

English Programmes

Suzhou Education Bureau Global Skills Training – Teachers’ Perspectives

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Executive Summary

This report and corresponding research was undertaken to help better understand the current landscape of English teacher awareness in relation to global skills, also known as 21st century skills, within Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes held in China.

Application and development of global skills is regarded as a key component of core competencies highlighted within the China High School curriculum, particularly: Cultural Awareness, Learning Ability and Thinking Quality, and also in developing more rounded, 'life-ready' individuals, equipped with tools required to meet life's future challenges as they move into adulthood. The research gathers perspectives from teachers in Junior High who attended a face-to-face training event provided by a UK organisation in Suzhou, China in July 2021, and seeks to:

- *Identify changes in confidence amongst Junior High teachers related to developing their students' global skills after intensive training.*
- *Explore and identify how changes to training design and other aspects of CPD may be useful for teachers in enhancing their capacity to promote and develop students' global skills in the local context.*

Findings will help decision makers and policy makers to better understand teachers' current and ongoing contextual needs in relation to global skills and inform future training events that can support these needs, particularly within the Suzhou context. Additionally, the insight provided can inform and guide future, impactful, training offers from UK training providers to ensure they better meet the needs of English teachers on the ground in a way that can both be accepted by participants and positively influence practice. Results also offer insight on how similar courses can be delivered in other Chinese contexts to better meet local English teacher expectations and need.

Result overview

Key results indicated that the idea of developing global skills is positively received by teachers and the importance of these skills is understood. However, there remains confusion over what some of the skills are and how they can relate to the English curriculum core competencies in a tangible and practical way. This may in part be due to language and comprehension issues, as the training (and research) was delivered entirely in English; or related to differing and confusing terminology used in different contexts. However, it should be noted that all participants who took part in both the training course and research were first confirmed to have a 'strong' English level, and were able to communicate effectively in English. This was re-enforced by the researcher's interaction with teachers through online interviews.

Some common global skills appear already to be familiar to teachers through previous training or knowledge of the general curriculum content, but there remains some doubt on how to integrate development of these into the classroom, especially if the training focuses on multiple global skills. Difficulties may also stem from teachers' learning habits and preferences where learning by example and observation are prominent, as opposed to working from training theory.

Key recommendations

From the research findings the following recommendations are offered for future training design:

- Focus only on one or two global skills in short training deliveries and address these in detail that supports contextual needs, particularly if these skills are more abstract.
- Ensure real needs are addressed, and avoid focusing heavily on areas where the majority of teachers are already confident or have significant experience.
- Build in remote follow up support for teachers when they return to the classroom. This may include mentoring or planning support for a number of lessons post-training, until they have a better idea of what might be expected or needed; and how to practically integrate global skills support into their normal content. This can be supplemented by ongoing Communities of Practices (CoPs) / Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs), as some teachers have suggested they might like to participate in such events.
- Have practical example sessions led by experts during the 3-day training¹ – It is advisable to avoid pre-practiced demonstrations here, and teachers should be reminded that classes do not always work as planned, especially with new groups, and that learning can come from both success and failure. Seeing the planning process, the rationale for making decisions on global skills integration, and what issues the teacher faces in the classroom are all valuable in helping teachers assimilate or improve these ideas for themselves.

¹ “3-day training” is mentioned here as this is the limit for continuous face-to-face training from one external provider in Suzhou (2021). This may be longer in other regions.

1. Introduction

The British Council and the Suzhou Education Bureau (SEB) have worked in partnership to support English teacher Continuing Professional Development (CPD) since 2014, forging strong relationships and successfully developing hundreds of English teachers from primary, lower and upper secondary school contexts.

SEB is Suzhou Municipal Government's working department within the education sector. SEB is in charge of policy making, planning, monitoring and evaluation of education development within pre-school, basic education, vocational education, higher education and adult education fields in Suzhou City and its surrounds. International communication and exchange, and teacher development, are among its top priorities.

Background and rationale for the face-to-face training

Training events held as part of the collaboration are categorised under SEB's foreign training allocation, therefore they are not delivered by local trainers. A SEB representative noted that they have "always invited foreign trainers to deliver" such courses since this type of training began. The aim is to offer participants an "authentic and immersed English learning environment, encourage them to fully engage with trainers and peers during the study, as well as provide Suzhou teachers with different teaching concepts and methodologies²" that move away from traditional methods of lesson observation as a primary learning approach.

The training arrangement contributes to the teachers annual CPD quota of 50 study hours, with one day's training constituting 8 hours of that quota. All teachers should meet their required quota time for ongoing professional development each year; however this does not include school-based training which has no fixed amount. For school-based development activities a principle of the "more the better" is advocated.

Until 2020, all CPD development projects under this partnership were facilitated by the British Council, with 2021 representing the first year where delivery was conducted by a third-party UK partner. In line with local regulations, 2021 also signified the first year of a significant change in the way such deliveries can be offered with the permitted training days moving from 5 days per cohort to a maximum of 3 days.

Suzhou Education Bureau has taken a strong interest in the area of global competencies and global skills, with this being a key facet of the 2019 Suzhou Education Game Changers (EGC) conference organised by SEB, and at which the British Council offered keynote speakers. The 2019 event invited speakers from both China and international contexts to share their ideas on global competencies and how these might be applied. Sadly, at the time of writing the conference has not been able to continue since then due to COVID-19, but strong interest remains.

² SEB input taken from translated feedback sought from local coordinator
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Positively, 2021 represents the first year since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in which face-to-face training can recommence. As part of the training design a needs analysis (NA) and assessment of teachers' familiarity with global skills was included as a baseline for investigating potential needs and support for participating English teachers in Suzhou.

From this survey, Suzhou English teachers generally said that they had attended different levels of training activities, such as school-based training, county-level training and municipal training, on various topics. However, in terms of global skills training, it was noted that "there have been previous training projects, like Project-Based Learning (PBL elementary, medium and advanced), and English through Drama," which may hold some relevance, but no formal training in global skills was highlighted. The 2021 UK-led course was therefore intended to address some of the potential knowledge gaps in this area.

In October 2021, amidst strong local and national interest in classroom integration of global skills and global competencies in China, the British Council undertook a brief research project to analyse participating teachers' continuing needs and to consider the effectiveness of the training model employed in supporting teachers to develop global skills in their classrooms.

2. Overview

What are global skills?

The term global skills is arguably vague, and can potentially mean different things in different contexts. In this paper we refer to global skills broadly as "essential skills that young people need to be fully prepared for life and work in a global economy." ([British Council](#), 2021). These skills can sometimes also be referred to as Core Skills or 21st Century Skills. These include, for example, Communication and Collaboration; Creativity and Critical Thinking; Intercultural Competence, Citizenship, and Digital Literacies amongst many others. The skills noted here are primarily those that were focused on in the July 2021 training delivery.

The training design

The 2021 face-to-face training was provided by a UK organisation, sourced through an open tender process in China with logistical support from the British Council. A needs analysis (NA) – provided in English - was conducted by the UK organisation and results were collated for both Primary and Junior High cohorts, as requested by SEB. From this, the course was designed.

The resulting 3-day course objectives stated by the UK training provider were:

"This course introduces key global skills that are widely recognized as beneficial and important for students who will be coming of age in an increasingly connected, globalized, and digital world. These skills will be vital for success in academics and business in the future, and classrooms that introduce and utilize these skills as part of regular learning will better prepare students to achieve."

By the end of this training workshop³, participants will be able to:

- *Name the key global skills and their relevance for the English Language classroom*
- *Implement several accessible and useful classroom activities to a range of student levels that increase global skills*
- *Be able to describe successful learner profiles for each of the presented global skills*
- *Further explore the concepts of global citizenship, digital citizenship, multiculturalism, and others as they pertain to the future of the students that they teach”*

Given the perceived variance in teacher knowledge and awareness recorded, the stated objectives focused primarily on a foundational introduction of what global skills are and how these might more generally be introduced into classroom practice. This initial choice was perhaps also influenced by the short delivery time.

From the NA, a 3-day training course was then developed to focus on key global skills by the UK training provider. A general outline of this, for both cohorts, can be found below:

Table 1: Course outline

What are Global Skills? (2.5 hours⁴)
Participants will be introduced to global skills and become aware of what they are. We will begin to look at why they are relevant for the English Language classroom and consider their relevance to education. ⁵
Creativity and Critical Thinking (2.5 hours)
This session will look at what creativity and critical thinking are, why they are needed in all aspects of life, and consider how we can adapt existing materials to include creativity and critical thinking.
Communication and collaboration (2.5 hours)
This session will focus on how students learn and practice vital skills of collaboration and working constructively as a team.
Intercultural Competencies (2.5 hours)
Participants will examine and practice introducing multi-cultural elements into the classroom to build strong exposure and understanding of other cultures as they learn. This skill will be built with special attention to ensure that students can create positive multicultural experiences later in life.
Digital Literacy (2.5 hours)
Overlaid across all the previous skills, digital literacy will examine the opportunities, benefits, and pitfalls associated with bringing necessary digital skills into the learning experiences of students. It will also examine how digital citizenship and new communication methods effect how students will be expected to communicate and learn in future.

³ Workshop refers to the 3-day delivery

⁴ Training days were 6 hours, which included 5 hours delivery and 1 hour lunch break.

⁵ Text taken from the UK organisation materials

Assessing Global Skills (2.5 hours)

Participants will be introduced to how they can assess global skills by making assessment of global skills qualitative, formative, ongoing and manageable.

Research focus

Given the very limited time available for content delivery, and subsequent limitations on resulting impact, this report does not focus specifically on the granular detail of the delivery content or specific trainers on this course. Instead this report looks more at the related changes in confidence and awareness of teachers, if any, and explores teachers opinions on how and where such intensive training formats may help them – or not - as they continue to understand more about global skills development in the classroom.

Therefore, this report seeks to meet the following outcomes:

By the end of this short research project, we will have:

- *Identified changes in confidence amongst Junior High teachers related to developing their students' global skills after intensive training.*
- *Explore and identify how changes to training design and other aspects of CPD may be useful for teachers in enhancing their capacity to promote and develop students' global skills in the local context.*

Methodology

This paper attempts to achieve the objectives stated above through two key research methods:

Firstly, through an anonymous *online survey* that explored Junior High teachers' general understanding of, and feelings towards, global skills; contrasting this with the same Junior High teachers' initial responses in the NA (n=19) issued by the UK training organisation. The NA was also conducted through online survey.

In this way, it was hoped that any positive changes could be highlighted, or indeed, any areas for future further development could be identified. The follow up survey conducted by the British Council was completed using Microsoft Forms. In total, a sample of 37 teachers gave their responses post-training.

Secondly, online interviews were utilised as part of the follow up, to dig deeper into teachers' impressions. Participants were selected from the Junior High cohort by the SEB partner based on each teacher's willingness to participate. From this selection, a set of *6 online interviews* were held in the week of November 8th, 2021, to delve deeper into teachers' general feelings about the course they received; including takeaways, delivery format, and practical application.

The interviews also asked how the training had helped teachers in terms of confidence, awareness and ability to integrate global skills into their classroom; and explored what areas may require further support. The 6 respondents came from the original sample of teachers who participated in the training, and who responded to the original NA. All respondents were volunteers and consented to participation.

No recordings of video, audio of personal details were made.

Limitations

This report is not intended to directly assess the specific training delivery undertaken by the UK organisation, as there are many factors that can influence the success or failure of training.

Additionally, as the British Council had little input on the NA design (n=19), while questions are related, this research paper is also not designed to act as a direct follow up study of every aspect of the UK organisation's own baseline survey. Instead this paper explores more generally what was successful and what gaps or issues have become apparent from the training experience. This requires some interpretation by the researcher.

Some questions, where possible do directly follow on from the UK organisations initial baseline, while some other question foci and wording vary slightly, requiring further assumptions to be made by the researcher when interpreting available data. Importantly, the NA had responses from both Junior High Groups and Primary groups, whereas for the follow up it was decided to only focus on one cohort; therefore the connection between baseline and follow up is somewhat more tenuous than would normally be the case.

Additionally, it should be noted that 3 months had passed between the training and the follow up surveys meaning content may have been forgotten, although conversely this delay also meant that teachers did have some time to integrate new ideas into their classes in the new semester.

The surveys and interviews were conducted in English, as was the training, and this may have had an effect on overall response rates and response quality. Due to limited time and resources, translation or interpretation were not sought. However, response to the follow up survey was strong with 37 responses in total. Interviews, which were held on a voluntary basis, were more limited in number and represented only 16% of the survey group (6).

The teachers

The Junior High group was selected for follow up responses as it was broadly assumed that there is more scope, both in language and content, for teachers to experiment with in terms of global skills in the classroom. This also removed any variance caused by different training content delivered to different course participant (CPs) groups. There was also an assumption that language proficiency of teachers in this group would be higher.

The data below presents comparison and contrast of the needs analysis data (NA) responses that involved both Primary and Junior High respondents, and – where possible - the follow up survey (FU) and interviews, which only involved teachers from the Junior High group.

3. Survey results

Note: *The needs analysis (NA) baseline (n=19) was conducted entirely by the delivery partner with minimal input from the British Council, although emphasis was placed on the introduction and identification of teachers' knowledge of global skills. The follow up surveys (n = 37) and subsequent interviews (n=6) were conducted solely by the British Council⁶but where possible were connected to the original NA survey.*

Perceived usefulness of global skills training

Prior to the July 2021 training, in the NA, teachers were asked about their understanding of global skills. The term global skills was chosen as it was deemed to be most common, was relatively familiar to teachers, and best represented the skills being discussed. However, there is an acute awareness on the part of the researcher that the term may still be misconstrued.

In the NA, teachers were first asked to answer:

NA: Q10: On a 1-5 scale (1=little, 5=very well), how well do you understand the concept of global skills and its components?

Of 19 respondents, a fairly even 7 / 7 split of 14 (74%) teachers answered either 1 or 2. Of the remaining respondents, 3 and 2 teachers selected a score of 3 and 4, respectively. This highlighted a strong inclination towards the lower end of the scale, suggesting teachers felt they had little understanding of what global skills might include pre-training, or indeed were unsure of the terminology used. In order to mitigate issues with vague terminology, in the NA questions were also later asked about specific skills that the global skills might include. More information about this can be found below.

Overall, the average score for Q10 was 2.26 suggesting a below average understanding of global skills as a whole.

A further question, Q13, was also posed in the NA to explore the perceived relevance of global skills to teachers in their context

NA: Q13: On a 1-5 scale (1=not useful, 5=very useful) , how useful do you think a module on what global skills are will be?

From the answers provided, we saw a shift in scoring to highlight a possible, perceived need, and perhaps by extension clarifying that the term global skills was somewhat better understood than first thought. In this case, four teachers (1:1 & 2:3), representing 21% of the NA

⁶ Some difficulties in comparison arose due to the difference in tools used by both parties. The British Council uses MS Forms.

respondent group selected 1 or 2 signifying low perceived usefulness. However, the vast majority of respondents noted either 3 (neutral) or 4, with an even split of 7 respondents for each. A single teacher selected 5 highlighting that they felt such a module would be of great importance. In relation to usefulness pre-course, this represented an average scoring of 3.2 across the whole group, suggesting marginally above-average perceived value.

In order to contrast this, and to follow up on teachers' impressions and changing attitudes in the post-course survey the following question was posed: **FU: On a scale of 1 -5 (1 = not useful at all, 5 = very useful) how useful to you was the module on global skills for teachers?**

By this time, the average score relating to usefulness of a global skills 'module' had risen to 3.68 highlighting a notable increase in teachers perception of whether such training was useful *after* taking part. This was presumably also influenced by a better understanding what the term global skills encompasses. This follow up question was important as the 7 teachers (37%) in the NA who chose 3 (neutral answer) to answer Q13 (above) may only have done so as they were: 1.) Not sure of the importance of such a module or 2.) Not sure of what global skills were, therefore, they chose the 'neutral' option.

Asking about this again showed that even after clarification of what 'global skills' means in the training the scoring was still relatively similar, and many teacher perceptions remained steadily non-committal on the usefulness of such training, although there was a slight increase suggesting more positive feelings had developed after clarification and experience in the training. Ultimately, teachers appear to remain generally unconvinced.

Specific global skills

To gain a more nuanced view it was important to also explore views and opinions linked to specific global skills rather than only general ideas on the overall concept.

In the NA teachers were asked about specific and relatively common global skills. These were:

Table 2: Needs Analysis questions for specific skills

- Q14: On a 1-5 scale (1=not useful, 5=very useful), how useful do you think a module on how to help learners use various strategies to **communicate and collaborate** in the English classroom will be for you?
- Q15: On a 1-5 scale (1=not useful, 5=very useful), how useful do you think a module on how to support **creativity and critical thinking**⁷ in the English classroom will be for you?
- Q16: On a 1-10 scale, how useful do you think a module on how to support **intercultural competence**⁸ will be?
- Q17: On a 1-5 scale (1=not useful, 5=very useful), how useful do you think a module on developing **digital literacies** (e.g. skills needed to effectively interpret, manage, share and create meaning/information through the ever-changing digital communication channels) will be for you?

⁷ Ideally Creativity and Critical Thinking would not be bundled together. However, they are interlinked and most frequently recognised. This may spread attention to lesser known or acknowledged 'Global Skills'

⁸ This term is specific to products offered by the delivery partner and may not be so commonly used by teachers. However, Intercultural competence is relevant to Chinese English teachers as it is emphasised within the Senior High Curriculum

- Q18: On a 1-5 scale (1=not useful, 5=very useful), how useful do you think a module on **assessing global skills** in the ELT context will be?

Using averages as a general indicator the following data was extracted:

Table 3: Breaking down the perceived value of different global skills

Global skills asked about	Average perceived 'usefulness' score from 1 - 5 ⁹
Communication & Collaboration	3.5
Creativity & Critical Thinking	3.8
Intercultural Competence	3.7
Digital Literacy	3.7
Assessing Global Skills	3.5

While all skills presented scored above average, the table highlights that modules in Creativity & Critical Thinking were deemed to be most important or useful, with Intercultural Competence and Digital Literacy coming a close second amongst Junior High teachers. Methods of Assessment and Communication and Collaboration were seen to be less important.

The results are perhaps not unexpected. Creativity and Critical thinking have been obtaining more and more attention through Chinese national curriculum development (I.e., Senior High English Curriculum core competencies) and are arguably the most widely known and acknowledged of global skills around the world. Intercultural Competence is also very relevant to the Chinese National Curriculum competencies whilst an interest in Digital Literacy may be influenced by the current context of COVID, online learning, and increased engagement online. This skill area is also strongly [related](#) (Nottingham Trent University, 2022) to critical thinking in how students might assess and manage information digitally.

Speculatively speaking, the lower two results may be adversely influenced by traditional teaching ideas and practices relating to how classes should be conducted, and how students should be engaged, I.e., teacher-led instruction Vs. student-led; whilst the deeply rooted and immovable assessment environment in China in which teachers must operate may also influence thinking on where there is value in global skills assessment.

Ultimately, given the relatively even scoring, with all above average in terms of usefulness, all 6 skill areas were covered within the 3-day training delivery to different degrees, in line with the Education Bureau requirements for developing global skills.

⁹ Rounded to one decimal place
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Following up on specific global skills after the training

After the training, to gauge where teachers were in their personal understanding of global skills, teachers were asked: **FU: In your own words please write a 1-sentence definition of what you now think global skills are. You can use your native language for this.**

With time to consider the question, the answers were generally relevant and encouraging. Teachers highlighted a relatively clear idea of what global skills might encompass, particularly in reference to the training content. Some of the broader definitions provided can be seen below (See Also Appendix A)

- *“Global skills includes critical thinking, cultural difference and so on, with which we can improve our thinking ability and communicative ability.”*
- *“Global skills are those that enable us to operate in an international environment, including cultural awareness, language and communication skills, international business awareness and communication skills.”*
- *“Global skills are skills that people should learn to adapt to the society and be involved in the environment.”*
- *“Global skills are the skills that teachers and students should manage in nowadays society because these can help them to be more competent.”*
- *“A skill used to adapt to the development of the world.”*
- *“Skills to adapt to future global developments.”*

However, some teachers tended to focus primarily on the ‘global’ and communicative aspect of what they had learned maintaining a narrower focus in their answers, for example:

- *“Global skills are the ways to communicate.”*
- *“global skills: help us communicate with each other.”*
- *“It makes us competent for global occasions.”*
- *“Efficient communication.”*
- *“To think in one's shoes and understand people from different cultures better.”*
- *“We can communicate with others more effectively and appropriately.”*
- *“It is an assembly of the skills that we can better cooperate and communicate with others from other countries.”*

One thing missing from many answers was a definition that showed a deeper understanding of what global skills are in their ‘entirety’. Instead, many teachers chose to answer by simply listing some of the different skills they were aware of. For example,

- *“Many skills, including creativity.”*
- *“Creativity and Critical Thinking, Collaboration and Communication Intercultural Competency.”*
- *“The skills of critical thinking and problem solving and so on.”*

From a positive perspective, simply by listing the names of certain global skills the teachers were already highlighting at least a basic awareness of the topic areas that could, potentially, be attributed to the training.

In this question, a number of teachers focused very specifically on inter-cultural competence. It is not clear whether this was what stood out for them from the training delivery or whether it is how they have chosen to conceptualise the 'global' aspect of global skills i.e., as an inter-cultural paradigm. While there are clearly some common themes, it appears that different teachers have taken away many different impressions and perceptions from the training.

This could, of course, be for a number of reasons, such as: attendance; language ability; preference and perceived relevance; differing clarity of thought, and time given to answering the question in the survey. These could all be factors and reasons for different ideas or takeaways from such a short, direct training delivery and should be explored further where possible.

When teachers were asked directly about their confidence in developing global skills amongst students after the training it was noted that for the previously low-ranked skills in terms of 'module usefulness' there was an interesting contrast with confidence levels in developing them.

For example, while fewer teachers saw a module on Communication and Collaboration to be useful in a training module, far more teachers stated that they *were confident* in developing Communication and Collaboration (27/73%) than any other area; although Assessing Global Skills remained low at (8/22%). The contrasting result for Communication and Collaboration may suggest that one reason for the perceived lack of usefulness of a module may lie with teachers *already* being confident in this area, whereas for Assessing Global Skills, for example, it is perhaps, as assumed, related to lack of perceived need in their already assessment-heavy context. Further exploration of this would be useful to avoid presenting content that teachers already feel confident in, and wasting valuable delivery time.

Based on the follow up survey, teachers stated they were relatively confident in developing Creativity and Critical Thinking (26/70%), which may also be content areas they have had previous experience of developing; while Digital Literacy (17/46%) and Intercultural Competence (14/38%) engendered much less confidence after the training delivery, albeit this was, it should be remembered, a very short one. This may suggest that there is more value and impact in using precious delivery time to focus on those skills that teachers are less confident in, not those they are already familiar with.

Making the training more relevant

Given the limited nature of the training, both in time and what could feasibly be covered, it was important to move beyond the training content alone and follow up on specific areas where teachers still felt there was a need for support, or where the format could better meet their needs.

It is important to build on what teachers received and consider how this can be improved moving forwards, although, unfortunately, the 3-day face-to-face time available cannot be changed. Post-training, teachers were therefore asked about other ways that their training might

be supported: **FU: How can training modules on global skills be made more relevant to you as a teacher in Suzhou? Rank the following. Top is most important, bottom least important to you.**

To manage responses, the following 8 set statements were offered to represent common adaptations that teachers might request in a training delivery. These were selected based on British Council trainer input and significant experience in teacher CPD in China:

- Use local textbook examples;
- Work more collaboratively with other teachers to come up with new ideas;
- Provide case study examples from other countries;
- Focus on a specific global skills and go into detail;
- Give more practical activity examples during the training;
- Use more Chinese to describe complicated concepts;
- Give live examples or video examples;
- Allow more time for reflection;

Having completed the training teachers rated¹⁰: *Give more practical activity examples during the training* as the most desired adaptation for future training deliveries, although it is important to mention: *Use local textbook examples*, overall had more ‘high’ ranking selections by teachers than any other statement. Third in the ranking was: *Provide case study examples from other countries*, while: *Work more collaboratively with other teachers to come up with new ideas*, was also a popular choice.

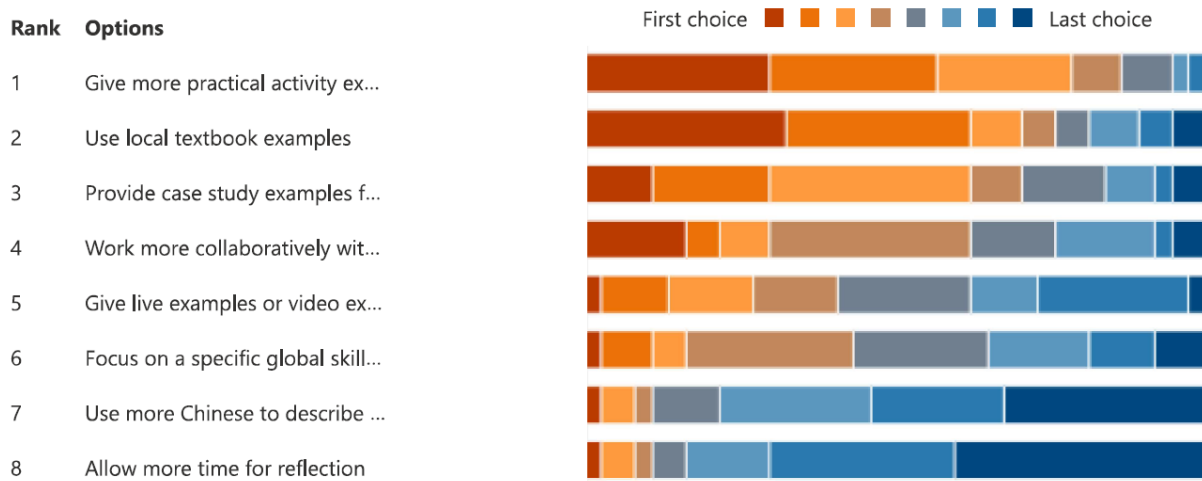
The findings here suggest that teachers are looking to maximise the time available to them in training and extract as much practical benefit from the sessions, rather than, *allow more time for reflection*, for example, which was the lowest ranked of all options – and of course is something that can be completed outside of input sessions, if required. Surprisingly, focusing on a specific global skill fared lowly in the ranking for teachers, suggesting that teachers may still prefer to have a wider scope of input and knowledge rather than focusing on one specific area.

Somewhat unexpectedly, *use of more Chinese to describe complicated concepts* was not a popular choice. However, this may reflect the higher English levels of selected participants on the English-led course. *Give live examples or video examples* of classroom integration of global skills fared relatively poorly in the overall ranking of first choices, but it was a strong second and third choice for a number of teachers showing that there is still strong interest.

Notably, each category, including the lowest ranked, all had at least one teacher select them as their top choice, highlighting a range of disparate individual views and opinions on the subject of training design and content.

¹⁰ Rating based on top 4 ranked picks
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Table 4: How can global skills be made more relevant



To ensure all aspects were considered, teachers were also asked if they had *other* suggestions on how the training might be made more relevant. Only two teachers responded. They stated:

“Use Chinese textbook to present a demonstration lesson.”

“Maybe the teachers can be given more time to share how they develop students’ relevant abilities in daily class.”

These answers, while small in sample, do still intimate that teachers are keen to ensure their own contexts are considered in the training. Potentially, because this would also better support practical application when teachers return to the classroom.

Teachers were also asked to elaborate on *how* the actual modules delivered *had been* useful to them, if at all. As previously stated, teachers gave an above average 3.68 out of 5 to rate the perceived ‘usefulness’ of the modules provided after the training. In the follow up survey, they also added a number of relevant reasons to illustrate their post-training choice and increased (or decreased) rating, some of which can be seen below (A full list can be seen in Appendix B):

The statements here were generally positive and highlighted why teachers thought the course was useful to them. However, it can also be seen that many of the positive comments were actually related to areas of classroom management, organisation or activities, and not particularly in relation to global skills.

Table 5: Comments on module usefulness

The modules were useful because¹¹:

<i>Learn from the teacher and the other teachers.</i>
<i>we can use some teaching methods, such as ranking, in our teaching</i>
<i>help make my lessons well organized</i>
<i>I can come up with more useful and effective ways to ask questions and plan activities.</i>
<i>It can help me create more activities to make my class lively and effective.</i>
<i>Strength my theoretical knowledge.</i>
<i>I can share with my students the skills needed in this world</i>
<i>Help students communicate safely and effectively with others.</i>
<i>give me more ideas about classroom activities</i>
<i>It helps me reflect on my own teaching</i>

Some teachers highlighted the importance of the module in promoting communication and sharing amongst teachers, and this is certainly a positive aspect which undoubtedly relates to Communication and Collaboration – a commonly referenced global skill by respondents.

However, this could also be regarded as an observation of technique rather than concept; an experience from the training delivery rather than something teachers see fundamental benefit in developing and that they can take back to their classrooms.

Perhaps this is an unavoidable result of only 3 days training, where content will be limited and not always sufficient to fully contextualise skills for teachers, or to make them relevant enough to take back to the classroom and try. Whereas, in contrast, specific short activities and methods used in the training are more clearly seen, experienced, and can be more easily related to a teacher’s local context. This re-enforces the idea that making the training relevant to the local context is an important part of buy-in, and this buy-in is impacted by not only the content, but also the types of activities used, and whether teachers can relate to them.

Some comments that highlighted lower perceived usefulness also shed light on this idea of practicality and relevance being highly valued.

¹¹ Language not changed or corrected.
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Table 6: Comments on why modules were not useful

The modules were less useful because:

<i>I have acquired some of them. But some to me are theoretical, I need to put them into practice.</i>
<i>... the students in my school are not so well equipped with the basic language ability, so it's hard for them to discuss further topics.</i>
<i>... the activities used in the training course were not quite associated with the real class</i>
<i>the students learning level in our school is not high enough to understand these concepts</i>
<i>对于初中生, 不是很重要。(For middle school students, not so important)</i>

The main concerns here focused on the difficulty for teachers and students in conceptualising global skills, and, secondly, around the language requirement of students to develop these skills in an English language context. One teacher noted that global skills “were not so important for middle school students”, while some others explicitly noted the gap between theory and real practice that they would have to bridge.

The responses suggest that while training modules should always consist of practical activities that teachers can immediately take back to their lessons, more clearly linking global skills to such activities at all levels of language will help teachers better absorb and be aware of how they can, at least, start to develop global skills in their own classroom.

It is important to re-emphasise that in only 3 days a limited amount of content can realistically be delivered, and therefore for deeper integration and understanding some consideration should also be given to an extended and supported classroom-based focus, post-training, to allow teachers to become more familiar with what they might do, and how they can do it, in their own environment. Short, highly intensive input would appear – from teacher impressions - to support only short-term integration of specific practical activities rather than longer-term, holistic and sustainable development of global skills in the classrooms.

Continuing challenges in relation to global skills

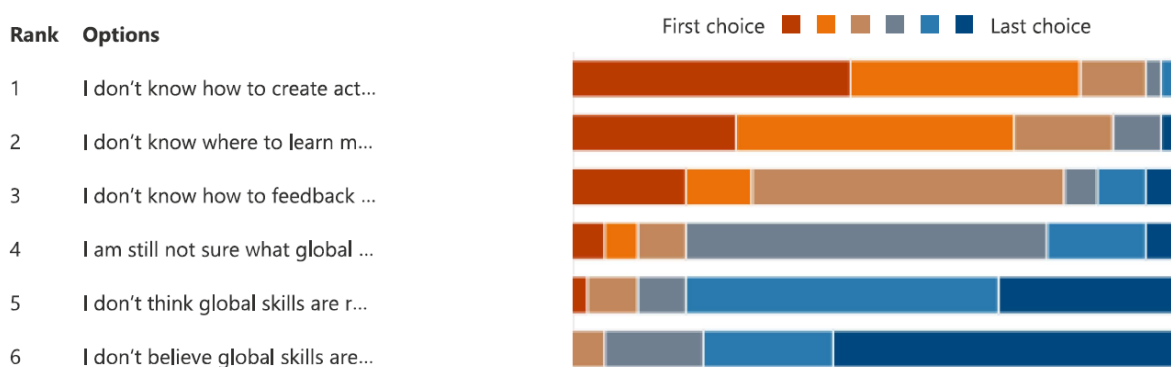
Teachers were asked about their own general feelings on the challenges they face after the training had concluded, through a further ranking question: **FU: Rank the problem statements below in the order that most closely matches your thoughts on global skills in your context? (Note: The top statement is the statement you feel most strongly about)**

Here teachers were given a choice of the following 6 statements to gauge how they felt about global skills post-training. The purpose was to identify potential ongoing challenges and where the greatest need might still be. Subsequently, statements were all “problems.”

- *I don't think global skills are relevant to my learners*
- *I don't believe global skills are relevant to a language learning context*
- *I don't know how to create activities that develop these skills*
- *I don't know how to feedback on activities that develop these skills*
- *I don't know where to learn more about global skills on my own*
- *I am still not sure what global skills are and why they are relevant to my students*

The majority of teachers selected their biggest challenge as *not knowing how to create activities that develop global skills*. This was closely followed by *not knowing where to learn more about global skills and how to develop them*, and finally teachers highlighted that they were *not clear on how to feedback on activities that develop global skills*. From these 3 'top' challenges, and the suggestions of teachers on how to make the training more relevant, we might speculate that the majority of teachers, while they have some knowledge of the theory behind global skills (although some respondents did note that not being sure of what global skills are was still a top challenge), they are unsure about how to practically apply their knowledge, or indeed find support.

Table 7: Teacher thoughts on global skills in their context post training



It is clear from other responses that teachers generally do believe that global skills has some relevance to the language learning context with: *I don't believe global skills are relevant to a language learning context ranked lowest* by some margin. Therefore, one might surmise that the issue lies not in convincing teachers of the importance of more holistic and rounded development of language learners, but instead showing them how to practically do apply this over time.

This assessment of bridging the gap between theory and practice is backed up by further comments made by teachers themselves. The following responses were also provided post-training to highlight teachers' feelings:

- ***“how to learn by myself and use the skills more often in my class”***
- ***“I hope to find some more activities that are easy to perform in the classroom.”***
- ***“A 3-day training is just a beginning of our learning. Further study is needed.”***

-
- “Some of my students' learning ability is poor, it's **difficult for me to think about some appropriate activities** for them.”
 - “It is essential to develop these skills, but it is **difficult to make it into practice** since analysing language points in class takes too much time.’
 - “**Resources are not enough** for us to use global skills.”
 - “**Local examples should be presented**”

Teachers here clearly focused on practical elements of their position and need. And it is of course necessary to consider how to support that; but the challenge is to also do so in a way that initiates and sustains professional development in the area of global skills rather than a quick one-off fix.

It is apparent from responses above that some teachers feel somewhat adrift now that the training has concluded, without sufficient resources or guidance to continue to progress autonomously. How to move from focusing on what can be provided in the allocated delivery time to providing what teachers really need to ‘push’ them towards self-motivated and sustainable development of their practice is something that needs to be considered carefully.

Teachers commitment to students’ long-term development

Providing a more holistic form of education can offer its own set of challenges beyond simply development of global skills. For teachers on the ground, challenges may include, for example, difficulties in assessment of global skills – again a practical issue. The lack of recognition for teachers due to limited assessment of long term development in students may also be an issue that affects teachers’ individual motivation and, perhaps, ego. With time being limited the ‘return on teacher time investment’ may be pertinent for many teachers and potentially one of the reasons that enthusiasm for change or increased effort to integrate such skills can meet resistance. Teachers may justifiably ask, without definitive short-term results or recognition, what is the point?

To explore this a little further, teachers were asked to respond to how the following statement made them feel: “**Developing global skills is a long term process and cannot always be easily assessed in the short-term.**”

They had 4 choices:

- *I understand this but am willing to help students in their long term development even if I receive no credit for this.*
- *This demotivates me slightly as I can’t see the progress students are making and I don’t know if I am helping.*
- *This demotivates me a lot as I can’t see the progress students are making and I don’t know if I am helping.*
- *I disagree with this statement.*

The vast majority of the 37 respondents chose: *I understand this but am willing to help students in their long-term development even if I receive no credit for this (32/86%)*. This highlights a clearly stated determination on the teachers' part that is highly admirable and suggests that, if the responses are honestly provided, lack of recognition may not play a significant factor in any decision to deprioritise the integration of global skills or support more holistic development. However, for some: *This demotivates me slightly as I can't see the progress students are making and I don't know if I am helping (3/8%)*) and *This demotivates me a lot as I can't see the progress students are making and I don't know if I am helping (2/5%)*, the thought of not being able to assess students' development effectively or know definitively whether they are helping their students remains an area of potential demotivation. This also suggests that while most teachers are willing to develop and support students in different ways, there is still a need to better conceptualise and quantify what is being developed through a formative framework that helps teachers understand what they are trying to achieve; both the how and the why.

And, importantly, where they fit in to their students' journey.

No one disagreed with the statement.

Moving forwards

To round up the survey teachers were asked two questions on how they might like to move forwards in their CPD journey.

- 1. Please make a statement in your own words (1 - 3 sentences) about your own feelings towards global skills in the classroom. You can use your native language for this.**
- 2. Please make a statement in your own words (1 - 3 sentences) about how you would like to continue your Continuous Professional Development in future. You can use your native language for this.**

With regards to #1 teachers were generally positive towards the concept of global skills, and many showed awareness of how important it is to develop them in their learners. However, this was offset by a pragmatic feeling towards implementation of new ideas in the classroom, noting a number of important issues including once again the need to support in practical application.]

Of the 40 answers, some responses strayed from the requirement of the task and teachers, in some cases, seemed to talk more about their own experience in the training room rather than the classroom. On reflection, perhaps the question itself could have been clearer.

However, some examples of interesting insights provided can be seen below:

- 1. Please make a statement in your own words (1 - 3 sentences) about your own feelings towards global skills in the classroom. You can use your native language for this.**

‘Positive’ comments:

- *“The students can express their own ideas and listen to others more actively. They can learn from others.”*
- *“Integrating these skills into the classroom can be more conducive to the progress of students and the maintenance of the effect of classroom learning, and reflect the role of language learning (Tr.¹²)”*
- *“Applying global skills in the classroom can prepare students and enable them to become better global citizens.”*
- *“I used some global skills in my class and feel that's really effective. It arouses students' interest and make the atmosphere nice.”*
- *“It is useful to help students learn the language better through many activities based on different aspects of global skills especially in the areas of Collaboration and Communication and Digital Literacies.”*

More ‘Pragmatic’ comments:

- *“Global skills are important for students and teachers. But for practical use in class, especially designing relevant activities is super hard for me.”*
- *“The content is relatively high level, which is still a certain distance from the actual teaching of English in junior middle school.(Tr.)”*
- *“Global skills, as we all know, is quite important and deserve more attention. However, facing today's teaching and learning environment, it is not easy to do so in daily teaching.”*
- *“It is difficult to implement in front-line teaching. Foreign teachers are very interesting. Teachers need systematic training. (Tr.)”*
- *“... However, in the classroom, the practicality is not particularly high. Due to the learning situation, the learned skills and methods have little room for operation.(Tr.)”*
- *“It's useful, but still a challenge for teachers to use since we have limited teaching time with lots of things to teach.”*
- *“At present, our textbooks are not closely related to it, so it is difficult to practice.”*

Of the second question, answers varied but can be broadly categorised into the following areas¹³

2. Please make a statement in your own words (1 - 3 sentences) about how you would like to continue your Continuous Professional Development in future. You can use your native language for this.

- Attend more training (15 responses)
- Find resources on the internet (3 responses)
- Reading and research (9)
- Develop through classroom practice (2)
- Lifelong learning (6)
- From peers (4)

¹² Translation from Chinese

¹³ Some teachers gave more than one answer

We can see from the answers provided for #2 that a large number of teachers (15) indicated a strong preference for further direct training to support their needs in areas of global skills. This supports teachers' earlier survey responses which asserted that many would prefer to experience live, practical examples and more contextualised learning. Such responses may, of course, also be influenced by a preference for traditional learning formats led by experts and/or training leaders, although most other responses appear more individually driven in regard to CPD need. Reasons for this majority preference for live examples could be explored further.

Of the other 24¹⁴ responses provided, answers all consisted of autonomous forms of continuous development, with 6 teachers noting the importance of *life-long learning*, at "any age", while 4 teachers would like to continue to learn through and with their peers.

This may highlight a future opportunity for more sustainable models of development such as Communities of Practice to develop in this context, and support training follow up.

4. Interviews

To follow up on the post-training survey results, interviews were arranged with 6 volunteers to further explore teachers' opinions and experiences. Numerous teachers stated they would be interested in participating, but of these only 6 did so. At no time were teachers required or forced to participate.

Questions were kept the same for each interview, and were intended to build on the replies found in the survey, where possible going deeper to get a more in-depth impression of how the training helped teachers, and where teachers now are in their development in this area. Answers were transcribed on-the-spot by the interviewer as no recordings were made.

The set questions used were.

- *What are global skills? (*Starter question to support recall)*
- *How did the course benefit you personally?*
- *Are you confident about developing global skills in the classroom?*
- *Which ones? Why these?*
- *Keeping in mind time restrictions, how could such courses be improved for your context?*
- *What was missing that would help a Chinese teacher develop learners global skills?*
- *What are the biggest challenges teachers face in incorporating global skills?*
- *What else could be done by your school or district?*

Interview results in summary

- What are global skills?

Teachers answered this question in different ways. However, it was evident that there was still no single coherent understanding of what the term global skills means, in English at least. Some oral responses were promising, such as "*something we can use to solve problems,*" something that "*can stimulate and encourage creativity*", "*help us*

¹⁴ Respondents could give more than one answer
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communicate with others,” and *“help students adapt to international situations”* and prepare for work. One teacher added that *“it helps us understand ourselves better”* and be able to *“objectively analyse what happens.”*

However, other answers strayed towards traditional learning skills such as reading and writing, highlighting a misunderstanding between more holistic global skills and the 4 key skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. This misunderstanding may be language related, as the interview was in the teachers’ L2, but it is also interesting to note that a number of teachers did seem to have assimilated and adopted a preference for specific global skill areas (and English terms) such as: creativity, communication, and intercultural communication rather than embrace the concept of global skills as a whole.

- How did the course benefit you personally?

In response to these questions, teachers noted that the training offered something different from other training deliveries and content. One teacher stated that it had *“opened my eyes to something new.”* A number of teachers also noted the usefulness of the experiential nature of the delivery, including group work and activities, that allowed them to take away clear examples of how to apply this in their own context. The fact that delivery was in English was also prominent, as teachers noted that they had a rare opportunity to practice in their L2.

More specifically related to global skills, one teacher noted that they had changed the way they ask closed and open questions in the classroom, making them more effective and moving towards specific aims. Comment was also made on the training content promoting greater focus on *“emotional self-regulation”* and teachers’ needs as well as those of the students.

Another teacher noted that the training had changed her way of thinking about her students; she added that rather than treating students as passive information absorbers she now gave them more autonomy and control.

- Are you confident about developing global skills in the classroom?

Overall, five of the six teachers stated that they were not very confident in doing this, with one teacher stating they were a *“little”* confident. The short length of the training was explicitly mentioned by two teachers, but other reasons were also given. Notably, teachers mentioned that the training time in July meant that when they returned to class in September they had already forgotten much of the content. There was also some confusion over some of the more abstract global skills presented, such as Digital Literacy and Intercultural Competence, perhaps emphasising the need for more time to help teachers better understand what these are, and how they can be integrated.

Additionally, as teachers primarily focused on exam scores they didn’t feel they had time to develop these skills in class, and, in two cases, there seemed to be a misunderstanding that perhaps a whole class period would have to be dedicated to global skills rather than integration into current planning and content.

Similarly, planning time was also flagged as issue. Some teachers felt they did not have enough time to plan these activities well, which affected confidence; while others felt their students' language ability would make it difficult for them to introduce.

- Which ones? Why these?

Communication and collaboration was highlighted as a skill that teachers felt able to experiment with after the training, perhaps inspired by the group work undertaken during the delivery, or indeed prior familiarity. This also corresponds with survey responses.

However, some problems met during practical application have reduced teachers' confidence in continuing to experiment. The most prominent issue was balancing time for more holistic activities against time spent on presenting required content.

On a positive note, half of the teachers noted they were more confident about understanding Critical Thinking and Creativity, and now they had some idea of how to develop these skills. Questions were also mentioned as a tool that teachers were drawn to in order to vary levels of difficulty, to follow up on students' ideas, and to meet their goals.

Unfortunately, after 3 months, one teacher was unable to name any of the global skills covered in the training, in English.

- Keeping in mind time restrictions, how could such courses be improved for your context?

Most teachers agreed that 3 days was too short to properly develop the concepts being covered, especially to any deep or meaningful level. As above, changing the timing of the course to be closer to, or during, term time to allow direct application was also noted. However, more specifically a number of teachers believed that activity presentation should be different and involve live examples from the trainers, or from teachers in live classes with students to help conceptualise what is being discussed. One teacher noted that they felt the current delivery methods were "*not good*" but they had "*no ideas of how to change*" this.

The idea of ongoing communities based on the training was also touched upon as one teacher mentioned that teachers already meet each other regularly in different, similar Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities. If such community E.g., Teacher Activity groups (TAG) or Communities of Practice (CoP) could be formalised and maintained *between* face-to-face events this may offer useful ongoing peer support.

- What was missing that would help a Chinese teacher develop learners' global skills?

Overwhelmingly, teachers highlighted that they wanted more practical aspects. To be able to see how to integrate these global skills into their classroom through a trainer or teacher micro-lecture example. The majority of teachers believed this was necessary to combine "*traditional ways with new ways*" as the theory alone did not seem to bridge the gaps in teaching beliefs and culture.

One teacher thought having more connection with the local exams (and curriculum) would be beneficial as students and parents were focused on this – and it may help with buy in. They also noted that the “*reality*” is that the main goal for students is to “*get better marks and language skills*” and in some cases students themselves will reject any new ideas not specifically exam related.

Half of the teachers also emphasised a need for more materials to continue learning or experimenting after the training course finishes. I.e., videos, audio, classroom materials etc. It was also requested by some teachers that local textbooks are used more in the training. It is important to note that textbooks were used for some activities by the UK trainers in the 3-day delivery, but teachers felt more examples were needed.

- What are the biggest challenges teachers face in incorporating global skills?

Based on analysis of notes taken for this question the most common challenges mentioned can be summarised into the following broad categories¹⁵:

- *Cultural knowledge*
- *Language level (3)*
- *Creating good questions (2)*
- *Assessment (2)*
- *Available materials*
- *Student attitudes (2)*
- *Available time*

We see that the most pressing perceived challenges are related to how students will receive input both in terms of language available and their attitude (and motivation) towards content that is not explicitly exam focused. As highlighted previously, teachers do recognise the need for better questions to help guide learning and develop skills but formulating questions that are more open or divergent without always having specific, closed answers remains a problem and may need further support.

- What else could be done by your school or district?

Answers here were limited. Teachers emphasised the need for more materials being made available to help develop different skills, and to avoid students becoming “*learning machines*.” Educating and changing attitudes of parents and students (and engrained teaching beliefs of teachers) towards such learning is also important, and schools and local districts can play a part in this. If the top-down focus overwhelmingly remains exam scores, and global skills are not explicit components of the exam scoring criteria, then it appears that there will be little scope for teachers to develop these other areas, as it does not benefit them to do so.

Other support mechanisms mentioned included: seminars that focus on global skills, clubs, and communities for teachers. It was suggested that teaching competitions may also be of benefit in honing practical application of holistic practices and crystalising this

¹⁵ The areas mentioned have been collated from different expressions provided, but which were generally thought to include the same area.

for other teachers, but this would also require changes on how such classes are assessed.

One teacher noted that there was “*nothing*” the school can do, although a number of teachers highlighted that some online activities led by Chinese experts already take place to support teachers. But no teachers were aware of any specific courses on global skills.

More in-school practical follow up was also mentioned as a method that could supplement the training.

5. Conclusions:

From the survey and interviews, there is generally a positive feeling towards the theory and rationale behind the development of global skills in English classrooms within Suzhou, and 86% of respondents felt content to help students develop these holistic skills even without the direct personal recognition that often comes from students receiving good exam scores or other short term measurable outcomes. However, this enthusiasm and positivity from the teachers is tempered by some residual confusion and a lack of experience in practically developing these skills over the longer term, leaving teachers adrift after the training had finished.

Additionally, other challenges that emerge from the nature of assessment in Chinese schools where students and parents maintain a narrow focus on assessment related goals were noted.

Summary of findings related to identified research focus

Research focus: Identify changes in confidence amongst Junior High teachers related to developing their students’ global skills after intensive training.

Change in confidence was difficult to gauge, as there is not a direct baseline question connection between the pre and post course surveys that fully covers this. After the training course, teachers indicated that they perceived the modules on global skills to be more useful than they had done before, and there was evidence through the surveys and interviews that teachers had taken away key aspects of the training that they could now apply to their own setting. And many did so.

However, numerous teachers noted that they were still unsure of how to promote or develop global skills in their classrooms, and indeed there still appears to be significant confusion about what global skills are.

Confidence appeared high in certain skills where teachers already had some familiarity, such as Communication and Collaboration (73%¹⁶ of respondents were confident in developing this) and

¹⁶ N=37

Creativity and Critical Thinking (70%), but less so on more abstract skills such as Intercultural Competency (38%) or Assessment of Global Skills (22%), where there may be a lower perceived relevance to the local context. Notably, the skills where confidence was high are also perhaps the easiest to physically display and experiment within a short training delivery. This suggests that course designers should be wary of taking easy options and presenting offering materials that is both familiar and of limited value to teachers.

For more abstract and less familiar global skills, more time, discussion and reflection will probably be required to move beyond only a shallow understanding of what can be applied. This will also have a significant effect on teacher confidence in these areas.?

It is clear that 3 days will not be enough to go deeply into what global skills are and how they might be applied. Therefore, reducing the scope of the training and focusing more deeply on specific skills is needed, both from a confidence and practical perspective, even though it should be noted that reduction in scope was not seen as a particular need by the teachers themselves. Whether this is relates to a traditional Confucian focus on desired [knowledge](#) (Rattini, 2019) acquisition or for developmental reasons could be further explored, as it may have a significant effect on training outcomes.

During both the survey and interview responses, many teachers focused largely on specific skills that resonated with them, while referring little to the others, highlighting that a general approach may not be the most effective approach if moving beyond the 'usual suspects' of critical thinking, creativity and communication and collaboration is desired.

Based on responses, a lack of confidence and motivation to implement global skills appeared to stem from a few key areas:

1. *A belief that global skills is too complicated for them and their students*
2. *A belief that students do not have the language requirements to develop global skills*
3. *A belief that teachers do not have the time to integrate these skills into their classes*
4. *Not having the ongoing support or access to materials that can help the progress*

Responses like the following further emphasise this:

- *“Global skills are important for students and teachers. But for practical use in class, especially designing relevant activities is super hard for me.”*
- *“The content is relatively high level, which is still a certain distance from the actual teaching of English in junior middle school.(Tr.)”*

Although there were numerous positive comments to counter this:

- *“I used some global skills in my class and feel that's really effective. It arouses students' interest and make the atmosphere nice.”*
- *“It is useful to help students learn the language better through many activities based on different aspects of global skills especially in the areas of Collaboration and Communication and Digital Literacies.”*

Research focus: Explore and identify how changes to training design and other aspects of CPD may be useful for teachers in enhancing their capacity to promote and develop students' global skills in the local context.

According to teachers, the three main practical challenges they faced after the training were:

- *I don't know how to create activities that develop these skills*
- *I don't know where to learn more about global skills on my own*
- *I don't know how to feedback on activities that develop these skills*

This suggests that follow up support is crucial in helping teachers realistically improve their capacity and build on training received. There remains a gap between where the teachers are and where they need to be to effectively promote global skills in their classroom.

When asked, the majority of teachers stated that they would prefer further face-to-face training, although there was also clear interest in more autonomous learning strategies, as highlighted below:

- Attend more training (15 responses)
- Find resources on the internet (3 responses)
- Reading and research (9)
- Develop through classroom practice (2)
- Lifelong learning (6)
- From peers (4)

However, key issues highlighted by teachers suggest that any future training must integrate more deeply into the local context and support and supplement rather than potentially interfere with teachers' current methods of teaching that have clear and relevant assessment-based outcomes. The analogy of '*pouring sand into a jar of rocks to fill the gaps rather than trying to add more rocks*' seems appropriate to illustrate the point.

Of course, any tweaks and suggestions to current practice must be backed up by specific examples – and teachers should be encouraged to adapt ideas that suit their own needs rather than mimic others. Numerous responses highlighted that teachers believe they learn best, or at least prefer to learn, through seeing practical examples and unpacking them from there, rather than learning through theory and rationale.

Using the local textbooks was also noted as important. Textbooks were utilised during the 3-day training delivery, but such demonstration needs to ensure teachers' differing contexts are considered, e.g., student language level, classroom parameters, large class size etc, to make it more relevant for teachers who work in such conditions daily – and not in a small, comfortable training room.

Even with such examples being applied or displayed in real classroom environments (i.e., not pre-practiced demos) by foreign trainers, showing what works and what doesn't, can never accurately represent the local teachers' experience, for numerous reasons. However, it can at least provide a better frame of reference for teachers' own ideas to blossom and therefore there is clear value. Seeing classes not work well can be as valuable as seeing a 'perfect' class.

The limited face-to-face training time available, and the time of year it was delivered, were also issues mentioned by many teachers. There is perhaps little that can be done to alter this logistically, but innovative solutions may be considered to make the most of the time available both face-to-face and post-training in order to support development in the longer-term.

Recommendations for future training on global skills

Some suggestions that may address related issues might include:

- *Focus only on one or two global skills in short training deliveries and address these in detail that supports contextual needs, particularly if these skills are more abstract.*
- *Ensure real needs are addressed, and avoid focusing heavily on areas where the majority of teachers are already confident or have significant experience*
- *Build in remote follow up support for teachers when they return to the classroom. This may include mentoring or planning support for a number of lessons post-training, until they have a better idea of what might be expected or needed; and how to practically integrate global skills support into their normal content. This can be supplemented by ongoing Communities of Practices (CoPs) / Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs), as some teachers have suggested they might like to participate in such events.*
- *Have practical example sessions led by experts during the 3-day training¹⁷ – It is advisable to avoid pre-practiced demonstrations here, and teachers should be reminded that classes do not always work as planned, especially with new groups, and that learning can come from both success and failure. Seeing the planning process, the rationale for making decisions on global skills integration, and what issues the teacher faces in the classroom are all valuable in helping teachers assimilate or improve these ideas for themselves.*

For course designers, it is also necessary to ask key questions when designing a global skills training course. As a simple starting point, we may take some of the teachers' concerns highlighted above and reverse these into questions we can help them answer, to further help drill down on local concerns. For example:

- *How can teachers adapt activities to develop global skills for different student levels?*
- *Does development of global skills have to be related to students' language ability?*
- *How can we help teachers integrate skills without using up valuable class time?*
- *How can we help teachers grow and develop after the training?*
- *What support and resources can I share for teachers' self-study?*

Hopefully, by answering these and following some of the suggestions above, teacher confidence and capacity to integrate global skills into the classroom can be improved, and training can better support ongoing CPD both in the Suzhou context and beyond.

¹⁷ "3-day training" is mentioned here as this is the limit for continuous face-to-face training from one external provider in Suzhou (2021). This may be longer in other regions.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher definitions of Global Skills after the training - Survey

In your own words please write a 1-sentence definition of what you now think global skills are. You can use your native language for this.
A skill used to adapt to the development of the world
Communication and collaboration will enable us to help each other to know better about the world.
Global skills are the ways to communicate
They include collaboration & communication, creativity & critical thinking, intercultural competence & citizenship skills and so on
global skills: help us communicate with each other
Global skills are abilities that are vital to personal development on a global basis
It refers to intercultural competence
the skills to finish tasks through all kinds of technology
Intercultural competence
Success in almost every aspect requires global skills.
It makes us competent for global occasions.
用与时俱进的方法进行英语教学。(English teaching with the method of keeping pace with the times)
The skills of critical thinking and problem solving and so on.
Global skills are essential to us in daily life.
to know how to deal with problems effectively in different situations
Global skills includes critical thinking, cultural difference and so on, with which we can improve our thinking ability and communicative ability.
全球性技能是那些使我们能够在国际环境中运作的技能, 包括文化意识、语言和沟通能力、国际商业意识和交际能力。(Global skills are those that enable us to operate in an international environment, including cultural awareness, language and communication skills, international business awareness and communication skills.)
Creativity and Critical Thinking Collaboration and Communication Intercultural Competency
Global skills are all-round. By using or combining some of them, we can get a new perspective.
It is an assembly of the skills that we can better cooperate and communicate with others from other countries.
Many skills, including creativity.
To think critically.
To think in one's shoes and understand people from different cultures better.
Global skills are skills that people should learn to adapt to the society and be involved in the environment .
一种尊重多元化与不同视角、批判性教育以及重视复杂性的技能 (A skill that respects diversity and different perspectives, critical education, and attention to complexity)

People who with global skills can learn foreign culture in a better way and have a thorough understanding of their own culture.
Skill used to live in globe.
Skills to adapt to future global developments
Global skills are the skills which can improve the learners English levels in the following aspects, communication and collaboration; creativity and critical thinking, intercultural competence and citizenship; emotional self-regulation and wellbeing and digital literacies.
Efficient communication
全球化人才技能 (Global talent skills)
Global skills are the skills that teachers and students should manage in nowadays society because these can help them to be more competent.
全球融合(Global integration)
We can communicate with others more effectively and appropriately.
The skills needed for a global society
知识全球化, 整合多种资源, 开拓思维。(Knowledge globalization, integrating multiple resources and developing thinking.)
拓宽我的视野 (Broaden my horizons)

Appendix B: Clarification of why teachers believe the modules were useful or not

Positive responses – why they were useful	
Negative responses – why they were not useful	

Earlier to understand
Learn from the teacher and the other teachers.
we can use some teaching methods, such as ranking, in our teaching
help make my lessons well organized
It is very useful for us to teach students with global skills.
The modules given by the professors are clear and well-organized. And it makes us familiar with the concepts and how they function
It helps me reflect on my own teaching
the students learning level in our school is not high enough to understand these concepts
Global skills influence my decisions of what to teach and how to teach.
It enriches our class activities.
I can use some teaching methods in my English class.
For example, after training I know the difference between oral practice and communication, it's useful for me to organize some class activities.
It teaches us how to cooperate with others effectively.
because the activities used in the training course were not quite associated with the real class
I can practice these activities.
some of the students can't get enough practice
The content on the paper is very clear and useful.
I have acquired some of them. But some to me are theoretical, I need to put them into practice.
Because the students in my school are not so well equipped with the basic language ability, so it's hard for them to discuss further topics.
I can use many of them in my teaching.
I can come up with more useful and effective ways to ask questions and plan activities.
It can help me create more activities to make my class lively and effective.
It opens up new horizons to me.
I can't use them very well in my English class.

The training helped me realize the significance of the development of students' comprehensive abilities.
English has been widely used.
I can use the examples in my teaching
I was lack of the teaching theory in the past, but now while I am preparing my lessons, I can make it more effectively, and I think my students can benefit more.
I'm not sure if they are suitable for my students
对于初中生, 不是很重要。(For middle school, not so important)
Because this training offers many practical methods to us and we have many examples to use.
I' m too busy to use them
Strength my theoretical knowledge。
I can share with my students the skills needed in this world
Help students communicate safely and effectively with others.
give me more ideas about classroom activities