

2025-26 MLRC RESEARCH

International School of Beijing

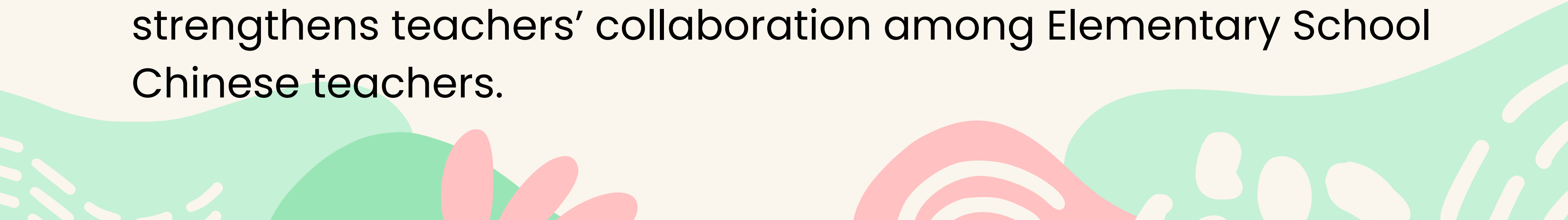
Participants: Vicky Wang, Felicia Liu,
Yinmei Wu, Emma Zhang



ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

We are a non-profit international school serving a diverse community of learners from EY2 to G12. We combine high expectations with strong collaboration to provide students with challenging and engaging learning experiences.

Our school uses Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a key structure for professional learning. This action research investigates the extent to which participation in the ES PLC cycle strengthens teachers' collaboration among Elementary School Chinese teachers.



RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent does participation in the ES PLC cycle improve Chinese teachers collaboration?





WHY THIS MATTERS TO OUR TEAM

Our team meetings were previously time-consuming because planning was done lesson by lesson to ensure the alignment among parallel courses, rather than through a unit-based approach. As a result, much of our meeting time focused on logistics, leaving limited opportunities to discuss student learning and how to best support individual needs.

To address this, we implemented a new meeting model — the PLC cycle — to strengthen collaboration and create a greater focus on student learning.

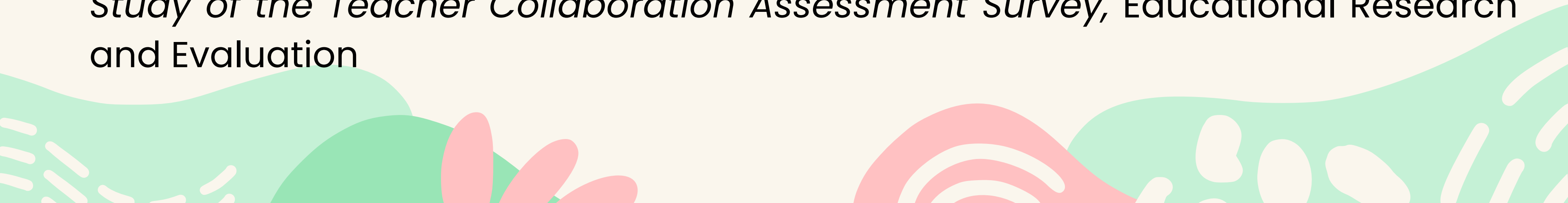


LITERATURE REVIEW

Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, & Thomas W. Many (2010) *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*, Solution Tree Press

Oscar A. Urieta (2025) *Improving the effectiveness of the teacher professional learning communities in sescondary education*, Education theses and Dissertations School of Education

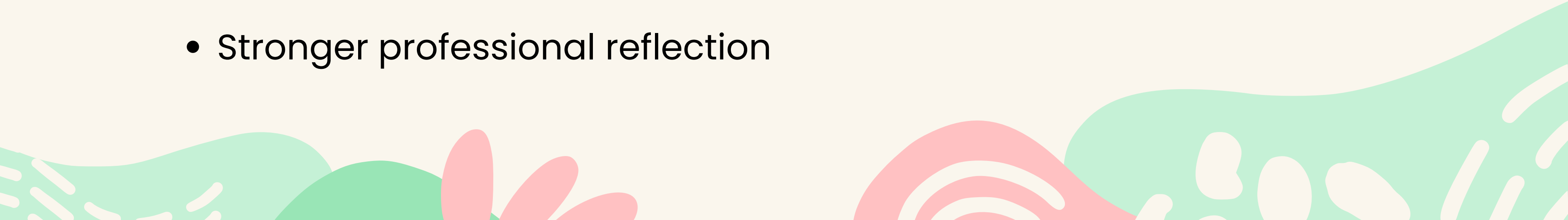
Rebecca Woodland, Minji Kang Lee & Jennifer Randall (2013). *A validation Study of the Teacher Collaboration Assessment Survey*, Educational Research and Evaluation



LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional Learning Communities (DuFour 2010 & Urieta 2025)

PLCs emphasize teacher collaboration to improve instructional practice and student learning. Research suggests that effective teacher collaboration is associated with:

- Increased instructional quality
 - Improved teacher learning
 - Higher student achievement
 - Stronger professional reflection
- 

Based on this literature review, we restructured our meetings to align our unit planning process with the PLC inquiry cycle.

Unit Planning Steps	PLC Inquiry Cycle	Purpose
Unit Preview	Clarify Learning Goals (UbD framework)	Choose and unpack standards, identify learning objectives, and teaching points. Choose key texts and design assessments
Co-Planning	Plan Instruction	Design lessons, learning activities, and instructional strategies
Checkpoints	Implement & Monitor Learning	Examine student progress, data dialogue, and adjust instruction accordingly
Co-Planning	Adjust Instruction	Share classroom experiences and modify lessons
Unit Review	Analyze Results (unit review protocol)	Reflect on student learning outcomes and improve the unit

LITERATURE REVIEW

Woodland et al. (2013) identified four essential elements of **Effective Teacher Collaboration** which can create a cycle of inquiry that supports continuous instructional improvement:

Dialogue	Collective conversation about student learning, the effects of instruction, and how to support every student.
Decision making	Teams make explicit choices about what instructional practices to start, stop, maintain, or change.
Action taking	Actually doing something as a result of team decisions.
Evaluation	Systematically collecting and analyzing data (both numbers and qualitative information) to determine if team actions actually improved student learning and teaching quality.

METHODOLOGY

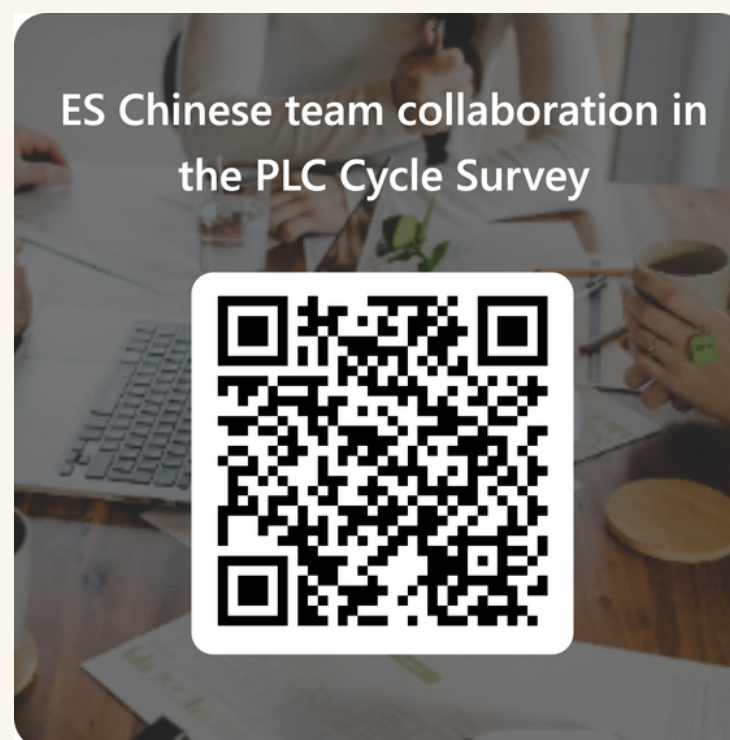
We collected data from a teacher survey that contains both rating questions and open-ended questions.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

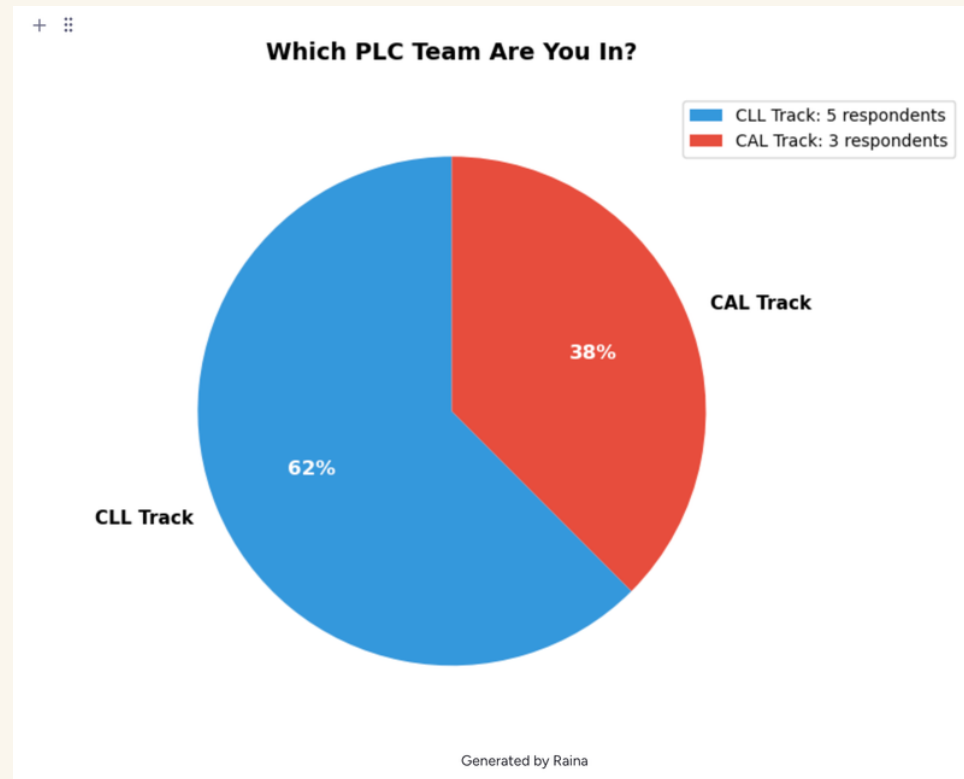
rating questions

QUALITATIVE DATA

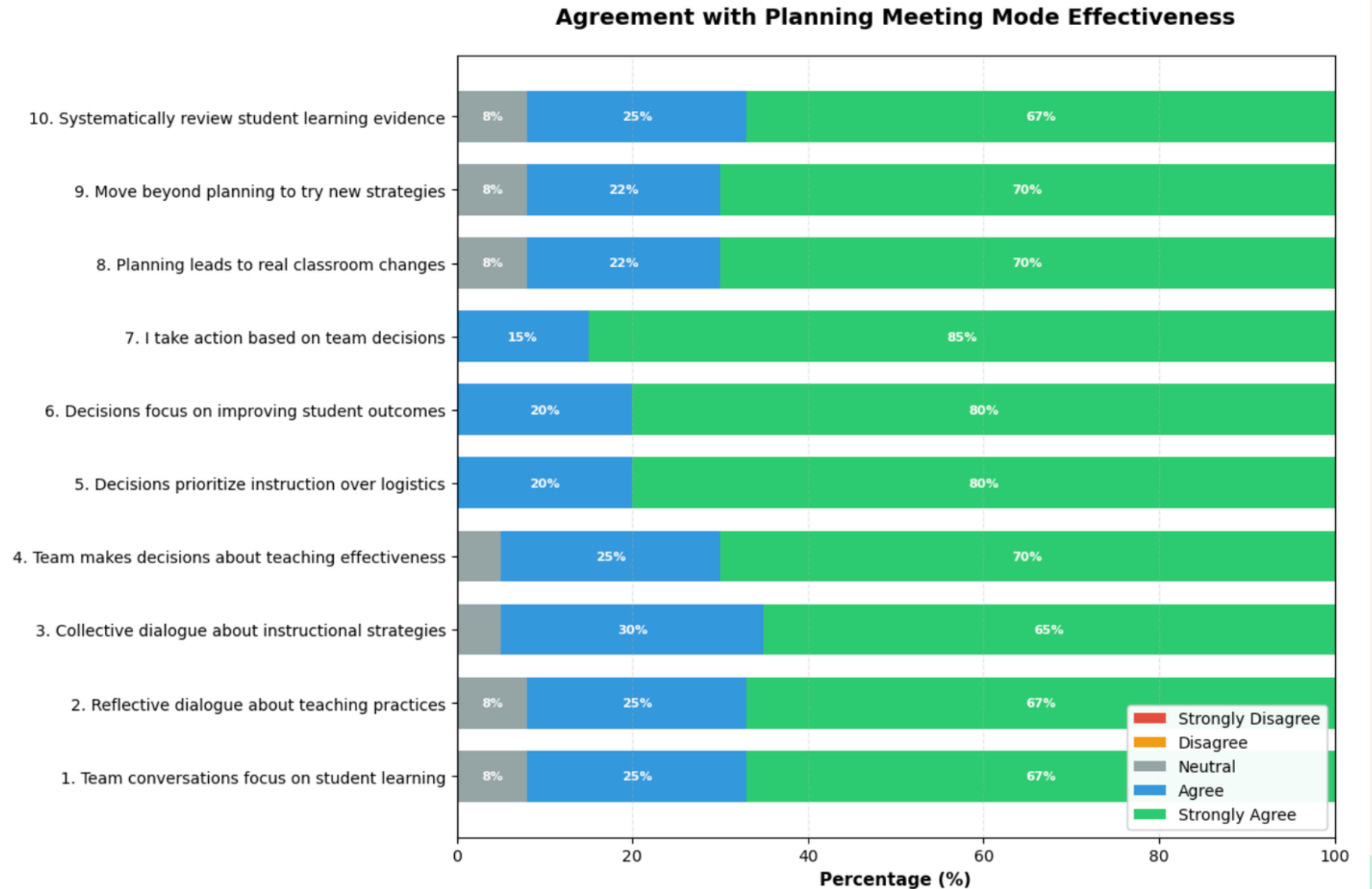
Open-Ended Questions



SURVEY RESULT



- More than 60% of the teachers from CLL team (Chinese as the first language)
- Nearly 40% teachers from CAL course (Chinese as a second language)



FINDINGS

from the quantitative data (rating questions)

- **Overall Positive Response:** Across all 10 statements measuring the implementation of PLC cycle effectiveness, respondents demonstrated strong agreement, with "Strongly Agree" responses consistently ranging from 65–85%.
- **Action-Oriented Culture:** Statements 7 and 9 (related to taking action and implementing new strategies) received the highest "Strongly Agree" ratings (85%), suggesting the team successfully translates planning into classroom practice.
- **Student-Centered Focus:** Strong agreement on statements 1, 2, and 3 confirms the team's commitment to student learning and instructional effectiveness as core planning priorities.

FINDINGS

from the Qualitative Data (open-ended questions)

Collaborations Elements	Responses	Indication
Dialogue: Clear structures and routines help maintain a strong focus on student learning	Many teachers highlighted that the PLC meeting structure itself helps the team stay focused on learning outcomes rather than administrative matters “每次会议都有固定的会议时间，也有比较清楚和具体的讨论重点，而且其他与教学设计不是密切相关的事项都会再另外的组会上讨论，而不是备课会。” “固定时间、固定讨论议题和讨论成果，如果没有成果会继续安排后续讨论。”	These responses suggest that the PLC inquiry cycle creates intentional collaboration structures that prevent meetings from becoming logistical or unfocused. Instead, the conversations consistently center on teaching, learning, and student progress.
Decision making: Collaborative decision-making leads to responsive changes in instructional practice	The PLC process appears to create a shared responsibility for instructional improvement rather than isolated teacher decision-making. “我们会看学生的assessment、成绩和课堂表现，然后一起调整教学方法来帮助学生。” “固定时间、固定讨论议题和讨论成果，如果没有成果会继续安排后续讨论。”	The data indicates that the PLC inquiry cycle strengthens collective instructional decision-making by creating a consistent process for reviewing evidence, identifying student needs, and implementing responsive teaching changes.

FINDINGS

Collaborations Elements	Responses	Indication
Action taking: The PLC structure supports strong collective accountability and consistent follow-through on agreed actions	Responsibilities and follow-up actions are shared effectively among team members through clear task allocation, accountability structures, and ongoing peer support. Teachers described a collaborative culture where team members not only complete assigned tasks, but also monitor progress, provide reminders, and support one another throughout implementation. “具体的任务在最开始就有比较公平地分配给每个成员，大家在施行时也会互相询问进度、提醒和帮助，确保能够共同完成。” “在备课结束后，老师们会把当时的共同决定带回自己的课堂中实践。之后，我们会在下一次备课会中分享哪些方法有效。”	The data indicates that the PLC meeting model has established effective systems for distributing responsibilities, maintaining accountability, and encouraging collaborative implementation of instructional decisions. However, the responses also suggest that our next step should focus on how to monitor teachers’ follow-up implementation and evaluate the impact on students’ learning more consistently across the team.

FINDINGS

Collaborations Elements	Responses	Indication
Evaluation: Follow-up actions are implemented collaboratively, but evaluation of impact is still developing	responsibilities and follow-up actions are clearly shared and consistently implemented across the team. Teachers work with agreed tasks, deadlines, and mutual support, and they also bring their actions back into the classroom. However, the link to systematic evaluation of impact on student learning is lacking. “会议过程中确定每一位老师的任务，并做好了记录，也讨论好了截止日期。” “大家都很有责任地在截止日期前完成任务。但是没有太多机会讨论对学生学习成绩的影响。” “希望让老师们有更多机会深入讨论学生学习，而不仅仅是完成教学安排。”	Our team has strong structures for implementing agreed actions and put them into action. However, we could look for more opportunities to discuss and evaluate the impact of our instructional changes on student learning.



DISCUSSION

Our findings may impact our school in the following ways:

- Strengthen collaboration and shared responsibility in the Chinese team, leading to more consistent practice across the whole school.
 - Build a stronger professional culture within the team that positively influences teachers' participation in wider community events.
 - Improve the use of student learning data to evaluate the impact of teaching on students' learning outcomes.
- 
- 



REFLECTION

- The PLC inquiry cycle has strengthened the structure and effectiveness of team collaboration by creating clearer meeting routines, shared goals, and more purposeful discussions centered on student learning.
 - We found the research results valuable and they confirmed that our shift was valid and beneficial.
 - We are thankful for the opportunity to read relevant literature and improve our craft based on our research. We also feel empowered to help develop our program and make positive changes within our department.
- 
- 

LOOK FORWARD

We will

1) Structure more professional dialogues to

- share and discuss effective teaching strategies
- have deeper reflection on the impact of our practice on student learning

2) Systematically use student work and assessment data to

- evaluate instructional impact
- guide the next steps of teaching and learning
- improve instructional practice over time

OUR LEARNING JOURNEY

On this Padlet

