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Conceptualising Teachers' Knowledge when Crossing National Boundaries

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper was to examine the meaning and function of "teachers knowledge", both as a foundational tool used by teachers as professionals and the ways in which such knowledge is acquired, shared, and bettered. To help guide this discussion, the paper reviews the literature on related topics whilst also providing other insights and recommendations for further research. The topics have been broken down into two main parts: conceptualising teachers' professional knowledge; and the sharing of knowledge internationally. The second of these examines the history of the topic whilst also critiquing the methods and effectiveness of sharing strategies. We find that the ways professional knowledge have been defined in public discourse are often inappropriate for the specific context of teaching. Furthermore, we find that sharing experience and knowledge between teachers is a foundational concept yet not always a straightforward matter and knowledge/experience can be a very difficult thing to transfer between one another. These obstacles can be exacerbated when it comes to the sharing of knowledge internationally, as economic disparities between participating nations can be vast and differences in culture challenging to overcome. Some nations additionally struggle in their authenticity to learn from each other. Ultimately, it is clear that "teacher knowledge" is a concept that is an area in need of further research, particularly as education reforms and curriculum adjustments are of great concern to both developing nations and their wealthier counterparts.

KEYWORDS:

knowledge communities, codified knowledge, teachers' knowledge, analogies of knowledge, international networking, knowledge networks

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Introduction

This article is the second article in a pair. The first of which focused on conceptualising communities (rather than knowledge) and was published in the *Polish Journal of Educational Studies* in 2018 (Underwood & Kowalczuk-Waledziak, 2018). In this second article we discuss competing definitions of teachers' professional knowledge and also issues around the sharing or co-construction of this knowledge. We then discuss the implications of this when crossing national boundaries and networking between different countries – specifically what different forms of knowledge might be shared – and what the implications of this might be.

These two articles were originally envisaged as a pair. However, as they evolved they became significantly different in style. The first presents a complete and highly structured conceptual framework that could be used to underpin research into the area of communities, as such it is a more conclusive but less discursive document. In contrast this second article is a more discursive article and the conclusions are less assured. There is value within this too of a different kind. It presents a rich discussion, which will contribute to debates in this area. Both of the articles in this pair are conceptual articles based on current literature in this field rather than on empirical research. However, the first article has also functioned as the conceptual framework for further empirical research into communities (Kowalczuk-Waledziak & Underwood, 2020).

Part 1: conceptualising teachers' professional knowledge

The codification of teachers' knowledge

Since the 1980s, many countries have expressed through their policies a belief that the professional knowledge of teachers can be codified into a set of commonly agreed standards (Zembylas, 2018). The use of a codified method of defining the knowledge held by teachers has dominated political discourse about teaching worldwide for the past four decades (Hudson, et al. 2012). These codified standards have even become the badge of a quality education system. The decision as to whether teachers from one country are recognised in another is often based on an evaluation of these written standards (Goepal, 2012). Most developed nations now assess teachers against codified standards, revising and modifying them periodically, but no country, once they have been introduced, has entirely withdrawn them (Call, 2018).

The history of codifying standards in England is an interesting example that illustrates this process, that most developed countries have also undergone, over the last four decades. This history is specific to England but has been reflected in similar histories in many other countries (Goepal, 2012). English codified standards were first

introduced in the 1980s by local authorities, followed by central government in the 1990s (Brown & Manktelow, 2018). During the 1980s and up until the mid-1990s, a series of successful conference motions put forward by various teaching unions demanded the abolition of teaching standards. However, this regular debate dwindled following the election of the Labour government in 1997, which gave the teachers' unions a central role in the General Teaching Councils and in the writing of revised standards (Brown & Manktelow, 2016). Once included more actively, the unions changed their position in these debates to a less confrontational one (Stevenson, 2014).

The view that codified standards are the most appropriate way to define teachers' professional knowledge has therefore been dominant and largely unquestioned in the political arena in the UK since the Labour election victory of 1997. Instead, debate has focused on who controls these standards (Bangs & MacBeath, 2013). Within this discourse there is what can be loosely defined as a devolved approach, with standards being defined by teachers themselves, possibly as negotiated through unions, although other models exist for obtaining teachers' voice (Bangs & MacBeath, 2013). In response there has also emerged, what can loosely be defined as a centralised perspective, in which it is argued that these standards should be imposed from outside upon teachers, based on a democratic mandate that politicians have in terms of representing their electorate and the people (Smith, 2013).

The codification of teachers' professional knowledge in England, as with other countries, was also linked to the introduction of a more rigorous disciplinary system for teachers deemed to be performing below these standards and to the introduction of performance related pay (NUT, 2015). Thus, by 2010, political debates on teachers' knowledge focused on ways of managing and defining standards rather than on whether this is a suitable way to understand teachers' professional knowledge (Smith, 2013).

Teachers' knowledge compared to other professions

Despite this dominance of a single and simple definition of professional knowledge in policy contexts, within academic discourse various models of professional knowledge compete. Although these more philosophical discourses on the nature of teachers' knowledge do not necessarily focus on challenging codification several implicitly raise doubts on the relevance of written standards.

Professional knowledge has been defined in a variety of ways in academic discourse. Two definitions that have taken as their starting point the nature of professional discourse are as follow: firstly, that professional knowledge is defined and shared by the use of distinct language (Brown & Manktelow, 2016); secondly, a contrasting Foucaultian critical approach whereby it is claimed that the language professionals use is a smokescreen to create an impression of separate and elite knowledge (Stickney,

2012). Both models present peculiar issues when defining professional knowledge within the teaching profession. This is not to say that teachers do not acquire a body of distinct and highly developed knowledge and skills; just that it will always be possible to define this knowledge in language that is familiar to most people. This is simply because most people have a deep familiarity with and gain a vast amount of language from teachers at school (Ball, 2006).

This can be illustrated by comparing the professional knowledge of teachers with definitions of professional knowledge in medicine and law. This is a relevant comparison as the General Medical Council and Law Society were publicly presented as models on which the creation of the General Teaching Councils of the United Kingdom were based (GTC(E), 1993; Smith, 2013). In both these professions, operating theatres and court rooms are alien places to most people that we only enter during rare moments of crises in our lives. The status of having distinct professional knowledge, whether authentic or illusory, is therefore easy to maintain via a formal and shared language reinforced by codes of practice (Hui & Stickley, 2007). However, these documented and formalised versions of professional knowledge do not make sense as a way of creating a model for the nature of teachers' knowledge; nor can they artificially create the illusion of this because the language of schools is familiar (Stickney, 2012). Borrowing a way of defining professional knowledge that is highly codified and which historically is based on law and medicine shows a misunderstanding of the nature of the teaching profession.

Teachers' knowledge as craft knowledge

Another way of understanding how teachers build and define their professional knowledge, which has a strong academic root in theory building, is by reference to either craft-based or arts-based traditions (Shimahara, 1998; Lupton, 2013). This way of understanding teachers' professional knowledge has heavily influenced approaches to teacher training in England and Wales in recent years, which have progressively moved towards a training process akin to an apprenticeship model. It also accounts for the way in which once teachers are trained, ongoing professional knowledge is built via accumulated experience (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Oancea, 2014). Significantly this language of craft, apprenticeship and learning through mentorship – also connects the professional knowledge of teachers to that of traditional, locally-rooted and community based jobs. This may be empowering for teachers or may undervalue the complex theoretical knowledge that also underpins their expertise, depending upon how this is perceived.

According to this craft-based definition of teachers' knowledge, it is through accumulated experience that teachers are able to find solutions to the challenges that they face, whether these be issues with lesson planning or classroom management or any

other aspect of teaching (Shimahara, 1998; Frost, 2014). Experienced teachers make sense of problematic situations by bringing a vast repertoire of past experiences and similar cases to the forefront of their minds (Taber, 2009). According to this account a teacher's knowledge is not primarily gained early on in a career via access to texts and learning that are inaccessible to others. It is instead gained steadily throughout a career, through the accumulation of inter-connected experiences (Frost, 2014). These specific experiences are equally inaccessible to others but are more idiographic, more likely to be expressed in less specialist language and gained in the teacher's classroom (Nyman, 2014). However, this knowledge is still highly specialised and can only be accumulated by deeply committed professionals over an extended period of time (Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008). Such knowledge acquisition enables teachers to create better lessons and learning environments. However, it also perhaps negates the idea that teaching can be defined by a list of standards that are ticked off very early in a teachers' career.

To understand why arts and craft-based careers are useful analogies for the types of knowledge that teachers possess, a distinction needs to be made between teaching as craft and teaching as art, whilst accepting that teaching knowledge can be a union of both these types (Lupton, 2013). Craft in this case is the accumulation of a broad set of skills, whilst art is the utilisation of these in innovative and unique ways by any given teacher. Just as an experienced carpenter makes each piece in a distinct way based on prior experience, so does a teacher when designing lessons (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012). As each challenge is resolved, the store of accumulated expertise and depth of knowledge is extended. This is also why knowledge with its implications of continual growth, rather than expertise which implies a moment of completion, may be more appropriate when defining teachers' professional knowledge (Van Velzen, 2012).

According to an arts-based analogy specifically, the knowledge of teachers is rarely directly replicated, as the moment of making such knowledge concrete is also a moment of individual creativity (Oleson & Hora, 2014). Artists are interested in other artists' work because of the creative discourse that is enabled by seeing and discussing it, not because they intend to replicate it entirely. Therefore, whereas in other fields such as medicine an exact equivalent case informs the way to address the next, in teaching, the myriad range of similar classroom experiences informs later decisions. However, this knowledge is used far more flexibly; a different setting is not simply advantageous or disadvantageous but leads to different but equally valid decisions (Gun, 2014).

To some extent, these interlinking definitions of professional knowledge would also be appropriate when defining experienced professionals in the traditional professions of law and medicine, which were placed in opposition to teachers' knowledge earlier. However this use of stored experiential knowledge may function at a higher

level in teaching (Frost, 2014), as law is bounded by more rigidly formalised and highly constrained rules of interaction within the various settings of the police station, courtroom or tribunal, while medicine is similarly bounded by rigidly set procedures (Kuper & D'Eon, 2011). If this is the case, then it is also possible for proponents of this viewpoint to argue that the knowledge of teachers, which once a teacher is qualified is built experientially, is potentially a more sophisticated form of knowledge than the procedural knowledge of other professions and is worth understanding in a distinct way, one that perhaps cannot be defined by lists of codified standards (Eraut, 2007; Frost, 2015).

These models discussed above, though are not a complete account, for whilst they may be a convincing way of explaining the nature of teachers' knowledge, it poses challenges for understanding the nature of the communities that they belong to and ways in which teachers' communicate this knowledge. This is because it is in short possible for crafts people or artists to develop their skills largely in isolation from each other.

Teachers knowledge as discourse

One way of understanding the knowledge communities that are formed by teachers is that knowledge is present in the dialogue between teachers but is activated in the creative process of teaching. This connection between knowledge sharing and community building has been particularly explored by writers writing within a teacher leadership perspective. The dialogue, between teachers, reveals teachers' stories and thus the know-why behind their teaching practices (Zangori & Forbes, 2013), which in turn boosts innovation and resilience – qualities teachers need to lead changes (Frost, 2012). Together, conversations between teachers may empower collective efficacy as a professional community. According to this perspective one way to further this potential would be for teachers to share reflections but without an expectation of necessarily directly sharing practice.

Shared reflection has entered the public and political discourse on teachers' knowledge in England partly via the teaching standards for England and Wales. An ability to reflect on practice is one of the teaching standards. This movement into the public discourse has tended to emphasise the possibility of reflection to facilitate concrete change (Menter, 2009). In relation to this a strong case can be made that all professional reflection by teachers is unprocessed action research (McNiff, 2010). This codified emphasis on reflection within the Teaching Standards for England and Wales has caused some controversy due to the difficulty in measuring such an elusive concept (McIntyre, 2005). Reflection is often a positive personal experience but also potentially narrow. It may not necessarily lead to personal or professional development unless directly linked to further frameworks and tools facilitating teacher leadership (Frost, 2015). However, if it is also linked to a sharing of ideas via storytelling, which in turn

links to the co-construction of new approaches, the needed aspects of agency and leadership may emerge (Frost 2012).

Processes of public reflection have also frequently been linked to the goal of exchanging teaching strategies. However, it may be that teachers do not need to agree on the best teaching strategies in order for their own teaching to improve. Indeed, this expectation may be rather simplistic (Underwood & Joshevska, 2019). It may be that they have articulated these stories and their own beliefs to each other to enable new but idiographic understandings to be developed (Elliott, 2009). Sharing experiences, shared via stories about teaching, can potentially achieve a variety of goals aside from the direct adopting of classroom strategies from others, including building self-efficacy, reinforcing a sense of belonging to a professional community and inspiring teachers to innovate and lead change (Frost, 2013).

Other models of teachers' professional knowledge have pinpointed the different forms of knowledge that teachers may acquire. Shulman (2013) built and refined a typology that defines teachers' knowledge according to three types. These are pedagogical knowledge, subject content knowledge, and contextual knowledge. This way of identifying different forms of knowledge is significant because it distinguishes between teachers' factual content knowledge and a simple knowledge of strategies, both of which can be easily shared and more complex forms of knowledge which cannot be. The tacit knowledge of how to teach well in a specific context, which Shulman describes as 'wisdom of practice', is much harder to transfer to others (Dogan, Pringle & Mesa, 2016).

In the increasingly globalised world that we live in, the sharing and co-construction of knowledge among teachers has expanded to an international level. Communication is at the heart of sharing and co-constructing knowledge. However, this is not always a straightforward matter when teachers engage with teachers from other countries. To further understand how teachers share knowledge, in the second half of this article we look at some issues that emerge when sharing knowledge across national boundaries.

Part 2: sharing knowledge between countries

There are a wide variety of different policy approaches regarding the support given to teachers to enable them to work together across borders. This is partly but not entirely dependent upon a country's financial ability to support such processes. However, within that caveat there are still significant differences. The countries with the strongest traditions of governments enabling teachers to work with other teachers internationally tend to be the Anglophone West and the Far East (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). This

has included for several decades especially Japan but now increasingly includes China, Singapore and others from among the emerging economies of Asia (Bray, 2014). Elsewhere, support for teachers working with colleagues from other countries tends to be more limited or to be focused on those working in education other than teaching, such as academics or policy makers, rather than teachers themselves (Santoro, 2014).

As has been mentioned above, this is often simply due to funding, with wealthier countries being more able to support teachers in engaging in such processes. However, differences between the support provided by wealthier countries can also in some cases, such as regarding the United Kingdom or Japan, be interpreted through a post-colonialist, historical, perspective. According to this account the countries that are most active in supporting international networking between teachers tend to also be those that exported their form of schooling throughout their worldwide empire during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and in doing so established a self-perception as exporters of educational expertise (Foster, Addy & Samoff, 2012). This historical legacy may mean that these countries are prepared to support international dialogue between teachers. However, this may primarily be because the policy-makers and teachers who come from them still perceive themselves in this way, as exporters of educational knowledge and practices (Rappleye, 2012; Welch, 2013).

Perhaps, teachers in these countries for deep-rooted cultural and historical reasons as well as financial ones are seen as leaders of educational change. These may also be countries where despite local concerns expressed by teachers, teaching is already a relatively high status and autonomous profession. Teachers do not always have the same status in the world outside these countries, particularly in less economically developed countries (Watt et al., 2012). In contrast to this, countries outside the developed West and the wealthier countries of East Asia are often thirsty to try to import practice from countries that are perceived to be more advanced in terms of the quality of schooling (Oyewole, 2016). Consequently, practice is sometimes imported wholesale too rapidly, leading to decline in teacher self-efficacy, or at least, not the improvement expected by the schoolsor government concerned (Burroughs, 2015; Steiner-Khamsi, 2016; Joshevska & Kirandziska, 2017).

This clearly raises issues regarding the possibility of recognising or creating a perception of international community amongst teachers, since such a culture would need to be based on a presumption of equality between all members participating in it. If there were to be perceived inequality between the professional status of the teachers who are interacting; if teachers from more developed nations find themselves in dialogue with non-teachers; or if teachers from outside England have profoundly different goals from partnering and networking with colleagues from other countries, these may all prove to be problematic in either identifying or building an international community of knowledge sharing professionals.

As the issues of teachers' dialogue when crossing national boundaries have now been clarified, the next question is: what specific kinds of knowledge do they share? The two main categories this article analyses are: teaching strategies and teachers' values. These sharings, however, do not exist without their problems, which will be further discussed in the next section.

Sharing teaching strategies

Recent literature published by the British Council (2016), which is the largest organisation in the United Kingdom facilitating international networking opportunities among teachers, suggests two reasons for teachers engaging in working with colleagues from other countries. The first of these is exchanging teaching ideas, the second to develop concepts of human rights and global understanding amongst both their colleagues and their students. These two ideas are then linked with an ideal of using education to develop critical thinking and then further related to increased democratisation. However, all these goals become problematic if economic differences are accounted for. This is because it may be difficult for meaningful relationships to emerge and a community built, if one country sees itself as leading the discussion and as having expertise to export but not import, and equally if teachers from different countries do not feel able to contribute as equals.

There is a considerable debate over whether a search for transferable teaching strategies from more developed countries by teachers or policy-makers in less developed countries is a positive or achievable goal. This critique typically questions whether, what are frequently defined as, Western teaching styles (Tan & Chua; 2015), are necessarily appropriate for non-Western cultures with different norms of behaviour in social and generational terms and even whether this process of export is part of a broader neo-liberal agenda (Sikoyo, 2010).

These 'Western' approaches to teaching are often described as tending to emphasise: child-centred strategies, project work and the testing of critical thinking (Burroughs, 2010; Bignold & Gayton, 2010). This concern that Western teaching methods are simply often impractical and inappropriate for developing countries, where the political culture is different and where simple issues such as class size and lack of resources present specific challenges, is one that is shared by a significant number of writers (Bajaj, 2010; Osei 2010; Westrick, 2013).

In relation to this there may also often be an economic motive for encouraging the export of teaching approaches and the accompanying materials of delivery such as textbooks and exams, which means that the educational value and potential impact are oversold (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). In countries that are in receipt of aid this may include pressure to reshape the national education system to fit with the perceived educational values of the donor country (Grødeland, 2010), even when this does not

take into account local circumstances (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). These will typically be more developed countries, such as in the case of Macedonia where specifically the countries of the European Union and United States of America have both funded and re-shaped the education system (Joshevska & Kirandziska, 2017).

Even the definition of what distinctly Western educational approaches are is a contested concept. Steiner-Khamsi (2013) describes how it is often testing regimes rather than pedagogical approaches that are exported from the West into less developed countries. Furthermore, whilst a testing regime may be imported, the accompanying teaching approaches may not be. This can then lead to a disconnect and the subsequent disempowering of teachers and disadvantaging of students. A focus on testing and international comparison can also distract from a meaningful dialogue about teaching (Joshevska & Kirandziska, 2017). The contested nature of what exactly Westernised strategies even are: whether when exported they inappropriately emphasise child-centred-ness or conversely rigorous standardised testing clearly illustrates the possible problems of importing teaching strategies.

These critical perspectives described above are not necessarily universally accepted though (Nordtvelt, 2010) and indeed many of the writers discussed earlier present nuanced and multi-faceted accounts rather than being dogmatic, illustrating the complexity of this area. One positive response to these challenges may be to suggest that teacher networking with its emphasis on smaller scale change and on building a community of professional equals is a more practical and positive way than other methods to build international relationships. This could be without the risk of accusations of neo-colonialism or paternalism that accompany larger scale interventions (Undeerwood & Joshevska, 2019).

It is also possible that in recent years the situation in terms of the borrowing of practice has changed. There seems at present to be a greater willingness than in the past for Western countries to look to borrow practice from the more developed countries of East Asia, including specifically: Japan, Singapore, Korea and some specific regions of China. This has partly been in response to successes by these countries on international comparative league tables (Huang, Su & Xu, 2014). However, this change has also been challenged as being not reflective of an authentic desire among Western countries to learn from other countries. Instead it has been claimed that these borrowings come from politicians with solutions already in mind looking for international justification. These concerns have been identified by various writers, writing at differing points over the past fifteen years (Chabbott & Elliott, 2003; Baker, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2016).

Regardless of the depth and authenticity of the process of seeking teaching strategies from other countries, England now seems to be increasingly keen to learn from other countries, including former colonies. This suggests that in relation to some

countries at least, currently neo-colonialist models need to be nuanced before they are applicable.

Sharing purpose and values

Forms of knowledge that may be shared when teachers work together across national boundaries include values, civic goals and pedagogical ideals. There is a long history in England and the USA of the process of linking with education systems of other countries, whether this be via research or via projects such as teacher exchange, being connected to highly idealistic goals regarding the building of a better society rather than relating to the classroom directly (Masemann & Epstein, 2008).

The idealism contained within much international engagement in the field of education is reflected in academic writing and in the literature produced by organisations that support international comparative research in education (Dale, 2015). The initial two commitments agreed at the first meeting of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies in 1970, were 'the internationalization of man and cooperation between cultures' (Masemann & Epstein, 2008, p. 19). Meanwhile, at the first meeting of the British section of the Comparative Education Society of Europe, later to become the British Association of International and Comparative Education, 'little attention was given to the possibility of improving the United Kingdom's system as a result of comparative studies' (Sutherland, Watson & Crossley, 2008, p. 158).

The following terms have dominated language regarding international teacher networking, within England and the USA: 'international understanding' in the 1950s, 'development education' with its implications of supporting poorer countries in the 1960s and 70s, and 'multicultural education' and 'peace education' up until the 2000s (Fujikane, 2003). All of these imply a need for these relatively wealthier countries to understand the educational systems of the poorer countries of the world for idealistic rather than practical reasons, as a window into societal understanding rather than into the nitty-gritty of classroom strategies.

The aforementioned terms also imply that one significant goal of people working in the field of education would be transferring Western democratic values. Although Fujikane's (2003) historical account is now somewhat dated, it is noticeable that the largest United Kingdom based organisation involved in enabling international networks of teachers still explicitly affirms that its goal is in part to use education as a vehicle for promulgating civic values of democratic participation (the British Council, 2016). The implications of this in terms of inhibiting or enabling the emergence of a sense of community amongst teachers from different countries is significant. Discussion regarding political or civic engagement could potentially be a driver in building such a community. However, if teachers from one country perceive themselves as having, lessons to teach, this could also potentially inhibit this process.

An idealistic and goal driven approach is also reflected in the British Council's descriptions of its various teacher partnership projects. The most frequently used phrase on the British Council's web pages, dedicated to teacher partnership projects (2016) is 'global citizenship' with implications of goals beyond and separate to developing classroom strategies. However, the picture is also not quite as one dimensional as this. The case studies of excellent networking practice contained on the British Council website do include examples of sharing ideas related to lesson content and of dialogue that reflects the shared professional interests of teachers working together. It is also important not to be too cynical about these approaches. An attempt to transfer strategies rapidly could have as many pitfalls as a shared conversation about culture and values.

Equally it can be argued that teachers are so fundamental in building civic society that it is only to be expected that their conversations will be wider than addressing teaching strategies alone and will inevitably involve a civic or political dimension (Dale, 2015). The value of developing cultural understanding itself, even on a small scale, should not be treated disdainfully, especially when such understanding is an equal dialogue free from any possible accusation of neo-colonialism (Arnove, 2013).

Thus far we have largely discussed issues that may arise because of significant differences between countries. However, there is a significant body of literature that problematises knowledge exchange across national boundaries in an alternative way. This research instead suggests that teachers could expect to find a high degree of commonality in the practice, experience and professional identity of colleagues from other countries. If this is the case it is possible that one reason why relatively little practice is transferred between countries is simply that there is no more to import or export from the Anglophone West, East Asia, Finland or indeed any other country, than there is from the school or even classroom next door (Manzon, 2014). As Bray (2014) argues, it is important not to assume that a school is representative of a nation or a nation representative of a region, a perspective reflected in the Bray cube model (2014), which emphasises how differences in practice can be as distinct within a school or between schools in the same country as they can be between schools or teachers from different countries.

Relatively few articles are published in English language journals regarding detailed classroom strategy within countries other than those it is presumed that the United Kingdom or USA can learn from (Foster, Addy & Samoff, 2012). If little research is done into teaching strategies, then possibly there is no effective context in which governments or other organisations can be certain that strategies are being imported into. This therefore risks a potentially paternalistic and impractical approach, whereby expertise is assumed only to exist outside the less developed country, when in fact it may already be present in the country that strategies are being imported into (Westrick, 2013).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that teachers' knowledge is a nuanced concept, and thus, conceptualising the sharing of this knowledge demands rigorous research. This paper, in short, hopes to have somewhat analysed the depth of this matter: what teachers' knowledge actually means in itself, what knowledge teachers share when crossing national borders, and the sophisticated issues associated with it. Despite this complexity, sharing knowledge globally is a rewarding challenge. Therefore, attempts should be made by researchers and policy makers to enhance communication and partnership among teachers worldwide so that internationally education can share a higher level of quality for future generations to come. It is among engaged teachers that practice meets theory in concrete terms. It may well be that whether locally or internationally teacher networking is the most sophisticated form of knowledge exchange within education.

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