A Study on constructing a Professional Teacher Learning Framework in JCGS PYP

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Abstract: This paper discusses the evolution of professional teacher development at JCGS PYP. We present innovative teacher learning frameworks and successful examples. Our research aims to provide teaching professionals and educators with effective practices implemented at JCGS PYP, fostering long-term teacher growth. This project comprises five action groups, each focusing on distinct topics, enabling teachers to learn and apply these concepts in their daily teaching.

Keywords: professional teacher learning framework, action group, examples

Background

Analysis of Teaching Staff Background in Jurong Country Garden School's PYP Primary School:

Jurong Country Garden School opened in September 2013. The number of faculty and staff has steadily grown from 30 in 2013 to 60 in 2016. Of the newly recruited teachers, 85% are college graduates with no prior teaching experience, while the remaining 15% have teaching experience in public or private schools but lack IB teaching experience.

Questionnaire introduction and analysis

A brief description of the questionnaire

In order to better understand and analyze the teachers' needs in relation to professional development, we conducted an online questionnaire survey. The questionnaire mainly includes items relating to training contents, teachers' confusion, opinions and suggestions.

1.Detailed contents and feedback are as follows:

Survey results indicate that 73.68% of teachers desire training in differentiated teaching, while 57.89% express interest in inquiry-based learning. Moreover, 68.42% of teachers prioritize "class management," with 55.63% and 52.63% highlighting "transdisciplinary integration" and "subject teaching skills" for professional development.

Overall, teachers are content with the previous training model, content, and its effectiveness. However, they suggest improvements:

-Incorporate more case sharing with classroom practice.

-Adopt a blended online and offline training approach.

-Encourage inter-school visits.

-Combine mandatory and elective training topics.

Teachers express significant learning needs in:

-Enhancing English proficiency.

-Gaining knowledge in child psychology.

-Strengthening subject-specific expertise.

-Improving class management skills.

In conclusion, the analysis suggests focusing teacher training on hierarchical teaching, inquiry-based teaching, transdisciplinary integration, standardized class management, and subject-specific skills. Training should prioritize relevance, practicality, differentiation, and active participation, fostering long-term learning and growth among teachers. Accordingly, we have developed the current PYP teachers professional learning model as follows(represented in Figure1):
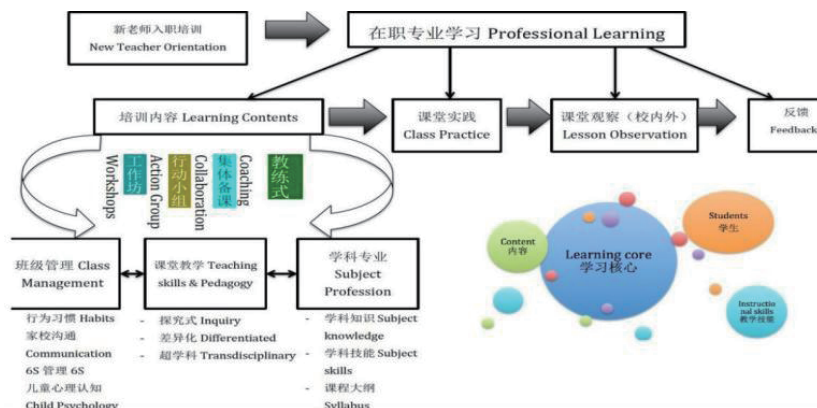

Figure1:Professional Teacher Learning Framework

Methodology

The methodology for this study uses a variation on the design research methodology (represented in Figure 2), which involves iterative cycles of analysis, development, evaluation and reflection.
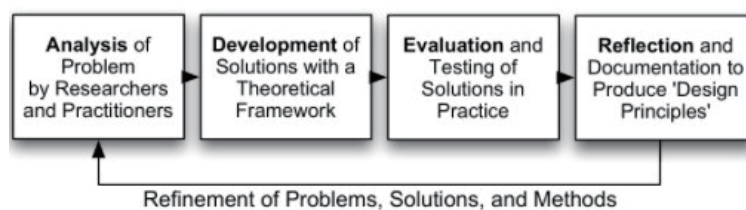

figure 2: The design research cycle (Adopted from Reeves, 2000)

2.Action Groups

2.1Topics:

Based on the questionnaire survey results, we have selected five key topics, each forming the basis of separate action groups for teachers:

G1: Teaching and Learning

G2: Class Management

G3: Inquiry

G4: Assessment

G5: IB Learner Profile

2.2Action plan

Each group has been tasked with developing and implementing a comprehensive action plan, including goals, challenges, solutions, detailed procedures, feedback mechanisms, and more. For instance, the second-grade group's detailed procedure encompasses class management overview, class system establishment, organization structuring, homeroom teacher's language arts, and strategies for managing challenging students.

3. Duration

Teachers convene every four weeks to share their research findings and progress.

3.1 Sharing Form; Score Based

i.Teachers within the same grade conduct training sessions centered on specific themes during these bi-monthly meetings. Following the training, students take an exam consisting of 10 questions, each worth one point, for a total of 10 points..

ii.Other teachers select training themes based on their individual needs. After the training, participants complete assignments, which are then anonymously graded by instructor

iii.Scores are released every two weeks, and commendations or awards are presented accordingly.

3.2 Requirements:

i.Each grade meticulously planned their training sessions in advance, submitting them to the project department for approval. Once approved, the training content was prepared and submitted to the project department before implementation. In case of any unforeseen circumstances necessitating adjustments to training themes, these changes had to be reported at least one week in advance and implemented only after obtaining approval.

ii.Immediate spot assessments were conducted to gather feedback on the training sessions. Students evaluated the training based on predefined assessment criteria.

iii.Every teacher participated in training at least once, with those undertaking multiple sessions receiving higher scores. Other teachers were required to select one theme for study during weekly training. Attendance was monitored by the project department, and teachers were expected to request leave at least one day in advance to ensure accurate records.

iv.Scores were integrated into the annual assessment process by the project department.

3.3 Practice: High-Quality Lesson Comparison and Sharing

As part of our practice, we actively engaged in the comparison and sharing of high-quality lessons. Each teacher was required to conduct an open lesson that showcased their newfound knowledge and skills. This four-week activity involved attending, evaluating, and scoring lessons, with assessments conducted by group leaders. Ultimately, four teachers (Cici Cao, Vincent Yuan, Cristal Shi, Myko Li) out of over 70 were selected to participate in the school's high-quality lesson competition. All teachers were required to attend and assess these lessons.

3.4 Results

Each action group, aligned with their research direction, implemented programs suitable for departmental use. This activity proved highly beneficial, culminating in the requirement for participants to produce research papers for further practice.

For instance, the second-grade group concentrated on Class Management. Under the guidance of second-grade teachers, the department

introduced ClassDojo and implemented regular checks.

i.Monitoring and feedback on Students' Behavioral Development

To monitor students' behavioral development and enhance management skills, PYP adopted ClassDojo for monitoring, recording, and assessing students'
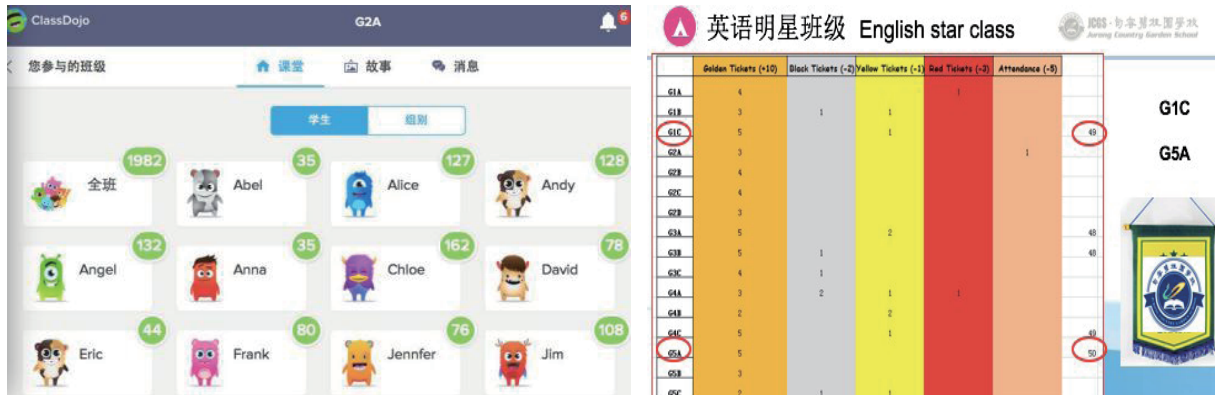
behavior(represented in Figure 3).

Figure3: course management

ii.Regular check

We established a red-flag system for both classroom management and outstanding English and UOI (Unit of Inquiry) environments. Checks were conducted every two weeks, with recognition for outstanding classes and red flags issued every six weeks.

4. Reflection

Achievements:

Shift from Manager to Leader: In the dynamic environment of JCGS, transforming from a manager to a leader was imperative as the teacher population grew. Key promotions achieved include:

- Emphasizing Vision over Control: Conducting questionnaire surveys to understand teacher needs and setting relevant training themes. Providing detailed explanations of score-based training plans and ClassDojo implementation, ensuring efficient execution, prompt issue feedback during middle-level meetings, and making necessary adjustments.

- Prioritizing Team over Individual: Actively participating in lesson preparations for each grade, understanding teacher ideas, grade-specific trends, and addressing issues that arose during the ClassDojo implementation through effective communication with teachers, ultimately reducing their workload.

- Delegation of Authority: Assigning different roles to suitable teachers in various departments instead of handling everything personally, which increased teacher engagement and commitment.

- Effective Training Approach: Applying the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based) principle in teacher training, enabling effective learning and rapid growth.

Areas for Improvement:

- Execution: While project preparation and planning were meticulous, the follow-up work was burdensome and led to delays in reporting teacher scores. This affected teacher enthusiasm, and improvement plans were not produced promptly.

- Communication: Insufficient one-on-one communication with teachers resulted in a lack of understanding of their psychological conditions in a timely manner.

In summary, while there have been notable achievements in transitioning to a leadership role and implementing effective training approaches, there is room for improvement in execution and communication to further enhance the success of the initiatives.

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