

The teaching of Chinese characters: a case study of Mandarin teachers' understanding of career-long professional learning in the UK

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Due to the growing status of Mandarin as a foreign language in schools, the number of Mandarin teachers has been on the rise worldwide in the last decade. However, the development of pedagogical approaches for teaching Mandarin in the UK context is still at its initial stage. Moreover, research shows that there are often inadequate career-long professional learning opportunities for in-service Mandarin teachers. Drawing on interviews and documentary data gathered during a one-day workshop on the teaching of Chinese characters (N=50), this paper reports on Mandarin teachers' professional learning needs and their perceptions of teaching Chinese characters. The study argues for the importance of re-contextualising metacognition in developing language teachers' knowledge and understanding about subject specific pedagogy. The findings also hope to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the theoretical and practical issues relating to the interconnectedness between Mandarin teachers' self-efficacy and career-long professional learning.

Keywords: Chinese characters; Mandarin; teaching language

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