

Appendix 8

China partner proposed project details

**UK - China Research and Materials
Development Awards**

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The text provided below has been created by the relevant China partners to highlight their needs, from their perspective, with limited input by the British Council. The content below provides a proposed project context, content and desired outcomes that have been outlined by the China partner based on their specific contextual knowledge and highlights the resources that they can also offer to support the project.

Applications made by the UK partner should take this context into account and highlight how they can best support these needs, facilitating the creation of provincial and/or national impact.

1. Researching the impact of a CLIL curriculum and accompanying digital Teacher Training course focusing on improving child health and safety

Award Type: EMaDA

China Partner: The Public Service Bureau of High-Tech Zone of Chongqing Municipality

RESEARCH FOCUS

The objective of this joint research project is to improve and record changes in teacher and student awareness and confidence towards child safety and health, through the delivery of an online teacher training course (to provide foundation knowledge for teachers), and the piloted implementation of a school based CLIL¹ (content and language integrated learning) course curriculum on student health and safety aimed at primary and junior high middle school level. This will be developed based on local contextual needs identified in Chongqing, with input on best practices from the UK.

It is intended that the course curriculum for classroom teaching and the online training course for English teachers, as well as experience and reflection accumulated through the pilot, will be shared to wider education partners in China and the international community, in order to promote and enhance child protection, safety and health in schools through English.

DESCRIPTION OF ANY SPECIFIC OUTPUTS REQUIRED AS PART OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITY

1. **A comprehensive and publishable research report** on the change in awareness of teachers and students in areas of student health and safety through design and implementation of a CLIL curriculum and related Teacher Training course designed to teach students about health and safety. This will include a
 - 1.) baseline (needs analysis) of current teacher and student awareness and confidence with regards to children's health and safety in schools to support creation of the CLIL course curriculum and Teacher Training course
 - 2.) monitoring and evaluation of the Teacher Training course pilot implementation
 - 3.) monitoring and evaluation of the CLIL course pilot delivery
 - 4.) follow up research and evaluation of the impact.

The final report will highlight key findings, successes, and challenges; while making recommendations on how the curriculum might be further improved to better meet local

¹ Language = English

needs and improve teacher and student awareness of student health and safety on a larger scale.

2. **A one semester school-based curriculum outline (and any related supporting documents) for an English-based CLIL course** on student health and safety at primary and junior high middle school level. In addition to English language enhancement this course will raise students' awareness of common safety protocols and good practice, including those from the UK, bolstering international and intercultural understanding between China and the UK, whilst enhancing students' overall understanding of the need to focus on safety.

3. **A bilingual self-access online training course for English teachers** to provide familiarity with the curriculum, its constructs, and key areas of content/modules to be taught. Content of Teacher Training modules will include key areas within: Student Safety; Student Health **and** Child Protection training. This course will provide teachers with the knowledge and tools to design their **own** course content and activities within the curriculum guidelines created in output 2 while raising teachers' overall awareness of student health & safety, child protection, and related classroom language. The training course and its format will be created for and be hosted on a platform identified by the local partner.

4. **A bilingual online teaching materials pack (for classroom use)** to allow frontline teachers to deliver the CLIL course on Student Health and Safety. This pack will include a set of lesson plans, learning materials, related audiovisual resources, and assessment support, for direct use by teachers in the classroom when they teach the outlined CLIL course.

POTENTIAL/DESIRED IMPACT

The focus of this research is aligned with the latest policy of the Chinese government on student 'Safety and Health' for primary and junior high middle school sectors. It will serve as a good sample of how to carry out the policy and help develop the awareness of student safety and health for school authorities, whilst also promoting other key competencies such as intercultural awareness and English language ability. Teachers and students will benefit in terms of new and valuable knowledge, whilst bolstering their second language skills.

The output of the research will be assessed through pilot feedback and, after any necessary adaptation, will be provided to all primary and junior high middle schools in the Chongqing High-tech Development Zone and the wider Chongqing region. This will also be shared with other regions and provinces.

The project outputs will be used in one of the following ways:

Classroom content and curriculum outline (provincially and nationally):

1. To be taught as a full CLIL course within current curricular time schedules.
2. Embedded into normal ELT class content.
3. To be used as a supplementary CLIL course in addition to current curricular content, possibly in extra-curricular time slots.

Online teacher-training course (provincially and nationally):

1. Become a required CPD course for in-service English teachers.
2. Provide guidance for future CLIL course delivery, as required.
3. Be provided as an optional part of teacher's CPD in Chongqing primary and junior high middle schools.

Successful experiences from the Chongqing High-tech Development Zone project will be shared in national and international forums with support from the China and UK partners.

PROJECT CONTEXT

The China Ministry of Education (MoE) has recently (2021) announced national guiding policy on incorporating health and safety into school curriculums and textbook design. There has always been a specific subject on health and safety in primary and junior high middle schools, but no such course curriculum or content was embedded in English classes.

As it is encouraged by the MoE to incorporate safety and health content into each subject, as appropriate, there is a strong possibility that research and a pilot that embeds curriculum and content about student health and safety into English language teaching will be of national interest and have national impact.

Chongqing high-tech zone is a pioneering zone for education in the western China region, with a strategy of SMART Education (SMART Children / Teacher / Classroom / School) at its heart. Student health and safety is regarded as a component of 'SMART children' by the China partner, who would now like to work with a UK partner on the creation of a relevant and culturally appropriate curriculum that can improve teacher awareness and knowledge in this key area through online training, implementation of relevant resources in local schools, as well as rolling this out to wider regions.

ROLES

Chinese team key roles:

- Support design of research tools
- Support disseminations
- Provide translation services
- Review and consult on curriculum and materials created
- Provide feedback on report
- IT and hosting support for online training course

Members

1. Steering Group:

- Zhou Wenyang, Director of public Service Bureau of Chongqing High-tech Zone
- Liu Xiaohong, Deputy Director of Academic Affairs Center of Chongqing High-tech Zone

Roles

- Mr. Zhou Wenyang plans the overall project and makes necessary adjustments during the research. Ms Liu Xiaohong monitors the research progress.

2. Academic Advisory Group:

- Wang Ruoyu, Primary School English Education Researcher from Chongqing Education Research Institute
- Wu Jiawen, High School English Education Researcher from Chongqing Education Research Institute

Roles

- Ms Wang Ruoyu and Mr Wu Jiawen provide academic guidance

3. Lead Research Group:

- Zhang Yunjian Primary School English Education Researcher from Chongqing High-tech Zone
- Yu Haiyang Junior High School English Education Researcher from Chongqing High-tech Zone

Roles

- Mr. Zhang Yunjian and Mr. Yu Haiyang lead the team to do the research.

4. Research Team:

Principals and English Teachers in chosen schools will be involved in the research and offer translation of the course materials developed.

At the end of the research term, the UK team will provide the outputs listed above based on the survey of the actual situation in Chongqing High-tech Zone.

BUDGET

Fund from the British Council: max. 30,000 - 50,000GBP/ Not to exceed 50,000GBP

The Public Service Bureau of Chongqing High-Tech Zone will provide 15,000 GBP in-kind funding, to cover its staffing, expert consultancy, admin, travel and other possible costs in this project. IT and hosting support for the online training course will also be provided by the China side.

2. Research on rural students thinking skills development within the English Subject in primary and secondary schools in Hubei province

Award Type: EMaDA

China Partner: Hubei Institute of Education Sciences (HIES) affiliated to Department of Education of Hubei Province

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Senior High Middle School Curriculum Standards, including English, was released in 2017-18 and since then there has been much attention paid to core competencies that must be met. However, little attention has so far been placed on the development journey learners make within compulsory education before reaching senior high middle school (grades 10 – 12), and this is particularly the case in relation to rural areas where, in fact, many students leave formal education before reaching senior high middle school. Subsequently, they are not afforded the same life-affirming benefits of developing core competencies that can help them in later life. Often by the time students reach senior high, significant opportunity has been lost to develop life-long learning habits, autonomy and thinking skills therefore ensuring these can develop early is important.

This research intends to focus on the core competency component of 'Thinking Skills' ([Wang & Luo, 2019](#))², as identified in Senior High Middle School Curriculum Standards, and explore how English teachers at primary and junior high middle school (grades 7 – 9) level are laying the foundations for their students' development of Thinking Skills in a way that builds towards what will be required at Senior High Middle School level and beyond.

Using Senior High Middle School Curriculum Standards core competency requirements as the basis of reference, through analysis of current teacher practices, awareness and feelings, a framework of practical reference will also be developed that presents stakeholders with progressive milestones that guide English teachers to support their students, particularly in rural primary and junior high middle schools, to improve how they begin and continue to develop students' 'Thinking Skills' from an early age and support that development through primary and junior high middle school.

In 2022, it is expected the new national primary and junior high middle school English curriculum will be released. No date has been confirmed for this as yet, but it is expected that this will play some part in the findings and framework developed here.

² Wang, Q and Luo, SQ (2019) Shifting from Teaching the Subject to Developing Core Competencies Through the Subject: The Revised Senior Middle School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition) in China found in Gao, X (2019) Shifting from Teaching the Subject to Developing Core Competencies Through the Subject: The Revised Senior Middle School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition) in China, Springer Switzerland AG. Accessed at: <https://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007%2F978-3-030-02899-2>

DESCRIPTION OF ANY SPECIFIC OUTPUTS REQUIRED AS PART OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITY

There are 2 key outputs, and two optional outputs:

1. A **professionally produced and disseminable landscape research report** that identifies:

- What rural and suburban primary and junior high middle school English teachers in Hubei are currently doing to support thinking skills at primary and junior high middle school levels, *with clear reference to the future goals and standards of senior high middle school.*
- What rural and suburban primary and junior high middle school English teachers in Hubei could do differently to better support students to develop their thinking skills and prepare them for future curricular demands.
- What gaps in practice there are between rural and suburban English teachers in Hubei in their development of students' 'Thinking Skills' and consider reasons for this.
- Recommendations for improvement that are exemplified in Output 2.

This finalised report will be disseminated at ELT conferences in China and provided to the Hubei Provincial Education Department to inform their decision making on teacher CPD. This can contribute to future teacher development opportunities and support the ongoing assessment of teaching and thinking skills development in rural areas.

2. A **referenceable bilingual framework** (separately or as an appendix³) that:

- 1) Provides key achievable objectives and/or milestones that English teachers can work towards to support the development of 'Thinking Skills' from Grade 3 to 9, in tandem with their English language teaching goals, and with particular focus on rural English teacher needs. This should build towards senior high middle school expectations.

3. Optional outputs – post project opportunities

Based on the project findings and data the Chinese partner plans to publish two further papers. There will be opportunity for the UK partner to further these additional research outputs through bilateral discussion and cooperation.

Paper for publication 1: Exploring the standard of thinking skills development in primary and junior high middle school English classroom practices in rural areas of Hubei province: a case study.

³ Where possible presenting the framework online for increased dissemination would be preferred.

Paper for publication 2: Investigating the current practices in student thinking skill enhancement in relation to the core competence of Thinking Skills in primary and junior high middle school English teaching in rural areas of Hubei province.

POTENTIAL/DESIRED IMPACT

Short term:

This research will:

- Identify gaps between teaching methods, teacher skills, and available resources between rural and suburban English teachers at primary and junior high middle school level.
- Provide policy makers, principals and leaders with a better understanding, and awareness of the needs of English teachers in different contexts within Hubei province, allowing them to make better decisions to support teachers in these contexts.
- Improve teachers' understanding of, and capacity to, develop students' thinking skills at primary and junior high middle school level with a forward focus

Mid to longer term:

The research will:

- Contribute to comprehensive, long term student thinking skills development in rural areas within English language classes.
- Contribute to greater skills development and interest in language learning amongst primary and junior high middle school students in rural areas through increased relevance to local lives

As Hubei is one of the most important and influential education provinces in China, and also the inner area of China, the findings and proposals gained in this research can have great impact on other rural areas in their English language teaching and learning in China, offering an exponential increase on the effect of the ensuing research.

PROJECT CONTEXT

As an important part of China's education, building equity in rural education is essential to its rural revitalization strategy, and this is strongly embedded within the Chinese government's education reform 2035 goals, which strongly emphasize the importance of students' life-long learning and the realization of education modernization.

Much research in China has been done in cities and suburban areas while in rural areas more in-depth investigations are still needed. Published research studies are mainly related to

curriculum and organizational matters as well as teachers' views in suburban areas, but few research studies have been conducted to reveal how the student core competences, including Thinking Skills (思维品质), are developed in more rural areas and what the challenges there are for both teachers and students in these contexts.

Taking the view that development of skills associated with Thinking Skills is a long term, progressive journey it is important to investigate how teachers and students are beginning this journey to provide the best possible foundation for future achievement. In the interests of baselining current standards, and establishing the groundwork for greater education equity, both rural and suburban schools will be investigated thereby offering: 1. Possible targets for future policy based on the reduction of identified disparities and 2. Possible targets for improvement based on overall need in both rural and suburban areas.

ROLES

Primary sector (Grades 3 – 6)

Zhou Shijie

As a special-class English teacher in Hubei Province, the principal researcher of this project has been teaching and researching in English education in primary schools in Hubei Province for over 16 years. Recently, he was the key investigator and researcher for five key projects, including task-based Classroom Design for Primary School English, a Research on the Teaching Mode and Performance of English Air Class in Rural Primary Schools and etc. He has published more than 10 research reports and papers, written and compiled a book and a set of other teaching materials for primary school English (grade 3-6), as well as the teachers' books and activity manuals. Being trained at University of Brighton and by the British Council, the principal researcher can ensure that the project be completed on time with quality and quantity guaranteed.

Prof Liang Xiaohua from Zhongnan University of Economics and Law has been the chairwoman of the Hubei Primary School English Teaching Steering Committee, established by Hubei Provincial Education Department, and has carried out many influential research projects in primary schools in China. Other research team members are Prof Liang's research team including Li Zhongzheng, Wu Yiran and Prof Ruan Quanyou, from School of Foreign languages, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law.

The joint efforts of the team will lay a solid foundation for completion of this project and the output of this research. In addition, the research team consists of local teachers, and other academic expertise, which highlights the strong synergy: both old and young, theoretical and practical. The members of the research team include not only influential experts in education science research, but also front-line teachers in primary and secondary schools with rich teaching and research experiences and also young lecturers with interdisciplinary backgrounds.

Junior High Middle School (Grades 7 – 9)

Led by Ms. Luo Zhihui, Hubei Institute of Education Sciences (HIES) is the overall project lead, in partnership with the Research Centre for English Education in Rural China led by Dr Yan Chunmei and her research team. Key personnel are:

Hubei Institute of Education Sciences:

- Ms. Luo Zhihui, Provincial-level English Teacher Researcher for Junior High Sector
- Ms. Li Lingjuan, Qianjiang English Teacher Master Studio Host (潜江市名师工作室主持人), a highly commended and experienced teacher who has participated in previous Hubei DoE's Teacher Trainer Development programmes in partnership with the British Council.

Research Centre for English Education in Rural China, Central China Normal University

- Dr Yan Chunmei, a PhD holder from Lancaster University, and her research team.

Other members of the research team:

- Teacher researchers at different administrative levels in Hubei under the leadership of HIES.

BUDGET

The British Council will allocate between 30,000-40,000GBP to the UK partner for the research to be investigated and written, and the outputs created.

HIES will allocate no less than RMB 50,000 yuan for primary and RMB 50,000 yuan for secondary for this research project, supporting actual costs such as necessary travel, materials preparation, report writing, and other possible local costs in the implementation of research in China. There will also be other sources of funding made available to cover the research team's time in conducting and participating in the research, such as collecting data, processing data analysis, and participating in research seminars, forums, conferences, as needed.