

# #EmergingEnglish

Exploring Digital Trends and  
Needs of English Teachers in China

**29 June 2022**

English Programmes, British Council China



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# Session content

- Overview of the 3-country study (aims, researchers, timeline and numbers)
- Focus on China:
  - Prioritised professional development (PD) need
  - Factors that influence PD engagement
  - What is considered effective PD
  - Online activity
  - Interview data on PD needs and preferences
  - Key findings
  - Key recommendations
- Cross-cutting themes (China, South Korea & Japan)

# Issues and aims

Perceived issues with online CPD provision:

- Limited relevance (e.g. focus on language school teachers or academics)
- Limited appropriacy for local context (e.g. curriculum and assessment)
- Language barrier (an assumption of B1-B2-level language competence)
- Content inaccessibility (e.g. internet restrictions)

Leads to... A lack of engagement with free and paid for online resources

Aim: Complete a comprehensive needs analysis and landscape review of online English teacher CPD offers (for state sector primary and secondary teachers) within China, Japan, and South Korea.

# Research team

## Central team



Simon Borg



Jason Anderson



Ben Beaumont

## China team



Karin Xie



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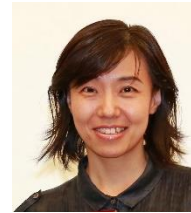


Ross Thorburn

## South Korea team



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Tae-Hee Choi

## Japan team



Ikuya Aizawa



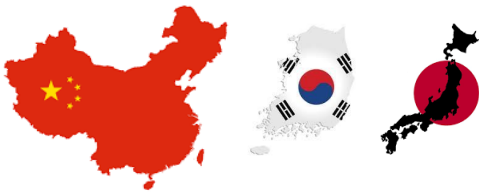
Kiyono Fujinaga-Gordon

# Research timeline

September 2021

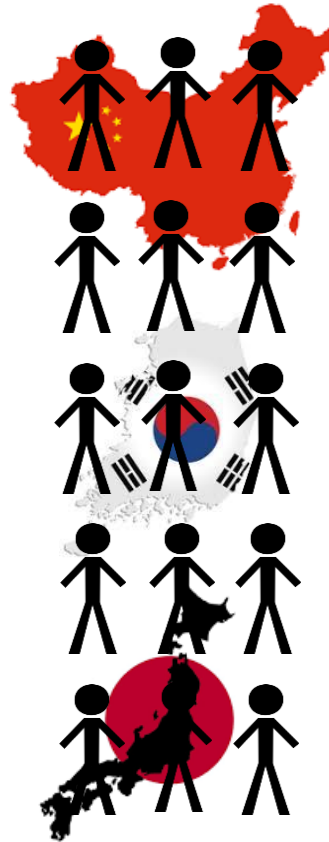


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# Phases of data collection (local-language questionnaires)

Question coverage:

- What kinds of online CPD are available?
- What aspects of ELT and teacher development do these address?
- What areas of work do teachers want support with?
- What kinds of CPD do teachers engage in?
- What motivates/limits engagement?



 6,469



 396



 394

# Phases of data collection (local-language interviews)

Question coverage:

- Professional development needs
- Attitudes to learning online (teachers and educational authorities)
- Factors that make it difficult to access online CPD
- Factors that motivate access to online CPD
- Areas of development using online CPD



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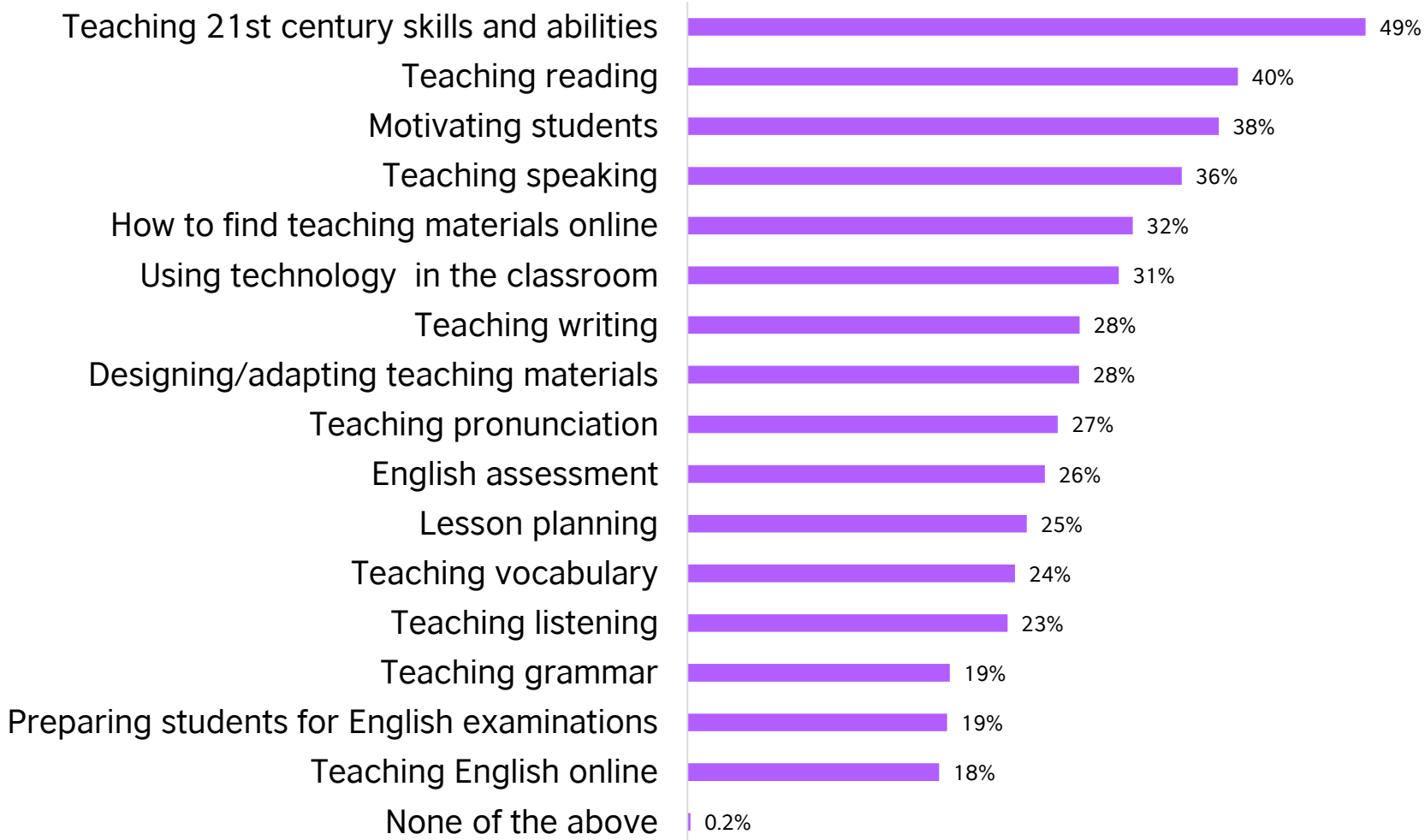


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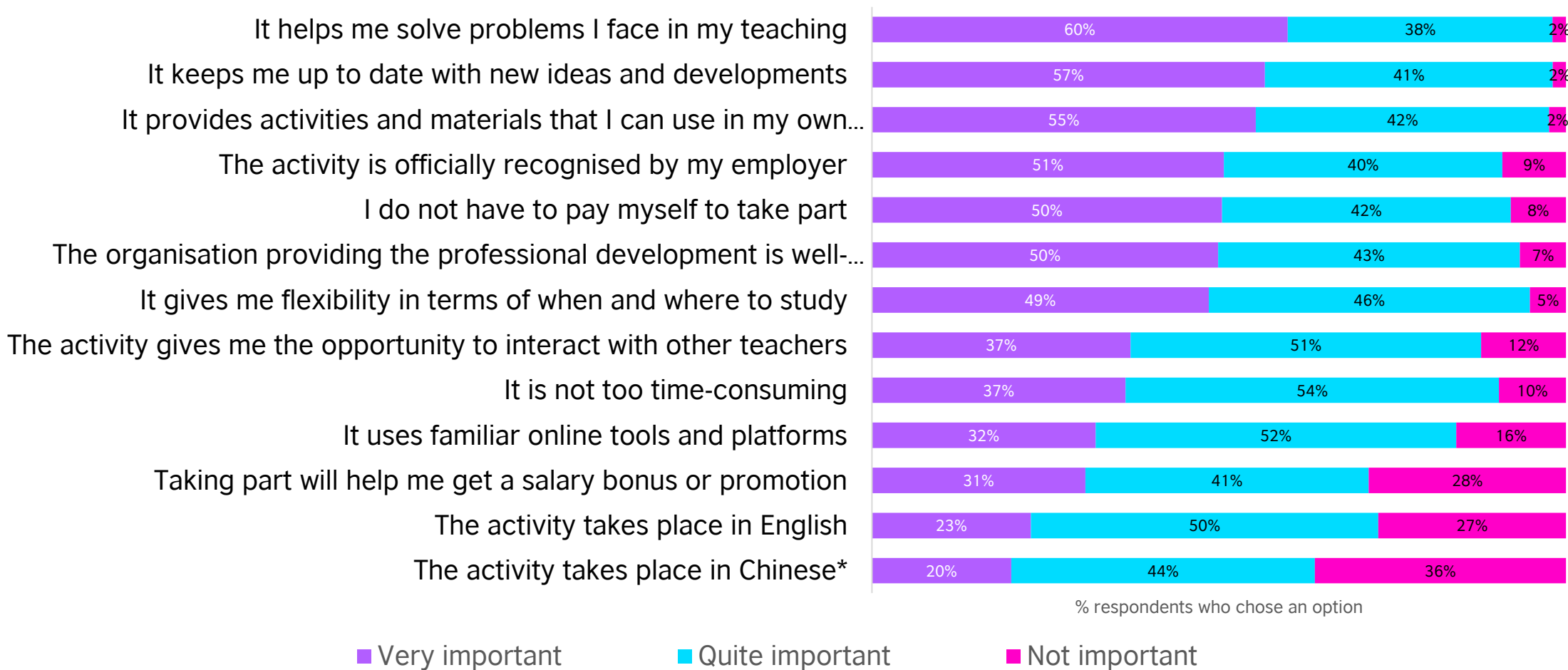
# China: Prioritised professional development need



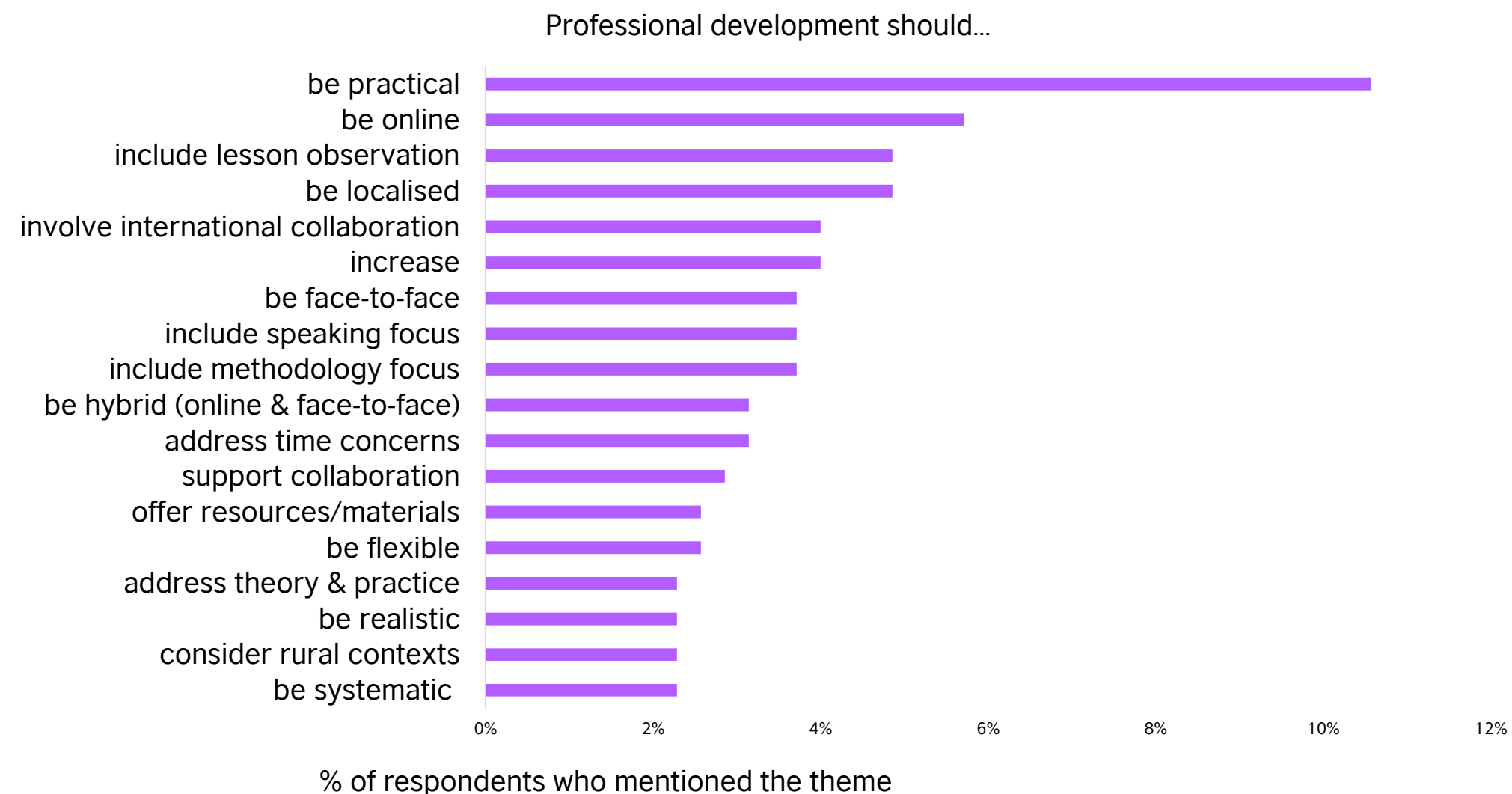
% of respondents who selected an option (each was allowed to choose up to 5)



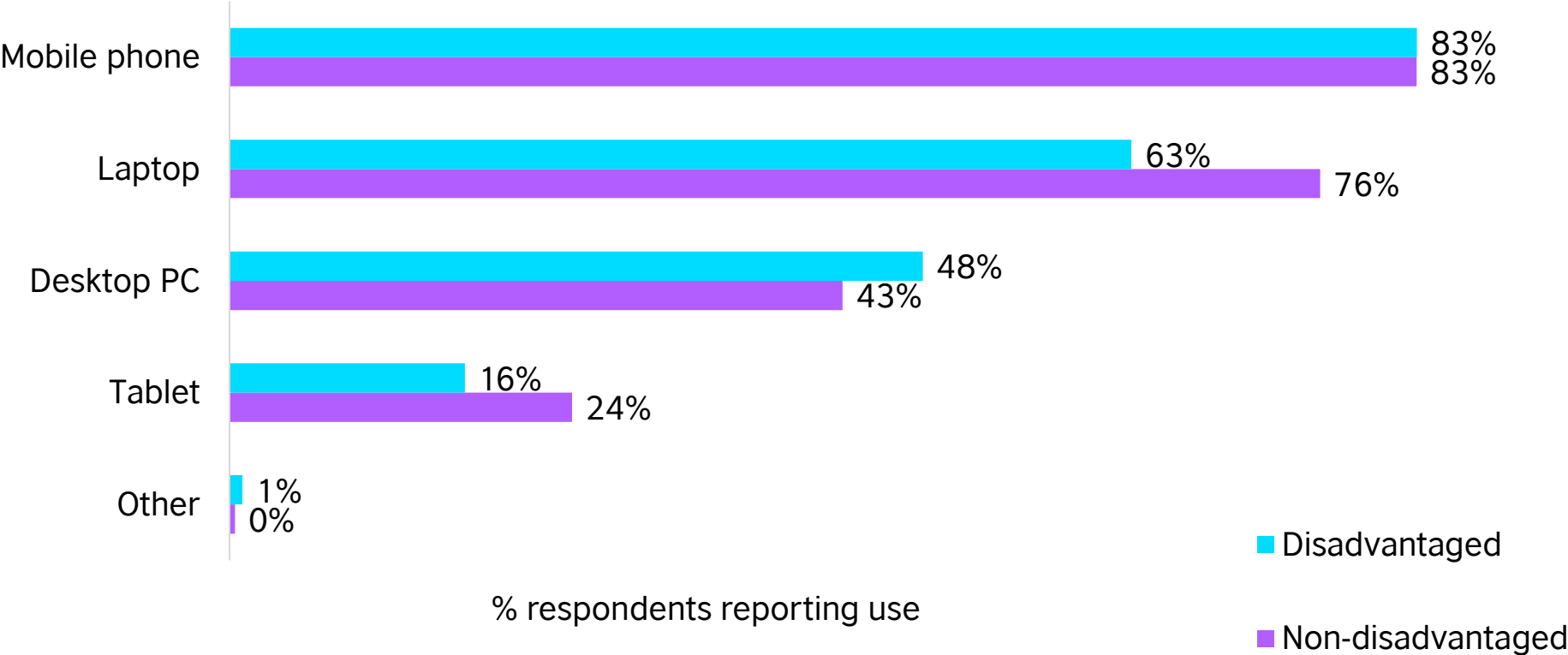
# China: Factors that influence participation in online PD



# China: Effective PD



# China: Online activity



# China interview findings: PD needs

## 1. Motivation, differentiation and planning

“If the activities aren’t interesting the students go to sleep.” (senior high, urban; Beijing)

## 2. Demonstration lessons

“What I really want is coaching from an expert who can help show me how to better teach children from the countryside.” (primary, rural; Hubei)

“I want to observe real teachers teaching real students.” (junior high, urban; Hubei)

## 3. Discussion of the four skills

“We think it’s an international language, but parents think differently about this.”  
(primary, urban; Hubei)

# China interview findings: Preferences for online PD

## Online PD preferences

“I prefer videos on YouTube to watch what I want. I look for classes, for example, I'll search for the topic I'm going to teach, like, the first class of the year or a question I have, like how to write a teaching plan.” (junior high, urban; Beijing)

“I think webinars are much better. But we need to prepare for the webinar, do some pre-tasks. In the webinar it should be more interactive. They need to do something (active). The problem with webinars is the participants are usually passive.”  
(senior high, urban; Anhui)

## China: Key findings

1. PD opportunities are often dominated by ‘experts’ with little opportunity to interact.
2. Demonstration and model lessons are often unrealistic (i.e. staged) and unreflective of challenges in ‘real’ classes.
3. Teachers believe there is an optimum mix of in-person and online PD.
4. Teachers want PD that is practical and directly related to their classroom needs (data suggest that this is not usually the case).
5. Uncertainty whether international organisations are able to understand or meet the needs day-to-day classroom challenges.

# China: Recommendations

1. Provide practical, realistic materials and activities.
2. Develop teachers' understandings of relevant theory and policy.
3. Provide support for current textbooks.
4. Diversify online professional development activities.
5. Conduct further research on recent policy changes.



# Cross-cutting themes (1): PD topic ranking

Professional Development topic ranking (highest and lowest) between the three countries

Top 3 (incl. %)	China	Japan	South Korea
	Teaching 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills (49%)	Motivating students (63%)	Teaching speaking (45%)
	Teaching reading (40%)	Teaching speaking (60%)	Teaching reading (45%)
	Motivating students (38%)	Teaching 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills (44%)	English assessment (44%)
Bottom 3 (incl. %)	↓	↓	↓
	Teaching grammar (19%)	Teaching vocabulary (12%)	How to find teaching materials online (11%)
	Preparing students for exams (19%)	Preparing students for exams (11%)	Lesson planning (11%)
	Teaching English online (18%)	How to find teaching materials online (6%)	Preparing students for exams (8%)

# Cross-cutting themes (2): factors influencing participation

Factors influencing respondents' decision to participate in online professional development activities

Top 3 (incl. % who indicated 'very important')	China	Japan	South Korea
	It helps me solve teaching problems (60%)	It helps me solve teaching problems (64%)	It provides activities and materials for the classroom (76%)
	It keeps me up to date with new ideas (57%)	It provides activities and materials for the classroom (54%)	It keeps me up to date with new ideas (75%)
	It provides activities and materials for the classroom (55%)	It keeps me up to date with new ideas (47%)	It helps me solve teaching problems (69%)
Bottom 3 (incl. % who indicated 'very important')	↓	↓	↓
	It will help me get a bonus or promotion (31%)	It will help me get a bonus or promotion (12%)	It takes place in English (18%)
	It takes place in English (23%)	The providing organisation is well-known (11%)	It will help me get a bonus or promotion (15%)
	It takes place in L1 (20%)	It takes place in L1 (9%)	It takes place in L1 (13%)

# The final report

September 2021

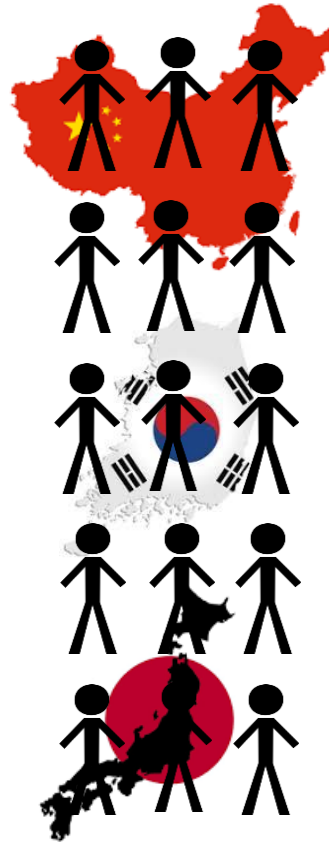


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# References

## *Double reduction*

Li, J., Li, X., Shi, A, & Yang, Q. (2021). The impact of the double reduction policy. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 637, 713-720. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220131.131>

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## *Core competencies*

Wang, Q., & Luo, S. (2019) Shifting from teaching the subject to developing core competencies through the subject: the revised senior middle school English curriculum standards (2017 edition) in China. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 109-134). Springer.

## *Influence of exams on teaching*

Kirkpatrick, R., & Zang, Y. The negative influences of exam-oriented education on Chinese high school students: Backwash from classroom to child. *Language testing in Asia*, 1(3), 36-45.

**Thank you for listening.**

**Questions?**