Teach in America

An alliance between the United States' Visiting International Faculty Program and ACER will give Australian teachers a new opportunity to develop careers abroad.

The Visiting International Faculty (VIF) Program, the United States' largest cultural exchange program for teachers, has been placing Australian teachers in American schools for nearly 20 years, but the recent alliance with ACER aims to expand recognition for the skills and experience teachers gain abroad.

These teachers contribute to the brain gain for our education system, according to Jennie Hayes, the VIF Program Manager at ACER.

"The VIF Program provides an opportunity for teachers to work in an American school for two to three years and return here with a wealth of experience which will be hugely valuable to our system. We consider it a brain gain rather than a brain drain," she says.

"It's a chance for Australian teachers to work in a different educational system, expand their professional development and come back to Australia with a wider view of education and the world."

ACER's involvement in the program is a step towards greater formal recognition of this professional development.

"ACER's role, initiated in 2008, is to manage selection of teachers in Australia and to ensure recognition for the professional development that teachers gain through the program," says Hayes.

Jane Larsson, Director of International Partnerships at the VIF Program, sees great benefit in the alliance. "Undertaking a new adventure and experiencing a new culture, while learning and applying new skills, can be a wonderful personal growth experience," she says. "We know that exposure to a new system of education and a new country and culture is influential in developing teachers' perceptions and instructional abilities as they prepare students for their roles in the global marketplace".

"The endorsement and recommendation of ACER will ensure local recognition of the reputation of the program. Our collaboration with ACER, an organisation that has a deep commitment to improving learning, assures Australian teachers that they'll benefit from a high-quality experience in the VIF Program," says Larsson.

For more information about the program, visit ***www.acer.edu.au/proflearn*** ■