

cribe locations. We're not going to test structures because we don't teach that way. At present, we're not giving essays, because until now very few have needed that skill. But some may in the future, so next semester we're likely to have an option in English for Academic Purposes.

Do you do any tests of reading or speaking comprehension?

We have a holistic oral assessment at the beginning. We measure various aspects of a person's speech, such as repetition and pronunciation, and try to come up with a score that is a mean between three judges. We also have reading cloze tests, and there'll probably be a listening cloze as well.

Do you enjoy your work?

It's crazy, frustrating, and wonderful. I'm working far more closely with my Chinese colleagues than I did last year in a regular foreign experts teaching job in a regular Chinese university. It's a complex mixture of things and they're all dynamic, which means we haven't defined them all yet. Probably if we're teaching a good programme, we will define something for each set of needs and modify it each semester.

FOREIGN EXPERTISE IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT

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In March of 1983, the TESL Canada China Committee negotiated with visiting representatives of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China with respect to direct TESL Canada involvement in the hiring of EFL teachers for China. These negotiations were successfully completed and a memorandum of agreement was signed whereby TESL Canada would formally recruit approximately 12 Canadian EFL teachers each year. These individuals would be recommended to the Chinese Ministry of Education who would have final authority with respect to hiring and placement.

This memorandum of agreement was regarded by TESL Canada to be of major significance for two reasons. First, there continue to be numerous cases of Canadians employed to teach EFL in China who lack the necessary personal and professional qualifications to do so, and thus there are some very embarrassing results for Canada. Second, Canadians who

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do possess the necessary qualifications are often frustrated in their attempts to secure EFL employment in China. As a result of the agreement with the Ministry of Education, TESL Canada would now have a direct role in EFL teacher recruitment, screening out unqualified applicants and providing a channel for those properly qualified professionals.

The search for applicants to fulfill our obligations incurred as a result of the signing of this memorandum of agreement, however, has been frustrating as well as embarrassing. One of the first problems confronted by the TESL Canada China Committee was the need to reconcile what we felt were appropriate professional qualifications with those qualifications that the Chinese Ministry of Education deemed appropriate. Clearly there was no disagreement on the general notion that the more professional training and experience, the more appropriate this individual would be. There was disagreement, however, on what constituted appropriate training and experience.

There is a clear preference by the Chinese for their foreign teaching personnel to have Master's degrees. Master's programmes in ESL are quite common in the United States and have been for many years, but that is not the case yet in Canada. The Chinese are familiar with the level of qualifications of the many American applicants for teaching positions, and, needless to say, expect the same standard from TEFL applicants from other nations. Was TESL Canada to claim that the Chinese had to accept lower standards from Canadians, or could we reasonably argue that a Canadian applicant possessing only a Bachelor's degree or even a TESL Certificate was as well-qualified as the American counterpart with a Master's in ESL? Clearly this issue of the relevance of an advanced degree for a teaching position has been argued under other circumstances, as well as for other disciplines, and it is doubtful whether TESL Canada could reach a resolution of the matter. It can be noted, however, that many of the certificate programmes offered by Canadian universities are indeed at least equivalent to the one-year, non-thesis Master's programmes that have proliferated in American universities during this last decade. Such arguments, however, appear to be lost on the Chinese who seem to have reached their own resolution on this matter of higher degrees. The Ministry of Education now maintains a distinction in the classification of foreign teaching personnel: the category of "foreign expert" has now been bifurcated into the categories of "foreign teacher" and "foreign expert"; the former being somewhat of a junior category not requiring the amount of professional training and experience of the "expert" classification.

Connected to this problem of higher degrees is the issue of just what academic speciality these degrees should be in. The Chinese were quite

clear that a degree in English literature would be necessary and sufficient for an EFL teaching post. Most of us in the profession here, however, would be equally adamant that such a qualification would be insufficient for an ESL/EFL teaching post. Thus, while formal training in English literature may, in some instances, be desirable, training in second language acquisition theory and pedagogy are necessary prerequisites for professional status. Thus, there seems to be a real dilemma here between what the Chinese think they want and with what we think they should want. Actually, the dilemma dissolves if one bothers to investigate the reality of ESL in China. There is a tradition of English being taught through literature and a foreign teacher will invariably be teaching through that established curriculum. In addition to this, the foreign teacher is expected to give special lectures on diverse topics ranging from economics to child rearing, education to feminism, and the claim that his/her degree is in linguistics/ESL is not seen as an excuse. Thus, short of being a Renaissance man, what is really valuable is a background in liberal arts and science. Thus, could the opposing Chinese and Canadian views on what constitutes appropriate qualifications be reconciled? Very easily, actually. An individual with a narrow ESL background (even at the Master's level!) would be as inappropriate for an EFL position in China as one who possesses training only in English literature. For China, let's have both. Maybe for Canada too, but I'll save that for another article.

With the resolution of the above issues, it would appear that TESL Canada could now proceed with fulfilling their obligation; specifically, the recruiting of twelve ESL teachers for positions in China. Unfortunately, the simple fact of the matter is that TESL Canada was hard-pressed to find even a portion of this number of qualified applicants. While there were indeed a reasonable number of applicants, the majority of these did not have what could be considered even minimal level background and experience. The Chinese have long held that "friendship is not enough;" we also hold that "interest in seeing the world is not enough." TESL Canada appears to be caught in somewhat of a Catch 22. Those who are established ESL professionals probably have employment in Canada which offers at least a modicum of security; these individuals are not anxious to resign from such positions to assume a short-term contract in a developing nation and to return to Canada having lost their seniority. Those who are free to travel are invariably younger individuals with a minimum of professional experience. This latter category, if they have some ESL training, will be able to survive a teaching assignment here in Canada because of the wealth of materials and resources available (TESL Canada being one such resource), but such inexperienced teachers would be hard-pressed, to say the least, to manage in a teaching situation

where they have to single-handedly adapt and develop their own materials. Thus what might be considered minimal qualifications for a teaching position in Canada would be woefully inadequate for a position in China. Another issue that the TESL Canada China Committee must face is that perhaps not all people in ESL share our enthusiasm for China.

Nonetheless, TESL Canada is faced with a dilemma that we have not been able to resolve: We have agreed to recruit approximately twelve ESL teachers per year for the Chinese Ministry of Education, but we are unable to find this number of qualified applicants. Are we to nonetheless recommend those individuals who have less than minimum-level qualifications merely to meet our quota? If we do so, crossing our fingers and hoping that they will "work out," is it fair to let a developing nation such as China be the training ground for Canadian teachers of ESL? Should we perhaps recommend only the small fraction of the total required who do actually possess the necessary qualifications, and openly admit to the Chinese that we are unable to recruit the total number? While this would seem to be a reasonable (as well as truthful) option, it would have the unfortunate consequence of suggesting to the Chinese that Canada does not have sufficient expertise in ESL, a conclusion which is as incorrect as it is disturbing, considering our nation's official policy on bilingualism.

But what, then, are our options?