

Supporting Sustainable English Teacher Continuous Professional Development in Yunnan Province

Overview report

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Overview

The EMaDA: Supporting Sustainable English Teacher CPD in Yunnan Province project was composed of three sub-projects, each with different local partners and different foci. All three projects had a professional learning focus and the site of projects covered pre-service and in-service teacher education for teachers of English.

Each of the sub-projects was initially designed by the Chinese partner as a starting point to secure UK partners through the British Council. The team from the Department of Applied Linguistics became the UK partner for each of the sub-projects. This initial design of the project was further developed by the University of Warwick team and refined in collaboration with the Chinese partners. The three subprojects were:

Project 1 – “Research into core curriculum design of postgraduate core courses for prospective English Teachers in border minority regions of Southwest China”. Project 1 was a collaboration with Dali University (Team leader – Professor Liu Fengqin). The aim of this project was to develop a new curriculum for pre-service English language teacher education. The project brief required the development of a new module for a post-graduate program in education that would address the needs of teachers in Yunnan.

Project 2 – “Research on the evolution of educational ecology and construction of a professional learning community (PLC) for English teachers' development under the rural revitalization strategy”. This project was a collaboration with the Yunnan Education Centre for International Exchanges in partnership with Kunming University of Science and Technology (Team leader – Professor Wang Ying). This project aimed to establish a professional learning community (PLC) across two middle schools in rural Yunnan. The project included the development of four online workshops to launch the PLC, which would then be handed over to the Chinese partners for future development.

Project 3 – “Research on development of cross-regional English teaching and research communities in bordering minority area through systematic support for expert teacher workshops” was undertaken with Yunnan Normal University (Team leader – Professor Hou Yunjie). This program aimed to provide a professional learning programme for expert teachers working with PLCs. This project involved delivering a series of four workshops for expert teachers and producing an online resource to support expert teachers in creating and facilitating PLCs.

Research design

The project adopted a common research methodology, with variations for each component. The specific methodologies were developed by the University of Warwick team and revised in collaboration with the local partners. The design consisted of two parts (a data collection component and an educational development activity).

Data collection component

The starting point for each project was a needs analysis, which involved a questionnaire and focus groups. Project 1 was designed for teachers of English working in Yunnan, especially early career teachers. Project 2 was limited to the teachers of English working in the two schools that would form the PLC. Project 3 targeted experienced teachers of English participating in a network established by Yunnan Normal University.

The needs analysis employed an online bilingual questionnaire and focus groups. The questionnaire was published in bilingual form on wjx.cn. The questionnaire had two types of questions 1) questions with Likert scale answers to prompts and 2) questions with open answers. It was based on a questionnaire developed by the UK team in an earlier project to identify the professional development needs of teachers in China (Centre for Applied Linguistics, 2019). It was revised with reference to the European Profiling Grid (EAQUALS, 2013) and the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2008) to develop a more comprehensive set of questions. Each questionnaire had a common core and additional elements specific to the project focus. For Project 1, there were added questions on participants' experiences of their pre-service learning. For Project 2, the additional questions related experiences of working professional learning communities. These Project 2 questions were also included in the Project 3 questionnaire, along with an additional section included focusing on the expert teachers' experiences of facilitating professional learning.

Project 1 had 102 respondents: 34 early career (1-5 years), 32 mid-career (6-15 years), 36 experienced (>15 years). Of these 17 were male, 85 female, but there was only one male early career teacher. Just under a third of teachers identified as members of ethnic minorities (30 teachers, of whom nine were early career teachers). This proportion reflects the overall ethnic profile of Yunnan province (Guo et al., 2015). Project 2 had 26 respondents: 15 early career (1-5 years), eight mid-career (6-15 years), and two experienced (>15 years). Of these, one teacher was male and 25 female. No ethnicity data was collected for Project 2 at the request of the Chinese partners. For Project 3, a total of 43 teachers responded to the survey. Of these teachers the majority was female (34) with only nine male teachers responding. This reflects the gender profile of the network as almost all participants in the network responded. The majority of the participants identified as Han Chinese (38) and five as members of ethnic minorities.

The focus groups were conducted online by the Chinese partners in Chinese. Online groups were chosen mainly for reasons of practicality. Travel was difficult at the time because of Covid-19 related travel restrictions but online groups also allowed for participants from different parts of Yunnan to be brought together in the same focus group, and for participants to communicate who would not normally have been able to travel to a central location because of difficulties of travel from remote areas. They were transcribed and translated into English for analysis. Project 1 conducted six focus groups with 18 teachers, all of whom were early career teachers. Project 2 conducted one focus group of six teachers, three from each school. Project 3 conducted five focus groups with 25 teachers.

Additional data for Project 1

In addition, for Project 1, a survey was conducted of students currently enrolled in M.Ed programs for future teachers of English. The questionnaire asked students to identify three things that they thought made for a good teacher of English and to explain why they thought these were important. It then asked students to rate their confidence in enacting a number of aspects of English language teaching drawn from the teacher questionnaire and to indicate how well they felt that their post-graduate course had prepared them for these aspects. The questionnaire was also published in bilingual form on wjx.cn and the same procedures were used for developing the questionnaire and translating it into Chinese as were used for the teachers' questionnaire.

A curriculum mapping of graduate level teacher education programs was also conducted. Curricula at graduate level were reviewed for three universities authorised by the Ministry of Education to offer Masters programs in teacher education. Currently only four universities in Yunnan have been authorised to offer Master's degrees in education (Yjbys.com, 2021).

Educational development

On the basis of the data collection, each project developed an implementation component that used the data collected to develop an educational intervention. Each intervention was designed collaboratively with the Yunnan partners and in Projects 2 and 3, workshops were delivered by members of both the UK and Chinese teams.

Project 1: Design of a one semester core module for graduate level pre-service education. The project developed a curriculum overview and a guide for teacher educators implementing the module.

Project 2: A series of four online workshops to help establish a PLC:

Workshop 1: What is a Professional Learning Community?

Workshop 2: Dealing with diverse demands on teachers' time

Workshop 3: Students proficiency and motivation

Workshop 4: Making training effective

Project 3: A series of four online workshops to support expert teachers in creating and facilitating PLCs:

Workshop 1: Leadership of PLCs - sustainable continuing professional development

Workshop 2: Learner-centredness and experiential learning and teacher well-being

Workshop 3: Reflective practice online and offline

Workshop 4: Teacher Research.

These workshops also formed the basis of an online resource for expert teachers.

Cross-project findings

Although the projects worked with different groups and had different aims. There were a number of issues that emerged in the data collection that showed common issues, in particular issues relating to teaching, professional development, and equity and diversity.

Teaching issues

Low level of students

In all three projects the language level of students emerged as a significant problem for teachers. Teachers widely believed that their students' current levels of English were inadequate and that many students were not capable of engaging with the curriculum at their assigned level because of their lack of achievement in their prior language learning. This was especially the case for teachers teaching at high schools who were preparing students for the Gaokao examination.

The issue of students' language levels has a number of key dimensions. Firstly, it was viewed as a defect of students, with students' poor performance being seen as a learning issue resulting from poor engagement, and poor learning skills. It was not seen primarily as the result of structural issues or teaching approaches. Secondly, it was understood as a problem for teachers' work because teachers were unable to teach the assigned curriculum to these students. However, this was not seen as a problem for the curriculum, in the sense that the curriculum was not suited to the level of the students, and modifying the curriculum level was, therefore, not put forward as a way of responding to students' learning needs. As a result, the pedagogical

approach adopted by teachers appears to be one that focuses on covering the required curriculum rather than addressing the gaps in previous knowledge. The focus on covering the curriculum is especially strong for students preparing for the Gaokao and the emphasis is on being able to answer exam questions rather than developing communicative language abilities.

There is an obvious need for teachers to develop the ability to differentiate teaching. There was some evidence of differentiation of teaching in the form of streaming but there was little sense of differentiation within individual classes, and so models of differentiation are weak (Ansalone, 2010). The model of differentiation in streaming appears to be one in which students are streamed in terms of ability and are then taught the same curriculum with modifications in the amount of content covered. The teaching approach appeared to be one of collaborative planning for the middle level of students and then adding additional content for high-achieving students and removing content for lower performing students. In addition, teachers indicated that the usual pedagogy for low performing learners was teacher-centred and focused on rote learning of responses to examination items. This approach would seem not to address the need for low performing learners to catch up with the curriculum. There is an obvious need for professional development to address issues of differentiating teaching, and this was built into the materials developed for the three projects.

There is a further need to address issues in early learning, especially in rural and remote schools, as it appears that students begin to fall behind the level of the required curriculum at an early stage. It is not clear from the current projects what the issues are in early learning and further investigation is needed to understand the nature of the problem and potential solutions.

Motivation and engagement

Students' motivation and engagement was also raised by teachers across the three projects as a significant issue for English language teaching. Teachers across the projects identified low levels of motivation as a significant problem for teaching and learning. Motivation was viewed by teachers as a cause of low student achievement. It was linked with perceptions of a lack of student engagement, with unmotivated students doing little in the classroom or doing little or no homework. Teachers believed that students saw little purpose for learning English and so were not prepared to invest time and effort in English language learning. Some teachers also felt that there was limited support for English language learning in families and in local communities in rural and remote areas.

Motivation was viewed by the teachers as a student responsibility and poor motivation was seen as a defect in students; that is teachers thought students should be motivated and they should do as required by the teacher. Motivation is thus understood as a problem for teachers rather than a problem of students' experience (Ushioda, 2020). There was little sense of motivation as something that resulted from factors external to students, other than lack of family or community valuing of English. There was also little sense that students' learning experiences in the classroom may contribute to motivation and that students' motivation was also teachers' responsibility. In the needs analyses, teachers did signal that they wanted to know how to motivate students, but in focus groups this seemed to be understood as having ways of communicating the importance of English language for students rather than seeing motivation as a classroom-internal issue. Many teachers did not seem to see students' low level of prior achievement as being consequential for motivation. However, it is likely that an on-going history of failure in English language learning contributed to students' lack of motivation. In addition, the teacher-centred pedagogies adopted with low performing learners may also

contribute to students' lack of motivation. All in all, there was thus not a sense that experience of learning contributed to motivation (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).

There is a need for teachers to understand more about motivation and the role that teachers and school cultures play in motivating students. As result, all three projects included a focus on motivation and ways that teaching can support motivation (or not).

Restricted pedagogies

The needs analyses revealed that teachers across all three projects implemented a broad range of pedagogical strategies and teaching and learning activities. However, there was also evidence that the majority of teachers usually drew on a limited teaching repertoire in their practice. In particular, form-focused teaching approaches and teacher-centred instruction were the predominant forms adopted by the majority of teachers and communicatively focused teaching approaches were less used. In addition, there was a strong reliance on textbooks with many teachers expressing a lack of confidence in departing from these in their teaching. As a result, there was a sense that many teachers do not feel they have agency to construct their own teaching, either because of the constraints of school cultures or because they felt they did not have the knowledge or expertise to do so.

The profile of teachers who gave evidence of having a restricted teaching repertoire does not seem to be linked to experience, with some early career or late career teachers reporting relatively restricted repertoires and others reporting much more extensive ones. From the data it is difficult to determine what the trajectories are for the development of teachers' repertoires. It appears that some teachers may consolidate a restricted repertoire over the course of their career, while others may develop more expansive pedagogies. It may also be the case that newly graduated teachers are entering the workforce with different pedagogical repertoires – some more restricted, some more expansive. There is a need for further research to understand how and why teachers develop their pedagogical repertoires and what opportunities teachers have to develop the range of practices they draw on regularly in their teaching. This was something that we bore in mind in designing the three interventions.

There is a clear need for teachers to develop their knowledge of pedagogies for language teaching and knowing how to draw on different ways of teaching to meet different learning needs and objectives. Project 1 reveals that there was little emphasis on pedagogy in existing graduate in-service teacher education programmes and so the module design for the project sought to build in pedagogy as a core focus. In Project 3 part of the resource developed for expert teachers as leaders of professional development included support for developing more elaborated pedagogies.

Pre-service and in-service professional development

Approaches to professional development

The projects, especially Projects 2 and 3 placed a strong emphasis on PLCs for professional development. In working with the idea of PLCs, the work of each project was ecologised within an existing set of practices and assumptions around the forms and nature of professional development for teachers. This ecology of professional development was not simply a context within which the projects operated but also structured how the work of the project was understood.

At various stages during the project it became clear that transmission models of professional development (Kennedy, 2005; Yan & Yang, 2019) were common, especially where external experts were facilitating the program. All of the teachers reported having been involved in such forms of professional development and all of the expert teachers in Project 3 reported having used this model. The teachers' expectation was thus one in which the professional development would take the form of a workshop in which the presenters communicated information to the teachers that the teachers would then implement (or not) later. The PLC focus of the current project meant that the model being used was intended to be more collaborative and required more active engagement by participants both within the workshop and outside. This clash in expectations of what constituted professional development needed to be negotiated throughout the project and it proved important to make explicit expectations about the conduct of the workshop and the rationale for its design throughout the workshop. The more active framing of the workshop, however, did not always work well and some participants were reluctant to participate in large or small group tasks, preferring to wait to be given information. While this may well be due to the relatively short interventions, there does seem to be a significant resistance or lack of comfort with more active and collaborative PD tasks and activities.

This focus on transmission models was potentially surprising as most teachers claimed to have participated in teacher-led PLCs in the needs analyses for Projects 2 and 3. The issue here appears to relate to the teachers' understanding of what constituted a teacher led PLC. In understanding PLCs, it appears that teachers drew on their previous experiences of Teaching Research Groups (TRGs 教研组). TRGs bring together teachers in the same subject for in-school professional development for teachers in China. TRGs are an externally mandated part of school structures at the national, provincial, city, district, and school levels and schools in China commonly allocate a regular two-hour block of time for TRG meetings (Paine & Ma, 1993) – a possible reason why there was a widespread feeling that any professional development activity that extended beyond two hours was excessive. While TRGs could function as PLCs, in reality their ways of working are highly diverse. The expert teachers in the focus group for Project 3 gave examples of TRGs that ranged from groups that did collaborative marking or lesson design, to groups that actively explored practice through investigations of the application of new ideas. However, often in TRGs transmission models seem to be common, and this may have been reinforced by local cultural settings operating in the schools. A widely used activity in TRGs is the 'open lesson' (公开课), in which teachers are observed by their peers, especially by a more senior teacher, and later receive feedback and comments (Chien, 2017; Liu, 2022; Ma et al., 2018). One particular difference between the functioning of TRGs and that of PLCs may be the way that local hierarchies play out in TRGs. Rather than being collaborations of equals, TRGs may be hierarchically organised with more senior teachers dominating the working of the group, leading to top-down practices of disseminating knowledge from those with seniority to those who are more junior (Paine & Ma, 1993; Paine, 1990). One impact of such hierarchies may be the reproduction of the practices of more established teachers, which as noted above may involve restricted pedagogical repertoires.

Another issue that emerged, especially in Project 2, was teachers' understanding of what professional development should deliver. There was a strong expectation that the focus of professional learning should be on providing practical solutions to known problems and that it would operate largely at the level of techniques for teaching that could be taken up and deployed immediately (Lei & Medwell, 2020). This conflicted with the participatory, investigative approach of the PLC model, which encourages collective exploration and experimentation with sustained reflection on practice. The emphasis in the PLC model is thus

more on process, with a view to bringing about substantive change to address local needs rather than on the dissemination of ready-made practices. This difference in expectation was not simply about the content of modules but also in the ways of working. The PLC model requires sustained engagement that goes beyond the time of scheduled activities. It needs to build in time for reflection, trialing and ideally forms of practitioner research. This view created problems that had to be negotiated and managed in Project 2, especially as the focus of the workshops was to support the establishment of a cross-school PLC. This represents a conflict between the aims of the Chinese university partners in Project 2, who had established a project to create a PLC across the two schools, and the school participants, who wanted practical solutions to known problems.

These issues reveal the complexities involved in introducing new models of professional development into an existing context and the importance of establishing clear understanding of and expectations about what professional development activities are designed to achieve. This was not only a practical matter to be negotiated in Project 2, but also is relevant for the expert teachers in Project 3, as they work to establish PLCs in schools in Yunnan.

Issues in current professional development

The place of theory and practice

The issue of the relationship between theory and practice in professional development emerged in all three projects. In each case teachers expressed a view that professional development was too strongly weighted towards theory and not enough towards practice. However, what was meant by weighting professional development towards practice varied. For some teachers it meant support in applying theory to their own practice, while other teachers felt that theory was of limited value and what they needed was practical solutions to the problems they encountered. This may relate to how teachers understood the purpose and goals of professional development (see below). All teachers, however, felt that they had difficulties in knowing how to implement theoretical concepts and models in their practice. This may also link to the issue of localising knowledge obtained from outside (see below).

The theory-practice interface is significant for professional development (Scott, 2010). While practice is ultimately the focus of professional development for teaching, deploying practices without understanding the theoretical rationale for those practices can lead to problems in practice and a lack of awareness of what practices can and cannot do. The important dimension of professional learning is the linking of theory and practice and working through the application of ideas in context. This suggests that transmission models of professional development (Kennedy, 2005) in which an 'expert' presents some aspect of language teaching and teachers are then expected to implement it are highly problematic, as they do not have the time and space for working on implementation and experimenting with new ideas and ways of working. There is a need for more contextualised forms of professional development that support teachers in working through ideas in practice. PLCs provide one model for achieving this.

In developing the three projects, the theory into practice dimension was an important feature. In Project 1, the curriculum design attempted to address this in the context of pre-service teacher education. In pre-service programs, it is important that students do develop a theoretical base to support their understanding of and reflection on their own practice. However, they also need to understand theory in application. For this reason, the module developed in Project 1 integrated opportunities for teacher educators to model practice for their students and to engage

them in reflection about their experiences into the lecture format. In Project 2 and Project 3, the focus was more on supporting teachers to work through ideas collectively and to adopt an investigative stance in relation to their professional learning. However, both projects also sought to adopt a teaching approach that would model participant-centred, collaborative ways of working. These aspects were stressed in collaborative meetings with Yunnan partners and we structured the workshops to model such active collaboration.

Localisation

Teachers across the three projects identified localisation as an issue in developing their own practice. They believed that they encountered ideas and practices in their reading or in other professional development contexts that were potentially useful, but which had been developed in different contexts and so could not be implemented directly in their local context. This was especially an issue for professional development by overseas presenters and teachers often felt that the ideas being presented were interesting and engaging but were not applicable in the local context. The issue for localisation is not so much that ideas emerge from outside the local context but rather that teachers do not know how to adapt their learning to their context and/or do not feel inclined to do so due to the kind of ingrained mindset mentioned previously and associated expectations regarding transmissive models of professional development that do not allow for experimenting with new learning in a supported way.

Barriers to innovation

Lack of professional development opportunities

Teachers across the projects said that they did not have enough opportunities for professional development, or they were not able to access the opportunities that currently existed. Many teachers said that there were few professional development opportunities available to them, although this may reflect teachers' knowledge of what is available rather than what is actually on offer. A large proportion of teachers responding to the needs analyses for the three projects indicated that they did not know how to find out information about what professional development opportunities were available and did not know what the relevant journals were for them to read. There is, therefore, a need for better dissemination of information about professional development opportunities for teachers of English in Yunnan and more guidance on where resources can be found.

For teachers in rural and remote areas, it may be difficult to attend professional development opportunities because of the travel time involved to get to venues. Teachers commented that there were more opportunities for professional development in cities, especially those with Higher Education institutions, but that it was often difficult to travel to attend these. This shows that there is a need for professional development that is accessible for teachers in geographically remote areas. Online professional development is a useful way to address this. The online workshops in Projects 2 and 3 brought together highly dispersed groups of people and did not rely on being able to travel to attend. However, the experience of these online workshops also revealed that there are technological issues that also need to be addressed in facilitating online workshops. While all participants had access to mobile phones and could access the workshops, this did not mean that they all had equal opportunities to participate as participation was influenced by other issues such as available band width, ability to use cameras and microphones, and even access to quiet spaces in which to participate. One strategy adopted in Projects 2 and 3 to offset the connectivity issues was to use WeChat as a parallel platform for communication between participants and pasting these WeChat comments into the Zoom chat space so that they were available to everyone. The Chinese partners in Project 2 attempted

to overcome some of these problems by bringing the teachers into a classroom at each school and having a single video link to the room. This however created other problems, such as difficulties in hearing participants who were far from the microphone or seeing them if they were not in camera shot, not being able to form cross-school groups for small group activities, and online presenters not to being able to mentor small group tasks.

There was also an issue around the use of English in delivering the workshops. While using English as the language of the workshops provides teachers with opportunities for using the language communicatively, it can also create problems for participation. Teachers' confidence in their own language abilities may prevent participants from actively engaging in the workshop and this can have consequences for their learning and their opportunities for shaping the discussion. The workshops adopted a translanguaging stance in which Chinese was seen as a valid way of engaging in interactions and there were always Chinese-speaking facilitators involved in the workshops to facilitate communication across languages. The WeChat mode also allowed for the use of Chinese in parallel communication.

Time

Time emerged as a significant issue for teachers across the projects. In the open questions in the needs analysis, time emerged as one of the greatest issues facing teachers in their work. Teachers especially complained about the impact on their workloads of activities that were not directly related to teaching: administration, meetings, managing students outside class, etc. Teachers stated that the pressure of time made it impossible for them to teach the way they wanted to teach as they simply did not have time to do the things they wanted to do as teachers. Moreover, the pressure of time made it difficult for them to engage in professional learning and to use new learning in the classroom. This impact of time pressure on innovation has been noted also at university level in Yunnan (Liddicoat et al., 2022; Murray et al., 2020).

Time pressure is felt in professional development activities in a number of ways. Expert teachers believed that it was difficult for them to meet their professional development obligations because they did not have sufficient time to do their professional development work on top of the rest of their workload. Some consequences of this were that:

- Teachers found it difficult to fit professional development activities into their work schedules. This time pressure related not only to attending professional development sessions but also to self-directed activities such as professional reading. Professional development activities need to take place during free time (as was the case for the workshops delivered as part of Projects 2 and 3) and this has consequences for teachers work-life balance. Balancing commitments to work and family was a common problem identified in the needs analysis questionnaire, particularly by female participants.
- Teachers did not feel they had time to plan and implement changes in their programs because they did not have the time to do this during their working day. Such planning needed to happen in teachers' free time.
- Teachers wanted solutions that were economical in terms of time; that is quick fixes that could be used without time required to plan and implement them.
- Expert teachers would deliver the same workshops a number of times because they did not have time to develop new ones. Participants in other projects complained about the repetitiveness of professional development workshops available to them, which reflects the other side of this issue.
- Expert teachers were less willing to travel to deliver professional development, potentially impacting in the availability of professional development activities in rural and remote areas.

- Expert teachers had difficulty recruiting teachers for their professional development activities because teachers did not have time to attend.

These issues show that there are significant problems facing professional development for teachers of English in Yunnan. The existing workload models do not seem to provide time and space for serious, engaged professional development. Moreover, the compulsory allocation of time to TRGs may create a further problem when they are used for collaborative planning or assessment rather than for professional learning.

Student level

One issue that was invoked by some teachers to explain why they could not change their practice was the low level of English of their students (as discussed above). Some teachers believed that innovative teaching practices could only be used with high-level students and that lower-level students required teacher-centred rote learning as they were not capable of doing anything else. This seems to be an artefact of the belief that successful English teaching for such learners involves memorisation of responses that can be used on the exam.

School leadership

There was evidence across the project that different schools provided different opportunities for professional development. This was especially obvious in the questionnaires and focus groups for Project 3. Expert teachers noted that it was easier for them to work with some schools than others and that this depended on the principals and their attitudes to professional development. Expert teachers found that some principals were supportive and facilitated activities in their schools but that others did not see professional development as having an important role in their school and limited teachers' participation directly or indirectly. The expert teachers argued that school leaders need to be much more aware of the importance of professional development for teaching and learning (Chen & Zhang, 2022; Qian & Walker, 2021).

Equity and diversity issues

The project did not have equity and diversity as a main focus, however some equity issues emerged from the data collection.

In relation to gender, the study revealed that the teaching force in Yunnan is highly gendered and predominantly female (15.7% male, 84.3% female). However, gender imbalances are a feature of teacher profiles elsewhere in China although the results here suggest that there is a smaller proportion of male teachers of English compared to Ling et al.'s (Ling et al., 2020) study of teachers in Jiangxi (33.9% male, 66.1% female), suggesting that English may be more feminised than the teaching force in general. Given the small number of males in the study it is difficult to identify specific issues contributing to the gender imbalance.

Among the expert teachers, the proportion of male teachers was larger (20.9%), indicating that there may be issues for career progression for women. This may relate to gender expectations relating to family care as all of the respondents who identified balancing work and family commitments were female.

In terms of ethnicity, teachers of English reflect the proportion of ethnic minority in the sample for Projects 1 and 3 was 24.1%, which is slightly below the general proportion of about one third of the population (Guo et al., 2015). However, the proportion of ethnic minority members

who are expert teachers is much lower at 20.9%, indicating that ethnic minority members may have difficulties in progressing to higher levels in the teaching profession. However, the numbers here are small and more research would be needed to understand this trajectory.

Conclusion

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