College English Teachers’ Beliefs about Effective Language Teaching

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This study examined the beliefs about effective language teaching held by a group of Chinese College English teachers. The extent to which teachers felt their classroom practices reflected these beliefs was also studied together with an analysis of the factors that, according to the teachers, limited the realization of their beliefs in their teaching. The findings show that while the teachers felt that their teaching reflected their beliefs, there was a significant difference between the value assigned to particular teaching behaviors and practices and the extent to which these were reported to occur in teachers’ work. In explaining the reasons for this mismatch, teachers felt that student factors, institutional factors, and teacher factors were influential.

Introduction

Discussions of a teacher role are a common feature in the literature on language teaching methodology (e.g., Wright, 1987; Richards & Rogers, 1986). Watkins (2005), for example, suggests 12 teacher roles: language guide, reflector, prompter, administrator, expert resource, observer, provider of input, organizer, performer, assessor, listener, and controller, while Harmer (2007) argues teachers should be able to adopt a variety of roles within the classroom to facilitate learning: controller, prompter, participant, resource, and tutor. Further taxonomies of teacher roles are suggested in Spodark (2001). Teacher roles have also been discussed with reference to particular facets of language teaching and learning—Voller (1997), for example, examines the role of the teacher in promoting autonomous learning.