

Outcomes and Recommendations

The morning group discussions yielded some common and key points from the teachers and universities, summarised as follows:

Teachers' Groups

- The importance of Chinese teaching pedagogy at the beginning of Chinese learning and throughout school i.e. the importance of stroke order and tones (some debate and disagreement).
- The conflict between university requirements of students, and what teachers need to teach in order for students to pass exams.
- Pre-U –some schools know a lot about Pre-U and others know very little.
- More information is needed by schools about the transition from school/college to university in terms of Chinese learning, particularly university requirements to study Chinese, as different universities have different entry requirements.
- Schools need to know more about requirements for, and contents of, Chinese courses. Teachers felt that a database would be useful for this kind of information.
- More information is needed from universities on issues such as single and joint honours – What is the best option for Chinese language courses?
- Teachers would like to know more information about job opportunities/ internships available for students after they have studied Chinese at university.
- A discussion concerning the format of the Universities and Schools Day for future events would be useful.

Universities' Groups

- Pre-U – Universities need to have more knowledge on this.
- Do universities require another MFL? – There was some debate between the universities about this. Most universities say that another MFL is desirable, especially in relation to grammar, and understanding the structure of language; however, subjects such as music and art are also useful in learning Chinese (to assist with tones or writing characters), or even maths (to assist with learning discipline).
- Streaming – Most universities have different entry levels, but the same exit levels, which means that currently (for universities) there is no perceived benefit to studying at school. There needs to be an exchange of information with schools about what these entry and exit levels are, and what alternative modules/ methods can be offered to pupils who have a good grasp of Mandarin.
- In relation to the point above, most universities are not flexible, which needs to be addressed (although there was an acknowledgement that universities have economic pressures and resource issues to bear in mind).
- Universities need to start creating and nurturing links with Chinese businesses so they are in a position to offer internships etc. to students.
- Working partnerships between universities and schools need to be increased and more unified, particularly in regional zones.

These key points have been circulated to the participants.