

IMPORTANT: EDITORIAL CHECKS AND REQUESTS

The appendix must be separated from the article file and uploaded as a supplementary file.

Appendix 1. Biographical Vignettes

Pseudonym	Biographical Vignettes
Emily (6 years)	Ms. Emily, who took the NMET exam in 2013, began teaching high school English in 2017 after finishing university. With six years of teaching, she's focused on guiding low-performing students through NMET prep. She finds it tough dealing with disrespect and emphasises emotional support for struggling students. Despite feeling helpless at times, she teaches in a developed city in China, where she worries about the difficulty hindering English learning for low achievers.
Lilian (6 years)	Ms. Lilian, with six years of English teaching experience, began her career in 2017 after passing the NMET in 2010. Since 2020, she's been teaching senior 3rd-grade students for the NMET. Unlike Ms. Emily, she has diverse experience teaching various English proficiency levels. Recently, she's concentrated on preparing high-proficiency students for the NMET. She works at a senior high school in a developed city in China.
Cindy (11 years)	In 2008, Ms. Cindy participated in NMET. After graduating university, she began teaching English at a private high school in 2012. She credits NMET for her personal growth, enabling her to leave her rural village for a better life. However, relocating to Guangdong posed challenges, including adjusting to different exam papers. Ms. Cindy also noticed cultural differences between northern and southern China, affecting student motivation and academic performance in NMET, especially among affluent southern families.
Dong (12 years)	Mr. Dong, who participated in NMET in 2007, started teaching English in 2011. Throughout his career, he actively participated in NMET discussions and exchanges, valuing experiences shared by veteran teachers. Over 12 years, he received numerous Best Teacher Awards for his dedication to improving NMET performance. He stresses the importance of nurturing students' interests, crucial for NMET preparation. Mr. Dong believes in adapting teaching methods to students' proficiency levels. He currently teaches at a public senior high school in a mid-tier city in Guangdong province.

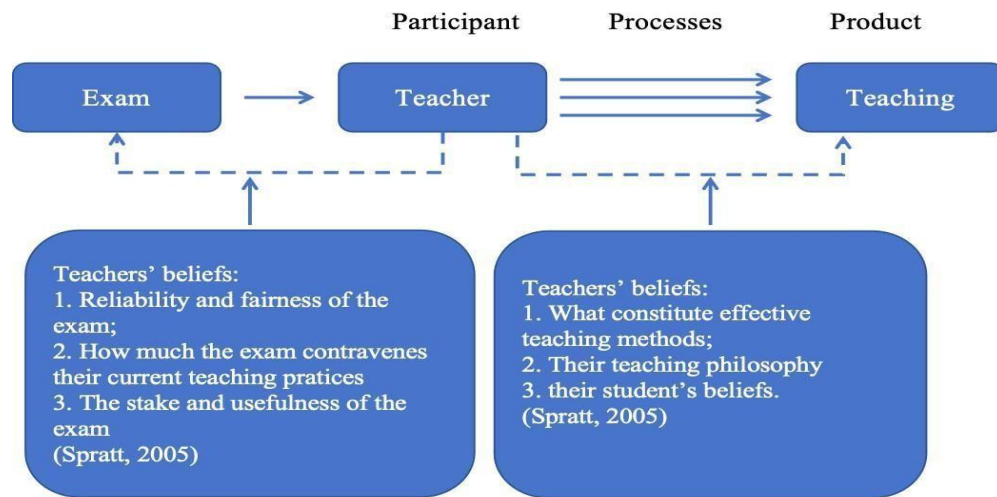


Fig.1 Conceptual Framework

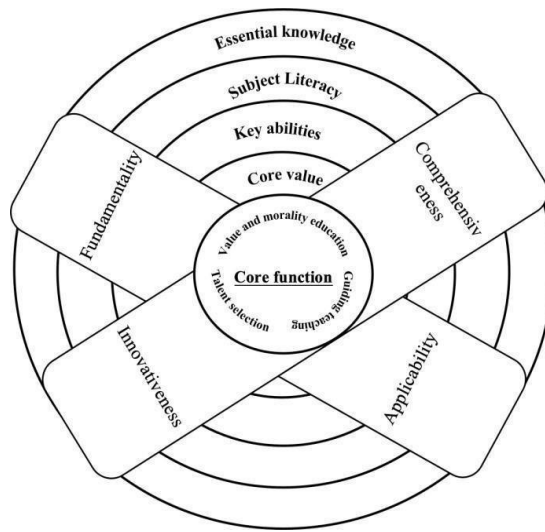


Fig.2 Core Function of National Matriculation Test (NMT) Evaluation System

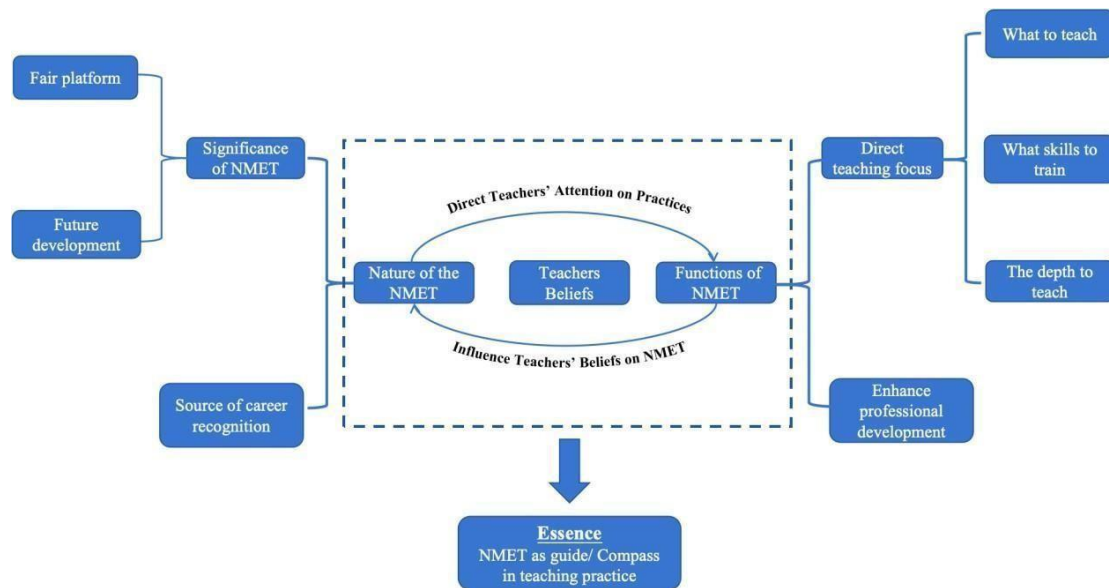


Fig 3. Teachers' Beliefs on National Matriculation English Test (NMET)