

The Impact of a Writing Workshop Approach on Chinese English Teachers' Beliefs about Effective Writing Instruction

Elizabeth SPALDING, Jian WANG, and Emily LIN
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA

A process approach to writing and its implementation in a workshop setting have been widely advocated in the U.S., where it has been well documented that the everyday classroom practice of the individual teacher is key to the success of reform. However, little is known about the effectiveness of this approach in non-Western contexts where English is taught as a foreign language or about how teachers in such settings will adapt it conceptually and practically. This study examined how a three-week experience of writing workshop influenced 57 Chinese English teachers' writing and their views of teaching writing. Data sources included teachers' daily reflections, scored writing samples, and final essays. Findings indicated that: (1) teachers' English writing improved significantly as a result of their participation in the workshop; (2) the majority of teachers believed their students' writing would improve if they implemented the practices they studied and that they intended to use a number of strategies they learned; (3) the teachers believed that the traditional grammar-translation approach they had been using had specific advantages. Teachers changed their beliefs selectively, most readily accepting those ideas that were most compatible with the existing culture of teaching and learning in their subject area.