful students will choose this occupation. (In some countries, doctors and lawyers are paid a good salary, so successful students prefer these occupations). It is a natural result that the quality of this profession increases with successful students choosing the teaching profession.
2. As the salaries of teachers increase, they will not be below a certain income level, and teaching will not be considered as a low status profession. In other words, Teaching will no longer be an unfavorable profession.

Good salary is an important influence in attracting and retaining high quality teachers (Murnane et al., 1991). Without a motivating element, the positive impact of teaching on student learning will be limited. As in other professions, quality and motivation can be provided with a high salary in teaching profession (Dolton et al., 2011).

Good working conditions cannot guarantee quality education, but it can be said that low salary in teaching might be a hindrance in student achievement. Figlio and Stone (1997), found that high salary is a contributing force to improve quality teaching. Similarly, the link between high salary and quality teaching has also been found in the study of Ballou (1996).

The talent and experience teachers has is an important influence on students' success. Quality in education cannot be achieved without motivated and successful teachers. Motivation and good profession can not be mentioned without successful teachers in the profession. As in all professions, success depends on good working conditions, which can be achieved by providing teachers with a good salary. Good working conditions does not guarantee quality education, but it is not usually possible for teachers to be successful and productive with low salaries. Ballou (1996) has found that teachers who receive good salaries are more productive and provide better quality education.

Education is one of the most important tools for the development of a country and the most important element of this process is teachers. Teachers have undertaken an important task, the training of future generations, which have an important place in the development of the country. For this reason, in order

for teachers to do their jobs in the best possible way, it is necessary to provide convenient conditions for them. Working abroad has been a good opportunity for teachers to have better life standards.

4. Learning about New Cultures

The best way to learn the culture of people is to be in that community. Working in other countries allows individuals to learn about a new culture. Teachers have to know the possible problems of students in the classroom from other countries. Teachers with international experience can understand the problems of students who belong to a different culture. It is important that teachers are in good relationship with students. Santoro (2007) argues that the attitude and behaviors of teachers play a major role in class management. As long as teachers know their students' culture well, they can establish a strong communication with them in the classroom which will not only contribute to classroom management but also students' achievement.

5. Learning New Languages

People who know foreign languages can communicate with other people, read information from different sources easily and travel to other countries. At the same time, people who speak foreign languages can find better jobs. Bamford and Mizokawa, (1991) argue that people who speak foreign languages are more creative and faster to solve problems. Recently, intensive focus on communication and social interaction in language learning has led to a new perspective on language teaching. According to the new intercultural approach, the goal of language learning is not only to improve language skills and the competence of foreign language communication, but also to increase the intercultural competence of students. Bringing a foreign language to the classroom environment also means offering students a different world which differs from their own cultural world. In this case, it is now necessary for teachers to increase the acquisition of students' intercultural competence as much as possible (Sercu, 2005). As a result, students who grow up with this approach will grow up as world citizens who know foreign languages and about other cultures (Risager, 2007).

6. Developing the Teaching Profession

Heideman (1990) defines professional development of teachers as using different teaching and learning activities to improve the academic achievement of students. Professional development covers the needs of individuals, businesses and organizations. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) consider teachers' professional development as all methods for improving knowledge, teacher attitudes and skills. Oldrayd and Hall (1991) describe professional development as the development of skills in working conditions and the advancement of the professional situation in the teaching profession. Day (1999) defines professional development of teachers as all natural learning experiences either planned or conscious which contribute to the educational criteria of individuals, groups and schools.

Teachers who work abroad learn new methods and integrate them into their own classes when they go back to their countries. Experiences gained while working abroad can change the classroom teaching style. In addition, they change their roles in the classroom as well; for example from teacher-centered to

student-centered teaching. Also teachers with international experience become more tolerant to students and their mistakes.

7. Conclusion

Education plays the key role in the development of future generations; therefore, teachers should have the necessary skills for effective teaching. Teaching abroad is a great advantage for teachers in that it helps them with social and professional development. They will have a chance of promoting their qualifications in the teaching profession. It is noteworthy that, experienced teachers can highly contribute to student achievement and teaching abroad can provide teachers a good opportunity to improve their experiences.

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