



Benchmarking and Teacher Training in Asian Languages

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- Asian languages and MFLs
- Challenges and opportunities
- Work at SOAS Language Centre
- Some future trends





Asian languages and MFLs

- Where do Asian (and African) languages stand
 - From community to modern foreign languages
 - Global languages – English?
 - Less widely taught (LWT) languages
 - World languages
- Growing demand and development in LWTLs
 - Education sector: schools and HEIs
 - Other communities/sector



Challenges and opportunities

- Mainstreaming LWT languages
- Benchmark LWT languages
- Training teachers for LWT languages
- Research into the learning and teaching of LWT languages
- Material development
- Technologies





Chinese Courses – some general Issues

- Lack of awareness of linguistic features of Chinese language
- Lack of a common standard for attainment (syllabus) and assessment for Chinese
- Lack of discussions and communications
- Lack of empirical research
- Lack of qualified and trained teachers
- Lack of adequate materials
- Lack of networking and high profile

Challenges and **opportunities**

- Rich MFL theories and practices
- Increasing awareness and demands
- Opportunities for ground breaking work
- Some work already completed (Japan foundation)
- Network and expertises for collaboration
- Technologies





Work at SOAS Language Centre

- Preliminary benchmarking work
- Teacher training
- Material development
- Research and conferences: e.g Symposium 2010
- Projects
 - EU project on benchmarking Chinese
 - Online teacher training project
 - Online Japanese and Sanskrit courses
 - Others – placement tests



Some future trends

- Demands continuing to grow but unbalanced
- Attract more attention but uncertain support
- Mainstreaming is the key for sustainable growth of LWT languages
- Integration of technologies to overcome geographical barriers and to meet the demands of the learners
- Collaboration between institutions to make efficient use of resources





Many thanks!

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