

“This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in:

Aamaas, Å., Nodeland, T. S. & Duesund, K. H. (2019). Outcomes from international teaching placements – what’s in it for the receiving side? A case of Norwegian preservice teachers in Indian schools. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 14.

on, 19 October 2019 available online:

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2019.1680954>.”

Outcomes from international teaching placements – what's in it for the receiving side?

A case of Norwegian preservice teachers in Indian schools

Abstract

International teaching placements are offered to students in many Initial Teacher Education institutions. The outcomes for preservice teachers in these international settings are widely researched and debated, but few studies focus on the experience of the receiving side. This article investigates outcomes for Indian cooperating teachers in eight schools after receiving cohorts of Norwegian preservice teachers on placement over a period of twenty years.

Through an analysis of qualitative research interviews with twenty-one Indian teachers, the article explores how a host community perceives and assesses its outcomes from the placements. The article finds that the teachers view their outcomes mainly in terms of exposure to new and different pedagogical methods, and as personal enrichment through encountering a foreign culture. The impact on pedagogical practices or school culture however, seems to be minimal due to systemic differences and barriers.

Keywords: overseas student teaching, international teaching placement, cooperating teachers, supervision.

Introduction

This article explores the outcomes of host schools in India after many years of organising international teaching placements for Norwegian preservice teachers. Many teacher education programmes offer opportunities for students to do teaching placements abroad, and research on the nature of such exchanges is a rapidly developing field. The learning outcomes of preservice teachers on international placements have received a fair amount of attention in the research literature, but remarkably few studies examine the outcomes of host institutions. Taking a qualitative, inductive approach, this study attempts to provide an empirical example of how a host community perceives the experience of regularly receiving preservice teachers on placement over a period of several years. Through this enquiry, the article aims to contribute to a wider discussion about the dynamics between sending and receiving partners in international teaching placements.

Outcomes from preservice teachers serving abroad

Mainly, research on outcomes from international teaching placements tends to focus on student development and the possible gains (Deardorff, 2006; Kabilan, 2013; Kushner & Mahon, 2002) or potential pitfalls (Brindley, Quinn & Morton, 2009; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011) of these experiences for preservice teachers. However, international placements are dependent on partnerships with host schools and cooperating teachers on the receiving end. As pointed out by Major and Santoro, the relationship between preservice teachers and host teachers in international settings has received very little attention (2016, p. 461). Some literature is emerging on the role of placement leaders and the authority invested in designing and leading placements, focusing on issues of power and reciprocity (Parr, 2012; Parr, Faulkner & Rowe, 2017). However, the material for this literature mainly draws on the (self-

critical) voices of the academic staff of the sending universities, rather than talking to host community teachers who mentor the students.

The lack of focus on the host teachers and receiving institutions is also noticeable outside the realm of teacher education. Taking a broader view that includes both international volunteerism, international service learning and international study abroad, Sherraden, Lough & Bopp (2013) show that there is still little research on the effects for both host institutions and sponsoring institutions. According to de Wit (2016), there is a need to incorporate other views than those of the western sphere in research, particularly as emerging economies are altering the arena of internationalisation. The landscape of research is gradually shifting away from seeing internationalisation as a purview of western countries, with developing countries playing a “reactive role” (de Wit, 2016, p. 16). This shift should also have implications for research on international teaching placements.

There are several complicating factors in researching outcomes for receiving partners, including power-relations between the sending and receiving institutions, and fear of negative consequences if the “wrong” answers are given (Sherraden et al., 2013, p. 25). However, such concerns should guide the development of more research projects rather than prevent them. Sherraden, Lough & Bopp (2013) have outlined a potential framework for analysing outcomes from students serving abroad that takes into account all stakeholders, both sending institutions, students, and host institutions. Here, the three following categories are proposed to determine what outcomes host institutions might have: *tangible resources*, where students fill gaps in staffing or bring additional financial resources, *capacity building* through providing extra hands and help with management, teaching, and planning, and finally *intercultural competence* which includes tolerance, international knowledge and global engagement (Sherraden, Lough & Bopp, 2013, p. 25-26). These three levels will be used as a starting point to discuss the outcomes of teaching placements.

The influence of preservice teachers on cooperating teachers

Another relevant strand of literature that has guided this research project is the influence of preservice teachers on cooperating teachers. Despite the emerging use of other terms such as mentors or assistant teachers, *cooperating teachers* remains the most commonly used terminology to describe teachers working with students on placement (Clarke et al, 2014, p. 165). This reflects the perceived role of the cooperating teachers in teacher education. A systematic literature review on cooperating teachers the past sixty years identifies eleven categories of how cooperating teachers participate in teacher education, ranging from controlling functions such as supervisors and gatekeepers, to modellers of various practices (Clarke et al., 2014). In other words, the research available focuses on what preservice teachers can learn from being mentored by cooperating teachers during their placements, and how cooperating teachers understand and practice their roles as teacher educators.

A small number of studies focus on the reverse effect – what cooperating teachers might gain from mentoring teachers-in-training. These studies suggest that cooperating teachers can develop and improve their own practices from working with preservice teachers (Landt, 2004), and that knowledge can be transferred from preservice teachers to cooperating teachers (Kiraz, 2004). Cooperating teachers name benefits such as the time freed up by having another adult in the classroom, which allows them to observe their own pupils in class, as well as being exposed to new and alternative teaching methods and strategies (Kiraz, 2004, p. 78-82). The same study suggests that cooperating teachers see less potential in learning from preservice teachers in the realms of classroom management and lesson planning.

On the other hand, a Jordanian study into the gains of cooperating teachers found that preservice teachers had no impact on the perspectives and practices of the cooperating

teachers (Ihmeideh & Coughlin, 2014). This lack of effect was linked to the need for capacity building for cooperating teachers and more university-driven placements that offer clear guidelines and frameworks for the cooperation (Ihmeideh & Coughlin, 2014). Accordingly, professional development for cooperating teachers in placement settings is not a given, and further studies to investigate the contextual factors that determine whether cooperating teachers become motivated to make changes to their own practices after working with preservice teachers are needed (Landt, 2004, p. 82).

Contextual factors become particularly pertinent in the case of placements in international settings, and especially in contexts where questions of positionality and power-relations come into play. Researching a group of Australian students on placement in the Solomon Islands, Major and Santoro (2016) were troubled by their findings which indicated that both students and cooperating teachers had an implicit understanding of the education system of the sending part as developed and superior, and the receiving part as underdeveloped and inferior (p. 471). Such underlying forces of global power relations need to be considered, but should also be complemented by other perspectives that can help us understand relationships between learners and mentors. Within education, unequal power relations can also come into play even within one country. The dynamics of insider and outsider perspectives are not necessarily clear-cut, but often nuanced by shifting identifications and professional identities (Naryan, 1993). These perspectives must be taken into account when analysing how the Indian cooperating teachers position themselves in relation to the Norwegian students when discussing their outcomes from the placements.

Method

As there is a lack of research on the perspectives of the receiving side in international teaching placements, this study took an inductive approach in order to generate more

knowledge. The study was designed to answer the following research question: *How do cooperating teachers perceive and assess their outcomes from hosting an international teaching placement?* A long-standing partnership between Indian schools and one of Norway's largest institutions for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) was chosen for further investigation. This study analyses empirical data drawn from interviews with twenty-one teachers working at Indian schools with a long history of welcoming overseas students on teaching placements. Interviews were conducted during fieldwork in India in 2015, and included eight schools located in a rural town in the regional state of Maharashtra. All the schools included in the study had long experience with Norwegian pre-school preservice teachers on placement, having received the first group of preservice teachers in 1997. The facilitation of the placements for the Norwegian preservice teachers was based on informal agreements between the institutions and did not involve any financial benefits for the schools in question.

The preservice teachers were all early-childhood educators, enrolled in a three-year undergraduate degree that qualifies for employment in Norwegian pre-schools catering to children up to six years. With an additional sixty ECTS credits of professional development, this programme can also qualify for teaching in elementary school for children aged six to ten (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2015). During the degree, students must spend a minimum of hundred days on teaching placement. In their third year, students had the option of applying to do their placements abroad. A group of on average fifteen candidates were selected for international placement each year, based on motivation letters, an interview and grade average. The stay in India lasted five weeks, and the students funded the exchange with partial support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund. In India, the students were organised into placement groups with four members, who went to the same schools and taught together in pairs. After two weeks, they switched schools, so that each group

experienced two different schools and multiple classrooms within each school. Students were encouraged to take active part in the local community, but there were no formally organised activities outside of the teaching placement.

The Maharashtra schools collaborating in the exchange were aimed at pre-primary stages (ages 3-4) and primary stages (ages 5-8), age-ranges similar to what the Norwegian students were specialising in. Seven schools followed the regional curriculum of Maharashtra state, while one of the schools followed the national curriculum issued by the Central Board of Education. Six of the schools could be classified as commercial schools, while two were affiliated with religious groups, namely one Baha'i and one Muslim school. The Muslim school was the only public school in the sample. All eight schools were boarding schools that recruited boarders mainly from middle class environments from all over the region of Maharashtra, and a few international pupils whose parents had sought out the schools because of their solid academic reputation. Additionally, all schools had reserved admission for a quota of local pupils from the nearby areas. Pupils were mostly bilingual, with English as their second language. All schools used English as the language of instruction.

The interviews were set up with the help of a local coordinator who got in touch with school leadership at the eight schools. Candidates for interviews were nominated by the school leadership, and were selected based on their active involvement in the collaboration the last five years. This process might have caused a bias in the sample, with the schools nominating teachers that had a positive view of the cooperation, and some schools having older teachers that had been involved longer than newer colleagues had. However, the selection process also ensured that the sample was relevant – as all of the interviewees had previous experience from receiving and supervising Norwegian preservice teachers on placement. All twenty-one teachers were Indian, with English as their second language.

As the research question targeted teachers' perceptions regarding their own professional development and school development, a qualitative approach was chosen as appropriate for the study. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, as we wanted to elicit nuanced accounts of the individual teachers' experiences and perceptions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 30). An interview guide was developed (see appendix A), structured around the general themes of 1) motivation for receiving students, 2) personal outcomes and school outcomes, 3) challenges, 4) the learning outcomes of the students, 5) suggestions for improvement.

All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and all gave their consent to participate and have the interviews recorded. The project was designed in compliance with the guidelines of the researchers' home institution, and registered with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). No names or personal details were registered in the interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcription was kept close to the Indian vernacular, and is rendered in the same way in this paper. NVivo 11 was used to classify and categorise the interview data. The interviews were first coded separately by the three authors in order to identify recurring themes and perspectives. The research team then met to discuss the identified codes, and these were merged into four thematic categories. These were *cultural exchange*, *pedagogical ideas*, *teacher-student relations*, and *teaching examples*, into which the entire data material was subsequently re-coded. The four categories were then collapsed into two main categories – one discussing cultural exchange and one discussing pedagogical inspiration. These are presented below, and include a range of quotes from the interviewees in order to provide transparency to our process of interpretation.

There are some limitations to this study. The interviews are qualitative, and the knowledge they provide is limited to the self-expressed perceptions of the informants. Furthermore, the research focuses on one particular exchange relationship, although the sample includes a

heterogeneous body of schools. It is therefore context-specific and cannot be used to draw general conclusions. As this particular area of research is very limited, we see this as an empirical contribution that could help initiate a broader discussion on how to include the perspective of host schools in international teaching placements. An interesting further development of this study would be to include fieldwork and observation in order to establish more knowledge on actual practices, as well as to develop projects in cooperation with researchers from both the receiving country and the sending country.

Findings

Pedagogical outcomes

Teachers in all eight schools pointed to the fact that the Norwegian students brought new pedagogical perspectives with them to the schools. For example, one teacher argued that the main motivation for accepting Norwegian students on placement was the exposure to different approaches and to find out “what kind of teaching is there, what kind of learning is there, what interaction they do” (Teacher 16, henceforth T16). When asked what this exposure had yielded, the teacher argued that methods the Norwegian students bring in, are “a little different” and “that exposure is very good, both for teachers and for the students” (T2). The teacher followed this up by introducing one example from an arts and crafts lesson where the students introduced paintings by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch to the pupils. According to the teacher, this opened a new window to world-famous arts. Both the paintings themselves, and the way the Norwegian students used these as part of the teaching, were new to the pupils and the school.

The students did not only bring pictures of impressionist paintings, they also brought skipping ropes, balls, wigs, as well as resources like songs, riddles, fairy tales and dances. The interviews reveal that this was well received by the host schools. In particular, the teachers were impressed by how these resources were used for facilitating participation and fostering motivation. In

addition, the active use of the nature surrounding the school appeared to be a foreign approach and was highlighted by the Indian teachers as a valuable approach to learning processes, “I mean, they wanted to show it practically. Not only in the book. So suppose if they’re talking about the leaves, or they’re talking about the garden, they directly take them to the garden” (T19). This was identified as a specific method, and seen as something that might be adopted into Indian practice:

They did something else also with art, like they asked us to gather different material, from the nature. So we looked at it like ‘ok, we don’t do such things in school with students’. So if we would do such things with students in school, maybe our children also would develop this kind of an artistic approach (T1)

The Norwegian students quickly developed a good relationship with the pupils, among other things through introducing games and playing as part of the teaching, which contributed to allay their initial problems of communication. For example, one teacher argued that “they are very good with the kids and the kids enjoy the company” (T8). She compared this to the attitudes of Indian teachers, and claimed that they did not have the same patience when it came to the pupils. In another interview, one teacher argued that Indian teachers were “thinking that this child is asking a bit too many questions” and thus lost patience and that the Norwegian preservice teachers “teach us that you need to be very patient” (T20).

Even though the Indian teachers took great interest in comparing Indian and Norwegian teaching traditions, especially the relationship between teacher and pupil, they expressed that the Norwegian tradition would be difficult to transfer to India. One teacher articulated this point in the following manner: “You have to be firm. And if you don’t bother to correct them then, then they – ah – they go berserk. Then they don’t listen to anything. They are very rowdy then.” (T8). The teacher worried that the Norwegian students were not sufficiently clear when it came

to teaching the subject matter; “they should at least correct the child if the child is being wrong” (T8).

Although the Norwegian preservice teachers were recognised for being able to motivate and involve the students, the Indian teachers questioned whether the “Norwegian methods” would work in an Indian context. The main concern for the Indian teachers was that the methods of the Norwegian preservice teachers might cause insufficient learning outcomes for the pupils. Indian schools were according to the Indian teachers very much focused on the teacher and textbooks providing pupils knowledge, which was important for passing exams and qualifying for future job positions. The teachers emphasised that they provided the pupils with necessary knowledge and introduced them to both sciences and humanities.

[The Norwegian students] can be as free as they want, and go back. But for us it will be a little difficult, because we have to do a certain amount of things. Because children have to go for admission to another school, they have to know a certain amount of things. Which is a must. (T8)

The responsibility to ensure that their pupils left school with the necessary learning outcomes were in other words a key concern of the Indian teachers. A certain amount of academic pressure was therefore seen as necessary. The view that Norwegian preservice teachers had something to learn from this rigor was also hinted at. For example, one teacher pointed out that the Norwegians had been very impressed with the high level of literacy in young Indian pupils. “But it is like in India there is lot of writing work. There is less of activity and lot of writing. So they’re [the preservice teachers] very happy with the writing part [...] They find them [the pupils] very quick learners.” (T9).

However, the Indian teachers acknowledged that motivation and engagement of the pupils needed more attention in Indian schools. One teacher argued that “if you pressurise all the time,

burden the children [...] by the time they reach the higher classes they lose interest” (T12). Here, the methodological input of the Norwegian preservice teachers was deemed valuable. The Indian teachers expressed that they probably had gained knowledge about several topics through their cooperation with the placement students, which might be included into their own teaching practices. The key to making this happen, according to the teachers, would be that the school leadership was open to changes and prepared to implement them systematically. Then the short placements might have provided more outcomes for the host schools, and “maybe have something more long lasting except for this one month” (T5).

Cultural exchange outcomes

One of the main reasons given by teachers for accepting to host the Norwegian students was the potential for learning about other cultures. One teacher saw the placement as a cultural exchange that both the teachers and pupils were in need of:

The main reason is you know, we wanted to know what the Norwegian culture is. Although we are living in separate countries, or different countries, you know - there should be some interaction between all of us. That’s the main important thing. (T16)

For the Indian pupils, meeting the Norwegian students represented a meeting with the world outside of India: “the Norwegian teachers come in and they teach the children, the children are more exposed to the outside world.” (T8). Furthermore, the pupils gained specific knowledge about Norway, since the students had made different presentations about the country. These included presentations of “life in Norway [and] animals” (T1) and “poems [and] songs. We get to learn a lot of things from them” (T6). The pupils were curious and asked questions, but they also actively searched for external knowledge about Norway: “I remember at that time the students went to the internet to research on Norway because they did not know Norway much.” (T1).

The Indian teachers also gained new knowledge about Norway, particularly relating to child rearing and teaching traditions; “there is a lot of exchange of ideas that happens with the teachers, as in our teachers are very interested to know about child care and the system of education in Norway.” (T2). Furthermore, the Indian teachers and the Norwegian students compared the Norwegian and Indian criminal justice systems, different family relations in the two countries, but also festivities; “They [the Norwegian students] like festivals a lot. They thoroughly enjoy holy festivals” (T21).

The focus on time and punctuality was also a part of the Norwegian cultural background highlighted by the Indian teachers, and several teachers experienced this as something that had an impact on them that they wanted to emphasise more in their own work; “You know, respecting the time [...] It was just me that was following the time very punctually. But now, even the [Indian] teachers respect [time]” (T9).

The teachers and students discussed different aspects of the two societies they represented. The outsider perspective on one’s own society was considered an important learning experience;

So it’s very interesting when you have that conversation with them, things that they observe which we don’t observe, because it is so ingrained in the culture. And very interesting discussions about family relationships, equality and you know, service to mankind, and what is their concept. (T1)

The Indian teachers expressed that they appreciated that the Norwegian students were interested in learning about Indian culture, and that they had saris made, thereby bringing specific cultural objects back to Norway. The teachers in one school were proud to share that “our cultural dressing they do [...]. Like Indian is how they’re dressing. And not only do they dress up and come for the functions [...] So we think that they are same, like Indian.” (T17). During free-time in the staff room, the students and the Indian teachers exchanged knowledge

about each other's cultures. At one school they argued that "in terms of cultural exchange, yes, here even in the staffroom, well, not just about education but there is talk about exchange of recipes, and culture, you know, wider form, in terms of festivals, and clothes and stuff like that" (T2). However, some of the Indian teachers felt that the Norwegian teacher students did not involve themselves in social interaction with them, only the pupils; "So although some of them, they are interacting with us, some of them they're not." (T16) and "some of them are a little bit shy. Some of them are, you know, they always stay together" (T3).

The Norwegian students also represented a possibility for language training for the Indian pupils. The Indian teachers are positive with regards to the English skills of the Norwegian students. "They were fluent in English" (T1), one of the teachers stated. Yet, many of the teachers experienced problems of communication in the beginning because the pupils had problems understanding the accent of the Norwegian students; "Indian accent is completely different. The way we speak. You know, sometimes it's not easy to understand" (T16). After a few days, however, things improved and the pupils understood the pronunciation of the Norwegians better. In addition, the way the Norwegian students structured their teaching ensured communication even though there were language problems. The students used drama, songs and concrete examples in their communication with the pupils.

They [the Norwegian preservice teachers] speak and at the same time they even, you know, give their body language, you know like 'come here', 'sit down', so slowly they catch up. And I think after two days, there it is nothing, the teachers [are] theirs, the children [are] theirs, and they are all knowing each other. (T9)

Finally, some teachers had suggestions on how to develop the collaboration. Their perspective on this was to offer Indian perspectives and experiences to a broader audience than the selected students who had the opportunity to travel to India.

I am also aware that not many teachers come to this part of India. So there might be some other students who would actually like to learn from the teachers who are from India. So why not conduct a small program [...] for the Indian teachers to visit your place? [...] That teacher comes there, and presents, like a subject teacher – a language teacher, a sports teacher [...] There might be some ideas and some new things which can be shared. (T9)

In other words, the host communities saw potential in furthering the joint outcomes by establishing more avenues of mobility within the framework of the international placement experience.

Discussion

In this study, we set out to explore how Indian cooperating teachers perceive and assess their outcomes from hosting an international teaching placement for Norwegian students. In the previous section, we outlined two main categories of how the teachers describe their outcomes, focusing mainly on insight into new pedagogical ideas and cultural exchange. In the following, we will discuss the content of these two categories in light of the literature review conducted. Sherraden, Lough and Bopp (2013) suggest *tangible resources*, *capacity building* and *intercultural competence* as relevant ways to discuss host institution outcomes. This model is a broad attempt to find shared characteristics across different ways of internationalisation – volunteerism, service learning and study abroad. The question is whether this general approach is helpful when discussing teacher education and cooperative teachers. Do the categories help to explain what motivates the schools to continue the partnership year after year?

Tangible resources

Tangible resources is understood as either bringing financial resources, or filling gaps in staffing that helps the institution to save money (Sherraden et.al., 2013, p. 25). There was no payment involved with the international teaching placement in this particular case. Financial resources for the school was not raised by the teachers as an issue during any of the interviews. Neither did the students function as replacement for permanent staff. The teachers did not accentuate material or financial benefits as a significant outcome from the placements over the years. On the contrary, the schools spent resources on assigning cooperating teachers to supervise the visiting students.

In other words, the importance of tangible resources understood as financial contributions seems to be minimal. However, the understanding of “tangible resources” might benefit from more critical consideration. As the interviewees raised the issue of mobility for Indian teachers to come to Norway, it might be that financial aspects of international collaborations need more emphasis when thinking about reciprocity in international partnerships. In particular, it is important to address the inherent imbalance in partnerships where only one part has the financial opportunities for regular travel without substantial external funding. Tangible resources, understood as funds for mobility for host partners, is a factor that might be useful to consider in further developing the exchange in this study and other teaching placements abroad.

Furthermore, if we broaden the definition of tangible resources to include artefacts and pedagogical resources described by the Indian teachers, the category becomes more relevant. For example, pictures of paintings, artefacts used for storytelling, wigs and skipping ropes were highlighted by the Indian teachers as valuable additions to their schools. The primary focus of the teachers when discussing these elements however, was not the financial aspect of the schools receiving these material resources. Rather, observing the *use* of these in teaching was highlighted as an interesting way of experiencing unfamiliar methodologies. The benefits

seen by the teachers related to what the students brought in terms of new ideas, which might be more relevant to consider in connection with the category of capacity building.

Capacity building

Capacity building was understood by Sherraden et al. (2013) to mean providing extra hands and helping with management, teaching and planning. The role of the Norwegian students in this study was not as volunteers or consultants. Rather, the students were there as part of their degree, working on their own professional development. Nevertheless, in light of the literature on what cooperating teachers might gain from mentoring teachers-in-training, capacity building could still be a relevant category to discuss the findings.

There were several examples of professional exchange between students and teachers in our empirical material. For instance, the teachers referred to discussing both pedagogical and cultural issues with the students. In addition, the teachers described rich observations of Norwegian students practicing teaching in Indian school environments. The encounter of an instruction-oriented Indian school system and a Norwegian preschool tradition of play-based and informal learning left the cooperating teachers with what they seemed to value as useful pedagogical impulses from the foreign students. This was especially the case with motivational factors such as the use of songs and body language, place-based methods, outdoor education and experiential learning.

However, while the Indian teachers did argue that they had gained new knowledge, and appreciated much of the work that the Norwegian students did in India, they also went far in rejecting the usefulness of this knowledge in their daily practices. They expressed confidence in their own abilities to provide pupils with relevant knowledge in a clear manner, as opposed to the Norwegian students with their well-intentioned but vague instruction of the pupils. This attitude contrast somewhat with the findings of Major and Santoro (2016), whose research on

host schools in the Solomon Islands revealed that the teachers in question received Australian students with a feeling of inferiority. For example, the Indian teachers regarded the play-based learning advocated by the Norwegian students as refreshing, but not as a serious educational option in their own, competitive context. They also felt that the Norwegian students were rather impressed by the results of the Indian methods, for instance the level of literacy in very young children.

Landt (2004) and Kiraz (2004) both argue that knowledge transfer from student to mentor can take place in teaching placements, but that placements leading to actual changes in teaching practices are less prevalent. It could seem that this is also the case in our sample. The Indian teachers themselves explained the perceived lack of relevance through a notion of a problematic but necessary “teaching to a test” mentality in Indian schools. The Indian school system is highly competitive and dominated by a culture of testing and memorisation (see for instance Joshee & Shira, 2009). Passing or not passing the public examinations will have a crucial importance for pupils and their families. Methods introduced by the Norwegian students were not viewed as particularly useful for the learning outcomes that the pupils would be tested on.

This does not mean that the Indian teachers were not influenced by the new impulses. The cooperating teachers did problematize their own teaching as lacking in its ability to motivate pupils, and here they saw a potential in the dialogic and pupil-active methods. Although the long-term impact of new ideas on practices in the host schools seemed limited in terms of structural change and professional development for host teachers, access to new perspectives and experiences for both pupils and teachers was identified as an important motivation for sustaining the role as hosts.

Intercultural competence

Thirdly, Sherraden et. al. (2013) propose intercultural competence, tolerance, international knowledge, and global engagement as potential outcomes for host institutions. The category of intercultural competence was the one most clearly expressed as an outcome by the Indian cooperating teachers. In the long term, the key impact of the placement was as a window to the outside world rather than a source of pedagogical ideas. In particular, teachers highlighted discussions in the staffrooms, introducing the Norwegian students to Indian culture and traditions, as well as learning about Norwegian culture and traditions. The teachers saw the cultural exchange embedded in the programme as the sharing of one's own culture, receiving knowledge about another culture, and developing communications skills both culturally and linguistically. Specifically, providing an outsider perspective to one's own cultural practices and school cultures was seen as useful. The emphasis the teachers put on the value of the experience for their pupils was also significant. For the pupils, the international teaching placement triggered curiosity and global engagement. These interactions amounted to an international experience without leaving the country, a possibility limited to the few. In educational research, the concept of "internationalisation at home" has been given increasing attention in recent years (Beelen & Jones, 2015), and this long-lasting collaboration between schools and a foreign university might be an example of the benefits of such internalisation, especially in the area of intercultural competence.

However, there is a danger that the perspectives and reflections offered by Indian teachers to Norwegian university researchers were distorted by politeness and restraint, and that our interpretation of them was biased by our own situated perspectives. The study might run the risk of falling into what some researchers have termed "myth-making", where superficial feel-good stories of intercultural learning serve to disguise an old-style colonial rhetoric of enlightenment and education (Parr et al., 2016, p. 164). Despite these limitations, it still seems that the teachers were motivated by a genuine interest in internationalisation. They also

expressed pride and confidence in their own traditions and teaching practices as the best way to fulfil their responsibilities towards securing their pupils' future. The teachers expressed that they believe the Norwegian students had something to learn from Indian schools and practices, particularly from their high achievements in early literacy, and that the Norwegian students should take more advantage of the cultural learning opportunities presented to them through being less shy in their communication with the staff. It was also suggested that exposure to Indian teaching ideas and practices would be useful to a broader Norwegian audience. This could perhaps be seen as an expression of partnership and exchange, rather than merely a "receiving" or "reactive" role.

Conclusion

Research on international teaching placements has until now been dominated by a focus on the personal and professional development of students, and what they bring with them "back home". This study has tried to address a gap in the research literature by focusing on the outcomes of the teachers that receive and supervise these foreign students, in a meeting between widely different school cultures and traditions. Through an analysis of interview data, we have demonstrated that the teachers themselves saw their key outcomes as 1) exposure to new and different pedagogical methods, and 2) widening their horizons by encountering a foreign culture. Receiving international students on teaching placements generated knowledge about alternative pedagogical approaches, stimulated curiosity with the pupils, and provided internationalisation at home through engagement with a new culture and the sharing of different perspectives.

When it comes to systemic impact, the study also suggests that there is a higher threshold when it comes to implementing new pedagogical ideas as an integrated part of teaching practices or school culture due to systemic differences and barriers. In this regard, placement

by itself seems to be of limited effect. An important aspect when thinking about outcomes for the receiving partner in international placements is the question of what the goal of the exchange is supposed to be. If the main motivation of the host schools is internationalisation at home, with a focus on gaining new perspectives and intercultural competence, this exchange offered relevant outcomes for the host communities. If the ambition was to develop and change educational practices, an important next step would be to identify factors that could enable students and teachers to become more than observers of each other's practices in international partnerships.

Based on the perspectives of the teachers in our study, we could attempt to make some suggestions for enhancing outcomes – both in terms of pedagogical ideas and cultural exchange. One important avenue could be to adjust and develop placement programmes in closer dialogue with different stakeholders, including school leadership and cooperating teachers at the host institutions. Finding shared areas of interest in the respective national educational development agendas - such as for instance citizenship or sustainable development - and structuring teaching tasks and conversations around them might have the potential to create more meaningful and interactive teaching placements. Finally, dialogue and planning in international cooperation within teacher education could be expanded and strengthened by taking advantage of possibilities made available through online platforms and webinar formats.

References:

Beelen J. & Jones, E. (2015). Redefining internationalization at home. In A. Curaj, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi, & P. Scott (Eds.), *The European higher education area: Between critical reflections and future policies* (pp. 59-72). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

- Brindley, R., Quinn, S., & Morton, M. L. (2009). Consonance and dissonance in a study abroad program as a catalyst for professional development of pre-service teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 525-532. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2008.09.012
- Clarke, A., Triggs, V. & Nielsen, W. (2014). Cooperating teacher participation in teacher education: a review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 84, 163-202. doi: 10.3102/0034654313499618
- Cushner, K. & Mahon, J. (2002). Overseas student teaching: Affecting personal, professional, and global competencies in an age of globalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6, 44 - 58. doi:10.1177/1028315302006001004
- De Witt, H. (2016). Misconceptions about (the end of) internationalisation. In E. Jones, R. Coelen, J. Beelen, J., & H de Wit, H. (Eds.), *Global and Local Internationalization* (pp. 15-20). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalisation at institutions of higher education in the United States. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10, 241–266. doi:10.1177/1028315306287002
- Engh, K. R. (2008). Kan førskolestudenter i et moderne velferdssamfunn profitere på praksis i barnehager i et fattig utviklingsland? [Could pre-school teacher students in a modern welfare society profit from placement in pre-schools in a poor developing country?]. *Norsk pedagogisk tidsskrift*, 92, 40-51.
- Ihmeideh, F. & Coughlin, C. (2015). The influence of student teachers on the perspectives of early childhood cooperating teachers regarding early reading instruction. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 43, 243-261. doi:10.1080/1359866X.2014.934198

- Joshee, R. and Sihra, K. (2009). Religion, culture, language, and education in India. In J. A. Banks (Ed.), *The Routledge international companion to multicultural education* (pp. 425 – 436). New York: Routledge.
- Kabilan, M. K. (2013). A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: Pre-service teachers' experiences of professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 36*, 198-209. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.013
- Kiraz, E. (2004). Unexpected impact on practicum: Experts learn from novice. *Teacher Education and Practice, 17*, 71–88.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Landt, S. M. (2004). Professional development of middle and secondary level educators in the role of cooperating teacher. *Action in Teacher Education, 26*, 74-84.
doi:10.1080/01626620.2004.10463315
- Major, J. & Santoro, N. (2016). Supervising an international teaching practicum: building partnerships in postcolonial contexts. *Oxford Review of Education, 42*, 460-474.
doi:10.1080/03054985.2016.1195734
- Naryan, K. (1993). How native is a "native" anthropologist? *American Anthropologist, 95*, 671-686. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/679656>
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2015). Tilsetting og kompetansekrav [Employment and teacher qualifications]. Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/regelverk-og-tilsyn/skole-og-opplaring/saksbehandling/larerkompetanse/#barnetrinnet-1.-7.-trinn>
- Olson, C. L., & Kroeger, K. R. (2001). Global competency and intercultural sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 5*, 116-137.
doi:10.1177/102831530152003

- Parr, G. (2012). Leading an international teaching practicum: Negotiating tensions in a site of border pedagogy. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 40, 97–109.
doi:10.1080/1359866X.2012.669824
- Parr, G., Faulkner, J. & Rowe, C. (2017). Dialogue and reciprocity in an international teaching practicum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(2), 162-179.
doi:10.1080/1359866X.2016.1199774
- Sherraden, M. S., Lough, B. J., & Bopp, A. C. (2013). Students serving abroad: A framework for inquiry. *Journal of Higher Education and Outreach*, 17, 7–42. Retrieved from <http://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe/article/view/1021/667>
- Trilokekar, R. D., & Kukar, P. (2011). Disorienting experiences during study abroad: Reflections of pre-service teacher candidates. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 1141–1150. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2011.06.002

Appendix A: Interview guide

The project is approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data

Answers will be anonymised.

Interview questions

- 1) Could you tell us about why you accepted to accommodate/receive Norwegian preservice teachers for internship/placement?

- 2) Could you tell us about your outcomes/ what benefit you see from receiving preservice teachers from Norway?

- 3) What kind for challenges did you experience in receiving/supervising the Norwegian preservice teachers?

- 4) What do you think the Norwegian preservice teachers learn from their internship in your school?

- 5) What do you think are especially challenging for the Norwegian preservice teachers doing their placement in India?

- 6) Do you have any suggestions for improving the internship/placement?