



ROB 04729

# **The Influence of China's Entry into the WTO on Foreign Language Education in China**

YanJun Wang & Margaret Robertson

University of Tasmania

**ROB 04729**

# **The Influence of China's Entry into the WTO on Foreign Language Education in China**

YanJun Wang & Margaret Robertson

University of Tasmania

E-mail: [Margaret.Robertson@utas.edu.au](mailto:Margaret.Robertson@utas.edu.au), [yjwang@utas.edu.au](mailto:yjwang@utas.edu.au)

## **Abstract**

More than two years have gone by since China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). Since then many changes have taken place in all aspects of everyday life across the country. It is argued that China's entry into the WTO has brought with it challenges as well as opportunities, in many fields including education. Educators should adopt the concept of lifelong education and view education in global terms. In particular, English language teaching in China should consider the changing demands of society under WTO, such as: applying a variety of teaching methods and strengthening the training of foreign language teachers.

Cultural change is an inherently complex process, in many ways unprecedented for both China and the WTO. Since the impact is unavoidable, we should get to know, master and use the WTO rules and regulations, so as to grasp the advantages while avoiding the disadvantages and trying our utmost to turn the challenges into opportunities.

This paper reports on the social and economic changes in post-WTO China and the general impact of entry into the WTO on Chinese education, particularly focusing on its impact on foreign language education in China. This paper also considers how much progress has been made in improving the teaching of English as a foreign language in China and what challenges will need to be met in the future.

Key words: WTO, foreign language education

## **Introduction**

This paper aims to look at the social and economic changes in China since the joining World Trade Organization (WTO) and the general impact of entry into the WTO on Chinese education, giving particular focus to its impact on foreign language education. The paper focuses on how much progress has been made and what challenges need to be met in the future.

Globally, the human race has entered a completely new stage in its history. With the advent of the new era, people are finding themselves living in an altered world, which calls for new adjustments, new ideas, new habits of thought and values. We should embrace new things and adapt ourselves to the new world. The 21st century is a time of advanced scientific and technological knowledge. People are blessed with new opportunities and faced with new challenges.

However, with the increasingly more rapid economic globalization and urbanization, more problems are brought to our attention. Nowadays more and more people have begun to realize the significance of change and the issues it raises for education. Perhaps today, more importantly than ever, what we teach and how we teach it will be the defining legacy of twenty-first century education and civilization. As Leach and Moon (1999, p.1) states, “At the same time the nature of educational practice itself has become the focus of conflicting pressures at the turn of a century that is witnessing radical change in the nature of public, community and economic life”.

During the last few decades a lot of changes have taken place in our society on an unprecedented scale. When we discuss change in the field of education in the new millennium, some will automatically restrict the discussion to areas of educational policies, system, curricula and the changes in teachers and students. However, education cannot be seen in an isolated way and dealt with separately from the events around the world. As Hargreaves (1997, p.5) asserts:

More than ever today, schools cannot shut their gates and leave the troubles of the outside world on the doorstep. Schools can no longer pretend that their walls will keep the outside world at bay.

Obviously the political system of any nation greatly influences the education system that exists within the country. Nevertheless, in the 21st century, no country is isolated from the globalised environment. The impact of globalization is not just on trade and production; it also has an important impact on education; so education systems must take into account developments in the outside world, changing to meet its requirements.

### **What is the WTO and How China Achieved Entry**

The WTO (The World Trade Organization) is the largest world organization that coordinates trade and business operations among its member states. It was launched on January 1, 1995 (“What the WTO is and what it does”, 2001), replacing the old General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which had acted as a temporary world trade watchdog and negotiating forum since 1948. It is headquartered in Geneva and officially defined as “the legal and institutional foundation of the multilateral trading system” (“What the WTO is and what it does”, 2001) meaning it sets rules for global trading and settles trade disputes among countries. It is a

permanent organization, created by an international treaty approved by the governments and legislatures of member states. Its global status is similar to the Washington-based International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Currently, 144 countries or customs territories belong to the WTO. It is a member-driven organization; so all decisions on any subject have to be agreed upon by everyone. No member can object to such decisions. The Council is the WTO's main standing decision-making body. It meets on average once a month and each member country sends representatives, normally led by the head of its permanent mission in Geneva. Aldrich (2001) states:

In the past twenty years, China has emerged as a key player in global affairs. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China's voice is heard on the full range of international political issues. The size and steady modernization of China's military has made it central to any discussion of stability in the Asia-Pacific region and, increasingly, the world. Finally, China's accession to the WTO confirms the country's status as one of the world's most important trading nations.

After 15 years of bitter struggles and numerous difficulties, China, the world's most populous nation, eventually became a formal member of the World Trade Organization on November 10th, 2001. This indicated that world trade ministers had admitted China to their global club, finally opening a potential market of 1.3 billion people. WTO Director Mike Moore ("What the WTO is and what it does", 2001) said:

With the membership of a country that accounts for one quarter of the world's population, the WTO will take a major step toward becoming a truly world organization. The step offered China a new place at the table of nations and gave new life to centuries of dreams.

China's entry into the WTO, announced at the organization's meeting in Qatar, entitles it to the full trading rights of member countries and regions. WTO membership opened more markets for China's rapidly expanding economy. In turn, China must make sweeping changes in nearly every sector of its economy, which is the largest and the fastest growing in the developing world. President Jiang ("What the WTO is and what it does", 2001) said China's WTO membership brings "hard-won opportunity while constituting considerable challenge for the country". Chinese Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng ("What the WTO is and what it does", 2001) said, "This will inevitably exert a widespread and far-reaching impact on China's economy and on the world economy in the new century". The China Business Times termed the event "China's second opening and reform", after the late leader Deng Xiaoping launched an era of economic reforms more than 20 years ago ("What the WTO is and what it does", 2001). The authors of "China and the WTO: Changing China, Changing World Trade", a superb account of China's initiation into the global trading organization note, "along with the 2008 Beijing Olympics, WTO status will

mark China's arrival on the world scene as emphatically as its emergency as a nuclear power did in 1964. Already, the WTO has taken on almost mythic importance in China" (Michael, 2002).

More than three years have gone by since China's entry into the WTO. With the steady growth in the country's economy, as well as the people's living standard, the rhythm of people's lives is speeding up and many changes have taken place across the country, as "currents of changes roll through every domain of society, shaking the stable state" (Schon, 1971, p.11). This change, although voluntarily accepted, is challenging. As Fullan (1991, p.31) points out, "Change may come about either because it is imposed on us (by natural events or deliberate reform) or because we voluntarily participate in, or even initiate change when we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency, or intolerability in our current situation".

### **Social and Economic Changes under WTO**

Thanks to China's reform and opening policy, great economic and social progress has taken place in the past two decades. As Supachai (2003) states, "In just two years after its entry into the WTO, China has become the fourth biggest trading nation".

China's growth has been relatively steady for a decade, settling slightly to 7.3 per cent in 2001. The first results of 2002 indicate record growth in industrial output, as the government continues to invest in infrastructure at record levels, and direct foreign investment flows in at a projected level of US\$50 billion for 2002. Hot sectors like telecommunications and IT, infrastructure and property development, agriculture and biogenetics, financial services, and upscale consumer products now attract major attention from all of the world's major multinationals (DeWoskin, 2001).

As a matter of course, China's entry into the WTO has brought with it challenges as well as opportunities. Both the nation and people enjoy the benefits that the organization provides, such as: lower tariffs and tax rates and fewer trade barriers, which facilitate swift and efficient imports and exports and other trade activities. According to the trade clauses of the WTO, the European Union must cut down the tax rates it imposes on China's exported textile products, thus enabling the arts-and-crafts companies in China to extract more profits from business.

Ordinary Chinese consumers have also gained some visible benefits: for example, American oranges and New Zealand Kiwi fruits have become common goods on store shelves. Automobiles, one of the most affected goods, are a good example of the benefits, because the prices of imported cars have dropped dramatically and domestic producers have been forced to follow suit. With the lowered tariffs and diminished trade barriers, many goods have reached prices acceptable to ordinary families in China. These range from high-tech products, including newly-developed PCs and cell

phones, to daily items, including foreign-made foods and well-known clothing brands. In addition, foreign companies have streamed into China and offered great job opportunities, which, in a sense, have helped to relieve the unemployment problem, as a boost in employment opportunities has taken place. As Yu Bin from the Development Research Center of the State Council (2001) mentions:

After the entry, as China's laws and rules and the government's behaviors gradually adapt to international conventions, this high-potential market of China will draw to it swarms of foreign investment. It's likely that China will, like the US after World War II and Japan in the 1960s and 70s, become the world's production and processing center.

While these improvements in life quality are no doubt significant, farther-reaching changes lie in the mind of the Chinese people. The Western ideas and work patterns that permeate China as it becomes more integrated with the rest of the world are having a great impact on the way Chinese people live, work and think. The younger generation in China is already experiencing cultural clashes with the older generation, as Western culture floods in. This became even more the case as relations with the West became closer and exchanges more frequent, after China entered the WTO.

Every Chinese was looking forward to China's entry into WTO, widely seen as a blessing and a promise of prosperity. It seemed to be so at first sight. However, on reflection, we are convinced that there are two sides to every question. As the proverb goes, "Every coin has its two sides" and China's entry is no exception. Though, while there were many benefits to be gained from WTO membership, some problems still exist. In other words, the entry imposed some negative effects on China: for example, state-owned enterprises in China are undergoing great difficulties, which will be more acute with the flow of foreign competitors into China. Meanwhile China's national economy was set to be faced with fierce competition from the outside world. The WTO pursues a relatively equal and free business environment for all its members, which poses a major challenge for China's economy. Business monopolies such as telecommunications and banking used to enjoy protection from government at all levels, but now find themselves no longer in a "safe box". They have to adjust or replace their current operative and marketing strategies to cope with the "outdoor" shrewd and talented competitors. As the article "What the WTO is and what it does" (2001) states:

Foreign banks can now do 'renminbi' business in the cities of Shanghai, Tianjin, Dalian, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Qingdao and Wuhan. Apart from these, insurance and agriculture were cited as the industries most threatened. Foreign insurers can now set up joint ventures in China. Foreign life and non-life insurers and insurance brokers can provide services in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Dalian, Shenzhen and Foshan.

Agriculture is another sector strongly affected by entry into the WTO. Following Chinese membership of the WTO, tariffs on agriculture commodities have fell within five years, from 31 percent to an average of 17 percent (“What the WTO is and what it does”, 2001). Import licenses and import quotas have been eliminated in many key products such as wool, grain, cotton and chemical fertilizers. Chinese farmers are threatened because domestic grains like corn and soybeans must compete with higher quality imports. The impact is that much greater because China is still primarily an agriculture country and has 800 million farmers. As Toffler (2001) observed, “China has three different spheres of society. Some 700 million to 900 million people, mainly peasants, still live in the ‘first wave’ world. They need to benefit from development, and are at the highest risk of being hurt by China's WTO entry”.

Observers believe that huge numbers could be forced to leave the countryside for the cities, where new jobs will have to be created for them. Though the expected increase in foreign investment will increase the number of job vacancies, there will emerge a great deal of unemployment friction, caused by the friction between the old system and the new international rules. This will be especially so in the first few years after entry and in the most threatened industries, that is, those that used to be protected most by the government. As the article “What the WTO is and what it does” (2001) states, “Over the long term, China’s entrance into the WTO, the reduction of the customs duties, the liberalization of trade and investment and the opening to foreign competition of a domestic market currently monopolized by the government will bring huge profits, and challenges as well, particularly for the agricultural, automotive, banking, insurance and telecom industries”.

### **The Influence of Entry into the WTO on Education in China**

China’s entry into the WTO meant that the education of China must speed up its steps towards internationalization, connect with other nations, open its education market and participate and compete in the international education market, leading by fair and open principles. Thus, China aims to win an active position in the globally competitive world education market. House (2000, p.13) points out:

We live in an age of economic productivity, during a time in which the dominant concerns in all our countries are: expanding the economy, raising personal income and increasing the standard of living. This concern for productivity is manifested in a drive for greater efficiency and has special implications for education.

Education faces challenges and opportunities after China's entry into the WTO. Educators must adopt the concept of lifelong education and view education in global terms. As the article “What the WTO is and what it does”, (2001) states, “A modern educational system has to be constructed and private educational institutions should be encouraged. WTO entry will enforce, not weaken, the function of ideological education at institutions of higher learning”. “According to the WTO service trade

total pact, 'education services' are also in the service trade category. Currently in the 144 WTO's member countries, there are more than 40 nations (regions) which have signed an education market agreement. According to 'the service trade pact' there are 13 regulations governing teaching and its marketing. Apart from the teaching activities (such as military colleges) thoroughly subsidized by the government, any teaching activity of the business kind belongs to the education trade service category. It overlays foundation education, higher education, and adult education and training. All the member countries of WTO have the right to participate in competition to provide education services. According to the relevant regulation of the WTO 'service trade total pact', 'education service' has primarily four kinds of action:

**The first**, provides long-distance education services, (*Cross-border Supply*). The state-owned power in the first party's member's country provides a 'multinational field' service to the second party's member country. In the realm of education, they encourage the first party's member country to provide long-range education courses and services to the second party's member country.

**The second**, encourages going abroad to study, (*Consumption Abroad*). The WTO encourages national citizens in the first party's country to go to the second party's country; thus they encourage national citizens in the first party to further studies in the second party.

**The third**, promotes the establishment of schools overseas, (*Commercial Presence*). The WTO encourages the first party's member country to establish business entities in the second party's member country. In the realm of education, they allow the national education organization in the first party to go to the second party's nation to set up individual proprietorships or joint venture schools, which can then engage in teaching, scientific research and cultural interaction activities.

**The fourth** area is to encourage talented professionals to circulate between countries (*Movement of Natural Persons*). The WTO encourages the first party's member country to appoint the citizens of the second party's member country to the professional services without employing bias. In the realm of education, they encourage the first party's member country to accept the citizens of the second party's member country to engage in professional teaching work, such as foreign language, mathematics or natural science teaching" (Feng, 2002, p.4). (Author's Translation).

In reality, there is no denying that China's commitment to educational services from now on exerts a profound influence on educational reform in China. As House (2000, p.15) comments, "Education and economic development are presumed to be closely linked". It is undeniable that education has become the biggest concern of present-day China. China has formulated the strategies of giving priority to the development of education and developing the country by relying on science and education. Specifically, the opportunities of China's education under WTO are chiefly as follows:

In the first place, China will benefit from the introduction of high-quality



education resources abroad to China and speed up the process of education reform, in order to narrow the gap in education between China and other developed countries. In the second place, China will benefit from the reform of education management system and will try to meet the needs of the society. (Wu, 2003, p.129). (Author's Translation).

With the increase in trade with other WTO members, both the government and companies need more staff who are familiar with international laws and commerce to ensure their success in the global marketplace. Education must cater for these needs. Some universities in China offered WTO-related courses to undergraduate and postgraduate students.

**In addition**, China will benefit by training new talented persons. In the 21st century, the population will directly depend on the accumulation of knowledge or effective abilities. Knowledge will set a still higher demand on people's abilities. The knowledge of foreign languages and computer techniques will be an indispensable tool that persons of intellectual capacity should be encouraged to master. As in the West, "The information society is wide open to the well educated and technically trained, be they men or women...the problem is how to educate and train people of quality for an abundance of good jobs" (McGill, 2003, p.8). China's reform and opening to the world are calling talented professionals. It cannot be denied that it is impossible to train such talented persons without opening the education market.

**Last of all**, China will benefit from setting up a lifelong education system. After China's entry into the WTO, the binding forces of the market became smaller and smaller. The demands of people for education diversification with many levels of structures should be met. The Chinese Ministry of Education (2001) points out:

Basic educational work would focus on three key links: moral education, updating of teaching materials and reform of the examination assessment system. In the spirit of 'emancipating the mind and marching with time', the Chinese Ministry of Education will take new measures to tackle the challenges posed by WTO accession: vigorously introduce quality foreign teaching resources mainly for higher education and vocational education; regulate actions in Sino-foreign cooperative running of schools according to law; further expand the opening of education to the outside and promote international educational exchanges and cooperation.

On the whole, under WTO the social and economic advances, the quickening of the tempo of living and ever increasing competition can be considered the main contributors to educational change in China.

## **The WTO and its Influence on Chinese Foreign Language Education**

After China's WTO entry, increasing contacts with foreign countries has required more knowledge of business and economics. To manage their work well in the future, English majors must have multiple skills. They are required to learn finance, marketing and management. In the information society, whoever gets the most information the fastest, will be able to gain the initiative in scientific and technological development. Information is equal to wealth and one means of disseminating and gathering information is foreign language. In the era of the intellectual economy, a foreign language is a useful tool to change science and technology into productive forces. As noted by Pei (2001, p.136), "After China's entry into the WTO, the scientific and technical developing personnel must have good knowledge of foreign languages if they want to be successful in their careers" (Author's Translation).

It is commonly believed that the foreign language is an important tool to bolster human achievement in regard to cross-cultural cooperation. In particular, nowadays more and more people are beginning to be aware of the importance of studying a foreign language. The number of learners is on the rise. A language is a key solution because it would encourage better communication among nations and for this there is no better way than to have a common language for all. "English is becoming the world language and there is an increasing focus on teaching English at all levels in China" (Feng, 2002, p.123). (Author's Translation). Moore (2001, p.1-2) mentions:

There has in recent years been a growing planet-wide discussion-notably among academics, educationists, journalists, language professionals, and business people-about the nature and use of English 'as a world language;' 'English as an international language;' and English 'as a global language,' or more explicitly, about 'World English,' 'International English,' and 'Global English'".

From this we can see that there is a growing worldwide awareness of the need for a common tongue. English is now a world property. Today's increasingly globalized, English has become the "working language" of most international activities. Moore (2001, p.13) also mentions that, "English is indeed, for good or ill, or both, the lingua franca of the movers and shakers and for those who wish to draw close to them-and parents worldwide want it for their children". Moore (2001, p.19) also points out that, "English is very firmly established as the language of the World Wide Web, as well as a means by which many nations of the world now communicate".

Under the WTO, the market economy is pushing the information times on fast forward, so that English is widely applied in various fields. It goes without saying that with the help of English we can communicate with the people of other countries: on the one hand, we can tell them about our achievements; on the other hand, we can learn their advanced science and technology and make foreign knowledge serve

China.

Since China's entry into the WTO, the demand for foreign language talent has increased, for knowledge construction and quality for all the people in China. For example, along with the opening of China's travel industry, a large number of foreign visitors will come to China. Travel agencies require people who have received tourism English training. Some three or four-star hotels will need people with hotel English training. If there is no population of foreign language speakers, it will definitely be disadvantageous in many aspects, such as: daily life, commercial trade and cultural communication and cooperation. It will be clear from the above that foreign language departments or foreign language institutes of colleges and universities should put more emphasis on foreign language teaching than before, in order to meet the demands of both individuals and society. It is high time that we fostered more excellent talent with foreign language ability to increase economic development.

The learning of English in China has a long history and now occupies the attention of millions of its people. The enormous progress in English languages education in China in the last twenty years is due largely to the strong and growing conviction of the Chinese government that English competence and computer skills are a must for the younger generations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is probably no exaggeration to say that China is a prime mover in foreign language education. As a profession, English language teaching is healthier now than it has ever been. There are more good materials than ever before and methodological approaches to the teaching of English as a foreign language have been improved greatly. This is a happy situation. However, naturally, not everything has been working successfully in China's English language education. In English language teaching some problems still exist.

*For example:*

**There is no combination of structural and functional language.** Littlewood (1981, p.1) points out that, "The structural view of language concentrates on the grammatical system, describing ways in which linguistic items can be combined. Functional language is variable and depends on specific situational and social factors". In class, teachers just paraphrase some words and expressions and grammatical points. Students are just required to write down their words mechanically. They have no chance to speak English in class. This kind of teaching is deadly boring and students study reluctantly. As a result, after graduation, most students can only read and write in English. Their listening and speaking ability is rather poor and they can't communicate with people in English. So they are often not competent for many professions. They call themselves "the deaf and dumb" in English language learning. To some extent, this situation doesn't suit China's needs under WTO.

**Inflexible teaching methods contribute to poor learning outcomes.** It is undoubtedly true that in preparing teaching programs, any teacher considers time.

Regardless of students' actual ability to digest English in China, they pour out the materials according to their own tastes, within a short class period. In this sense, the teacher acts as a statesman whereas the students are the audience. It is important to realize, however, that this teacher-centered approach is not necessarily the most effective role for the teacher to adopt. As a matter of fact, teaching and learning are tightly related to each other and neither can exist without the other. It is vital for the teacher to arouse the interest of students and let them participate in classroom discussion actively. In addition, in most of the secondary vocational schools, teachers are often not professionally trained to teach the subjects which they are expected to teach in real life contexts-as is often the case in Australian schools. Teacher professionalization is the trend in world teacher education development and a key trend in China's teacher education reform. Many teachers are beginning to realize the need to change their beliefs about teaching and learning, and the need to acquire new skills and techniques in teaching and in assessment according to the new concepts in teaching and learning and according to the needs of their students.

**Improper testing systems in English language teaching (EFL) are also problematic in China.** Testing language has traditionally taken the form of testing knowledge about language, usually the testing of knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. However, there is much more to being able to use language than knowledge about it. Hymes (1971, p.7) proposes the concept of communicative competence. He argued that using the grammar/translation method, "A speaker could be able to produce grammatical sentences that are completely inappropriate". In communicative competence, he included not only the ability to form correct sentences but to use them at appropriate times. Since Hymes proposed the idea in the early 1970s, it has been expanded considerably, and various types of competencies have been proposed. However, the basic idea of communicative competence remains the key to the ability to use language appropriately, both receptively and productively, in real situations. Nowadays, College Entrance Examinations in China require students to be capable users of written English, more than spoken English and listening ability. So most schools put emphasis on written English and spend little time in training students' listening and speaking ability. To some extent, students can get good marks in English in College Entrance Examinations, but by and large, putting undue emphasis on written English will result in passive language users.

Taking into account all these factors, we may reasonably conclude that English language teaching in China should consider the changing demands of society under WTO. The teaching of English has become a global industry. The qualities of its workers are dictated largely by entrepreneurs' assessments of market factors. Consideration for students, for example, thinking first and foremost of how students can learn fastest and more effectively, have not yet been incorporated into EFL teaching in China. To improve this situation, a number of steps could be taken:

**Firstly**, to set up the aims of English language teaching. "The most important goal in foreign language teaching is that students should be able to talk to people in other

cultures and understand what they are saying (Crouse, 1994, p.69)". Teachers are expected to use a more task-based approach and make the students the center of learning. The traditional way of grammar teaching causes foreign language teaching to become too theoretical and be disadvantageous to training students' actual communicative capacity to apply language. So grammar teaching should adhere to the view of "language communication first".

**Secondly**, to improve English language teaching by using a variety of teaching methods. To counter the deficiencies of traditional ways of English teaching, steps are being taken to change teaching methods. As John (2000, p.63) points, "We need to think here of subjects as forms of *life*, not just a form of knowledge and certainly not just as some mixture of 'skills' and 'content'. Teachers must know their students, who they are, what their aspirations are, and how they learn as individuals. Teachers take from what suits their own personality and their teaching style and what is appropriate for the personalities and aspirations of their students, thus forming their own approach. Crouse (1994, p.69) also mentions that, "The teacher needs to expose students to authentic, meaningful use of the language as much and as often as possible".

**Thirdly**, multimedia computers can be used to improve English language teaching. Teachers are expected to use modern technology in teaching, creating more effective resources for learning and for using the language. Computers, as the product of modern civilization, playing a vital part in the daily activities of human society. With the aid of students' enthusiasm for learning how to operate a computer, teachers can fully use the multimedia computer to teach foreign language. Multimedia computers possess the advantages of powerful interactive and video-audio functions. The pictures and its accompanying statements are both excellent. The characters, sounds, pictures, and so on, can be deliberately selected by using the mouse. The students can directly feel and be aware of what is going on, as if they placed themselves in the midst of real language surroundings, not only seeing and hearing but also speaking and thinking. The students can quickly deepen their comprehension and memory of the teaching contents of multimedia texts. This interactive form of teaching also provides three dimensional images for the students to practice foreign language, increasing the opportunities of seeing, hearing and speaking for the students. So it can effectively arouse the students' interest in study. As Hargreaves (1997, p.6) mentions:

New technologies enable many students to reach out and connect with other students, other teachers, other worlds; to surf the internet and ride the information superhighway without the teacher's immediate monitoring, support and intervention. Indeed, by permitting worldwide communication at the tap of a keyboard, computer technology dissolves the distinction between 'what's out there' and 'what's in here' altogether.

**Last but not least**, to strengthen the training of foreign language teachers. Teachers in the future should master both professional knowledge and other related skills. As a

foreign language teacher, it is necessary and important to have a good supply of relevant knowledge, which they can apply to foreign language teaching. Meanwhile, they should learn more about methodology while teaching. In addition to all of these factors, the teachers' own language proficiency need to be improved, without which the other roles mentioned can hardly be fulfilled.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that China's entry in the WTO is a rare opportunity, as well as a challenge for Chinese education. Many teachers are beginning to realize the need to change their beliefs about language and language learning, and the need to acquire new skills and techniques in teaching and in assessment according to the new concepts in teaching and learning and according to the needs of their students. There are rapid changes in all aspects of everyday life in China.

We can say with certainty that in the next three to five years, China's investment environment will change dramatically, stimulated by WTO commitments and other factors. But it is an inherently complex process, in many ways unprecedented for both China and the WTO. It is true that to open the country to the outside world brings about both positive and negative results. Since the impact is unavoidable what we should do is to get to know, master and use the WTO rules and regulations as soon as possible so as to grasp the advantages while avoiding the disadvantages and trying our utmost to turn the challenge into opportunities. Meanwhile we can try our best to reduce the negative influences. Although much progress has been made in China, the Chinese people still have a great distance to cover to achieve their ultimate goal of harmonizing China with the world and building up China into a powerful state in the world.

Using the consistent effort of thousands of Chinese foreign language educators, and the substantial body of knowledge about effective language teaching methodology that has been developed by experts all over the world, China can confidently confront the challenge to further promote foreign language education in China, and to train more and better qualified foreign language-speaking personnel, hopefully in time for the forthcoming Summer Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

## References

- Crouse, G. K. (1994). *Meeting New Challenges in the Foreign Language Classroom*.  
Lincolnwood: National Textbook Company.
- Feng, ZengJun. (2002). *WTO and Chinese Education*. (In Chinese) Guangzhou:  
Zhongshan University Press.

- Fullan, M. G. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Falmer Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (1997). Rethinking Educational Change. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The Challenge of School Change. A Collection of Articles* (pp. 3-25). Melbourne: Hawker Brownlow.
- House, E. (2000). Economic Change, Educational Policy Formation and the Role of the State. In A. Altrichter and J. Elliott (Eds.), *Imagines of Educational Change* (pp.13-19). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hymes, D. H. (1971). *On Communicative Competence*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- John, W. (2000). *Key Issues in Education and Teaching*. London and New York: Cassell.
- Leach, J. and Moon, B. (Ed.). (1999). *Learners and Pedagogy*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Learning Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McGill, M. (2003). Introduction to Module 1: Change & Education Or The Cheese Just Moved! In *Contemporary Educational Issues (A & B) ESG700 & ESG701*. Tasmania: School of Education: University of Tasmania.
- Moore, B. (2001). *Who's Centric now? The Present State of Post-colonial Englishes*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Schon, D. (1971). *Beyond the Stable State: Public and Private Learning in a Changing Society*. London: Temple Smith.
- Wu, Song. (2003). *WTO and Development of Chinese Basic Education*. (In Chinese). Beijing: Beijing Institute of Technology Press.

### **Online References**

- Aldrich, E. (2001). *Impact of China's Entry into WTO*. Retrieved September 22, 2004, from <http://reports.stanleyfdn.org/spcooD.pdf>
- Development Research Center of the State Council, (2001). *Colleges Adjust to Teach*

- New Skills*. Retrieved September 22, 2004, from  
[http:// 21stcentury.chinadaily.com.cn/article.php?sid=2110](http://21stcentury.chinadaily.com.cn/article.php?sid=2110)
- DeWoskin, K. (2001). *China in the Next Three to Five Years*. Retrieved October 22, 2004, from  
<http://www.pwcglobal.com/Extweb/manissue.nsf/docid/E36E5594BFAC638ECA256B760034B7A5>
- Michael, H. (2002). *The Asian Review of Books*. Retrieved October 22, 2004, from <http://www.asianreviewofbooks.com/arb/article.php?article=186>
- Ministry of Education, (2001). *2002 Blueprint for Educational Reform and Development Drawn*. Retrieved October 27, 2004, from  
[http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200112/28/eng20011228\\_8/668.shtml](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200112/28/eng20011228_8/668.shtml)
- Pei Liang Cai, (2001). *Foreign Language Continuing Education for the Science and Technical Personnel in China*. Retrieved October 27, 2004, from  
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&sid=5&srchmode=1&vinst=PROQ&fmt=3&...>
- Supachai, P. (2003). December 26, 2003. *China's Success and the Way Ahead*. Retrieved October 18, 2004, from  
<http://www.deccanherald.com/deccanherald/dec26/edst.asp>
- Toffler, A. (2001). *Futurist Toffler Says China Has Seen Astonishing Changes*. Retrieved October 27, 2004, from  
[http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200111/28/eng20011128\\_85562.shtml](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200111/28/eng20011128_85562.shtml)
- What the WTO is and what it does*. (2001). Retrieved November 22, 2004, from  
<http://21stcentury.chinadaily.com.cn/article.php?sid=2057&thold=0&mo>