

## Chinese language teaching in Britain: Present and future

There has been a long history of Chinese language teaching (CLT) in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), but until recently, CLT was predominantly confined to community schools for Chinese children on weekends and a small number of other schools and universities. Therefore, it had remained peripheral for a long time in terms of student numbers and of its position in the education system.

This situation has changed dramatically over the last ten years, especially since the beginning of the 21st century, as CLT has experienced an unprecedented and rapid development during this period. Today, almost all British universities offer some kind of Chinese course. More and more secondary schools have started or plan to start Chinese courses as part of their curriculum ever since Chinese was officially recognised as a subject of modern foreign languages (MFLs) by the government. Chinese language and culture activities are getting into more primary schools than ever before. In addition, Chinese language courses also become commonly available in both public and private institutions for adult and professional learners. This situation presents opportunities as well as challenges. The present paper aims to first describe briefly the current provision of CLT in the UK, its background and characteristics, and then to give some preliminary analyses of current issues and prediction of possible trends concerning the development of CLT in the UK in the next few years.

### 1. Background

Towards the end of the 20th century, the British education system and society started to re-examine foreign language policy and practice as economic globalisation and multilingualism were rapidly changing the world and needs and demands for language skills became more apparent as well as different from before. A series of commissioned studies were conducted and reports published: the "Nuffield languages inquiry" in 1999 (Nuffield Foundation 2000); the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) published a report on the status of Chinese studies in the higher education sector in 1999; the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published its language document titled "Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum" in 2000. At the same time, the Chinese and British governments signed a collaboration agreement on the promotion of Chinese and English language learning and teaching in China and the UK, including a school exchange programme administered by the British Council. In 2001, a Languages National Steering Group was established at the advice of the DfES, and in February 2002, it published a green paper

under the title "Language learning". Subsequently, in December 2002 a national language strategy document came out, "Languages for all: Languages for life".

"Languages for all" set three main objectives: improving language teaching, creating a national language qualification framework, and increasing the number of people learning languages from primary education throughout to lifelong education. It also proposed measures and a timeline to achieve these objectives. A major change in terms of language policy is that it proposed the MFL to be no longer a statutory subject at the end of the secondary education but instead to make MFL learning an entitlement to all pupils in primary schools by 2010. This change was reiterated in the "Languages review" (also called "Dearing report"), which also stressed that MFL should be relevant to students in terms of their life and their cognitive ability. In terms of the qualifications, an assessment and qualification system called Languages Ladder, was put forward based upon the widely accepted Common European Framework of Reference. Soon the DFES commissioned OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations) to develop a framework called Asset Languages, an assessment and qualification system with greater flexibility for skills to be assessed and recognised separately in line with the proposed National Ladder. The new system consists of six stages and eighteen levels. Since Asset Languages' first appearance in September 2005, about 15,000 people have taken the assessment available in about twenty languages. Chinese is one the languages in which assessments are available, but only the first three levels for the time being.

## **2. Current provision and characteristics**

While there can be different ways to describe the current CLT provision in the UK, the present description is provided in terms of the three main education sectors in which CLT provision has grown rapidly in the last few years, i. e. primary and secondary education, higher education, and lifelong education.

### **2.1. CLT in primary and secondary education**

The real development of CLT in British schools has come about in the last five to six years, with initiative from organisations such as the HSBC Global Education Trust and British Council (BC) as well as from some individuals in schools. Since 2002, the annual conference on educational cooperation with China and Chinese speech competitions organised by HSBC Global Education Trust and British Council have become important events for schools. Demands from parents and support from local and central government bodies have also helped with the development of CLT in schools. It is estimated that Chinese instruction is available in about ten percent of all secondary schools in England, over 400 in number. In addition, there are several dozens of private schools that also offer

Chinese courses. As the number of schools which are members of the Special School and Academy Trust (SSAT) is increasing, particularly with a Confucius Institute now residing at SSAT, the number of its member schools offering Chinese will continue to rise.

An important factor that contributes to the fast development of CLT in British schools is the decision and foresight of some individuals, particularly heads of MFL departments and head-teachers who understand the importance of Chinese and even its advantages as a MFL. Among state schools, Kingsford Community School (URL: <http://www.kingsfordschool.com>) was the first to make Chinese a compulsory MFL. When talking about this decision (cf. Jackson 2009), its head-teacher said that while most people know that Chinese is important, she also believed that Chinese would be very useful in helping students to develop their interest in their studies and their understanding of the outside world. The school recruited three full time teachers of Chinese via their website, which was also unprecedented in British schools. The new Chinese course was very popular with students, and it in fact helped with the change of student behaviour since the school is in an economically deprived area of London. Its students have won awards in the annual Chinese speech contest, and some gained very good results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE, comparable to the German "Mittlere Reife") and even A level (comparable to German "Abitur") Chinese examinations, breaking down the psychological barrier that such examinations could only be taken by Chinese heritage students. The school now also provides CLT for its neighbouring primary schools in the community.

Of the many independent schools (they are actually private) that offer Chinese in a significant way, Brighton College hit the headline in 2006 (cf. Press Association 2006) because while a number of private schools had offered Chinese long before Brighton College, it was the first to include the language as a compulsory subject. Its new head-teacher said that this decision wasn't just about being fashionable, but he felt that it would be foolish for his students not to understand Chinese language and culture when leaving school. He has recently introduced Chinese into the prep school where children as young as three will start to learn Chinese. Brighton College (URL: <http://www.brightoncollege.org.uk>) has also forged a collaboration link with Kingsford Community School (KCS) in CLT where outstanding students from KCS in Chinese may enter Brighton College with its scholarship. This link has also helped to encourage students of KCS to work hard and to promote CLT in KCS as well as in the school sector as a whole. British private schools are usually very reactive to market demands. They are quick in offering Chinese courses in line with parents' requests as they have relatively more autonomy and resources at their command to do so.

## 2.2. CLT in higher education

The development of CLT in British higher education is partly responding to the societal demands for graduates with Chinese language skills, and is partly the result of the HEFCE's financial investment in CLT over the last ten years. Chinese language courses in British higher education come in a range of forms: single honours, joint honours, as a constituent part or an option of a degree programme, or simply as a non credit bearing course. Single honours Chinese is offered in only a few universities, such as Cambridge, Oxford, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Leeds, and Edinburgh, and it usually takes four years to complete. The increased interest in Chinese is evident from the fact that while the number of language students dropped by 2 % in 2004, there was an increase of 14 % in Chinese, and this trend seems to have continued. In 2008, there was a big increase in the new student in-take for Chinese, about 60 % as compared to the previous year at SOAS, for instance. Universities that offer postgraduate programmes in Chinese studies are relatively few, and mostly among those mentioned above. But with the establishment of the British Inter-University China Centre (URL: <http://www.bicc.ox.ac.uk/>), postgraduate students and research output are certain to increase.

Joint honours involving Chinese are getting very popular in British universities, as these programmes seem to better meet the demands of the students. The programmes last between three to four years and the combinations include Chinese plus another language, Chinese plus history or other subjects. But the most common and popular mix seems to be Chinese plus business studies, as languages are increasingly seen as an instrument to advance business interests. Some universities even place their language department in their business school. It is estimated that there are a few hundred students on such programmes. In addition, there are a couple of thousand students taking Chinese either as a credit bearing or non credit bearing course in universities. At SOAS alone, the number of students studying Chinese in these courses amounts to a few hundred.

University Chinese language teachers have a professional organisation of their own, the British Chinese Language Teaching Society (BCLTS; URL: <http://www.ctcfl.ox.ac.uk/clts/aboutus.htm>), which was founded in 1997. Over the last decade or so, BCLTS has developed from an informal seminar with eight members from six universities to now about eighty members from over forty higher education institutions, and this number will continue to grow in the next couple of years. Its function has changed over the years, too, from an informal forum to an organisation of professional development programmes, research projects, an annual international symposium and publication of research papers.

### 2.3. CLT in adult and lifelong education

In the British education system, further education (FE) and adult education provide education opportunities for those who have completed or passed the age for school education. Further education tends to be more vocational for students who do not go on to higher education, but it also offers courses to mature learners, which is similar to the purpose of adult education, or lifelong education. CLT in lifelong education is very unevenly distributed across the country, but seems to reflect the economic development and relationships that these education establishments have in those areas with China. For instance, CLT is very active in the Southeast of England. Generally speaking, further education is the sector in which CLT is most diversified in form, and unbalanced in geographic coverage, with CLT provision falling far behind other education sectors.

In the lifelong education sector, many university language centres play an important role in providing and promoting CLT in the UK, of which the SOAS Language Centre (URL: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/languagecentre/>) is most representative as it offers a large scale of Chinese language courses at all levels and in different forms both on its campus and at clients' premises. The Centre has about 1,500 registrations a year for its Chinese courses, from general language to professionally specific courses, such as business and legal Chinese. In addition, the Centre also offers teacher training programmes, conducts research into the cognitive processes of how English speaking adults learn Chinese, and develops teaching materials. With the establishment of the London Confucius Institute at the Centre, the Centre now organises more cultural activities concerning China. There are many other university language centres like this.

Many private institutions and community schools constitute an important force in promoting the development of CLT in the UK. Most of private institutions would place financial interest first but the courses they offer cover Chinese language and culture as well as briefings pertinent to China. Some organisations specialise in helping secondary schools that intend to start CLT, some work with Chinese universities that have graduates in teaching Chinese as a foreign language and introduce them to opportunities to gain teaching experience in British schools, and still others provide language and cultural activities for pre-school children. In London, some European countries have their own schools, some of which have also started to offer Chinese along with their own language. In addition, many English language schools have also started to offer Chinese language courses. In a recent survey of its member schools, the International House World Organisation, a network of language schools worldwide that are committed to implementing high standards of quality and innovation in education and training, found that one fifth of the 100 respondent schools offer Chinese language courses. Although such provision may not be seen as mainstream, it is still playing an important role in promoting the development of CLT in the UK. Chinese community schools play a similar role here, too. Unlike before, these schools no

longer just cater for children from Chinese families, but also for children and adults from the community. There are a few hundred such schools in the UK, including some new ones established by new immigrants from China since the 1980s. These new schools tend to teach Mandarin and simplified Chinese, and are run by people with higher education qualifications. As they are quite open and flexible, they attract a lot of non-Chinese students, and sometimes even the parents of these non-Chinese students.

Another interesting aspect of CLT are training opportunities in Chinese language and culture that some businesses and government departments offer in their institution for their employees. Understandably, most of these enterprises and institutions have a business or other relationship with China. Courses of this kind are often provided in collaboration with a specialised institution, such as a language school or university. Some enterprises also select staff and send them to study at higher education institutions.

The picture of CLT would not be complete without mentioning the increasing number of Confucius Institutes (CIs) in the UK. Over a dozen of CIs have been established in the UK so far, most of them at universities. UK also has the most specialised CIs, such as a CI for business, for Chinese medicine, and for schools. London Confucius Institute, which was the first in the UK and resides at SOAS, launched a journal called *Chinese learning and teaching* in 2006 and organises an annual China Day event along with a book-fair on materials for learning and teaching Chinese. British CIs soon came to realise the importance of cooperation and coordination of their activities, and have thus initiated an informal yet regular forum termed as Confucius Institute Network UK (CINUK; URL: <http://www.confuciusinstitute.ac.uk/about/worldwide.html>) towards the end of 2006.

## 2.4. Characteristics of the development of CLT in the UK

There are a number of characteristics associated with the development of CLT in the UK in the last ten years. First, like other MFLs, Chinese language teaching is also student centred. This is primarily because of the British cultural tradition and educational experience that stresses the students' learning process and experience. Thus, many schools start with pilot courses in Chinese in a hope to foster students' interest and confidence in learning Chinese as well as to test the water. This is also because Chinese is seen as being very different from European languages, and there is not enough understanding of Chinese. This has led to the practice that much of the course design, content selection and delivery methodology were based upon students and their learning environment rather than on special features of Chinese language as formulated by Chinese linguists. For example, explanations of relevant linguistic knowledge take due consideration of how students can understand and assimilate them. Second, the development of CLT in the UK has been the result of market demands. Of the various strands

of development, the most rapid increase occurred in the learning and teaching of Chinese related to economic, political and cultural needs and activities. Most of the students are from government departments and business institutions that have something to do with China. In universities, Chinese language courses increased most in programmes offered in conjunction with business studies, economics, political studies and other related subjects. Initial drive for CLT in secondary education came from HSBC Global Education Trust and the British Council, which shows the economic and political influences on this development. People who learn Chinese because of their interest in Chinese culture and language are relatively few in number. Third, this rapid development has also benefited from the change in the British government's China policy and its MFL policy in recent years. The inclusion of Chinese as a MFL made it possible for Chinese to be taught as a mainstream MFL subject in schools. So it can be said that the recent development of CLT in the UK is actually a combined result of increasing market demands and government policy change. However, there are a number of issues that have come up along with the rapid development of CLT.

### **3. Issues and reflections**

The first issue is lack of an adequate syllabus and examination system for Chinese teaching. The issue has been raised many times, but it has not been given the attention that it deserves. While there have been a 50 % and 40 % increase respectively in the number of uptakes of Chinese GCSE and A levels since 2001, the actual number of students taking these exams is still very small as compared to those taking similar examinations in other European languages. For examples, in 2006, there were 50,000 students taking French GCSE and about 100,000 taking German GCSE, but only about 3,000 taking Chinese GCSE. The situation was similar with A level uptakes. There are a number of reasons for this. Apart from the fact that Chinese started much later than these languages, a major problem with Chinese is that no adequate syllabus has been set up which meets the needs and objectives of overall curriculum requirements and at the same time reflects how English speaking learners study Chinese. As for university Chinese courses, while a number of universities do refer their Chinese courses to the Common European Framework, lack of a commonly recognised syllabus or standard means in fact that there is a huge discrepancy between many universities in terms of their objectives and results. Some do not teach Chinese characters, so there is little comparability between university Chinese language courses. Although there is a syllabus for GCSE Chinese, the fact that it was based upon the model for French without due attention to the prominent linguistic characteristics of the Chinese language, the cognitive process of English speakers learning Chinese and the circumstances under which these learners use Chinese explains why students find it difficult to learn

Chinese and less rewarding as they are unable to achieve similar grades in examinations as they would if they studied European languages. This is precisely why some schools are still hesitant in deciding if they will include Chinese as part of their examinable subjects, as they can't be sure of their students' results, which may adversely affect the school's position in national rankings. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that there is only about one eighth of the secondary schools offering Chinese which include it in their GCSE or A level subject list.

A related issue is examination and certification in Chinese. Some progress has been made in this regard already. As mentioned before, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations) and Cambridge ESOL (English as Second or Other Language), have since 2005 developed three stages of its Asset Languages certification scheme for Chinese: Breakthrough, Preliminary and Intermediate, in line with the British government proposed national Languages Ladder framework as part of the national language strategies. A salient feature of this certification scheme, which has six stages in all, is that it allows separate testing and certification of the four skills in language learning. It has taken into consideration the reality that language learners may have different needs for these four skills, and may indeed develop these skills at different stages of learning. Thus, this certification gives much expected flexibility to both learners and teachers. Compared with traditional qualifications, the new system of certification has distinctive advantages, particularly for new language subjects such as Chinese, and consequently has soon become quite popular with Chinese students. In addition, there have been other similar attempts in providing alternative qualifications in Chinese. For instance, the Pre-university Diploma in Chinese, developed by Cambridge International Examinations as an alternative to traditional A level Chinese which was mainly designed with heritage Chinese students in mind. Other qualifications such as the Chinese HSK (*Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi*, or Chinese proficiency test) have been around in the UK for about two decades, but its annual number of candidates has never been more than 200 in the last few years. This number, however, is expected to rise dramatically in the next three to five years.

The second issue is the lack of adequate teaching materials in Chinese. This has become an increasingly acute problem as Chinese language teaching is rapidly developing in the last few years, and is subsequently adversely affected by this lack, which dampens the enthusiasm of students and teachers. It is true that there are many textbooks available on the market, but few of them are designed with regard to the British context. Typically, the issue of teaching materials includes the following aspects. Firstly, most materials cannot satisfy the needs of the British curriculum design and requirements of the British education system; secondly, most of the available teaching materials were designed from the point of view of Chinese language itself rather than the needs of the learners



and users, thus learners, especially beginners are made to feel that Chinese is inaccessible and impossible to learn. Thirdly, the problem is also manifested in the contents of these teaching materials, as little consideration has been given to how learners would use the language and assimilate the culture in a non Chinese socio-cultural and linguistic environment. The relevance of learning content is one of the issues mentioned in the recently published "Dearing report". Fourthly, few of the available teaching materials are based upon research and understanding of how English speaking students learn Chinese as compared with how they would learn another major European language where they would feel less foreign. Last but certainly not the least is that few of the materials on the market are designed to lead the learners to acquire recognised British qualification, which is essential if Chinese intends to become a member of the mainstream foreign languages family in the UK.

However, there have been some attempts at compiling teaching materials for the British market in the last two decades, particularly the last five years. The most notable one is *Colloquial Chinese* by P. C. T'ung and D. E. Pollard at the SOAS in the early 1980s. The book was designed as the start-up coursebook for university students studying for a degree in Chinese. While its vocabulary and contents may be a bit out of date now, its underlying principle with English speaking learners in mind still makes it the best suitable textbook of its kind today. *Chinese for GCSE*, first published in 2003 with co-sponsorship of the British Council and the Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOCFL, or *Hanban*) is another example of localised teaching materials, but for school students. While this publication helps to provide students and teachers with a much needed source of materials, the fact that it was modelled on the French syllabus means that it hasn't taken into consideration any linguistic features of Chinese, which subsequently lead to some much discussed problems. For university students who do not study Chinese for a degree and adult learners, *Chinese in Steps* is a series textbook specially designed for the British market, incorporating cognitive features of English speaking learners as well as linking to the requirements of the British accreditation system with regard to the Common European Framework. It is truly a pioneer in the efforts of locally produced Chinese teaching materials. The first volume came out in 2005, and four volumes in all have been published so far.

The third issue is lack of qualified and experienced teachers of Chinese, which has in fact become the bottleneck that constrains further development of Chinese teaching in the UK. To a large extent, teachers are a decisive and guiding factor in the whole process of learning and teaching. An experienced teacher can make up for lack of adequate teaching materials by adapting the existing materials or even creating his or her own materials to meet the needs of the students and the curriculum. As there was little demand for Chinese from schools before, it is only recently that a couple of universities have started offer

nationally recognised teacher training programmes – PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) – in Chinese. Due to all sorts of reasons, these programmes only have a handful of students enrolled in them, thus falling way behind the fast growing need for teachers as a result of rapid development of Chinese teaching in schools in the last five years or so. Therefore, less than one tenth of the couple of hundred teachers of Chinese in schools have gained formal teaching qualification, and less than half of them have been exposed to any formal teacher or linguistic training. Those who have gained teaching qualifications from the Chinese government are also few in number.

Apart from lack of formal training, about 80 % of these teachers work part time, and many of them only teach a few hours a week. It is obvious that part time teachers are unable to devote much time to the teaching, nor would schools be able to provide these teachers with good opportunities for professional development. Absence of a professional organisation for school teachers of Chinese also contributes to the current lack of opportunities for them to exchange ideas and learn from best practice, to lobby for professional development to protest their rights. The situation is slightly better with university Chinese language teachers. However, lack of qualified and experienced teachers is a constraining factor for the development of Chinese teaching in the UK as a whole as some schools decide to give up Chinese shortly after its start because the students haven't had a good enough experience with the trial course.

There have been some efforts made by various institutions to address this issue. Mostly notably was the Certificate in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language course launched by the SOAS Language Centre in 2003 in anticipation of the increasing demand for trained teachers of Chinese. A number of universities have started or are also preparing Chinese teacher training programmes. At the same time, institutions such as Confucius Institutes are also actively involved or planning similar courses in order to help with the training of both pre-service and in-service teachers. As there are some special characteristics in teaching Chinese in the UK which need to be addressed, there will be continued discussion and search for most appropriate contents for such training and professional development programmes in the next few years.

The fourth issue is the lack of relevant research and exchanges concerning the learning and teaching of Chinese, which is also related to the above mentioned problem of teacher training. For the time being, those who are able to devote time are mostly full time teachers, particularly those who teach in universities. However, a considerable number of teachers are not clear about what they can do in terms of research based upon their classroom teaching, some are not equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills in this regard. At the same time, activities and opportunities for teachers to exchange information and learn from others' best practice are limited, apart from annual conferences organised by BCLTS, HSBC Global Education Trust, and the British Council and

occasional seminars organised by SSAT and regular workshops by the SOAS Language Centre, which are far from the real needs and demands from the rapidly emerging professional group. In the last couple of years London Confucius Institute has been discussing with the relevant organisations to offer new training opportunities and professional development programmes, and its first Foundation Certificate course was launched in 2008.

Finally, another issue in the development of CLT is lack of coordination and cooperation between various organisations and institutions, which often leads to reinventing the wheel and inefficient use of resources. This not only slows down the development of CLT unnecessarily, but also makes it difficult to obtain understanding, support and trust from colleagues teaching other MFLs. Obvious examples of this kind include percussive use of course levels, huge differences in course objectives, and repetitive creation of low quality, but similar teaching and supplementary resources, all in the absence of a widely recognised framework of standards. Therefore, the formation of a national steering group made up of major stake holders which has the knowledge, resources as well as authority to coordinate all the existing and future efforts is absolutely necessary. This will require a development strategy, and, of course, a common framework for Chinese based upon the CEFR to guide all future efforts in materials development, examination modification, teacher training and research so that CLT can be put on the right track and gain its appropriate place in the MFL family in the UK.

#### **4. Concluding remarks: Future development and trends**

With the above analysis of CLT in the UK in the last few years, it is reasonable to draw the following conclusion in terms of the future developments and trends in CLT with some immediate issues to be addressed in the next three to five years:

First, the number of joint honours programmes and optional courses featuring Chinese will continue to grow in British universities. Joint honours programmes are very different from single Chinese honours and may differ from each other in both contents and number of hours allocated depending on the proportion of the Chinese language in the programme. At the same time, it is certain that more and more universities will have Chinese as an IWLP (institution wide language programme). All this generates demand for qualified teachers and adequate teaching materials. What really matters now is that such university Chinese language courses should have clear objectives and standards, which need to be set up not only with reference to descriptions of can-do statements of the Common European Framework, but also with regards to some special features of the Chinese language. Otherwise it will be difficult to change the current situation that Chinese is viewed just as an add-on to the list of modern foreign languages

(MFL) without due attention to linguistic and pragmatic differences between Chinese and most of the other MFLs, i. e. European languages.

Second, as more and more secondary schools offer Chinese language, many are also planning to include Chinese as part of their school curriculum leading to qualifications at GCSE or A levels. This, in a way, is a natural result of the increased teaching of Chinese in schools, as including it in the curriculum can help guarantee the time and quality desired, and the schools are becoming more experienced and confident about teaching Chinese after a period of trial. However, there is also increasing need for a commonly recognised national syllabus and for continued effort in the reform of the examinations at both GCSE and A levels as the previous and even current examinations are still too difficult for non-heritage Chinese speakers to pass. All these issues need to be resolved before Chinese can be fully incorporated into the school curriculum, with new and appropriate examinations in which students may get desired grades comparable to other modern foreign languages with similar efforts. Again, a syllabus should be set up within the British framework of the Languages Ladder and the wider Common European Framework with due regard to the vital differences between Chinese and other modern European languages both linguistically and pragmatically, as well as with regard to contents of such a syllabus and to the essential characteristics of the cognitive process of English speakers learning Chinese. As the "Dearing report" points out, a common issue that modern language teaching is faced with is how to ensure the relevance of the contents to learners' lives.

Third, more and more primary schools will offer opportunities for their pupils to participate in extra-curricular Chinese language and cultural activities, though it is not anticipated that there will be any official endorsement from the government or growth on a significantly large scale in any short term. To a large extent, such development will be the expected consequence of the government's current foreign language policy, which the government intends to implement in the next couple of years, which is to make MFL available to pupils as an entitlement in primary schools. Compared to the secondary schools, the need for qualified teachers and adequate materials will be much more acute and urgent for primary schools. Therefore, short term, rapid training for teachers of Chinese and the establishment of resource centres may be an immediate answer to help primary and secondary schools in their effort to expand their Chinese language and cultural activities.

It is almost certain that a number of universities which already offer PGCE programmes in MFL will start to offer such programmes in Chinese. It is clear that all types of pre-service and in-service professional development programmes will need to work together in order to meet the demand. However, the real issue is coordinated investment in both the contents and deployment of these programmes to avoid the mistake of reinventing the wheel which would result in

wastage of effort and resources. In view of the fact that most Chinese language teachers are native speakers, but mostly without appropriate and necessary training in Chinese and language teaching, it is important to include these elements in the short term training programme: Chinese language, basics in applied linguistics in regard to language teaching, language acquisition and approaches in the teaching and developing of language skills.

It can also be anticipated that there will be a number of new textbooks to be developed locally by teachers teaching in the UK in conjunction with Chinese language specialists. This is necessary in order to meet various local needs while the teachers become more experienced and confident. However, it will not be possible to develop any really high quality teaching materials in the absence of an adequate syllabus and of research into the acquisition process of English learners. Therefore, it is of vital importance to have an overall plan for the development of Chinese teaching, and a national body which can coordinate and integrate all the efforts from all relevant individuals and organisations.

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