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Broadening the Perspectives of English Education Policy: Case Analysis of the TaLK (Teach and Learn in Korea) Program

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The present study aims to evaluate the TaLK (Teach and Learn in Korea) program, an English education program initiated by the Korean government as part of its policy to lessen the English divide. TaLK has two aims: to decrease the English-divide phenomenon by providing English exposure to regions in Korea that lack English language resources, and to build a global network of people who admire and are knowledgeable about Korea. The selected TaLK participants teach English in public primary schools located in rural areas of Korea while at the same time learning about Korean culture and the Korean language. In January 2009, the first TaLK program scholarship recipients finished their first semester of teaching English in public schools. Through focus group interviews, six performance indicators were extracted from the perspectives of nine different groups of participants. Structured surveys comprised of questions for each indicator were then administered to over 1,000 participants representing all nine groups. The nine groups were then reclassified into three groups according to the participants' role and the similarity of the task performed in the program. The responses within each group for each performance indicator were then compared. The results will be discussed with the unique outcomes of the program and with suggestions to improve the program.