

## Lessons from the Other Side: What can dispatch companies teach us?

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### Comments regarding instructors

#### Instructor similarities

"... as practitioners there is little difference between the potential capabilities of direct-hire and dispatch instructors. Most of the advantages of direct-hire come from a larger familiarity and position within the university structure and relationships with university staff and students."

"... most of these assessment values will depend primarily on the quality and commitment of the individual teacher rather than the category of their employment ..."

#### Strengths from dispatch experience

"Working as a dispatch instructor helped me to identify multiple stakeholders and how they fit into the larger systems at the departmental, university, and national level."

"... working for a dispatch company taught me what works and what doesn't in a very large variety of environments that otherwise I would not have exposure to."

"That has made me, as a teacher, push myself to be more creative in developing my individual style and philosophy so I can stand out from the rest, make myself marketable and a desired direct hire."

"I am sure to dot all the "i"s and cross the "t"s."

"A lot of the skills to create dynamic and fun activities I learnt during dispatch and find them indispensable now. The energy and pacing of the classes during dispatch gave me an excellent model to aspire to when designing my syllabus and conducting my classes at university now."

"I feel that the influence is very positive. Working for a dispatch company forced me to have a certain discipline that is still important when working as a directly hired teacher."

"Dispatch instructors essentially just follow orders...Direct-hire have a lot more autonomy in what they do in the classroom. A good thing? Well, that depends on the instructor... However, there are also DH instructors who seem to stroll into the classroom 10-20 mins late, and speak in L1 for most of the time."

### Comments regarding organizations

"[Dispatch companies] provide a good opportunity for instructors to enter the competitive field of university teaching without having published, but also limit the number of direct-hire positions available to instructors."

"There can be too much micro-management and perhaps unnecessary bureaucracy, but I also appreciate the work that dispatch companies do for the instructors (syllabus writing, test preparation, text selection)."

"Support and opportunities for professional development of teachers on campuses where I've worked have been provided exclusively by direct-hire departments."

"I'd say the thing that made my dispatch company more effective was that they were constantly improving and striving to improve student learning, curriculum, and quality of teaching in an organized and systematic fashion. They were also extremely flexible, professional, and able to adapt to ever changing needs of students and university faculty and staff. The level of communication among and between dispatch teachers was far greater than anything I've experienced working directly at 10 different universities."

"I am a stickler for clarity of purpose, and through a dispatch company, that has always been clear on nearly every level. Dispatch companies allow you to focus on what the main aspect of your job is, teaching. Many good teachers have become disenchanted and exhausted by the kafkaesque environment of the Japanese approach to language education."

Also, dispatch companies ... offer more training and more opportunities for teachers to learn new ways how to teach."

## Comments for “Take-aways”

### If you are a DH instructor...

(On dispatch) “They have a set curriculum to follow and there tends to be little leeway in terms of introducing outside material. But this means they are teaching in a way that is more systematic, all students should be covering the same curricular and this keeps it standardized - which I see as a positive thing. Direct hire on the other hand is very random in terms of their experience, education and actual teaching ability - particularly for part-timers. There is often no accountability, which can lead to resentment and a lack of enthusiasm to go beyond just teaching the minimum- doing the same thing without upskilling.”

### If you are a DH administrator...

“The dispatch company had an excellent set of materials that were prepared, road-tested and good to go with minimal need for adaptation. For the direct-hire, we had a massive bank of materials that were disorganized and chaotic. After 2 years at the direct-hire, I became a course coordinator and quickly set about establishing a full syllabus with all materials organized and prepared for incoming teachers.”

“For any given course, my dispatch company wrote the syllabus and prepared all the tests. This is more efficient than having every teacher prepare everything from scratch.”

“The level of communication among and between dispatch instructors was far greater than anything I’ve experienced working directly at 10 different universities.”

“They came and “observed” a class and gave me feedback. This has never happened in my university department.”

“[Dispatch company] provided ongoing training whereas now I'm expected to just carry on 100% independently”

“Observations. Although officially scheduled once a semester, nobody actually attends at the DH dept. My manager has NEVER seen me teach a lesson.”

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## Survey Questions

Regarding the specific functions and abilities of these instructors/organizations, which do you feel is more effective?  
In layman's terms, "Who/Which does \_\_\_\_\_ better?"

### Instructor Domains

- Q1** Dealing with administrative staff / management of administrative issues.
- Q2** Liaising with other instructors
- Q3** General administrative duties
- Q4** Punctuality & time management (lesson start/finish)
- Q5** Use of technology in the classroom (e.g., AV consoles, Moodle integration)
- Q6** Class / student management
- Q7** Lesson planning / preparation
- Q8** Use of graded instructional language
- Q9** Education material design and/or selection
- Q10** Management & reliability of student records (e.g., attendance, assessments)
- Q11** Assessment design & implementation

### Organization Domains

- Q1** Support for instructors regarding general personnel / HR matters
- Q2** Facilitation of instructors' professional development / publishing
- Q3** Instructor workload for administrative "paperwork"
- Q4** Facilitating instructors' use of technology / CALL
- Q5** Responsiveness to instructor feedback
- Q6** Supporting instructors in lesson planning / class preparation
- Q7** Non-instructor support of students / liaising with students
- Q8** Education material design and/or selection
- Q9** Effective approach to development & design of assessment structures.
- Q10** Curriculum development

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