ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN CHINA: A

TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Keithe D. Wall

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe the lived experiences of foreign university English as an additional language instructor in China who had or were currently teaching at the tertiary level as it relates to teacher training and preparation programs. The theory that guided this study was Shulman's Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, as Shulman's theory clearly defines the knowledge that instructors must possess to be effective, and teacher training and preparation can be more clearly understood through Shulman's framework. The study's methodology was a phenomenology design. Purposeful sampling was implemented. The study was conducted using online conferencing software. Individual interviews, a focus group, and journal prompts were the data collection methods used. Data were analyzed according to Moustaka's procedures for phenomenological data analysis. Six themes emerged from the data; the six themes were: job of opportunity, the absence of structured teacher training, and acknowledgment of inadequate training. Outlier themes that arose included: impostor syndrome, education as a business, and expectation of self-study and education. Qualitative analysis indicated that foreign university English as an additional language instructors deemed employer-provided training inadequate, leaving instructors feeling underprepared for the classroom. Despite these challenges, there was a notable appreciation for collaborative training approaches, such as peer mentorship and observation, which participants found beneficial for their professional development. The study highlighted the urgent need for structured, comprehensive teacher training and preparation programs for foreign ESL instructors in China.

Keywords: English as an additional language, phenomenological, ESL, pedagogical content knowledge

Copyright Page

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, from whom all good things flow!

I dedicate this to my wife and family!

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my committee chair and committee member.

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List of Abbreviations

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Connectivist Massive Open Online Courses (cMOOC)

Department of Education (DoE)

English language learners (ELL)

English as a second language (ESL)

Extended Massive Open Online Courses (xMOOC)

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

Professional Development (PD)

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

Pedagogical Language Knowledge (PLK)

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

There is little research on core English as a second language (ESL) teaching practice (Pang, 2019). However, Grossman et al. (2010) identified and conducted research on the elements of language arts instruction. Internationally, teacher training is an issue because authentic communicative exchanges are rare (Ju, 2013). And, in reality, many foreign language teachers practicing in international contexts, China in particular, are unable to engage in authentic communicative behavior. Through this research study the lived experiences of foreign ESL instructors in China teaching who have taught at the university level were explored. In this chapter, the historical, social, and theoretical background, the empirical, theoretical, and practical significance of this study, the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the research questions used to guide this study are discussed.

Background

English for academic purposes now plays a pivotal role in China's internationalization (Duan, 2023). Language programs in Chinese universities adopted English as the instructional medium in addition to English language materials and the communicative approach to language learning (Tong et al., 2020). The shift in language teaching methodology led to an incongruence between learner needs and teaching standards (Li, Peng, 2020). There is a shortage of trained ESL and bilingual teachers (Carabelli, 2021). Teachers ought to possess pedagogical content knowledge within their specialized field (Shulman, 1987).

Historical Context

A traditional method and the oldest approach to English as an additional language teaching is the grammar-translation method or the Classical Method (Adebileje & Akinola,

2020). The Classical Method was used to teach foreign languages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Brown, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The method is reductionist in nature, stripping the target language down to its grammatical systems and placing emphasis on rote memorization of prescriptive morphological, phonological, syntactic, and grammatical rules (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020; Deng, 2023). The method emphasizes the development of grammatical skills and the analysis of lexis, which is learned in isolation and translated from the learners' native language into English (Richter, 2020). The communicative aspect of the target language is not emphasized. The primary emphasis in this methodology is placed on translating written language and understanding the grammar aspect of the target language (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020).

The Direct Method is communicative in practice and immerses learners in the target language through inductive grammatical and classroom instruction (Richter, 2020). The Direct Method has been in wide practice since the early 1900s (Brown, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Learners model their communicative output after the native speaker instructor (Richter, 2020). The Direct Method originates from language patterns and psychological theory (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020).

The Audio-Lingual Method is premised on the idea that forming habits is a means of learning (Li & Peng, 2022). The Audio-Lingual Method was viewed as revolutionary and was prominent in the late 1940s and 1950s (Brown, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The creation of communicative competence is the central goal of the audio-lingual method and focuses on developing native-like abilities in learners (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020). Language, in the Audio-Lingual Method, is seen as a set of formats centered on spoken instruction (Richter, 2020). The Audio-Lingual Method is heavily reliant on memorization of dialogue and phrases, repetitive

drills, pronunciation practice, implementation of tapes, and the theory which has the goal of producing error-free utterances (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020).

The Natural Approach was developed by Krashen and Terrell (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020). The Natural Approach was developed and used in the late 1970s (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Regarding the Natural Approach, the form of the language is emphasized. From the beginning of instruction, the target language is the medium of communication, and on-the-spot corrective feedback is withheld during oral communication (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020). A divergence in this method is the use of the learners' first language in tandem with the target language.

Aligning with second language acquisition, the Natural Approach demands vast amounts of input from the instructor. There is a silent period, followed by an emergence (Lai & Wei, 2019). Littlewood (1981) described the communicative theory as a language teaching approach that "pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view (p.1)." The Communicative Approach, or Communicative Language Teaching, is a learning theory that prioritizes learning in the target language and learning to use the language but not learning the language itself (Dos Santos, 2020).

Communicative competence is a model of knowledge that is comprised of an individual's grammatical competence. Grammatical competence includes one's grammatical, lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and phonological knowledge (Canale & Swain, 1980). Additionally, communicative competence encompasses one's sociolinguistic knowledge—the individual's knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language use and rules of discourse (Canale & Swain, 1980). The Communicative Approach's origins began in the 1960s and used

widespread in the1970s; the Communicative Approach is currently used in the Chinese university education system (Lin, 2019; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Language teachers gain the knowledge that they need through teacher preparation programs, workplace orientation and induction, on-the-job training, and continuous professional development (Tziona et al., 2023). Professional demands and standards for language teachers are unique and require a high level of foreign language teacher knowledge. Language instructors need to possess "knowledge of the structure of the language, the cultural aspects of the language, intercultural knowledge, knowledge of language teaching, knowledge from other fields that inform language teaching, the ability to integrate language teaching with concepts and content from other disciplines, the knowledge of language assessment, and knowledge of language teaching policies" (p. 2). However, teacher preparation programs and education for pre-service and in-service instructors are inadequate in ESL (Zhu, 2010).

Social Context

Curriculum and educational policy markedly impact English education in China (Li & Peng, 2022). Curricular and educational political history can be understood in terms of eras: before and after 1945, the first Renaissance (1956–1966), the Cultural Revolution, and the second Renaissance (1977–present). Internationalization continued from the period of 1950–1965 as a relationship between the Soviet Union, Russia, and China gave way to higher education collaborations. Following 1978 and the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution reformations, English language learning came to the forefront as an internationalizing force. Li (2016) makes clear that from the 1980s to the 1990s, the Chinese government employed tight regulations surrounding foreign student enrollment, teacher exchanges, and various types of foreign collaboration (Li & Peng, 2022). English for academic purposes now plays a pivotal role

in China's internationalization (Duan, 2023). Language programs in Chinese universities adopted English as the instructional medium in addition to English language materials (Tong et al., 2020).

Communicative language teaching came to Chinese universities in 1979 (Lin, 2019). As a result of the implementation of communicative language teaching, the educational needs of many Chinese English learners are not being met (Chen & Goh, 2011; Chen & Goh, 2014; Yazdanpanah, 2015; Yang, 2020). Language learning in China is exam-oriented; therefore, communicative language teaching may not offer learners the skills they need to be successful (Yang, 2020). Chinese learners may be required to take standardized tests, such as the *Scholastic Assessment Test* to enter foreign universities (Dos Santos, 2020). Additionally, international schools may require entrance exams, such as the A-Level and the General Certificate of Education. The tests do not have a communicative or oral proficiency aspect, making communicative language training of little practical use. Communicative language teaching prizes fluency in the target language above accuracy because minor errors in communication do not cause full communicative breakdowns (Ju, 2013). However, many Chinese learners of English expect to publish research articles in English and therefore are disinterested in speaking ability, never intending to study abroad or interact with native English speakers in English.

Even when learners have an interest in improving their communicative ability, the implementation of communicative language teaching may not meet their needs. For Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to be effective, instructors must conduct a needs analysis of the individual learners in the class, answer questions, and offer improvements or corrections for each individual student (Dos Santos, 2020; Ju, 2013). However, English language classes in China are often 50 or more learners, and learners vary in English proficiency, such

large-scale classes significantly impact learner outcome and performance. Utilizing communicative language teaching becomes an insurmountable task for the teacher to assess the individual language needs of each learner (Ju, 2013).

Theoretical Context

Before the establishment of second language acquisition as a discipline, behaviorist theory, popularized by Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1957), stated language learning is a process of habit formation (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). The language learning process mirrored the Pavlovian construct of conditioning, following the concepts of stimulus, response, and reinforcement (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020). In opposition to behaviorist theory, cognitive or mentalist theory, as advocated by Noam Chomsky (1959), argued that language acquisition is an innate property of the learner to learn a language; therefore, language acquisition is not a function of habit formation (Larsen-Freeman, 2019; Al-Rickaby, 2023). The theory further stated that speakers are capable of understanding and producing language they have never encountered; therefore, it is the speakers' intuitive knowledge of the rules of the language that makes this possible (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). Chomsky (1966) referred to this innate property and knowledge as the "language acquisition device" (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020, p. 1016).

Psycholinguistic theory regarding second language acquisition deals with the psychology of learning a language and its learning process (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). Stephen Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model was influenced by Chomsky's Universal Grammar (Lai & Wei, 2019). The Monitor Model consists of five interdependent hypotheses, which include the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. The sociocultural theory of second language acquisition is expanded by the concept of linguistic competence and argues that communicative competence

ought to be considered (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). More broadly, sociocultural theory positions the learner as entrenched in varying sociocultural contexts, and by way of social interaction with others, cognitive development is advanced. Most notably, the sociocultural theorist Vygotsky (1978) viewed human actions as taking place in cultural contexts; these contexts are governed by language, and optimal knowledge-building occurs when human actions are in context (Alkhudiry, 2022).

Modern cognitive second language acquisition theories state that learning occurs in a unit of explanation understood as the brain-body-environment and not only in one's head (Larsen-Freeman, 2019). A prominent contemporary cognitive theory is usage-based linguistics. Usage-based theories are grounded in the assumption that linguistic systems are exercised in usage events or utterances (Javadi & Kazemirad, 2020). Through practical usage and experience within the context of social interaction, language is learned. This intuition is understood as a model of linguistic representation labeled "usage-based theory" (Javadi & Kazemirad, 202, p. 473; Jing-Schmidt, 2018).

Shulman (1987) identified pedagogical content knowledge as an amalgam of both content and pedagogy, which is unique to the teacher and is their own type of professional understanding. The categories of teachers' knowledge are defined as subject, general pedagogical, and curriculum knowledge. Additionally, knowledge regarding learners, their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical (Berry et al., 2016). Shulman's theory stated that teachers need to have subject-specific knowledge and content knowledge regarding the aforementioned theories, methods, and pedagogy.

Problem Statement

The problem is inconsistent teacher training and professional development in ESL among foreign instructors in China teaching at the university level. According to Li and Peng (2022), many ESL instructors lack the capacity and professional knowledge to ensure task and outcome accuracy in a communicative English language teaching context. Rahman et al. (2018) found that content knowledge and English proficiency were problems with classroom English teachers. Instructors attribute difficulty using CLT to their English deficiency (Wafi, 2023), and language teacher training broadly does not emphasize pronunciation, thereby leaving instructors unable to systematically improve learner pronunciation issues (Levis, 2022). Furthermore, in China, teachers are not trained in CLT, leaving them unable to answer detailed questions about the target language, sociolinguistics, or culture, as they arise from interactions in the classroom (Dos Santos, 2020). Moreover, Rizzuto (2018) explored the knowledge level of teachers who teach ELL students and found that the amount of knowledge and training that teachers possess directly affects what and how the students learn.

The effect that teacher knowledge level has can be seen in pre-service trainee instructors whose undergraduate education is viewed as not providing them with the necessary language training, thereby impeding instructor competence (Gan & Chi-Cheung, 2018). English language learners need to have a command of the second language acquisition theories relevant to language acquisition to better their teaching practice (Austin-Archil, 2019). Overall, research regarding teacher education programs intended to provide preparation to mainstream instructors engaging English language learners is sparse (de Jong et al., 2018; de Jong, 2019; de Jong & Naranjo, 2019; de Jong, 2021; Hamada & Miller, 2023). Additionally, research regarding the preparation of instructors integrating ELL best practices, skills, and related knowledge into their

current practice is similarly sparse (de Jong et al., 2018). Thus, I will explore foreign English as an additional language teachers' lived experiences regarding teacher training and professional development who are teaching English for academic purposes at Chinese universities in Mainland China.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe the lived experiences of university ESL instructors in China who had or were currently teaching at the tertiary level as it relates to teacher training and preparation programs. The theory guiding this study was Shulman's Theory (1987) of pedagogical content knowledge. The categories of teachers' knowledge are defined as subject, general pedagogical, and curriculum knowledge. Teachers' knowledge are additionally defined as, knowledge regarding learners, their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (Berry et al., 2016).

Significance of the Study

English teachers in China lack pedagogical content knowledge in terms of English language knowledge, pedagogical method, and strategy knowledge, including knowledge regarding the needs of English learners (Chen & Goh, 2011; Chen & Goh, 2014; Yazdanpanah, 2015; Yang, 2020).

Theoretical

While teaching English as an additional language in China, foreign teachers can gain professional knowledge and experience in their respective fields. Language instructors gain the knowledge they need through teacher preparation programs, workplace orientation, on-the-job learning, and ongoing professional development (Tziona et al., 2023). However, most teachers in

the ESL context learn teaching by themselves without being conferred teaching qualifications or without having received systematic training (Li & Peng, 2020).

Shulman's Theory (1987) of Pedagogical Content Knowledge suggested seven knowledge bases that teachers must have to be effective and successful, namely "(i) content knowledge; (ii) general pedagogical knowledge; (iii) curriculum knowledge; (iv) pedagogical content knowledge; (v) knowledge of learners and their characteristics; (vi) knowledge of educational contexts; and (vii) knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Through this study, teachers' pedagogical content knowledge will be understood. As criterion sampling was used, teachers functioning within a specific teaching context will be understood. Trends in the absence of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) can be identified across participants, thereby advancing the theory into international ESL teaching and services as a diagnostic tool.

Empirical

Research regarding the preparation of instructors integrating ELL best practices, skills, and related knowledge into their current practice is sparse (de Jong et al., 2018). Additionally, trends within the small amount of data available on ELL teacher education programs and development point toward an acknowledgment of inadequate teacher education preparation systems (de Jong, 2021). The study contributes to the existing literature by exploring the lived experiences of ESL teachers who have undergone teacher training and preparation, including how that relates to perceived learner outcomes, particularly in China. Moreover, this study contributes to previous research by adding to the qualitative literature regarding traditional ESL teacher professional development and contemporary online teacher professional development.

Additionally, this study contributes to efforts to address the preparation of pre-service

teacher educators and stakeholders who are responsible for the professional development of in-service teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare teachers for working with ESLs (Brisk, 2008; Bunch, 2013; Costa et al., 2011; Nevárez-La Torre et al., 2008; Walqui, 2011). This study contributes to the existing literature by giving foreign ESL teachers living abroad a voice so scholars and other stakeholders can better understand the need for investment in teacher training. Awareness and understanding of these experiences benefit English language education and assessment stakeholders. as they make decisions regarding English language education, assessment, and expectations.

Practical

Research conducted could be helpful to foreign language teachers, general education classroom teachers, higher education professionals, administrators and managers, directors of studies, and a variety of stakeholders in the ESL industry. ESL directors of studies, administrators, and managers have a direct impact on teacher training, teacher professional development, teacher pre-service and on-the-job credentials, continuing professional development, and workshops. Such methods of professional development have an additional impact on learners' futures and teachers' lived experiences.

Through this study, stakeholders may be aided in devising professional development curricula and strategies for preparing teachers to be better able to teach. The research may provide them with an insight into the lived experiences of foreign language teachers living in the largest market for ESL, and their experiences with teacher training. After understanding more about the professional experiences of these teachers, stakeholders could modify their teaching and induction programs, creating training schemes to improve teacher pedagogical content knowledge thereby improving learner outcomes.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this research study. The sub-questions were directed by Shulman's theory (1987) of pedagogical content knowledge, which categorizes teachers' knowledge as defined by subject, general pedagogical, and curriculum knowledge. Furthermore, pedagogical content knowledge includes knowledge regarding learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (Berry et al., 2016).

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of university ESL instructors in China who teach at the university level?

Sub-Question One

What are the lived experiences of university ESL instructors in China who teach at the university level with employer-provided teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses?

Sub-Question Two

What are the lived experiences of university ESL instructors in China who teach at the university level with self-funded teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses?

Sub-Question Three

What are the lived experiences of university ESL instructors in China who teach at the university level post-teacher training and/or teacher preparation coursework?

Definitions

1. *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)* - Refers to an approach to language instruction that accentuates the cultivation of communicative competence in language learning (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

2. *Connectivist Massive Open Online Courses (cMOOC)* - Course content is based on socio-constructivist perspectives and the design principles of learner autonomy, diversity, openness, and interactivity (Griffiths, 2021).

3. *English Language Learners (ELL)* - English language learners. A national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits (DoE, 2020).

4. *English as a Second Language (ESL)* - A program of techniques, methodology, and special curriculum designed to teach ELL students English language skills, which may include listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation. ESL instruction is usually in English with little use of the native language (DoE, 2020).

5. *Extended Massive Open Online Courses (xMOOC)* - Course content is focused chiefly on the dissemination of content, which is completed via specialized video-oriented learning platforms utilizing lecture videos, integrated quizzes, and short online tests for automated assessment (Griffiths, 2021).

6. *Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)* - MOOCs are unique from conventional courses due to their massive and open dimensions and are typically rooted in established pedagogical models and learning theories (Amado, 2022).

7. *Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)* - PCKs are defined as the integration or amalgamation of pedagogy and content which covers the 'what' and 'how' of teaching (Shulman, 1985).

8. *Pedagogical Language Knowledge (PLK)* - The pedagogical language knowledge that teachers should possess is knowledge regarding grammatical features of content-area texts, systemic functional linguistics, and tools central to analyzing the language features central to academic work (Bunch, 2013).

9. *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)* – TPACK refers to a teacher's knowledge on how to develop specific didactic strategies on different matters using information and communication technologies (ICT) to facilitate learning (Moreno et al., 2019).

10. *The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)* - UNESCO promotes knowledge sharing and the free flow of ideas to accelerate mutual understanding and a more perfect knowledge of each other's lives (UNESCO, 2023).

Summary

Pang (2019) advocated on behalf of anchoring EFL/ESL practice in second language acquisition theory when describing a quality language learning process. A lack of teacher training, on-the-job training, and professional development in the English as an additional language learning field can negatively impact learner and teacher outcomes. The objective of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of foreign university English as an additional language instructor in China who had or were currently teaching at the tertiary level as it relates to teacher training and preparation programs. Through understanding the larger societal teaching context, the methods used to teach learners in the

societal context, and the theory underpinning the teaching methods, can build teacher

pedagogical content knowledge and meet the needs of learners.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to contextualize the inconsistent implementation of teacher training and preparation programs in ESL, including to illustrate the need for understanding the lived experiences of foreign ESL teachers. Chapter two provides a review of the research on this topic. In the first section, the theories relevant to teacher training and preparation in ESL are discussed, namely the theory of situated learning and pedagogical content knowledge, followed by a review of recent literature on current and historical second language acquisition theory. Then, current and historical ESL methodology and pedagogy is discussed. Next, an overview of English language learning in China is discussed and the issues that the internationalization of English brought. After that, the most current ESL teaching methodology and theory surrounding teacher training and preparation in ESL is discussed. Finally, a gap in the literature has been identified, demonstrating that there needs to be more research regarding the lived experience of foreign ESL university teachers regarding inconsistent implementation of teacher training and preparation programs in ESL.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework offers a means by which a social phenomenon can be described, clarified, or analyzed (Wacker, 1998). The theoretical framework chosen to understand the problem of learners not having their questions correctly and effectively answered is Shulman's (1987) Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge. The theory was chosen as it relates not only to becoming teaching professionals, but, more broadly, relates to the development of specialized teacher knowledge within a specialized content area. Shulman (1987) posited that an instructor needs to have seven knowledge bases in order to teach effectively and successfully. The seven

knowledge bases are "(i) content knowledge; (ii) general pedagogical knowledge; (iii) curriculum knowledge; (iv) pedagogical content knowledge; (v) knowledge of learners and their characteristics; (vi) knowledge of educational contexts; and (vii) knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Shulman's theory is utilized in this study as a way of understanding why instructors may be unable to correctly and effectively answer student inquiries.

The Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge stated that teachers must possess the seven knowledge bases to teach effectively and successfully (Shulman,1987). Therefore, if a teacher is unable to correctly and effectively respond to student inquiry, the teacher must thereby be lacking about one or more of the seven knowledge bases. Clermont et al. (1993) stated that successful teachers are those with highly developed pedagogical content knowledge that can be enhanced through intensive intervention and skills-oriented workshops. Grossman (1990) expanded the pedagogical content knowledge conception, adding four central components. Mishra and Koehler (2006) further expanded PCK theory by adding a technological component or Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). Many studies have been developed following these models (Moreno et al., 2019).

With special regard to English language learning and teaching, Shulman's (1987) Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge was drawn upon to better understand the knowledge about language that English language teachers need (Bunch, 2013). According to Kidwell et al. (2021), researchers have designated this understanding of content-area language use as pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013; Galguera, 2011). Ball (2000) and Jay (2009) raised questions surrounding what pedagogical language knowledge and degree of language awareness should comprise the core knowledge base of language teachers (Bunch, 2013). Kidwell et al. (2021)

stated that Galguera (2011) and Bunch (2013) expounded on the work of Shulman (1987), who identified pedagogical content knowledge (PCK).

Galguera (2011) identified "critical language awareness (p.85)," which is at the heart of pedagogical language knowledge. Pedagogical language knowledge ought to be supplemented by linguistics, second language acquisition knowledge, bilingualism, and various other language-related knowledge bases (Bunch, 2013; Valdés et al., 2005). The pedagogical language knowledge that teachers should possess is knowledge regarding grammatical features of content-area texts, systematic functional linguistics, and tools central to analyzing the language features central to academic work (Bunch, 2013). Galguera (2011) stated, "Opportunities to examine specific functions of language in academic contexts and experience ways in which language is used to represent knowledge in classrooms, as well as the power and status differences encoded in language [that teachers] begin to construct deep understandings of language" (p. 90).

English, as an additional language teachers abroad, often teach English for academic purposes; therefore, they require academic content knowledge. The ability to teach content-specific language is PCK. Kidwell et al. (2021) claimed that instructors with well-developed PLK have a greater awareness of the linguistic features of their content areas, and the best approach to imparting content-specific lexis, text structures, and genres needs to be unpacked, examined, and made accessible to learners. Kidwell et al. (2021) view PLK "as an essential contributor to novice teachers' ability to enact the CP supporting language and literacy development" (p.3). I seek to further extend Shulman's (1987) model applicability into the realm of international English as an additional language teaching.

Related Literature

Literature regarding teacher training and professional development is extensive. The literature review section will provide a synthesis of the most recent literature regarding teacher preparation and professional development. The following study has been formulated based on the gap that was discovered in the literature that follows. The most recent literature is focused on teacher training and professional development from an international viewpoint, teacher credentialing and qualification, international teaching training reformation, and the absence and need for English as an additional language teacher training in education.

The literature has provided evidence that research on ESL teachers and the effectiveness of and experiences with teacher teaching is sparse. Moreover, research on foreign ESL teachers who teach at China's university level is scant. Furthermore, research on foreign ESL teachers working in the Chinese university system and their experiences with teacher teaching is similarly meager. The literature included qualitative studies, and the literature has a gap in the inclusion. A review of current literature reveals an absence of information related to foreign ESL teachers' lived experiences regarding teacher training and professional development who have taught English for academic purposes at Chinese universities on Mainland China.

Teacher Training Globally

Broadly speaking, many modern teacher preparation programs state their mission as creating socially just and culturally responsive educators (Jez, 2020). Teacher training in the contemporary sense declares a commitment to wholly inclusive education, where culturally and socially responsive instructors are created and prepared to teach learners who are diverse ethnically and racially, who are English language learners, who are multilingual learners or emergent bilingual learners, who are special needs learners, and who are learners with

disabilities. Inclusive education demonstrates a continuous commitment by the international community to strive toward basic educational equity (Florian, 2021). Furthermore, inclusive education seeks to bring down impediments to the participation of marginalized individuals and groups in education (Florian, 2021; UNESCO, 2017).

Within inclusive education, multiple variations or specialties of education exist, as stated by Florian (2021), which are bilingual education, special education, culturally responsive teaching, social justice education, and urban education. Four distinct understandings of inclusive education were synthesized by Göransson and Nilholm (2014), which are the inclusion and placement of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, the meeting of the social and or academic needs of learners with disabilities, the meeting of the social and or academic needs of all learners, and inclusion as the creation of community. Regarding teacher training and the improvement of learner achievement, teacher quality is important (Loyalka et al., 2019). Identifying quality characteristics within systems for teachers' education and professional development is important (Lopes, 2019). How to improve educational systems and by extension learner outcomes is already known.

Quality characteristics identified in relation to initial teacher education include, first, curriculum development and management are of greater importance than curriculum organization, and to this end, theory and practice and teacher development must emphasize and expand the ability of instructors to teach diverse learners. Particular attention in teacher education and professional development systems must be given to the construction of pedagogical thinking capacities to allow instructors to diagnostically manage the teaching process (Lopes, 2019). Secondly, in-depth knowledge must be developed regarding child development and learning and pedagogy with a final summative assessment involving the

research of a practice-based problem. Third, teaching and managing difficult learners should be the emphasis and once the difficult learner has been managed, learning how to teach and manage all students can be done. Fourth, student teaching should take place in special teacher training schools run by universities with similar practices and curricula to public schools. Fifth, teachers should be trained in supervision, teacher professional development, and assessment. Lastly, teacher training programs have developed research in relation to the university's teacher training department.

In addition to what is known in relation to what quality characteristics within systems for teachers' education and professional development are, recommendations have been made specific to teacher education and development by UNESCO (2008). The recommendations coincide with a growing international awareness surrounding the importance of preparing classroom teachers for inclusive education. The recommendations include, first, the reinforcement of the instructor through the improvement of social status and working conditions, creating systems to recruit appropriate teacher candidates, and retaining well-qualified instructors (Florian, 2021; UNESCO; 2008). Second, teachers ought to be trained and equipped with the necessary skills and materials to engage diverse learner populations.

Professional development at the school and pre-service training level should include instruction on how to meet the needs of the diverse learning needs of different categories of learners (Florian, 2021; UNESCO; 2008). Third, recognize the strategic role that university education plays in pre-service and professional teacher training and inclusive education. Fourth, support research in relation to inclusive education and teaching and learning processes. Fifth, arm school administrators with the ability to deal with the diverse needs of all learners and to

promote inclusivity. Lastly, remain aware of learner, teacher, and school protection during conflict.

Despite understanding and recommendations, there are still structural issues with teacher education programs. Despite the call for inclusive education, teachers remain siloed in educational categories and are inhibited by instructional labels (Florian, 2021). Teacher education programs themselves are antithetical to the broad knowledge-based instruction that is required to maneuver diversity. Teacher education programs are categorized as primary, secondary, general education, special education, among others; these teacher education program categories may include coursework on diversity as an addendum but do not provide instructors with the tools they need for inclusive education practice. Florian cited effective teachers as combining practical skills and the ability to comprehend and utilize research as a means to develop teaching ability. Moreover, the inclusion of content knowledge on types of disabilities and difficulties should be integrated into standing coursework or the addition of addendum specialist courses.

However, while addendum specialist coursework and infusion models embed content knowledge into teacher education programs which effectively promote attitudes toward inclusive education, there is little evidence that this addendum coursework method impacts teaching practice (Florian, 2021). Many instructors continued to feel underprepared for inclusive education. Additionally, many teacher candidates had difficulty with student teaching and feelings of being overwhelmed, lacked support, negative mentors, feeling a lack of autonomy while teaching, and inadequate feedback (Jez, 2020).

Within an American public school teaching context, there is an increase in learners who are multilingual while the majority of instructors are monolingual English speakers (Bacon,

2020). Mills et al. (2020) found that there was a disconnect between teacher preparation programs and confessed desire to redress issues of equity and the implementation of work to do so. Furthermore, no uniform nationwide set of requirements for training teacher candidates to work with multilingual workers exists (Jez, 2020). Much effort has been made to address the dual issues of diversity and difference in teacher education in inclusive contexts, but the knowledge base on the issue of teacher education remains fragmented (Florian, 2021). Also, special education content knowledge is inadequate in the improvement of in-school practice, as it does not sufficiently connect broader pedagogical content knowledge and curriculum imperatives that teacher candidates must learn and apply.

The knowledge, skills, and values that instructors require to effectively practice inclusive education are the ability to integrate theory and practical skills, the ability to build relationships with the objective of improving outcomes, the ability to develop inclusive pedagogy and collaborative skills and attitudes, an awareness of diverse learner home environments, broad comprehension of change in education and its impact on learning in contexts of exclusion and disadvantage, and capacity for reflection and inquiry (Florian, 2021).

Teacher quality is also important for improving student achievement in an international context (Loyalka et al., 2019). Instructors in developing countries often lack the required knowledge and skill to impact learner outcomes positively and are poorly prepared to teach. As reported by UNESCO (2018), there are many disparities in educational funding and in approaches to teacher education, preparation, and teacher qualifications across global regions. Policymakers in developing countries are establishing professional development schemes to mirror those of developed countries (Loyalka et al., 2019). As inclusive education in teaching practice and teacher education takes root, international concern around the preparedness of

instructors is mounting (Florian, 2021). Teacher qualification and education disparities exist in different parts of the world and are further exacerbated by macro and micro conditions. The reformation of teacher training programs and systems is a global issue that institutions worldwide are working to change. Borawska-Kalbarczyk and Tołwińska (2019) have called for the systematic evaluation of teacher training in contrast with the rapidly changing classroom environment.

The Absence of and Need for English as an Additional Language in Teacher Education

There is a lack of both in-service and pre-service teacher training courses as it relates to the demands of English language learning (Archila & Truscott de Mejía, 2020; Camargo Cely, 2018; McDougald, & Pissarello, 2020). Research regarding teacher education programs intended to provide preparation to mainstream instructors engaging English language learners is sparse (de Jong et al., 2018; de Jong, 2019; de Jong & Naranjo, 2019; de Jong, 2021; Hamada & Miller, 2023). Additionally, research regarding the preparation of instructors to integrate ELL best practices, skills, and related knowledge into their current practice is similarly sparse (de Jong et al., 2018). There exists a scarcity of research that focuses on the analysis of trends in research on English language teacher training and development (Eren & Kurt, 2019).

Trends within the small amount of data available on ELL teacher education programs and development point toward an acknowledgment of inadequate teacher education preparation systems (de Jong, E., 2021). An acknowledgment of inadequate teacher education preparation systems can be seen, as demonstrated by pre-service trainee instructors whose undergraduate education is viewed as not providing them with the necessary language training, thereby impeding instructor competence (Gan & Chi Cheung, 2018). An acknowledgment of inadequate

teacher education preparation systems can also be seen through the lens of many ELL instructors not possessing any formal training in teaching (Millard et al., 2020).

Teachers themselves are cognizant of the impact that their lack of formal training has on the learners in their charge (Millard et al., 2020). Pre-service ESL teacher trainees require English language preparation programs that promote the development of skills in anticipatory reflection to better manage the classroom environment (Gan, 2018). Ali (2018) found that additional specialized training and professional development are required by teachers. Eren & Kurt (2019) stated that both pre-service and in-service language instructors would benefit from training programs abroad; teacher development opportunities must be created and furnished by the educational institution administration.

Morton (2019) reported more specifically on current issues within content-based English language learning and teaching. The author found key issues relating to the English teaching subset, such as the lack of in-service and initial teacher preparation programs. Additionally, a greater understanding is needed regarding teacher training and professional development needs. The absence of adequate resources for teacher education and professional development has been reported as an international phenomenon. Regarding in-service training programs dedicated to methodologies used to teach a subject other than the normal language of instruction, it has been stated that there is virtually no initial training.

Novice teachers in the United States reported feeling unprepared and claimed they lacked adequate training to teach multilingual student populations effectively (Kiramba et al., 2022). Moreover, there is a lack of training for teacher educators to aid in the use of correct teaching methods and a lack of specialized training regarding bilingual education (Morton, 2019). Pre-

service professional developments focused on language and content integration are virtually nonexistent for United States immersion teachers.

The Need for Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Coupled with the need for specialized training and professional development within ESL, the theme or issue of deficient pedagogic and content knowledge was present. Instructors have few opportunities for ESL pedagogy training (Millard et al., 2020). Knowledge of the target language, English, and the inadequate command of spoken English prevent non-native instructors from adhering to basic pedagogy and methodology (Gan & Chi Cheung, 2018). Teachers often struggle with the reality that they are responsible for both content knowledge and language integration knowledge (Morton, 2019). Distinct specialized professional knowledge exists within every professional context (Jacob et al., 2020; Freeman, 2020).

Instructors who work directly with learners with language-based disabilities or deficiencies must be well-versed in the systematic knowledge of language teaching (Mitchell, 2019). In addition to understanding and possessing a strong professional knowledge base, teachers must also possess field and pedagogic capabilities which are typically gained through professional teaching training programs (Kurnaz & Özbay, 2020). When developing in-service teachers, emphasis should additionally be placed on classroom performance, understanding the teacher's belief system, and developing and maintaining pre-service instructors (Kurnaz & Özbay, 2020). Kurnaz & Özbay stated that having an understanding of the language system grammatically and lexically may not be enough for the language teacher. General education teachers are generally not well equipped with the knowledge and needed skills to teach English language learners (Mitchell, 2019). Millions of learners are instructed by general educators who are not specifically trained to work with them.

Domain-specific knowledge related to specific expertise is content knowledge (Jacob et al., 2020). Regarding foreign language pedagogical and content knowledge, Levi et al. (2023) found that many teacher education programs do not provide prospective language teachers with the required pedagogical and content knowledge to raise the second language proficiency of learners. Furthermore, methods of development have still not been created to guarantee that all instructors possess adequate linguistic proficiency. The importance of content and language integration in professional development has been reported by Morton (2019).

There is an explicit need for instructors with limited target language proficiency to engage in the continued development of subject knowledge to maximize language learning opportunities (Gan & Yang, 2018). Eren & Kurt (2019) outlined the need for instructors to be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to engage multilingual and cultural learners. To add further complexity to the issue, de Jong et al. (2018) wrote about the relationship between teachers and teacher training, implying that the quality of teacher education courses hinges on the quality of instructors teaching them (Ruecker, 2021).

Utility of Reflective Practice

The need for reflective practice regarding individual instructors' professional behaviors is critical (Levi et al., 2023). Reflective teaching is a ubiquitous term used in professional teacher training (Tun & Habók, 2021). However, while reflective teaching is commonly referred to within pre-service teacher education, its role and function are largely ignored by both students and instructors (Tang, 2021), even though reflective teaching is an important learning component (Oo & Habók, 2020). Reflective practice can be used to assess what is already known by the instructor, adding additional information, with the desired result of drawing out new knowledge, meaning, and greater levels of understanding (Tun & Habók, 2021).

Through reflective teaching, instructors can objectively assess their instructional behaviors before, after, and during instructional processes (Tun & Habók, 2021). Reflection is paramount to the maturation of novice teachers and ought to be encouraged through methods of self-assessment and evaluation (Levi et al., 2023). Reflection can ensure the continual improvement of teachers' instruction (Tun & Habók, 2021). Learners and novice instructors must develop dual skills, as they affect each other; as teaching is developed, greater and more profound reflections can be made. Subsequently, the more developed the reflection, the greater the gains made in one's teaching (Levi et al., 2023).

A review of current literature revealed an absence of information related to foreign English as an additional language teachers' lived experiences regarding teacher training and professional development who are teaching English for academic purposes at Chinese universities in Mainland China. Learning English as an additional language, instructors must understand how to teach English language learners and command the second language acquisition theories relevant to language acquisition to better their teaching practice (Austin-Archil, 2019).

Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development is a fundamental part of teacher education (Li, 2022). According to Carney et al. (2019) and Haug and Mork (2021), professional development bolsters teachers' professional attitudes and abilities, creates better schools, and develops learner achievement and learning processes. A comprehensive conceptual framework for teacher professional development was posited by Sancar (2021), and the conceptual framework attributes professional development centrally as a process beginning at teachers' college and ending at retirement.

Professional development is a broad term (Kalinowski et al., 2019). Researchers have yet to offer a complete understanding of the concept, scope, and features of teacher professional development (Komba & Mwakabenga, 2019). To facilitate professional development for teachers, stakeholders must comprehend how teachers mature professionally and the conditions that are conducive to that maturation (Sancar et al., 2021). Korthagen (2017) viewed teacher professional development as a focused process emphasizing teacher needs, focuses, prospects, emotions, motivations, and dreams. Several researchers have offered definitions of professional development (Deen, 2023). As defined by Kalinowski et al. (2019), professional development is understood as purposeful, formal, organized learning and/or training opportunities for in-service instructors.

Diaz-Maggioli (2003) defined professional development as a continuous process where instructors are willfully engaged in activities to improve and better understand how best to tailor the learning process to meet the needs of learners. Deen (2023) posited professional development as a lifelong endeavor that is an earnest attempt by the instructor to improve their being. Additionally, professional development may be defined as support given to instructors so that they may be more responsible for engaging in continuous learning, planning, and reflection with colleagues regarding teaching practice (Deen, 2023). Finally, Avalos (2011) viewed professional development as transformative, arguing that it is a process of teacher learning, learning how to learn, and changing teacher knowledge into practice to the benefit of their learners.

Professional development in concrete terms takes place in formal and informal spaces inside and outside of educational institutions (Luesse, 2022). Several activities are considered professional development, including "workshops, conferences and seminars, participation in networks, collaboration, research, reading, observation, mentoring, and coaching" (Luesse et al.,

2022, p. 3). Moreover, alternative structures of professional development exist, which includes intensive single workshops, professional development that includes both learners and teaching in tandem, including the integration of informal and formal learning opportunities (Perry, 2023).

Professional teacher development can be delineated in terms of traditional and new approaches (Sancar et al., 2021). Guskey (2003) described the traditional approach to professional development as promoting the processes and activities that increase teachers' professional content knowledge, skills, and the adoption of stances and attitudes to enhance student learning. Additionally, the traditional approach encompasses all activities instructors engage in for the duration of their careers that are designed to enhance their work (Sancar et al., 2021). Traditional teacher professional development overall is viewed as teaching activities that focus on elevating teacher learning and shifting teacher classroom practices thereby improving learner outcomes (Sancar et al., 2021; Fischer et al., 2018). Knight and Skrtic (2020) stated that research has shown that traditional forms of professional development seldom culminate in substantial changes in instructional practices or student outcomes.

New or contemporary approaches to teacher professional development rest on the situate perspective which allows for focus to be placed more on the individual (Sancar et al., 2021). Contemporary professional development practices focus on instructor teaching and learning practices. The learning and teaching practices are situated within individual, social, and occupational dimensions and are collaborative, self-directed in a learning environment, and inquisitive. In this way, teacher professional development becomes an aspect of the instructors' lifelong learning; teacher professional development is the accumulation of skill, professional knowledge, personal qualities, and values.

Recent studies have portrayed professional development as collaborative and situated in teachers' instructional contexts (Ehrenfeld, 2022). Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2020) identified six characteristics that when present and integrated into professional development increase the effectiveness of said professional development. The characteristics are described as critical and important features. Firstly, professional development is said to be more effective if it occurs over a sustained period of time. Additionally, professional development ought to be organized cyclically thereby making the process reiterative. The reiterative nature of the professional development allows for the assimilation of new teacher knowledge and is in opposition to particularly ineffective one-day development sessions. Secondly, Cordingley et al. (2015) stated that professional development that occurs in a group is more effective.

When professional development occurs within a group context, teachers are able to challenge one another, provide clarity when misunderstandings occur among peers, and propagate a community of practice; this is in opposition to the transmission of information from a teacher trainer to participants which is markedly ineffective (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Thirdly, the effectiveness of professional development increases when teachers identify with and endorse participating in it. Voluntary engagement with professional development increases its effectiveness in contrast to obligatory or compulsory development. Fourthly, according to Cordingley et al. (2015), the effectiveness of professional development also increases when the subject matter of the training pertains to the instructor's specific content knowledge.

When professional development includes training on general pedagogical knowledge and subject-specific content knowledge training becomes more effective (Li, 2022; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Fifth, when professional development involves external expertise, it is more effective (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). Lastly, professional

development is more effective when opportunities for the implementation, application, and use of what is learned are provided to teachers (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020).

In addendum to the six characteristics which when present and integrated into professional development increase the effectiveness of said professional development by Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2020), Li (2022) outlines additional features. Visser et al. (2010) stated that effective professional development must be able to offer teachers instructional strategies and assessment methods. Teacher professional development should also delve into teaching and learning challenges, hardships, and aspects of good practice (Li, 2022). According to Capps et al. (2012), effective teacher professional development should promote scientific and inquiry-based teaching with authentic experiences for teachers.

As stated by Park Rogers et al. (2010), the chief goal of effective professional development should be to increase student learning and ought to take into account learner needs; therefore, teacher trainers must demonstrate how to utilize learner data to inform and improve teaching practice. Effective teacher professional development equips teachers with the ability to assess student needs, design appropriate assessments, and continuously change the standards-based curriculum to suit student-specific learning needs (Li, 2022). Broadly speaking, the consensus surrounding effective professional development mandates it should be "long-term, content-focused, inquiry-based, learner-centered, and incorporate active learning. Such PD utilizes adult learning theory; provides opportunities for feedback and reflection; supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts; and supports teachers with learning communities" (Luesse et al., 2022, p.3).

Kalinowski et al. (2019) measured the effectiveness of teacher professional development in terms of levels: instructor contentment with and acceptance of professional development

intervention, teacher maturation in terms of knowledge, motivation, and beliefs, teacher classroom practice, and student learning. Kalinowski et al. additionally observed a range of features that successful teacher training has in common. The features can be organized concerning the structure of the intervention or the structural features of the teacher's professional development. The content of the intervention or content-related features and the manner in which the content is delivered or its didactic features. Didactic features of teacher professional development include feedback and the integration of an input phase; following this input phase, the newly gained knowledge should be implemented and concluded with reflection on the new practice.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Professional Development

The primary benefit of offering and engaging in teacher professional development courses is providing teachers with the ability to improve their theoretical and practical knowledge and teaching expertise (Borg, 2018; Setiawan & Kuswandono, 2020; Li, 2022). Additionally, professional development programs can spur fundamental changes in teacher practice, institutional quality, and learner achievement (Li, 2022). Moreover, teacher knowledge develops following the completion of teacher professional development courses (Borg, 2018; Setiawan & Kuswandono, 2020; Li, 2022). Christoforidou and Kyriakides (2021) found that teacher professional development bolsters and modifies instructor teaching style, planning, and assessment. Professional development, as stated by Darling-Hammond (1998), provides teachers with the ability to face a variety of challenges. The professional development courses offer teachers skills and tools to develop learner motivation and present teaching materials in experiential and innovative manners (Wasserman & Migdal, 2019). Finally, professional training courses have begun to develop teachers' technological knowledge (Wasserman & Migdal, 2019).

Several barriers impede teacher professional development in ESL (Deen, 2023). The barriers include a lack of external support, difficulty evolving or increasing subject knowledge, and the absence of seasoned colleagues who teach the same subject. In contrast to general education, foreign language pedagogy and professional development involve teaching multiple language aspects, developing communicative competence in the target language, understanding a myriad of language learning technologies, and understanding the sociocultural aspects of the target language and acquisition dynamics. Additional barriers to ESL teaching professional development include insufficient training, insufficient scaffolding from institution administration, insufficient time, and rigid hierarchical mandates.   Teachers must possess particular kinds of knowledge and command specific skills to successfully cultivate language development (Kalinowski et al., 2019). Yet, the majority of teachers do not possess the skills to address learner language proficiency. Teacher professional development in ESL has had an impact on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and classroom behaviors (Li, 2022). With respect to ESL professional development and teacher readiness represent a pivotal aspect (Deen, 2023).

Effectiveness of Professional Development

Darling-Hammond and Snowden (2007) offered seven characteristics of effective professional development within the context of ESL, which are "content focused; incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory; supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts; uses models and modeling of effective practice; provides coaching and expert support; offers opportunities for feedback and reflection, and; is of sustained duration" (p. 5–6). In-service ESL teachers are recommended to undergo professional development to revise, improve, and enhance their teaching skills and subject matter knowledge (Deen, 2023).

Contemporary Modes of Professional Development

As previously established, professional development is an invaluable aspect of teachers'
continuous and ongoing growth (Parsons, 2019; Fischer et al., 2018). Emergent and differing
forms of professional development are becoming ubiquitous, in particular online professional
development (Parsons, 2019). Online professional development can be defined "as structured,
formal professional learning that is provided entirely online, resulting in changes to teacher
knowledge, behavior, and practices" (Bragg et al., 2021, p. 2). Over the last several years, the
popularity of online and blended professional development learning has increased; in addition to
being the fastest-growing field regarding the use of educational technology (Paulsen, 2019). As a
result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergency response to the global disruption of
international education systems, an abrupt shift toward online learning has occurred; the
COVID-19 pandemic facilitated the re-assessment of the role of online learning in education
(UNESCO, 2020; Parsons, 2019).

Parsons (2019) argued that online professional development has the uncommon and
unique potential to engage teacher learners globally. Means et al. (2013) offered a rationale for
the implementation of online professional development learning which includes its cost-
effectiveness, the increase in accessibility of learning and educational opportunities, and
increased professional development proliferation. There is minimal impact on teacher learners'
time resources, transportation fees, and absence from work (Wasserman & Migdal, 2019).
Learner autonomy is a hallmark of online professional development where institutions can offer
arresting, self-determined, asynchronous professional development at a scale which can extend
to geographically dispersed teacher learners (Bragg et al. 2021). Teacher learners have the ability
to choose the institutions of study according to their level of professionalism (Wasserman &

Migdal, 2019). Online continued professional development formats are more flexible than traditional on-site training alternatives (Hertz et al., 2021).

Wasserman and Migdal (2019) additionally outline several disadvantages associated with online teacher professional development which include feelings of learner insolation and disconnection, a lack of immediate and effective feedback on questions and tasks that leads to learner frustration, the absences of nonverbal communication among teachers and learners diminishing learner confidence, a lack of contact with peers resulting in negative effects on learning, and the potential for technical problems that impede learning. Drange and Roarson (2015), Fraj-Hussein et al. (2012), Hershkowitz and Kaberman (2009), Mabrito (2005), Sela (2005), and Worley and Tesdell (2009) all positioned the high level of self-discipline required for online coursework as a negative.

Effective Contemporary Teacher Professional Development

Portillo and Lopez de la Serna (2020) offered the six most important aspects of teacher professional development regarding how to teach in an online learning context. First, within the online professional development context, a supportive environment must be developed and designed for teacher learners. Second, the learning context itself must be acknowledged. Third, teacher maturation must be acknowledged as a transition from traditional forms of professional development give way to online learning. Fourth, the goals and relevancy of teacher professional development in an online context must be established. Fifth, teacher professional development strategies in association with the transition from traditional forms of professional development to online learning must be acknowledged. Sixth, teacher-learners must be informed on knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding online professional development and how to best evaluate it. Effective teacher professional development covers subject-specific matter, prolonged

engagement over time with said subject-specific material, and interactive experiences (Parsons et al., 2019).

Effective professional development overall, according to Hertz et al. (2021), integrates the following seven elements: "content focus, active learning opportunities, support for teacher collaboration, models of effective practice, coaching and expert support, time for reflection and feedback, and is sustained duration" (p.143). Additionally, Hertz et al. pinpointed specific aspects that render online teacher professional development particularly effective. Powell and Bodur (2019) offered six implementation and design features that online professional development should utilize to be effective. Firstly, the training must address the teachers' specific learning needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hertz et al., 2021). Secondly, the training must be a useful means of solving issues regarding teaching practice, instruction, or student learning (Hertz et al., 2021).

Thirdly, the training must generate engagement through collaborative and interactive opportunities for learners in the online community (Hertz et al., 2021). Fourthly, the training should be reflective of the real world that the teacher trainees work in through the integration of authentic tasks and activities. Fifthly, the training should offer reflective opportunities for participants to contextualize newly acquired information within their personal teaching contexts. Finally, the training must provide understanding of how technology, content, pedagogy, and learners intersect.

Bragg et al. (2021) reported on the actual design elements present in successful or effective online professional development programs. The design elements include cratering to different individual learning styles through the implementation of differentiated activities and applications, consideration of program length and duration, and fostering of social interaction,

collaboration, and resource sharing as a means of engagement. The social interactions may be "facilitated or non-facilitated between peers, online program facilitator and students, inter-organizational collaboration, and the Learning Management Systemp. 7).

Teacher interaction may occur asynchronously or synchronously via online meetings and learner support is additionally delivered via asynchronous and synchronous activities (Bragg et al., 2021). Furthermore, successful or effective online professional development programs emphasize gaining additional pedagogical content knowledge to facilitate learner comprehension, embed practical, hands-on activities and authentic observations in the online learning materials, and promote the application of newly acquired knowledge in the field. Moreover, effective online professional development programs allow for flexibility through self-directed and paced learning, are relevant to the instructors' learning needs, and are goal-orientated. Finally, these programs take into consideration the life and professional experiences of the teacher-learners before the online experience with continuous teacher reflection on the content and learning experience embedded into the program.

Massive Open Online Course Professional Development

Within the realm of online and distance learning exists Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). MOOCs are unique from conventional courses due to their massive and open dimensions and are typically rooted in established pedagogical models and learning theories (Amado, 2022). Chiefly and ideally speaking, MOOCs are "free or low-cost Internet-based university courses or near equivalents" (Kögler, 2023, p. 205). MOOCs are online-based teaching regimens designed for the accommodation of thousands of learners without charging any fees (Billsberry & Alony, 2023). MOOCs, historically, have come out of academia, steeped in the philosophy of open education (Kögler, 2023). Mahajan et al. (2019) identified the four

elements that comprise MOOCs. As the acronym states. MOOCs are massive in scoop. They are explicitly designed for the enrollment of a vast to unlimited number of learner participants and no additional expenditure is required as participant enrollment increases (Mahajan et al., 2019).

MOOC courses are open, free of charge, and do not mandate prerequisite enrollment qualifications or certifications (Mahajan et al., 2019). The medium of delivery is online and resources are doled out over the Internet. Lastly, MOOCs are full courses complete with learning goals and objectives, course content, and learner assessment through formative and summative assessments with the presentation of certifications post-coursework. MOOCs are online learning environments that hinge on the variables of self-awareness, help, and regulation (Sezgin, 2020).

There are two generic MOOC models with differing underlying pedagogical approaches and distinct design frameworks (Griffiths 2021; Kögler et al., 2023). cMOOCs (connectivist MOOCs) provide collaborative, network-focused environments that encourage the development of connections between participants and the lecturer (Griffiths 2021; Herranen et al., 2021; Kögler et al., 2023). cMOOCs are crafted based on socio-constructivist perspectives and the design principles of learner autonomy, diversity, openness, and interactivity (Griffiths, 2021). cMOOCs can incorporate both synchronous and asynchronous learning and communication. Within the cMOOCs framework, knowledge is created through discussions, generating and sharing content, and social network activities (Kögler, 2023). In cMOOCs, learning is found via the collaboration of participants; therefore, the interplay between educator, content, and learner autonomy functions developmentally extending course content (Griffiths, 2021). Finally, cMOOCs are dependent on networked interactions and individualized sense-making where knowledge is gained through the process of construction through levels of ever-increasing collaboration (Griffiths 2021; Kögler et al., 2023).

By contrast, xMOOCs (eXtended MOOCs) are rooted in cognitive behavioral science (Griffiths 2021; Kögler et al., 2023). xMOOCs seek to deliver high-quality content to the participants and decentralize participant collaboration; they focus chiefly on the dissemination of content which is done via specialized video-oriented learning platforms utilizing lecture videos, integrated quizzes, and short online tests for automated assessment (Griffiths 2021; Herranen et al., 2021; Kögler et al., 2023). While the content present in cMOOCs is fragmented and is not tethered to the course, xMOOCs present coursework in a defined formal course structure where learner mastery is expected (Kögler et al., 2023). Teaching is conducted using lectures and instructional videos in xMOOCs. The primary design difference between xMOOCs and cMOOCs is how knowledge is transferred (Griffiths, 2021). The xMOOC design model is the predominant model within the context of online learning, and the model has become synonymous with large-scale video-based instruction and MOOC (Kögler et al., 2023). Research has demonstrated the relevance of MOOCs for teacher professional development (Herranen et al., 2021). Fidalgo-Blanco et al. (2016) offered a means of integrating the cMOOC and xMOOC models to produce stronger learning outcomes. The models would be combined by running them parallel and embedding the material created in the cMOOC in the xMOOC (Billsberry & Alony, 2023). Fidalgo-Blanco et al. (2016) found that completion rates rose more than 30% and learner sanctification improved.

Effective MOOCs Teacher Professional Development

Emerging research has shown that MOOCs are particularly effective in providing teacher learners with current content knowledge that they may otherwise not have access to (Herranen et al., 2021). MOOCs within the context of professional teacher development solve several issues that teachers face when pursuing continued education (Herranen et al., 2021). Successful

professional development, MOOCs draw explicit lines between coursework and actual classroom practice in addition to setting concrete learning aims, fostering community, and supporting teacher collaboration. MOOCs develop skills especially well for those working within specific career fields, offering a chance to refresh knowledge or acquire new knowledge (Mahajan et al., 2019). Sezgin (2020) posited that MOOCs are excellent alternatives for teacher education on a local and international scale and may provide teacher learners with outstanding professional self-development for free. Mahajan et al. (2019) provided an overview of the advantages and disadvantages associated with professional developmental MOOCs.

The advantages are they are self-paced, creativity promoting, self-directed, collaborative, heterogeneous, free of cost, enroll vast numbers of participants, and modules can be viewed multiple times (Mahajan et al., 2019). Conversely, MOOCs may offer ambiguous assessment criteria, unreliable certifications that may not be recognized by institutions, courses that offer little financial incentives to developers, and are resource intensive.

Mentorship as Professional Development

Mentoring is understood as a form of professional development (Berbain et al., 2023). As a form of professional development, mentoring is considered to be beneficial to novice teachers of English to English language learners and teachers of other subjects (Aliaga-Salas, 2018; Banegas, 2022; Bao, 2021; Berbain et al., 2023; Chan, 2020; Grassinger et al., 2010; Griffiths et al., 2020; Hobson et al., 2016; Lasater et al., 2021; Mullen, 2021). Concerning professional development and teacher education, mentorship and mentoring are performed by experienced in-service teachers who routinely mentor pre-service teachers during teaching practicums; this is a well-established educational practice. (Berbain et al., 2023; Walters et al., 2019). The mentoring dynamic or relationship is advantageous to both parties; the novice teacher gains invaluable

experience and knowledge, while the mentor imparts expertise and refreshes their practice (Enăchescu, 2022).

Mentorship has been defined in a myriad of ways by several researchers (Walters et al., 2019). Sweeny (2008) offered the following definition: "the complex developmental process that mentors use to support and guide their protégé through the necessary transitions that are part of learning how to be effective educators and career-long learners" (p. 2). Mentorship has additionally been defined as a partnership providing particular benefits to both mentors and protégés (Walters et al., 2019). According to Griffiths et al. (2020), mentorship is a "two-way process that develops a reflective approach to learning through the key processes of collaboration, dialogue, observation, critical reflection, and inquiry" (p. 211). Finally, Chambers et al. (2015), as referenced by Walters et al. (2019), stated mentorship is a "profession-building endeavor as mentors and mentees are co-learners on a voyage of discovery" (p. 2).

Three types of mentorship have been adopted in educational settings (Sadiq, 2023). The three types of mentorship are defined as apprenticeship, competence, and reflective model (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). The apprenticeship model is an observational one where the mentor is observed and imitated; communication between the mentor and mentee is one-way (Sadiq, 2023). The competence model sees the mentor observing the mentee for the demonstration of competencies after a predetermined time. The reflective model is an inquiry-based learning model that places great emphasis on collaborative activity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and the exchange of ideas, coupled with the acquisition of mandatory skills to ensure they are effective instructors. Additionally, the reverse mentoring model is built and characterized by mutual trust and cooperation (Valle et al., 2022). The reverse model of mentoring is reversed in

that the mentor and mentee positions are flipped; the less experienced instructor serves as a mentor to a more experienced learner who plays the role of the mentee.

Mentorship can occur in a more formalized institutionalized scheme or program, or it can occur in an informal interpersonal self-driven mode (Aliaga-Salas, 2018; Berbain et al., 2023). Mentoring that occurs through structures where individuals and groups engage in conversations promotes professional development (Cherkowski & Walker, 2019; Berbain et al., 2023). During the mentorship, mentees develop teaching skills, confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to self-reflect (Gakonga, 2019; Berbain et al., 2023). Mentorship, in times of instability such as COVID-19, was shown to facilitate educators' development (Banegas, 2022; Berbain et al., 2023; Chan, 2020; Mullen, 2021). Feelings of professional and personal satisfaction are increased for the mentors according to Walters et al. (2019). Furthermore, mentors have stated they have learned from their protégés, who offer novel instructional strategies, new knowledge, and resources from their university coursework. Mentorship is an authentic opportunity for professional development for the mentor; thereby, making the mentor relationship viable for both participants.

Effective Mentorship as Professional Development

A framework for successful mentoring relationships was offered by Tsokov et al. (2022). Successful mentoring relationships demonstrate equality where both participants exchange ideas and make decisions as equals together. The mentee has a choice in the relationship and makes decisions regarding goals and pedagogical strategies. Additionally, mentees engage with the mentor in a spirit of trust where dialogue is open and ideas can be exchanged by both parties. Furthermore, reflection is provided as a means to maintain a commitment to quality ideas. Lastly, a successful mentoring relationship is action orientated which moves the mentor and mentee

towards the implementation of the planned goals. More narrowly, successful mentoring within the context of English language teaching is evidenced when it demonstrates the following characteristics as outlined by Berbain et al. (2023) and Gakonga (2019).

Successful ESL mentoring has a clear purpose, a clear conceptualization, mentee autonomy, mentee and mentor review, tailored, individualized mentoring processes, and support throughout the mentorship program (Berbain et al., 2023; Gakonga, 2019). Challenges regarding mentoring have been documented by Enăchescu (2022). A primary challenge to the implementation of mentoring schemes is identifying whether participants will commit to the program; what's more, ensuring the mentees have adequate time to reflect on their practice with their mentor is challenging. An effective mentoring model was outlined by Winter (2019); the model found that instructors value having the ability to build relationships with a regarded mentor when discussions are nonjudgemental and all topics can be broached.

Additionally, Tsokov et al. (2022), in their effective mentoring model, that trust and encouragement must be present in the mentoring relationship as well. Next, Winter (2019) stated that mentorship programs ought to be apart from formalized teacher evaluation practices. Then, effective mentoring programs must demonstrate a commitment to a school system and teacher professional development as a means to achieving learner success. Effective mentoring programs demonstrating a commitment to schools is an idea that is echoed by Tsokov et al. (2022), stating the mentor must be abreast with the modern achievements in the field of teaching in a school environment. Furthermore, administrators must play an active role in creating a supportive and effective mentoring environment (Winter, 2019).   Communication among stakeholders should be ongoing during the mentorship program, includeing mentors, mentees, and directors (Winter, 2019). Communication can be facilitated by stakeholders through basic horizontal skills, such as

active listening, asking strong questions, focused presence, and feedback (Tsokov et al., 2022).

In addition to the maintenance of clear communication channels, there must be an understanding

that the impact of mentoring on teaching and learning takes time (Winter, 2019). Lastly, Winter

stated that effective mentoring programs need to be designed to meet the needs of diverse groups

of teachers with varying educational goals and backgrounds; goals should be individualized.

Tsokov et al. (2022)'s effective mentoring model calls for individualization through data

collection and analysis. Tsokov et al. argued that instructors should develop data-collecting skills

regarding the educational process, analyze this data, and draw conclusions from it. The

conclusions of Tsokov et al.'s eyes should be the genesis of the mentoring process which paints a

reality-based view of the current situation and an accurate means of progress measurement.

Summary

Research on teacher education programs intended to provide preparation to mainstream

instructors engaging English language learners is sparse, and instructors themselves are aware of

the impact that their lack of formal training has on the learners they teach (de Jong et al., 2018;

de Jong, 2019; de Jong & Naranjo, 2019; de Jong, 2021; Hamada & Miller, 2023; Mitchell,

2019). According to Shulman's (1987) Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, teachers

must possess the seven knowledge bases to teach effectively and successfully. Clermont et al.

(1993) stated that successful teachers are those with highly developed pedagogical content

knowledge that can be enhanced through intensive intervention and skills-oriented workshops.

Kidwell et al. (2021) stated that Galguera (2011) and Bunch (2013) expounded on the work of

Shulman (1987), who identified pedagogical content knowledge. Furthermore, according to

Kidwell et al. (2021), researchers have designated this understanding of content-area language

use as pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013; Galguera, 2011).

Teacher professional development is an integral aspect of teacher education, which promotes teachers' professional attitudes and abilities, creates better educational institutions, and develops learner achievement and learning processes (Carney et al., 2019; Haug & Mork, 2021; Li, 2022). Professional development can include workshops, conferences, and seminars, participation in networks, collaboration, research, reading, observation, mentoring, and coaching and can be delineated in terms of traditional and new approaches (Luesse et al., 2022; Sancar et al., 2021).

Within the specialized teaching context of ESL teaching in China at the university level after a foreign instructors' vantage point, even less is known. This study helped to fill that gap by providing descriptions of the lived experiences of foreign ESL instructors in China regarding teacher training. The study has practical value and hopefully will improve the professional practice of teacher training in its context by identifying common gaps in PCK to teachers and stakeholders.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe the lived experiences of foreign ESL university teachers in China who had or were currently teaching at the tertiary level as it relates to teacher training and preparation programs. Foreign ESL teachers often do not receive the training or professional development needed to perform effectively in the classroom. Trends within the small amount of data available on ELL teacher education programs and development point toward an acknowledgment of inadequate teacher education preparation systems (de Jong, 2021). The nature of this study involved the exploration of how Shulman's theory (1987) of pedagogical content knowledge as a framework to better understand teacher training and the development of learner and teacher outcomes and experiences. In Chapter Three, I address the research design, research questions, setting and participants, researcher positionality, procedures, data collection plan, and trustworthiness for conducting the study.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study, as this study focused on understanding the lived experiences of individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon. A qualitative study was the appropriate method of research because the objective was to understand the lived experiences of the participants. A qualitative study, additionally, is defined as teacher training experiences are social realities that have been constructed by foreign ESL teachers. The inclusion of and focus on participants' voices is a hallmark of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenology was most appropriate, as the research objective was to understand the shared experiences of the participants. Phenomenologists place primary

emphasis on the description of what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. The emphasis placed on description is in contrast to quantitative studies, which are reliant on statistical and numerical data to analyze social realities in particular variables (Gaertner & McClarty, 2015; Gall et al., 2015; Huerta &Watt, 2015). Phenomenology focuses on experiences and emphasizes the sense that surrounds every day, the meaning of the human being, that is to say, the experience of what people are (Fuster, 2019). Furthermore, phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld, how people immediately experience the world pre-reflectively rather than through conceptualization, categorization, or reflection (Husserl,1970b; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973; van Manen, 1997).

The objective of phenomenology is to understand the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences (van Manen, 1997). Van Manen (1990) positioned phenomenology as a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (p.117). Phenomenology is a systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience (van Manen, 1997). Finally, Husserl (1992) posited phenomenology as something granting "a new descriptive method and an aprioristic science that is broken down from it and is destined to supply the fundamental organ for a rigorously scientific philosophy" (p.52).

The specific type of phenomenological study that I implemented for the study was transcendental phenomenology. Of the two specific phenomenological study approaches, transcendental and hermeneutic, transcendental was chosen, as it is focused less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on a description of the experiences of participants (Moustakas, 1994), while hermeneutics is orientated toward both lived experience and the interpretation the "texts" of life (van Manen, 1990, p. 4). Husserl's transcendental method in its

most strict terms mandates that phenomenological research is purely descriptive, and that interpretation is outside the purview of phenomenological research (van Manen, 1997).

With the transcendental phenomenological method, a distinction can be made. Gadamer (1986) made a delineation between two understandings or senses of interpretation "Interpretation is a pointing to something, and interpretation is pointing out the meaning of something" (p. 68). The former is "not a reading in of some meaning, but a revealing of what the thing itself already points to...we attempt to interpret that which at the same time conceals itself" (p. 68). The objective of this study was to understand the lived experiences of individuals who had experienced a particular phenomenon, in essence, to uncover or reveal, not to interpret.

Transcendental phenomenology, as established by Edmund Husserl, was developed as a philosophic system grounded in subjective openness (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl sought to discover the essence and meanings of knowledge. A hard delineation exists between facts and essences. Essences provide dual knowledge, in one regard essences provide the essential nature of the Real and in another regard, essences provide the essential nature of the non-Real.

Research Questions

A single central research question was formulated, and three sub-questions served to guide the study's focus. As a means of reiteration, sub-research questions provide the researcher with the ability to be precise (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The questions formulated addressed the specific areas of the phenomenon in the study.

Central Research Question

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level?

Sub-Question One

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level with employer-provided teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses?

Sub-Question Two

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level with self-funded teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses?

Sub-Question Three

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level post-teacher training and/or teacher preparation coursework?

Setting and Participants

Every interview, focus group meeting, and document analysis data collection was conducted on-site or used online conferencing software, but the setting for this study was Shanghai, China where all the participants experienced the phenomenon. Details regarding the study setting and participants are described. Additionally, the rationale for the sampling technique chosen for the study is explored. The participant criteria are described. For this study, participants were foreign ESL instructors who had taught in China and taught at the university level. They possessed varying degrees of teaching experience and training.

Site

The geographic location of the organization is Shanghai, China. The organization receives government grants but is operationally independent of the benefactor government. The organization services United Kingdom (UK) education, English teaching, and exam providers.

Additionally, the organization develops contract opportunities for the sector, and services providers internationally. Structurally, the Board of Trustees performs as the guardian of the organization's purpose and is ultimately accountable for the organization. There is a Deputy Chair and trustees hold the Senior Leadership Team to account for the organization's performance, strategy, and policy. The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for the overall strategy, direction, and management of the organization. The organization has a simple hierarchical structure. Executives, managers, and supervisors within this organization are responsible for keeping actions aligned with strategy and objectives (Bolman & Deal, 2021). The structure can be understood as a chain of command which is a hierarchy where managerial and supervisory strata are present. Each strata possesses legitimate power, shaping and directing the behavior of those at lower levels. The chain of command, hierarchical structure works best when authority is both endorsed by subordinates and authorized by superiors (Dornbusch & Scott, 1975). The site was selected because it employed several participants who were interviewed for the study. Furthermore, the organization's mission statement and commitment to the proliferation of quality English content across the globe are in keeping with this study's objective.

Participants

Participants in this study were foreign English as an additional language teachers. The teachers had taught or were currently teaching in China at the tertiary level. They had or were currently teaching English for academic purposes. There were no gender restrictions, and the age range of the participants ranged from 18 to 60 years old.

Recruitment Plan

The sample size for this study consisted of 10 former and/or current foreign English as an additional language university instructors. The sample size was within the suggested range for

phenomenology qualitative research studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For transcendental phenomenology in particular, a favorable sample size is between 5 and 25 participants. In qualitative research, the range of opinions and varied representation is explored; thus, qualitative research is primarily concerned with a richness of information (Gaskell, 2000). Additionally, Bowen (2008) argued participants who possess the most substantive and meaningful knowledge about the research topic are best. Therefore, a purposeful sampling strategy was chosen to select participants; criterion sampling more specifically was implemented to select participants.

For qualitative research, data saturation is not a function of participant number, researchers ought to choose participants capable of yielding rich and thick data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). When data saturation has been achieved, there exists enough information to replicate the study, when no novel information is obtained, and when further coding becomes impossible or unfeasible (Guest et al., 2006; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). The sample was taken from several WeChat groups. The participants were recruited and were approached in various WeChat groups and through personal correspondence. Participants were chosen purposefully. Purposeful sampling increased the likelihood that participants would provide pertinent, rich information. Participants were required to meet specific criteria (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The criteria for the participants were as follows. There was no age or gender restriction for the participants. They taught English as an additional language or EAP at a Chinese university at the time of the interview. They were a foreign, non-Chinese national teacher. Restrictions regarding protected populations were adhered to for IRB purposes. I emailed all respondents to verify the criteria were met.

Researcher's Positionality

The motivation for this research study stems from my professional experience and background. For the last seven years, I have been living, teaching, and learning in China. The majority of my experience has been teaching adult learners through several educational organizations. While teaching, I have received employer-provided training in addition to paying for professional development training. I noticed a demonstrable difference in my capacity to effectively teach after investing in professional development training. What struck me, from having discussions with colleagues, was the varying degrees of training that teachers had received. Understanding how much and what manner of teacher training and professional development instructors have gained and their experiences with that training is of interest to me. My interpretive framework and the philosophical assumptions guiding my study are described.

Interpretive Framework

My interpretative framework as a researcher is constructivism. The constructivist perspective believes that interactions learners have with peers and their learning environment are integral to the development of knowledge (Schunk, 2020); I agree with this perspective, particularly within the realm of second language acquisition. Acquisition means the natural or non-conscious process of internalizing the rules of a language or "picking up a language" (Thornbury, 20017. As children are exposed to more language, they figure out the rules themselves and produce increasingly correct and complex utterances (Geyser, 2006).

Additionally, learners acquire language primarily from the input they receive, and they must receive large amounts of comprehensible input (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). Lastly, concerning the environment and classroom interaction, interpersonal interaction between learners

and experts (*experts* include teachers and more knowledgeable learners) is a valuable scaffolding technique I often employ in the classroom (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 112).

Philosophical Assumptions

As an English as an additional language teacher, teacher training within this field, particularly in an international context, is of personal interest. I have worked with multiple English education companies and experienced both employer-provided and self-funded teacher training and professional development. The experience inspired me to explore the lived experiences of foreign ESL educators in China who taught within the university context and their experiences with teacher training and professional development. To this study, I brought ontological, epistemological, and axiological philosophical assumptions.

Ontological Assumption

Ontology deals with issues relating to the nature of being, the nature of reality, and its characteristics (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Oxford, 1997). My ontological position as a researcher correlates to my belief in multiple realities. The multiple realities are indicative of individual experiences and individuals experiencing reality in different ways. Moreover, multiple realities reported by the individual are as valid as those reported through themes using words of different individuals and the presentation of different perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reality exclusively exists within ideals and ideas (Oxford, 1997).

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemology refers to the "origin, foundation, limits, and validity of knowledge" (Oxford, 1997, p. 38). My epistemological position as a researcher relates to my interpretative framework as a researcher, which is constructivist. Regarding the epistemological assumption within the context of qualitative research, it is the researcher's role to obtain subjective evidence

from participants and to decrease the distance between themselves and those being researched (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The aforementioned epistemological assumption correlates with my ontological position. Regarding knowledge, "...all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience" (Kant, 1959, p. 25).

Axiological Assumption

Axiology is about the role of values within the context of quantitative research. My axiological assumptions as a researcher stem from the professional experience that I have gained within the English as an additional language field within a particular cultural and geographic context. Additionally, personal biases of race, ethnicity, nationality, and the intersectionality of those identities in an international context extend into my axiological assumptions. I struggle personally with remaining unbiased and non-prejudicial. I believe this struggle to be illustrative of the struggle within us all.

Researcher's Role

In this or any qualitative research study, the researcher serves as a human instrument. The human instrument is uniquely positioned to grasp and process confusing pieces of data and is capable of summarizing, feeding back, clarifying, correcting, and amplifying informant data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The human instrument performs the analysis, synthesis, and coding of the data provided (Nowell et al., 2017). All inquiries were created by the researcher; Scheurich (1994) posited the researcher's "belonging to a particular class, race, gender, religion as well as the researcher's historical position and personal values — all of these can influence, limit and even constrain the process of discovery and generation of knowledge" (p.4). To that end, as outlined by Moustakas (1994), I bracketed my own experience and engaged in Epoch. I have been a foreign English as an additional language teacher for 7 years and have lived in Shanghai,

China for the same period. I have taught at more than 15 different universities in Shanghai and for several different for-profit English education institutions.

At present, I work both as a teacher and an English language assessor. My own life and experiences can be considered the best instruments for acquiring knowledge about research informants' social and cultural worlds (Lave & Kvale, 1995). Prior to the interviews, I disclosed to the interviewees my history with foreign language teaching in China, education companies that I have and currently work for, and my interest in becoming a professor in English for academic purposes context. Many of the participants have known me throughout my time in China and have worked for the same education companies or institutions. My personal interest is the animating force for this research as I have witnessed language teaching in China evolve firsthand, and I am very interested in understanding the lived experiences of other teachers, teacher training, and their perceptions. I intend to learn more about how teacher training and perpetration in ESL make a difference, whether positively or negatively.

Procedures

The procedures section functions as a step-by-step guide to research procedures so that this study can be replicated. The initial step in conducting this study was to apply for and be granted permission through the Liberty University Institutional Review Board. Site permission was obtained through the submission of a request to use the site to conduct research; additionally, a portion of the research was obtained offsite using video conferencing software. I described how the participants were recruited. I described in detail how data was collected, and its analysis. Lastly, I described how the triangulation of data was achieved.

For this phenomenological study, purposeful sampling was used, more specifically criterion sampling. Criterion sampling is effective when all individuals studied represent people

who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). "This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007, p.125). The sample size was 10 participants. Dukes (1984) recommended studying three to 10 subjects, while Riemen (1986) recommended studying 10 individuals within a phenomenological study. Once IRB approval from Liberty University was obtained, I began the recruitment process, both data collection and recruitment happened in tandem. The participants were chosen from a pool of volunteers who responded to a recruitment advertisement or direct inquiry via WeChat. The participants were selected based on specific criteria in accordance with the purposive sampling method. The first step in data collection was in-depth individual interviews with the participants. The interviews were held via Zoom. I video-recorded and audio-recorded the interviews using a primary and secondary device and transcribed all interviews, ensuring that no information was missed. At the conclusion of each interview, I gave each participant instructions regarding the journal prompts, which were sent via email, and I requested participants email their typed journal responses.

The prompts are provided (Appendices C, D, and E). Initial data analysis, after the first interviews, was completed simultaneously. Preliminary focus group questions have been developed, and following the first interviews individual interview questions were refined according to codes and common themes found (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The focus group consisted of five participants.

Data Collection Plan

After IRB approval from Liberty University, I began the process of respondent recruitment. Prior to the commencement of the official study, a pilot study was performed. This

pilot study was completed to guide data collection and aided in the development of protocols regarding interviews and journaling protocols (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Sampson (2004) utilized pilot testing as a means of refinement and development for research instruments, question frames, and research procedure adaptation. Following the pilot study, adjustments were made, and the data collection process began in earnest. Prior to and throughout data collection, the process of bracketing through phenomenological reduction was performed using journaling.

Epoch or bracketing is defined as "setting aside prejudgments and opening the research interview with an unbiased, receptive presence" (Moustakas, 1994, p.180). To this end, I journaled about my role as a student and my experience with respondents facilitating the discussions. I separated my experiences by examining them and explored them in terms of varying experiences respondents had with the same phenomenon. Finally, I confirmed my suspended experiences as legitimate to the phenomenon or removed them from the analysis as biased information (Peoples, 2021). Through self-reflection, researchers can reduce the impact of personal bias by becoming aware and looking beyond one's "own preconceptions" (Newman, 2010, p.82). Data collection for this phenomenological study consisted of three collection methods. Firstly, there were semi-structured interviews with single individuals.

The interviews were conducted via Zoom. They were semi-structured, and informal, and lasted between 35 min to 40 min. Semi-structured interviews allow for a balance between focusing on the research topic and allowing for a disciplined naturalness (Giorgi, 1985). A focus group meeting was held, lasting 35 min to 40 minutes, and was conducted via Zoom with five participants. I engaged in the process of Epoch prior to the focus groups. At the conclusion of the focus group I sent, via email, the journal prompts, and I requested participants email their typed journal responses. I requested that the participants take no longer than one week for this task.

To increase the validity of the study, three distinct sources of data collection were used. Using three distinct sources of data collection to increase study validity is defined as triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As an additional means of boosting validity, member checking was employed. After the data was transcribed and evaluated, the participants were sent the transcripts for review to check for errors. According to Creswell & Poth, member checking increases the validity of qualitative research studies.

Individual Interviews

For phenomenological studies, the primary source of data collection is in-depth interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The most important aspect of an in-depth interview is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it. The purpose of in-depth interviews is to enable participants to speak more freely about a phenomenon and reconstruct how they have experienced a particular phenomenon (Seidman, 2006). Before beginning the interviews, epoch was used to put aside all prejudgments and to allow the researcher to become an active and unbiased listener. For the initial interview, a semi-structured format was implemented to ensure the essential methodical spontaneity of phenomenological research (Giorgi, 1985).

Follow-up interviews were administered to fill in gaps that exist within the data that were collected. The initial or preliminary interviews and the follow-up interviews were key methods of data collection. A semi-structured interview protocol was utilized, as it allowed for the construction of interview questions that were increasingly relevant to the research question, thereby addressing key aspects of the research while allowing for a disciplined naturalness which is emblematic of phenomenological research (Giorgi, 1985).

At a time and location convenient for the participants, the interview took place through online video conferencing software (Moustakas, 1994). The interviews were semi-structured and individual. At the onset of the interview, the researcher provided the participants with a brief introduction regarding the focal point of the research (Peoples, 2021). Interviews consisted of 16 semi-structured open-ended questions and follow-up questions to elicit the essence of the participant's experience with the phenomenon and to add the needed informal and interactivity demanded by phenomenology research (Moustakas, 1994).

All interviews were audio recorded for transcription (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2014). Audio and video recordings were made on at least two devices during the interviews to ensure recording quality. The protocol was applied to in-person data collection, as well as data collection conducted via online video conferencing software. If participants were unable to meet in person, virtual focus groups and web-based interviews are valid qualitative research approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Virtual focus groups and web-based interviews were utilized by the researcher. Each interview was between 35 to 40 minutes. The interviews and focus groups were recorded as a means to improve the data management quality freeing the researcher to focus on the interview and the interviewee.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Where did you grow up? How would your friends and family describe you as a person?

2. Why did you come to China to teach?

3. What made you choose to teach at the university level in China?

4. Describe your experience teaching at the tertiary level of education in China as a foreign English language instructor. CRQ

5. Describe the teacher training/teacher preparation courses that you took before teaching at the tertiary level. SQ1

6. Give an example(s) of teacher training/preparation provided by your employer. SQ1

7. Describe your experience with the teacher training or teacher preparation courses provided by your employer. SQ1

8. How do you perceive the impact of the training your employer-provided on your learners' outcomes? SQ3

9. Give an example(s) of when a lack of employer-provided training impacted you negatively. SQ3

10. Give an example(s) of when employer-provided teacher training impacted you positively. SQ3

11. Talk about any areas regarding teacher training or teacher preparation courses provided by your employer that were lacking or inadequate. SQ1

12. After receiving employer-provided training, can you describe your experience as an instructor? SQ3

13. Describe your experience with the teacher training or teacher preparation courses undertaken at your expense. SQ2

14. Give an example(s) of training undertaken at your expense. SQ2

15. How do you perceive the impact of the training you paid for on your learners' outcomes? SQ2

16. Give an example(s) of when a lack of training provided at your expense impacted a learner negatively. SQ2

17. Give an example(s) of when teacher training provided at your expense impacted a learner positively. SQ3

18. Talk about any areas regarding teacher training or teacher preparation courses provided at your own expense that were lacking or inadequate. SQ3

19. How did the training prepare you for the classroom? SQ3

20. What advice would you give to a person interested in teaching in China?

21. What do you wish you knew about the ESL industry before you became a part of it?

When constructing and performing a phenomenological study, a semi-structured interview protocol is recommended (Peoples, 2021). The semi-structured interview was utilized for initial interviews to allow for vital methodical spontaneity (Giorgi, 1985). The qualitative research questions related directly to the sub-questions listed above. The first four questions were designed to establish rapport with the participants; Creswell & Poth (2018) stated that establishing rapport with participants is needed to gain quality data. Next, questions one, two, three, and eight are more in-depth questions about the shared experiences of foreign university English language instructors in China with employer-provided teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses.

Once rapport was created and trust had been built with the interviewees, core research questions should be asked (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Then, questions 10, 11, 12, and 13 are more in-depth questions about the shared experiences of foreign university English language instructors in China with self-funded teacher training and/or teacher preparation programs and/or courses. Again, core research questions ought to be asked once the interviewee is secure enough and is more willing to share information that may be sensitive (DeJonckheere, & Vaughn, 2019). Questions five, six, seven, nine, 14, 15, and 16 were in-depth questions on the shared

experiences of foreign university English language instructors in China post-teacher training and/or teacher preparation coursework. Finally, questions 20 and 21 were designed to conclude the interview on a more lighthearted note.

Individual Interviews

From first-person life experiences, phenomenological research evidence is obtained (Moustakas, 1994). Immediate analysis of interview transcripts after their completion is advisable due to the large amount of data they produce (McGrath et al., 2019). Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology analysis procedures were used to analyze the interview transcriptions. Through phenomenological reduction, I attained a textual description and thereby a better understanding of what was experienced. Phenomenological reduction "is not only a way of seeing but a way of listening with a conscious and deliberate intention of opening ourselves to phenomena as phenomena, in their own right, with their own textures and meanings" (p. 92). Secondly, horizonalizing produces were implemented; I gave each statement equal value and created preliminary meaning units or textural descriptions. Thirdly, the preliminary meaning units were broken down into final meaning units or themes through the process of imaginative variation. Fourthly, I synthesized the final meaning units into situated narratives. Then, the situated narratives were synthesized into general meanings which were integrated into all major participant themes. Finally, a general description was provided. A general description was completed for every single interview. After completing this process, I was able to obtain individual textural and structural descriptions. Textural and structural descriptions were obtained through imaginative variation.

According to Moustakas (1994, p. 100), imaginative variation "is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing

polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions". Textural descriptions are what enables one to describe *how* the phenomenon is experienced. Structural descriptions are the order that is embedded in the everyday experience which can only be understood through reflection (Keen, 1975). Moustakas (1994) asserted, "Structures underlie textures and are inherent in them" (p. 67).

Focus Groups

In focus groups, individuals behave differently than they would otherwise behave alone or even with another person (Peoples, 2021); "focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information, when interviewees are similar and cooperative with each other, when the time to collect information is limited, and when individuals interviewed one-on-one may be hesitant to provide information" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 231). Focus group meetings allow for "a variety of perspectives and explanations [to] be obtained from a single data-gathering session" (Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p.143). Through focus groups, commonalities can be affirmed, expanded, or refuted regarding the teachers' initial responses (Patton, 2014).

At a time and location convenient for the participants, the focus group interview took place via online video conferencing software (Moustakas, 1994). The focus group was conducted using a semi-structured open-ended question format process of Epoch before the focus group session to eliminate any biases and abstain from judgment (Moustakas, 1994).

At the onset of the interview, the researcher provided the participants with a brief introduction regarding the focal point of the research (Peoples, 2021). Interviews consisted of five semi-structured open-ended questions and follow-up questions to elicit the essence of the

participant's experience with the phenomenon, adding the needed informality and interactivity demanded by phenomenology research (Moustakas, 1994; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

All interviews were audio recorded for transcription (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2014). Audio and video recordings were made on at least two devices during the interviews to ensure recording quality. The protocol was applied to in-person data collection, as well as data collection conducted via online video conferencing software. Participants were able to meet in a virtual focus group; web-based interviews are valid qualitative research approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Focus Group Questions

As Patton (2014) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended, the focus group prompts were derived from themes and aspects identified after the initial data collected from interviews.

1. How did you enter the ESL industry? CQ

2. Discuss a collaborative training experience that you had while teaching at a university in China. SQ1

3. Have the collaborative training experiences that you have had in China impacted your teaching practice at university, positively or negatively? SQ3

4. Please give an example of how the collaborative training experiences manifested themselves in the classroom. SQ3

5. Please discuss how the lack of collaborative training has manifested itself in the classroom. SQ3

6. Describe the nature of employer-provided teacher training in China. SQ1

7. Describe the nature of self-funded teacher training in China. SQ2

8. Describe an experience where you felt ill-equipped or inadequately prepared to teach. SQ1

9. Describe how you dealt with the situation. SQ1

10. What else would you like to share about teaching in China?

Focus Group

Data analysis for the data attained for the focus group began by following Moustakas' (1994) procedures; firstly, Epoch was implemented. Secondly, horizonalizing produces were implemented; I gave each statement equal value and created preliminary meaning units or textural descriptions. Thirdly, the preliminary meaning units were broken down into final meaning units or themes through the process of imaginative variation. Fourthly, I synthesized the final meaning units into situated narratives. Then, the situated narratives were synthesized into general meanings, which integrated all major participant themes. Finally, a general description was generated.

After completing this process, I was able to obtain individual textural and structural descriptions. Textural and structural descriptions were obtained through imaginative variation. According to Moustakas (1994, p. 100), imaginative variation "is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions." Textural descriptions are what enables one to describe *how* the phenomenon is experienced (Moustakas, 1994). Structural descriptions are the order that is embedded in the everyday experience, which can only be understood through reflection (Keen, 1975). Moustakas (1994) asserted that "structures underlie textures and are inherent in them" (p. 67).

Journal Prompts

According to Moustakas' (1994) analysis of procedures for phenomenological data, journal prompts were analyzed. The journal prompts were administered at the conclusion of the focus group interview and were developed to obtain the essence of the participants' experiences. Journal prompts allow for the elevation of time pressure that participants may feel during live interviews; moreover, participants have a greater feeling of autonomy and anonymity (Meth, 2003; Stamper, 2020). I sent the journal prompts via email and requested participants to email their typed journal responses.

Journal prompts were emailed to participants immediately following the completed focus group interview. An advantage of journal prompts is that it affords participants time to respond in a non-interrogative environment. Participants were asked to write reflections as guided by prompts. Participants were asked to keep their journal reflections under one page and as a typed Word document. Participants were asked to return journal entries within one week. For this study, the participants were asked to answer four questions with five to seven sentences that acted as a reflective essay about teacher training in China.

Journal Prompts Questions

After focus group interviews were concluded, the following prompts were given to the participants.

1. Describe what role the employer should play concerning teacher training and preparation in your teaching context. SQ1

2. Describe an experience where an employer took responsibility for your professional development. SQ1

3. Describe what role the individual teacher should play concerning teacher training and

preparation in your teaching context. SQ2

4. Describe an experience where you took responsibility for your professional development. SQ2/ SQ3

Journal Prompts

Following Moustakas' (1994) procedure of Epoch, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation, Epoch was implemented. Secondly, horizonalizing produces were implemented; I gave each statement equal value and created preliminary meaning units or textural descriptions. Thirdly, the preliminary meaning units were broken down into final meaning units or themes through the process of imaginative variation. Fourthly, I synthesized the final meaning units into situated narratives. Then, the situated narratives were synthesized into general meanings which integrated all major participant themes. Finally, a general description was generated. After completing this process, I was able to obtain individual textural and structural descriptions. Textural descriptions are what enables one to describe *how* the phenomenon is experienced. Structural descriptions are the order that is embedded in the everyday experience which can only be understood through reflection (Keen, 1975). Moustakas (1994) asserted, "Structures underlie textures and are inherent in them" (p. 67).

Data Analysis

Transcendental phenomenology is focused on the description of the experiences of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data synthesis across the three data collection methods was performed in particular individual interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups. Data synthesis is defined as "the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100).

First, preliminary meaning units were generated. Second, final meaning units for all interviews and journal prompts were generated. Third, common sub-themes and themes in the data were identified. Fourth, meaning units were clustered into themes or common categories, and overlapping statements were removed. Textural descriptions of the experience were developed using clustered meanings. Finally, from the textural and structural descriptions, a synthesis of structural descriptions, textures, and structures produced the essence of the phenomenon constructed. The data synthesis process for this research study was guided by Moustakas's (1994) data synthesis model.

In detail, transcendental phenomenology data analysis was conducted in accordance with Moustakas' (1994) procedures. Procedures were initiated with bracketing or the Epoch. Epoch requires any preconceived ideas about teacher training and any other information relevant to this study to be set aside; this must be executed in a "systematic effort" (p. 22). To execute Epoch, reflexive journaling is required (Ahern, 1999). Epoch was done through a process called reflexive journaling (Ahern, 1999; Moustakas, 1994). The reflexive journaling process mandates preparation, action, evaluation, and systematic feedback (Ahern,1999). The process of writing preconceived ideas about the phenomenon helps the phenomenon to be better understood. Following the Epoch and reflexive journaling processes, phenomenological reduction was used to analyze the data.

The phenomenological reduction process yielded coded and clustered data which was organized according to theme. Textural qualities were obtained through phenomenological reduction. After textural qualities were gained, horizonalization was executed. The creation of themes based on the textural qualities found through the phenomenological reduction process is understood as horizonalization. At this juncture, data unrelated to the study's purpose was

removed from the data analysis prior to creating themes (Moustakas, 1994). Themes were used to create textural descriptions. The established themes were used to describe the experiences of foreign ESL teachers in China teaching at the university level. Following phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation was used to analyze possible meanings and structural qualities. The objective "is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience or the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced and describing the essential structures of the phenomenon is the major task" (p.100).

Structural themes were used to create a composite description, or essence, of the phenomenon being studied, and textural and structural descriptions were combined to form the description of foreign ESL teachers in China who teach at the university level (Creswell, 2013; Gall et al., 2015; Moustakas, 1994). Structural themes emerged by way of imaginative variation and will be used to describe the *essence* of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The *essence* of the phenomenon is an intuitively integrated fundamental textural and structural description into a unified statement of the essence. The data analysis process concluded with the integration of structural and textural themes together to obtain a complete phenomenological description. Acknowledging that the essence of any experience can never be fully exhaustive, and that the fundamental textural and structural synthesis represents the essences fixed in time and from the vantage point of an individual researcher is important.

Trustworthiness

As defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness within the context of qualitative studies is understood in terms of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility is defined as the level of certainty or confidence in the truth of a study's findings. Transferability is demonstrating that the findings could have applicability in

other contexts. Dependability refers to whether the findings can be replicated. Confirmability is the degree to which the study's findings are impacted by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

Credibility

Credibility is confidence in the truth of a study's findings or the extent to which the findings accurately describe reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The feasibility of the account that a researcher arrives at determines its acceptability to others (Bryman, 2016). Techniques for establishing credibility hinge on triangulation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Triangulation was achieved by using three methods of data collection, which included individual interviews, focus group interviews, and journal prompts. Triangulation of data sources was utilized to ensure the study is highly credible; triangulation was achieved through integrating and cross-checking data from the three different chosen sources, thereby checking for data consistency (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To ensure that saturation was achieved, an adequate sample for phenomenology research was taken, with a minimum of five participants and a maximum of 25.

Transferability

Transferability is demonstrating that the findings may have applicability in other contexts; moreover, when research findings are consistent and replicable, transferability will be achieved (Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, transferability is largely achieved through the use of thick descriptions when describing research findings (Geertz, 2008). The insight gained from the lived experiences of the participants selected through maximum variation sampling may be similar to insights regarding other populations with similar experiences (Peoples, 2021). The themes and general summary of this phenomenon offered

insights for stakeholders teaching or within the English as an additional language field or industry.

Dependability

Dependability shows that the findings are consistent and could be repeated; this is demonstrated through an effective description of the procedures undertaken for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell and Poth (2018) stated "dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process" (p. 256). Dependability is accomplished through an inquiry audit, where a thorough review of the process and the product of the research is conducted by the dissertation committee and the Qualitative Research Director. As a measure to ensure research dependability, I will keep all notes for auditing after the completion review and successful defense of the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Techniques for establishing confirmability include bracketing and reflexivity. I bracketed my personal judgments, setting them aside to focus on the phenomenon thereby performing phenomenological vigilance (van Kaam, 1900). Additionally, by out-rightly stating any biases that were present or brought to the research study from previous experiences, I engaged in bracketing. Bracketing is when the researcher reveals any biases that may be present before the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, confirmability can be achieved through thick and rich descriptions of what has been heard, observed, and learned so that other researchers can come to similar conclusions (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). The subsequent chapters will illustrate face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and essay data in a rich, thick, and vivid

descriptive manner offering the reader the opportunity to gauge the transferability of the shared

similar experiences. Moreover, both data analysis and synthesis will be detailed so that

information from this study can be compared and contrasted with similar research (Braun &

Clarke, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations or implications in this research are relegated to obtaining

consent from the respective interview site, which was obtained. Informed consent was obtained

from all participants. All participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study and

their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Site and participant confidentiality by way of

site and participant pseudonyms was implemented. Participants were made aware prior to data

collection that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that any information gathered

to that point would be destroyed. The identities of all participants were concealed, and each

participant was given a fictitious name (Check & Schutt, 2012).

All information asked was related to the research questions, and the purpose of the

research study was only to protect the anonymity of the participants (Cheraghi et al., 2015). All

research and data collection took place only after securing IRB approval. In both virtual and

offsite online interviews, a secondary backup method of data storage was used, for both video

recording and audio recording. All data were stored on a secure password-protected computer.

The data should be destroyed after three years (per LU IRB). Regarding risk and benefits,

participants were made aware of the possibility of the research findings being published and the

collected data and findings being used in future presentations.

Summary

A transcendental phenomenological research design was utilized for this qualitative study. The objective of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of foreign ESL university teachers in China. The primary means of data collection were interviews; focus groups and journal prompts were also implemented; through these data collection methods, the experiences of these instructors were captured. Personal experiences were bracketed out via phenomenological vigilance and the process of Epoch, the iterative process was used to analyze data, and thick and rich descriptions of the respondents' experiences were developed and validated through triangulation. Through data analysis, textual and structural descriptions were developed, followed by data synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). I used Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology analysis procedures and Saldaña's (2021) coding procedures.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe the lived experiences of foreign university English as an Additional Language (EAL) instructors in China who had taught or were currently teaching at the tertiary level, focusing on teacher training and preparation programs.

Central Research Question

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level?

Sub-Question One

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level with employer-provided teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses?

Sub-Question Two

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level with self-funded teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses?

Sub-Question Three

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level post-teacher training and/or teacher preparation coursework?

Chapter Four begins with a succinct overview of the 10 participants involved in the study. Participants were initially recruited through purposeful sampling, with subsequent participants identified via purposeful sampling. Data were collected from the participants through personal,

semi-structured individual interviews, a semi-structured focus group interview, and responses to four short-form journal prompts. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to analyzing the research data and highlighting significant findings.

Participants

The study's participants consisted entirely of non-Chinese foreign nationals who currently teach or have previously taught at universities in China. Their ages ranged from 18 to 60 years and included both male and female individuals. All 10 participants had experience teaching at Chinese universities located within the same city, with each having taught at more than one Chinese university. For confidentiality, all participants were assigned pseudonyms, and they are described in detail in the following sections.

Table 1

Participants

Participants' Name	Gender	Country of Origin	Highest Degree Earned
Ronald	Male	Canada	Bachelor's
Nathan	Female	South Africa	Bachelor's
Jay	Male	Australia	Bachelor's
Paul	Male	United States	Master's
Danny	Male	United States	Bachelor's
Caleb	Male	Ireland	Bachelor's
Chris	Male	United States	Doctoral
Amber	Female	United States	Bachelor's
Gabby	Male	Ghana	Master's

Johns	Female	Russia	Master's

Ronald

Participant Ronald is a foreign instructor from Canada, where he experienced a typical middle-class upbringing in the vast Canadian suburbs. Growing up in a sprawling city like that Canadian city, he found himself drawn indoors more often than engaging in outdoor activities, which he feels reflects a shift seen in his generation. However, despite his suburban routine, a strong sense of adventure brewed within him, prompting him to venture out into the world. His adventurous spirit led him to China initially and subsequently to Sweden, Greece, the Netherlands, and other destinations. His inclination towards exploring new cultures and environments seem to stem from a desire for new experiences and a broader perspective on the world.

Nathan

Participant Nathan is a foreign instructor who was born in Swaziland and spent her formative years growing up in both Swaziland and South Africa. Her friends and family often describe her as very open-minded, and she takes pride in embracing diverse perspectives and experiences and has always been naturally friendly, which makes it easy for her to connect with others and build strong relationships. Whether it is with friends, family, or new acquaintances, she strives to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere wherever she goes.

Jay

Participant Jay is a foreign instructor who was born and raised in Australia and spent the majority of his formative years immersed in the dynamic atmosphere of the city. In 2019, he embarked on a new chapter by relocating to China, to seize an exciting opportunity as an English teacher. This transition offered him the chance to delve into unfamiliar cultures and broaden his

perspectives beyond his homeland. Known for his extroverted nature, he is perceived by friends and family as someone who thrives in social settings. He has an outgoing demeanor and effortlessly connects with others, fostering meaningful relationships.

Paul

Paul grew up in the United States and comes from a family where he was the seventh and youngest child. His childhood was marked by abundance, as he never lacked anything and enjoyed the perks of being the youngest, including new toys, clothes for school, and a fresh suit for Easter Sunday service. He reminisces fondly about his upbringing, surrounded by great friends and a supportive family. At the age of 18, he embarked on a new journey by joining the Air Force and is currently teaching in China.

Danny

Danny grew up in the United States and after finishing college in America pursued studies in pedagogy and psychology, setting the stage for his passion for teaching. His friends would describe him as a very kind, creative, warm, and gentle person, reflecting his compassionate nature and genuine care for others. His passion for teaching shines through in his interactions with students, as he loves working with them and finds fulfillment in guiding their learning journeys. He envisions himself as a lifelong educator, committed to making a positive impact on the lives of his students and fostering their growth and development.

Caleb

Caleb spent his formative years in Ireland until the age of 18, with a brief stint in the United Kingdom during early childhood. At 18, he made a significant move to Wales, Australia, where he pursued higher education at university. Subsequently, he ventured to Spain, where he engaged in teaching ESL, which ties into his experiences in China. He has been described by his

family and friends as adventurous, contrary, articulate (without bragging), and occasionally argumentative. Despite this, he is also recognized for being helpful, friendly, and kind.

Chris

Chris grew up in the United States where he spent his formative years from birth until his mid-thirties. In the 2000s, at around the age of 35, he made a significant move to China. However, he later returned to the United States, living on the West Coast before eventually returning to California. According to his family, he is outgoing, hyper, and very talkative, reflecting his lively and sociable nature. He is currently in China teaching at a university. Despite his outgoing personality, he also possesses a depth of understanding and insight gained from navigating different environments and cultures.

Amber

Amber is a foreign instructor who grew up in the United States. Her diverse experiences across different countries and cultures have shaped her outlook on life and contributed to her multifaceted personality. She has an adventurous spirit and a willingness to engage in discussions and assist others. She embodies a blend of characteristics that make him unique and valuable to those around him. She has been described as sometimes being introverted, calm, and reserved.

Gabby

Gabby hails from Ghana, where he grew up in a middle-income family. From a young age, he exhibited a friendly and kind demeanor, traits that have stayed with him throughout his life. His upbringing instilled values of compassion and warmth, which are evident in his interactions with others. After completing his education in Ghana, he traveled abroad to pursue a master's degree. This experience broadened his horizons and provided him with valuable insights

into different cultures and perspectives. Currently, he is teaching in China, where his amiable personality shines through in his interactions with students and colleagues alike. Overall, he embodies the qualities of a cool, friendly, and kind individual, whose warmth and approachability make him a valued member of any community.

Johns

Johns is a foreign instructor born in Russia, where she grew up in a lower-income family. Despite facing challenges, she was raised to be strict yet friendly and kind. Her upbringing instilled in her a sense of discipline and resilience, alongside a genuine warmth and compassion towards others. After completing her education in Russia, she pursued a master's degree abroad, demonstrating her dedication to academic and personal growth. Currently, she is teaching in China, where her blend of strictness and kindness is evident in her interactions with students and colleagues. While some may perceive Johns as somewhat standoffish initially, she is open to building relationships and connections with others once they get to know her. Overall, she embodies the qualities of a strong, compassionate individual, whose firm demeanor is tempered by her genuine kindness and friendliness.

Results

The study was guided by a central research question and three sub-questions which aimed to describe the lived experiences of foreign university English as an Additional Language (EAL) instructors in China. The instructors had taught or were currently teaching at the tertiary level and were asked about their experiences with teacher training and preparation programs. Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and responded to journal prompts discussing the nature of teacher training and preparation programs in China.

Six themes emerged from the data. The six themes were (a) job of opportunity, (b) the absence of structured teacher training, and (c) acknowledgment of inadequate training. Outlier themes that arose included (a) impostor syndrome, (b) education as a business, and (c) expectation of self-study and education. Sub-themes emerged from the theme of acknowledgment of inadequate training. Within the theme of acknowledgment of inadequate training, the sub-themes were (a) the value of collaborative training and (b) unwillingness to pay for own training. The prominent themes and sub-themes emerging from participants' collective shared experiences are outlined and displayed below in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes & Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Exemplary Quote
Absence of Structured Teacher Training		"There wasn't much support that was offered by my employer."
Acknowledgment of Inadequate Training		The TEFL training was "quite useless to you and you're just coming in completely blind."
	Value of Collaborative Training	"...I learned a lot, all the feedback and all the lesson observations and talking to all the teachers..."
	Unwillingness to Pay for Own Training	"You need to figure out how to pay for your training. And it can be expensive, I wouldn't say it's expensive depending on what type of salary you're getting..."
Impostor Syndrome		I would say every once in a while impostor syndrome would creep it's ugly way into my head when you work for ABC company."
Education as a Business		"You are maximized as a teacher for your teaching, teaching hours..."

| Job of opportunity | "I was sending out job applications and the best offer was in Shanghai and the teaching job offers in United States were now so great. And so that was the main reason really, about job and money." |
| Expectation of Self-Study and Education | "I had to study the content that was being delivered. I had to in some cases even challenge the content that was being presented..." |

Absence of Structured Teacher Training

The most prominent theme with regard to teacher training and preparation programs in China was the resounding acknowledgement of their absence. Nine out of the 10 participants mentioned the absence of structured teacher training and teacher preparation programs. The single participant, Ronald, who did not explicitly state the absence of teacher training, characterized the training that they received as "a joke." He went on further to describe the mandatory online TEFL course as:

Just clicking the next button click, click, click, click, click, click. I think it was meant to be 120 hours. I did it over the weekend. There were a few assignments that I would doubt anyone actually really did. I immediately looked at and I remember thinking at the time that I picked up very little.

Additionally, when describing an online TEFL course provided by their employer, Nathan went on to state, "There wasn't much support that was offered by my employer," and further characterized that training as a "crash course" and "free-flowing" in nature. Participant Jay reported that "there was not much training going on, but they're just training me how to use the technology efficiently." When asked, "Are there any other examples or instances of teacher training or preparation provided by your employer?" participant Paul replied, "Not to the degree of acknowledgment." The training courses were "not a mandatory requirement or anything." Interestingly enough, Paul actually questioned the motivation of the employer with regard to

employee enrollment in more formalized training, stating, "I don't know if there was some type of goal that they had to make to, you know, enroll us or not. I have no idea, but it was really kind of casual." Recounting a scheduled training occasion. Paul also said:

> It was by invitation, and there are many in our group. At one point, my group had eleven teachers, and maybe four of us went to do it, so it was kind of casual in that regard, and if you wanted to, you could.

The absence of structured teacher training is a multifaceted issue. A participant described the mandated structured online teacher training as a joke and that sentiment was further reinforced by the casual manner in which employers positioned teacher training in their respective institutions as non-mandatory. Participants had little faith in employers concerning teacher training and overall support; some participants questioned the motive behind the offer of training. To the extent that teacher training was mandated, it was viewed as haphazard and non-systematic. Structured teacher training, which would provide instructors with the needed pedagogical content knowledge to be effective teachers, was not provided in mass. The lack of structured teacher training was so egregious that nearly every participant was able to articulate the problem.

Acknowledgment of Inadequate Training

As participants acknowledged the absence of structured teacher training and teacher preparation programs, they additionally judged what was offered by the employer as lacking and inadequate. Seven out of the 10 participants understood the employer-provided training as falling short. Participant Ronald described the TEFL training as "quite useless to you" and characterized going into the classroom as "you're just coming in completely blind." Furthermore, participant Danny spoke of how detrimental the inadequate training was in the classroom. He stated:

We didn't have a lot of advanced knowledge. I mean, I guess the best example is

just like in terms of planning, my planning, my course outlines. I didn't really know what

to plan exactly, especially when I'm first starting at a school. You know, I really didn't

know what to do. It just made my job more stressful, and it made me have waste time

trying different things and trying various kinds of lesson plans. So it just causes stress and

wastes time, it slows down the learning process.

When prompted, participant Danny spoke of the role the employer plays regarding

teacher training and preparation in his teaching context:

It is the role of any employer to ensure that all employees have adequate expertise before

they are thrown into a classroom. This is especially important if in the event someone is

right out of college with limited contact with all elements of the teaching process such as

course design, test composition, fair scoring, etc. Furthermore, employers must be sure

specific institutional requirements in relation to students and their majors and

corresponding coursework are known by all staff.

Overall, the feedback from participants underscored a significant disconnect between the

expectations placed on new teachers and the reality of the support and training provided by

employers. The gap in adequate preparation not only leaves educators feeling unprepared and

stressed but also negatively impacts the quality of education delivered to students. The testimony

of participants, particularly Ronald and Danny, highlights the critical need for comprehensive

and practical teacher training programs that equip educators with the necessary skills and

knowledge to succeed in the classroom.

Moreover, the emphasis on the employer's role in ensuring a thorough understanding of

institutional requirements and the teaching process suggests a broader need for systemic changes

in teacher training and support mechanisms. The participants' experiences call for a reevaluation of how teacher preparation is approached, emphasizing the importance of practical, hands-on training that prepares educators for the complexities of modern teaching.

Value of Collaborative Training

While foreign instructors understand and acknowledge the absence of structured teacher training and the inadequacy of the training that is provided by the employer, seven of the 10 remarked on the value of collaborative style training. Collaborative training through various methods, such as the "ability to train alongside coworkers," "mentorship from teacher to student and teacher to teacher," "peer-to-peer interactions and peer observation," "collaborative meetings," and "follow-up training sessions." Moreover, Caleb acknowledged the importance of collaborative training expressing a desire to have more of it, stating that it was "short term" and there was a "lack of mentorship", and a "lack of feedback and mentorship training." He saw observation as collaborative training as "useful." In more detail, Caleb stated:

> I mean, it prepared me, I learned a lot, all the feedback and all the lesson observations and talking to all the teachers, whether it's informal or formal or official or unofficial, it all helped me. But I think the training, the self-training on its own wouldn't prepare me enough, but the on-the-job training, the lesson observations and working with other teachers helped me.

Amber reported only having experienced observation style collaborative training once, stating: "So I think I've only experienced this while ago where I've had my course observed, and then I observed another teacher to see what they were referring to." Employers in this study have demonstrated a willingness to provide the least invasive and expensive teacher training and preparation available at their disposal. Whether by design or pure happenstance, participants

reported gaining value from collaborative training, most notably peer-to-peer observations. However, peer-to-peer observations and subsequent feedback were administered in a short-term manner and lacked the critical feedback needed to move instructors forward in their teaching practice.

Unwillingness to Pay for Own Training

While foreign instructors understood and acknowledged the absence of structured teacher training and the inadequacy of the training that is provided by the employer, that did not compel them to come out of pocket and cover the expense of teacher training. Seven of the 10 remarked on this unwillingness by stating that they paid for no out-of-pocket training. The noted unwillingness coincides with Ronald's characterization of teacher training as "a joke." Amber spoke to a number of barriers that impede the instructor's ability to gain such training. Amber stated:

> You need to figure out how to pay for your training. And it can be expensive, I wouldn't say it's expensive depending on what type of salary you're getting. If it's your PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) or getting your Masters, it's hefty cause most of the training is not done in China. You're usually looking for something out of the country to get a qualified certification, and you have to be able to convert your money actually to pay for it on top of that, so it's not the easiest thing to do. It's not that easy to do yourself, but it is and it's not and it's quite expensive depending on what type of job you have and how much you've saved up for it.

Participant Jay expressed the idea of the employer as a stakeholder in the education and training of employees, he stated:

> One way employers can support teacher training and preparation is by offering financial

assistance for professional development. This can include funding for attending conferences, workshops, and courses. By investing in their employees' professional growth, employers not only contribute to the improvement of the teaching profession but also demonstrate their commitment to the development of their workforce.

The reluctance of foreign instructors to personally finance their professional development despite recognizing the inadequacies of employer-provided training, speaks volumes about the systemic issues within teacher preparation. With seven out of 10 participants expressly unwilling to bear the costs of further training, as highlighted by the candid remarks of Ronald and detailed barriers presented by Amber, the narrative underscores a critical gap in support and resources for educators seeking qualification enhancement. Amber's insights reveal the logistical and financial challenges of acquiring recognized qualifications, particularly when such training necessitates international travel and significant expense.

The predicament is further compounded by the existing financial constraints faced by educators, making the pursuit of advanced certifications a daunting endeavor. Jay's suggestion points towards a viable solution, emphasizing the role of employers as key stakeholders in the educational ecosystem. By offering financial support for professional development, employers can alleviate the burden on teachers, fostering an environment that encourages continuous learning and ultimately elevates the quality of education. The noted collective feedback calls for a collaborative approach to teacher training, one that involves both individual initiative and institutional support to bridge the gap between the current state of teacher preparedness and the ideal standards of educational excellence.

Outlier Data and Findings

The study's data were pertinent to the research inquiries, revealing key themes during the analysis phase. Several outlier themes were discovered and had to be reconciled with the specific research objectives. The conclusion drawn from the findings suggested that foreign instructors must grapple with impostor syndrome, the expectation of self-study, and different attitudes toward education.

Impostor Syndrome

Two of the 10 participants reported experiencing impostor syndrome. Impostor syndrome is a feeling typically associated with beginning a new job where the new employee must reconcile their new responsibilities and position with the feeling of impending exposure due to incompetency (Berry & Worthen, 2021). Within a higher education context, the impostor syndrome is a type of cognitive dissonance between the high status of the job being performed and the low status that instructors occupy as contingents. Ronald stated about his time teaching in China at the university level:

It was quite an interesting experience. I think for a while, the impostor syndrome was definitely real. Yeah, I think it was an interesting experience. I mean, China being just about the only country you can teach at the university level with only a bachelor's degree.

Additionally, Amber reflected on her time as a university instructor stating:

I would say every once in a while, impostor syndrome would creep it's ugly way into my head when you work for ABC company. Yeah, there's a bit of impostor syndrome...it's more of a role filling that you feel. You probably if you were totally honest ask yourself, do you actually belong here?

The phenomenon of impostor syndrome, experienced by two out of 10 participants in

this study sheds light on the psychological complexities facing new employees, particularly in the realm of higher education. Impostor syndrome is characterized by feelings of self-doubt and fear of being exposed as a fraud despite holding a position of responsibility, underscores the cognitive dissonance that arises from the juxtaposition of the perceived high status of academic roles against the actual precarious standing of contingent instructors.

Ronald's recounting of his teaching experience in China highlights the unique challenges posed by certain educational settings where qualifications might not align with traditional expectations, intensifying feelings of inadequacy. Similarly, Amber's reflection on her role underscoring the pervasive nature of impostor syndrome, suggesting that it is not merely a transient worry but a recurrent battle with self-perception and professional identity. The insights call for a better understanding and support mechanisms within academic institutions to address and mitigate the impact of impostor syndrome, ensuring that educators can navigate their roles with confidence and a sense of belonging.

Education as a Business

Another logical but unexpected theme that arose was the concept of education not as a virtue but as a business. Paul described the manner in which his company schedules instructors to extract every ounce of productivity from them, he stated:

> You are maximized as a teacher for your teaching, teaching hours, and in addition to that you are charged with creating your own content or the adaptations which takes so much work it takes away from this sort of feeling or experience that you had from learning... because then all of the sort of administrative pieces are sort of overshadowing all of that.

The results demonstrated an unwillingness on behalf of the employer or institution to invest financially in teacher training and improved competency. The institution's perspective,

that education is a business rather than a public endeavor, mandates that time is not spent composing structured coursework but rather ad-hoc, peer-to-peer, low-to-no-cost professional development is the standard. Danny in response to journal prompting shared:

> Since I began full time teaching in 2013 — the only training I received was during planning days in which teachers worked together on course design. This was peer-to-peer teacher assistance and not set up directly by any employer I've worked with.

Participant Jay wrote about his experience with teacher training stating: "One of the most significant ways in which my employer took responsibility for my professional development was through mentorship and guidance." While mentorship is a valuable means of professional development, it is also cost-effective. It utilizes employees who may have invested in their own personal education and have gained experience as a way to impart their gained knowledge and experience to an employee at little to no cost.

The insights gathered from the participants unveil a disconcerting trend where education is increasingly perceived and managed as a commercial enterprise rather than a virtuous public service. Paul's account of being pushed to maximum productivity, coupled with the lack of institutional investment in formal teacher training, underscores a broader shift towards minimizing costs at the expense of educational quality and teacher welfare. The approach sees institutions favoring ad-hoc, low-cost professional development methods, such as peer-to-peer learning and mentorship, as highlighted by Danny's and Jay's experiences.

While these methods can offer value and foster a sense of community among educators, they also reflect a reluctance to allocate resources toward comprehensive, structured teacher development programs. The testimonies presented illustrate a critical need for a reevaluation of

priorities within educational institutions, advocating for a balance between operational efficiency and the nurturing of educational excellence through well-supported and adequately trained teaching professionals.

Expectation of Self-Study and Education

Despite the acknowledging a lack of employer investment in teacher training, three of the 10 participants took a degree of responsibility for their perceived lack of classroom preparedness. In doing so, Paul described a great deal of personal sacrifice with regard to time and effort for no additional monetary compensation from his employer. Paul recounted:

I had to study after the content that was being delivered. I had to in some cases

even challenge the content that was being presented because you know, with our

culture, changing the landscape, changing as it, even as it is today is completely

different from what it was when I came five years ago. So I just had to study up

and I had to do my research.

Another participant, Nathan, stated that he did "a lot of self-study" and made "content for the course." He stated:

I took a couple of courses even after I left the company on content development because I

just wanted to be a better person and it's really coming in handy right now because I have

an employer that really invests in me and basically, they meet me not even halfway.

Participants taking personal responsibility for their lack of professional expertise has limitations. While Paul was willing to undertake additional work to get himself up to speed regarding content and the classroom, he was not willing to pay out of pocket for training coursework. However, Paul, by doing work to improve instruction for his learners and by extension his institution was paying with his time for no monetary gain. Contrastively, Nathan

willingly undertook more traditional coursework, and as a result, his current employer pays a portion of his continued professional development. Whether an instructor chooses to take the time to engage in self-study is an entirely personal decision.

Central Research Question

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level?

The participants' perspective on teaching ESL at the university level in China was primarily characterized by opportunity, meeting the requirements to undertake the endeavor, and employment instability. Participant Danny entered the Chinese ESL job market as a result of limited opportunities at home in the United States. He stated:

So that was more than 10 years ago, in 2013, and at the time I was about to finish my Masters, and when I was nearing graduation, I was sending out job applications and the best offer was in Shanghai and the teaching job offers in United States were now so great. And so that was the main reason really, about job and money.

As Danny's career continued, he recounted difficulty maintaining employment in the Chinese education market. Danny stated: "I was at ABC University, and I had to leave there because of the company, ABC company, was shrinking their partnerships." Participant Caleb stated: "The job market wasn't great at the time in Australia and getting a marketing job in Perth was very difficult because so many graduates, so few jobs." Jay described the tenuous and unstable nature of employment in China when discussing his first university teaching opportunity:

I was sent to campus and started working April 2019, normally I would start working in February, but there was a teacher before me working as an English teacher there due to concerns about his visa at the university, they contacted me and asked me if I could be his

replacement as an English teacher. This company, called XXX, came in and asked me if I could take his position and if I'm willing to start from April 2019 until and the end of the semester that they offered me a contract extension to work until Spring 2022.

As stated by a participant, only a bachelor's degree is required to teach at the tertiary level at some universities in Mainland China. The relatively low barrier to entry to gain access to the educational system can be seen as a factor that attracts people who would otherwise be unqualified to teach. The low barrier to entry, coupled with the inability of many employers and institutions to retain employees creates a situation where those with few opportunities in their respective home countries seek English teaching work as the path of least resistance rather than a vocational calling.

Sub-Question One

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level with employer-provided teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or courses?

The participants' perspective on employer-provided teacher training in China within the context of university ESL instruction was there is an absence of structured teacher training and an appreciation for the often ad hoc collaborative training provided. Johnathan stated, regarding structured teacher training, "There was not much training going on, but they're just training me how to use technology efficiently if there's a problem." Of the university Danny worked at he reported that "they had no training whatsoever." Caleb spoke positively about the collaborative training provided by the institutions that he worked for throughout his career:

At three different schools I attended we would have regular workshops, for teaching ideas, new strategies and new activities that we could use in classes. In my school in Spain a

teacher who was experienced in teaching First Certificate in English (FCE) courses

delivered a workshop on how to teach vocabulary effectively through building word

collocations then expanding them into sentences. In another school in Australia they

delivered workshops on how to use technology effectively in the classroom in the form of

making engaging PPTs. In my first school they would have regular workshops on

Thursday where experienced teachers would share lesson ideas with their colleagues.

Participants stated that there was little to no employer-provided training occurring at

institutions. Employer-provided training was primarily categorized as ad-hoc and unrelated to

pedagogical content knowledge. However, a participant did note that technology-focused

training occurred, and such knowledge is needed to be effective as an instructor according to

Mishra and Koehler's (2006) theory of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

(TPACK). Additionally, another participant spoke of workshops centered around how to use

technology effectively in the classroom. So, while employer-provided training may tend not to

focus on pedagogical content and language knowledge, there is an emphasis placed on

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, and instructors' ability to command technology

relevant to classroom instruction.

Sub-Question Two

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the

university level with self-funded teacher training and or teacher preparation programs and/or

courses?

The participants' perspective on self-funded teacher training in China within the context

of university ESL instruction was an unwillingness to pay for teacher education. Gabby stated "I

have not paid for any courses." Ronald questioned the motive for taking such training courses stating:

> If you want a little opinion on them, it seems like most of those people, just most people who do them, just chase them to get higher jobs, not because they're actually necessarily interested in like, you know, to become better teachers.

> Danny expressed a willingness to self-fund teacher training; however; that training was not undertaken with the goal of improving his practice for employers and institutions in China. Danny stated:

> The best example of this is enrolling and paying myself for a G7-12 certificate in language arts education. My employer provided no assistance but of course I knew to ensure that I can potentially return to USA or work, getting a cert and license is required.

Caleb spoke about seeking teacher training online through a no cost option:

> In my university in China there was no support or training given to international teachers so I joined a free website where I could liaise with other teachers. Moreover, I had met other teachers from other centers such as XXX during this time and one of them had a lot of ideas that he shared with me and I respectively shared with him. We looked at each other's lessons and gave each other feedback which was useful.

> Overall, participants were unwilling to self-funded teacher training in China. Some participants, in response to the lack of employer-provided training, sought out collaborative-style training at no cost and sought to build professional relationships with more seasoned instructors to fill in knowledge gaps. Other participants were simply unwilling to pay and perceived the teacher training vertical within the English teaching industry as fraudulent.

Sub-Question Three

What are the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China that teach at the university level post-teacher training and/or teacher preparation coursework?

The participants' perspective on teacher training in China within the context of university ESL instruction post training was that they were inadequate, yet they still saw the value of collaborative style training. Chris described his experience prior to teaching as "It was, it was a situation where, I was kind of like I was thrown into the fire. Another way to describe it would be sink or swim, right?" He went on to describe being observed:

I have been observed at least three to four times during a semester, so twice from my superior and then twice from someone above them, ESL superiors observing me and then the school observing me critiquing my a capability. I would say it's more of a how to improve my teaching ...these are the things you need to do to improve your teaching.

Paul was asked to describe how he felt after receiving employer-provided training and defined it as "somewhat inadequate training." He stated:

It's really a self-learning experience we're learning experience. You have to equip yourself there. These companies are only concerned with people in the seats. This is all that they are really concerned about, that there are people in this seats and that you come to class.

Additionally, it should be noted that the collaborative style that is widely implemented by institutions is far from adequate. Paul stated regarding peer-to-peer teacher collaboration:

You can probably bounce some things off of another colleague, but you know 80% of them, of us, do not have an education background, we, they were engineers. They are

doctors, you know, medical doctors and nurses and retirees. And so a lot of folks would

not have experience to share.

Post-teacher training and teacher preparation coursework, participants described

themselves as having to adapt as learning unfolded in the classroom. A participant reported

feeling as if they were not given the support they needed before being placed in the classroom.

Additionally, peer-to-peer teacher collaboration, which has predominantly been viewed by

participants as a positive, was shown to have disadvantages. When the profession attracts

professionals who have no education-related expertise, it impacts the effectiveness and

legitimacy of peer-to-peer teacher collaboration. Institutions refusing to provide instructors with

knowledge-based input not only relates to the effectiveness of teachers but creates a reality

where instructors are unable to pass knowledge on as no knowledge has been gained through

experience.

Summary

Chapter four provided a description of the research results depicting the shared

experiences of university ESL instructors teaching at the university level in China. The results

were presented as they addressed the overarching research question of what shared experiences

university ESL instructors had regarding teacher training and preparation programs. An analysis

of data collected via interviews, a focus group, and journal prompts indicated that there were

several themes and narratives that bound this group of participants together.

Firstly, regarding sub-question 1, dealing with employer-provided teacher training and

preparation programs, participants conveyed a diverse array of experiences. In spite of the

absence of structured training protocols, participants derived comfort from impromptu

collaborative endeavors. Secondly, regarding sub-question 2, focusing on self-funded teacher

training or preparation programs, participants exhibited a distinct sentiment. Many expressed

reluctance to invest in such courses, perceiving them primarily as tools for securing elevated

positions rather than genuine avenues for personal and professional development. Lastly,

regarding sub-question 3, post-teacher training and coursework, instructors reflected on their

educational journey, highlighting both the deficiencies in the training received and the value

derived from collaborative learning methods. Despite these observations, they welcomed

feedback aimed at enhancing their pedagogical skills, recognizing the significance of continuous

improvement.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand and describe the lived experiences of foreign university English as an Additional Language (EAL) instructors in China who had taught or were currently teaching at the tertiary level, with a focus on teacher training and preparation programs. Literature has predominantly presented teacher training and professional development from an international perspective, addressing topics, such as teacher credentialing and qualification, international teaching training reforms, and the identified absence and need for English as an Additional Language teacher training in education (UNESCO, 2023). The body of work has highlighted a notable gap in research concerning ESL teachers, particularly regarding the effectiveness of and experiences with teacher training (de Jong et al., 2018; de Jong, 2019; de Jong & Naranjo, 2019; de Jong, 2021; Hamada & Miller, 2023).

Additionally, there is a parallel scarcity of research on the preparation of instructors to integrate ELL best practices, skills, and relevant knowledge into their teaching (de Jong et al., 2018). The gap extends to studies focusing on foreign ESL teachers at Chinese universities. Moreover, there is a lack of research presenting trends in ESL teacher training and development (Eren & Kurt, 2019). The study addressed these gaps by exploring the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China, particularly in relation to teacher training. The findings, discussions, implications, and recommendations for future research derived from this study are detailed in the subsequent sections.

Discussion

Research dedicated to teacher education programs, aimed at preparing mainstream instructors for engaging with English Language Learners (ELL), remains limited (de Jong et al., 2018; de Jong, 2019; de Jong & Naranjo, 2019; de Jong, 2021; Hamada & Miller, 2023). Li and Peng (2022) highlight that many ESL instructors lack the necessary capacity and professional knowledge to ensure accuracy in task outcomes within a communicative English language teaching context. Additionally, Rizzuto (2018) investigated the knowledge level of teachers instructing ELL students and discovered that the extent of teachers' knowledge and training directly influences student learning outcomes. Furthermore, in China, teachers often lack training in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), leaving them ill-equipped to address detailed questions about the target language, sociolinguistics, or culture arising from classroom interactions (Dos Santos, 2020).

For foreign English as an additional language instructors in China, especially those teaching at the university level, the availability, adequacy, and consistency of teacher training and professional development vary greatly. Rahman et al. (2018) identified issues with content knowledge and English proficiency among classroom English teachers. Rizzuto (2018) further emphasized that the level of knowledge and training held by teachers teaching ELL students significantly impacts both what students learn and how they learn it. Enriching the existing body of literature, this research study delved into the lived experiences of foreign ESL instructors concerning teacher training and preparation, encompassing both employer-provided and self-financed training, before, during, and after their teaching engagements.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The thematic findings from the study on teacher training and preparation among university ESL instructors in China reveal several critical insights organized around key themes. Four major themes emerged from the research, which are (a) absence of structured teacher training, (b) acknowledgment of inadequate training, (c) value of collaborative training, and (d) unwillingness to pay for own training. Three outlier themes also emerged from the research (a) education as a business, (b) impostor syndrome, and (c) expectation of self-study and education. These themes aligned with the literature presented in chapter two. This research also contributes to increasing the percentage of ESL teachers who have participated in research to better understand the lived experiences of foreign instructors.

Absence of Structured Teacher Training

A striking theme emerged regarding the conspicuous absence of structured teacher training programs, with nine out of 10 participants highlighting a stark lack of formal training initiatives. The lack of formal training initiatives available coincides with the literature which has indicated the absence of adequate resources for teacher education and professional development as an international phenomenon (Morton, 2019). With specific regard to English teaching, a lack of in-service and initial teacher preparation programs has been reported. Moreover, a greater understanding is needed regarding teacher training and professional development needs.

Participants did not specifically indicate the areas of pedagogical content and language knowledge that they lacked. Instructors in the foreign ESL teaching context lack both in-service and pre-service teacher training courses as it relates to the demands of English language learning (Archila & Truscott de Mejía, 2020; Camargo Cely, 2018; McDougald, & Pissarello, 2020). Therefore, teachers may not even be aware of the knowledge that they lack and cannot express in

metalinguistic terms what knowledge they need. The provided training, when available, was often dismissed as inadequate or superficial, as illustrated by Ronald's dismissal of TEFL courses as merely a procedural formality, underscoring the dire need for more substantial and meaningful teacher training mechanisms within educational institutions.

Acknowledgment of Inadequate Training

Participants consistently critiqued the insufficiency of the training provided by their employers, with many feeling ill-prepared for the demands of the classroom. Participants' feelings of unpreparedness are in alignment with contemporary literature. Kiramba et al. (2022) found that novice teachers in the United States reported feeling unprepared and claimed they lacked adequate training to teach multilingual student populations effectively. Teachers themselves are cognizant of the impact that their lack of formal training has on the learners in their charge (Millard et al., 2020). Finally, an acknowledgment of inadequate teacher education preparation systems can be seen, as demonstrated by pre-service trainee instructors whose undergraduate education is viewed as not providing them with the necessary language training, thereby impeding instructor competence (Gan & Chi Cheung, 2018).

Regarding foreign language pedagogical and content knowledge, Levi et al. (2023) found that many teacher education programs do not provide prospective language teachers with the required pedagogical and content knowledge to raise the second language proficiency of learners. Furthermore, methods of development have still not been created to guarantee that all instructors possess adequate linguistic proficiency. The testimonies, particularly from Ronald and Danny, underscored the urgent requirement for comprehensive and practical training that aligns with the real-world complexities of teaching. The absence of structured teacher training and the inadequacy of the training provided together create instructors devoid of the required knowledge

to effectively instruct. Even more disheartening is that these instructors are cognizant of their shortcomings. No participants communicated any actions taken by themselves or colleagues to convince their respective employers to intervene in this regard.

Value of Collaborative Training

Despite the general absence of structured training, seven out of 10 participants appreciated the value of collaborative training methods, such as peer mentorship. Peer mentorship and observation do fall within the literature's definition of professional development which may take place in formal and informal spaces inside and outside of educational institutions (Luesse, 2022). Recent studies have portrayed professional development as collaborative and situated in teachers' instructional contexts (Ehrenfeld, 2022). Furthermore, several activities are considered professional development including "workshops, conferences and seminars, participation in networks, collaboration, research, reading, observation, mentoring, and coaching" (Luesse et al., 2022, p. 3).

Educational institutions and employers in this study appear to be utilizing informal, ad-hoc training as a cost-saving strategy and, while the method is beneficial, informal training practices cannot fully substitute for formalized, comprehensive teacher preparation programs. Additionally, for professional development of the sort used by the employers and institutions in this study to be effective, it should be "long-term, content-focused, inquiry-based, learner-centered, and incorporate active learning. Such PD utilizes adult learning theory; provides opportunities for feedback and reflection; supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts; and supports teachers with learning communities" (Luesse et al., 2022, p.3). Participants spoke of the short-term nature of the professional development given, describing observations as occurring once to twice per semester.

Unwillingness to Pay for Own Training

A noteworthy finding was the general unwillingness among participants to personally finance further training due to various barriers, including financial constraints and perceived inadequacies of available programs. The literature has shown that there many disparities in educational funding and approaches to teacher education, preparation, and teacher qualifications across global regions (UNESCO, 2018). The participant's perceived inadequacies of available programs are borne out in the literature as well. Florian (2021) stated that teacher qualification and education disparities exist in different parts of the world and are further exacerbated by macro and micro conditions.

The reformation of teacher training programs and systems is a global issue that institutions worldwide are working to change (Borawska-Kalbarczyk & Tołwińska 2019). Borawska-Kalbarczyk and Tołwińska have called for the systematic evaluation of teacher training in contrast with the rapidly changing classroom environment. The participant's unwillingness to pay for their training despite having an awareness of professional inadequacy speaks to a lack of commitment; however, this lack of commitment or unwillingness to invest is reflective of both the institutions that employ the instructors and the instructors themselves. Such reluctance points to a broader issue of systemic undervaluation of teacher development and the need for employer support in professional growth. Alternatively, institutions could hire instructors already in possession of the requisite pedagogical content and language knowledge needed to be effective, but this action would cut against the drive for profit as professions of that caliber would likely demand higher compensation.

Education as a Business

A concerning theme that arose was the perception of education primarily as a business, prioritizing operational efficiency over educational quality and teacher well-being. Themes that arose in the study, namely the absence of structured teacher training, the acknowledgment of inadequate training, and the acknowledgment of collaborative training all point toward institutions refusing to invest in teacher professional development. And to the degree that institutions are willing to train instructors, they will only provide the least costly means and modes of professional development. Such a perspective fosters environments where cost-saving measures, such as ad-hoc and peer-based training, are preferred over more substantial investments in teacher preparation.

Participants indicated that employers were not willing to bear any of the cost associated with professional development, and participants expressed an unwillingness to pay for their professional development, leaving institutions with ineffective teachers and teachers feeling unprepared for instruction. Instructor ineffectiveness is determined through the framework of Shulman's (1987) Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, where participants have noted lacking concerning his outlined seven knowledge bases.

Impostor Syndrome

The study also highlighted the prevalence of impostor syndrome among instructors, exacerbated by the lack of formal training and the high expectations associated with their roles. Participants acknowledged the inadequacy of teacher training programs and as Gan and Chi (2018) indicated, this acknowledgment can be seen as demonstrated by pre-service trainee instructors whose undergraduate education is viewed as not providing them with the necessary language training, thereby impeding instructor competence. Additionally, teachers themselves

are cognizant of the impact that their lack of formal training has on the learners in their charge (Millard et al., 2020). Instructor awareness of the negative effects of inadequate teacher training fuels impostor syndrome. Impostor syndrome is defined as a feeling typically associated with beginning a new job where the new employee must reconcile their new responsibilities and position with the feeling of impending exposure due to incompetency (Berry & Worthen, 2021).

Participant Ronald expressed an incongruency between his credentials and his position as a lecturer. His feelings of professional inadequacy stem from his lack of pedagogical content knowledge as framed by Shulman (1987). Shulman's theory outlined seven knowledge bases for instructor effectiveness, but this inadequacy goes further given the specialized teaching context. Galguera (2011) and Bunch (2013) expounded on the work of Shulman (1987), arguing on behalf of pedagogical language knowledge. ESL teachers should additionally possess knowledge regarding grammatical features of content-area texts, systemic functional linguistics, and tools central to analyzing the language features central to academic work (Bunch, 2013). Kidwell et al. (2021) view PLK "as an essential contributor to novice teachers' ability to enact the CP supporting language and literacy development."

Expectation of Self-Study and Education

Despite recognizing the limitations of employer-provided training, some instructors took personal initiative for self-study and professional development, reflecting a commitment to their roles but also highlighting the inadequacy of institutional support. Participants stated several obstacles that impeded access to professional development; as a result, instructors sought out low to no-cost options for professional development. Reflection is paramount to the maturation of novice teachers and ought to be encouraged through methods of self-assessment and evaluation

(Levi et al., 2023). Participants reported reflecting on observational data gained in the short term.

Online coursework, chiefly and ideally speaking, MOOCs, are "free or low-cost Internet-based university courses or near equivalents" (Kögler, 2023, p. 205). MOOCs are online-based teaching regimens designed for the accommodation of thousands of learners without charging any fees (Billsberry & Alony, 2023). MOOC courses are open, free of charge, and do not mandate prerequisite enrollment qualifications or certifications (Mahajan et al., 2019). Participants additionally stated unwillingness for and lack of confidence in industry-related qualifications or certifications, thereby making MOOC courses a viable option. However, Worley and Tesdell (2009) position the high level of self-discipline required for online coursework as a negative. Simply put, there is no substitute for structured, formalized teacher training and professional development. Unstructured, ad-hoc, informal, excessively cost-conscious training positions instructors as ineffective non-professionals.

Implications for Policy or Practice

Implications for teachers, administrators, universities, and institutions were revealed through the study's findings. The research highlights several critical areas of concern and opportunity for both teachers and administrators within the context of teacher training and preparation in China, especially for foreign instructors.

Implications for Teachers

Given the lack of structured training programs, teachers should be proactive in seeking out professional development opportunities. Such may include advocating for employer support in funding professional development or seeking collaborative training opportunities with peers. As acknowledged by UNESCO (2018), there are many disparities in educational funding and

approaches to teacher education, preparation, and qualifications across global regions. Advocating for employer-supported funding in professional development may be a way to improve teacher quality, which is also important for improving student achievement in an international context (Loyalka et al., 2019). Participant Jay reported that:

Teachers should take an active role in their own professional development while also contributing to the development of their colleagues. This involves seeking out opportunities for ongoing learning, attending workshops or conferences, and staying current with research-based practices.

Reflective practice and teaching are additional methods of proactive professional development where instructors can objectively assess their instructional behaviors before, after, and during instructional processes (Tun & Habók, 2021). Reflection is paramount to the maturation of novice teachers and ought to be encouraged through methods of self-assessment and evaluation (Levi et al., 2023). The value of collaborative-style training, as highlighted by participants, suggests that teachers can benefit from peer-to-peer learning and mentorship. Engaging in collaborative meetings and follow-up training sessions can enhance teaching skills and classroom preparedness. Embracing collaborative learning is advisable. A participant stated:

Mentorship involves providing guidance, support, and feedback to help them (teachers) develop their teaching skills and knowledge. By sharing their expertise and experience, teachers can contribute significantly to the professional growth of their colleagues. Teachers serve as role models for their peers, especially those new to the profession. By demonstrating effective teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and instructional methods, experienced teachers can positively influence the professional development of others. Teachers should actively engage in collaborative learning

communities within their schools or districts. By participating in professional learning

communities, study groups, or collaborative lesson-planning sessions, they can contribute

to a culture of continuous improvement and shared learning.

As a form of professional development, mentoring is considered beneficial to novice

teachers of English-to-English language learners and teachers of other subjects (Aliaga-Salas,

2018; Banegas, 2022; Bao, 2021; Berbain et al., 2023; Chan, 2020; Grassinger et al., 2010;

Griffiths et al., 2020; Hobson et al., 2016; Lasater et al., 2021; Mullen, 2021). Concerning

professional development and teacher education, mentorship and mentoring are performed by

experienced in-service teachers who routinely mentor pre-service teachers during teaching

practicums; this is a well-established educational practice (Berbain et al., 2023; Walters et al.,

2019).

Recognizing and addressing feelings of impostor syndrome is crucial. Teachers can seek

support from peers or professional networks to build confidence and validate their teaching

abilities, especially when transitioning to new roles or responsibilities. As participants reported

having feelings emblematic of impostor syndrome. Fagell (2022) suggested that instructors

remain mindful that feeling unqualified does not mean they are unqualified. Additionally,

inexperienced instructors should shift their focus by leaning on professional networks and more

experienced peers, asking other teachers and professionals for feedback and advice, or joining

professional learning communities.

Implications for Administrators

Administrators should consider the long-term benefits of investing in teacher training and

professional development. Offering financial support for professional growth not only improves

teaching quality but also demonstrates a commitment to the educational workforce. Participants reported that:

One way employers can support teacher training and preparation is by offering financial assistance for professional development. This can include funding for attending conferences, workshops, and courses. By investing in their employees' professional growth, employers not only contribute to the improvement of the teaching profession but also demonstrate their commitment to the development of their workforce.

Regarding financial support for professional growth and improving teaching quality, teacher training and the improvement of learner achievement are important (Loyalka et al., 2019). To improve educational systems and, by extension, learner outcomes particular attention must be given to the construction of pedagogical thinking capacities in teacher education and professional development systems which enables instructors to diagnostically manage the teaching process (Lopes, 2019). Moreover, developing structured training programs is advisable due to the clear need for more comprehensive training. A participant additionally expressed:

Another way employers can support teacher training and preparation is by offering in-house training programs. These programs can be tailored to the specific needs of the school or institution and cover a wide range of topics, such as pedagogical techniques, classroom management, and technology integration. In-house training programs provide employees with the opportunity to learn from experienced colleagues and experts in the field, while also fostering a sense of community and collaboration within the workplace.

Administrators should work on developing or enhancing training modules that cover essential teaching competencies, technology use, and course design. One solution is to create Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), which are "free or low-cost Internet-based university

courses or near equivalents" (Kögler, 2023, p. 205). MOOCs are online-based teaching regimens designed to accommodate thousands of learners without charging fees (Billsberry & Alony, 2023). The courses are open, free of charge, and do not mandate prerequisite enrollment qualifications or certifications (Mahajan et al., 2019). The medium of delivery is online, and resources are doled out over the Internet. Lastly, MOOCs are complete courses with learning goals and objectives, course content, and learner assessment through formative and summative assessments, offering certifications post-coursework.

Finally, encouraging a culture of mentorship and collaborative learning within institutions can mitigate the effects of inadequate formal training. Implementing formal mentorship programs and peer observation opportunities can enhance teacher preparedness and job satisfaction. Mentorship can occur in a formal institutionalized scheme or program, or it can occur in an informal, interpersonal, self-driven mode (Aliaga-Salas, 2018; Berbain et al., 2023). During mentorship, mentees develop teaching skills, confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to self-reflect (Gakonga, 2019; Berbain et al., 2023). The mentoring relationship is advantageous to both parties; the novice teacher gains invaluable experience and knowledge, while the mentor imparts expertise and refreshes their practice (Enăchescu, 2022).

Implications for Practice

Reframing education as a profession, not merely a business, requires an institutional shift. Viewing education primarily as a business detracts from the quality of teaching and learning. Policymakers in developing countries are establishing professional development schemes to mirror those in developed countries (Loyalka et al., 2019). Administrators and policymakers should balance business considerations with the intrinsic educational values and professional development of teachers. Encouraging self-study and continuous learning is crucial. Both

teachers and administrators should recognize the importance of self-study and continuous professional development. Creating a culture that values and rewards ongoing learning can improve teaching outcomes and student learning experiences.

Participants emphasized the need for a culture of professional development and learning, suggesting that encouraging teachers to engage in professional development opportunities, recognizing and rewarding their efforts, and providing resources and support for their growth can foster a culture of continuous learning that, in turn, helps teachers stay updated with best practices and innovative teaching approaches, ultimately benefiting the students they serve. Emerging research highlights the effectiveness of MOOCs in providing teachers with current content knowledge they may otherwise lack access to (Herranen et al., 2021). Sezgin (2020) argues that MOOCs are excellent alternatives for teacher education, both locally and internationally, offering professional self-development opportunities for free.

The advantages of MOOCs include being self-paced, creativity-promoting, self-directed, collaborative, heterogeneous, free of cost, capable of enrolling vast numbers of participants, and allowing modules to be revisited multiple times (Mahajan et al., 2019). From a regulation and standardization perspective, policymakers need to develop and enforce standards for teacher training programs, especially for TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certifications. Disparities in teacher qualification and education across the world are exacerbated by both macro and micro conditions (Florian, 2021). The global reformation of teacher training programs and systems is underway, with institutions worldwide striving for change. Borawska-Kalbarczyk and Tołwińska (2019) advocate for the systematic evaluation of teacher training against the backdrop of a rapidly changing classroom environment.

Participant Paul shared his experience with the Cambridge TKT (Teacher Knowledge Test), noting, "TKT modules were not a mandatory requirement or anything, but they're helpful modules." Ensuring that such programs are rigorous, comprehensive, and practically relevant can enhance the overall quality of teaching. Policymakers in developing countries are working to establish professional development schemes akin to those in developed countries (Loyalka et al., 2019). As the focus on inclusive education in teaching practice and teacher education grows, international concern about instructor preparedness is increasing (Florian, 2021).

Finally, governments and educational authorities could consider incentives for institutions investing in high-quality teacher training and professional development. The incentives could include tax benefits, accreditation points, or public recognition. Insights from the research highlight significant gaps in teacher training and preparation in China, especially for foreign instructors. Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted approach involving both individual initiative and systemic changes within educational institutions. By fostering a supportive and collaborative educational environment, enhancing professional development opportunities, and recognizing teachers' professional needs, educators and administrators can collaborate to improve the quality of teaching and learning in China.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The research conducted aligns with previous literature on teacher training and preparation programs within the context of teaching English as an additional language. The interview protocol developed proved effective in gathering relevant data, reinforcing prior studies' findings. Initially, the scarcity of adequate resources for teacher education and professional development has been recognized as a global issue (Morton, 2019).

The literature indicated that many ESL instructors lack the necessary capacity and professional knowledge to ensure task and outcome accuracy within a communicative English language teaching context (Li & Peng, 2022). Furthermore, there is a noted deficiency in both in-service and pre-service teacher training courses, failing to meet the demands of English language learning (Archila & Truscott de Mejía, 2020; Camargo Cely, 2018; McDougald & Pissarello, 2020). Trends in the limited data available on ELL teacher education programs suggest an acknowledgment of the inadequacies in teacher education preparation systems (de Jong, E., 2021).

Addressing the first sub-research question about the shared experiences of university ESL instructors in China with employer-provided training, the study clearly revealed a significant absence of structured teacher training. Additionally, the recognition of the value and need for collaborative training aligns with best practices in teacher training, as outlined by Hertz et al. (2021), which emphasized seven elements of effective professional development.

Millard et al. (2020) reflected on teachers' awareness of the negative impact their lack of formal training has on learners. Foreign instructors' acknowledgment of the absence of structured training and the disconnect between teaching methods and training—describing it as unstructured, informal, and lacking in focus on students—suggests a misalignment with Shulman's (1987) Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, which posits that effective teaching requires mastery over seven knowledge bases.

The second sub-research question revealed foreign instructors' reluctance to personally finance the training they recognize as necessary. Such hesitance is attributed to a lack of external support from their institutions and the belief that the burden of training should fall upon the employer. Financial constraints were also cited as a barrier, corroborating Deen's (2023) findings

that various factors hinder ESL teaching professional development, including insufficient institutional support and cost-effectiveness challenges (Means et al., 2013).

The third sub-research question highlighted the pervasive recognition of inadequate training. The findings align with Zhu (2010) and de Jong (2021), who both note the insufficiency of teacher preparation in ESL contexts. A singular instructor's insights into the consequences of inadequate preparation underscore the gap in alignment with Shulman's Theory of Pedagogical Content Knowledge. Clermont et al. (1993) argued that successful teachers possess developed pedagogical content knowledge, suggesting that intensive intervention and skills-oriented workshops could enhance this.

The foreign instructors' knowledge deficiencies are further exacerbated when considering the refinement of Shulman's theory by Galguera (2011), who emphasized the importance of "critical language awareness (p.85)" among the core knowledge bases language teachers must possess. The knowledge should be supported by understanding linguistics, second language acquisition, bilingualism, and other related areas (Bunch, 2013; Valdés et al., 2005).

The central research question's thematic characterization by foreign instructors as treating the ESL teaching profession more as an opportunistic endeavor than a professional commitment highlights a lack of pre-service skills. Such a perspective underscores the thematic findings across the study, suggesting a broad acknowledgment of the gaps in teacher training and preparation among university ESL instructors in China.

Limitations and Delimitations

The current study incurred several limitations, one of the most significant being its strong regional focus. All participants had exclusively taught in tertiary institutions along the East Coast of China. Consequently, the study's findings are particularly population-specific, driven by the

identified gap in the literature concerning the experiences of foreign English instructors at the tertiary level in this region. The results might have been more broadly applicable if the study had included foreign instructors who taught at universities and institutions across different regions of China.

Additionally, the process of securing participants presented a limitation. At times, potential participants with valuable experience refused to participate. Furthermore, during the interviews, the researcher did not pose follow-up questions when participants discussed their experiences with teacher training and preparation programs. The absence of these follow-up inquiries possibly prevented the uncovering of novel themes within the participants' shared experiences, due to this lack of deeper probing.

The study was specifically delimited to foreign instructors of English as a Second Language (ESL) who had taught or were currently teaching at the university level in China. This focus was chosen to address a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of foreign ESL teachers in the Chinese tertiary education sector. Transcendental phenomenology was selected over hermeneutic phenomenology because the aim was not to interpret but to understand. Transcendental phenomenology facilitates the extraction of both textural and structural descriptions of the respondents' lived experiences. Due to the exploration of a specific phenomenon, purposive sampling was employed to simplify participant identification and enrollment.

Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the findings, limitations, and specific constraints identified in the study of foreign ESL instructors in China, a comprehensive exploration into future research avenues presents a significant opportunity to expand our knowledge base and improve

pedagogical practices. Such exploration underscores the necessity of extending the geographic scope of research beyond the East Coast of China to encompass the diverse experiences of ESL instructors across the entire country. Such an expansion is critical for uncovering regional variances in ESL teaching methodologies and experiences, which may highlight important disparities or areas of consistency that have remained unexplored.

Further, there is an imperative need to diversify the profiles of study participants. Future research should aim to include voices from a wide range of teaching backgrounds, encompassing instructors from secondary education, vocational training centers, and various institutional contexts, such as private language schools and international schools. Expanding the participant base would afford a more holistic understanding of the ESL teaching landscape in China, revealing a broader spectrum of challenges and achievements faced by educators. Moreover, the inclusion of comparative studies is essential for placing the experiences of ESL instructors in China in a global context. By comparing China's situation with those countries that also host foreign ESL teachers, such research could serve as a reflective surface to identify global best practices and unique challenges. Such insights could inform the development of cross-border strategies that contribute to a cohesive global educational community.

The perspectives of educational institutions and employers also warrant focused investigation. Understanding their views and expectations regarding teacher preparation programs could provide a balanced perspective on the needs and aspirations of both educators and their institutions, thereby facilitating the development of more effective teacher training frameworks. Longitudinal studies hold the potential to trace the professional trajectories of ESL instructors over time, shedding light on the long-term impacts of teacher training on instructional

efficacy, student outcomes, and career development. Such insights are invaluable for substantiating the long-term benefits of structured training programs.

The application of mixed methods approaches in future research is recommended to enrich the data landscape. By integrating quantitative assessments with qualitative insights, such studies could offer a nuanced understanding of the ESL teaching experience, with follow-up interviews and focus groups unraveling the complex dynamics of instructional challenges and successes. In the era of digital transformation, the exploration of technology's role in supporting and enhancing teacher training is paramount. Investigating the potential of digital tools and online platforms could unveil innovative approaches to teacher development, tailored to the evolving needs of the 21st-century educator.

Furthermore, addressing the financial and logistical challenges associated with accessing quality teacher training is crucial. Exploration into these barriers, along with potential institutional and policy-level interventions, could facilitate more accessible and impactful training opportunities. Cultural adaptation and understanding emerge as critical themes, underscoring the importance of cultural competency in the effectiveness and satisfaction of ESL instruction. Research in this domain could deepen our understanding of the interplay between cultural knowledge and pedagogical practice. Finally, the exploration of collaborative and mentorship-based training models within the ESL instructional context in China could offer practical insights for program development, promoting an environment conducive to educator growth and collaboration.

Conclusion

Overall, this transcendental phenomenological study presented the lived experiences of foreign university English as an Additional Language (EAL) instructors in China, focusing on

their interactions with teacher training and preparation programs at the tertiary level. The study aimed to uncover the shared experiences of these instructors, guided by a central research question and three sub-questions regarding their experiences with employer-provided training, self-funded training, and post-training teaching experiences. Participants were 10 non-Chinese foreign nationals, both male and female, aged between 18 to 60 years, who taught or had taught at various universities in a single Chinese city. Data collection involved personal semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, and responses to journal prompts, revealing significant insights into the state of EAL teacher training and preparation in China.

The findings underscored a pronounced absence of structured teacher training and preparation programs, with nine out of 10 participants highlighting this gap. Moreover, the training available was often deemed inadequate, leaving instructors feeling underprepared for the classroom. Despite these challenges, there was a notable appreciation for collaborative training approaches, such as peer mentorship and observation, which participants found beneficial for their professional development. There were two critical takeaways that emerged from this research. The critical need for structured teacher training programs is borne out by the overwhelming absence of structured training programs which points to a significant gap in the professional development of foreign EAL instructors in China. Such findings call for educational institutions and policymakers to develop comprehensive, standardized training frameworks that equip instructors with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach EAL at the university level.

Despite the lack of formal training programs, the positive reception of collaborative training methods among participants suggests a viable pathway to enhance teacher preparedness and efficacy. Institutions should consider incorporating peer-led training sessions, mentorship

programs, and observational learning opportunities as integral components of teacher professional development strategies. In summation, this study highlights the urgent need for structured, comprehensive teacher training and preparation programs for foreign EAL instructors in China, emphasizing the potential of collaborative training approaches to fill the current gap. Addressing these needs can significantly improve the teaching effectiveness of EAL instructors, thereby enhancing the learning experiences and outcomes of their students.

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Appendix A: INFORMED CONSENT

Consent

Title of the Project: ESL TEACHER TRAINING IN CHINA: A TRANSCENDENTAL
PHEMONOMLOGICAL STUDY
Principal Investigator: Keithe Dearon Wall, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty
University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study focusing on the experiences of foreign ESL
university instructors with teacher training and preparation programs. To participate, you must
have taught or teach at a Chinese university, be a non-Chinese national (foreign instructor), and
be 18 years of age or older. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in
this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to understand and describe the lived experiences of university
ESL instructors in China who have or are currently teaching at the university level and to
understand and describe their experiences with teacher training and preparation programs.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes, either in person or via a
   videoconferencing system. The interviews will be audio recorded to allow for later
   transcription and analysis.
2. After interviews have been transcribed, participants will be asked to read the interviews
   for accuracy. This task will take approximately 25 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a better understanding of the experiences of foreign ESL university
instructors with teacher training and preparation programs that will result in more support for
instructors and learners.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to
the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or The British Council. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Keithe Wall. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him a███████████████ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, ███████████████████████████

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

z

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: ESL TEACHER TRAINING IN CHINA: A TRANSCENDENTAL PHEMONOMLOGICAL STUDY

Principal Investigator: Keithe Dearon Wall, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study focusing on the experiences of foreign ESL university instructors with teacher training and preparation programs. To participate, you must have taught or teach at a Chinese university, be a non-Chinese national (foreign instructor), and be 18 years of age or older. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to understand and describe the lived experiences of university ESL instructors in China who have or are currently teaching at the university level and to understand and describe their experiences with teacher training and preparation programs.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in a focus group interview, lasting approximately an hour, either in person or via a videoconferencing system. The focus group interview will be audio recorded to allow for later transcription and analysis.
2. Following the focus group, participants will be asked to write short journal responses to four prompts relating to teacher training and your lived experiences. This activity will take approximately 30 minutes.
3. After interviews have been transcribed, participants will be asked to read the interviews for accuracy. This task will take approximately 25 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or The British Council. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Keithe Wall. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Where did you grow up? How would your friends and family describe you as a person?

2. Why did you come to China to teach?

3. What made you choose to teach at the university level in China?

4. Describe your experience teaching at the tertiary level of education in China as a foreign English language instructor. CRQ

5. Describe the teacher training/teacher preparation courses that you took before teaching at the tertiary level. SQ1

6. Give an example(s) of teacher training/preparation provided by your employer. SQ1

7. Describe your experience with the teacher training or teacher preparation courses provided by your employer. SQ1

8. How do you perceive the impact of the training your employer-provided on your learners' outcomes? SQ3

9. Give an example(s) of when a lack of employer-provided training impacted you negatively. SQ3

10. Give an example(s) of when employer-provided teacher training impacted you positively. SQ3

11. Talk about any areas regarding teacher training or teacher preparation courses provided by your employer that were lacking or inadequate? SQ1

12. After receiving employer-provided training, can you describe your experience as an instructor? SQ3

13. Describe your experience with the teacher training or teacher preparation courses undertaken at your expense. SQ2

14. Give an example(s) of training undertaken at your expense. SQ2

15. How do you perceive the impact of the training you paid for on your learners' outcomes? SQ2

16. Give an example(s) of when a lack of training provided at your expense impacted a learner negatively. SQ2

17. Give an example(s) of when teacher training provided at your expense impacted a learner positively. SQ3

18. Talk about any areas regarding teacher training or teacher preparation courses provided at your own expense that were lacking or inadequate? SQ3

19. How did the training prepare you for the classroom? SQ3

20. What advice would you give to a person interested in teaching in China?

21. What do you wish you knew about the ESL industry before you became a part of it?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOCUS GROUP

1. How did you enter the ESL industry?

2. Discuss a collaborative training experience that you had while teaching at a university in China?

3. Have the collaborative training experiences that you have had in China impacted your teaching practice at university, positively or negatively?

4. Please give an example of how the collaborative training experiences manifested themselves in the classroom.

5. Please discuss how the lack of collaborative training has manifested itself in the classroom.

6. Describe the nature of employer-provided teacher training in China.

7. Describe the nature of self-funded teacher training in China.

8. Describe an experience where you felt ill-equipped or inadequately prepared to teach.

9. Describe how you dealt with the situation.

10. What else would you like to share about teaching in China?

APPENDIX E: JOURNAL PROMPT PROTOCOL

1. Please read the journal prompt questions and respond with five to seven sentences.

2. Describe what role the employer should play concerning teacher training and preparation in your teaching context.

3. Describe an experience where an employer took responsibility for your professional development.

4. Describe what role the individual teacher should play concerning teacher training and preparation in your teaching context.

5. Describe an experience where you took responsibility for your professional development.

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT POST

WECHAT

ATTENTION FORMER AND CURRENT COLLEAUGES: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a PhD degree at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to understand and describe the lived experiences of university ESL instructors in China who have or are currently teaching at university and to understand and describe their experiences with teacher training and preparation programs. To participate, you must have taught or teach at a Chinese university, be a non-Chinese national (foreign instructor), and be 18 years of age or older. Participants will be asked to do one of the following: participate in an interview (35 - 45 minutes) or participate in a focus group interview lasting approximately an hour and afterwards write short journal responses to four prompts relating to teacher training and your lived experiences (10 -15 minutes). After interviews have been transcribed, all participants will be asked to read the interview transcriptions for accuracy (25 minutes). If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please direct message me for more information. A consent document will be emailed to you one week before the interview or focus group.

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE PROCEDURAL LOG (Ronald)

01-22-2024	Received IRB Approval
01-23-2024	Messaged potential participants
01-23-2024	Ronald responded with his willingness to participate
01-24-2024	Ronald completed consent form
01-24-2024	Contacted Ronald to scheduled interview
01-25-2024	Conducted Ronald 's interview
01-25-2024	Read electronic transcripts for errors/first read through
01-26-2024	Printed transcript and placed in locked cabinet with other transcripts
01-26-2024	Sent electronic transcript to participant for review and to correct any information
01-29-2024	Began reading and coding of transcript

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1: Could you describe the teacher training or teacher preparation courses that you took before teaching at the tertiary level or at a university?

Speaker 2: Well, it was a bit of training. For example, they taught us how to use technology, such as operating the new class system, how to share the screen, and how to get students to focus on the PowerPoint presentations. There wasn't much training on teaching methodologies, but they did guide us on which textbooks to use for the tertiary level. Initially, we used Interchange and New Horizon College English, but eventually, we decided to exclusively use New Horizon College English. The training mainly focused on using technology efficiently and contacting the university immediately if there were any issues.

Speaker 1: Can you give an example or any examples of teacher training or preparation provided by your employer?

Speaker 2: As I mentioned earlier, they trained me on how to use technology, not just the class management system but also other tools. They instructed me on maintaining a disciplined classroom and the importance of a proper student-teacher relationship, cautioning against being overly friendly due to strict policies on maintaining professional boundaries. They emphasized being aware of cultural misconceptions and the importance of cautious interaction with students.

Speaker 1: So, there weren't any training courses or teacher training preparations provided by the employer?

Speaker 2: For preparation, they suggested observing other teachers' classes. For example, I was advised to observe a class taught by XXXX, a former employee, to understand how to manage a class effectively, especially students at different levels of English proficiency. The observation included how to discipline students, like dealing with mobile phone use in class, and encouraging the use of English over Chinese. However, there wasn't much formal preparation, just observation.

Speaker 1: How do you perceive the impact of the training your employer provided?

Speaker 2: There wasn't much impact. We tried to ensure students learned as much as possible, but due to the diversity and varying English proficiency levels, especially among non-English majors, it was challenging to make a significant impact.

Speaker 1: Can you give an example of when a lack of employer-provided training impacted you negatively?

Speaker 2: Although there were a few trainings, they weren't very comprehensive. I remember needing more training in student discipline, which could have led to negative consequences for the institution.

Speaker 1: Can you give an example of when employer-provided training impacted you positively?

Speaker 2: The training on using technology and observing other teachers were positive aspects. They taught me to observe and take notes on teaching skills, which was helpful when I started teaching my classes.

Speaker 1: Are there any areas regarding teacher training or preparation courses provided by your employer that were lacking or inadequate?

Speaker 2: The main issue was the lack of formal training courses. Other companies, like XXX, provide more comprehensive materials on topics such as content-based instruction and student discipline, which was lacking in my experience.

Speaker 1: After receiving employer-provided training, can you describe your experience as an instructor?

Speaker 2: The experience was quite positive. I learned to communicate efficiently, manage the classroom effectively, and give clear instructions. Teaching at the university level in various contexts was enjoyable.

Speaker 1: Can you describe your experience with teacher training or preparation courses undertaken at your own expense?

Speaker 2: Before coming to China, I took a teacher training course in Australia, which provided valuable insights on teaching English at any level, classroom management, and awareness of students' challenges. This training was particularly aimed at preparing for teaching jobs in China.

Speaker 1: How do you perceive the impact of the training that you paid for?

Speaker 2: The training was very beneficial. It broadened my experience and equipped me with essential skills for teaching English effectively. It was instrumental in securing a teaching position in Shanghai.

Speaker 1: Can you give an example of when a lack of training provided at your own expense impacted a learner negatively?

Speaker 2: I can't recall any negative impacts from the training I paid for. It was quite beneficial overall.

Speaker 1: Can you give an example of when teacher training provided at your own expense positively impacted learners?

Speaker 2: The training improved my ability to teach English effectively to non-native speakers, which has been significantly helpful.

Speaker 1: Are there any areas regarding teacher training or preparation courses provided at your own expense that were lacking or inadequate?

Speaker 2: I didn't find any inadequacies in the training I paid for.

Speaker 1: How did the training prepare you for the classroom?

Speaker 2: The training provided all the necessary information for managing the classroom, including dealing with discipline issues. It was very helpful.

Speaker 1: What advice would you give to a person interested in teaching in China?

Speaker 2: Be mindful of what you say in the classroom, avoid sensitive topics like politics and religion, and maintain professional boundaries with students. China has strict regulations on these matters.

Speaker 1: What do you wish you knew about the ESL industry before you became a part of it?

Speaker 2: I wish I had known more about creating engaging lessons and the qualities of a good English teacher. That knowledge would have been beneficial.

Speaker 1: Thank you very much.

Speaker 2: Yes, thank you.

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE JOURNAL PROMPT

Please read the journal prompt questions and respond with five to seven sentences.

1. Describe what role the employer should play concerning teacher training and preparation in your teaching context.

It is the role of any employer to ensure that all employees have adequate expertise before they are thrown into a classroom. This is especially important if in the event someone is right out of college with limited contact with all elements of the teaching process such as course design, test composition, fair scoring, etc. Furthermore, employers must be sure specific institutional requirements in relation to students and their majors and corresponding coursework are known by all staff. Therefore any employer is should take action in a number of ways as follows: (1) ensure all orientation and curriculum planning time for new teachers before formal teaching begins is adequately long and includes all the essential information; (2) gives teacher student profile data in areas of demographics, ability, motivation level, and career trajectory; (3) provide incentives for teachers to enroll in professional development programs by providing tuition assistance.

2. Describe an experience where an employer took responsibility for your professional development.

Since I began full time teaching in 2013 — the only training I received was during planning days in which teachers worked together on course design. This was peer to peer teacher assistance and not set up directly by any employer I've worked with. Another example of this. Was observations required by XXXX, but those were short and inadequate. Professional development in the sense of formal workshops, mock lesson critiques and real substantive training leading to improved skills, certification has never been offered.

3. Describe what role the individual teacher should play concerning teacher training and preparation in your teaching context.

    Personal responsibility with regard to your own career development is essential. I've learned to never rely on any school or other organization to push me to pursue advanced training because they never do while — they will simply demand that anyone who applies for a given job has all the training / prep/ certs / degrees before they will consider your resume. It is something we do out of necessity to ensure we have job security and eventually land a tenured permanent position at a desirable school. One needs to be active in MOOCS, paid certificate programs and exploring doctoral education depending on one's career goals.

4. Describe an experience where you took responsibility for your professional development. The best example of this is enrolling and paying myself for a G7-12 certificate in language arts education. My employer provided no assistance but of course I new to ensure that I can potentially return to USA or work, getting a cert and license is required.