

Professional Teacher Development: A Case Study on a Student Exchange Program

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ABSTRACT The transformation of teacher development by way of an exchange program as an empowerment tool, is a vital development of the student teacher curriculum. This interpretive research project is based on a qualitative element, namely, in-depth interviews with students from Tshwane University of Technology who were involved in an exchange program with students from Windesheim University in the Netherlands. Findings revealed that exchange programs can enrich student teachers immensely with an awakening awareness of other cultures, of events occurring and resources used by other countries for quality teaching. There is a clear need for institutions to introduce and foster international collaboration with institutions abroad to establish enduring relationships that will present students with opportunities to increase their subject knowledge and to comprehend its relevance in the greater context of the world. In the given case, South African students were granted the opportunity to learn and to teach at schools in the Netherlands. They could observe and participate in the machinations of a well organised and effective educational system. They returned with boundless enthusiasm to improve the local systemic dysfunctional structures encountered in the schools where they contributed their efforts during prescribed experiential training.