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The Effectiveness Of Exchange Student Program On School-based Experience

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Abstract

Teaching transformation as a preferred profession, one of 11 shifts in the early reporting of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 emphasizes on increased teacher learning and development. Hence, the international program of this school-based experience is planned in 2016 to enhance the learning and development of future teachers globally. This study examines the impacts of the program implementation that has been implemented in 2017 and 2018 in collaboration with the University of Indonesia Teachers Association of Semarang. This assessment study involved 22 students of IPG Campus Temenggong Ibrahim, Johor who had attended the program during the year. Semi-structured interviews and documents reflections were used to collect data from students. The thematic and textual analyzes disclosed that there were four aspects involved: management and implementation of teaching and learning, communication skills, confident level and cultural value. The findings of this research provided some valuable input on teaching and learning to be incorporated to prepare student to become an excellent teacher.

Keywords: Exchange Student, School-based Experience and International Program.

Introduction

The international program of this school-based experience is a student exchange program involving students of IPG Campus Temenggong Ibrahim, Johor, Malaysia with a student of the University of Indonesia Teachers Association of Indonesia, Semarang. Through this program, students can gain experience in different schools and countries. 4 weeks of experience in different cultures and practices in education gives students the opportunity to gain experience especially in the context of teaching and learning according to their respective fields.

To produce 21st century skilled teachers and to implement lifelong learning, teachers need to be trained as thinkers and able to solve problems and think as entrepreneurs. Therefore, the international program of this school-based experience is also intended to enhance thinking skills, critical thinking, communication skills and self-confidence through holistic and global education approaches.

Research Objectives

Following were the main objectives of this paper:

1. To explore the experiences gained in teaching and learning.
2. To identify the skills acquired while participating in an international program of school-based experience.

Methodology

This qualitative study used a descriptive study method to explore the effectiveness of International program on school-based experience. This method helped in obtaining a better assessment of research issue. The group of 9 participant for year 2017's program and 13 participant for year 2018's program were purposely selected from various options. These students from options guidance and counselling, remedial, science, chinese language and physical education. For data collection, semi-structured interviews and reflectives documents were used to obtain information from the students. Textual and thematic analysis were conducted to identify some important aspects with regard to the effectiveness of the program.

Findings

Semi structured interviews were conducted with the students. The students were found to experience several aspects in participating the program. Based on the semi-structured interviews and documents reflections, the teaching and learning experience seemed to open the mind of student's knowledge in classroom management. Three important issues that emerged from the data analysis were related to communication skill, confident level and cultural value. These themes are discussed in detail below.

Management and Implementation of Teaching and Learning

International experiences provide participants with an exposure to diverse cultures and backgrounds. International programs specially designed for teachers "emerged as an important way to expand the worldview of new teachers and bring a needed global perspective to their curriculum development and classroom instruction" (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007, p. 116) Theme-based learning has been implemented in primary schools across Indonesia in accordance with the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) which emphasizes skills, knowledge, social and spiritual aspects. Theme-based learning also further demonstrates the relevance of learning with its use in everyday life so that students can understand their purpose in learning the subject. Learning is also carried out using themed textbooks and does not use any subject as a title. Instead they are labeled according to the theme of the theme, such as theme 1-5 which covers the whole subjects mixed into one book for each theme. Themed learning leads to a more flexible teaching and learning session where teachers can test pupils according to their level of achievement.

In the context of teaching, class teachers are responsible for teaching all subjects except religious subjects, physical education and English. This is different from the Malaysian country with different teachers for each subject. The concept of one-on-one teachers can enhance the relationship between teachers and students in turn to enhance teacher focus on overall self-development of students. In addition, the teacher also serves as a mentor teacher because primary schools in

Indonesia do not have counseling and counseling teachers. Class teacher is a mentor teacher who will motivate and advise students.

In terms of facilities, most primary schools in Indonesia do not have complete facilities such as labs, counseling rooms, restrooms and music rooms. However, with the help and support of parents, the classroom is decorated to suit various activities. There are also schools that do not have a field. Thus, open halls or squares will be used as a venue for various sports activities or entertainment events. Primary schooling in Indonesia also emphasizes activities outside the classroom. Without using a lot of financial costs, every week students and all schoolchildren will also walk to the small streets and roads to nearby schools such as parks so that students can perform activities like recreation, playing in the playground and so on. Table 1.0 shows the views shared by some of the student.

Table 1: Management and Implementation of Teaching and Learning

Name (Pseudonym)/ View	
Semi-structured interview	Reflections Documents
<i>Fiqah: / A teacher will teach the same class for all subjects.</i>	<i>Rafa: / Class teacher is responsible as a subject teacher for all subjects except religion, english and physical education.</i>
<i>Izul: / Teachers teach by theme not by subject.</i>	<i>ooi: / Theme-based learning has been implemented in coordination with the 2013 Curriculum (K-13).</i>
<i>Tang: / No guidance and counseling teacher.</i>	<i>Chieng: / Class teachers are counselors who give motivation and advice to students.</i>

Communications skills, Confident Level and Cultural Value.

The researchers used the related literature to identify themes and exhaustive descriptions. For example, current literature and theoretical explanations were used to name categories and subcategories in the present study. For instance: Social structural and cultural aspects, social interaction and relationship, students' engagement and motivation (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002), class atmosphere (Ames, 1992), teachers' sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), supportive learning environment (Dembo & Gibson, 1985), democratic education (Flores, 2001), autonomy (Ronfeldt et al., 2013) collaboration process in professional development schools (Rice, 2002), school climate (Cohen & Michelli, 2006), supervisor quality (Ronfeldt et al., 2013) teacher qualities (Stronge, 2007), culture and school structure (Teitel, 2001), and guide and competence of mentors (Grossman & Thompson, 2004) were considered in some aspects.

When attending the program, student-teachers are given the opportunity to teach and conduct certain activities in the classroom. Experience managing these behaviors and classrooms will enhance the communication of teachers in facing students for different countries, cultures and languages. Language differences provide challenges for future teachers to organize communication and language based on student understanding. Students also learn effective communication through the teachers at the school. Among the features practiced to enhance effective communication are

the democratic practices of communication, the use of accurate, clear and concise language and respect the feelings of others.

This program also enhances the level of student-teachers self-confidence to interact with teachers, pupils and school staff in an effort to establish a good relationship with the school. Their self-confidence is enhanced through various activities such as celebrating Teacher's day, gotong-royong, telematch and cultural activities. In terms of cultural values, pupils in schools are instilled with cultural values, for example every Thursday students are allowed to wear batik to school. In addition, batik scrambling is also a compulsory activity of students besides placing the arts in their respective classes. Students are taught to feel proud of their culture. The culture of reciting prayer according to their respective religions and places of worship is also practiced to bring students and teachers closer to God and indirectly spiritually strengthen each student. Table 2.0 shows the student's views about the communication skills, confident level and cultural value.

Table 1: Communication Skills, Confident Level And Cultural Values

Name (Pseudonym)/ View	
Semi-structured interview	Reflections Documents
<i>Tay: / We were given the opportunity to teach in the classroom. From there I learned to communicate well.</i>	<i>Brandon: / Teaching experience and doing activities with students can enhance my communication skills.</i>
<i>Chong: / During this stage my confidence to build relationships with people I just knew was low.</i>	<i>Athirah: / Various activities have increased my self-esteem to face students and teachers and school administrators.</i>
<i>Sya: / I am impressed with the attitude of the students of the nation with culture.</i>	<i>Chong: / Pupils wear batik in the classroom and in everyday life.</i>

Conclusion

Based on the findings we can conclude that Exchange Student Program On School-based Experience has provided a meaningful experience to student-teachers through different teaching and learning in regard to enhance their creativity in classroom management in the future. Communication skills, self-confidence and cultural value also enhance the potential of students to become good teachers. Overall, this program has had a high impact on the quality of students as future excellent teachers. Therefore, the effectiveness of this program can be scrutinized more implicitly.

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