Talking Like a Teacher: Identifying as a teacher and enhancing capacity building potential

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For many International Pre-Service Teachers (IPSTs) Australian classroom culture is a shock. Behaviours, such as children out of their seats, questioning the teacher, talking during class, not always listening and being loud and seemingly abusive do not match the IPSTs cultural perception of teachers, students, classrooms or schools. As a result many IPSTs fail their mandatory school placements. Talking Like a Teacher (piloted in Semester 1 2013) was designed to help assist international students to acculturate as teachers to the Australian (specifically Darwin) school environment prior to their first placement. Introduction of this program emphasises the capacity-building potential of immigrant teachers, since their status as teachers makes them catalysts between the dominant Anglo-Australian education community and their own minority communities. Further, immigrant teachers are models of successful professionalism for first and second-generation children of their minority communities. Anecdotal evidence is that Talking Like a Teacher successfully aided acculturation. This paper reports on a qualitative study that evaluates the project. Audiotaped interviews with program participants and school mentors were analysed and conclusions drawn which highlight elements of a program that better prepares IPSTs for mandated practicum.

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