Empowering Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers Through Collaboration With their Native-English-Speaking Colleagues in EFL Settings

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As a nonnative English speaker, I am always reminded of, and sensitive to, the truths and consequences of millions of English teachers and professionals like me who have to struggle with the language at one time or another, linguistically or pragmatically, to overcome the threats to self-confidence and self-assurance imposed by the perceived inferiority of nonnative-English-speaking teachers (NNESTs). Thanks to the increasing number of research studies on this issue over the last decade, the status of the professional self-esteem of NNESTs has been increased, thus bringing them to the forefront of educational research and practice, which is often sociocultural and sociopolitical in nature (Liu, 2001).

It is widely acknowledged that the majority of the English teachers worldwide are NNESTs (Liu, 1999). It is also a fact that in EFL settings such as China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand, studying English from instructors whose mother tongue is the same as their students is not only realistic, but also very successful because they have the unique characteristics described by Medgyes (1994), who acknowledges that NNESTs can

1. Provide a good learner model for imitation.
2. Teach language learning strategies more effectively.
3. Supply learners with more information about the English language.
4. Anticipate and prevent language difficulties better.
5. Be more empathetic to the needs and problems of learners.
6. Make use of the learners’ mother tongue.

In addition, Tang (1997) posits that NNESTs can better predict potential difficulties for the students and know how to help them learn based on their own language learning experiences.

However, because of the limited cultural experiences and lack of authentic input, hiring NESTs to join the teaching faculty in EFL settings has been very popular, though not necessarily successful, for several reasons: compromise of hiring criteria, limited supervision and mentoring, and a lack of encouragement to collaborate in curriculum development, syllabus design, lesson preparation, and professional development.

Nevertheless, NNESTs have long suffered what is called an inferiority complex because NNESTs will never be able to measure up to the linguistic standards that are so valued in their profession, such as a native U.S. or U.K. accent. They will be led to believe that their interlanguage, or the knowledge of the L2 that they possess, is always inadequate (Cook, 1999). It is assumed that in order to meet the high expectation of their students, NNESTs have to work harder than NESTs in order to prove themselves worthy of being in the profession (Thomas, 1999).
I will briefly discuss the development of NNEST as an emerging field of research, and then provide models of collaboration between NESTs and NNESTs. I will also explain why NNESTs should develop multiple social identities, and I will use the case of Shantou University as an illustration.

NNEST AS AN EMERGING RESEARCH FIELD

The interest in NNEST as a research area in English language teaching began not long ago. Some researchers paid attention to the notion of native- and nonnative-English-speaking professionals in the early 90s (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Davies, 1991; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992). To challenge the notion of the native speaker (NS) as the ideal language teacher, which could be attributed to a tenet in the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language held in 1961, Phillipson (1992) uses the term “native speaker fallacy” (p. 195) and questions its validity. He claims that nonnative speakers (NNSs) can acquire abilities that are, according to the tenet, associated with NSs (i.e., fluency, correct usage of idiomatic expressions, and knowledge about the cultural connotations of English). Moreover, Phillipson evaluates the learning process of NNESTs and posits that it is a valuable quality that NSs cannot emulate.

According to Widdowson (1994), when the emphasis is moved from the contexts of use to contexts of learning, the advantage that NS teachers have will disappear. Medgyes (1992) challenges the idea that NSs are better teachers than NNSs, and claims that both NESTs and NNESTs have their own strengths. Subsequently, his book addressing the NS-NNS dichotomy (Medgyes, 1994), along with the study he conducted with his colleague (Reves & Medgyes, 1994) investigating English teachers’ perceptions in 10 countries, caught scholars’ attention. In their study, Reves and Medgyes collected data using a questionnaire from 216 NS and NNS teachers in 10 countries. Analysis of the data revealed that two-thirds (68%) of the respondents saw differences between NS and NNS teachers, and that the majority (75%) considered NNS teachers’ linguistic difficulties to have an adverse effect in teaching. Reves and Medgyes suggest that exposure to an English-speaking environment and pre-service training with a focus on proficiency might be helpful for NNESTs. In addition to this suggestion, they claim that NNESTs should be made aware of their strengths.

It was not until a colloquium organized by George Braine at the annual TESOL convention in 1996 that NNS educators began to express their concerns and experiences to the open audience. This ground-breaking colloquium, which inspired a number of individuals in the audience, mainly NNSs, through the sharing of poignant autobiographical narratives, has led not only to more sessions and publications in subsequent years but also to the establishment of the NNEST Caucus in TESOL. Although there are numerous locally born teachers all over the world where English is taught as a foreign language, the issue of NNEST had always been underrepresented and under-researched because “the topic was an unusually sensitive one, long silently acknowledged but too risky to be discussed openly” (Braine 2004, p. 16). The research in this area began with the establishment of the NNEST Caucus in TESOL in 1998, thanks to Braine, Liu, and Kamhi-Stein. In subsequent years, proposals and presentations on NNESTs at TESOL conventions increased from a dozen to a few dozen, and many doctoral students have begun to choose NNESTs as their dissertation topic. The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF) one year made NNESTs their priority research topic, and TESOL Quarterly has published a number of high-quality articles in this area that have had an impact on our field.
According to Kamhi-Stein (2004a), the NNEST research field has passed through three phases with topics and foci that have gradually shifted as the field has developed. In the first phase, the primary focus was on NNEST's self-perceptions. Along with Reves and Medgyes's (1994) study, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) investigated self-perceptions of 17 NNS graduate students enrolled in a course in the TESOL program at a U.S. university. By triangulating data employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques via questionnaire, interviews, and written reflections, the researchers found that the participants' self-perceptions had become more positive over a period of 10 weeks.

The second phase was characterized through studies that focused on the credibility of NNESTs. These qualitative studies often used autobiographical narratives (e.g., Amin, 1997; Braine, 1999; Thomas, 1999). Thomas (1999) shares her disappointing experience as a teacher being evaluated by her students on the basis of her race rather than her teaching performance. Her students explicitly challenged her credibility as a teacher, especially one student who commented that the class would have been better had it been taught by a NS instructor. She also notes that not only the students but also her NS colleagues threatened her confidence. Based on her experience, she argues that NNESTs’ lack of confidence is the outcomes of these overt challenges to credibility. Braine (1999) reflects on the days when he was in graduate school in the United States and explains how the disadvantage followed him because of his nonnativeness. For instance, the unfortunate treatment he had received when he applied for a teaching position at an intensive English program led him to wonder why NNESTs teachers are not appreciated for their diversity and multiculturalism, whereas ESL students are usually praised for what they can bring into language classrooms. Thus, NNES professionals’ own experiences as graduate students, teachers, and job applicants in the English-speaking environment not only struck others in the field who could identify themselves with these professionals, but also helped raise more important issues for in teaching English. Consequently, what NNESTs can contribute to the language classroom started to gain prominence.

The third phase of research in this area focuses on how NNESTs are perceived by others, such as administrators and students (e.g., Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Mahboob, 2004). Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, and Hartford (2004) conducted a survey study to shed light on the hiring issue, looking at the NES–NNES population ratio in ESL programs in the United States. Data were collected from 122 administrators of intensive English programs (IEPs) in the United States (with a response rate of 25.5%). Analysis of the data showed only three criteria to be significant: whether one was a native English speaker or not; recommendation; and teaching experience. Mahboob et al. suggest that IEPs in the United States reexamine their hiring practices if they seek to offer their students exemplary role models of NNESTs, and reflect “a realistic and inclusive picture of the diversity represented by world Englishes” (p. 116). Likewise, Lasagabaster and Sierra’s (2002) research investigated students’ perceptions of their English teachers using a questionnaire to test four hypotheses based on past NNEST research. They found that students at all levels (primary, secondary, and university) showed a higher preference for NESTs. The students indicated a preference for NESTs in the areas of pronunciation, speaking, vocabulary, and culture and civilization, whereas they preferred NNESTs for areas such as learning strategies and grammar.

Nevertheless, each of these lines of research has its own drawbacks in research methodology (e.g., surveys and interviews) without much cross-sectional triangulation or prolonged engagement, and also in their narrow scope (e.g., hearing only one side of the story). For instance, too much attention was focused on perceptions rather than on the effects on teaching and learning outcomes. Much research has been done in ESL contexts while the major contexts of EFL were mostly neglected. No research to date has focused on NNESTs who do not share the L1 with the students while teaching
in that country—for instance, Chinese English teachers teaching in Russia or Thai English teachers teaching in China.

Also questionable is treating NESTs and NNESTs as if they stand at the opposite ends of the scale with absolute characteristics (Kamhi-Stein, 2004b; Matsuda, 1999-2000, 2003). Such a view is no longer supported, as it does not “capture the complexities involved in being a NNES professional” (Kamhi-Stein, 2004b, p. 3). Rather, both NES and NNES professionals are now considered to have skills and competencies that complement each other. I now turn to the issue at hand: the possible effect of collaboration between NESs and NNESs in teaching English.

**PRACTICE IN NESs-NNESTs COLLABORATION**

Literature on NESTs-NESTs collaboration is scarce. I will use a few existing models first (e.g., NEST-NNEST collaboration as a means of teacher development for a college English composition course, a professional collaborative relationship originated in an MATESOL program, and team-teaching by NESTs and NNESTs in the secondary school EFL context in Japan). In the next section, I will introduce the model we use for teacher development at the English Language Center at Shantou University in China.

**Model I. Collaboration via Reflection**

Matsuda (1999–2000) suggests a model of collaboration realized by two NESTs and two NNESTs for an English composition course at a U.S. university by introducing his experience as one of the NNES participants. In this model, the peer instructors shared reflection journals via e-mail. Although they started as rather passive readers of one another’s concerns, they later became active respondents. He states that the participants’ self-awareness as members of a collaborative community not only allowed them to give each other support but also encouraged them to realize their own strengths and preferences, thus enabling them “to adopt, adapt, and learn from other teachers’ approaches and strategies that are informed by differing linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds” (p. 10).

As illustrated in this model, NES-NNES collaboration can work effectively for teachers of both groups—not to supplement what they do not have, but to empower them for what they can bring to teaching. Matsuda concludes by suggesting that such collaboration occur at other institutions, while recognizing that it requires teachers’ willingness to work collaboratively.

**Model II. Collaboration Through Learning**

Carvalho de Oliveira and Richardson (2001) introduce a collaboration model of their own that stemmed from a friendship as classmates in an MATESOL graduate program that later developed into a solid professional relationship. Acknowledging one another as a valuable learning resource, based on their strengths as either an experienced EFL teacher (for the NNES) or an informant on U.S. culture (for the NES), they helped each other obtain knowledge that reinforced their studies in the MATESOL program. While they were each performing a teaching practicum, Carvalho de Oliveira and Richardson met biweekly to share ideas and materials, and to discuss their teaching experiences as well as their academic needs. In so doing, they assisted each other by providing and gaining supportive feedback on a regular basis. This became the foundation for their collaborative professional development.
Carvalho de Oliveira and Richardson’s model suggests the importance of preservice teachers’ understanding of and implementing collaboration with others who have different expertise to form a fundamental ground that benefits the participants professionally. This model of collaboration is similar to Matsuda’s model in that it promotes the idea of NESTs’ and NNESTs’ mutual benefit, as opposed to the idea of a one-way support that implies that the competent help the incompetent based on their backgrounds.

Model III: Collaboration via Team-Teaching

The last example concerns an English as a foreign language (EFL) context in Japan. Tajino and Tajino (2000) suggest a model of collaboration between a NEST and a NNEST in the specific context of EFL at secondary schools in Japan, where a NEST, called an assistant English teacher (AET), and a Japanese teacher are paired up to team-teach English language classes with an emphasis on oral communication skills. Tajino and Tajino point out the confusion expressed by both teachers regarding their roles within such a team-teaching practice. This confusion, admittedly, often resulted in limiting the potential of the available resources and leaving the NEST to be “human tape recorders” and NNESTs to be “interpreters” (Tajino & Tajino, 2000, p. 5). They state that it is, ironically, the teachers who need to develop an understanding of intercultural communication, and hence they offer a model of NES-NNES collaboration for the Japanese EFL context that subsumes various ways of realizing the team-teaching role.

As we can see, collaboration is full of challenges. Working with others, especially those with differences in background and cognitive style, requires willingness, understanding, tolerance, and respect. Appreciating the different skills and expertise of others is a key factor in successful collaboration (Carvalho de Oliveira & Richardson, 2001). As Carvalho de Oliveira and Richardson posit, successful collaboration “is built on the abilities of the collaborators to appreciate their respective differences without feeling less competent themselves” (p. 126). It can be inferred that collaboration cannot be realized successfully without the involved individuals’ autonomous and devoted attitudes.

A NEW COLLABORATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE: THE CASE OF SHANTOU UNIVERSITY IN CHINA

Shantou University was founded in 1981 in the city of Shantou located in the southeast of Guangdong Province in the People’s Republic of China. Shantou University is devoted to nurturing knowledgeable, aspiring, and promising students. With the generous support of the Li Ka Shing Foundation and government officials at all levels, Shantou University has gone through several phases of educational reform to become one of China’s modern and internationalized universities. The mission of Shantou University is to align the university with international standards, to help its students use English as a tool to explore Western culture, and to expand its students’ horizons by teaching and encouraging critical thinking. However, such a mission cannot be carried out without a high level of English competence among the students. In the past, English language teaching at the university did not result in the desired outcome; the language teaching was confined to preparing students for the college English exams (CET4 and CET6). Therefore, it was necessary to introduce new concepts and new methods for language teaching and learning through the cohesive curriculum and co-curriculum of the English Enhancement Program.
In 2002, The National Writing Project at the University of California, Berkeley, was commissioned by the Li Ka Shing Foundation to determine the feasibility of establishing English as the medium of instruction at Shantou University within the stated five-year goal and to make recommendations regarding the accomplishment of this goal as well as the strengthening of the teaching and learning of the English language. After a week-long study consisting of interviews, observations, document analysis, information gathering, and verification, the project experts identified four major barriers and risks: academic design and instruction, the examination system, organizational development, and capacity and facility support and development. They also formulated suggestions for changes and improvement in each of these identified areas.

In following the recommendations of the National Writing Project at the University of California, Berkeley, Shantou University initiated the English Enhancement Program in the fall of 2002 and subsequently established the English Language Center, a year later, in the fall of 2003. As an integral part of the English Enhancement Program at Shantou University, the English Language Center’s (ELC) mission is focused on increasing the competitiveness of our university students’ English proficiency to an international level while creating a model that directly contributes to both the English teaching and learning reforms throughout China. The ELC believes that a high level of communicative competence (i.e., grammatical, pragmatic, discourse, and strategic competence) is the ultimate goal for all of our students. Along with this strongly held belief, we subscribe to the following: teaching innovation that is informed by research, developing students’ critical thinking strategies, and stressing learner autonomy. All of the preceding points of concentration should be cultivated and nurtured within a setting established specifically for the ELC program, a combination of directed classroom study and extra- and co-curricula activities.

To this end, ELC developed a new curriculum that places all students according to their overall English proficiency and individual abilities, thus maximizing and personalizing their learning experience through specifically developed placement tests. Furthermore, through a comprehensive needs analysis of English language learning difficulties and the accompanying attitudes of our Shantou University students conducted during the fall of 2003, two areas of weakness were identified as significant among our students: listening and speaking (their aural and oral skills). Subsequently, the ELC designed, developed, and adopted numerous English language use opportunities campuswide. Included in these activities: English Corner, English Lounge, Creative Expression Club, Shantou Beat, Conversation Series, Faculty Lecture Series, Film Series, Reading Club, Poetry Club, Spelling Bee, and the multiphased English Festival consisting of Intercollegiate Speech Contest, Intercollegiate Singing Contest and Variety Show. All of these functions and activities greatly enhanced and expanded our students’ aural and oral English communicative skills throughout every facet of their lives at Shantou University.

But when it boils down to the most essential element, the question remains who is going to do it all. It takes a group of dedicated people directed by a visionary leader to make things happen. At the ELC, we are dedicated to building a community in which teachers from both China and abroad work together collaboratively, collegially, and comfortably. We provide ongoing professional development opportunities for the mutual exchange of ideas and thoughts, including presentations from visiting experts in the field and workshops focused on teaching methods and materials. We also hold regular faculty meetings in order to ensure the standards of our curriculum, while at the same time taking into consideration individual ideas, preferences, and needs. ELC is unique in that every year we hire about 15 to 20 foreign teachers, interns, or lecturers to join the ELC faculty. With half local and half foreign, a steady community of practice has emerged, with much collegial
communication and collaboration. I believe true collaboration happens every day, every week, and every month, as that greatly empowers NNESTs as well as NESTs (see the Appendix for highlights of the achievements through collaboration).

Because of the composition of ELC faculty with half of them being NESTs and half NNESTs, the crucial challenge we have faced is how to build a community of practice where both local and foreign teachers can be harmonized to work collegially, collaboratively, and comfortably together. There are quite a number of challenges we have encountered. First and foremost is the sense of inferiority that local teachers have faced in working with NESTs. Most local teachers have not studied abroad and have not had experience working with NESTs. Likewise, NESTs feel the lack of cultural information and lack of understanding of Chinese students’ learning styles and strategies. As such, we tried to arrange both groups to work together by dividing them into level-specific groups according to teaching assignments. Through lesson preparation, test designs, and grading, as well as peer-observation, both groups stepped forward to understand each other and established a mutually beneficial team-working environment. As one local teacher revealed in her conversation with me one day:

I think collaboration with teachers from different cultural backgrounds in the Chinese context greatly contributes to the Chinese English teaching and research development. On the one hand, through this collaboration, the local teachers can seek more opportunities to share with foreign teachers’ perspectives on teaching methodology, course design, course assessment, teaching management, and cultural aspects. They can work together to face the challenges and solve the problems. On the other hand, the collaboration provides opportunities for both local and foreign teachers to establish partnerships in their academic research, which is beneficial to the development of linguistic theoretical foundation and global language teaching.

Likewise, our foreign teachers also felt greatly encouraged in collaborating with local teachers. As one of the foreign teachers confessed:

To be honest, I didn’t expect much collaboration because I never witnessed it in my previous job in China. At that time, local teachers seemed reluctant to disclose their personal insight, either to guard their intellectual property or to avoid possible miscommunication with a foreigner. When I first arrived at STU, I could sense a similar hesitation to collaborate, but to a much lesser degree. But, since a measure of collaboration is actually built into the program, there have been so many opportunities to do so here, and that hesitation has clearly diminished. In planning lessons and tests, I’ve experienced a fair amount of free exchange of helpful ideas and files with my local counterparts.

Second, we tried to invite a number of experts and professionals both at home and abroad to conduct workshops, lectures, and other types of professional development activities. For 6 months in 2004, we undertook a major project to compile a series of student companion books to the text we use, NorthStar. Through such collaboration by constantly discussing topics of mutual interest, and sharing experiences and expertise, local as well as foreign teachers begin to understand the sources of differences and foment a concerted effort in materials development. One local teacher reflected:
Now that we have been working together for more than one semester, we do find collaboration beneficial to a certain extent. But what is more distinctly embodied is the collaboration in the compiling of the Student Companion Book. We domestic teachers know better what Chinese students need, what to give and how to give while the foreign teachers are experts of cultural knowledge and are able to accurately explain things in authentic language. Therefore, we can bring out the best in each other in the compiling. This is the aspect in which I’ve realized the advantage of the domestic-foreign collaboration.

We also tried a peer-mentoring program by inviting foreign teachers to visit classes taught by local teachers to share with students some cultural information and perspectives. Likewise, some local teachers are invited to visit foreign teachers’ classes to help provide local perspectives to the problems foreign teachers encounter in teaching. Such mutually beneficial approaches strengthened the respect and appreciation between the two groups. Students, too, benefited tremendously from being taught by both local and foreign teachers. As one local teacher reflected on her experience about collaboration in a professional development session:

I never imagined that we would collaborate so much. On many occasions, I invited my foreign colleagues to my classrooms, and I let them have interactive talk with my students about anything the students don’t understand about the texts. And students felt thrilled. They can talk to foreigners face to face. With me in the classroom, my students felt at ease, as sometimes my students couldn’t put everything they had in mind in English, I could help them out. So I have learned a lot together with my students, and I have made progress with my students. I found such experiences very rewarding.

This local teacher’s satisfaction with collaborating with foreign colleagues was echoed by a foreign teacher:

I have had great collaboration with local teachers on my level and I really feel that the exchange of ideas and input has been equal. That said, I often feel that this good collaboration is in part based on the excellent English skills of the local teachers at my level and their familiarity with western teaching practices. Because they have taught in the ELC for many years and in some cases have lived abroad, they teach and interact as colleagues very easily with me.

Another thing we experimented very successfully with was to encourage teachers to participate in co-curricular activities. Teachers are given ample opportunities to work together outside the classrooms supervising students in various kinds of co-curricular activities, thus increasing their contact and mutual exchanges of perspectives while guiding students in various enthusiasms. Some local teachers initially thought that only foreign teachers would be welcomed by students in coordinating their activities. But when they jointly participated in coordination, they strengthened the effectiveness by sharing the culture and perspectives, and also created more live encounters for understanding and learning from each other. As one foreign teacher reflected:

A warm, respectful, open environment, where local and foreign teachers equally invest is ideal from my perspective. Respect and the need for all teachers’ contributions must be emphasized. Seeing foreign teachers as “the experts” hinders this from becoming a reality. This issue can be overcome by building strong relationships with colleagues, accepting that
Collaboration will improve over time, and allowing for different venues such as co-curricular activities for collaboration.

In order to help NESTs understand the Chinese culture and language, we also offer Chinese classes through which NESTs begin to appreciate Chinese culture and increase their understanding of how difficult it is to learn a foreign language. This also empowers local teachers who teach Chinese to these foreign teachers and helps decrease their sense of inferiority. Both groups, the foreign teachers learning Chinese and the Chinese teachers teaching English, gained perspectives as both native and nonnative speakers, thus greatly increasing their empathy in language learning and teaching. As noted by one foreign teacher:

This [learning Chinese] is really something that attracted me to come here. I am always fascinated by the Chinese language and culture. I took some Chinese classes in the U.S. before I came here, and now I am brushing up my Chinese and really feel great to experience what my students are experiencing. I think all foreign teachers should learn the language of the country where they teach. I cannot be happier to have this opportunity ELC has provided for me.

These are just a few examples. The crucial point is how to empower both NESTs and NNESTs to work together in a professional community where they each feel that their values, strengths, and unique contributions will be directly transferred to their teaching effectiveness to enhance our students' communicative competence. This case of collaboration is unique in many ways, but the true essence of collaboration lies in community building. It is the community of practice that everyone participates in and contributes to that holds the ultimate value of collaboration, which results in benefits to the students we serve.

**CONCLUSION**

Collaboration, despite the growing popularity of the concept, sometimes can be difficult to foster. There are so many factors working against it in the real world: time and energy constraints, turf wars, feelings of inadequacy or superiority with language and pragmatics, and general inexperience with the idea of collaboration. I have to admit that we also encountered some suspicion and resistance at the beginning. NNESTs feel inferior working with NESTs while the latter felt constrained not to impose their native superiority on their NNEST counterparts. But we pulled it together. We stepped outside the box, and we reached consensus through numerous arguments, debates, persuasion, and professional development training, peer mentoring, and project management training. To educate the existing faculty and help them grow, and to bring in more competent faculty and help them mingle, and to empower NNESTs as well as NESTs through ample opportunities for collaboration has proven effective and has resulted in more cooperation, collaboration, professional growth, internal reward, and investment in the implementation of the new curriculum and program.

**REFERENCES**


Appendix

Highlights of the NNESTs and NNETs Collaborative Initiatives

Teaching Innovation

- Created a seven-level curriculum for undergraduates and set skill-specific goals and objectives at each level
- Placed students according to proficiency levels

Professional Enrichment

- Conducted a series of workshops for professional enrichment
- Organized three international symposia on ELT in China
- Conducted campuswide needs analysis research
- Published a number of research articles in national and international journals
- Launched the first issue of the peer-refereed journal *Review of Applied Linguistics in China (RALC)*, which marks the first of its kind in China that meets international standards

Co-Curricula Activities

- English Lounge
- English Corner
- Creative Expression Club
- Five Intercolligiate English Festivals
  - Intercolligiate Singing Contest
  - Musical “Pippin”
  - Game Fair
  - Talent Quest
  - “Christmas Carol”
- English Newspaper, *The Shantou Beat*
- ELC Faculty Lecture Series
- ELC English Speech Club
- ELC Reading Club
- ELC Film Series
- Spelling Bee
- The English Conversation Series

Program Development

- Collaborated with both national and international universities
- Implemented four-part teacher performance review process (i.e., external review, self-evaluation, students’ evaluation, and director’s evaluation)
- Successfully recruited 15 to 20 foreign teachers each year
Empowering Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers

- Published *ELC Guidebook*
- Designed and published ELC Web site
- Developed a promotional video for the ELC activities and events on campus
- Co-developed two digitalized language labs with a capacity for 36 students in one and 60 students in the other for classroom instruction as well as independent self-directed study

**Recognition and Accomplishments**

- Won the STU Teaching Excellence Award 2005
- Won the Guangdong Province Teaching Excellence Award 2005
- Recommended for National Award for Excellence in Teaching 2005
- A Shantou University student was the second-place winner at the National English Speech Contest in Beijing 2004 organized by *China Daily* and *21st Century Newspaper*
- Received national grant for a study on Chinese students’ language aptitude and published the paper in *Foreign Languages in China* (ISSN 1672-9382) by Higher Education Press in China
- Executive director appointed to be on the National College English Teaching Advisory Committee
- Developed online oral English speaking test (T-Best)
- Increased students’ oral English skills (listening and speaking) significantly (p. >001) through pre- and posttest design (placement test on entry against posttest as exit exam by using the same instruments)
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