

# What Makes a Successful EFL Teacher in China? A Case Study of an English Language Teacher at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine

Zhi Huang

Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University

Level 4, C5A, Macquarie University, North Ryde, NSW 2109 Australia

Tel: 61-433-619-847 E-mail: jeffzhihuang@gmail.com

## Abstract

This paper investigates the traits of a successful EFL teacher at a Chinese University by collecting qualitative data, including surveys with questionnaires and interviews, from Miss H and a group of her students and her colleagues. The purpose is to detect what special qualities she has and what other roles she undertakes in her teaching position. The data indicate that to fulfil her role as both a teacher and a “tour guide”, Miss H has the qualities of being knowledgeable, responsible, enthusiastic, patient and kind. She also has a strong ability to utilise her teaching methods in accordance with what her students need and to train them to learn in a communicative and independent way. She serves as both a friend to her students, giving them support and helping them with learning, and as a coordinator among her colleagues, encouraging professional development and cooperative teamwork.

**Keywords:** English language teaching, English as a foreign language, Teacher quality, Case study, Qualitative data analysis

## 1. Introduction

In English language teaching and learning, some teachers are regarded as more successful than others. The reasons vary: according to Brown (2001), successful teaching depends on the teachers' language proficiency, language-teaching skills, interpersonal communication ability and personality. This paper investigates an English teacher at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine (NJUCM) who is qualified and successful in teaching English as a foreign language and who is popular among students. To answer the question of why she is considered a successful EFL teacher in China, this paper examines what special qualities she has, how she conducts classroom teaching, and what other roles she undertakes in her position. The research also elicits her students' and colleagues' perceptions of her unique teaching qualities. For this purpose, Miss H at NJUCM, a group of her students, and a group of her colleagues were surveyed and interviewed in and out of the classroom to find the answers to the three sub-questions: (1) What are the unique qualities of Miss H (including her personal traits, professional achievements and teaching style) that make others perceive her as a successful EFL teacher in China? (2) How does Miss H teach English effectively in the classroom? (3) What other roles does Miss H undertake in her teaching position? The results of this case study cannot be generalised to all, but the conclusions reveal some essential qualities for successful teachers and also show which special characteristics can be integrated into real life teaching, according to different teaching contexts.

## 2. Background to the study

### 2.1 Introduction

In considering best practices in teaching in higher education, Ramsden (1992) conceptualises the various aspects of such professionalism (see Figure 1) by indicating that in order to achieve good teaching, the theory and context of teaching are needed before the real action of teaching, and reflection on the experience is needed afterwards. But these factors alone are not enough to “complete” the picture of the complexities of teaching in higher education. This section focuses on the related literature and suggests a new conceptualisation (see Figure 2) based on Ramsden's but with more factors significant in higher education and – more importantly – in teaching EFL successfully.

### 2.2 Qualities that make a successful EFL teacher

In English language teaching, successful teachers may differ in various ways, such as in language proficiency, teaching styles, personal traits, and preferred teaching materials. Curtis and Cheng (2001) suggest that successful teachers have profound knowledge, outstanding skills and unique personality characteristics. Brown (2001) also offers a checklist of good language-teacher characteristics, which he divides into four categories: technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities. This list examines language teaching and language teachers at various angles and evaluates successful teaching in detail. Burton (2000) holds the

opinion that good teachers need to have knowledge, uniqueness, reciprocity and professionalism. All these ideas of what qualities make a good teacher can be divided into three main categories: professional knowledge or achievements, personal traits and teaching style.

### 2.2.1 Professional achievements for a successful EFL teacher

The professional or academic honours or awards a teacher has received can certainly show that teacher is successful. It is true that teaching is a personal activity that incorporates a teacher's different beliefs and assumptions about how to achieve effective teaching. Teachers' beliefs are "ideas and theories that teachers hold about teaching, language, learning and their students," which are derived from "their experience, observations, training and other sources" and serve as "a source of reference" and "teachers' classroom practices" (Richards & Schmidt, 2003, p. 541). Different from learners' beliefs, teachers' beliefs focus on the thoughts of teachers based on their experience, training and observations and these beliefs are a source of new ideas, practices and classroom teaching development. Therefore, a teacher's belief system usually influences their knowledge, attitudes, expectations, values and methods about teaching and learning, which teachers build up over time from their experience (Richards, 1998).

According to Ethell and McMeniman (2000, p. 88), successful teachers "have a larger knowledge base from which to draw" and usually "organize knowledge more efficiently in complex interconnected schemas and utilize it more effectively". Thus, it is essential for successful teachers to have both superior subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Ruiz-funes (2002) suggests there are intrinsic approaches that we should look for in potential EFL teachers, such as the love for the target language, attitude towards the profession and students, motivation and enthusiasm. According to McKeachie (1997), for teachers who have a sense of making a difference, a sense of competence and a sense of self-determination, and who are helpful to students, their department chair, colleagues and students find them highly satisfactory. To conclude, the professional achievements a successful EFL teacher needs are not only awards and honours they have received, but also a combination of teacher's beliefs, professionalism, understanding, knowledge and people skills, and the drive for improvement (June, 2000).

### 2.2.2 Personal traits of a successful EFL teacher

Stronge (2002) and Protherough and Atkinson (1991) have shown some important personal traits of successful EFL teachers. It seems that being a successful EFL teacher is hard, and these personal traits are all necessary and important for success. Wong and Wong (1998) point out that the mediocre teacher tells and explains, but the superior one shows and inspires. To be a successful EFL teacher, it is therefore very important to have the ability to enthuse and inspire the students for their lives. As Batten, Marland and Khamis (1993) state, students' views of the qualities of good teachers embody not only being friendly and humorous, but also respecting and encouraging the students. Biggs and Moore (1993) also mention that the personal traits that make a great teacher comprise being enthusiastic, encouraging, humorous, fair, flexible and organised.

When looking at teachers in China in particular, Cortazzi and Jin (1996, cited in Mullock, 2003) give a table of Chinese students' expectations of a good EFL teacher. In the table, the top characteristics are having knowledge of the subject matter, being patient, being humorous, being a good moral example, being friendly, teaching about life, arousing students' interest, being both warm-hearted and understanding, using effective teaching methods and being caring and helpful. It is obvious that most of the students' expectations of a good teacher are about the teacher's personal traits.

### 2.2.3 A successful EFL teacher's teaching style

In the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards & Schmidt, 2003), teaching style is defined as "a teacher's individual instructional methods and approach and the characteristic manner in which the teacher carries out instruction" (p. 544). Different teachers have different ways of teaching, including different strategies and techniques, different roles in the classroom and different styles of teacher-student interaction. Therefore, we can regard teaching style as "a complex amalgam of belief, attitude, strategy, technique, motivation, personality and control" (Wright, 1987, p. 68).

Teaching style may lead the teacher to play different roles in the classroom, each role with a certain effect on the learners. According to Scrivener (1994), there are three kinds of teachers: the explainer, the involver and the enabler. The explainer knows the subject matter well but is limited to teaching methodology; the involver is able to use appropriate teaching techniques and tries to involve students actively but retains clear control over the classroom; while the enabler is aware of how individuals and groups are thinking and is able to create a good classroom atmosphere by sharing and negotiating decision-making.

In a successful EFL teacher, the teaching style tends to be more “goal-oriented”, “task-dependent” and “knowledge based” (Wright, 1987, p. 69). In other words, not only should the teacher have a good knowledge of subject matter and teaching methodology, but he or she should also bring their own personality and attitude into teaching and realise good teaching through shared negotiation and be a reliable source of information for the students when needed.

### 2.3 The successful EFL teacher's “other” roles

Besides effective classroom teaching, successful EFL teachers undertake other roles in their positions, such as preparing timetables, materials and handouts, seeing students individually, attending staff meetings, arranging out-of-class activities, marking tests and examinations, and writing reports (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). All these roles constitute a successful EFL teacher and can be considered as part of teacher development. According to the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards & Schmidt, 2003), teacher development can be defined as “the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and knowledge and examining his or her teaching systematically” (p. 542). Different stages in teacher development include developing and expanding skills of teaching, being competent and professional in teaching, cooperating with colleagues and practicing decision-making and leadership.

It is then clear that being a successful EFL teacher requires more than fulfilling the role of teacher alone; it also requires someone who is an organiser of different activities, an assessor or examiner, an active participant in their students' development and in professional self-development, and an observer who seeks feedback and evaluates his or her own work (Harmer, 2001). A successful EFL teacher is different to an academic teacher or researcher. According to Ur (2002), although they have something in common (which “is evaluated in the long term by his or her influence on the thought and action” [p. 390]), they differ in a number of ways. For example, in contrast to the academic, a language teacher as a professional takes a more active role, focusing on what really works for the individuals, and they are quick to change tactics if necessary.

### 3. Research methodology

A case study, as Stake (1995, p. 6) states, is “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”. It is not like a sampling study and so it cannot be generalised to other cases. It is essential for a case study, according to Bassey (1999), to focus on the discussion of the context and methodology of the study, and to make sure that the data collection and analysis are ethical and trustworthy. As McDonough and McDonough (2000) state in their research, a case study is natural, typical and particular and cannot be generalised. However, with case studies, samples can be collected and these may generate some useful thoughts on certain study areas or aspects. In this case study, qualitative rather than quantitative data was collected in order for analysis, because as Stake (1995, p. 37) points out, qualitative researchers “have pressed for explanation and control” as well as “understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists”.

The participants in this study were Miss H at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine (NJUCM); 24 English-major students who were in their second year of university and who had a teacher-student relationship with Miss H; and eight English teachers who were in the same staff room as Miss H. The students were between 20 and 21 years of age, and the teachers were between 25 and 50 years of age. The sample did not cover all Miss H's students (approximately 100 students) as it focused on one teacher and is a case study in nature. NJUCM is a university in which English is a compulsory subject in the curriculum, and the English major focuses on English language itself rather than English for specific purposes, such as English for Chinese medicine. Thus, the subject and setting of the study can be understood as examining a successful EFL teacher who teaches English for general purposes in an ordinary Chinese university.

Triangulation in qualitative research is adopted in this paper. Triangulation is defined as “the process of collecting data from several different sources or in different ways in order to provide a fuller understanding of a phenomenon” (Richards & Schmidt, 2003, p. 565). The use of triangulation in this paper includes interviews, surveys with questionnaires and focus groups. Using triangulation in a case study ensures the resources are fully used so that all the important data is triangulated (Stake, 1995). To obtain truthful and convincing qualitative data, all the questions in questionnaires and interviews are designed to require detailed answers.

The conduct of this study was permitted by the authority of School of Foreign Languages, Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, and approvals were received from the participants to ensure they were willing. All the participants were recruited through an in-class announcement and e-mail contact to ensure that the participation in the project was entirely voluntary.

The data collection process falls into three parts: In part one, an interview of Miss H was conducted for her profile as a teacher and her views on being a successful EFL teacher in China. The teacher profile includes evidence of her language proficiency, her teaching experience and her major academic or professional achievements. In part two, a sample group of eight teachers who were colleagues of Miss H and were all in her staff room were surveyed with questionnaires. The following day, two of them (the only senior female teacher and the youngest junior male teacher in her staff room) were interviewed to collect the data about their ideas on EFL teaching and on being a successful EFL teacher. In the last part, a sample group of 24 students (from four classes) who majored in English and had a teacher-student relationship with Miss H were surveyed with questionnaires. Four of them were placed in the focus group to be interviewed to collect the data about their ideas on EFL learning and being a successful EFL teacher.

To get the sample group, emails were sent to 32 students of both genders, eight in each of Miss H's classes (according to their student numbers, the first three girls and the last three girls, and the first two boys on the list of each class were selected). They were invited to an appointment to complete the questionnaire. The first 24 students that turned up were selected to do the questionnaire. Then those who wrote down their email addresses at the end of the questionnaire had the chance to be involved in the focus group. Emails were sent to them afterwards, and the first four students who replied were selected to be in the focus group. All the subjects who participated in the project gave informed consent.

#### **4. Data analysis**

##### *4.1 Descriptive data: a teacher profile of Miss H*

The data collected from the interview showed that Miss H had the experience of teaching English as a foreign language for seventeen years. After graduation, she became an English language teacher at Nanjing Agricultural University in the first six years and then went to Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine (NJUCM) and continued her career as an EFL teacher. During her 17 years of English teaching, Miss H has been involved in teaching college-level English to non-English majors for 14 years. In the February before the interview, Miss H joined the English major teaching group and has been teaching general English to English major students for more than one year.

In her career, Miss H has received several professional achievements, including the Excellent Teacher's Award from Shi Zugu's Teaching Foundation in 2000 and two Excellent Teacher's Awards from Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine in 2005 and 1999.

According to Miss H, English is "a beautiful language" with which we can get more from Western cultures and it is "a tool to touch the whole world". She considers English-teaching a lifelong career because not only can she "get more proficiency in the language", but also she can "help more people in China to use the beautiful language to communicate with people from all over the world".

##### *4.2 Views on EFL teaching and on being a successful EFL teacher: a discussion*

In Miss H's opinion motivation is the most important aspect of English-language learning for the language learner and in EFL teaching learner training is very important because, with the teacher's help, the learners can get a sense of achievement in developing skills to use the language. Teachers should bear in mind that learners play the central role in teaching and teachers must know what they need in order to help them achieve their goals. In classroom teaching, successful teachers give help to students so they can learn a new way to approach the language and can take away both knowledge and the skills to develop their language proficiency step by step. In this case, what successful teachers do is to think about the students and know what they need first. They then choose the appropriate materials for teaching and plan classroom activities that involve all the students' participation in the class. Since students in China do not have enough chances to use English language in their daily life, successful teachers in China need to "prepare more appropriate materials and plan more proper activities in classroom teaching in order to help students use the language as much as possible".

In the questionnaires to Miss H's colleagues, four male teachers and four female teachers were surveyed about their ideas on EFL teaching and being a successful EFL teacher in China. The data showed that in terms of EFL teaching, the teachers rated important traits of successful teachers as enthusiasm, responsibility, rich knowledge, cross-cultural awareness, communicative competence, teaching methodology and personality. Moreover, some colleagues mentioned other aspects that may be important too, such as patience, devotion to the job, the ability to absorb new information, the ability to help students find the correct and most efficient ways to learn English, and creating an environment in which students could practise. As a successful EFL teacher, he or she should be humorous, optimistic, open-minded, earnest, considerate, communicative and interactive. He or she should "have

the ability to add something new in teaching every now and then”, should “try different ways in teaching to make students learn in a happy and effective way”, should “have overseas experiences to share with students”, and should “apply teaching styles to appeal the taste of most students”. In China, successful EFL teachers should also be “disciplinary”, “aware of students’ weaknesses and cultural differences”, “able to make language learning both interesting and meaningful”, “able to keep pace with the reform of society” and sometimes “able to control a large class of more than fifty students”.

In a focus group, two of Miss H’s colleagues were interviewed: one female with 29 years of teaching experience and one male with two years of teaching experience. In their opinion, “language is a skill rather than knowledge, and teaching English as a profession can broaden our horizons and keep us young”. “What is important in teaching EFL is to expose your students to the language of English and teach them to learn the skills of how to study English”. In China, successful EFL teachers should not only “have a responsible attitude and be easy-going” but also “have a good command of language and cultural knowledge, good explanation of language rules and be willing to interact with students”.

Twenty-four of Miss H’s students were also surveyed with questionnaires: four males and twenty females, all aged 20 to 21 and all with seven years of English-learning experience. In their opinions, the top three most important aspects in learning the English language were “practising as much as possible”, “interest in the language” and “perseverance”. They regarded a successful EFL teacher as being good at English, interesting, humorous, flexible, helpful, responsible and patient. All male students thought the teacher should not be boring, and more female students thought the teacher should be good at English and be flexible. As a successful EFL teacher in China, both male and female students expected him or her to “have more knowledge than English itself” and expected him or her to be “responsible”, “passionate about teaching and students”, “patient” and “familiar with the cultures of other countries”.

Four of Miss H’s students – two males and two females – participated in a focus group. They agreed that the most important aspects in English learning were to practice more, be interested in it and spend more time and energy on it. They described a successful EFL teacher as knowledgeable, patient, responsible, humorous, full of energy, positive, like a part of students, and knowing what and how to teach in order to solve the problems students have. Since EFL teachers in China work harder but focus on the textbook more, they should – according to the students – “have a better understanding of the language and teaching”, “give students more freedom to develop themselves and train students to learn the skills of how to learn English”.

In summary, EFL teaching and learning has its own principles and being a successful EFL teacher requires certain qualities, such as having a learner-centred attitude, being knowledgeable, responsible, patient, humorous and flexible. What is more, successful EFL teachers in China should work harder to keep up with the pace of social changes, give more space to students for them to develop their ways of learning English, and train students to acquire the skills rather than knowledge of English language.

#### *4.3 Analysis of qualities that make Miss H successful*

When asked for the unique qualities that make her successful, Miss H mentioned her “passion and enthusiasm” for English teaching. She compared an EFL teacher to a guide who takes a group of tourists into a garden or a park. “The guide shows what the beautiful scenery is, where they should go and how to get there, and then the tourists should walk through and look at things by themselves, trying to discover and get what they need independently. The tourists are like students”. The teacher, in her eyes, is a guide who shows students the ways of learning English and teaches them the skills to overcome difficulties; while the students, on the other hand, should learn by themselves with the teacher’s help to achieve their own goals. A conclusion can be drawn from what Miss H says: she knows well about the process of learning a language and is both responsible and flexible. She takes the responsibility to be a good guide to students in their learning and at the same time tries to be flexible in teaching so that students may find their own ways to learn the language better with her help.

Miss H’s colleagues gave a sketch of the characteristics that make her successful. These included the following attributes: knowledgeable, enthusiastic, optimistic, responsible, patient, diligent and well organised. Two colleagues in the focus group held the opinion that Miss H has the ability to “make teaching interesting and effective by adopting various teaching methods and giving them feedback so that students feel that they are learning”.

Students of Miss H used words such as responsible, patient, knowledgeable, hard-working, kind, easy-going and helpful to describe her. They also thought that Miss H was friendly because “she always smiles” and because she helps them with “both their study and their life”. One student wrote that she “is always doing small things to make students feel warm”. For example, she might “pick up their pens that dropped onto the floor” or sometimes

“teaches them the proper way to write”. What is more, students like her because she “teaches in a free and happy way”, and she “always considers in the students’ places to be closer to them”. She is “inspiring” and “very kind to students’ mistakes”. Four students in the focus group agreed that Miss H is “knowledgeable” and “has a good attitude towards students and teaching”.

#### *4.4 Analysis of Miss H’s effective classroom teaching*

Effective classroom teaching, as defined by Miss H and her colleagues and students, is like “a tour to the world of English”. Not only do her students gain knowledge of the language and culture, but they also learn the skills to study and to solve their problems. Moreover, the teacher tries to create a harmonious atmosphere and fruitful outcome in accordance with the teaching target and makes sure that every student is actively using the language.

In effective classroom teaching, according to her colleagues, the teacher “provides proper environment to involve all the students” and helps them “communicate with each other actively, bravely and accurately”. Therefore, both the teacher and the students learn through interactive activities and, more importantly, the students learn strategies to monitor their own language learning process in the learner-centred classroom teaching.

In the survey questionnaires and interviews from Miss H’s colleagues, her colleagues used a number of words to describe her classroom teaching. The top ten are as follows: interactive, encouraging, cooperative, interesting, student-centred, innovatory, disciplinary, efficient, enjoyable and challenging. On the other hand, the data from Miss H’s students reveals that Miss H’s effective classroom teaching has similar characteristics with those from her colleagues. The top ten words given by Miss H’s students about her classroom teaching are: interesting, interactive, easy to understand, alive, enlightening, creative, efficient, rewarding, student-centred and encouraging.

In the focus group, Miss H’s colleagues are most impressed by her attitude towards classroom teaching. Every time “she prepares well before class” and when teaching in class, “she gives students various materials and provides scaffolding to give support to students”. Moreover, she “always smiles to attract students to focus on the tasks”, “chooses the appropriate teaching methods to motivate the students to participate in class activities” and “is flexible in managing classroom teaching in order to meet students’ different needs”.

Miss H’s students in the focus group were of the opinion that Miss H usually “motivates them in classroom teaching to interact with each other effectively” by providing them not only materials in the textbooks but also stories and music and by using computer and overhead projector to help her, rather than using the traditional ways of English teaching in China, which focus on textbooks only. What they were most impressed by was that she “seems to know what the students think” and “is patient with the problems they have”.

#### *4.5 Analysis of other roles Miss H undertakes which make her successful*

Besides classroom teaching, a successful EFL teacher should also undertake some other roles in his or her teaching position. According to the data from Miss H’s colleagues, the other roles a successful EFL teacher undertakes include “doing research to enrich knowledge”, “renewing existing knowledge system” and “helping students with their life problems”.

Two colleagues in the focus group mentioned that a successful EFL teacher is a progress monitor and coordinator of the students. He or she may also “convey cross-cultural materials” so as to “cultivate students’ cultural awareness”. On the other hand, students of Miss H regarded a successful EFL teacher as one who “communicates with them often after class”, “shares own life experience with them”, “cares about their psychological problems”, “joins them on some other curricular activities”, and “provides them more opportunities to practice English”. It is very interesting that one student mentioned one other role of a successful EFL teacher is to take the students to the bookstores together and give them help on selecting appropriate materials for learning English.

When Miss H was interviewed on the issue of other roles, she said she considers herself as “a friend to the students” and sometimes “even a parent who helps them with life problems and gives them ongoing support so that they can put more effort into learning English”. That is just what her students said they thought of her in terms of the other roles she undertakes in her teaching position. Students in the focus group thought she was both their best friend and their parent. She gives a hand to students when it is needed, helps them with difficulties, takes care of their daily life and is concerned about their physical and mental health. The deepest impression that students had of Miss H is the confidence she gives to them. She is always willing to help students overcome all kinds of difficulties and develop a positive attitude towards life and learning. Students have not only learned skills and strategies for learning English, but they have also learned how to deal with other people successfully

and how to get on well with others.

Miss H's colleagues agreed that she improves students' personalities by helping them overcome difficulties and that she develops students' learning skills by organising self-access and by training students to learn how to study English in their own way. What is more, her colleagues emphasised that Miss H also handles trivial staff issues efficiently and said that usually she will exchange teaching plans among colleagues and discuss different ways of teaching and effective teaching methods in order to influence her co-workers to work hard as a team.

In summary of the other roles that Miss H undertakes in her teaching position, to the students she is known as a friend who helps them learn English and as a parent who takes care of their life, and to her colleagues she is known as a coordinator who works with them as a team.

#### 4.6 Implications for further research

From the data analysis, there are some implications that can be drawn and recommended for further research. Firstly, it may be interesting to focus on the differences and similarities of the comments given by colleagues and those by students, and then compare and contrast to discover something unique or significant about the different views held by teachers and students on the same issue. In this study, Miss H's colleagues and students gave similar ideas on how to be a successful EFL teacher and why they think Miss H is a successful EFL teacher in China. However, they have slightly different ideas on some small points that were ignored because of the purpose of this case study. Thereby, it would be divertive to discover more in this aspect and to discuss the different opinions given by EFL teachers and students on the topic. Secondly, classroom teaching is a complex process that requires a teacher with a strong ability to control and conduct. It would be helpful if more focus was put on effective classroom teaching and more effort was given to discovering how successful EFL teachers handle classroom teaching flexibly and effectively. More detailed and more interesting data could be obtained to analyse and discover how the teacher and students work together harmoniously to achieve effective classroom teaching and learning.

### 5. Conclusion

This study investigates an EFL teacher at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine (NJUCM) who is successful at teaching English as a foreign language and who is popular among students in order to discover why she is regarded as a successful EFL teacher in China. Miss H and a group of her students and colleagues were surveyed and interviewed in and out of the classroom in order to get the data for analysis. The results show that Miss H has the personal qualities of being responsible, patient, enthusiastic, kind and knowledgeable in her role as a teacher, and she also has the strong ability to utilise her teaching methods to teach in accordance with what her students need and to train them to learn in a communicative and independent way, both in and out of classroom. Not only does she become a friend and a parent to her students, giving them support and helping them solve all kinds of problems, but she is also regarded as a coordinator among her colleagues, encouraging her co-workers to develop themselves and work hard as a team.

This case study focuses on one successful EFL teacher in China, but hopefully it will influence other teachers in other places to think more about how to improve their teaching and how to take on the many roles of a successful EFL teacher in order to become successful and win the respect of not only their students but also their colleagues, family, friends, and even strangers.

### References

- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Batten, M., Marland, P. & Khamis, M. (1993). *Knowing how to teach well: teachers reflect on their classroom practice*. Hawthorn: ACER.
- Biggs, J. B. & Moore, P. J. (1993). *The process of learning*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Prentice Hall.
- Brown, D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: an interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Addison Wesley.
- Burton, J. (2000). Learning from teaching practice: a case study approach. *Prospect*, 15/3, 15-21.
- Curtis, A. & Cheng, L. (2001). Teachers' self-evaluation of knowledge, skills and personality characteristics needed to manage change. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 29/2, 139-152.
- Ethell, R. G. & McMeniman, M. M. (2000). Unlocking the knowledge in action of an expert practitioner. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(2), 87-101.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.

- June, M. H. (2000). Research into teacher effectiveness: a model of teacher effectiveness. *Research Report #216, Department for Education and Employment, England.*
- McDonough, J. & McDonough, S. (2000). *Research methods for English language teachers.* Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- McDonough, J. & Shaw, C. (2003). *Materials and methods in ELT: a teacher's guide.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- McKeachie, W. J. (1997). Wanting to be a good teacher: what have we learned to date? In Bess, J. L. (Ed.). *Teaching well and liking it: motivating faculty to teach effectively.* Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Mullock, B. (2003). What makes a good teacher? The perceptions of postgraduate TESOL students. *Prospect*, 18/3, 3-24.
- Protherough, R. & Atkinson, J. (1991). *The making of English teachers.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education.* London: Routledge.
- Richards, J. C. (1998). *Beyond training: perspectives on language teacher education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. & Schmidt, R. (2003). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics.* Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Ruiz-funes, M. T. (2002). *On teaching foreign languages: linking theory to practice.* London: Bergin & Garvey.
- Scrivener, J. (1994). *Learning teaching: a guidebook for English language teachers.* London: Heinemann.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research.* London: Sage.
- Stronge, J. H. (2002). *Qualities of effective teachers.* Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Ur, P. (2002). The English teacher as professional. In Richards, J. C. & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.). *Methodology in language teaching: an anthology of current practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wong, H. & Wong, R. (1998). *How to be an effective teacher: the first day of school.* Mountain View: Harry K Wong Publications.
- Wright, T. (1987). *Roles of teachers and learners.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

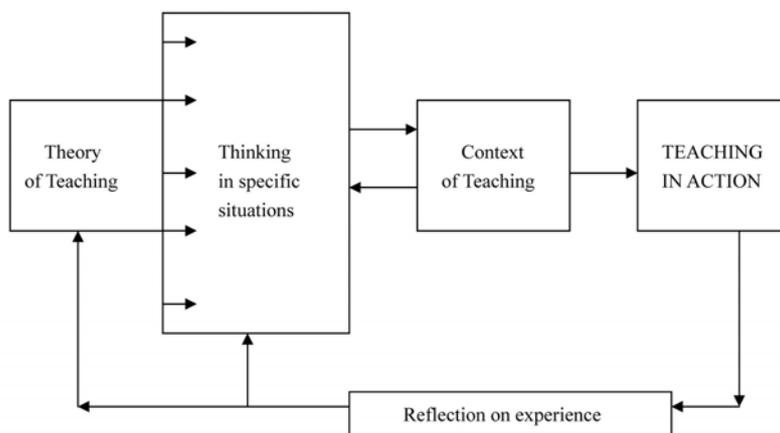


Figure 1. A model of teaching in higher education (Ramsden, 1992, p.119).

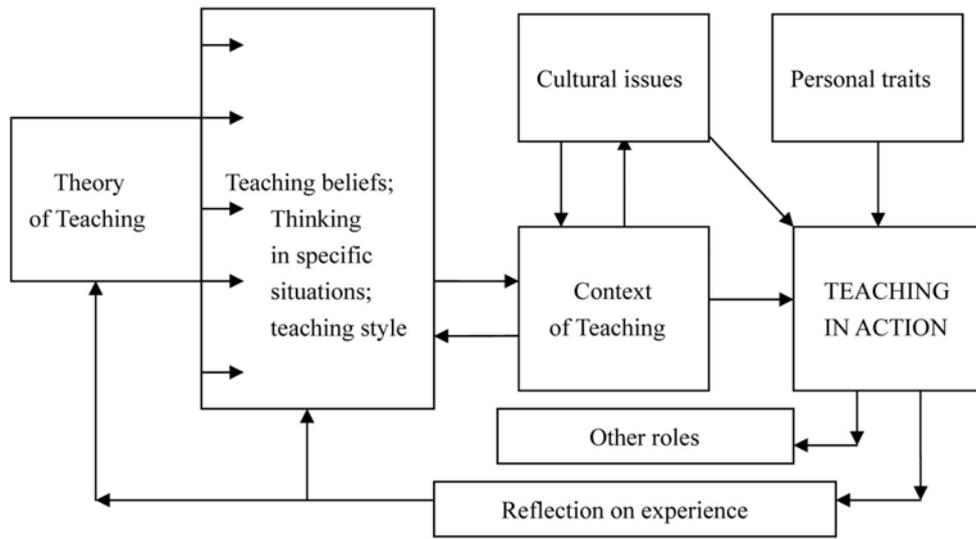


Figure 2. A model of successful EFL teaching in higher education (based on Ramsden, 1992, p. 119).