

**Conference Name:** 2020 Global English Education China Assembly

**Date:** November 21-23, 2020

**Presenter:** Nick Yuan

During the challenging year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, I had the honor of attending the 2020 Global English Education China Assembly organized by China Daily in partnership with TESOL International Association in Hangzhou, China. This assembly served as a high-level international English Language Teaching (ELT) event, bringing together educators and researchers from various backgrounds.

I was accepted to deliver a 20-minute panel paper presentation titled “Novice University EFL Teachers’ Professional Development through the Teacher Study Group: The Changing Collaborative Learning Community and Individual Identities.” Throughout the two-day conference, I attended several keynote speeches, panel presentations, and workshops, gaining exposure to the forefront of English education in China, particularly during the pandemic.

This prestigious event aimed to promote scholarship and cross-cultural understanding among English educators in China while enhancing dialogue with peers worldwide. It covered various themes in TESOL, including teacher education and professional development, English for specific/academic purposes, and curriculum development under the new competencies required in China.

My research focused on the professional development of novice EFL teachers through participation in a teaching study group held by the English Language Center (ELC). Using Activity Theory as a framework, I discovered that novice EFL teachers gained both practical support and emotional bonding within this professional learning community. Key factors contributing to the innovation of our teaching study group included flexible teacher-centered rules, the adoption of practical materials, and a balanced division of labor among group members.

As an attendee, I gained valuable insights into the latest English curriculum for Chinese students, newly invented assessment criteria, and creative methods for online lessons during and after the pandemic. Networking with renowned experts was particularly inspiring, as many offered valuable suggestions and encouragement regarding my research and future career.

Overall, this experience was invaluable and could not be obtained elsewhere, especially during such extraordinary circumstances. I am truly grateful for this opportunity!

