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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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To Be or Not to Be? The "Publish or Perish" Syndrome for English Teacher Educators in China

Abstract The philosophy of "publish or perish" has already been adopted as a yardstick by the vast majority of Chinese higher education institutions in their attempts to benchmark Western research universities in recent years, which has led to increasing pressure on university teachers to produce research publications. This paper addresses this endemic issue in China's teaching universities with particular reference to its impact on English teacher educators. It points out that this trend is a result of unrealistically benchmarking research universities in well-resourced Western countries and overlooking the nature of teaching universities, the nature of English teacher educators' professional commitments, and the practical constraints on China's teaching institutions. It has given rise to a variety of problems which, unless addressed properly, may demoralize English teacher educators and impair the quality of both teaching and research. The paper argues that a fair perception of and attitude towards research and realistic expectations of English teacher educators' research outcomes are essential. Practical implications at macro-, meso- and micro-levels are provided with the aim of improving the status quo.

Keywords publish or perish, research publications, support mechanisms, teacher effort

Introduction

The "publish or perish" syndrome used to be a feature of Western higher education. It has received much attention in the West, with a special issue on the phenomenon appearing in the Spring 2000 issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly*.

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Beginning in 1993, it has been gradually diffused into Chinese higher education, following calls in the "Outline for Reform and Development and Education in China" for the establishment of world-class research universities (Eggins, 2007, September). Lai (2010) reported that in an attempt to raise China's international competitiveness, the Chinese government has instituted a series of sweeping reforms, all with the aim of rapidly expanding the number of places within tertiary education institutions. Ma (2007) also noted that the Chinese Ministry of Education has been deeply involved in the process of transforming state-building or flagship universities into world-class research universities via launching a variety of initiatives, such as "Project 211" from 1996–2002 and "Project 985" launched in 1998 by former Chinese President Jiang Zemin. "Project 211" sought to facilitate the improvement of 100 leading universities (including Peking University and Tsinghua University; Ma, 2007, p. 33) and over 300 key disciplines; and "Project 985" aimed to construct 34 first-grade world-renowned research universities and explore new administrative systems and mechanisms of establishing higher education institutes (Liu, 2007, p. 57).

These initiatives have created extraordinary incentives as well as pressures on Chinese higher education institutions to upgrade themselves in terms of research rankings as an overriding, if not main objective. This has caused severe competition among institutions at all levels and of all types (whether comprehensive universities, normal universities, or technical and vocational colleges; whether state-run or private) to establish research centers. Research grants, publications, and formal conference presentations are typically the main considerations in promotion, tenure, and merit-based pay increases. As Wang and Han (2011) observed, high priority is placed on international and national rankings, based on publications in international and national journals, citations, and international cooperation. It is not uncommon for an annual target of three international publications to be set for each faculty member, and failure may mean termination of employment in elite universities. This scenario is vividly reflected in the comments given by Tight (2010): The golden age in which academics were able to pursue their own interests, had relatively light and undemanding teaching responsibilities, and enjoyed widespread respect from both the general public and policy makers, has gone (p. 105).

Normal universities have, without exception, succumbed to the influence of this national academic climate. It is no longer sufficient to publish a few

well-turned essays and a great work of some sort in the sunset of an academic career, as the institutionalized research assessment exercise conducted every two to three years sets rigorous quotas of research outcomes for each academic tier. It recognizes four levels of academic (excluding practical) journals: ordinary, core, key, and authoritative journals. Publications appearing in key and authoritative journals, such as those on the CSSCI (Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index), SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index), A&HCI (Arts and Humanities Citation Index) are recognized by financial awards, while a failure to reach the expected quotas results in an approximate 5% deduction of annual income as a penalty. Teaching-oriented faculty without research publications can no longer get the same level of recognition as they previously could; whilst in contrast, research-active staff are invariably highly honored and rewarded despite minimal effort put into teaching and supervising students.

This nationwide trend in China's higher education is addressed here, as we believe it is likely to undermine faculty's self-esteem and morale, and the overall quality of teacher education if unattended to. We focus on its impact on English teacher educators in normal universities. While acknowledging some positive elements in this new trend, we consider it to be unreasonable, irrational, and unrealistic because of its overemphasis on research and research outcomes, and disregard for teaching and provision of support mechanisms. We deal with the positive elements of this trend first, and then its negative impact on English teacher educators. Finally, we discuss some implications in the hope of optimizing the existing faculty assessment system, maintaining English teacher educators' self-esteem and morale, and enhancing their practices of teaching and research.

Positive Elements in the "Publish or Perish" Philosophy

Needless to say, this trend has some positive elements and benefits to both teachers and institutions. On the one hand, it may bring benefits to individual teacher educators and students' learning outcomes, such as changes to the curriculum and pedagogy if research outcomes are applied in teaching; improved professional gratification and social prestige via presenting the products of research in a form accessible to others (Nunan, 1992, p. xii) and enhanced students' learning outcomes with the vitality brought to the teaching by

research-active faculty members (Altbach, 2009).

On the other hand, benefits may accrue to departments and institutions. It may promote collaborative research endeavors among teachers, and thus help to foster a collegial environment through boosting teacher educators' sense of ownership, incentives, and competence in undertaking research collaboratively. Research activities and outcomes may upgrade the profile of departments and institutions, and increase support at institutional and national levels, which in turn may establish a virtuous cycle of departmental and institutional development. For these reasons Chinese administrators attach much more importance to research than teaching, where outcomes are less tangible and palpable.

Drawbacks and Negative Impact of the Trend on English Teacher Educators

Drawbacks of the Trend in Reality

While acknowledging the potential benefits of the "publish or perish" philosophy, we argue that despite its attempt to improve teacher' professional competence and boost their status and careers in the academy, and its prima facie success in "sustaining academic values and academic control in a context where the state was making new demands on research and higher education and seeking to impose its own structures for quality assurance upon them" (Henkel, 1999, p. 105), the adverse effect of the philosophy seems to merit more attention. It has created a profound disturbance in the academic profession, especially the field of English education and teacher education. A great deal of evidence shows that it has neglected the nature and characteristics of teaching universities, English teacher educators' professional work and a series of practical constraints, e.g., workloads, institutional and individual differences, constrained resources, limited outlets for research available to English teacher educators, and an unprofessional review and publication process.

First of all, it seems to have neglected the distinctive feature of English teacher educators' professional work. English teacher educators in Chinese teaching universities are well-known for their onerous workload demands and time pressures. It is extraordinarily difficult to allow time and energy for research, which is an intrinsically different discourse. Shu (2004) observed that Chinese

university English teachers teach an average of 15 hours a week plus various kinds of extra work (p. 289), in Freeman's terms (1998) "a wider and wider range of responsibilities beyond actual classroom teaching" (p. 7) which do not directly foster scholarly publication, but demand time away from work on preparation of manuscripts for publication (Skolnik, 2000), e.g., planning lessons, marking students' assignments, devising exam papers, planning, organizing and participating in students' extra-curricular activities, undertaking logistic responsibilities, liaising with schools to maintain opportunities for the practicum and other collaborative activities. English teachers' workload becomes more demanding due to large class sizes, ranging from 30 to 40 for English majors, and from 40 to 60 for non-English majors. The ratio of teachers to students is an average of 1 to 18.2 in most universities, and 1 to 35 in some universities (Shu, 2004, p. 289). These figures have increased substantially as a result of the massification of Chinese higher education since 2000. In the period to 2006, the EFL (English as a foreign language) teacher/student ratio reached up to 1 to 200.

Apart from these compulsory routine teaching responsibilities, English teacher educators have additional mandatory teaching demands and obligations in all kinds of income-generating programs, such as part-time dual BA degree programs, part-time MEd programs for school teachers, and non-degree-bearing language development and teacher development programs delivered at weekends, during summer and winter holidays. Altbach (2009) noted that some Chinese academics "generate a significant part of their incomes through outside work, such as consulting, moonlighting at other institutions, or, at some universities, taking on extra teaching loads in fee-producing programs, which obviously detract from the core functions of the professoriate and make full academic productivity difficult to maintain" (p. 23). Eggins (2007) made similar observation that given the inadequate conditions of work and remuneration of the majority of academics, Asian academics have to hold more than one job to make ends meet. The various responsibilities have rendered English teacher educators' life fractured, and peace of mind, a requisite for wholly engaged and committed academic work, almost an impossibility.

Secondly, this trend seems to have neglected a range of practical institutional constraints. Lack of resources is one of the major hindrances. As Eggins (2007) noted, "an environment where meaningful research is possible is difficult to achieve" in Asian countries, e.g., computer use is often rationed and the cost of accessing major databases is such that access is often severely limited (p. 7). A

multiplicity of other factors have increased the difficulty of getting published, such as limited access to English language journals and references beyond China, the small number of recognized relevant journals, and the large number of university English teachers. The number of nationally recognized English-related journals is less than 30 (only one journal is in English), whilst the number of university English teachers was 100,000 in 2002 (MoE, 2002) and this number is still on the increase. Additionally, journals in China are university-based and comprehensive, covering all areas related to English language, such as translation, cross-cultural communication, literature, linguistics, English teaching methodology, and language teacher education. Furthermore, submissions written in English are not accepted by those journals. Only a very small number of teachers publish their work in international journals beyond China, however, of the internationally reputable journals, only SSCI-indexed ones are recognized in many institutions.

Apart from the institutional constraints, unprofessional review and publication practices of journals appears to be a further demotivating factor. As Cheung (2010) noted, an absence of comments is a characteristic of Chinese language journals probably as a result of the difficulty of handling a large number of manuscripts. Authors have to exercise an exceptional level of patience and tolerance towards journals to which they submit their manuscripts without any expectation of acknowledgement of receipt of their manuscripts as a ritual, or feedback on their manuscripts. Authors automatically assume that their manuscripts have been rejected if they do not receive any response in a period of several months unaware of reasons for the rejection. In this sense authors have lost a great opportunity to improve their manuscripts. Tam and Chen (2010) found in five Chinese university-based journals a disproportionate contribution of faculty papers from editorial board members of those journals and faculty in the universities the journals are affiliated to. They attributed this to protectionism, academic accountability, and the social capital of *guanxi* (关系, relationship) in the specific context of China. On their part, journals and authors seem to have already accepted this practice as normal.

Negative Impact of the Trend on English Teacher Educators

The overemphasis on research and unreasonably and unrealistically high demands in terms of research productivity have led to several undesirable

consequences in normal universities, such as a rapid proliferation of academic corruption, underrating of teaching, demoralizing of teachers, and formation of a competitive departmental atmosphere. The first negative impact, the dramatic increase of academic corruption as a result of the product-driven research culture has been addressed as an issue by some researchers (e.g., Pocha, 2006; Yang, 2005). Pocha (2006) pointed out that there has been a growing public concern about plagiarism at all levels of the academic system and violation of intellectual property at some Chinese research universities. Yang (2005) revealed a series of academic inequities in Chinese higher education, such as misrepresenting one's educational background or work experience, rampant plagiarism, ghostwriting, affixing one's name to someone else's publications, getting one's name listed as senior author without any contribution, distorting research data, making false commercial advertisements, violating meritocratic values (using personal relationships/favoritism) in research grants application, monopolizing grants, etc. In addition to these academic offences, inequity is also common in the manuscript review process, review-free privilege is granted to academic celebrities simply due to their prestige, whilst ordinary teachers have a slim chance of having their papers reviewed on account of their humble status. This review process has created opportunities to exploit personal connections to get published. Charging publication fees (版面费, *ban mian fei*) is widespread irrespective of the quality of submissions, which has led to a large amount of academic junk being used by students in textbooks.

The second negative impact is the prevalent tendency to devalue teaching and research on teaching and teacher education, which in turn has generated a debilitating effect in English teacher education. Teaching is downgraded as a simple and technical activity, and research on teaching and teacher education is not recognized as legitimate disciplined research because of its perceived lack of academic rigor. The myriad competing demands and commitments related to teaching and service (e.g., teaching, supervising agenda, bureaucratic directives in the form of meetings and paperwork) do not count in the fullest sense from the university's perspective, posing a dilemma regarding the balance of teaching and research, infringement of teacher educators' academic freedom to follow their interests and passion in their work and stifling creativity. Courage and determination appear to be precious assets in the changed academic climate that pursues tenaciously the belief in the responsibility to assist the growth of new

teachers and to show commitment to good teaching with all the time that entails. The dual commitments to the professional and academic communities keep teacher educators' gaze focused on the fulcrum of their lives, always striving for the perfect balance to be a bona fide member of the academy (Cole, 2000) and squeeze out time for scholarship from between the cracks of professional and family time, only to find that their elusive search for a balance between the personal and professional realms of life and the sacrifice of their standards of living is a fruitless effort (Knowles, Cole, & Sumsion, 2000; Lai, 2010).

Besides the debilitating effect, overrating research and devaluing teaching has generated a demoralizing effect on English teacher educators. Many conscientious and self-sacrificing English teacher educators who put their students before their careers find themselves marginalized with a "semi-public status," stuck in a dilemma and "no-win" situation. Some English teacher educators "veer away from professionally demanding activities they most want to do and the work they feel they do best and towards those meritorious activities understood and hence rewarded in academic departments" (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, p. 337), they bite the bullet to do research to meet the university's standards of academic work. What is more, it is a vehicle of professional and personal humiliation (Henkel, 1999), especially for research-inactive staff with a new and undesirable semi-public status in this environment. More pervasive stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, frustration, burnout, and disillusionment have occurred among English teacher educators compared with academics of "pure disciplines" of the arts and sciences who can afford more commitment to research activities.

The third negative impact is the likely aggravation of the already competitive and individualistic context of Eastern working culture (Hall, 1976) that has traditionally dominated higher education. Collaborative research, albeit widely promoted, is de facto only rhetoric due to teachers' lack of enthusiasm for collaboration. Overrating first authors' contribution to co-authored research publications and overvaluing principle investigator's status in research projects discourages project participants from fulfilling their initiative to the full. An invisible acute competitive atmosphere has gradually formed, where teachers rarely communicate with each other about their teaching and research. The departmental environment is rather tense where teachers feel alienated from each other, demarcations between research-active staff and research-inactive staff have

arisen, and a gulf between action researchers and disciplined researchers has occurred due to different levels of recognition awarded to them.

In brief, the "publish or perish" philosophy widely practiced in China's higher education has more negative than positive impacts on English teacher educators in teaching universities. As discussed previously, it has yielded a series of adverse effects on English teacher educators' self-perception and professional development. Apart from its negative impact on English teacher educators, it has also generated adverse effects on students' learning. Gao et al. (2010, July 20) expressed their concerns about the declining quality of teaching in China's higher education as a result of lecturers' and institutions' slighting of teaching. The vast majority of Chinese university students (83.4%) were dissatisfied with their courses, in particular the unreasonable course design and teacher-centered pedagogies (Gao et al., 2010, July 20). The philosophy originated from the over-zealousness of Chinese institutions in their quest to overtake world-leading universities and their pathological craze for accountability fulfillment. Now, we discuss the implications of this syndrome on various levels.

Implications of the "Publish or Perish" Syndrome for Practice

Implications of the "publish or perish" syndrome for practice include those on three levels involved in the Chinese higher education system, i.e., national and local educational management at the macro-level, institutional administrators at the meso-level, and English teacher educators at the micro-level respectively. Responding to this entails a common awareness on the part of the meso- and macro-level of the issue and its likely consequences, and their joint efforts to create platforms for English teacher educators' professional development. At the micro-level, it entails English teacher educators' change of perception about research and sustained efforts to engage in collaborative research.

Implications for National/Local Educational Management

Adopting a Decentralized Management Approach

The issue about English teacher educators' publications sounds like an institutional and personal problem. In fact it may have partly stemmed from the macro-level, which has adopted a highly centralized and top-down management

approach in higher education. The nationwide large-scale initiatives to benchmark first-rate universities have led to institutions "swimming with the tide" with little consideration of their local features. Reforming the traditional administrative structure with more elements of de-centralized and temperate approaches can help to eliminate its negative functions (Wang & Chen, 2007). The tiered model adopted in America and the UK is a good example of differentiating institutions into three tiers—vocationally oriented "open-door" community colleges, multipurpose state universities, and selective research-oriented universities—to accommodate ever-larger numbers of students with varying levels of academic ability and goals for study. The three tiers of institutions have their specific patterns of funding and support for each of the tiers as well as quite different missions (Geiger, 2004). The syndrome suggests a need to experiment with a new policy in a small area to identify potential problems and precautions prior to moving on to the formal nationwide implementation stage, instead of launching it across the country without piloting. It also suggests a need to promote locally appropriate policies and practices to maximize both institutional and individual development. Precautions should be made to prevent the building of excessive numbers of research universities and set realistic goals for institutions at different levels. Additionally, policies need to be made to curb the rate of expansion of higher education to alleviate such consequent problems as a scarcity of resources, a drop in educational quality, and a weak international academic standing, and make concerted efforts at the meso-level to create a more agreeable environment in which teachers can concentrate on authentic academic endeavors without having to sacrifice work stability (Lai, 2010). Empowering institutions may be more effective, as institutions may be more cognizant of their institutional features and needs, and more able to develop strategic plans for institutional development.

Providing Support to Normal Institutions

Provision of political and financial support to normal universities needs to be on the top of the agenda to create an enabling academic atmosphere. In political terms, a reduction in teachers' workload can be realized via limiting expansion of higher education to an appropriate level, and increasing faculty recruitment. Conditions for teacher development can be improved through a variety of means,

such as adjusting the current faculty assessment to recognize and promote teachers' all-round professional competencies rather than research publications as the only parameter, increasing quotas for funded research projects at various levels to involve more teachers in research activities, providing more resources for teaching and research (including Chinese and English resources within and outside China), creating more opportunities for in-service training both in China and abroad to enhance teachers' professional expertise, and monitoring and standardizing the practice of academic journals in China. In financial terms, the status of teachers needs to be substantially improved so that they can concentrate on their teaching and research whole-heartedly and energetically without financial concern. Finally, constant dialogue with institutions and teachers is necessary to address important issues that need to be taken on board.

Implications for Institutional Administrators

Establishing a Fair Faculty Assessment System

A fair faculty assessment system needs to be established within normal universities. Summative assessment of teacher performance in the form of quantitative measures should be supplemented, if not superseded, by developmentally-driven formative evaluation to maintain teachers' motivation. The faculty assessment system should recognize individual differences to encourage faculty to fully engage in intellectual pursuits in an area of their own choosing and use their skills to the full. Parallel tracks should be established to recognize excellent performance in different areas of expertise. The primary goal of normal universities should be switched to preparing students for practice, which entails rectifying the current marginality of teacher education and according equitable value to teaching. Teaching-oriented staff should be accredited for their unfailing commitment to their teaching career, and their generally higher level of teaching quality than research-active staff (Symbaluk & Howell, 2010). Demands on teachers' research outcomes need to be re-examined to set realistic expectations, given the high level of investment required for research activities, the inverse relationship between quantity and quality of research, institutional characteristics and practical constraints. In their effort to overtake internally renowned institutions, administrators need to identify the

gaps in terms of "software" qualities, i.e., the infrastructure available to facilitate rather than stifle teacher and institutional development. Teachers should be given opportunities to be involved in reviewing the research assessment system and making modifications if necessary.

Valuing Research on Teachers' Practice

Research and teaching are in a symbiotic relationship (Visser-Wijnveen et al., 2010), so the main criterion of good research should be whether it informs practice rather than whether it is published (Smiles & Short, 2006). The process of engaging in research is a process of changing both the ways in which schools work and what is expected of, and valued in, what teachers do (Freeman, 1996, pp. 100–101). Research outcomes should be primarily intended to influence educational policy and practice through various media, including discussion, presentations, or advocacy, rather than journal articles exclusively. A process-oriented view of research (Allwright, 1997; Carr & Kemmis, 1986) is necessary for administrators' assessment of research, which values a research perspective in teachers' teaching practice and the process of research as more important than the product of research. Action research and exploratory practice, although they have not received full recognition in Chinese institutions, are sustainable research activities to maximize the research-teaching nexus. Compared with other forms of research, they place their focus on a search for local understandings rather than for incontrovertible findings and universalistic theory (Allwright, 1997). They integrate teaching and stimulate reflection about teaching, thus can be made sensibly and actively a part of teaching without posing an intolerable burden. The whole process enables teacher educators to understand the teaching and learning process and help students in the best possible way.

Creating Support Mechanisms for Research

As Gould (1996) stated, a "fortuitous combination of external circumstances (personal, familial, societal, and historical) play an important role in enabling external circumstances" (p. 12). To facilitate teachers' research activities support should override demands. Temporal and intellectual space, substantial autonomy

and academic freedom should be provided to enable English teacher educators to exercise their creativity and generate desired academic productivity. Teachers' desires for internal (satisfaction of curiosity, sense of mastery over subject matter, responding to challenges, and joy of involvement) and external rewards (recognition from peers, love and esteem from students, increase in income, and administrative mobility) should be appreciated. Teachers should be encouraged to find personal satisfaction by pursuing personal goals that are compatible with those of the university and their external environment (Eggins, 2007), otherwise dampened morale will incur, which will be likely to lead to declined quality of teacher education.

Supportive policies and actions need to be implemented to create favorable conditions for research, including department-based seminars/workshops/ conferences, offering research training (for example on research design, data collection, academic writing, manuscript submission, giving presentations, etc.), upgrading resources and facilities, expanding networks in the field of teacher education, reducing teachers' workload, increasing retreat and sabbatical leave, establishing an incentive system of prizes and honors, creating opportunities for continuing professional development, and increasing financial support.

Implications for English Teacher Educators

Changing Their Perceptions of Research

Teacher educators, especially those who consider teaching and research as dichotomous, should firstly change their perception of research and its relationship with teaching. In fact, research is not necessary an add-on separated from teaching or an optional extra because research and teaching are mutually facilitative and beneficial (Thornley, Parker, Read, & Eason, 2004). It is within teachers' capability as an integral part of their professional daily life and an activity of inquiry derived from their daily practice. If teachers make their teaching inquiry-based, their teaching and research may be more meaningful and rewarding. As researchers of their own practice, they can make their research strategies fit into the classroom routines (Hubbard & Power, 1993, p. 9) and discover for themselves how deeply theoretical their work is and has always been. When they write for publication, they have the opportunity to reflect deeply upon their practice by exploring the beliefs, values, and images that guide their work,

and to document how ideas evolve and belief systems change through reflective inquiry (Burton, 2005, p. 14). They need to be process-oriented as the process of conducting research on practice is more significant than the product.

Undertaking Collaboration with Colleagues

Collaboration across and beyond institutions can help English teacher educators create professional communities of practice and make public their knowledge, beliefs and practice (Ting, 2005). It can provide them with the support they may need to initiate and sustain their engagement with research. It can develop their research competence and make them enjoy the process of research. Various types of voluntary collaboration are conducive to teachers' research experience. For example, collaborative research groups coordinated by an experienced researcher can help to create a professional community for like-minded teachers with the express purpose of systematically examining practice and enriching teachers' knowledge about learning and teaching (Fairbanks & LaGrone, 2006). Undertaking collaborative research projects can increase the amount of data that can be collected and allow for investigation of a problem from different angles (Wallace, 1998; Lewis & White, 2003). Writing groups, as a micro-culture that supports teachers as writers (Murray, 2009) can not only provide a range of readers, but also create a more positive and cooperative environment for writing. Individual and collaborative writing can enhance teachers' reflective practice and overcome their potential resistance to literature on teaching and learning which resulted from the differences between their expectations and experiences of the literature and those in teaching and learning (Green, 2010). There are many alternative options of collaboration if teachers take a positive view.

Conclusion

This paper critiques the epidemic of overrating research publications prevalent in Chinese normal universities. It discusses its downsides and negative effects on English teacher educators and brings out the implications for all parties concerned. The main message is that the pervasive "publish or perish" philosophy has posed a "monoculture on the intellectual landscape" and therefore is "inimical to healthy and diverse intellectual habitats" (Ruth, 2010). To create a

multicultural intellectual landscape, a fair faculty assessment system needs to be established to maintain the interests, passions, freedom, and creativity of English teacher educators, who are in themselves an important and valuable national resource, the key to a successful higher education system. Unless the "publish or perish" syndrome is properly addressed, all but the most conscientious and self-sacrificing teachers are likely to "perish," which will in turn lead to students "perishing."

This message carries three-fold implications. First, a consensus needs to be established in the Chinese higher education system that top priority should be given to teaching in normal universities, which may have a direct impact on the quality of student teachers, including their attitudes towards their future teaching career and professional competence as teachers. The commitment of teaching-oriented faculty should be recognized and cultivated. Second, policy-makers at macro- and meso-levels need to take a long-term process-oriented view of research and establish support mechanisms to enable teachers to undertake research collaboratively with a higher level of self-efficacy. Applied research on teaching and teacher education should be valued, and research outcomes should be applied in practice to ameliorate the educational environments and enhance student teachers' professional development. Third, teachers need to change their perceptions of research and actively engage in research on their practice collaboratively to achieve dual goals of teacher and student development. A long-term perspective is an imperative as research entails substantial investment of effort and time, and hence teacher resilience is a requisite.

Despite its focus on research management in Chinese normal universities in particular, this paper attempts to generalize beyond a specifically national context because this issue has become a global one and is applicable to many other educational contexts. Some problems discussed also apply to other disciplines in different educational and cultural contexts, whether in developing or developed countries. Hopefully the discussion brings new insight to all people concerned, both in English language teacher education and in other disciplines, including teacher educators, administrators, and policy makers.

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