

THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRANSNATIONAL LEARNING TO THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Zanda Rubene

University of Latvia, Latvia

Gunita Elksne

University of Latvia, Latvia

ABSTRACT

The study analyzes the concept of transnational learning in the context of professional development for teachers. The aim of the study is to theoretically reflect on transnational learning as a tool for the multi-dimensional professional development of teachers in the 21st century.

One of the goals defined by UNESCO to be reached by the year 2030, is improved quality of education and lifelong learning, including teacher professional development. Teacher Professional Development Forms develop and change both vertically and horizontally, from passive to active solution search, experience-based learning.

The study examines the professional growth of adults in 3 different theories: Kegan constructive-developmental theory, Drago- Seversone learning-oriented model for school leadership and Nonaka and Takeuchi SECI organizational knowledge creation theory.

The authors' conclusions on transnational learning as a tool for teacher professional development are based on the findings of, Bruno-Jofré, and Johnston, as well as Johnson and OECD. As well as researching previous studies on transnational learning available on the Ebsco and Web of science websites.

Methodology: In the process of research, using the method of analysis of scientific literature, conclusions have been drawn on the transnational learning role in the professional development of teachers.

Keywords: professional development, adult education, transnational learning.

Introduction

In pedagogy, there is always a topical question of how to transfer knowledge, skills, values, how to develop personality and create such conditions for growth that meet each person's needs. Today, this question has become more urgent than ever, as the world is changing very rapidly, and so is the society, its values, and needs. This is also confirmed by

the goals set by UNESCO to be achieved till 2030, one of the seventeen goals being targeted towards qualitative education, meaning – “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO, 2019) (OECD, 2019). However, education and educators do not adjust fast enough to meet all requirements. For many years’ professional development of teachers was organized as the transfer of additional knowledge and information to teachers, however, the issues to be solved nowadays require other competencies and other teacher’s abilities. Everyday life is volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) (Fadels, Bialika, & Trilings, 2017), (Reimers, 2016), so the teacher must learn as they do, learn to help himself.

Teachers’ knowledge and the need for a change in the nature of the profession were discussed in the OECD Educational Research and Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) conference “Teachers as learning specialists – implications for Teacher’s pedagogical knowledge and professionalism” in Brussels, 2014. Pedagogical knowledge, that is, knowledge of teaching and learning refers to the specialized body of knowledge of teachers for creating effective teaching and learning environments for their students. There is an agreement that competence in teaching requires a high level of pedagogical knowledge, but there is still a need to assess teacher knowledge as the outcome of the teacher education system and as a predictor of effective teaching and student achievement (Paniagua & Istance, 2018, p. 15). The function of teachers has switched from being a subject matter expert who transmits information and explicit knowledge to act as a facilitator of student learning in this society. Current reforms emphasize that teachers develop students’ skills in problem-solving, learning to learn, reflective thinking, teamwork. And one of the key questions of Innovative Pedagogy is – what is desirable for users (both students and future employers) (OECD, 2016)?

Teachers and schools live in a society, which requires that they be adept at the same skills they are developing in their students (Herman, 2018). “The Quality of the teaching workforce has the depth for student outcomes, as empirical research has shown that teacher quality has an impact on student achievement” (Guerriero, 2017) (Guskey, 2002). It means that there must be growth and development in teachers, their visions of the world, its cognition. “Today Teaching is treated as a career expressed by learning and life-long professional development” (Zamir, 2018). Well-known lectures and seminars are no longer able to provide teachers with the necessary support. New approaches, methods, forms are needed, ways of increasing their inner capacity, developing personal qualities. Teacher Professional Development Forms develop and change vertically and horizontally, from passive to active solution search, experience-based learning (Révai, 2017).

“Teachers should have opportunities for the creation and development of professional knowledge that includes ‘unsystematized’ personal experience, knowledge derived from practice settings, and propositional knowledge” (Day, 1999). Teachers must be ready to solve problems in the course of work and to live and learn simultaneously. One of the ways that meet the needs is the mutual assistance of teachers to each other in the classroom, professional groups, world. Also, in the professional further education of teachers, innovative pedagogical approaches and techniques, one of which is experience-based learning, must be taken over (OECD, 2016). “Professional Development (PD) models fall on a continuum from highly adaptive to highly specified” (Koellner & Jacobs, 2015). In addition, being aware of the high demands on teacher competence both from the society, from parents, and from the pupils (OECD, 2019) the different life and professional experiences of teachers, the offer and opportunities of professional growth should also give the teacher positive emotions, wellbeing, a chance to restart and recharge. Globalization has opened the world and allowed people to connect in new and exciting ways. We create unique systems that are developed through our life experiences and passions. Combining experience-based learning and globalization leads to transnational learning and education.

Adult learning theories and models that justify the contributions of transnational learning

One of the theories on which the authors base their argument is developed by Robert Kegan, growth psychologist, professor at Harvard University. Based on Piagets opinions on child development, Kegan has created a theory that covers human growth throughout the whole life. The Kegan theory – constructive – developmental theory – basically explains how we, as adults, are creating something of importance in terms of cognitive, emotional, interpersonal and human personal experiences. Kegan does not think that development is the accumulation of new knowledge, but rather the change of way of acquiring knowledge, changing perception and explanation. The main focus of Kegan’s theory is “the evolution of consciousness, the personal unfolding of ways organizing experience that is not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of the mind” (Kegan, 1982). This theory offers a variety of principles of understanding and supporting growth in adults, who have different life experiences and world perceptions, considering current events: adaptation challenges, power, responsibility, uncertainty, complexities, growth-enhancing environment. Kegan’s constructive – developmental theory offers the structure of individual meaning building systems. It also covers

the way we think of an environment for learning that can contribute to growth.

The way humans acquire knowledge or dominant thinking determines how each new experience is perceived and how it is interpreted. It's like a window through which we look at the world, others and ourselves. Kegan divides adult development into 5 levels:

- Impulsive mind,
- Imperial mind,
- Socialized mind,
- Self-Authoring mind,
- Self-Transforming mind (Kegan, 1982).

To promote growth, we first need to understand what kind of knowledge acquisition way the adult is using. Only then it's possible to decide what support, what methods and techniques to offer for each adult's growth, so that they can feel safe: feel like they are accepted just the way they are, not "forced" to change, that the type of growth is appropriate to the abilities and desires, with enough opportunities and challenges to create a more effective development context.

Creating learning activities, initiatives that support, promote adult development at both professional and personal levels – it gives ideas on how to increase capacity, how to think, communicate on development.

Drago-Severson has developed a practical model based on Kegan's theory, which she describes as follows: "Constructive-developmental theory emphasizes the qualitatively different ways in which we, as human beings, make sense of our own experiences and the world, and it emphasizes that all people can continue to grow, learn, and develop throughout their lives" (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 22). In *Core Elements of Learning Environments for Leadership Development*, Drago-Severson identifies four ways of perception of the world, typical of adults, describes supports and challenges that can be infused into pillar practices to promote growth in adults with different ways of knowing.

Drago – Severson at the center of her model puts care (honestly valuing aspects of a person and focusing on that person's well-being), respect (seeing and acknowledging individuals' rights), trust, collaboration (engaging, having connected conversations, to work together) and intentionality (being purposeful about environments, forms) (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 61). Concerning the professional development of teachers, opinions on the importance of the environment as well as on pillar practices are particularly relevant. These pillar practices – teaming, providing leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry and mentoring – are methods that help to grow and support adult's internal capacities (Drago-Severson, 2009). Of course, these methods can also be implemented within the school, but they

are much more effective in other environments that transnational learning can provide.

Another adult development model – a dynamic model for measuring knowledge level of organizations based on Nonaka and Takeuchi Model (SECI- (socialization-externalization-combination-internalization). Model covers the necessary four dimensions of knowledge “knowledge volume” the amount of knowledge), “knowledge value” (the importance and weight of existing knowledge), transformation speed of different types of knowledge” (the transformation of different kinds of knowledge) and “knowledge advantages and expenses” (the production expenses and transfer of knowledge and their interests) (Nezefati, Afrazeh, & Jalali, 2009). This model can explain varied scenarios and policies of knowledge management.

Theory talks about what to know, how to understand, what is socialization, how to share knowledge, how to use knowledge, and who has the right to do so. The two most complex steps in knowledge transformation include changing the type of knowledge – externalization, transforming tacit knowledge into explicit, and internalization – transforming explicit knowledge into tacit. These two steps require a great deal of personal involvement and usually include mental models, personal beliefs and values, as well as a change of perception of yourself, your group, and your entire organization. Creating knowledge is not a linear, sequential process. It is rather determined by the continuous and dynamic interaction between implicit and explicit knowledge.

Theories show that adult education is valuable for both the individual and the organization, if it is transformative, which can be achieved if the individual is actively involved in the process of acquiring knowledge.

Studies and conclusions on transnational learning

In 1999, the European Network on Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP) started a conversation on a term called European Teacher. Easy Mobility as a benefit of the EU was also examined. It was acknowledged that both physical and virtual collaboration between the pupil and the teacher, not only when studying what's necessary for lessons, but also getting to know the language, culture, and diversity of people, is one of the ways to promote teachers' professional development and the quality of education in general (European Commission, 2018). “A European Teacher who has experienced the value of mobility encourages students to develop this general culture, along with a critical perspective, so that they may become autonomous, responsible and active citizens. This culture forms the basis for the acquisition of skills that enable students to move around, live and work in different European cultures. As well as familiarity with different

cultures, a European Teacher also needs to be able to analyze complex intercultural issues in order to enhance cross-cultural learning processes” (Schratz, 2014).

Most of the European education development policies are focused on higher education, Ph.D. students and university lecturers, however, contribution to the professional development of teachers after formal education was also considered. “Raising teacher education quality so as, in turn, to raise the quality of education and training in the European Union in a way that responds to the challenges of lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society” (European Commission, 2018).

Transnational teacher education programs are growing very quickly, and UNESCO considers that there “exists a lack of comprehensive frameworks for coordinating various initiatives at the international level” (OECD, 2005, p. 4) (Lancrin, 2004). Not only European countries are interested in transnational teaching, but it is topical all over the world. There is a lot of talk about it at the theoretical level, but there is not much practical experience yet, UNESCO explains this that “transnational teachers education is still too recent and too small phenomenon” (OECD, 2005, p. 13). There is no unified approach to terminology yet, all transnational learning, transnational education, cross-border education, borderless education, and cross-cultural education are used.

If we look at the researches posted on Web of Science and Ebsco with the keywords Transnational learning and professional development, these are basically social studies: Training of migrants, bilingual learning. Looking at the research done in transnational education (TNE) with the focus of professional development, the range of studies also is small: Ebsco – 24 articles, Web of Science – 35. The leading positions include Australia and England and the United States. In Europe, there are very little researches to be found with these keywords. The existing researches are mainly about higher education, which includes research on growth in student mobility (Hussin, 2007), education of university teaching staff (Smith, 2009), success/failures of different programs in a specific country (Kun, 2019). Researches on schools describing the experience of specific schools in hosting students, as well as the individual cooperation of teachers in some context of the subject (Erixon & Wahlström, 2016). Some researchers have also focused on education affecting migrants (Shibao, 2010), pre-primary education, and theoretical issues such as, how TNE develops leadership or how to build Curriculum focusing on TNE (Clarke, Johal, Sharp, & Quinn, 2016). And there are just a few studies related to the professional development of teachers, through using TNE. One of the researches is Janelle M. Johnson’s “Mapping a New field: Cross-border professional development for teachers” (2011). In it, the author points out that “teachers’

education in any society is based on a critical stance that extends far beyond the aims of mere ‘tolerance’ and ‘management’ of diversity. This position also recognizes that teacher learning occurs in both formal and informal contexts and must occur longitudinally in order to be effective” (Johnson, 2011, p. 127). Johnson also acknowledges that transnational education is booming, but research is scarce in proportion. One of her dissertation questions is: “In what ways is cross-cultural professional development for teachers a transformative process for the teachers, their schools, and the communities in which they work?” (Johnson, 2011, p. 120). Lancrin believes that “Cross-border education can be a good capacity development tool for developing countries, for their tertiary education system but also, more broadly, for their economy“ (Lancrin, 2004, p. 36), and. Yvonne Hebert (Bruno-Jofre & edit., 2014). *Teacher Education in a Transnational World* offers a genuinely international interdisciplinary examination of the challenges and opportunities associated with teacher education in the twenty-first century. However, the answer is not unambiguous, the result is influenced by many factors that are still awaiting their research. Arizona University scientist concludes in her dissertation that listing all the benefits of transnational learning is a difficult task: “The cross-border experience in itself was often salient for learning; there was an amazing range of potential outcomes during such experiences aside from the stated program content, and learning was multidirectional” (Johnson, 2011, p. 53).

Conclusions

In the 21st century, with the rapid development and transformation of both public values and needs, educational development, quality is very important, but it is not able to change fast enough. Teachers’ further education with traditional methods does not provide the necessary growth. Scientists’ findings suggest that adults are more effective in learning new things when they think about their past experience: personal and professional, and the opportunity to train in a team, taking a leadership role, learning under the leadership of a mentor, or watching and interviewing colleagues. Transnational learning is developing very rapidly, and more and more teachers use this method. The first research shows positive benefits but also marks dangerous aspects. Research in this area is needed to draw objective conclusions.

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