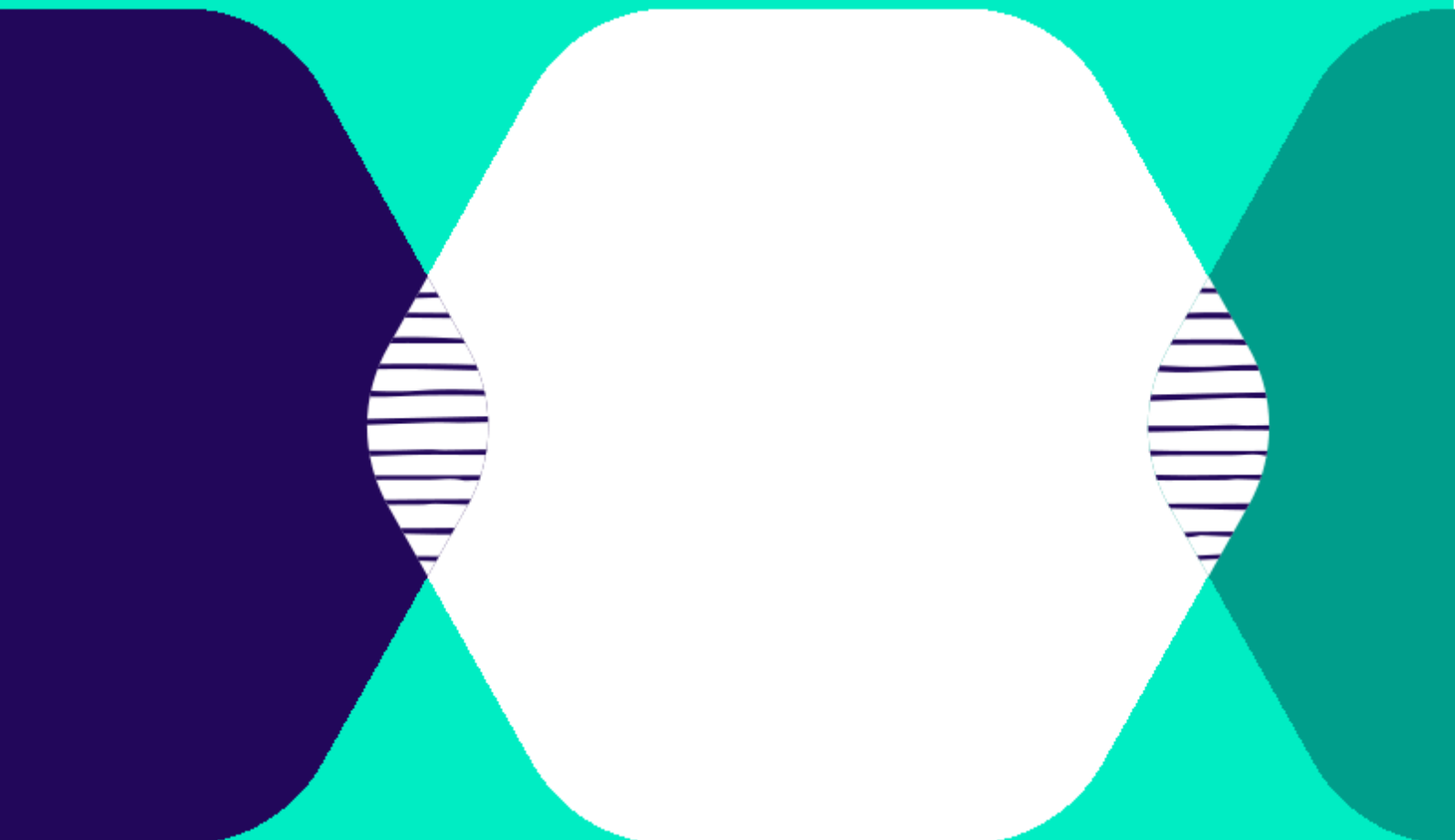**BRITISH COUNCIL**

TILE pilot project report – 2024

Written by NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education) for the British Council as part of the Tangshan In Class Language Effectiveness (TILE) pilot project

Contents

1. Executive summary

The Tangshan In Class Language Effectiveness (TILE) pilot project addresses a critical challenge in Chinese Junior High School English education: while teachers often possess adequate English language knowledge, many lack confidence in actively using English for classroom management and activities. This British Council-funded collaboration between NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education) and the Teaching Research Institute of Tangshan Education Bureau has demonstrated remarkable success in helping teachers activate their existing English language capabilities.

From February to July 2024, the project engaged 1,018 participants (951 English teachers and 67 team leaders) across 18 geographical areas surrounding Tangshan city. Through an innovative combination of self-access learning, mentoring support and practical implementation, the project achieved significant measurable impact.

Data collected throughout the project indicates meaningful progress in several areas. Teacher confidence in using English for classroom management increased from 40 per cent at baseline to 96 per cent by project completion. Through observed classroom practice, participating teachers demonstrated improvement in at least one effectiveness criterion, particularly in areas such as giving instructions and managing activities.

The project maintained consistent participation levels, with 83 per cent of teachers completing the course requirements. This included completion of core modules (92 per cent), attendance at team leader meetings (96 per cent), and submission of video observations (89 per cent). Webinar attendance averaged 84 per cent across three sessions, though the final session saw lower attendance (69 per cent) due to timing during the exam period.

Team leaders also developed their mentoring capabilities throughout the project, with 97 per cent reporting increased confidence in supporting teachers. By the end of the course, 92 per cent indicated they felt prepared to deliver similar training independently. These team leaders provided regular guidance to teachers and offered structured feedback on teaching videos.

The project's impact extends beyond individual skill development. Focus group feedback reveals meaningful changes in classroom dynamics, with teachers reporting increased student engagement and participation. As one teacher noted, 'The course transformed my approach to creating an English-speaking environment. My students are now more actively involved in speaking and listening activities.'

Gender equality and inclusion were prioritised throughout implementation. With 91 per cent female teacher participation and 95 per cent female team leader participation, the project actively monitored and addressed potential barriers to engagement. Course design accommodated participants' other commitments, with flexible scheduling and adaptable completion requirements.

The project has established a strong foundation for sustainability through:
- development of local mentor capacity
- creation of a comprehensive implementation toolkit
- building a repository of successful teaching practice videos specific to Chinese classroom contexts
- establishment of two implementation pathways to accommodate different institutional needs.

This pilot provides compelling evidence for scaling the programme across China's education system. The demonstrated improvements in teacher confidence and effectiveness, combined with strong completion rates and positive participant feedback, suggest that this model offers a practical approach to enhancing English language teaching in Chinese Junior High Schools.

2. Recommendations and action points

These recommendations and action points are ordered to prioritise foundational elements that set the stage for successful course implementation, followed by practical considerations that enhance participant experience and support ongoing assessment and improvement processes.

Pre-course preparations

1. Organise a separate launch meeting for team leaders (TLs) before mentoring skills sessions.
   Ensure team leaders are on board and clear about their role in the project.
2. Conduct an official launch for all participants.
   Introduce the course and set expectations for all attendees.
3. Arrange initial TL–teacher meetings shortly after the project launch.
   Review the project outline and clarify expectations and goals.

Learning management system (LMS)

4. Consider allowing Chinese mobile numbers for registration on *In Class*.
   Enhance accessibility for participants.
5. Replace Xiao e Tong with a more suitable LMS, preferably one already widely known, such as DingTalk.
   Requirements to include:
   - *secure sign-in process to ensure privacy for video recordings etc.*
   - *private group creation*
   - *video posting within private groups and commenting capabilities to foster community and sharing, essential for teacher activity group (TAG) activities*
   - *report creation to assist with monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and monitoring engagement*

○ *weekly content release feature to maximise impact of synchronous TAG sessions.*

Support materials

6. Create how-to videos for LMS usage.
   Provide guidance on navigating the platform effectively.
7. Develop a TILE-specific help video for using *In Class*.
   Cover registration, login issues, completion and scoring, and support channels.

Course pathways

8. Consider offering two course pathways.
   Almost 90 per cent of teachers stated at the end of the course that they would find it useful to access In Class *without participating in additional aspects of the course, due to regular commitments.*
   ○ Level 1: *In Class* and webinar attendance (Certificate of Participation)
   ○ Level 2: *In Class,* webinar attendance, methodology input and team leader support (Certificate of Completion)
9. Consider an early drop-out policy that is known at the start of the course.
   Allowing for more accurate reporting of key performance indicators (KPIs).

Video observation and assessment process

It is noteworthy that 46 per cent of teachers indicated in the midway course survey that they would like the mode of observations adapted, while nearly 67 per cent requested a reduction in or adaptation to the frequency of these observations.

10. Consider a reduction in the number or frequency of observation videos, but request longer video submissions from participants.
    Reduce time and teacher pressure while allowing more comprehensive evidence of meeting criteria and development of teaching practices.
11. Clarify the purpose of observations.
    Determine if they are developmental or assessment focused.
12. Simplify observations for TLs with a focus on developmental feedback rather than assessment.
    Streamline the process for providing feedback (e.g. one strength and two areas for development).
13. Provide standardisation training for TLs or consider external assessors.
    Ensure consistency in evaluation and remove the current disparity between assessors.

Team leader support

14. Simplify mentoring skills training content and language level.
    Make it more accessible to all TLs.

15. Streamline processes and systems for TLs.
    Reduce complexity in their roles.
16. Ensure clear understanding of course requirements from the start of the course.
    Avoid misinterpretation of data collection processes.
17. Provide training on data input and spreadsheet management for TLs.
    Ensure accurate data handling by TLs.

End-of-course data collection and management

18. Allow sufficient time between the end of the course and holidays for data collection.
    Facilitate thorough data gathering.
19. Utilise district leaders for regular progress checks.
    Keep TLs on track with task completion.
20. Improve survey design for consistent data collection across the course.
    Maintain uniform questions across base-, mid- and endline surveys.

Course content

21. Simplify team leader session content and improve contextual relevance.
    Increase engagement through practical application.
22. Enhance interactivity in course material for team leader meetings.
    Foster active participation among participants.
23. Remove or flag non-compulsory *In Class* modules and add a summary of common classroom expressions to *In Class* materials.
    Save time and support teachers in practical classroom situations.
24. Consider building a video library of exemplary teaching by Chinese teachers.
    Provide resources that showcase effective teaching practices.

3. Introduction to TILE

3.1 Background and needs

The **Tangshan In Class Language Effectiveness (TILE) project**, overseen and funded by the British Council, involved a collaboration between NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education) and the local China partner (Teaching Research Institute of Tangshan Education Bureau) to support the improvement of local Junior High School (ages 13–15) English teachers' confidence and effective and inclusive use of English when managing classroom activities. The project aimed to help English teachers better involve, engage and support more of their students in their understanding of English language activities, and to support the teaching, learning and assessment of English overall.

This project was aligned with identified English teacher needs in China (Borg et al., 2022)[1]

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[1] Borg, S, Anderson, J, Beaumont, B, Xie, K, Guo, Y, Thorburn, R, Choi, T, Kim, HJ, Aizawa, I & Fujinaga, K. (2022). *The continuing professional development experiences and needs of English language teachers in China, Japan and Korea*.

and was identified as a required need by local partners, as it was felt that English teachers' confidence and their effective and inclusive use of English in managing classroom activities have a direct impact on the teaching, learning and assessing of English in a classroom context.

This project presented an opportunity to support teachers' classroom English language use and, by extension, students' English language learning. Although the focus was not on improving teachers' overall language proficiency, it was anticipated that teachers' increased exposure to English during the project would still present positive language opportunities for them.

3.2 Project objectives

The overall aim of the project was to develop, trial and evaluate a sustainable and replicable model and toolkit, deliverable by local trainers, that improved English teacher language confidence and effectiveness in Chinese Junior High School classroom contexts. While this pilot project focused on developing a more effective and authentic application of English in classroom management in Tangshan's Junior High School contexts, in the longer term it is hoped that this training model will contribute to improving English classrooms in other regions within China and indeed in teaching contexts beyond the English classroom in China. Ultimately it is hoped that the TILE project will contribute to the development of an education system that supports inclusive, high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.

Specific objectives of the project were:
- an improvement in the confidence and effectiveness of participating teachers in using English to present and manage classroom activities within Junior High School language-learning classroom contexts
- an improvement in the confidence and effectiveness of participating team leaders in mentoring and supporting the teachers in their team
- a better overall understanding of the current language landscape of English teachers in Junior High Schools within basic education in China, particularly in terms of confidence and effectiveness
- a better understanding of challenges related to gender as regards teacher engagement with continuing professional development (CPD).

Finally, it could be argued that the most important stakeholders in this project are the students. It was therefore anticipated that more confident and effective English tuition delivered by their teachers would ultimately, albeit indirectly, benefit students in Junior High Schools in Tangshan province, as it would provide them with an enhanced quality of instruction.

3.3 Rationale

The project's rationale was shaped by both practical constraints and strategic considerations. Given the relatively short implementation time frame, we recognised that

significant improvements in teachers' English proficiency levels would be neither achievable nor effectively measurable. Instead, we focused on areas that could show meaningful change within the project timeline, while laying groundwork for future, more comprehensive programmes.

This led us to concentrate on two interconnected aspects: teacher confidence and classroom effectiveness. While confidence measurements rely primarily on self-reporting and thus have inherent subjective limitations, they provide valuable insights into teachers' willingness to use English in the classroom. To complement these subjective measures, we developed structured observation criteria focusing on specific classroom management behaviours and English usage patterns. This combination of self-reported confidence data and observed effectiveness metrics allowed us to track meaningful changes in teaching practice.

The project emphasises activating teachers' existing English knowledge rather than teaching new language skills. Many Chinese teachers already possess the necessary English vocabulary for classroom management (such as 'open your books' or 'work in pairs'), but may lack confidence in using it consistently. Our approach pairs the British Council's *In Class* programme content with practical classroom technique support, helping teachers build confidence in applying their existing English knowledge. Importantly, this is not an English-medium instruction (EMI) or full immersion approach but rather a focused effort to increase appropriate English usage in ways that enhance student learning.

3.4 Proposed delivery model

The project covered 18 geographical areas, including 22 districts, counties, townships and other rural areas surrounding Tangshan city, in line with ODA (Official Development Assistance) requirements, and included at the launch a cohort of 1,018 participants (951 English teachers at Junior High School level and 67 team leaders (TLs) of varied seniority). The full cohort was geographically divided into 47 groups of 15–25 course participants.

As part of the delivery model, the cohort of 67 regional TLs, identified by the local partner, offered ongoing logistical and academic teacher support. NILE consultants provided expertise in training facilitation and delivery, providing practical support to the TLs.

The TILE project adopted a cascade and mentoring approach (Figure 1) that integrated input through self-access learning (SAL) using the British Council's *In Class* platform and mentor support from designated TLs for participating teachers. The project was designed in a way that teachers could integrate elements of input from TLs and *In Class* content into their classroom activities and then participate in reflection activities individually, with their buddy and within their teacher activity groups (TAGs) regularly. Short segments of teachers' classes were recorded and submitted for assessment throughout the course.
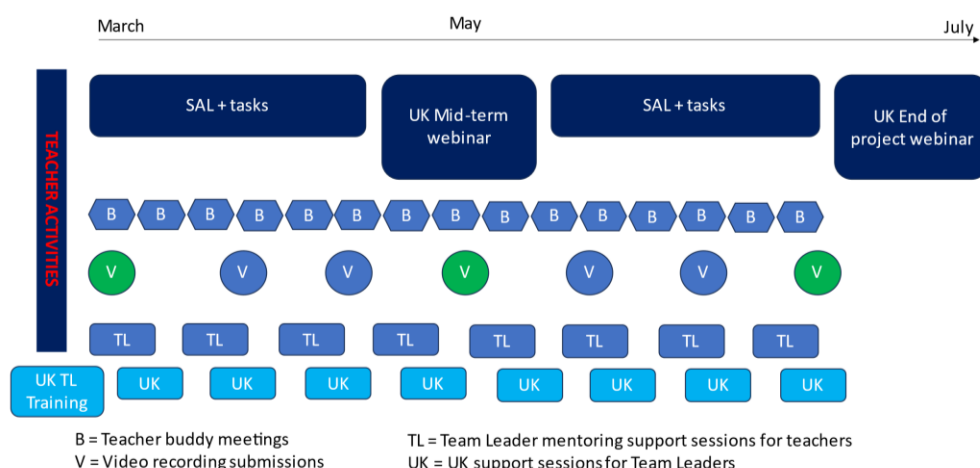
Figure 1: The TILE project delivery model

WeChat was used as the main mode of communication between teachers, buddies, teachers and TLs, and TLs and NILE trainers. Live sessions and meetings between TLs and NILE trainers were held on Tencent. OneDrive was used to store video observations, buddy observation forms and observation assessments of three assessed videos per teacher. Originally it had been planned to use Xiao e Tong to carry out the functions of course LMS and learning network. However, the structure of this LMS proved not to be suitable.

3.5 Project outputs

A variety of outputs were delivered during the project.

During the implementation phase:

- eight hours of initial sessions for TLs, including PowerPoint slides, trainer notes and handouts
- nine hours of support sessions with TLs
- mid-course and end-of-course webinars
- tasks for teachers to reinforce learning and provide support for areas of need
- observation submission guidelines and assessment tools

As documentation of the project's activities and results:

- a needs analysis report to inform the design of the training modules
- a mid-course monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) summary report to highlight project progress and identify required action for the second part of the course
- a collation of data on participation; completion of *In Class* compulsory modules; baseline, mid-course and end-of-course surveys for both teachers and TLs; end-of-course focus group feedback (from a control group of teachers) and a NILE trainer feedback survey

- an overall project report to include MEL summary, lessons learned, application of the approach and recommendations for future project iterations, including learning platforms, participant engagement, duration and content of course, etc.
- PowerPoint slides of key findings to support the above report
- a toolkit to be used in future editions of the project, including:
  - training materials for TLs with guidance
  - tasks and resources
  - survey templates
  - framework for submission and evaluation of video
  - assessment framework with guidance on application
- a revised and updated technical proposal for future delivery of this training model in China.

3.6 Project key performance indicators

The TILE project was structured around two overarching key performance indicators (KPIs), which were further delineated into specific goals for teachers and TLs. These KPIs were designed to comprehensively measure the project's impact on confidence and effectiveness across distinct areas. The primary KPIs were divided into six indicators for teachers and three indicators for TLs.

This approach allowed for an evaluation of the project's outcomes, ensuring that progress could be accurately tracked and assessed for each participant group. The following outlines these KPIs in detail.

Core indicators

1. *80 per cent of teachers **self-report** increased confidence in using English for managing classroom activities.*
2. *80 per cent of TLs **self-report** increased confidence in mentoring teachers.*
3. *80 per cent of the control group **show** increased effectiveness in using English for managing classroom activities.*

The core indicators measure the project's impact on the primary outcomes below.

- Participating teachers will have improved their confidence and effectiveness in using English to present and manage classroom activities within Junior High School language-learning classroom contexts.
- Participating team leaders will have improved their confidence and effectiveness in mentoring and supporting the teachers in their team.

Wider contribution to CPD and evidence of sustainability

1. *80 per cent of TLs feel the course has contributed to their professional development as a teacher mentor.*

2. *80 per cent of teachers feel the course has contributed to their professional development as an English teacher.*
3. *80 per cent of TLs feel confident that they could deliver the course again independently.*

The above indicators measure the project's development of a sustainable and replicable model and toolkit, deliverable by local trainers, that has the potential to make a wider contribution to CPD across China.

Logistics and participation success criteria

1. *80 per cent of teachers engage with course support activities, e.g. working with a buddy, attending webinars, opening newsletter.*
2. *80 per cent of teachers achieving course completion as defined by success criteria below:*
    *   *90 per cent of teachers complete 12 identified modules on* In Class
    *   *80 per cent complete all extra tasks on Xiao e Tong*
    *   *80 per cent attend all meetings with their team leader*
    *   *80 per cent attend or watch recording of two live webinars*
3. *80 per cent of teachers participate in the buddy system and document this through sharing videos and feedback forms with TLs.*

4. Summary of TILE pilot activities
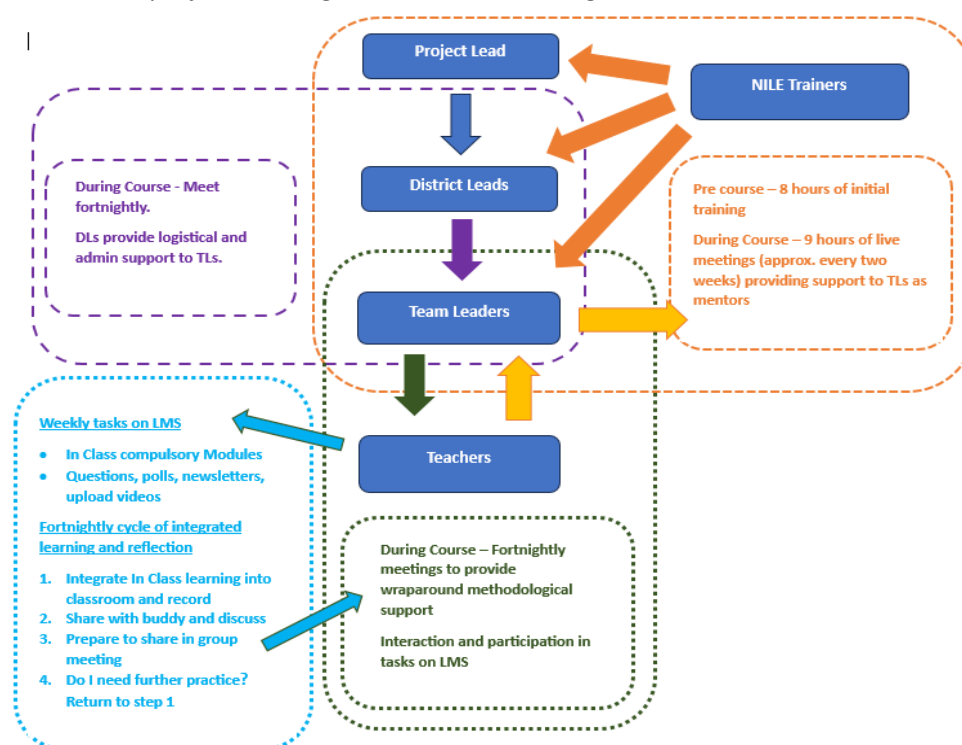
The project was organised as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: How the project was organise

4.1 Needs analysis

To ensure the project's relevance and effectiveness, a needs analysis survey was conducted for all participants. This survey aimed to establish the teachers' specific requirements in terms of content and time availability. The project team identified, through the survey, specific areas of classroom activity that participating teachers felt less confident in or wanted to develop. This was used to create a course of targeted input from the British Council *In Class* platform, accompanied by additional academic, practical and methodological support from local TLs, buddies and the wider teaching group.

The findings are summarised below.

Teacher demographics

- Age distribution: Evenly spread across 20–29 30–39 and 40–50 age brackets, with approximately 3 per cent above 50.
- Gender: 90 per cent female.
- Location: 43 per cent in county areas of Tangshan, 28 per cent in townships, 20 per6cent in cities and 9 per cent in suburbs.
- Personal commitments: 52 per cent have childcare responsibilities, 38 per cent have caring duties, 48 per cent have housework commitments, 33 per cent are pursuing other studies and 11 per cent have other unspecified commitments.
- Time availability: 60 per cent have 1–2 hours available weekly, 25 per cent have 3–4 hours and 15 per cent have more than 4 hours.
- Teaching experience: 51 per cent have over 10 years' experience, 11 per cent less than one year, with the remainder evenly distributed between 1–5 and 6-10 years.

Two key questions relating to teacher background were the expected number of available hours that participants could spend on the course and what other time commitments (if any) would potentially make this difficult. The results show that 60 per cent of teachers expected to be able to spend 1–2 hours per week on the course. Time commitment was not collected for TLs as we were previously informed of a total expected commitment from them. The nature of the role and tasks meant that each week would require a different number of hours to complete.

Results show that a substantial number of participants have family commitments, with childcare featuring the highest for both teachers and TLs.

Teaching competencies

Areas of confidence
- 77 per cent in teaching grammar, words, and phrases.
- Approximately 40 per cent each in teaching pronunciation, lesson planning, managing lessons and activities, and managing student behaviour.
- Lower confidence levels in using songs (20 per cent), managing resources and technology (16 per cent) and assessing learning and giving feedback (15 per cent).

Areas for development
- High interest (*c.*50 per cent) in teaching pronunciation and managing lessons and

activities.
- Moderate interest (*c.*40 per cent) in assessing learning and giving feedback, managing resources and technology, and lesson planning.
- Lower interest (*c.*30 per cent) in managing behaviour, using songs and stories and teaching grammar, words and phrases.

English language proficiency

- 60 per cent 'sometimes don't know how to say what I want to say in English', 25 per cent usually manage well in this area, 12 per cent often struggle and 3 per cent 'always know what they want to say'.
- Nearly 60 per cent lack confidence in using English in the classroom.
- 42 per cent possess an English language qualification.
- English practice outside the classroom: 14 per cent never, 40 per cent rarely, 40 per cent sometimes and 6 per cent often.
- Preferred English practice methods outside the classroom: Primarily receptive skills (90 per cent), including TV, films, songs and podcasts, with reading and studying in second place; finally, 11 per cent engage in spoken English with friends, family or colleagues.

Teachers were surveyed on their level of confidence in teaching aspects of language related to *In Class* categories. Further to this they were asked which of the same options they would most like to develop. Teachers feel most confident teaching grammar, words and phrases. There is a relatively even spread across 'teaching pronunciation', 'planning lessons' and 'managing lessons & activities'. There was an even spread across many of the potential areas for development, which also included areas teachers felt confident in, such as 'teaching pronunciation'.

4.2 *In Class* modules selection

The needs analysis showed an even spread of areas for development; therefore, 11 out of 16 categories were selected as core course components from the British Council asynchronous *In Class* global product. Most categories lasted one week; however, four categories were extended to two weeks due to their broader scope and a desire not to overload participants, bearing in mind 60 per cent of participants indicated they only had 1–2 hours of availability per week. A course pathway was provided to guide teachers through modules, along with supplemental tasks to support learning and adoption of new skills and language.

The *In Class* selected categories were as follows.

Lessons
- Managing activities
  - playing a word game
  - demonstrating pair and group activities
  - setting up card and picture games
  - putting dialogues in order
  - monitoring group activities

- using translation in an activity
- giving instructions for grouping
- changing partners or groups

● Teaching grammar, words and phrases
  - creating context
  - using examples
  - using actions and objects
  - understanding words in a text
  - looking at grammar in a sentence
  - reviewing words and phrases
  - reviewing when to use a phrase

● Teaching pronunciation
  - getting students to listen and repeat
  - helping students to hear sounds
  - teaching word stress, sentence stress and intonation
  - helping students to say sounds

● Using songs, rhymes and chants
  - introducing a song or rhyme
  - teaching a song or rhyme
  - teaching a chant
  - using a chant for language practice

● Telling stories
  - getting students ready to listen to a story
  - talking about storybook pictures
  - involving students in storytelling
  - ending a story

● Managing time
  - moving between the stages of a lesson
  - starting an activity
  - giving students time to prepare
  - managing pace during an activity
  - checking time with students
  - stopping an activity

Resources
● Managing resources
  - using textbooks and notebooks
  - using the board
  - giving out materials
  - collecting classroom materials
  - using flashcards
  - using pictures from the textbook
  - using real objects

Students
- Giving feedback
    - telling students they are correct and not correct
    - correcting students
    - correcting mistakes after an activity
    - getting students to give feedback
    - giving positive feedback

- Assessing learning
    - managing self-assessment
    - checking answers

- Managing behaviour
    - creating classroom rules
    - praising students' behaviour and effort
    - praising younger students' behaviour
    - responding to misbehaviour
    - managing classroom noise
    - rewarding students

- Supporting students
    - using your students' first language
    - encouraging collaboration
    - encouraging English in class
    - checking instructions
    - encouraging imagination

For each topic, teachers watched videos and tried interactive activities, having the opportunity to read the video transcripts and the accompanying articles about each topic. Teachers could listen to the model language presented in each video, repeat and record themselves. They were encouraged to build their own personal phrasebook of useful classroom language. As a self-study course with progress tracking, *In Class* generated data about the teachers' engagement.

4.3 Team leader mentor skills training

TLs and DLs participated in an initial eight hours of training with NILE trainers, delivered through four sessions on Tencent. Topics included Teacher Learning and Development, Mentoring, Observation for Teacher Development and the Buddy System.

The Teacher Learning and Development session reflected on the interrelationship between training and development for teacher learning. It evaluated four models of teacher learning and analysed the development needs of teachers at various stages of their careers. Various CPD options were identified, and an explanation of the model chosen for this programme was given.

The Mentoring session looked at the benefits and challenges of mentoring. It considered

the mentoring relationship and the process for conducting successful mentoring. TLs were encouraged to reflect on appropriate goal setting for mentees and learned about 'empowering questions' that allow mentees to gain voice in the mentoring process.

Session 3 focused on observing teachers and provided TLs with a comprehensive set of observation tasks and guidelines. They were asked to consider which of the 15 possible focuses for an observation might be most appropriate for their teachers, ranging from giving instructions, eliciting and providing corrective feedback to, for example, learner output.

The final session looked at the role of buddies in developing and supporting teachers and gave information on the proposed buddy system in this programme.

A further nine hours of support sessions were given throughout the project, primarily through fortnightly one-hour meetings held on Tencent. These meetings aimed to provide ongoing practical support to TLs facilitating the development of participating teachers.

To further supplement the support provided, TLs were given access to the NILE website members' area, which includes practical advice and lesson plans to support teachers and teacher trainers in classroom and training activities. Access to the NILE e-library was also granted for the duration of the course.

4.4 Delivery phase

Team leaders/Teacher activity groups (TAGs)

Teachers received methodological support through fortnightly meetings (eight in total) with their TAGs and TL, using WeChat or Tencent.

Weekly tasks and five homework assignments were used to keep teachers engaged and participating throughout the course. These asked teachers to reflect on different topics in preparation for, or as a response to, *In Class* modules. The reflection was primarily on their own teaching and classrooms. NILE trainers also advised TLs on how to encourage participation in meetings.

Teacher responses in the homework assignments were either submitted to the TL via WeChat or shared with the groups at the next meeting.

Buddy systems

The buddy system for teachers was a key element of working and learning *with* and *through* others throughout the course. Participating teachers were each paired up with a 'buddy', a fellow course participant who acted as a critical and confidential friend for the discussion of course tasks and classroom observation throughout the course. The buddy system was implemented in Weeks 1 and 2.

In the weekly tasks, teachers were asked to experiment with new language learned from *In Class* modules in their own lessons and then share their experience and reflections with their allocated buddy every week. Buddy discussions also allowed for planning classroom observations together, as teachers were also required to record a 5- to 10-minute activity from their lessons (seven in total, approximately one every two weeks) and share this with the buddy to get their feedback using a standardised Buddy Observation Form. Likewise, they were asked to observe the buddy's class (via a video recording) and give feedback. This feedback was to focus on constructive feedback, advice on areas to improve and the sharing of ideas and resources. These videos and observation forms were also submitted via WeChat to the TLs for monitoring purposes. Three of the videos were then assessed by the TL, using an Observations Assessment Form, and uploaded to OneDrive, forming part of the teacher portfolio for evaluation.

Learning impact events: midway and end-of-course webinars

There were two UK-led webinars, one midway and one at the end of the course. In both webinars, teachers had an opportunity to see examples of good teaching practice (submitted by TLs to the NILE team) and they were then prompted to consider how they could implement teaching ideas and suggestions in their own classes. Following the end-of-course webinar, in addition to reflecting on how their teaching had now changed and evaluating the impact on both their students and their own ability to manage classroom activities, teachers were also encouraged to reflect forward and consider how they might teach differently in the future.

4.5 Team leader meetings

NILE trainers held nine support sessions with TLs throughout the course. The aims of these meetings were both administrative and pedagogical: to deliver key information about the course and assist TLs with logistics, data collection and time management; to give TLs an opportunity to feed back concerns or questions about the programme to NILE; to give TLs the space to reflect on the project and the course components with external language and teaching experts; to provide guidance on TLs' own meetings with teachers; and for these meetings, with their PowerPoint slides, to then act as a model for TLs to adapt and deliver to their own teacher groups. The PowerPoint slides acted as a structure to support meetings, as a record of meetings and, once TLs submitted to NILE their versions with added comments and questions from teachers, as a record of TL–teacher discussions. These gave NILE trainers an insight into how the course was progressing from participants' perspectives and allowed them to prepare appropriate homework tasks, topics for subsequent meetings and forthcoming webinars.

4.6 Challenges and solutions

In a project of this scale, it is inevitable that significant challenges may arise. Fortunately, this being a pilot project, the learning from overcoming these challenges allows for the programme to be refined and improved for future iterations. The major challenges were as detailed below.

Pre-course training

Challenge: During pre-course training, it became apparent that TLs had a limited awareness of the goals of the project that they had been recruited for. One key expectation seemed to be that the project was a language improvement course.
Solution: To resolve this issue, a launch meeting was held for all participants between the pre-course training and Week 1 to highlight the aims and objectives of the project along with the key tasks, activities and platforms. This meeting helped to get all participants familiar with the programme, although the misunderstanding about language improvement did persist, especially among some TLs.

Challenge: The content of the pre-course training included complex information about the programme processes and systems and a substantial amount of education theory, for example different models of teacher education. The high-level language during the delivery was, for some TLs, a language barrier to accessing the information, and the input did not always align with the project goals.
Solution: In subsequent meetings with TLs, further assistance was given with understanding the design and processes of the project, and TLs were given regular opportunities to comment and ask questions. The language of later handouts, webinars and meetings was graded more appropriately for the level of participants. Resources were shared in advance of meetings to allow time for processing independently, and recordings of live sessions were provided so that participants could watch again in their own time. There was a Mandarin speaker on the NILE team to help with communications, and translation in the WeChat groups was available.

Platforms: *In Class*

Challenge: The *In Class* platform was not ready for the start of the project.
Solution: The course was delayed by one week, and the revised course schedule allowed for two introductory weeks to introduce the buddy system and the Xiao e Tong platform. This had a positive impact at the start as it gave participants more time for becoming familiar with two key elements of the programme. Unfortunately, the delay also resulted in the final weeks of the course taking place in the busy exam period at school. This created the extra challenge of teachers completing final topics and observations on time. As a result, TLs had difficulty collecting final tasks.

Challenge: The *In Class* platform could not accept Chinese mobile numbers for registration. This led to confusion around login access and passwords and therefore getting onto the platform. Teachers were waiting for links to be sent to their phones and became frustrated by the lack of access to the platform. Some teachers were slow to start completing topics, with the knock-on effect that they were slow to start recording activities.
Solution: A URL was created for the TILE project that allowed registration by email. Unfortunately, it appeared that many teachers did not use emails very much. Encouragement and support were provided in WeChat groups and cascaded down to individual teachers.

Challenge: There were misunderstandings on the platform about how participation was recorded: at group, category and topic level. This generated a lot of queries.
Solution: The issue was resolved with the development team, and specific explanations were provided in WeChat groups and cascaded down to individual teachers.

Challenge: *In Class*, as an online self-study course, allowed access to all its topics, including those which were not a requirement of this project. Some participants did not follow the course outline and/or check weekly tasks. As a result, they accessed and completed topics which were not necessary. While completing extra topics and doing extra tasks is not in itself a problem, it became an issue when teachers started to complain about these non-mandatory categories and when time spent on them interfered with the completion of obligatory weekly tasks. There was a concern that teachers who were not following the course outline and were studying out of sync with the programme and their peers may not have been fully benefiting from the methodology input delivered by TLs.
Solution: Weekly topics were included in the course outline as part of the teacher and TL guidelines. They were also posted each week and referenced in meetings with TLs and NILE trainers.

Platforms: Xiao e Tong

Challenge: There were a number of issues regarding the suitability of the Xiao e Tong platform structure for this project. Functions necessary for the project (e.g. questions and snap polls) were not available. The structure did not allow for private sub-groups to be created, with the result that 47 separate courses would have to be set up to provide the required functionality for the project. The platform also did not generate meaningful data for project reporting. The reduced functioning of the platform led to a significant drop in the number of logins by participants throughout the course. This led to some key tasks being missed by both teachers and TLs and the removal of newsletters as an element of the programme since participants were not accessing them.
Solution: Xiao e Tong was relegated from learning management system (LMS) to just a repository for housing weekly homework tasks and building an ongoing outline of the course. Communications, for example reminders about tasks, were sent via WeChat.

Challenge: This platform was not able to offer secure sign-in as expected by the project privacy policy. Uploaded videos could be viewed by anyone with a link.
Solution: Teachers' observation videos and feedback forms were not uploaded to Xiao e Tong. Instead, they were sent via private WeChat and uploaded by TLs to secure OneDrive.

Platforms: OneDrive

Challenge: A quick replacement was needed for Xiao e Tong as the course was under way and there was not sufficient time to test an alternative option. OneDrive was selected as the quickest available solution. However, the late introduction of this new platform meant that TLs were unfamiliar with the system, and previously shared instructions were no longer valid. The new platform added to the workload of the TLs as not only did they have to

familiarise themselves with a new system but they (rather than the teachers as originally envisaged) had to take on the responsibility of uploading videos.

Solution: Documents were created for TLs about how to use OneDrive, and an overview was also included in one of the TL mentoring sessions with NILE trainers.

Video observations: teachers

Challenge: Some teachers were not confident about recording and sharing videos of themselves teaching and they requested to leave the course.

Solution: A decision was made to allow teachers to continue the course without submitting videos. This meant they were still able to benefit from other aspects of the programme.

Challenge: Some teachers found it difficult to find the time to record a video observation every two weeks.

Solution: As only three out of seven videos (recorded at the beginning, middle and end of course: videos 1, 3 and 6) were to be formally assessed, this criterion was re-emphasised and relayed to teachers as the minimum passing standard, reassuring them that they just needed to find the time for three recordings. Unfortunately, this information was miscommunicated to some groups, who stopped submitting videos after video number three, with the result that they did not provide evidence of their teaching at the end point of the course (video 6). Insufficient evidence of their teaching across the duration of the programme was therefore collected to assess individual progress from the beginning to the end of the project.

Challenge: Some of the activities seen in the videos submitted were too short and failed to evidence many of the criteria in the assessment form. In addition, it was not always clear how the activities chosen or methodology used by some teachers related to the *In Class* topics.

Solution: NILE trainers revisited the purpose, expectations and process of the video observations with TLs in their meetings and encouraged them to cascade this information to their teachers.

Video observations: TLs

Challenge: Observation assessment forms were too complex for some TLs who did not have sufficient experience of assessing peers and giving feedback. Some TLs were more focused on grading rather than providing developmental feedback. Errors occurred while inputting data into the forms, for example grades were added to comments sections, and this affected progress tracking. Some commented on all aspects of the video rather than focusing on a few areas, and the language used ended up being a repetition of the language of the criteria. Ultimately, this has resulted in a noticeable discrepancy between the scores given among and by TLs as well as those awarded by NILE consultants who assessed a sample of videos from a control group for quality control purposes.

Solution: NILE trainers reviewed the assessment forms with the TLs in their regular meetings and gave feedback and training on the key assessment sections. As a result, TLs upskilled in the assessment of observations and use of Excel.

5. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)/Gender equality

The project team prioritised equality, diversity and inclusion by actively monitoring the impact of gender on participation. This approach aimed to identify and mitigate any disadvantages that could affect engagement. By collecting gender-disaggregated data and analysing participation rates, the team ensured that all participants had equal opportunities to benefit from the course.

Teacher data

In this cohort, 91 per cent of the teachers were female. In the NA survey, the cohort communicated their availability to pursue this course would be around 1–2 hours per week (60 per cent).

This was reflected and increased in the end-of-course results, which show that the majority of teachers (72 per cent) spent two hours or less working with *In Class* and a further two hours or less (64 per cent) on additional features of the course.

Childcare issues and household responsibilities affected the ability to dedicate time to this course for approximately half of all participants, while 41 per cent cared for elderly relatives and 33 per cent were affected by another course of study; 39 per cent stated 'other' as a reason preventing sufficient course access.

The range of course elements that teachers found most difficult to fit in to their regular commitments were video observations (30 per cent) and Xiao e Tong (21 per cent). However, 18 per cent of teachers felt that nothing was difficult to fit in with their regular commitments. Unlike team leaders, teachers were not asked which they found the easiest to fit in.

Team leader data

Ninety-five per cent of team leaders were female. Previously the team leaders did not provide data on availability to complete the course. However, in contrast to the teacher survey, end-of-course survey results show that far fewer (55 per cent) spent two hours or less on *In Class,* with 44 per cent spending over three hours. Again, in contrast to the teachers, the majority of team leaders (57 per cent) spent over three hours (with 25 per cent spending over four hours) on additional features of the course.

Childcare issues (56 per cent) and household responsibilities (*c.*42 per cent) affected the team leaders' ability to dedicate time to this course, while 35 per cent cared for elderly relatives and 39 per cent were affected by another course of study; 51 per cent stated 'other' as a reason preventing sufficient course access.

The range of course elements team leaders found the easiest to fit in to their regular commitments were *In Class* modules (37 per cent), with meetings with UK trainers a close second at 36 per cent. Other results showed a third of team leaders found observation assessments and meetings with teachers the most difficult to fit in.

Importantly, approximately 60 per cent of team leaders, in the end-of-course survey, felt reasonably or very confident in using teacher education practices that create an inclusive learning environment. Additionally, 76 per cent felt confident in treating all teachers fairly and with respect, and 67 percent creating a motivating, supportive and inclusive remote learning environment for teachers.

Changes made during course

Analysis of the mid-course survey gave a clear indication of the areas of the course that were more difficult for participants to fit around other commitments. Minimum participation standard was set, which reduced the time commitment in the following ways.
- Video submissions were reduced from seven to three, at beginning, midway and end of course, reducing the time needed to prepare the recording, along with the time spent on pre and post discussion with their buddy.
- Minimum attendance of TAG groups was set at 70 per cent so that participants with other commitments were not penalised for not achieving 100 per cent attendance.
- Minimum submission of homework was set at 60 per cent to reduce the amount of extra work necessary to complete the course.
- Minimum completion of *In Class* core components was set at 70 per cent so that participants did not fall behind the schedule of completing a module every one or two weeks.

Recommendations for future

The self-access modules on *In Class* were the easiest area of the course for participants to fit around other commitments, while meetings with fixed times were the most challenging to fit in to a busy schedule.

A two-tier participation approach would give participants the option to study modules and experiment with language at their own pace.

6. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

6.1 Introduction and expected impact of the project

Several evaluation methods, as defined in project outputs, were used to guide and assess the project. Impact and positive change were primarily assessed through a combination of tools, including self-reporting surveys, short, submitted videos and qualitative feedback.

Surveys

All participants, both team leaders and teachers, were requested to complete a baseline survey. This was followed by mid-course and end-of-course surveys being issued and collected. NILE trainers were also asked to give end-of-course feedback.

Video submissions

To understand the specific change and impact the project had, a control group of 25 teachers was established. This group received more detailed monitoring and evaluation. Control group videos (three per teacher – early, mid and end of course) were assessed using observation criteria established for the course by the team leaders to provide formative feedback for teachers and monitor changes in performance due to input. The video submissions were summatively assessed by NILE consultants against the same criteria.

Focus group

On course completion, a focus group of 12 teachers was conducted to gain further qualitative feedback on the project.

6.2 Baseline/endline findings

Analysis of the TILE project data reveals meaningful improvements in both participant confidence and teaching effectiveness. The findings demonstrate how increased confidence translated into concrete changes in classroom practice, particularly in the use of English for classroom management and student engagement.

Teacher development and impact

Initial baseline data showed that only 40 per cent of teachers felt confident using English in the classroom. By project completion, this percentage increased dramatically to 96 per cent. This quantitative improvement manifested in transformed teaching practices, as one participant explained:

> *I have shifted from a traditional lecture-style approach to a more interactive and collaborative one. Instead of simply presenting grammar rules, I now introduce them through real-life scenarios and encourage students to discover the rules themselves by working in groups and analyzing examples. This has made the learning process more engaging and has helped students better retain the knowledge.*

Teachers reported notable improvements across multiple competency areas. Confidence in using English for classroom management increased from 81 per cent to 96 per cent, while confidence in teaching grammar, words and phrases rose from 66 per cent to 93 per cent. Beyond these metrics, teachers described creating more dynamic learning environments where:

students and teacher are both energetic and active to use English, and the activities in class are in great order and get better results.

The project's impact extended beyond basic classroom management to more sophisticated aspects of teaching. As one participant noted:

The assessment and feedback strategies I learned have enabled me to provide more constructive and timely feedback to students. Instead of just focusing on grades, I now give detailed suggestions for improvement, which helps students grow and develop their skills more effectively.

Core indicator achievement

The effectiveness category increased by 2.5 per cent. Video observations of participating teachers showed that 100 per cent demonstrated improvement in at least one effectiveness criterion, with using English to help students to hear word and sentence stress showing the highest number of teachers who showed improvement (Figure 3).
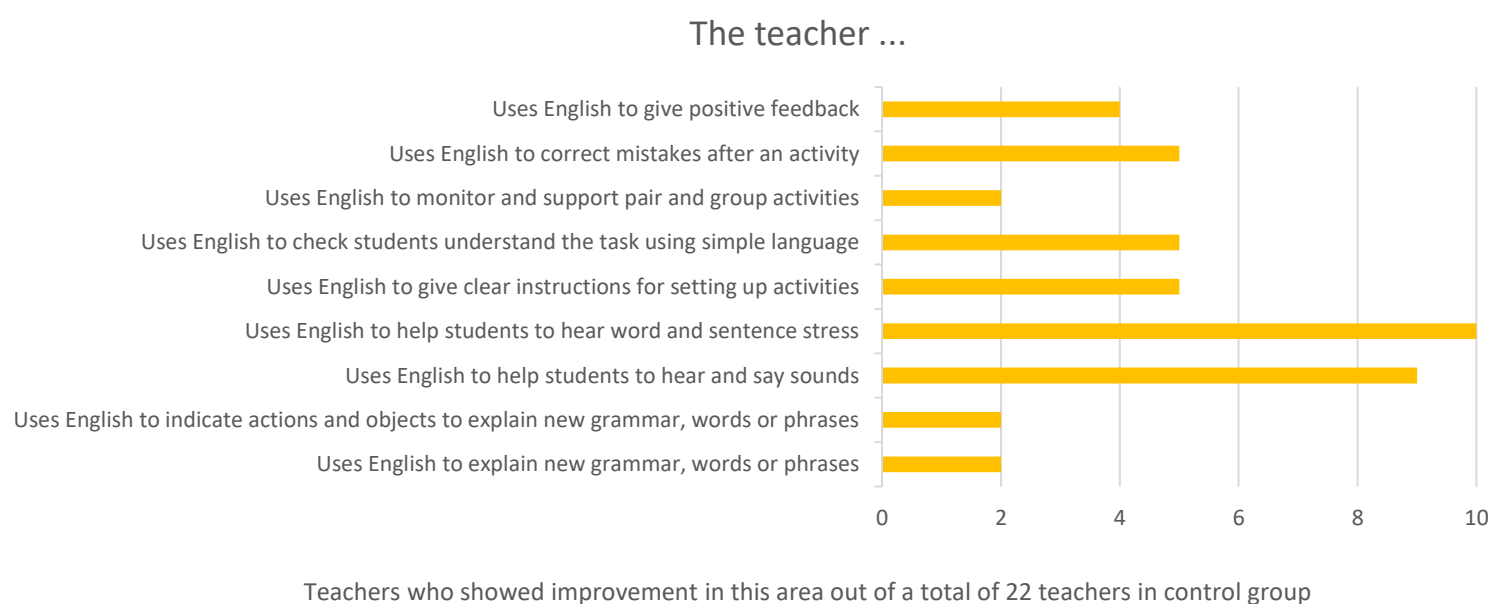
The teacher ...

Criterion	Teachers improved
Uses English to give positive feedback	4
Uses English to correct mistakes after an activity	5
Uses English to monitor and support pair and group activities	2
Uses English to check students understand the task using simple language	5
Uses English to give clear instructions for setting up activities	5
Uses English to help students to hear word and sentence stress	10
Uses English to help students to hear and say sounds	9
Uses English to indicate actions and objects to explain new grammar, words or phrases	2
Uses English to explain new grammar, words or phrases	2

Teachers who showed improvement in this area out of a total of 22 teachers in control group

*Figure 3: The improvement demonstrated in each criterion*

Team leader development

The project's impact extended beyond classroom teachers to team leaders, who showed significant growth in their mentoring capabilities. Analysis of team leader survey data reveals substantial improvement in confidence across all assessed areas. As illustrated in the Figure 4, there was a consistent decrease in the percentage of respondents indicating 'not at all confident', accompanied by a corresponding increase in those identifying as 'reasonably confident'.

1. How confident are you in identifying, selecting, designing and adapting appropriate resources (including digital content) and activities to support teacher development?
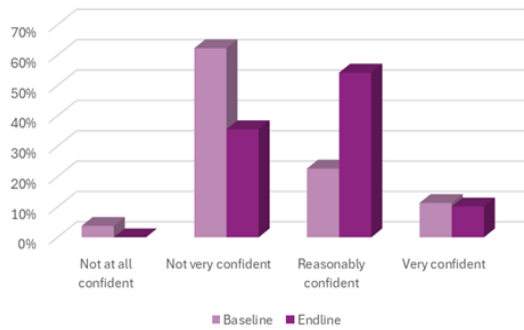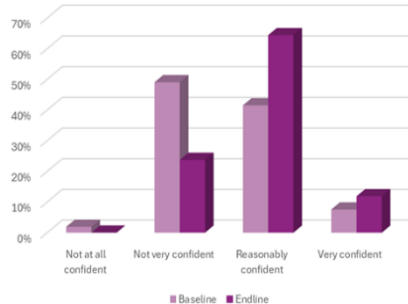
2. How confident are you in organising the course and sessions into coherent and logically ordered stages?
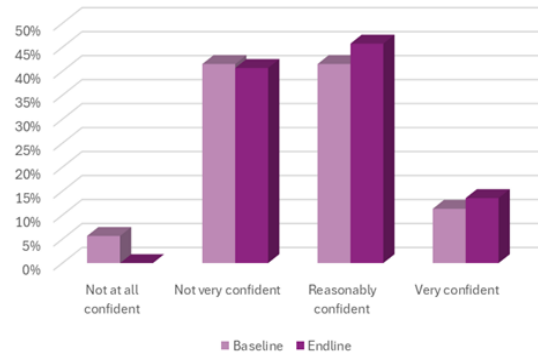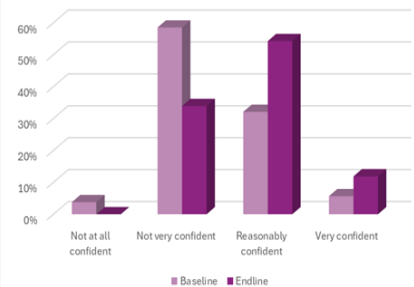
3. How confident are you in communicating clearly, for example, when presenting new information or giving instructions?
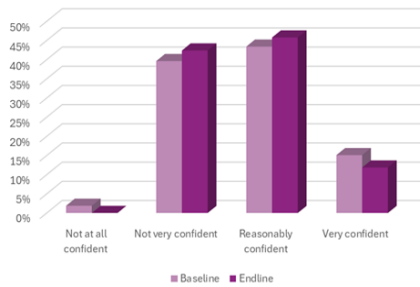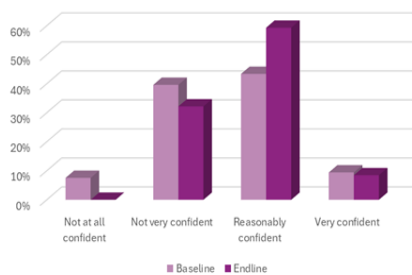
4. How confident are you in making effective use of technology?

5. How confident are you in monitoring teachers' level of understanding and, as a result, making formative instructional decisions?
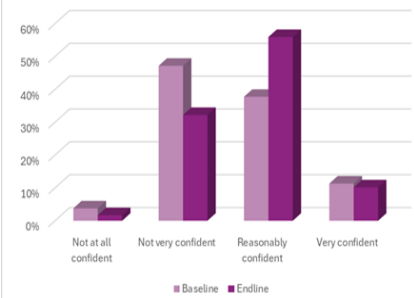
6. How confident are you in evaluating teachers' skills and knowledge using a range of tools and methods, such as (video) observation, self-assessment and peer feedback?
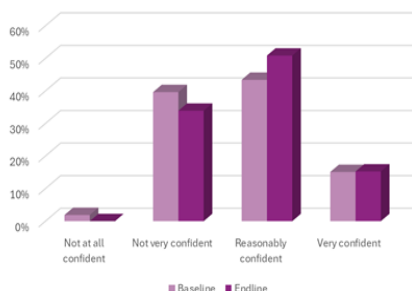
7. How confident are you in giving teachers oral and written feedback that is clear, specific and related to evaluation criteria?
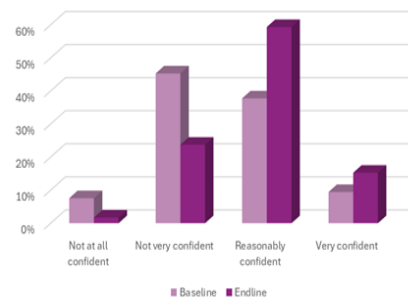
8. How confident are you in evaluating teachers formatively and using the results to support teacher learning?

9. How confident are you in evaluating teachers in a manner that is transparent, fair and which supports their professional learning?

10. How confident are you in explaining, in a manner that motivates teachers, the value of professional development?
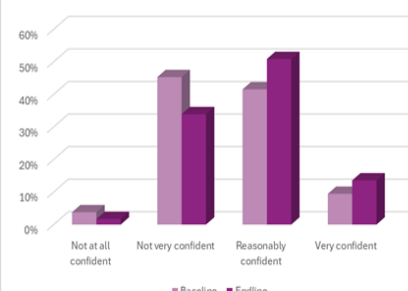
11. How confident are you in providing regular opportunities for teachers to develop their reflective skills?

The transformation in team leader confidence is particularly evident in the cumulative data, as can be seen in Figure 5. The proportion of team leaders reporting themselves as 'reasonably' or 'very confident' increased from 49 per cent 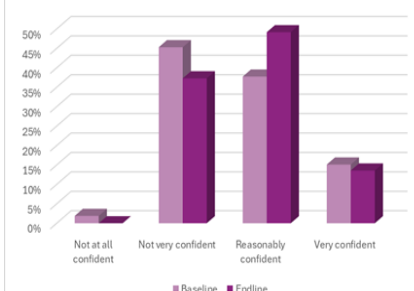to 66 per cent over the course duration. This enhancement in confidence levels indicates successful development of the mentoring capabilities essential for the project's long-term sustainability.
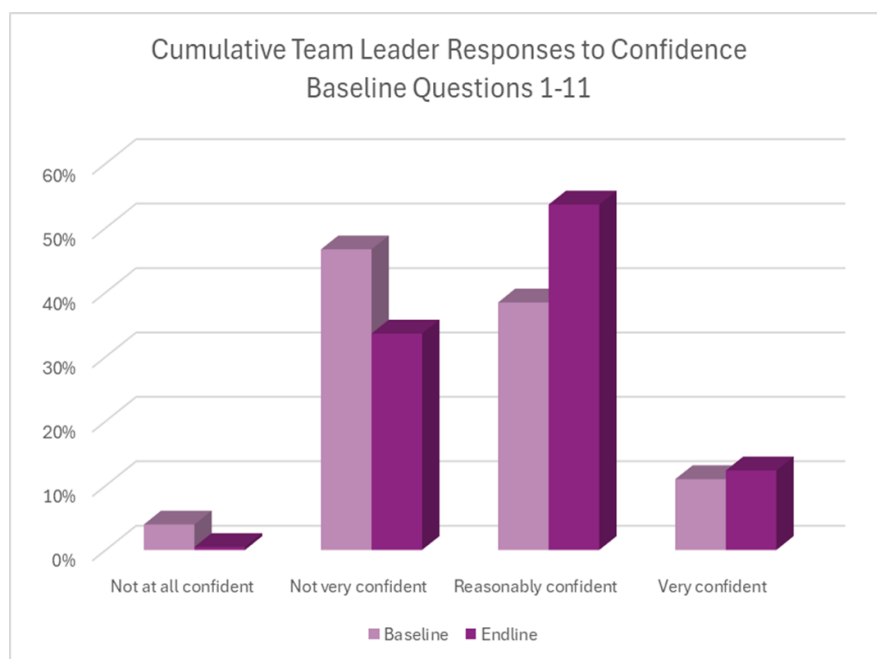
Figure 5: Baseline and endline results for team leaders' confidence levels

Overall programme success

The project maintained strong engagement throughout its implementation (Figure 6), with 83 per cent of teachers completing all course requirements. This included 92 per cent completion of core modules, 96 per cent attendance at team leader meetings and 89 per cent submission of video observations. Additionally, the average attendance of 84 per cent across all webinars demonstrates sustained participant commitment.

Figure 6: Engagement by participants across implementation of the course

This comprehensive evidence suggests that the TILE project successfully achieved its core objectives of enhancing both teacher confidence and effectiveness in using English for classroom management, while also developing a capable cohort of team leaders to support future implementation.

6.3 Feedback survey data

End-of-course surveys provided detailed insights into participant experiences and perceived benefits. The data reveals high satisfaction levels and specific areas of impact.
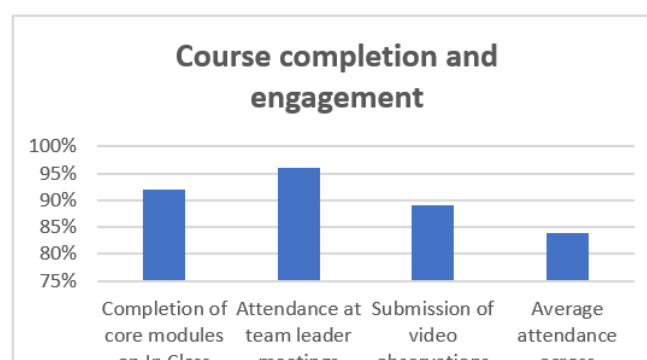
- Teacher development: 95 per cent of teachers reported a meaningful contribution to their professional growth, with particular emphasis on enhanced classroom management skills and increased confidence in spontaneous English usage.
- Team leader growth: 98 per cent of team leaders acknowledged significant professional development benefits, specifically noting improved mentoring capabilities and a deeper understanding of teacher support strategies.
- Implementation challenges: Survey data helped identify key areas for future refinement, particularly regarding technology platform accessibility and time management. These insights have informed our recommendations for future iterations.

Once again, the end-of-course surveys were extremely positive (Figure 7), with participants sharing enthusiastic comments such as:
    'Hold more of these events!'
    'I feel so honoured to attend this event; I hope this project will continue.'
    'Excellent!'
    'Very helpful/useful.'

These responses reflect the participants' appreciation for the course and their desire for further CPD opportunities.
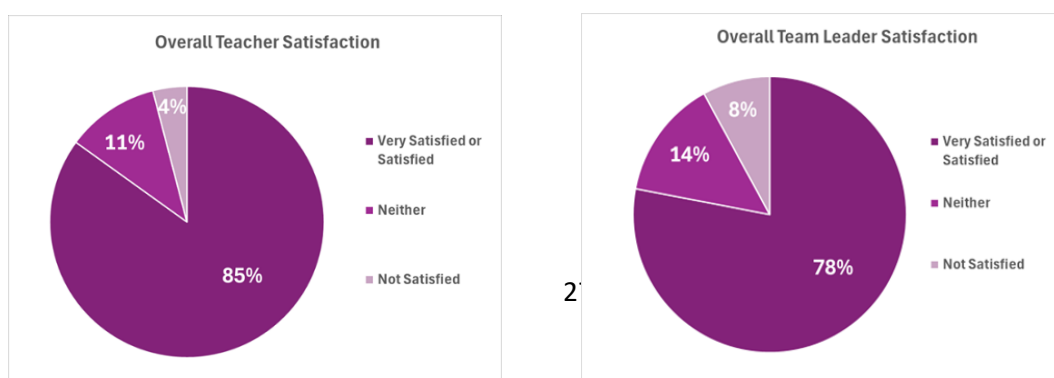
Among the responses for those that were less satisfied were:
'Give more good examples'
'I hope to have some short videos related to textbooks to share'
'It's better to present authentic classroom teaching videos in in class courses'
'chose a better period of time'

Focus group summary

On course completion, 12 teachers participated in a focus group.

Overall, the course was well received, with teachers reporting improved confidence, teaching skills and student engagement. The practical nature of the course and its focus on English language use in the classroom were particularly appreciated.

Positive aspects
● The course improved teachers' confidence in using English in class and general oral skills and increased student participation and understanding.
● Teachers' ability to create an English-speaking environment improved, resulting in better student speaking and listening skills.
● Practical teaching resources such as activities and videos were highly appreciated for their concise, engaging content and practical game demonstrations. The impact of this has been increased student participation. *In Class* expressions, instructions and resource cards were also well received.
● Practical teaching skills, including classroom management and student support, were valuable.
● Classroom organisation skills have improved, with more use of group and pair work.

Webinars
● Initially challenging to understand, but comprehension improved over time.
● Valuable activities include watching teaching videos, having discussions and gaining input from peers and international trainers.

Time constraints
● Teachers acknowledged the need to allocate 1–2 hours per week for the course.
● Preference for evening sessions.
● Suggestion to align course content with coursebooks and exam preparation.

Platform issues
● Password and login problems were reported.
● Some users experienced difficulties accessing resources.

- Desire for continued access to videos after course completion.

6.4 Observation data

Observations of the control group were assessed against a predetermined set of criteria (see Appendix 9.1).

The criteria were divided into three categories: confidence, effectiveness and core indicators. Each criterion was scored from 1 to 4 or N/A, with 4 being *The teacher does this appropriately and well throughout the activity* and 1 being *The teacher does not do this at all*. A final overall score (1–4) was given for the teacher lesson profile reflecting a pre-written lesson content descriptor.

Results were difficult to extrapolate for several reasons and are therefore included in the recommendations in section two.

However, within the effectiveness category, every teacher showed an improvement in at least one of the nine sub-criteria, while in the confidence category, all bar one showed an increase in at least one of the criteria.

By the end of the course, across all observations, the confidence category score showed an increase of 3.75 per cent and the effectiveness category score showed an increase of 2.5 per cent.

A case study of a participating teacher.

Prior to the final webinar, this teacher's video submission was recognized as exemplary by her team leader and a NILE consultant.

The teacher effectively implemented a communicative approach to teaching speaking and listening through dialogues. She structured her activities well, beginning with an engaging video to set the context, followed by the introduction and practice of essential language chunks. Key vocabulary was revised, and pronunciation was emphasized through an interactive 'rapid response game,' culminating in a review of relevant grammatical forms.

During the main activity, the teacher demonstrated confidence in using English to manage the activities. She provided clear instructions tailored to her students' levels, offered choices in dialogues and roles, monitored progress, and conducted sensitive error correction. By allowing private practice before full-class participation and positively reinforcing student efforts with praise, she fostered an inclusive environment.

The results were impressive with students engaging in communication, displaying enjoyment, and participating fully in a supportive learning atmosphere.

This case study illustrates the programme's success in enhancing teacher effectiveness and confidence while serving as a model for peers. The positive feedback from both students and fellow teachers highlights the value of professional development initiatives in improving English language education in China's Junior High Schools.

Figure 8: Individual case study of a participating teacher

See Appendix 9.2 for the full case study of the participating teacher in Figure 8 and Appendix 9.3 for an impact case study of the whole cohort.

7. TILE sustainability

7.1 Introduction

The development of a sustainable and replicable model for English teacher CPD presents a significant opportunity to benefit teachers and students across China. This approach aims to create lasting impact and foster continual improvement in English language education. By focusing on sustainability and scalability, the project seeks to establish a framework that can be adapted and implemented in various regions, ultimately enhancing the quality of English language instruction nationwide.

7.2 Evidence of sustainability

The project's sustainability is evidenced by several key factors. First, the implementation of a buddy system as an ongoing CPD activity throughout and beyond the course highlights the sustainability and accessibility of peer-to-peer support, ensuring teachers continue to learn from and support each other.

Furthermore, the project's success in building confidence among TLs is noteworthy. By the end of the project, an impressive 92 per cent of TLs expressed confidence in their ability to deliver the course again. This high level of self-assurance among TLs is crucial for the long-term viability of the programme, as it ensures a pool of confident and capable individuals with the ability to continue to disseminate the knowledge and skills they have gained from this pilot course.

Another significant aspect contributing to the project's sustainability, and a key area for development, is the creation of a repository of observation videos. As one teacher stated in the focus group, 'I would like more videos of excellent teachers to watch (especially in my own time).' These resources have the potential to serve as valuable training tools, providing a lasting resource that can be utilised in future courses or as ongoing professional development activities when a suitable platform, ensuring privacy, is found.

7.3 Scalability

The scalability of the project is a critical factor in its potential for widespread impact. The recommendation is to have a phased implementation, starting with the wider Tangshan area, before expanding to other regions in China. The project proposes to recruit and train existing TLs, building on their experience from the pilot, to ensure successful rollout across Tangshan and beyond.

This approach allows for refinement based on lessons learned, including process simplification and platform optimisation. A suitable LMS is essential for successful scaling, as the pilot project revealed its importance in maintaining and encouraging community

engagement. Implementing a second phase in Tangshan would allow for further investigation into suitable platforms that support the existing application of the project.

For wider rollout the project proposes to identify regions with potential to recruit partners in line with the Teaching Research Institute of Tangshan Education Bureau. These regions would be appropriate for rollout of the top tier of the project, i.e. the inclusion of mentoring and methodology input. Focusing on these regions would allow for the continued collection of good-practice videos. A bank of these could then be made available as an enhancement to lower-tier, self-study applications of the project.

This strategic, staged approach to scaling aims to maximise impact and ensure long-term success in improving English language education nationwide.

7.4 Lessons learned

The implementation of the course revealed several key areas for improvement. First, the learning platform's effectiveness hinges on selecting a flexible platform, sufficient training for all users and a user-friendly, secure set-up. TLs require thorough training in Excel data input, and spreadsheets should be configured to automatically calculate pass/fail components, streamlining the process.

Participant engagement emerged as a critical factor. Allowing for two pathway options of differing time commitment for teachers and a clear drop-out policy would add flexibility to the programme. Additionally, simplifying the process for teachers to upload videos and buddy feedback forms to the LMS is essential. This simplification not only enhances teacher participation but also reduces the complexity of the TL role, allowing them to focus more on mentoring and less on administrative tasks.

Data collection processes need refinement. A simplified approach, monitored throughout the course duration with assistance from DLs, will ensure more consistent and reliable data gathering. This ongoing monitoring can help identify and address issues promptly, improving the overall quality of collected data.

Finally, the course's duration and timing require reconsideration. Starting the course earlier in the academic year would prevent it from concluding too close to the end of the school year. This adjustment would alleviate time pressures on participants and allow for a more comprehensive learning experience without conflicting with end-of-year responsibilities.

These lessons highlight the importance of user-friendly systems, streamlined processes, effective data management and thoughtful scheduling in enhancing the overall effectiveness of the course.

7.5 Evidence-based project impact

The TILE project has generated substantial evidence of its effectiveness and potential value for future teacher development initiatives in China. This section synthesises key findings that could inform broader educational policy and programme design.

Quantitative evidence of impact

1. Teacher language confidence and usage
   - 96 per cent increase in classroom English usage confidence
   - 95 per cent of teachers report confidence in experimenting with new language
   - 93 per cent confidence increase in teaching grammar, words and phrases (up from 66 per cent baseline)
   - 96 per cent improvement in general English proficiency, with speaking showing the highest gains

2. Teaching effectiveness metrics
   - 100 per cent of teachers showed measurable improvement in at least one effectiveness criterion
   - 95 per cent demonstrated increased confidence in teaching pronunciation (up from 85 per cent)
   - 89 per cent successful completion rate for video observations, providing concrete evidence of classroom implementation

3. Professional development impact
   - 95 per cent of teachers report positive contribution to professional development
   - 83 per cent course completion rate despite significant time constraints
   - 92 per cent completion rate for core *In Class* modules

System-level implementation insights
1. Time and resource requirements
   - 60 per cent of teachers allocated 1–2 hours weekly for course participation
   - Additional two hours weekly spent on supplementary activities
   - Evidence suggests optimal results when integrating coursework with existing teaching responsibilities

2. Platform and technology considerations
   - 90 per cent of teachers indicated preference for mobile-based access
   - WeChat integration proved crucial for communication and engagement
   - Need for localised registration and access solutions identified

3. Mentoring system effectiveness
   - 97 per cent of team leaders reported increased mentoring confidence
   - 92 per cent expressed readiness to deliver future iterations
   - Buddy system showed 94 per cent participation rate among control group

Implications for future implementation

1. Scalability factors
   - Evidence supports two-tier implementation model:
     - Basic tier: self-paced *In Class* learning (suitable for 90 per cent of teachers)
     - Advanced tier: full programme with mentoring support
   - Clear correlation between local leadership engagement and programme success
   - Demonstrated effectiveness across varied teaching contexts (urban, suburban, county, township)

2. Success prerequisites
   - Strong local institutional support
   - Clear communication channels
   - Flexible technology platforms
   - Structured but adaptable mentoring system

3. Resource optimisation
   - Effective ratio of one team leader to 15–25 teachers identified
   - Optimal meeting frequency established (eight meetings over course duration)
   - Evidence-based assessment framework developed and validated

Impact on educational quality
1. Classroom practice transformation
   - Increased English usage in classroom instruction
   - Enhanced student engagement reported
   - Improved classroom management techniques observed

2. Professional community development
   - Sustainable peer support networks established
   - Enhanced collaboration between teachers
   - Improved professional dialogue and feedback mechanisms

3. Long-term sustainability indicators
   - 92 per cent of team leaders confident in future delivery
   - Established local expertise for programme continuation
   - Created reusable resources and assessment tools

Future research and development areas
1. Longitudinal impact study opportunities
   - Control group of 25 teachers available for continued observation
   - Baseline data established for future comparison
   - Framework developed for measuring long-term impact

2. Model adaptation possibilities
   - Evidence supports adaptability to different regional contexts
   - Potential for integration with existing professional development systems

- Opportunities identified for technology platform enhancement

This evidence base provides a strong foundation for decision making about future implementations and adaptations of the TILE model. The data suggests that this approach can be effectively scaled while maintaining quality and impact, particularly when adapted to local contexts and needs.

8. Conclusion

Despite the limitations and challenges detailed in this report, the TILE project has demonstrated significant success in achieving its KPIs and fostering professional development among English teachers in China. The course has exceeded expectations in several crucial areas, specifically in the areas of increasing effectiveness in using English for managing classroom activities and confidence levels.

Key achievements include:
1. teacher confidence: nearly 96 per cent of teachers reported increased confidence in using English for classroom management, surpassing the 80 per cent target
2. teacher effectiveness in using English for managing classroom activities: 100 per cent of teachers showed an improvement in at least one of the effectiveness criteria during video observations
3. professional development: 95 per cent of teachers felt the course contributed to their professional growth, exceeding the 80 per cent goal
4. course completion: 83 per cent of teachers successfully completed the course, with high engagement rates across various components
5. team leader development: almost 97 per cent of TLs reported increased confidence in mentoring, with 98 per cent acknowledging the course's contribution to their professional development
6. overall course satisfaction: 85 per cent of teachers and 78 per cent of TLs were satisfied or very satisfied with the course.

Challenges of the project include:

for UK providers
1. tailored support: there is a need to provide graded language support and resources to accommodate varying proficiency levels among TLs, ensuring effective communication and engagement

for the British Council
2. platform suitability: there is a need for a more appropriate LMS that aligns with project requirements and user accessibility in the Chinese context
3. simplified processes: streamlining data input, video uploads and data collection to reduce administrative complexity and enhance overall project efficiency

4. timing considerations: there is a need for consideration of starting the course earlier in the academic year to avoid conflicts with end-of-year activities, ensuring optimal participant engagement and ease of data collection
5. reducing complexity for team leaders: there is a need to simplify and reduce the TLs' role by minimising administrative time through process automation and providing clearer guidelines to help them focus more on mentoring and teacher development

for external partners
6. participant selection: there is a need for a considerate recruitment process to identify teachers and TLs who are well suited for the programme's demands and objectives. This process requires careful attention to balance the diverse needs and capabilities of potential participants while maintaining the programme's high standards.

The overall success of the project, evidenced by the high achievement rates across KPIs, demonstrates its significant impact on teacher development and classroom practice. Moving forward, implementing the lessons learned will be crucial in refining the programme and ensuring its continued success and relevance in supporting English language teaching in China.

9. Appendices

9.1 Observation criteria

Confidence
Criteria rubric   **1 – The teacher does not do this at all.**   **2 – The teacher does this, but not always appropriately.**   **3 – The teacher does this, mostly appropriately and well.**   **4 – The teacher does this appropriately and well throughout the activity.**   **N/A – Not relevant to this activity**
The teacher uses language that has a good pace for the students. *I.e. teacher doesn't appear too hesitant or isn't speaking too fast.*
The teacher is able to adapt his/her English language as needed to help students understand. *I.e. teacher feels confident in changing how they present in English.*
The teacher is able to spontaneously interact with the students in English. *I.e. the teacher feels confident in their use of English to speak about unplanned topics in English.*

The teacher asks questions and responds to student questions in English. *I.e. the teacher feels confident enough to converse with students in English for clarification or feedback.*

The teacher experiments with new language in the activity. *I.e. the teacher uses language from the TILE project or other language they may be experimenting with.*

Effectiveness

Criteria rubric

1 – The teacher does not do this at all.

2 – The teacher does this, but not always appropriately.

3 – The teacher does this, mostly appropriately and well.

4 – The teacher does this appropriately and well throughout the activity.

N/A – Not relevant to this activity

The teacher uses English to explain new grammar, words or phrases.

The teacher uses English to indicate actions and objects to explain new grammar, words or phrases.

The teacher uses English to help students to hear and say sounds.

The teacher uses English to help students to hear word and sentence stress.

The teacher uses English to give clear instructions for setting up activities.

The teacher uses English to check students understand the task using simple language.

The teacher uses English to monitor and support pair and group activities.

The teacher uses English to correct mistakes after an activity.

The teacher uses English to give positive feedback.

Core indicators

	4.1 Fair treatment of learners
1	The teacher consciously excludes and/or consciously allows others to exclude learners based on their ethnicity, religion, language, ability or socio-economic status.
2	The teacher unconsciously excludes and/or unconsciously allows others to exclude learners based on their ethnicity, religion, language, ability or socio-economic status.

3	The teacher treats learners equally without bias but does not necessarily prioritise opportunities for disadvantaged groups to participate in class.
4	The teacher treats all learners equally without bias and draws on a range of equity strategies to prioritise opportunities for disadvantaged groups to participate in class.
	4.2 Gender equity
1	The teacher <u>consciously</u> excludes and/or consciously allows others to exclude learners based on their gender.
2	The teacher <u>unconsciously</u> excludes and/or unconsciously allows others to exclude learners based on gender.
3	The teacher treats learners equally without bias based on gender but does not necessarily prioritise opportunities for all learners to participate in class.
4	The teacher treats learners equally without bias based on gender and draws on a range of equity strategies to prioritise opportunities for all learners to participate in class.
	4.3 Catering to individual needs
1	The teacher makes no attempt to cater to learners' individual needs and different ways of learning.
2	The teacher makes some attempt to cater to learners' individual needs and different ways of learning but has difficulty managing differentiated learning tasks and techniques in class.
3	The teacher caters to learners' individual needs and different ways of learning, using a limited repertoire of differentiated learning tasks and techniques with some success.
4	The teacher consistently caters to learners' individual needs and different ways of learning, managing an appropriate range of differentiated learning tasks, techniques and supplementary materials.
	5.1 Development of creativity and/or imagination skills
1	The teacher does not set tasks that encourage learner creativity and/or imagination.
2	The teacher attempts to set tasks that encourage learner creativity and/or imagination but does not optimise the tasks' full potential in the lesson.
3	The teacher sets tasks that encourage learner creativity and/or imagination somewhat effectively.
4	The teacher sets appropriate tasks to encourage learner creativity and/or imagination and uses effective scaffolding and other techniques to optimise the tasks' full potential.
	6.2 Teacher uses teacher talk time (TTT) and learner talking time (LTT) appropriately
1	The teacher uses TTT excessively and prevents learners from interacting enough.
2	The teacher uses TTT appropriately for the lesson in parts but doesn't always give enough time for LTT.

3	The teacher uses a balance of TTT and LTT mostly appropriately for the lesson, but some TTT could still be reduced.
4	The teacher balances TTT and LTT appropriately to maximise opportunities for learners to engage in collaborative learning.
	6.3 Pair work and group work
1	There is no pair/group work. Only individual/whole-class interaction patterns are used.
2	The teacher uses some pair/group work, but often not appropriately or meaningfully.
3	The teacher usually uses pair/group work appropriately and meaningfully, with some minor exceptions.
4	The teacher consistently uses pair/group work appropriately, meaningfully and in a way that ensures learning aims are achieved through participatory, learner-centred activities.
	7.1 Teacher's use of English
1	The teacher does not use English at all, or else uses it inappropriately for the learners' level.
2	The teacher uses some English, but not always appropriately for the learners' level.
3	The teacher uses English mostly appropriately for the learners' level.
4	The teacher uses English appropriately for the learners' level.
	7.2 Learners' use of English
1	The learners barely speak in English during the lesson other than to repeat after the teacher or to say one or two words. They avoid speaking in English when given the opportunity.
2	Learners use some English, but generally only during controlled drills or in the occasional response. They require a lot of encouragement to speak in English.
3	Learners speak in English when given the opportunity for the most part, and some try to use English to communicate in meaningful ways.
4	Learners regularly use English productively and/or creatively. Most of them take advantage of opportunities to use English in the classroom.
	7.4 Teacher's use of learners' community or home languages
1	The teacher does not utilise learners' existing linguistic resources to support learning, even though it could be appropriate to do so.
2	The teacher uses the learners' existing linguistic resources but over- or underuses them or else uses them inappropriately.
3	The teacher uses the learners existing linguistic resources during the lesson to support learning, mostly appropriately.
4	The teacher uses the learners existing linguistic resources during the lesson in an appropriate and principled way to support learning.

	8.2 Effective use of learning materials
1	Learning materials are used to keep learners busy rather than to support learning. Learners are not given any clear purpose to engage with the materials.
2	Learning materials are used in a very controlled way which doesn't always support learning. The teacher misses opportunities to use the resources flexibly and/or to give learners a clear purpose for using them.
3	Learning materials are used in a mostly effective way. The teacher uses the materials somewhat flexibly and gives the learners a purpose to engage with them that supports the learning aims.
4	Learning materials are used in a meaningful and flexible way to engage learners and support their achievement of the learning aims
	9.1 Assessment (e.g. checking understanding of new language, concepts)
1	The teacher does not appear to do any formal or informal assessment of learning during the lesson.
2	The teacher makes some attempt to do formal and/or informal assessment of learning during the lesson, but it is inconsistent or inappropriate.
3	The teacher does some formal and/or informal assessment of learning during the lesson.
4	The teacher uses formal and/or informal assessment of learning techniques appropriately and consistently during the lesson.
	9.2 Error correction and feedback
1	The teacher does not notice errors and does not provide error correction and/or feedback, or correction and feedback are done in a negative way.
2	The teacher attempts to provide constructive feedback, but many errors are missed or not corrected appropriately.
3	The teacher provides some positive and constructive feedback, with some good examples of error correction.
4	The teacher uses an appropriate balance of indirect and direct error-correction techniques and provides positive and constructive feedback to support learning.
Teacher lesson profile	
1	The teacher does not provide a good model for learners because his/her language proficiency is limited or s/he does not adjust language to the learners' level. The teacher does not use effective methods or use appropriate resources for developing English skills or systems because there is an overemphasis on superficial or rote learning. Learners are not adequately challenged and spend the majority of the lesson passively watching or listening to the teacher rather than being actively engaged in using English.

2	The teacher has a limited knowledge of English systems and skills and is thus not an ideal model for learners and misses opportunities to use other resources to expose them to a better model. The methods and resources used by the teacher are limited in their effectiveness and, as a result, learners may not be given opportunities to develop language systems and skills in meaningful ways. The teacher does not fully challenge learners or use techniques that reflect an up-to-date knowledge of current theories of language acquisition. Learners spend more class time watching or listening to the teacher than being actively engaged in using English.
3	The teacher has a good knowledge of English and ensures learners are provided a good model of English, which may be achieved with additional resources. The teacher uses mostly appropriate methods and resources to help learners develop their language awareness, accuracy and fluency. The techniques used are designed to challenge learners and involve them in the learning activities.
4	The teacher has an excellent knowledge of English and ensures learners are exposed to good models of English, which may be achieved with additional resources. The teacher uses effective methods and engaging activities to give learners opportunities to use language in creative and meaningful ways for different authentic purposes. The teacher skilfully adjusts learning techniques to both challenge and captivate learners as the situation demands.

9.2 Individual case study

Introduction
This case study highlights the exceptional performance of a Chinese English teacher who participated in the TILE project aimed at primarily improving confidence and effectiveness in using English for managing classroom activities, while also contributing to their overall professional growth. Additionally, the programme sought to gain insights into the current language context and challenges faced by English teachers in Junior High Schools within China's basic education system.

Professional recognition
Prior to the final learning-impact webinar, this teacher's video submission was highlighted as an exemplary case by her TL and deemed by a NILE consultant to be the strongest example. As such, it was used to demonstrate several areas of good practice, detailed below. Webinar participants expressed strong interest in her techniques, with many requesting access to the full video for further study and implementation in their own classrooms.

Teacher profile
The teacher demonstrated outstanding skills in implementing a communicative approach to teaching speaking and listening through the use of dialogues.

Activity preparation, set-up
The teacher demonstrated a well-structured activity set-up, integrating multiple effective stages. She began by setting the context with a brief, engaging video and then moved on to provide and practise essential language chunks. Key vocabulary was revised and a focus on pronunciation achieved through an interactive 'rapid response game'. The preparation stage was finished with a targeted review and practice of relevant grammatical forms.

Activity implementation

The teacher's approach to the main activity demonstrated her confidence and effectiveness in using English to set up and manage the classroom activity by implementing many of the features of the course included on the *In Class* platform:

- providing clear, supported instructions using simple language graded to the students' level
- offering students choices in dialogues and roles for the practice activity
- monitoring and conducting sensitive error correction during the activity
- ensuring inclusive participation by giving students the opportunity to practise privately before volunteering for full-class performance
- positively reinforcing students' abilities through praise and encouragement.

Student engagement and feedback

The teacher's methods resulted in:

- meaningful communication among students
- visible enjoyment in the activity
- full participation in a safe and encouraging learning environment.

This case study demonstrates the successful achievement of the programme's objectives. The featured teacher exhibited confidence and effectiveness in using English for classroom management and activities. Her approach not only contributed to her own professional development but also served as a 'good practice' model for her peers. The positive response from both students and fellow teachers underscores the value of such professional development initiatives in enhancing the quality of English language education in China's Junior High Schools.

9.3 Impact case study

Case study summary

This case study analyses the impact of CPD activities on TILE project participants, emphasising teacher confidence, effectiveness and needs. It compares baseline and endline survey results and incorporates qualitative observation comments from control-group videos to assess the impact of CPD on teaching practices.

Initial landscape

At the outset, Chinese English teachers recorded low confidence levels across various aspects of language instruction, which indicated significant room for improvement in teacher confidence and effectiveness.

Table 1: Baseline and endline results for teacher confidence

Aspect of teaching	Baseline	Endline	Change
Teachers feel confident using English in the classroom	40%	96%	+56%
Teachers feel confident using English for classroom management	33%	96%	+63%
Teachers feel confident using English for managing activities	81%	96%	+15%
Teachers feel most confident teaching grammar, words and phrases	18%	45%	+27%
Teachers feel confident in using English to help students hear and say sounds	85%	95%	+10%

Outcomes

Following the TILE course, substantial improvements were observed as shown in Table 1. Additionally, and quite significantly, 95 per cent of teachers expressed confidence in experimenting with new *In Class* language, which was borne out in the qualitative observations.

Control-group video observations revealed several positive aspects of teaching practices.

1. **Incorporation and experimentation of *In Class* language**: Teachers demonstrated successful efforts to experiment with and integrate *In Class* language.
2. **Clear communication**: Teachers used simple, accessible English for task instructions.
3. **Pronunciation and error correction**: There was evidence of effective pronunciation, error correction and drilling, with positive modelling of phrases or words.
4. **Confidence and engagement**: Teachers were confident, clear about activity set-ups and engaged openly with students, creating a warm and inclusive classroom atmosphere.

Analysis

The dramatic increase in teacher confidence across various aspects of English language instruction suggests that CPD can significantly impact teaching effectiveness. The high percentage of teachers willing to experiment with new language in the classroom (95 per cent) indicates a positive shift towards using English more for managing activities. The qualitative observations support these quantitative improvements, showing that teachers are applying new skills in teaching pronunciation and areas of classroom management.

Ultimately, more confident and skilled teachers are likely to have a positive impact on student learning outcomes and overall English language education quality in China's education system.