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Academic mobility: three cases of prospective pedagogues

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Abstract. Academic mobility is a powerful tool for prospective pedagogues seeking academic development, assisting young specialists in developing their pedagogical skills and abilities, immense professional experience, as well as in personal improvement and mentality expansion which are critical for their future careers. The paper examines three cases of prospective pedagogues and discusses the benefits and drawbacks they encountered during academic mobility in foreign countries. However, while conducting study, we discovered numerous challenges, both in terms of scheduling travel to a foreign country and in terms of complications encountered when the prospective pedagogue arrived. Consequently, the authors attempted to present the solutions to the problem by analyzing background and obtained data. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used, as well as a coding scheme for the gathered data; additionally, samples were selected at random on a voluntary basis. At the conclusion of the work, various implications and recommendations for future papers are offered.

Keywords: academic mobility, prospective pedagogue, academic and professional development, benefits and drawbacks, implications.

Introduction

Nowadays work competitiveness is increasing not only in our country, but also in the international area. As a result, academic mobility is one of the crucial elements in educational area because the requirements to prospective specialists are increasing day by day. With help of academic mobility prospective pedagogues may strengthen their professional, personal qualities as well as researching skills in a new social, educational environment. Academic mobility program gives the prospective pedagogues an opportunity to gain an international experience and "also contributes to the development goals of both sending and receiving countries" (Lee et al., 2025). President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in his speech at the meeting of the National Council for Science and Technology outlined that "Creation, innovation, knowledge and dedication to science are the main qualities that a truly advanced country needs" and pointed out that for knowledge and science international advanced experience is necessity

like air, and it is not for nothing that outstanding personalities of our nation were engaged in education. President also stressed that "It is crucial to create conditions for talented and capable youth to engage in science" (Tokayev, 2024). Gaining experience begins with the academic mobility application procedure, since applicants must meet the requirements of several higher educational institutions, not only of the sending university but also the receiving university. It includes participants' knowledge level, language proficiency, personal qualities, and "strengths and abilities in educational, professional and project-based activities" (Faizullaeva, 2025). Higher educational institutions additionally need to send students to academic mobility programs in order for those prospective specialists' competencies to grow significantly. Furthermore, academic mobility, particularly external academic mobility, enables future professionals to realize "language and scientific training; participation in conferences" (Khabibullina et.al., 2016) and improves the cultural competences, personal skills, and employability of prospective pedagogues, allowing students to develop varied abilities in molding opportunities and professional situations (Bradly, Iskhakova, 2023). However, despite the numerous benefits of academic mobility, there are still obstacles to participate in academic mobility programs for university students in our country, including prospective pedagogues. Furthermore, experts feel that students' "fear, self-confidence due to insufficient professional knowledge and skills, lack of foreign language knowledge, intimidating selection procedures and interviews" (Juškevičienė et.al., 2022). As a result, this research investigates the importance, benefits, motivational reasons for participating in academic mobility, as well as the problems and implications for prospective pedagogues. The research questions for this paper are as follows: the first research question is "Which advantages or obstacles might prospective pedagogues encounter concerning academic mobility?" and the second research question is "What are the significant implications of academic mobility for prospective pedagogues?".

Materials and methods

The case study technique was used to determine the significance of academic mobility, motivational factors for participation, obstacles, and consequences for prospective pedagogues. For this, we examined three cases and specific examples of academic mobility among prospective pedagogues. The first stage aimed to select samples randomly who took part in academic mobility programs in different countries. Samples were selected according to their academic programs diversity. The second stage aimed to gain a thorough understanding of participants' unique experiences with academic mobility, as well as to examine geographical and cultural disparities between different education systems. Interview consisted of two stages. First stage Journal 1, was asked to do in written form before interview. Journal 1 contained several questions about personal information about participants, namely gender, age, English proficiency level, academic mobility country, duration of mobility program and reasons of participating in academic mobility program, participants' motivations for engaging in mobility programs. In the second stage it was conducted semi-structured interview with participants about the experiences or perceptions of academic mobility, perceived benefits, challenges encountered, and future career goals. The interview consisted of 5 basic questions, we asked generating questions connected the Journal 1 to identify the reasons and to obtain more expanded answers. The next stage is to analyze the student responses, discuss, and give some implications of academic mobility for prospective pedagogues. Participants were picked from students at a nearby institution. The selection criteria were to focus on students majoring

in pedagogical specialties, i.e. prospective teachers, who have participated in various academic mobility programs in different countries. Individual, in-person, and online inter-views were organized on a voluntary basis. Students chose anonymous names, thus we titled Cases 1, 2, and 3 following the primary method of this work. All individuals volunteered to engage in the interview after obtaining prior written informed consent. The research method was conducted with complete confidentiality and anonymity. To process the data, we used qualitative and quantitative approaches, coding, and comparison methods. The semi-structured interview's outcome was determined using the thematic analysis method (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). We recorded the respondents' responses, printed them on paper, and used pencil-and-paper coding techniques (Rubin, 2012). All of the responses were classified thematically and divided into benefits, problems, and implications.

Academic mobility is important for prospective pedagogues' growth since it exposes them to a variety of curriculum approaches, system of education, and cultural viewpoints. Academic mobility is defined as the transfer of students or researchers for a specific academic period (including academic or work experience), typically a semester or academic year, to another higher educational institution (domestic or abroad) to conduct study or research (Kossybayeva, Is-sayeva, 2024). The experience is crucial for developing prospective pedagogues' adaptability, cross-cultural communication skills, and a more comprehensive awareness about worldwide changes in education. Kadirszova (2024) points out that, training students for academic mobility allows them to be competitive and movable in the labor market while also receiving professional knowledge in line with current national and worldwide trends. Thus, academic mobility provides prospective pedagogues with vast experiences which improve their educational perspectives, pedagogical skills, and cultural competencies (Diem et al., 2023). According to researchers' studies, the most important and beneficial aspect of academic mobility for prospective educators is that "an international student mobility and scientific collaboration have a positive and significant correlation, leading to greater knowledge production and collaborative output" (Hou et al., 2023). Academic mobility promotes prospective pedagogues' professional development by allowing them to interact with different international peers and educators, as well as different educational systems, to learn new teaching strategies, innovative teaching practices, and a more inclusive approach, which they can then apply in their future classrooms, profiting students from different socioeconomic categories. This exchange of ideas may motivate prospective pedagogues to implement new approaches that are more effective in meeting the demands of their future students. Academic mobility helps them improve their pedagogical skills and gain a competitive advantage in the labor market (Rustemova et al., 2020). Prospective pedagogues can display adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and a global perspective, qualities that can be improved through academic mobility. Experience in foreign country allow prospective pedagogues immerse in a new different environment and grasp new knowledge and professional skills also they perceive "intercultural competence" (Pylväs, Nokelainen, 2021). Academic mobility has an important motivating effect on pupils' language skills as well. Academic mobility programs frequently require participants to work in a different language. This encounter greatly increases prospective pedagogues' language proficiency "through media education technologies, fostering motivation, communicative competence, and readiness for foreign educational environments" (Wanget al., 2017). Language proficiency is widely recognized as a crucial talent in today's rapidly interdependent globe. Academic mobility allows prospective

pedagogues to develop worldwide interactions with peers, instructors, investigators, and organizations. Networking worldwide provides prospective pedagogues with "valuable support from foreign partners and mentors" (Diem et al., 2023), as well as the opportunity to "find a community of friends" and receive "personal benefits such as creativity, openness to diversity, and interaction with others" (Ruste-mova et al., 2020). These relationships can lead to joint projects, further research alternatives, improved employment chances, supervision, as well as access to an abundance of sources to help them advance their professional skills as teachers.

While academic mobility provides with many advantages, it also raises problems that prospective pedagogues must overcome. Previously we mentioned that some challenges while participating in academic mobility program start with application process at home university (Faizullaeva, 2025), (Juškevičienė et.al., 2022). Table 1 presents the prerequisites for applicants to the Academic Mobility competition at Semey Medical University. Overcoming these kind of challenges (passing IELTS, conducting in-person interviews) have to flow gradually and with the assistance of mentors.

Table 1. Prerequisites for applicants to the Academic Mobility program

No	Requirements
1	3d year students
2	No academic debts
3	No disciplinary violations
4	Transcript with current grades (GPA at least 2.67)
5	High level of English proficiency (IELTS certificate 5.5 and above or the test confirmation of B2 level)
6	Certificates (prizes at republic/international level), diplomas, letters of gratitude (if available)
7	Oral interviewing

Source: <https://smu.edu.kz/ru/2024/08/21/akademicheskaya-mobilnost-4/>

When moving to a new nation, challenges include adjusting to different educational systems, overcoming language hurdles, and navigating cultural differences. Prospective pedagogues may confront language competency issues, limiting their academic and social experiences in a foreign nation. Adapting to different speaking styles might take a significant amount of time and effort. Also it poses "fears of possible difficulties in adapting when moving to another country, as well as reluctance to break up with family or close friends and insufficient financial support" (Juškevičienė et.al., 2022), "pressing issues" (Faizullaeva, 2025) and "cultural norms" (Diem, 2023). Adapting to a new culture can be challenging as well. Acclimatization may cause emotions of loneliness or homesickness, affecting students' academic performance and overall well-being. According to Diem (2023), "time management" can also be an issue for students. Specifically, due to the "different perspectives and significant differences between the internal structure of our country's educational system and the foreign education system, a student of a higher educational institution may not be prepared for an outstanding foreign academic mobility program" (Kadirsizova, 2025). One of notable challenges is differences in educational

qualifications and systems across countries which complicate the "recognition of student achievements" (Brkić et.al, 2024). Despite these challenges, local researchers are concerned about risks associated with "intellectual immigration" during academic mobility (Ualtayeva et al., 2025). Regarding the difficulties that students face during academic migration, it is critical to conduct a comprehensive "review of existing policies and institutional adaptations" (Nilsson, Westin, 2024). The challenges encountered in theoretical analysis allows to discuss the issues of three cases of prospective pedagogues of this paper and offer some specific recommendations to enhance academic mobility experience.

Results and discussion

As a result of the research we present three specific cases and attempt to answer the research questions: 1. "Which advantages or obstacles might prospective pedagogues encounter concerning academic mobility?" 2. "What are the significant implications of academic mobility for prospective pedagogues?". We also conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with prospective pedagogues who had participated in international mobility programs in various countries. The interview focused on students' personal thoughts, the transforming consequences of mobility, and professional ramifications, and it included qualitative data. The thematically classified responses were divided into benefits, challenges, and implications. After analyzing and classifying the responses from three cases, we conclude that the participation of prospective pedagogues-students in academic mobility program is undoubtedly beneficial to the home university as well as the entire country's educational system. The analysis of Journal 1 questions showed important expectations from academic mobility program. We highlighted the most frequent key ideas from participants mentions: personal growth, career advancement, professional development, language acquisition, diverse educational system, communication skills, networking, international collaboration, cultural immersion, traveling.

According to the results of thematic coding of all three cases prospective pedagogues make four basic benefits: 1. Teaching skills; 2. New knowledge, new skills; 3. Personal qualities; 4. Global competencies (Figure 1).

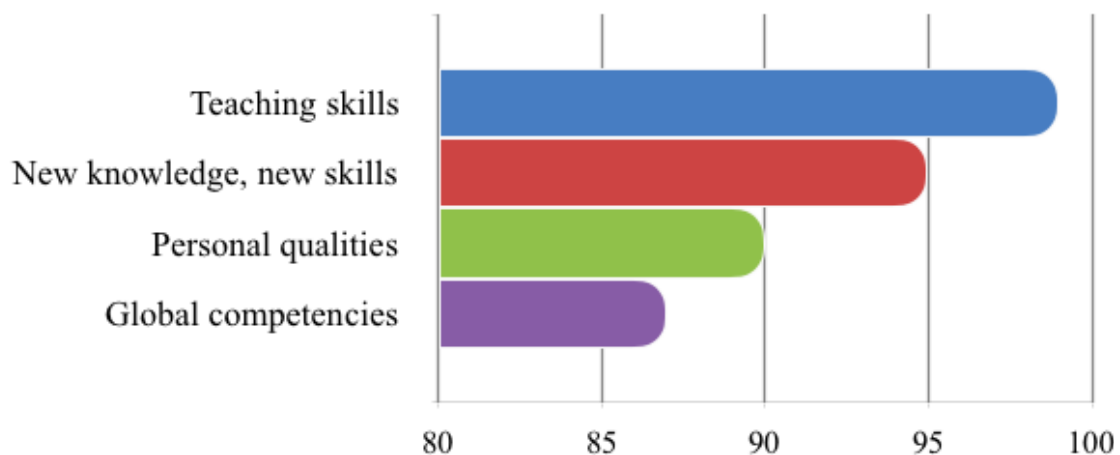


Figure 1. Results of thematic coding: four basic benefits

1. Academic mobility enhances teaching skills. According to respondents, the most significant contribution of academic mobility for prospective pedagogues is that it aids in the integration of new teaching strategies and a new teaching culture into our educational system, broadening future teachers' knowledge of innovative teaching methods and best practices, as well as pedagogical techniques across various educational systems. Respondents described this issue as follows: through academic mobility, a prospective pedagogue learns and absorbs all fresh information and skills from foreign instructors as well as their own actions.

Case 1: Throughout the academic program, I attempted to learn and experience not only the materials offered in our classrooms (I have a large number of guiding materials that I must go over repeatedly), but also their teachers' teaching approaches and styles. How they educate, how they engage with us and the students, how they check homework, etc. So I plan to apply what I've learned in my teaching practice in future.

2. The second highlighted benefit is that academic mobility provides opportunities for new information and skills. It fosters the acquisition of new knowledge and research skills. Academic mobility provides opportunity for collaboration with worldwide professors, professionals, and peers.

Case 2: After experiencing academic mobility, I realized that understanding of the subject I intend to teach will come first. As a teacher, I must be aware and continue to pursue information throughout my life because science, education, and pedagogical practices are constantly evolving. Yes, this program helped me gain new knowledge in my subject area, as well as new insights and understanding as a prospective teacher, and yes, new practices. I could compare the educational systems in my home country and the host country.

Case 1: My best success, my best benefit is that I had an opportunity to take classes from outstanding professors, to ask questions, even tried to write a paper and take part in the conference. It was huge experience for me, now I am not only a future teacher, also I am really interested in doing a research.

3. Personal qualities. Academic mobility enables prospective pedagogues to become more adaptable, culturally aware. Experiencing other cultures and learning contexts helps prospective pedagogues develop empathy and adaptability, all of which are required qualities for prospective pedagogues. It promotes cross-cultural understanding.

Case 3: Academic mobility, in my opinion, completely transforms the visiting student's perspective. Yes, for greater outcomes, of course. Because, as for me, I transitioned to a whole new community with no compatriots, parents, or group mates. I also had to deal with a new educational community, new professors and students, and a new culture. All of them develop the individual and provide fresh experiences. As a prospective teacher, I believe I must seek out new experiences.

Case 2: People are very open-minded, easy-going there. I am an introvert by nature, but I became an extrovert somehow.

4. Global competencies. Equipped to work in a variety of settings, meeting the growing demand for globally competent instructors and learning new technology.

Case 3: I recognize that the world is changing every day. I am aware that children are highly bright; they can open ChatGpt or any other site on the internet and obtain an answer to their inquiry. I am considering the role of a teacher in the future. Also, consider the interaction between a teacher and a student. That is why we must be prepared to work with a variety of children and settings.

The results of coding revealed the most frequent issues reported by participants as follows: Problem 1. Language barriers; Problem 2. Educational and cultural adjustment; Problem 3. Financial constraints; Problem 4. Inadequate research skills. The detected issues are demonstrated in Figure 2.

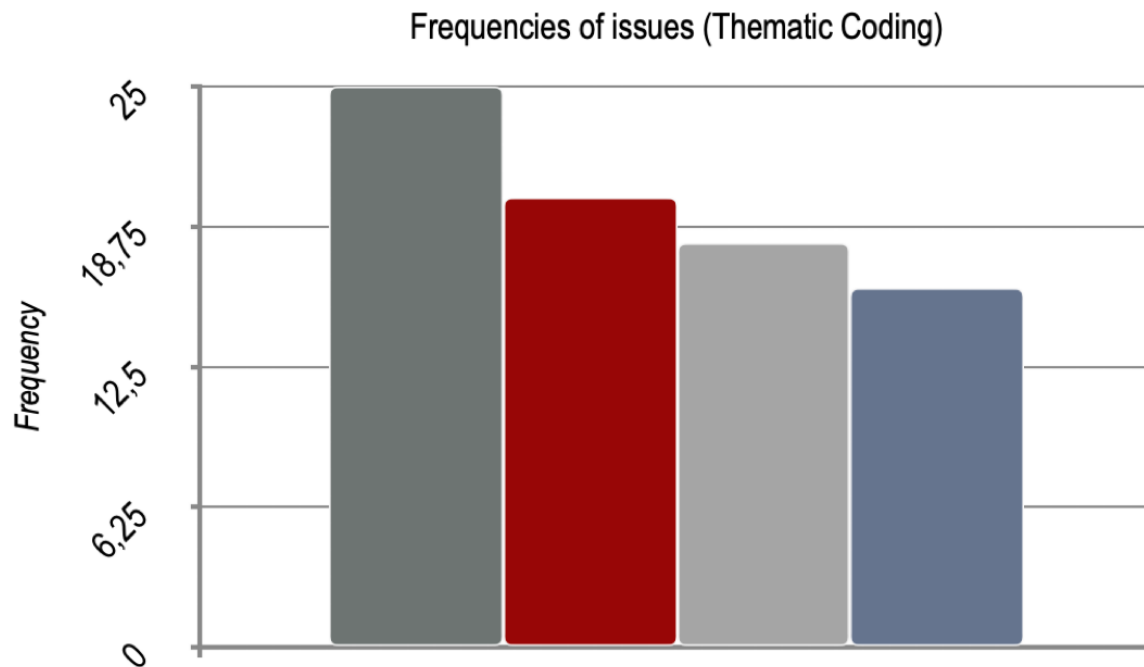


Figure 2. The most frequent challenges

Participants identified language barriers as the first and most significant issue for them. They observed that a lack of language ability makes it difficult to understand class materials and debates within the academic community, as well as to comprehend important information when dealing with native lecturers and researchers. The second challenge is highlighted as educational and cultural adjustment. Students emphasized the differences in teaching styles, methodologies, teachers' approaches to student tasks, and the overall educational system. For example, one participant stated that "Teachers never 'force' you to do tasks or be active; everything is your responsibility". To the question, "Why do you think so?" What's the difference?" he/she answered: "In my experience, teachers usually take the dominant position in the classroom, but their teachers never do". In terms of financial constraints, two examples reported that they did not have any problems because the programs covered all expenses, including air travel, housing, university tuition, and so on. However, one participant had to cover all expenses except the university price. Another problem that students confront is a lack of primary research skills when they arrive at host universities. Students also stated that when they return, they do not share their experiences with friends or lecturers; instead, they continue their studies at the local institution. They do not make any presentations at any seminars though they have much to share with their peers and lecturers.

The findings of a prior research of three cases show that, while there are advantages and disadvantages, academic mobility for prospective pedagogues has significant implications for

their future employment. Among them are policy de-velopment, institutional support, research encouragement, and experience-sharing support. Overall visual results of the paper with out-coming implications is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Benefits, challenges and significant implications

Benefits	Challenges		Implications:	
1. Teaching skills; 2. New knowledge, new skills; 3. Personal qualities; 4. Global competencies.	1. Language barriers; 2. Educational and cultural adjustment; 3. Financial constraints; 4. Inadequate research skills.			1. Policy development; 2. Institutional support; 3. Research encour-agement; 4. Experience-sharing support.

Policy Development: The findings of the student survey underscore the need for education policy to establish supporting systems that allow academic mobili-ty for prospective pedagogues. This includes dispersing funds and forming col-laborations with international institutions. **Institutional support:** Higher educa-tional institutions should support and integrate academic mobility into educa-tional programs of the university. The support system should include mentor-ship, preliminary preparation of prospective pedagogues to academic mobility program. **Training** might include introduction to foreign university's system of education, curriculum, community etc. One more important, needed assistance is foreign language teaching. University should encourage prospective pedagogues to learn language deeply to improve their proficiency. **Encouragement for Re-search:** One of the challenges prospective pedagogues mentioned in the interview-ing process is lack of research skills. Because the profession of teaching needs creativity, continually seeking new ideas, examining students and teaching tech-niques, prospective pedagogues must be able to conduct research. As a result, potential pedagogues must possess basic research abilities. A student with pri-mary research skills will only benefit from academic mobility abroad. **Support of sharing experiences:** prospective pedagogues should be encouraged by their home university or other higher educational institutions to share their experiences upon their return in the form of a poster or oral presentation. University should pro-vide opportunities prospective pedagogues present their results at seminars, meetings, round tables, sessions, so other peers could gain some experience and motivation as well. **Semi-structured interview** and its results with three Cases demonstrate the positive outcomes of the research. We evidence that coding re-sults show the dominating position of academic mobility benefits. Students, par-ticularly prospective pedagogues, learned valuable teaching skills. Students could gain teaching skills at home country at university and in practice too, however academic mobility student obtains new, "international experience, exchange ex-perience, study and work in a new environment" (Kossybayeva, Issayeva, 2024) which are invaluable. Respondents emphasized the importance of experience, particularly research skills gained throughout the academic mobility program. Researchers may argue that research skills are not required for teachers, yet the teaching profession necessitates ongoing self-education and progress. Cross-cultural knowledge, adaptability, and empathy are essential qualities for teachers. Consequently, all respondents mentioned that they improved their personal qual-ities

during academic mobility program. Global competencies are necessary tools for teachers and they have "to equip themselves with knowledge, skills, and qualities required to keep pace with the fast-changing world" (Em, 2021). Moreover, during academic mobility students acquired many professional competencies and skills, that they inspired to improve "relationship between a teacher and pupil" (Case 1). Respondents, despite passing the IELTS exam, struggled to communicate well in academic language and had cultural and financial obstacles. Overall, three cases show that, despite significant hurdles, the benefits of the academic mobility program for aspiring teachers outweigh the drawbacks. The key consequences of academic mobility for aspiring pedagogues include policy development, institutional support, research stimulation, and possibilities for sharing experiences, all of which aid in the resolution of specific academic mobility difficulties.

Conclusion

Academic mobility is essential contribution to the development of future specialists. It is especially crucial investment to professional advancement of prospective pedagogues. Because academic mobility promotes prospective pedagogues' professional, personal qualities and global competencies. All of these benefits are proved in findings of this paper. The research examined three situations in which prospective pedagogues participated in academic mobility programs in foreign nations. The semi-structured interview was organized and the results were coded and analyzed. The findings of semi-structured interview showed benefits and challenges faced by three cases during academic mobility and answered the first research question. As a result of coding we identified the following benefits: teaching skills; new knowledge, new skills; improvement of personal qualities; acquisition of global competencies. At the same time it should be noted that despite those benefits, there are still some notable drawbacks, like language barriers; educational and cultural adjustment; financial constraints; inadequate research skills. The paper discussed several implications that could lead to the resolution of issues. Among those are the establishment of institutional support policies at home universities, the promotion of potential pedagogues to conduct research, and the support of students who participated in academic mobility programs to share their experiences with peers and teachers. As the limitations of the study should be indicated the small number of participants and volunteers who would like to become a sample of the research. This limitation is due to students' reluctance to participate in the research. The raised issue in the paper could be further developed with involving institutional policy and university samples.

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Contribution of the authors: All authors have equally contributed to the conceptualization, development and writing of the article.

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Академиялық ұтқырлық: болашақ педагогтардың үш кейсі

Аңдатпа. Академиялық ұтқырлық – болашақ мамандардың тәжірибе жинақтап, кәсіби құзыреттерін кеңейтуіне мүмкіндік беретін тиімді кәсіби даму құралы болып табылады. Мақалада болашақ мұғалімдердің академиялық ұтқырлық бағдарламаларына қатысуының маңызы мен проблемалары қарастырылып, осы тәжірибенің кәсіби даму мен педагогикалық инновациялар үшін әлеуеті атап көрсетілген. Сонымен қатар, ұтқырлық саласындағы түрлі бастамаларды зерттей отырып, болашақ мұғалімдердің әлеуетін арттыруға мүмкіндік жасайтын мәдениетаралық өзара әрекеттесудің, жетілдірілген оқыту методологияларының және коммуникациялық мүмкіндіктері қарастырылады. Болашақ педагогтардың үш жағдайы зерттеліп, шетелде академиялық ұтқырлық кезінде кездескен артықшылықтары мен кемшіліктері талқыланады. Академиялық ұтқырлық болашақ педагогтарға баға жетпес кәсіби тәжірибе, сондай-ақ жеке дамуға және ойсананың кеңеюіне мүмкіндік береді. Дегенмен, зерттеу барысында болашақ педагогтар академиялық ұтқырлықты ұйымдастыру кезінде және шетелге барған соң да қиындықтармен кездесетінін байқадық. Сондықтан авторлар мәселені шешудің жолдарын зерттеу және алынған мәліметтерді талдау арқылы ұсынуға тырысты. Жұмыста сапалық және сандық әдістер қолданылды, сондай-ақ жинақталған мәліметтерді кодтау әдісі қолданылды; сонымен қатар, зерттеуге қатысушылар ерікті түрде кездейсоқ іріктелді. Мақаланың соңында болашақ зерттеулер үшін түрлі ұсыныстар мен қорытындылар берілді.

Кілт сөздер: академиялық ұтқырлық, болашақ мұғалім, кәсіби өсу, мәдени әсер, маңыздылық, артықшылықтар, мәселелер, салдарлар.

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Академическая мобильность: три кейса будущих педагогов

Аннотация. Академическая мобильность является мощным инструментом для будущих педагогов, стремящихся к академическому развитию, помогая молодым специалистам развивать педагогические навыки и способности, которые критичны для их будущей карьеры. В этой статье рассматриваются значение и проблемы участия будущих учителей в программах академической мобильности, а также три случая будущих педагогов и обсуждаются преимущества и недостатки, с которыми они столкнулись во время академической мобильности за рубежом. Безусловно, академическая мобильность предоставляет будущим педагогам бесценный профессиональный опыт, а также возможность для личностного роста и расширения менталитета. Однако в ходе исследования были выявлены многочисленные трудности как в организации поездки в зарубежные страны, так и в проблемах, с которыми будущий педагог столкнулся по прибытии. В связи с этим авторы попытались представить решения проблемы, анализируя предыдущее положение дел и полученные данные. Использовались качественные и количественные методы, а также схема кодирования для собранных данных; в дополнение к этому, выборка проводилась случайным образом на добровольной основе. В заключение работы предложены различные выводы и рекомендации для будущих исследований.

Ключевые слова: академическая мобильность, будущий педагог, академическое и профессиональное развитие, преимущества и недостатки, выводы.

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