What I Learned from an Initial Visit to Two Outlying Schools in China

Carol Yap

Abstract

According to the report on Global Teacher Status Index 2018, China's teachers are ranked the first in the world and it correlates with the results of the PISA 2009, 2012 and 2015. Conversely, Malaysia's teachers which rank the second on GTSI 2018, do not match the same results as mentioned above. The author visited two outlying schools in China, as the basis, to learn more about the good practices by interviewing teachers of the two schools, distributing questionnaires for the teachers of the two schools to answer and collecting simple data from both schools as well as observing a lesson in one school. It was found that there are good practices that can be emulated and adapted by teachers so that pupils' learning outcome can be improved in Sabah, East Malaysia.

Introduction

As an educator in Malaysia, it is a mandatory requirement that I and my colleagues implement the National Education Blueprint with dedication. My nation is working zealously to uphold and upgrade the education system so that it will be on par with the advanced nations in the near future.

Among all, when it comes to classroom teaching and learning, the 21st Century teaching and learning, as consistently focused on, is considered as of utmost importance to make the lessons more fun through active participation of students whereby the inclusion of 6Cs (Communication, Collaboration, Character-building, Citizenship, Critical thinking and Creative thinking) are taken into account during the process of classroom teaching and learning. As the saying goes, "No man is an island", every good education system requires schools which consist of quality leaderships, dedicated teachers and committed professional learning community willing to learn from good practices globally in order to produce higher students' learning outcome.

Background and Objectives

Upon reading the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009, 2012 and 2015, China's students are listed on the top ten tier (Appendix 1 & 2). In addition, according to the report of Global Teacher Status Index 2018, the teachers in China are ranked the first in the world, by securing a full index of 100, followed by the teachers in Malaysia, with the index ranking of 93.3 (Appendix 3). The results show that the high teacher status in China correlates well with the improved pupil performance as measured by PISA scores, but unfortunately, the high teacher status in Malaysia doesn't relate to PISA 2015 rankings at all! Then, I came across an article commenting about China's 'chalk and talk' pedagogy in 2014, so it made me feel curious about the classroom teaching and learning of the country. I really wanted to understand if the teachers are merely using the traditional 'chalk and talk' pedagogy in the lessons. In conjunction with my visitation to relatives in Fujian province, China, I took the opportunity to visit and interview a headmaster and a few teachers in 2 different outlying, low enrolment schools in the district

of Tong An, Fujian Province. Though the schools are not located in Shanghai, I believe the Education policy - implementing National Curriculum cum developing school-based curriculum, is run similarly throughout the country.

As China consists of the World's biggest population, the concept of the low enrolment schools is not similar to the Malaysian context. While the number of students over 300 is considered a type B school (a school with the number of pupils from 150 to 499) in the state of Sabah, East Malaysia, it is considered a low enrolment school over there (the number of pupils which is less than 150, is a low enrolment school in Malaysia). The first school is Xing Tang primary school, which is located at Xing Tang village, has 350 pupils, and there is one class in every grade except grade 1, which consists of two classes, with only 16 academic teaching staffs, including the headmaster. This school is a classic example of the low enrolment school with only one block of 4-storey building. The pupils of the school live nearby within the distance of around 10km. More than 60% of the pupils are from other poorer provinces as their parents settled in Fujian province and work as factory workers, labourers, farmers and construction workers. Although the parents are the blue collar workers, they are not as poor as the low income group within the local context. Most of the parents view education seriously and about 30% of the pupils attend extra tuition classes after school hours. According to the headmaster, Mr Hong, the attendance rate of the parents who come to attend school's Parent- Teacher Association meeting is 95% and above.

The second school that I was given the privilege to visit is a bigger school, Ting Xi primary school. It is located at the outskirts of Ting Xi town and the number of pupils is 600, and there are two classes in every grade, with 34 academic teaching staffs. The school consists of two blocks of 4-storey buildings and the Ting Xi secondary school is next to the primary school. The educational and socioeconomic backgrounds of the parents in the school are similar to Xing Tang primary school but they are mostly locals who work as farmers, labourers, factory workers and construction workers.

The schooling hours are fixed in both Xing Tang and Ting Xi primary schools, starting from 8.00am till 11.40am, then a lunch break of more than 2 hours and classes resume at 2.15pm. The level 1 classes end at 3.40pm whereas the level 2 classes end at 4.30pm. The average number of pupils in every class in these two schools is from 40 to 50. Similar to the local context, the locality of every government run school is served within the proximity of the nearby community but one thing good about this is, there are more schools built in each community area and the facilities are far better than most of the National Schools in Sabah, East Malaysia.

I interviewed two Mathematics teachers and one English teacher (who is the only English teacher and also a temporary teacher) in Xing Tang primary school. With much cooperation, they answered my questionnaire (Appendix 5). Apart from that, I was able to interview the headmaster, Mr Hong, of Xing Tang Primary School. The headmaster is a qualified headmaster who always attends compulsory courses for his professional development. For Ting Xi primary school, I interviewed two Chinese teachers and one Mathematics teacher. All the teachers in these two schools underwent teacher training according to the subject specification that they chose, in the local universities.

As a School improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+), my main concern is to learn more about best teaching or professional practices across the nation, especially the more productive and outstanding, high-performing education development, so as to bring awareness to the teachers in the district that I serve and produce high quality teachers and

better student learning outcome in accordance with the aspirations of the National Education Blueprint. Secondly, to learn about the teaching and learning approach for pitching the condition of the under-privileged pupils in the outlying schools in China and hopefully to bring back the Chinese teachers' professional working culture or atmosphere to adapt to the local context in order to help improve pupils' learning outcome, especially in the low-performing schools where most of the pupils are from under-privileged backgrounds. I hope that by visiting and learning from the teachers' professional practices of these two schools in China, I can share the good practices and implement them in the local context.

Methodology

This preliminary research was carried out by reading some writings about China's Education Structure, National Curriculum and scholarly thesis and thereafter visiting the two primary schools in China for 3 days consecutively, getting information about all the practices which contribute to the improvement of the overall school pupils' academic performance particularly.

Instrument

a) Interview: A simple interview in each school was conducted for finding more about teachers' working culture, school curriculum, and professional practices (Appendix 4).
b) Questionnaire: a set of questionnaire was distributed to three teachers in each school and the questionnaire covers my research questions in the following areas (Appendix 5).
i) Is the 'chalk and talk' pedagogy implemented in the schools and how far does it apply?
ii) Is the 21st Century Teaching and Learning (pupil-centred teaching, Kagan Structures and Cooperative Learning Strategy) fully implemented in the outlying under-privileged primary schools of China?
iii) How are the Professional Learning Communities or 'teaching-research groups' [*jiaoyan zhu]* in the China context, run in the primary schools of China and are they helpful for enhancing teachers' quality and thereafter increasing pupils' learning interest?
c) Learning Walks: Two sessions of Learning Walks were carried out at Xing Tang Primary School for two days (Appendix 6).
d) Teaching and Learning Observation: a session of 40-minute Mathematics classroom teaching and learning observation was carried out in a Year 5 class at Ting Xi Central Primary School (Appendix 7).

The Process

Before embarking on my journey to China, as mentioned above, I started some readings regarding China's Education, curriculum and classroom teaching and learning (Tan & Hairon, Education Reform in China; Xuefeng et al, A review of research on professional learning communities in mainland China (2006-2015); Guo & Guo, Spotlight on China; Zhang & Pang, Exploring the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities in China). During the visit in China, I sought for permission of the headmaster of Xing Tang Primary School and a Chinese teacher of Ting Xi Central Primary School to conduct my initial research, followed by a session of simple interviews with the teachers of two schools, distributing and collecting a set of questionnaire to three teachers of each school. Two sessions of Learning Walks from Year 1 to Year 6 classes were carried out at Xing Tang Primary Schools for two different days. A day of a 40-minute classroom Mathematics teaching and learning

observation, then followed by a short discussion with the Maths teacher, conclude my practical research Upon reaching my home country, I continued with a session of informal WeChat interaction with a teacher of Ting Xi Central Primary School as follow-up.

Results

The initial findings were based on the knowledge gained through readings, followed by a 3-day visit to the two outlying schools cum a session of WeChat interaction with a Chinese teacher of one of the schools. Based on the data collected from the questionnaire and a 40-minute session of Classroom Mathematics teaching and learning observation in Ting Xi Central Primary School, as well as the 2-day intermittent period of learning walks at Xing Tang Primary School, I would say that the classic idea implanted through the media about the practice of 'chalk and talk' is actually not part and parcel of the deeply rooted idea in the eyes of the world. Instead, I came out with a preliminary impression that a combination of 'chalk and talk' and pupil-centred methodology are carried out in these two schools.

There were interactions between teacher and pupils, pupils and pupils, and pupils and the materials (text book, workbook, worksheets), it was the case that the teacher did the talking all the time. The teachers asked pupils to criticise their peers' work and give comment or feedback. There is an interactive whiteboard facility in every class which facilitates the teaching and learning. This reduces the time for the teacher to copy or write sentences on the white board. As long as all the teaching materials or aids are well prepared, the interactive board can help display the materials, with the size of materials adjusted according to the environment and size of the class. Every pupil in the class was either occupied with the work given or with two-way interaction during the teaching and learning.

On the contrary, for the case of Sabah, East Malaysia, there is no interactive whiteboard facility in all the fully government-run National schools as it involves millions of Ringgit (Malaysian currency) to install the board in every classroom. The exceptions are found in a few Chinese vernacular schools which are partially aided by the Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Every Chinese vernacular school is fully or partly equipped with this facility with the funds raised by the Chinese chambers among the Chinese community. In this case, the teachers in the Chinese vernacular schools of Sabah, East Malaysia, are practising the similar procedures as in the schools I visited in Tong An district.

Talking about the implementation of the 21st Century Teaching and Learning, the classroom seating arrangement in both schools is still the traditional lecture seating arrangement. However, pupils' personal or group works, projects, or artistic works are displayed at the back of the classroom and outside the corridors. According to the teacher in Ting Xi Central Primary School, the work results of pupils are kept updated for display weekly or fortnightly. From the 40-minute Maths lesson in Ting Xi Central Primary School, the Maths teacher requested the pupils to criticise about the lists of statement whether they were referring to 'rotation' correctly or not. Higher order thinking questions were posed during the 40-minute Mathematics lesson, such as "what is the reason that you agree with his answer?" "Go to the board and explain why you disagree with his answer." From the interviews of the two outlying schools, the critical subjects are Chinese and Mathematics, whereas Mathematics and English are the critical subjects of most of the low performing primary schools in the District of Kota Kinabalu, Malaysian Borneo. English is not

a critical subject in primary schools in most of the primary schools in China because pupils learn basic vocabulary and grammar first.

"In Singapore and Shanghai Mathematics classrooms, teachers ask students to work on problems at the board, not expecting all students to get the right answer. The purpose is for the effort of those at the board to help students understand the problem and to develop their broader Mathematical understanding, rather than to focus on getting the right answer." (Saavedra and Opfer, 2012) - this paragraph exactly fits the scenario of the 40-minute Mathematics lesson. Whereas in the District of Kota Kinabalu, most of the Mathematics lessons in the National Schools gradually began to apply the similar scenario only, after the change of the Mathematics curriculum since 2016, in which there are 40% of higher order thinking skills instilled in the problem solving questions. Since then, Mathematics has become the most critical subject for the majority of the primary schools till today. Nevertheless, a lot of interventions and innovations in teaching & learning of this subject need to come out with in order to alleviate the low marks of pupils in this subject.

From the interview and post lesson discussion in Ting Xi primary school, it is interestingly found that the official practice of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has been running for more than 17 years (from early Year 2000) in Mainland Chinese schools. Teachers in both schools come to the consensus that, apart from combining the implementation of National Curriculum and developing School-based Curriculum, PLCs are part and parcel of their teaching career and it helps enhance their professional teaching standard by engaging regularly in a wide range of professional development activities, including specific short term training activities, but also the range of "teaching and research activities" which constitute the core of professional learning communities in schools. These activities include collective lesson planning; peer observation and evaluation and critique; observation of demonstration or model lessons, including the watching of videos of model lessons which are carried out frequently. Teachers at all levels are expected and encouraged to contribute to the production and consumption of knowledge and research about teaching and learning, including by publishing articles in school, township, county, district, provincial and national newsletters, newspapers and journals.

The responses of the interview (from the 6 teachers of the two schools) matched the review of research on PLCs in mainland China (2006-2015), that is, there are three main teacher groups (from kindergarten to 12th grade) as PLCs: teaching research groups, informal learning groups and networked learning groups. Teaching research groups are an important local prototype of PLCs which consist of collective lesson planning, demonstration lessons, lesson observation (similar to the Malaysian context, the Lesson Study). An informal learning group is a spontaneously organized group of teachers with the same interests, who gather to develop initiatives of their own. These two teacher groups exist within schools and neighbouring schools in the same county. Networked learning groups use Internet tools(e.g., WeChat) or teacher-training programmes to connect teachers from different schools and focus on sharing teaching materials. The headmaster of Xing Tang Primary School, Mr Hong, showed me the lists of PLC programmes that would be carried out for a week, from 6th May till 11th May 2019 (Appendix 8). This kind of public notice would be circulated through the Wechat group in each school once every Sunday.

In Malaysia, the Teacher Education Section of the Ministry Of Education started launching the PLC policy as a school approach in 289 schools (primary and secondary) nationwide, in 2011. Thereafter the PLC was spread to the other schools and it has become a part and parcel of professional practice till today, for all the schools. The implementation

of the PLC in Malaysian schools, especially in the District of Kota Kinabalu, is completely different from the practice of the two schools that I learnt in Tong An District. There is no fixed list of the PLC programmes every week in every school. All the annual PLC programmes are planned by the subject panel heads and usually the most frequent one is done once a month. The PLC climate is still considered more dormant compared to the China schools.

Discussion

Since 1986, the people of China have had the right to a minimum of nine years of education, six years in the primary schools and three years in the secondary schools. The compulsory main subjects learnt in the primary schools of China are Chinese, Mathematics and English. The English subject is learnt from third grade (Year Three) onwards in Tong An district, but in most of the cities nowadays, pupils start having English lessons when they are in Primary 1. Only these 3 subjects will be tested through formal official examinations with scores entered into the students' report books. The pass rate for these main subjects is 60%. In Primary 3 usually, Science and Information Technological Education (basically some essential knowledge and skills in computer and its usage) become new subjects to study.

For the Malaysian citizens, a six-year primary schooling is legally compulsory. The required main subjects learnt since Year One, in the National primary schools are Malay, English, Mathematics and Science. As for the Chinese vernacular schools and Tamil vernacular schools, Chinese or Indian is the added main subject learnt respectively. Only the 4 main subjects or 5 main subjects for the Chinese or Tamil vernacular schools will be tested in the Primary Schools' Achievement Test when pupils are in Year Six. The pass rate for these main subjects is 40%. From the comparison, it is obvious that the China pupils are more stressful as the pass rate is expected to be higher than Malaysia and some other countries, I believe.

Below are the theories which support the combination of 'chalk and talk' and pupil-centred methodology. According to Palincsar and Klenk (1992), the variety of teaching styles that teachers implement in their classrooms can be crucial for student learning depending on their students' socio-economic status. The school environment for low socio-economic students is fundamentally different from the environment at home. In most schools, uniformity dominates the classroom and there is typically little regard for diversity. In most low-income homes, the families do not structure the daily chores of life; however, found in many middle class homes, families work together to structure the daily chores of life (Payne, 2011). Because of these differences (Payne, 2001), Palincsar and Klenk (1992) discovered that students from a less-structured home environment become more successful academically in a more structured classroom environment, which includes a more structured teaching style.

Since the 1950s, the primary and secondary schools in China progressively and comprehensively formed teaching groups which group teachers based on the same subject (e.g. mathematics teaching-research group) and lesson preparation groups which group the same subject teachers based on the same grade (e.g. mathematics grade 1). While all schools have teaching-research groups for all the subjects, not all schools have lesson preparation groups. (Hairon,S & Tan,C, 2015) Within schools, teachers regularly discuss teaching issues that are relevant to their daily practice, and a series of collective activities are organized with a fixed schedule, which contributes to the enhancement of teaching quality and fosters student learning. For example, the results of the PISA indicate that the

top performance of Chinese students could be partly attributed to the institutionalized teacher collaboration in PLCs (Zhang et al., 2017).

As for the district of Kota Kinabalu, Malaysian Borneo context, the practice of PLCs is still in the primary stage in which the dissemination of the PLC policy was completely extended in 2014, especially in the outlying low enrolment schools. Teachers are fully encouraged to practise the programmes of PLC since then but the frequency of implementation is totally dependent on every school administration or the group of schools in a particular area. There are altogether 9 areas with PLC schools in which 6 for the primary schools and 3 for the secondary schools. The number of PLC schools in each area is between 8 to 11 schools. In my opinion, there are many good practices and skills of the teachers in China, Japan and Singapore, where the implementation of PLCs has a longer history, (Hairon, S., & Tan, C. Developing Teachers through Professional Learning Communities in Singapore and Shanghai; Ruth Ahn et al, Japan's Innovative Approach to Professional learning) which the school teachers and administrators in the district of Kota Kinabalu need to benchmark, emulate and adapt to their teaching environments.

Conclusion

As my visitation of the two outlying schools was informal, there were many things which were beyond my intervention, such as collecting pre and post research data, detailed information and further contextual learning in the schools. Nevertheless, I should say that I learn something though it took three days of visits only.

First and foremost, it is the deep commitment of the teachers in serving the schools. Punctuality and attendance in every teaching and learning and PLC activity are of paramount importance! Albeit it looks trivial or probably not a big deal in Malaysians' perspective, I believe it contributes to shaping the positive value to the younger generation. As mentioned earlier in my Research background, the teachers in China are ranked the first in the world, by securing a full index of 100 in the report of the Global Teacher Status Index 2018; after the interviews, the responses to the questionnaire and further readings of the reports of scholarly research, I cannot disagree with the report of the Global Teacher Status Index 2018! Even though the subject of the research was not in Shanghai or Hong Kong, I believe there is no significant discrepancy between the provinces as the running of PLCs has become a common occurrence throughout the country's education system. This is obviously a very good and model practice that we should admire and emulate so as to become a productive culture in the context among the Malaysian teachers.

However, there are flaws in the People's Republic of China education system so that I think the country can look up to Malaysian practice, that is the focus on upgrading and improving the use of English in schools and the society. My point is, the educators of Malaysia should be open-minded and humble ourselves to learn good practices, though they are small steps, to help improve my country so as to achieve the aspirations of the Malaysian National Education Blueprint 2025.

Biographical Note

Carol Yap was a primary school English teacher for 18 years and the Head of the school's English Panel. Currently a School Improvement Specialist Coach of the District Education Office in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, East Malaysia, for 6 years. She obtained her Teaching Certificate from Gaya Teachers' Training College. She holds a B.Sc Ed (Hons) from University of Technology Malaysia and a Master's Degree in Education (TESL) from Asia e University.

Her field of research and area of interests include Teaching Pedagogy and Continuous Professional Development in Coaching and Mentoring.

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Appendix 1

Average Score of PISA Mathematics, Science and Reading: (2015)

1.	Singapore	551.7
2.	Hong Kong	532.7
3.	Japan	528.7
4.	Macau	527.3
5.	Estonia	524.3
6.	Canada	523.7
7.	Taiwan	523.7
8.	Finland	522.7
9.	South Korea	519.0
10.	China	514.3

Appendix 2

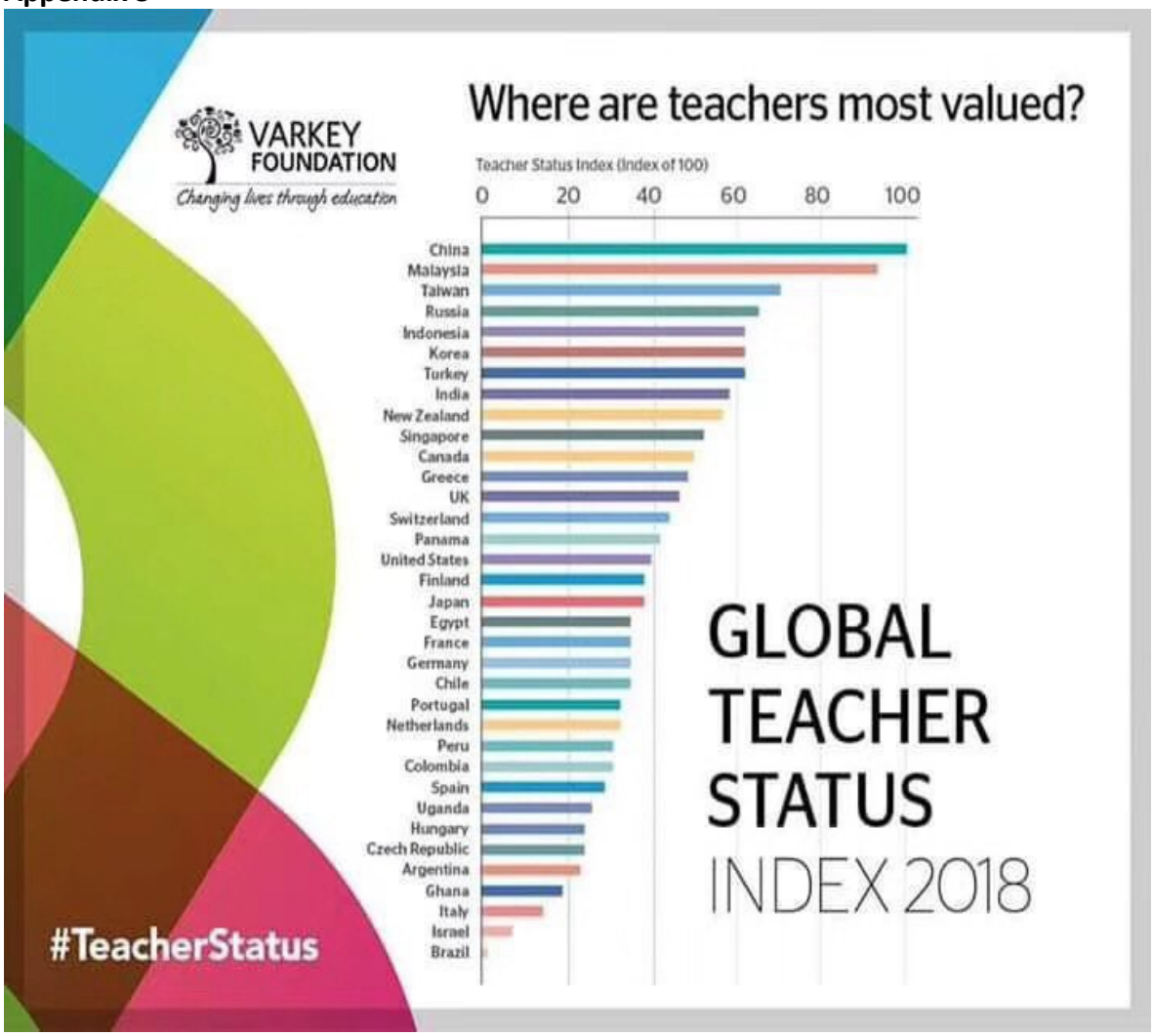
National Center for Education Statistics

Table M4. Average scores of 15-year-old students on PISA mathematics literacy scale, by education system: 2012

Education system	Average score	s.e.	Education system	Average score	s.e.
OECD average	494	0.5			
Shanghai-China	613	3.3	*Lithuania*	479	2.6
Singapore	573	1.3	Sweden	478	2.3
Hong Kong-China	561	3.2	Hungary	477	3.2
Chinese Taipei	560	3.3	*Croatia*	47	3.5
Korea, Republic of	554	4.6	Israel	46	4.7
Macao-China	538	1.0	Greece	45	2.5
Japan	536	3.6	*Serbia, Republic of*	44	3.4
Liechtenstein	535	4.0	Turkey	44	4.8
Switzerland	531	3.0	*Romania*	44	3.8
Netherlands	523	3.5	*Cyprus*	44	1.1
Estonia	521	2.0	*Bulgaria*	43	4.0
Finland	519	1.9	*United Arab Emirates*	43	2.4
Canada	518	1.8	*Kazakhstan*	43	3.0
Poland	518	3.6	*Thailand*	42	3.4
Belgium	515	2.1	Chile	42	3.1
Germany	514	2.9	*Malaysia*	42	3.2
Vietnam	511	4.8	Mexico	41	1.4
Austria	506	2.7	*Montenegro, Republic of*	41	1.1
Australia	504	1.6	*Uruguay*	40	2.8
Ireland	501	2.2	*Costa Rica*	40	3.0
Slovenia	501	1.2	*Albania*	39	2.0
Denmark	500	2.3	*Brazil*	39	2.1
New Zealand	500	2.2	*Argentina*	38	3.5
Czech Republic	499	2.9	*Tunisia*	38	3.9

France	495	▲	2.5	*Jordan*	38(	▼	3.1
United Kingdom	494	▲	3.3	*Colombia*	37(	▼	2.9
Iceland	493	▲	1.7	*Qatar*	37(	▼	0.8
Latvia	491	▲	2.8	*Indonesia*	37!	▼	4.0
Luxembourg	490	▲	1.1	*Peru*	36(		3.7
Norway	489		2.7				
Portugal	487		3.8				
Italy	485		2.0	**U.S. state education systems**			
Spain	484		1.9	*Massachusetts*		▲	6.2
Russian Federation	482		3.0		51(		
				Connecticut		▲	6.2
Slovak Republic	482		3.4		50(		
				Florida		▼	5.8
United States	**481**		***3.6***		46		

Appendix 3


VARKEY FOUNDATION
Changing lives through education
Where are teachers most valued?
Teacher Status Index (Index of 100)
0
20
40
60
80
100
China
Malaysia
Taiwan
Russia
Indonesia
Korea
Turkey
India
New Zealand
Singapore
Canada
Greece
UK
Switzerland
Panama
United States
Finland
Japan
Egypt
France
Germany
Chile
Portugal
Netherlands
Peru
Colombia
Spain
Uganda
Hungary
Czech Republic
Argentina
Ghana
Italy
Israel
Brazil
GLOBAL TEACHER STATUS INDEX 2018
#TeacherStatus

Appendix 4

Interview questions

1. Name
2. Name of the school serving:
3. Teaching qualification(s):
4. Name of institution(s) attended:
5. Major:
6. Years of teaching experience:
7. Subject(s) that you teach:
8. The number of pupils in the class(es) that you teach
9. What are the two most critical subjects in this school?
10. The pass rate for core subjects:
11. Please state briefly about the school curriculum.
12. Please state your average working hours per week, activities that are necessary for you to take part in school.

Appendix 5

Questionnaire:

1. Is your teaching approach pupil-centred? Yes ( ) No ( )
   i) How do you implement it if your teaching & learning is pupil-centred?

   _____
   _____
   _____

   ii) Please state your reason(s) if you implement teacher-centred teaching & learning :

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Have you ever learnt about or attended Kagan Structures, Cooperative Learning Strategy? If your answer is Yes, do you implement it in your lessons?

_____

3. The Continuous Professional Development course(s) that you attended (from 2018 till today):

_____

_____

_____

4. Please tick the ICT educational tools that you know and learnt before:
i) Edpuzzle ( ) ii) Flipped classroom ( ) iii) Padlet ( ) iv) Popplet ( ) v) Interactive White Board ( ) vi) Video games/Language games ( ) vii) Google Classroom ( ) viii) Kahoot ( ) ix) Quizizz ( ) x) Blendspace ( )

5. Please state the ICT educational tools that you use in the classes which are not mentioned above.

_____

6. About Professional Learning Community :
a) How often do your panel conduct the Lesson Study/Open class?

_____

b) How often do your panel run the Learning Walks?_____
c) How often do your panel conduct a Video Critique?

_____

7. Do you think that Professional Learning Community is helpful for enhancing your pedagogical skills, increasing pupils' learning interest and improving their academic performance? Why?

_____

Appendix 6

LEARNING WALK INSTRUMENT

Focus : Classroom Seating Arrangement and atmosphere and Pupil-centred teaching

Subject						
Indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Seating arrangement						
Teacher's communication						
Pupil-centred Teaching						

Measuring pointers Scale 0 : No Scale 1 : Unclear Scale 2 : Clear Scale 3 : Very clear	Description of the LW Classroom seating arrangement - 21st century, in groups Teacher's Communication - clear voice projection, variety of intonation, motivating pupils Pupil-centred teaching - pupils are responsive, pupils take part actively in group activities, pupils pose questions regarding the content of the lesson, pupils can solve the problem/make decision.

Appendix 7

Classroom Teaching & Learning Observation Tool

Teacher's Name		Teacher's IC Number	
School		Date	
School Code		Time	
Class & Number of Pupils		No. of Visit/coaching	
T&L Topic			

COMPONENT / ASPECT		LEVEL				REMARKS
		0	1	2	3	
PLAN	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	☐	Teacher states a broad topic for the lesson in general. ☐	Teacher identifies and discusses a clear and specific learning objective. ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and learning objective is linked to previous or subsequent lessons ☐	
	LESSON PLAN	☐	Lesson is based in part on a daily teaching plan(RPH) that is linked to an annual teaching plan (RPT). ☐	Lesson meets Level 1 and follows the overall structure and main points of the RPH. ☐	Lesson meets Level 2 and consistently follows all points of the RPH. ☐	
	ACTIVITY BASED LEARNING	☐	Lesson has an activity that is performed by students and activity is instructive and ties in to students' learning. ☐	Lesson meets Level 1 and activity involves creativity, two-way discussion, practical application or other use of HOTS. ☐	Lesson meets Level 2 and has at least two different activities that involve creativity, two-way discussion, practical application or other use of HOTS ☐	
DELEVERY	COMMUNICATION	☐	Teacher is audible, speaks clearly and uses language that is easy to understand for students. ☐	Teacher meets Level 1 and does not only read directly from the textbook ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and uses variation in volume, tone and voice to effectively engage students. ☐	
	STUDENT PARTICIPATION	☐	Most student are attentive but passive. ☐	All students are attentive and respond to questions when asked. ☐	Meets Level 2 and students proactively ask questions with further constructive discussions amongst themselves and with the teacher. ☐	
	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	☐	Teacher is well aware of the students and also the classroom cleanliness. ☐	Teacher meets Level 1 and is able to control disciplinary of the students. ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and is able to use all space of the classroom effectively. ☐	
	TEACHING AIDS	☐	Teacher uses the whiteboard/projector to explain relevant concepts or ideas to students and words/drawings are clearly visible. ☐	Teacher meets Level 1 and uses additional relevant visual aids that are clearly visible and eye catching. ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and at least one of the visual aids involves students' interaction. ☐	

	CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	☐	Teacher was broadly on topic but made content errors or displayed clear gaps in content. ☐	Teacher was entirely on topic, did not make content errors and had content knowledge required of the syllabus to teach effectively. ☐	Teacher met Level 2 and used content knowledge from beyond the syllabus that helped students reach lesson objective. ☐	
COMPONENT / ASPECT		**LEVEL**				**REMARKS**
		0	**1**	**2**	**3**	
ASSESSMENT	**ORAL ASSESSMENT**	☐	Teacher asks relevant questions that test against the learning objective and correctly identifies correct and incorrect answers. ☐	Teacher meets Level 1 and uses open questions and offers explanations for incorrect answers and positive reinforcement for correct answers. ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and uses questions that do not rely only on recall and calibrates questions according to different students' ability levels. ☐	
	WRITTEN ASSESSMENT/ HOMEWORK	☐	Teacher sets relevant written home or class work that tests against the learning objectives and identifies correct and incorrect answers in the work of most students. ☐	Teacher meets Level 1 and offers solutions for incorrect answers and positive reinforcement for correct answers in the work of most students. ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and tailors work to different students' ability levels. ☐	
REVIEW	**SUMMARY**	☐	Teacher closes the lesson but does not meet Level 2. ☐	Teacher meets Level 1 and offers summary including learning outcomes and 3-5 main points from the lesson. ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and explains why this lesson is important and how it relates to other lessons. ☐	
REFLECTION	**LESSON REFLECTION**	☐	Teacher can make general observations about lesson but does not meet Level 2. ☐	Teacher identifies at least one strength and one development need. ☐	Teacher meets Level 2 and proposes course of action to address development need. ☐	

Appendix 8

The Weekly notice of PLC activities within the county (From Xing Tang Primary School)

读好书 行好事 做幸福人

举行数学青年教师基本功岗位练兵专项培训，吴亚梅，张丽婷，洪鹏，杨欣欣，邵艺光，徐晨，洪月婷，陈晓辉参加；②10日（周五）在新城小学"落实统编教材新理念"，张婷婷，王淑华参加；③音乐：10日（周五）上午在同安区教师进修学校附属幼儿园二楼多功能教室举行音乐教研，任婉钦参加；④英语：9日（周四）上午在西柯中心小学举行市英语送教下乡活动，赵玉，陈秀婷，林秀真参加；请相关老师调好课，准时参加，具体文件详见OA； 2. 9日(周四)上午第二节课(9:00开始上课)在凤南中心小学举行新入职教师课堂教学考核教研活动,请全体语文老师准时参加。执教者：张婷婷，王淑华，执教篇目：三年级下册《漏》、五年级下册《彩色的非洲》； 3. 6日（周一）下午在第三实验小学举行英语片区教研，赵玉，林秀真，陈秀婷，钟镇添参加； 4. 11日上午8:30（报到时间8:10），同安区滨城小学举行同安区第五届中小学生"汉字记忆书写"趣味比赛。请新塘小学的陈晓尉，南山小学的吕思雨和吕柏军做好参赛准备，带队老师和学生指导老师要安排好学生当天的安全问题； 5. 本周学区下校期中常规检查。时间安排如下：星期三上午一、二节新塘小学，三、四节后坂小学；星期三下午一、二节南山小学，周四下午一二节中心小学。人员安排如下：陈旭民带队，参加人员周明吉、吴亚梅、汪晓静、吕跃放、张建新、许荣族、、叶绿馨、洪月婷、张丽婷、赵玉、陈亚梅。请各校按"凤南学区常规检查记录表"内容做好准备。
1.5月6—12日是防灾减灾宣传周，请各校做好相关教育活动，并于15日前报送活动总结和两张活动图片； 2.5月10日是防空警报试鸣日，请各校做好相关教育，并做好疏散演练；

Appendix 9

Xing Tang Primary School, Tong An District, Fujian Province

A view of a Year 5 class in Xing Tang Primary School

Ting Xi Central Primary School, Tong An District, Fujian Province


Year 5 Mathematics lesson, Ting Xi Central Primary School.