

Transnational Teaching in the Induction Years

By

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Abstract

Teachers working transnationally continue to become more common with globalization, connecting teachers from different countries worldwide. However, successfully navigating the process of moving one's life and career abroad can be challenging, even more so for an inductee teacher. Previous research describes the experiences and benefits gained through student teaching abroad and experienced teachers becoming transnational teachers in a vast amount of countries. One important aspect of preparing all types of transnational teachers is an effective induction process. Research about effective inductive practices for experienced transnational teachers and first year teachers in their home countries has also been examined thoroughly. However, there is much less research on transnational inductee teachers. This study answers the question about the experiences of transnational teachers during the induction period. Through semi structured interviews with five Republic of Ireland secondary school teachers working in England during their induction years of teaching they share about their initial induction process, the challenges faced in the school, and the benefits gained through the transnational experience. The findings identified aspects of effective transnational induction: having regular meetings on school policies with other new teachers and discussions with mentors and colleagues who can relate to being a newly inducted or transnational teacher. Challenges during the induction period included: implementing a foreign curriculum, developing student-teacher rapport, and understanding school grade reporting processes. Through overcoming the challenges, the participants experienced growth in their sense of independence, improvements in their teaching practices and opportunities for career advancement. This study has implications for an effective induction process for transnational induction teachers: helping them to successfully navigate their challenges and experience the benefits of being a transnational teacher.

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Introduction

I had just finished my student teaching at a medium-sized Midwestern high school and was planning on teaching in the United States. However, during the job search I found an employment agency looking for science teachers to teach in England. After realizing working and living abroad was a rare opportunity I knew I had to go for it. Thus began early morning phone calls with the employment agency to set up online interviews. After two interviews with different schools I was lucky enough to be offered a physics teaching position at a secondary school outside of London. Little did I know the interview process would be the easiest part of becoming a transnational teacher. For the rest of the summer I began preparing for my move and new position: obtaining a passport, applying for a work visa, making travel arrangements, searching for apartments, and researching the English school system. Little did I know the challenges I worked through the summer before the big move were only the start. Once arriving late into the school year due to the lengthy process of obtaining a visa, I sat down for my induction process which was full of new information required to navigate a day in the English school system. However, this short induction process did little to address the continuous challenges that would arise in my first year of teaching in a foreign country and school system.

My experiences as a transnational teacher in the induction period were unique compared to regular inductee teachers and experienced transnational teachers. Where transnational teachers are defined as, those teaching in a country different from where they were prepared and the induction period as the first three years of a new career. Regular inductee teachers have prior knowledge about the school system they are about to join and an education designed to prepare them for it. Transnational inductees lack both the prior knowledge and the designed education. This is in combination without experience of successfully leading a classroom, differing them

from experienced transnational teachers. Due to all the experiences transnational inductee teachers are lacking, their induction phase is even more important and difficult to successfully incorporate. The difficulty of effectively preparing transnational inductee teachers is expressed in a review of teacher induction, “beginning teachers’ initial beliefs and teaching practices play an important role in shaping, impeding, or facilitating what and how they learn in induction contexts” (Wang et al, 2008, p. 147). Since transnational inductee teachers' initial beliefs are most likely not based on prior experience the start of their careers can be more difficult compared to regular inductee teachers. The difficult induction process faced by transnational teachers is not the end of their unique challenges. When trying to navigate their new roles they often go on to working through feelings of upheaval, dissonance, and confusion (Tarc & Tarc, 2015). These feelings can be caused by many different experiences. Through semi structured interviews with five Irish teachers who began their teaching careers in England, the study aims to better understand the experiences of transnational teachers, those teaching in a country different from where they were prepared, in their induction phase or the first three years of their teaching career. From the interviews emerged themes related to the effectiveness of their induction process, the difficulties faced in school, and the benefits gained from navigating the transnational work environment.

Literature Review

The literature review on transnational teaching and teacher induction support each other on the following major themes. First, through working through their difficulties, transnational teachers can experience benefits both personally and professionally. Second, transitional teachers experience many difficulties they have never before experienced dealing with culturally different students and school policies. Third, the induction process of all teachers is crucial for ensuring

both teacher and student success. And fourth, an effective induction process often requires mentors or strong relationships with colleagues allowing for an on-going support system for the teacher to ask personalized, actionable questions.

Benefits of Transnational Teaching

The life of a transnational teacher is a unique one. They have the opportunity to leave their home country and open their eyes to new ways of teaching and living life. Navigating these new ways can be difficult and rewarding. The literature focused on the benefits of transnational teaching focuses on themes of personal and professional growth. Transnational student teachers reported an increased level of self-confidence credited to the student teachers consistently dealing with novel issues (Cushner, 2007; Romano, 2008). Transnational student teachers also saw increases in their cultural knowledge and value multicultural education (Cushner, 2007). An important skill set to develop by all types of teachers as classrooms become more diverse. Transnational teachers also show growth in their abilities to teach and manage diverse groups of students (Serin, 2017). Partly due to the opportunity transnational teachers have to learn different types of pedagogical approaches from their colleagues (Garii, 2009; Serbes 2017). Transnational teachers also have many first hand experiences from living in multiple countries. These foreign experiences can be used in lesson plans to further engage students (Serin, 2017).

Difficulties of Transnational Teaching

The job of being a transnational teacher is one that comes with many challenges both professionally and personally. Inside the classroom cultural gaps must be bridged to develop rapport for effective teaching. Inside the school teachers need to work through foreign school curriculum and policies.

One of the issues faced by transnational teachers is engaging the students from a different culture (McAlpine & Cargo, 1995). One reason for this difficulty may be the transnational teacher's use of pedagogy styles the students are not used to. Another reason could be due to culture differences and language as stated in Ferguson's (2009) personal narrative:

As a teacher in my own culture, I had a set of reliable expectations and assumptions of what a Canadian classroom should look like, of its possibilities and of its challenges.

When I was preparing to teach the literature course in Thailand, I was stuttering through a foreign cultural narrative whose characters performed differently and whose plots had different purposes. Our discourse of language and behavior were not in sync, and so modes of communication were oftentimes confusing. Students did not understand my cultural references or sense of humor (p 29).

Transnational teachers will often begin their jobs with little knowledge of their students' daily experiences and their students will most likely have even less knowledge of their transnational teacher's lives which will affect their ability to effectively communicate. This sentiment was also highlighted in McAlpine and Cargo's (1995) case study where they found the lack of the teacher's culture knowledge led to assumptions about her students and strained relationships. These classroom difficulties can also negatively affect the transnational teachers' feeling of self-efficacy (Fitzsimmons & McKenzie, 2006). However, once the transnational teacher begins to better understand their students' cultures and daily issues to build rapport, they can begin to feel more successful in their teaching (McAlpine & Cargo, 1995).

Understanding curriculum and school procedures created difficulties as well for transnational teachers navigating their responsibilities. Since transnational teachers never experienced the school system they are now teaching in, there are specific parts of the curriculum

they must learn (Miller, 2006). This is an added burden because a teacher in their own home country would have prior knowledge on this information from their prior experiences as a student. This lack of specific subject knowledge can also negatively impact a transnational teacher's self-esteem (Miller, 2006).

Another issue transnational teachers face due to lack of curriculum knowledge is their understanding of their students' prior knowledge. Alberts (2008) noted this in his study on challenges and opportunities of foreign college instructors, "Practically all foreign-born professors were shocked at how little background knowledge most American students bring with them from high school" (p 196). This lack of knowledge of the students' prior knowledge directly impacts any teachers' ability to scaffold their lessons and ensure the proper level of rigor for their students. Alberts (2008) continues to give recommendations to foreign born professors such as seeking out mentors and sitting in on colleagues' classes to better understand the cultural norms of the school as well as giving transnational teachers examples of syllabus and assessments.

Importance of Induction

Wang (2008) describes the first year as both crucial and problematic for beginning teachers. This makes the induction process for all teachers very important to ensure effective instruction and teacher well-being. A successful induction process allows teachers to better cope with their new responsibilities and may lead to higher teacher retention rates. Bang et al. (2007) found the key difference between leavers and stayers/movers of the teaching profession was their access to resources and support systems.

Effective induction processes can have other profound impacts from preparing their students for assessments to subject knowledge. Brown's (2015) case study on inductee teachers

states, “These findings reveal the need for teacher educators and mentors to help novice teachers develop the pedagogical, personal, and political skills required to succeed in high-stakes teaching contexts” (p1040). The induction process can also give teachers time to develop their subject knowledge. Subject knowledge is often overlooked with new teachers and does not necessarily increase without a specific intention to do so (Nixon et al, 2017). Since inductee transnational teachers are already at a disadvantage when it comes to curriculum knowledge of their new school, it is even more important to ensure the induction process allows for focus on the curriculum.

The importance of the induction process for transnational teachers is also noted in a study of the induction and professional development needs of Australian transnational teachers:

The new teaching space involved social situations and cultural practices, many rules of which were unknown to teachers. In such circumstances, the previously constructed knowledge and daily practices of individuals may not necessarily ‘fit’, resulting in tensions in teachers’ use of pedagogies and navigation of their personal values and beliefs about teaching and learning. (Tran et al, 2021, p 7)

For transnational teachers to avoid these tensions around pedagogy and teaching beliefs, an induction process is needed to help the teachers become aware and to understand any information necessary for success in and outside of the classroom.

Induction Best Practices

In this next section, the suggested most impactful practices of the induction process are discussed. The first effective practice is assigning the inductee teacher a mentor (Kearney, 2017; Wang et al, 2008). More specifically Kearney (2017) found the mentor should be within the same subject as the mentee but not a direct manager of them. This makes the mentor someone capable

of answering the mentee's specific content questions and someone they feel comfortable going to for help. Second, it is also important for the induction process to be ongoing (Wang et al, 2008). This allows time for the mentee to reflect on what they have learned and gives them a consistent support system. To understand the true effectiveness of different induction techniques further research is needed in a variety of different schools (Wang et al, 2008).

Induction for the Transnational Teacher

Overall a successful transnational induction seems to require the same components of a regular induction process: a type of mentor to help answer specific ongoing questions and access to actionable information specifically related to the teacher's responsibilities. However, the induction processes for transnational teachers do not always effectively prepare them. This can be due to the superficial nature of the process, aimed more towards preparing teachers who went through the country's education system (Tran et al, 2021). Addressing the gaps transnational teachers experience between the induction process and information required to successfully navigate their daily lives is necessary for success (Mizzi & O'Brien-Klewchuk, 2016).

To cope with these disconnects, the transnational teachers heavily relied on informal relationships with colleagues who acted as mentors (Alberts, 2008; Tran et al, 2021). These colleagues provided the transnational teachers an outlet to ask specific, practical questions to be successful professionally and personally in a foreign environment.

Gaps in the Literature

The first purpose of this literature review was to first identify the benefits and challenges experienced by transnational teachers. However, only Miller's (2008) paper was specifically about transnational teachers in England. Therefore, there is a need for further research to see if the benefits and challenges of transnational teachers' experience in England are similar or

different to the previous research on transnational teachers in different countries. Also the majority of research on transnational teachers are not specifically looking at transnational teachers in their induction years. The benefits and challenges faced by inductee transnational teachers may be different leading to the question, what are the challenges and benefits of inductee transnational teachers in England?

The second purpose of the literature review was on the induction process of teachers. The literature expressed important best practices in order for teachers to be successful in their first years of teaching. However, these studies were focused on the induction process of teachers who were teaching in their home countries. There is far less research on the induction processes of transnational teachers and the research which does exist spans many different countries. In order to fully understand the current and best induction practices for transnational teachers further research is required in different contexts. This leads to the question of what are experiences and results of transnational teachers induction processes in England?

Methods

Context

The target population in this study was transnational inductee teachers who began their teaching career in England. The participants were employed by three different secondary schools in their first year of teaching abroad. One of the schools was in a rural area south of London and contained a student body of mostly white British nationals. The other two schools are located in the suburbs of London, where 16% of students have English as their second language (Find and Compare Schools in England, 2019). After the initial year all the teachers were employed by one of the suburban schools, Canterbury College. Canterbury is an all boy school containing Key Stage 3, 4 and Key Stage 5 levels and a population around 900 students (Find and Compare

Schools in England, 2019). Key Stage 3 is the equivalent to middle school, Key Stage 4 is equivalent to a student's freshman and sophomore years of high school, and Key Stage 5 is equivalent to a student's junior and senior year of high school in the United States. At the end of a student's Key Stage 4 years they sit their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Examinations for each of the classes enrolled in over the previous two years. The students use their scores to decide which classes to take during Key Stage 5 or to apply for an apprenticeship program. After the two years of Key Stage 5, students then take their Advance Level Examinations (A-Level). The A-Level scores are then used by the students to apply for university, an apprenticeship, or enter the job market.

Participants

In the study there were four male participants and one female participant. All five participants completed their secondary school and teacher preparation programs at university in Ireland, before starting their careers in England. All of the participants began their teaching careers shortly after completing university when they were in their early twenties.

The first participant, Jack, was one of the two teachers who did not start his career out at Canterbury, but joined the school in his second year. In his first year he was employed by a school with similar demographics as suburban London schools. Jack has taught english, history, politics, and religious education and currently has seven years of teaching experience. He also spent one year as the head of a year group. The head of a year group advises all the students of a particular year in general education and behavior.

Grace began her career at a small rural school south of London before joining Canterbury in her second year. Grace has taught biology, chemistry, and physics. Grace now has four years

of teaching experience. She also was the head of a year group at Canterbury during the second and third year of the induction phase.

The next three participants were Daniel, Charlie, and Michael. They all began their careers at Canterbury. Daniel taught physics and chemistry and has 3 years of teaching experience. Charlie and Michael taught design and technology and both have 4 years of teaching experience. They also have been the co-heads of the design and technology department since their second year of teaching. This role required them to create curriculum maps, organize resources, and analyze student outcomes on the GCSE and A-Level examinations.

Author Background

Although not a participant of the study it should be noted that I (the author) was also a transnational teacher during my induction years. Shortly after completing my teacher preparation at a rural Midwestern liberal arts university I accepted a physics teaching position at Canterbury. I spent all three years of my induction phase there before returning to the United States to continue teaching physics and mathematics. During my second and third year I also held the position of head of the physics department.

Research Design

Hermeneutic phenomenology was the methodology used in this study. A phenomenological approach was taken because it allows for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. As expressed by Kafle (2013) it allows for the use of human experiences to understand the essence of a phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen over transcendental phenomenology due to the fact I am also a transnational teacher. Transcendental phenomenology involves suspending all personal ideas and biases towards a phenomenon in order to understand it (Kafle, 2013). There would have been a great difficulty to put aside my

own memories and thoughts to properly apply the transcendental approach. In hermeneutic phenomenology the researcher is supposed to use both new information and their own prior knowledge and experience to better understand a phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019); thus allowing me to continuously add to my own knowledge on the experiences of transnational inductee teachers and to better understand their experiences.

Data Sources

A semi structured interview was used to understand the lived experiences of transnational inductee teachers. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, I started the interview process. I used a convenience sampling technique due to having former colleagues who were also transnational inductee teachers. I emailed these former colleagues describing my study and the research questions and asked them to be interviewed about their experiences. Those showing interest were then sent the participant consent form (Appendix A) to be signed and returned.

Data Collection

The interview process consisted of a single one-hour long semi structured interview over a video call. In the interviews the participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences on the topics of their initial induction, difficulties navigating their work responsibilities both in and outside of the classroom, and the benefits of being a transnational teacher. For a more detailed overview of the protocol see Appendix B. Each interview was recorded, then transcribed using the online transcriber Otter and proofread for errors.

Data Analysis

After all the interviews had been conducted, the transcripts were then encoded using the computer program NVivo. Descriptive coding was used in the first cycle to organize the main

themes of each individual interview. In the second cycle the descriptive codes from the first cycle were then placed in a provisional list of codes based on the categories of the interview questions. The second level codes were then analyzed to find the major themes which emerged across the participants.

Results

The aim of the study was to better understand the experiences of transnational teachers in their induction phase. From the coded interviews themes about the effectiveness of the induction process, the in school difficulties faced, and the benefits of transnational teaching emerged.

The First Year of Induction

The first major theme which emerged was on the topic of the first year induction. In the participants' reflection on their first year induction they discussed the effective and ineffective aspects of their induction process. They also identified how they coped with difficulties in which their induction process did not prepare them for.

First Year Induction Effectiveness

The teachers who began their careers at Canterbury (Charlie, Daniel, Michael) found a variety of issues with the induction process. Both Daniel and Michael commented on the briefness of the process and its effects. Daniel stated, "I think it was just more of an overwhelming thing and the fact that so much was thrown at me so quick[ly]." Similar to Michael's experience, "[The induction] was very very quick and then thrown into the deep end." They also noted the induction process did not contain any extra information addressing their transnational nature.

Grace's induction process, at the small rural school, avoided this issue with having a more ongoing process. "I actually think the induction program was amazing. It was really

good...We had weekly meetings from September to February half term,” which included all the school’s new teachers. From the teachers interviewed, Grace had the most positive experiences on her ongoing more personalized induction process.

Another key difference was how the induction process addressed the teachers individualized questions. All three teachers who began at Canterbury stated the same induction process of going over the school handbook with a member of the senior leadership team in a single meeting. At Grace’s school, where meetings were ongoing, she mentioned that different teachers would lead the different meetings and that the majority of time spent in the meetings were led by the inductee teachers' questions or on specific school policies.

Important Relationships

Out of the five teachers interviewed Grace was the only one to mention an assigned mentor, who she had weekly meetings with. She found this extremely beneficial. First she mentioned the meetings were led by her own questions, allowing her to fill in the gaps of her knowledge of the English school system. Second she stated, “all the mentors were new qualified teachers plus one or plus two people. So it was people that had just gone through the new qualified teacher process and they know how difficult it is.” Although her mentor was not a transnational teacher, having recently gone through all the unknowns that comes with starting a teaching career was very helpful to Grace.

Due to the lack of specific induction for the other participants, they needed to find other ways to work through their unique issues. In doing so a common theme arose, the importance of relationships with colleagues. Michael discussed how beneficial it was to have informal discussion with Charlie, who could relate to his issues. Michael stated:

I think I was lucky in the sense that obviously Charlie [and I] started together. So things I didn't pick up on, he might have picked up on [and] things he didn't pick up, I might have picked up on so we can just bounce off each other and use each other.

Similarly, Charlie found discussions with the head of his department extremely beneficial in navigating a foreign school system:

I suppose I was really lucky. When I went in my head, she was an Irish person that had gone through it three or four years before me and she was fantastic and I think that's more than Canterbury [did] to help me.

In the interviews with Daniel and Jack they also mentioned specific colleagues who they heavily relied on during their first year to help answer their specific questions about their new profession. Colleague relationships were heavily relied on in order to successfully navigate the continuous problems and unknowns experienced by inductee transnational teachers.

Transnational Teachers Challenges

The difficulties faced by transnational teachers are different from teachers who were educated in the school system they are now teaching in. The participants reflected on their unique challenges and three major themes emerged. First in understanding and implementing the English National Curriculum. Second with building rapport with culturally different students. Third, creating student progress reports.

Navigating the English National Curriculum

Teaching a curriculum to prepare students for a standardized test is no easy task, even more so for transnational teachers. Having no prior schooling on the English National Curriculum, the transnational teachers of this study discussed how their lack of content

knowledge, content pacing, and lack of student prior knowledge as added difficulties to their instruction.

“It comes down to the English curriculum being so broad.” Michael brings to light the large amount of knowledge students in the English school need to know for their GCSE and A-Level Examinations. Thus resulting in teachers in the English school system needing a breadth of subject knowledge. Jack spoke of having to research the specifics of the Roman Empire in Britain. Grace had to learn new chemistry and biology experiments that she had never before conducted. Michael and Charlie, the two technology teachers, mentioned spending time learning about textiles and smart materials (materials which change properties due to its environment). In all of their situations they spoke of having to spend extra time learning the specific specification points or learning objectives that could come up on their students’ exams. Michael best explained the impact of this saying, “when you do first start and they see you they’re like ‘Oh, who’s this fellow, he doesn’t have a clue.’ And that’s what you’re thinking in the back of your mind.” Even with all the participants completing their secondary school equivalency exams and graduating university, there was still more they needed to learn about their subjects during their first school year teaching.

Another issue mentioned by the participants was understanding the entire scope of a curriculum they never experienced. Since the English National Curriculum builds upon itself across the Key Stages, it is important for teachers’ to know exactly what their students have previously learned. An ignorance of the students prior knowledge can affect both the pacing and rigor set by the teacher. Daniel, the physics and chemistry teacher, emphasized the pace more than needing to learn the actual content; “it was just kind of more learning of how long to spend on a certain topic.” Not having an understanding of the students’ abilities to answer specific

questions types that were common on the examinations also impacted the planned pacing of Jack:

They [students] had been doing elements of source analysis in key stages two and three, but when it came to actually doing the source analysis in Key Stage Four, they found it very, very tricky and they weren't able to work it out. It just felt like it was slowing me down a little bit in terms of being to actually crack on with the content.

Not having a complete understanding of the students' prior knowledge and skills also gave Michael and Daniel issues when math came up in their subjects. Michael remembered dealing with the issue by seeking out a math teacher to see exactly how the students were being taught how to do a specific type of addition. Only by connecting with the math teacher could he ensure that he could explain the math concepts using language more familiar to his students.

Student-Teacher Rapport

Developing rapport with students is important for effective teaching. However, this can be more difficult for transnational inductee teachers. They need to navigate the pitfalls that normal first year teachers face when trying to develop rapport with their students, with the added difficulty of learning about their students' cultural and daily experiences. However, the participants found with time, learning/sharing mutual interest, and mutual respect rapport can be built.

Daniel and Charlie both stated it took a full year and a half to develop good rapport with their students. Daniel contributed his reasoning to the high turnover rate of teachers at Canterbury and the need for students to overcome their preconceptions that transnational teachers are only temporary instructors:

If the students see that their teachers, they only come for a year and then they're gone, [the students think], 'Oh yeah, he's just another one of those.' But the more time you spend there they think, 'Oh yeah he's actually here for longer.'

Charlie explained his difficulty of building a strong rapport with students by stating, "It was difficult at first to build up, because you don't know their story. You don't know what they're going through. You don't know what it's like to be a kid growing up in England." For both these teachers it took time to fully understand the lives of their English students required to build connections with them.

The participants shared the variety of ways they were able to build these connections with their students. Daniel found bringing his students interests in his lesson plans helped the students relate to him. He spoke of explaining radioactive half-life by relating it to single elimination soccer tournaments, and using the slang term of "fam" to remember Newton's Second Law. Jack and Michael both found that volunteering for extracurricular activities also helped their students see mutual interests and that their teachers wanted to see them succeed both inside and outside of the classroom.

Grace also found building rapport with her students difficult at first due to establishing a proper student and teacher relationship:

"In my first year I made a few mistakes with trying to build rapport and I think I tried to go with being their friends too much...but I just don't think you can do that to start building rapport because the respect is just not there from the beginning."

The need for a mutual respect between the teacher and students also came up with Michael, "In terms of building a rapport with them, I think once you break down the initial barrier, and they

kind of know you and you can treat them with respect, you'll eventually get it back." Grace and Michael's comments both emphasize the need for mutual respect before rapport can be built.

Progress Reports

Understanding the data collection, synthesis, and reporting process of summative assessments was another shared difficulty by all the participants of the study. The collection of these scores were often difficult due to timing misalignments of the end of module summative assessment and when the progress reports were due. The synthesis added another layer of difficulty since the assessment scores needed to be converted to the GCSE scoring system, which was different for each assessment. The reporting then required even more time when the now GCSE scores needed to be inputted as a student's working at grade (WAG) and used to calculate other scores. The next grade included was the student's target grade (TG) which needed to be looked up for each individual student since it is a grade assigned to each student after primary school. Finally, the teacher needed to come up with a predicted grade (PG) or the grade the teacher believes the student would score on their GCSE or A-Level examination based on their current WAG, year level, and teacher discretion. This entire process is one that requires a large amount of diligence and time to complete.

When bringing up progress reports in the interview Michael responded, "I remember my first data collection at Canterbury being there three evening in the week til half seven, seven just trying to get [my] head around it." Similarly, Jack stated, "I think the whole grading system was a massive culture shock and it took me one or two different data collections really to get up to speed with it." These feelings were shared by the other participants. The Irish trained teachers were used to sending out a single grade in the Irish system, or a student's WAG in the English

system, home to parents whenever it came to progress reports. However, Daniel touches on even this familiar part of sending out the WAG on progress reports was more difficult than expected:

Oh my dear the grade boundaries! Like from experience from growing up, if you've got 85% or above no matter what test it was, it was an A...The grade boundaries were set...so the fact that the schools have the ability to chop and change grade boundaries to accommodate the test, I find that infuriating.

The changing grade boundaries for the different grade levels or even different sections within the same grade added to the complexity of reporting the most familiar part of progress reports.

Another aspect which the participants found difficult to grasp was the need to report the students' target grade. The participants found that reporting students' TG negatively affected the students' beliefs on their own ability. Since the TG of students is based on standardized tests in their primary schools, students will often have target grades too low or high compared to their actual ability. Grace stated, "I think even just the fact that the target grades are based on like how they did in primary school, I just think that it's just stupid." Charlie also was not a fan of target grades because, "You're [the student is] automatically put in a box. And it's really hard to get out of that box." Charlie and the other technology teacher Michael especially had an issue with target grades since the tests the scores were derived from were based on the student's english and math abilities.

The last and most time consuming part of the progress reports was coming up with a predicted grade since it involved using the WAG and teacher's opinion of the student to predict the score they would achieve on the GCSE or A-Level examinations. Grace stated, "I don't really see much point in predictions of grades...I just don't think we should have predicted them two years before they sit the GCSE." She went on to say how it can be demotivating to students in

part because, “It’s too frequent in that the gaps between the data collections are too short. Like the boys can’t effectively work on their grades [between progress reports].”

Transnational Benefits

Although the participants discussed many challenges they faced during their induction years, they believed their experiences had many benefits. They discussed growth in personal attributes and their teaching abilities, along with having more opportunities for career advancement.

Personal Benefits

Individual participants found the personal benefits of teaching transnational in their confidence level, independence, and gratefulness. Charlie stated:

Now I can literally go to any country or any city in the world and now I’d be fine. I know I would get by, I know I would at least be able to get a house to stay [at]...Whereas I don’t think I’d have that self confidence in myself [before].

Both Daniel and Grace also commented on their increased sense of maturity and independence. Daniel spoke of realizing how the world really works and being fully independent. While Grace said, “Moving away from home and having a full time job and even just having bills and the house. I think it’s just made me more mature and more kind of grateful for everything I do have.” Which holds a similar sentiment of Charlie’s new found respect of home, “But it’s not until you go away and you stand at top of the hill and look back go I actually had it pretty good.”

Professional Benefits

The participants also reflected on how their teaching skills improved from teaching transnationally. Grace spoke about an increase in her classroom management ability compared to if she was only teaching in Ireland to a less diverse and better known culture of students. Michael

saw increases in student engagement by relating his authentic worldly experiences to the curriculum.

Participants also spoke up the benefits of career opportunities, as four of the five participants gained leadership roles within their first three years. Jack brought up the year he held the role of a head of year in his third year, a job in Ireland normally reserved for much more experienced teachers. Grace was also promoted to a head of year role during her second year. In these head of year positions Jack and Grace had the opportunity to develop leadership and mentoring skills. Charlie and Michael also mentioned how their co-head of design and technology role gave them experience in developing curriculum.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to explore the experiences of transnational teachers in the induction phase of their career. The results from the interviews conducted with five Irish teachers, who began their careers in the English school system, presented major themes. The first theme involved the effectiveness of their initial induction process and how the participants developed their own strategies to help reduce the many stresses of the job. Second, the ongoing struggles in understanding and delivering the English curriculum, building rapport with their students, and reporting grades. Third, the participants discussed benefits gained personally and professionally.

First Year Induction

The results gave examples of both effective and ineffective aspects of the induction process for first year transnational teachers. A success induction included an ongoing teacher focused process giving the transnational inductee teacher an outlet to ask questions. The results

also showed how the participants used colleague relationships to solve their problems when the induction process was inadequate.

Keys to a Successful Induction

The initial induction process of the participants into the English school system varied in the degree of easing the transition into their careers. Grace responded with the most positive outlook on her first school's induction program. She contributed the success to its ongoing process and its focus on the individual's own issues as they arose throughout her first year. The participants who began their career at Canterbury found their formal induction process less successful. Largely due to the brevity and its one size fits all approach created for teachers who had been educated in the country. Both these positive and negative sentiments are consistent with the previous literature on induction programs. In a study of the professional development needs of transnational teachers it was found that the programs were often one-stop, superficial workshops (Tran et al, 2021). The brevity of the Canterbury induction process also led to participants feeling overwhelmed or thrown into the deep end. Similarly, in an analysis of pre-departure orientation manuals, it was found that teachers went through an emotional toll when there was disconnect between the information of the induction process and challenges later faced (Mizzi & O'Brien-Klewchuk, 2016).

Personally as a transnational teacher who went through the same induction process at Canterbury, I remember reading through the school's handbook which was beneficial, but did not answer many of my future questions. Since the process occurred before I even entered my classroom, there was no formal process for me to ask the multitude of questions that arose over the next months, which led to ample amounts of time spent searching for solutions to my issues and feelings of being overwhelmed.

Grace's ongoing induction process suggests a solution to the continuous questions inductee transnational teachers face. Her regularly recurring meetings were often focused on answering the inductee teachers' questions which greatly eased her transitional transition. The importance of this aspect of the induction process is also stated in previous literature, "The 'actual training' that may significantly support teachers in their offshore teaching should not be generalized, but necessarily be specific and practical" (Tran et al, 2021, p10). These findings seem to indicate a successful induction process should be ongoing and focused on the answering individual's needs and questions.

Grace also spoke of the benefit of having a mentor who was also a newly qualified teacher who could easily relate to her issues and questions. Being assigned a mentor to new teachers has been suggested to be very beneficial partly because it allows for a continuous support mechanism (Bang et al, 2007). Also in Kearney's (2017) study of best practice for induction, mentors were found to be critical and the most useful part of induction.

Coping with Ineffective Induction

Although the other participants did not mention having formal mentoring, they all discussed how important their colleagues were in navigating their first year, especially those who could relate to their situation. Charlie and Michael both spoke of talking to each other when they would run into issues and if they could not help each other they would go to their head of department who was an experienced transnational teacher from Ireland. Daniel similarly spoke about coming to me during his first year knowing I had one year of experience as a transnational teacher. The strategy of seeking out colleagues for support in instruction, assignments, and issues of working abroad has been shown to support teachers navigating these challenges while working transnational (Alberts, 2008; Anderson et al, 2018).

I also put this strategy into use my first year, often discussing my troubles with the other first year science teacher in my department who was educated in England. These findings show the importance for transnational inductee teachers to develop relationships with their colleagues, especially with those who can relate to their experiences, in order to successfully resolve their continuous occurring problems.

Transnational Teachers Struggles

For the majority of inductee teachers, they will begin their careers in the school system they experienced, giving them a framework to navigate school policies and deal with issues that arise day to day in the classroom. Transnational teachers do not have this benefit. In a study of overseas trained teachers in England by Miller (2006), he stated “Overseas trained teachers must recognize that teaching in a new country involves learning to work in completely new surroundings, with different procedures, policies, and standards which can lead to a variety of anxieties, tensions, and stresses” (p208). The participants reflected on three major themes which reflect Miller’s findings.

Content Preparation and Teaching Impacts

The first major theme of the participants' difficulties revolved around the never before experienced English National Curriculum and resulting under preparedness to effectively teach it. All the participants expressed troubles with either gaps in their own subject knowledge and/or the pacing of their curriculum. This affected their feelings of self-efficacy and created another time commitment in their already busy schedules. Miller’s (2006) study discusses the impact on experienced teachers’ feelings, “The evidence suggested that confidence and self-esteem of overseas trained teachers are under threat continually” (p 203). Alleviating these feelings is

difficult due to the time commitment required to increase one's own subject knowledge and the lack of time allotted for inductee teachers to do so (Nixon et al, 2017).

I also dealt with these issues of being underprepared to deliver the English National Curriculum. One example was the radioactivity module of the physics curriculum. During my first year I spent time outside of class learning information that was not a part of any of my previous physics courses. I also was very nervous presenting demonstrations involving the different radioactive particles which affected the learning of my students. It was not until I was able to go to a workshop on radioactivity in my second year before I felt I could effectively engage my students with the topic. These findings indicate that transnational teachers' unpreparedness of a foreign curriculum can negatively impact their own feelings and increase the amount of time committed to their work.

Weak Understanding of Student's Prior Knowledge

The other major issue presented in the findings was an understanding of the students' prior knowledge and how it affected the delivery and reception of the content. Trans et al (2021) had similar findings when working with Australian transnational educators and noted, "the previously constructed knowledge and daily practices of individuals may not necessarily 'fit', resulting in tensions in teachers' use of pedagogies" (p7). Since transnational teachers do not have knowledge of the skills and prior content knowledge of their students it can be difficult to effectively teach new content. Normally new teachers will use their knowledge about the students' abilities and prior knowledge to make decisions during instruction and lesson planning (McAlpine & Cargo, 1995).

Understanding my students' prior content knowledge and abilities was also an issue I dealt with, particularly with teaching math skills in physics. For example, my teaching of

rearranging equations was not effective and led me to spend more time on the math skills of the lesson rather than the physics content. My ineffectiveness continued until speaking with a math colleague and asking when and how it was taught in the English school system. Once I was able to use the vocabulary my students were regularly hearing in math while rearranging equations, I could more effectively and quickly teach this skill. This supports the idea that transnational teachers' lesson plans and their success can be hindered by their lack of their student's prior knowledge and abilities.

Building Rapport

The participants found building rapport with their students was a process that took time. Not only did they need time to understand the life of an English teenager, but the students also needed time to see how they could relate to their transnational teachers. Similarly, McAlpine and Cargo's (1995) study found that the Canadian teacher's lack of knowledge of Aboriginal culture at first led to difficulties in building relationships with her students; however, she stated once she became aware of her individual student's personal history she was much more flexible and successful in managing her classroom. Similarly, it was found that developing student-teacher rapport was a difficult task at first due to confusion in communications and students not understanding a transnational teacher's sense of humor or cultural references (Ferguson, 2009). Transnational teachers need time to work through the cultural differences between themselves and their students before being able to effectively communicate and to build rapport through respect and mutual interests.

Although the participants found it at first difficult to build rapport with their students, they commented on how they successfully built rapport once overcoming their initial perceived differences. The first theme that emerged focused on gaining mutual respect with their students

as a precursor to developing rapport. Romano (2008) emphasized the importance of mutual respect when investigating the effects of student teaching abroad:

Respect is one of those values that manifest itself in a classroom in its own language and attitude. For example, when a COST [Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching] teacher stops and listens to a student's ideas and responds to those ideas seriously, students can see how she respects who they are as people. (p 91)

The participants reflected on similar ideas where once their students felt like their teachers listened to and respected their ideas and interested, respect was reciprocated and a rapport began to become established.

The last strategy used by the participants to develop rapport with their students was by finding ways to engage their students in extracurricular activities. This both allowed for the teachers to show their own interests outside of the classroom, but also allowed the students to see their teacher cared for their entire person, not just as a student (Romano 2008).

I experienced the benefit of building respect and relationships with my students through extracurricular activities. Halfway through my first year I had the opportunity to start an afterschool basketball club. This was my first chance to engage with my students outside of the classroom and I noticed the benefits after just one basketball club meeting. A few of my more troublesome students, who came to the basketball club, were much more receptive to me. These students started seeing me as more than a teacher but as a human who had other interests and skills they respected and could easily relate to. The basketball club also gave me the opportunity to have out of class discussions with my students and to learn their out of school interests and to more effectively develop a rapport with my students.

Challenges of Progress Reports

Coping with the English grade reporting system emerged as a struggle for the participants, especially in their first year. Understanding the different types of grades on the data heavy reports led to negative feelings and time consuming commitments. A study on transnational teachers also mentioned the time consuming administration work that is required of teachers in England (Miller 2018). The high frequency of grade reporting experienced by the participants only added to their very busy workload of a transnational inductee, taking away from time after school normally spent on learning curriculum and developing lessons. They spoke about how they heavily relied on their colleagues to help navigate the difficult parts of calculating and predicting grades. The time commitment could be mitigated if more initial professional development was focused on making transnational teachers aware of the school's grade policies and reporting process (Alberts, 2008).

Benefits of Transnational Teaching

The teaching profession comes with many struggles and transnational teachers need to cope with even more due to their ignorance of the foreign school system. However, through those struggles comes growth and the participants saw personal and professional growth when navigating through their induction years.

Personal Benefits

The participants found areas of personal growth in their confidence, independence and gratefulness. An increased level of confidence was also found in student teachers who spent time teaching in Guatemala (Burgard et al, 2018) Another study also noted an increased sense of independence as an effect of transnational student teaching (Mahon & Cushner, 2002).

My overseas experiences lead to similar benefits, where prior to my experiences visiting a different country brought on anxious feelings. However, now knowing that I have successfully moved and lived in another country I feel completely at ease when walking around a completely foreign city. Showing how my transnational teaching has led to increases in my confidence to navigate foreign countries. Giving further evidence that personal growth can be gained through transnational teaching.

Professional Benefits

The participants commented on areas of growth related to their teaching abilities and career opportunities. In their teaching abilities they saw improvements with being able to navigate the cross-cultural classroom. This included in the areas of building rapport, enriching content, and classroom management. Biraimah and Jotia's (2018) study on the effects of study abroad programs on teachers noted, "Participants' perspectives on their own personal and professional development, cultural awareness, teaching methodologies, and choice of curricular contents generally showed sustained positive growth from base-line pre orientation levels" (p449). An example of an enriching content arose when Michael spoke of using his life experiences gained from living abroad and from his home country to engage students in lessons. Serin (2017) also found using authentic stories about your transnational experience can enrich lessons and lead to student engagement.

Using my foreign experiences to enrich my lesson content was also a benefit I found from teaching transnationally. One example was using names of cities from the Midwest when I was creating a map for my students to decide which type of power generation each city should use based on their surrounding geography. These simple names to me were foreign to my

students and their novel aspect ended up generating lots of discussion both on power generation and my home state.

The career benefits of the participants focused on the career advancement opportunities did not align with previous research. All but one of the participants of this study spoke of being promoted to a leadership role (head of department or year group) on top of their normal teaching and how these opportunities would not have been available so early on in their career at home. However Miller's (2018) study on overseas trained teachers had conflicting results, where only one of the six Jamaican transnational teachers had been promoted in England. However, Miller's discussion of this result may explain the difference, "Overseas trained teachers from BAME backgrounds appear not to be thriving and flourishing as well as locally trained teachers and non-BAME in England" (2018, p165). The career success of the non-BAME participants of this study seem to support Miller's discussions. However, due to limited demographics of this study, further research into the relationship between BAME transnational teachers and their success should be conducted.

Limitations

The findings here have limitations. The first limitation is the study's sample size and population demographic. The sample size of the study was limited to only five transnational teachers who all were of Irish nationality. Therefore, the transnational teacher of this study was one who spoke the same language as their students and had aspects of similar culture. This means the findings are not generalizable to all transnational teachers and makes it difficult to use these findings to explain the experience of transnational teachers who work in a country that speaks a different language. Another limitation is due to the fact all the participants taught the majority of their induction years at the same all boy school in a suburb of London. Meaning the

results do not necessarily translate to all secondary schools in England, particularly to coed schools and those not located in the suburbs. Finally, the timing of the interviews conducted for this study is a limitation. Since all except one of the participants were now out of their induction phase, as defined by the paper, the findings were those of experiences which occurred in the past. The experiences of inductee transnational teachers would be more accurately captured if the interviews were done with teachers currently in their inductee years.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to better understand the experiences of transnational teachers in the induction phase of their careers. By conducting semi structured interviews with five Irish transnational teachers the following emerged themes related to their induction process, teacher difficulties, and personal/professional benefits. The participants found that on-going, teacher focused induction processes were needed to help navigate their first years along with developing close relationships with colleagues. Future research should continue looking at what features of induction processes that best prepare teachers in other contexts. The participants also spoke on the difficulties they experienced when learning and implementing a new curriculum, developing rapport with their students, and working through grade reporting. Future research on effective ways for teachers to develop these job responsibilities while teaching is warranted from these findings. Lastly it was found that transnational teaching can result in personal and professional growth for the individual. However, the extent of this growth should be the focus of future research especially with how it correlates with teachers of minority cultures. Overall the experiences of a transnational teacher in their induction phase can be full of many unique challenges. However, with an effective induction process and learning from one's colleagues,

inductee transnational teachers can overcome their challenges and experience personal and professional growth.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

Please read all the information below carefully before you decide to participate in this study. Any and all questions pertaining to this study can be asked before signing.

Study Title: Transnational Teaching in the Induction Years

Principal Investigator: Kevin Harris, Graduate Student, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Faculty Advisor: Rachelle Haroldson, Ph. D, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Purpose of the Study: To identify experiences by teachers in their induction phase of teaching in a country outside of their home country. To provide insight and suggestions for future and current teachers to better prepare for teaching abroad at the beginning of their career.

To identify common themes experienced by teachers in their first year in the profession who have chosen to teach in a country outside of their own. Allowing for future and current teachers to better prepare for difficulties and successes which arise in their profession.

Your role: You are invited to participate in a research study about the experiences of an inductee teacher who has decided to work abroad. If you agree to be a part of this study you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. This interview will be approximately one hour in length and will be conducted over the video platform Google Meet. The focus of the interview will be on your experiences in the induction phase of your teaching career. Following the interview, your response will be transcribed for research purposes. Any identifying information provided will not be shared in the research paper and all video will be destroyed when the study is completed.

Potential Risks: Conversations regarding negative teaching experiences may arise during the interview process which may bring up unresolved emotions.

Potential Benefits: An opportunity to further reflect on your own experiences during your first year of teaching abroad and potentially lead to improvements in your current practice. An opportunity for new and veteran teachers to reflect on others experiences potentially leading to more teachers staying in the profession. Developing new ideas to improve your own teaching practices.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential. Any identifying information you offer during the interview will be anonymized in the research paper. Your information will be assigned a pseudonym which will be used if and when your information is referenced in the research paper. Any files that connect your information to your code number will be kept on a password locked computer that only the principal investigator will have access to. When the data is analyzed and the study completed, all files connecting your information to the code number will be permanently deleted from the computer.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no penalties for refusal to participate both now or at any point in the study process. Refusal of all or any questions asked during the interview process is within your rights.

Right to withdraw: You have the right to withdraw completely during the course of the interview or study at any time without consequences.

Contact for questions on the study:

Principal Investigator

Kevin Harris

Kevin.harris@my.uwrf.edu

Contact for your rights as a research participant:

IRB Office

Tammy Kincaid

IRB@uwrf.edu

Agreement: I have read the information stated above and fully understand my rights if I choose to participate in this study.

Participant Name: _____

Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Phase	Purpose of Phase
1. Introduction and background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind participants of anonymity and that all responses are voluntary - Ask background questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University major - Subjects taught - Schools taught at during induction phase
2. Transnational Teaching Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask questions about experiences dealing with the following pertaining to being a transnational teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of curriculum - Lesson planning - Grade policies - Developing student-teacher rapport - Differences in language - School rules and classroom management
3. Transnational Induction Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask questions about experiences about the first year induction process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall experience - Best practices - Ineffective practices - Coping with ongoing issues
4. Transnational Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask questions on how the transnational experience was beneficial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal qualities - Teaching skills