

**Title:** An exploration of experiences of overseas trained teachers in England.

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**Proposal:** Paper

**Text:** 500 words

I am intrigued by the conference theme: Activism in a troubled world: auto/biographical and narrative perspectives on struggles for the good and beautiful. This paper cuts across three conference questions but, the one it most identifies with is ‘What it means to be an activist and whose values we represent?’

I am a British teacher, born, raised and educated in Uganda and have taught in secondary schools, in Kent, for 23 years. Before undertaking a research degree in Education. I encountered direct illustrations of ‘a troubled world’ in Uganda. I lived through a dictatorial military regime led by Gen. Idi Amin; followed by sporadic civil conflicts, witnessed brutal murders and narrowly escaped a gunshot. I believe that I am currently encountering subtle illustrations of ‘a troubled world’ in the United Kingdom, where intolerance of ‘otherness’ threatens trust within families and communities and UK’s global reputation as a tolerant country. Some of the intolerance can be attributed to misinformed institutional regulations and guidelines, such as the Four-Year Rule (below), that need research to inform policy review.

The Department for Education, provides a Four-Year Rule, as part of its ‘non-statutory guidance’ to Head Teachers, Local Authorities and School Governors, in England, regarding management of teachers who qualified in countries outside the European Economic Area, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand & USA (Overseas Trained Teachers- hereafter, OTTs). While teachers who qualified in the aforementioned countries can apply for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) on arrival in England, teachers who qualified in the rest of the world are required to work for four years as Unqualified Teachers, before they are eligible to apply for QTS. I find the arbitrary Four-Year Rule discriminatory, because it prejudices OTTs by country of origin, rather than their individual capacities.

The ESREA 2020 conference will be on activism, in its many forms and how it has led some of us to life history and auto/biographical research. As an OTT who served in different capacities for 23 years in England and engaged many OTTs, with different experiences, I recognised institutional discriminatory policies and practices, whose impact I was unable to quantify, nor could I find a space where I could raise OTT issues, until I resigned from the teaching profession, in 2014. From 2018 I started a PhD in Education, with a focus on documenting experiences of OTTs, anchored in relevant supporting literature.

The goal of this ethnographic research is to trigger conversations about OTTs' experiences, in political and professional spaces, so that OTTs' unique potential can be developed, for the benefit of employers, students, OTTs' home countries and OTTs. This paper will examine the background study, skewed against OTTs, that culminated in the discriminatory Four-Year Rule. It will draw on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field; also, Relative Deprivation Theory and Deskilling to provide theoretical frameworks of the unique and complex challenges that OTTs face. The research is in early stages so, this paper will include mainly autobiographical illustrations that illuminate aspects of the theories in the selected literature.

**Question:**

'What it means to be an activist and whose values we represent?'

**Key Words:**

Activism, auto/biographical, Four-Year Rule, Relative Deprivation Theory, Troubled world

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