

Foreword to the Special Issue of Care in Higher Education English Language Teaching

Apart from being an established researcher, Jock Wong has been known to me as a diligent, knowledgeable, responsible, and reflective teacher. I can feel he has a passion for teaching. Thus I was not surprised when he proposed to run a special issue on the topic of care in higher education (HE) English language teaching (ELT). On the one hand, I was taken aback by this bold proposal because I knew the topic of care in HE language classrooms was largely neglected both in the literature and in teacher training and teacher performance evaluation. However, on the other hand, I also felt at ease because I knew this was what Jock really cared about. I still remember some years ago when he asked me to write a small piece on the topic of motivation in language classroom for a forum he edited. Though motivation is a different concept from care, I realized Jock paid great attention to students' psychological needs and well-being. Now, to add to the list, Jock is known to me also as a caring teacher.

As Jock and other contributors to this special issue have rightfully presented, care is relevant to major stake-holders involved in English language teaching, and it is high time to redefine what teaching excellence needs to entail. At the institutional level, it is useful to incorporate a good awareness of care and the ability to deliver care into professional development opportunities and staff performance evaluation. Besides delving on content knowledge, it is essential for teachers to create a caring environment in which students' psychological needs are not ignored. While learning in the classroom, students should find it comfortable to reveal their affectual concerns and be able to gain positive responses from their teachers. In short, I wholeheartedly join Jock to uphold that "we newly recognize care as an important criterion of teaching excellence and, for that matter, a 21st century skill" (Wong, J., this issue).

This special issue on care in HE ELT may be the first of its kind, and I trust it will be well received in the community. I hope this special issue will arouse greater interest on this less researched topic and I look forward to further discussions.

Xinghua Liu
Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China
Co-Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of TESOL Studies