

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS (ACSSO)

The national voice of parents of children in Australia's public schools and their school communities

LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

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<http://www.languageseducation.com/news1071126.pdf>

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Welcome to the **Languages Education in Australia Newsletter**. Produced by the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) jointly with the Australian Parents Council (APC), this Newsletter aims to inform school communities and other subscribers about events, activities and initiatives around the country related to languages education.

We want this Newsletter, and our Languages Education in Australia Website (<http://www.languageseducation.com>) to become increasingly interactive, building two-way communication and providing a venue for school communities to put forward ideas, discussion topics, suggestions – and *a gallery of good news stories and photos about how your school is engaging its community around languages education*. Contact us on: info@languageseducation.com

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YOUR STORIES

Highlighting innovative ways to involve young Australians and their families in languages learning, inter-cultural communication and understanding ...

Kimmba Bi-lingual Playgroup

The Multicultural Bilingual Learning Playgroup Association, a not-for-profit community organisation, operates Kimmba at Sherwood Court in Doncaster East, Melbourne.

Kimmba's caring and stimulating learning environment helps pre-school from 0-6 years of age to learn, communicate and interact with a foreign language early in their lives, in ways that build their self-esteem and confidence. The program actively helps children and their families understand other cultures and promote community cohesion and harmony.

This is the first playgroup association in Australia that is aimed at the acceptance of families and children who come from different nationalities and backgrounds and who speak different languages. Kimmba believes that a society which accepts and welcomes its peoples' colours, races, languages, and religions - and understands those core characteristics we all share, and how we can work co-operatively together - is a successful, well-functioning society. One in which we would like our children to live and grow.

Developed by and with families from other cultures and language backgrounds, the community at Kimmba would like to see multiculturalism in Australia continue to succeed and in doing so promote the diversities of the world's cultures without any language barriers.

The Association has started playgroups in the following languages: Mandarin, Cantonese and Spanish, German is just formed.

Read about Kimmba's first musical intercultural performance at <http://www.languageseducation.com/kimmba.pdf>

Kimmba is currently looking for Mandarin, Spanish, Japanese, Greek and German bilingual preschool language teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience, including early childhood. Current Australian qualifications are preferred.

Kimmba also welcomes approaches from new families seeking to join their Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish and German playgroups.

Read more at <http://www.kimmba.com.au/>

IDEAS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LANGUAGES 2008

What About a Junior Language Challenge Event?

In the UK, the **Eurotalk Junior Language Challenge** is now in its fourth year of operation. This is a nationwide competition which is open to every primary school child in the UK.

Through their interactive multimedia CD-ROMs the organising agency has given thousands of children the opportunity to learn a foreign language - usually a language that they will not have the chance to learn in secondary school (thus increasing the range of languages available and accessible to young people beyond those offered and provided in formal schooling).

The process also provides engagement for teachers, who have the opportunity to try all the activities of the competition as personal development, a means of getting a practical sense of how the process works for their students, and encouragement to them to encourage their students to "have a go".

Teacher comments:

"This kind of ICT based activity is extremely valuable in supporting language activities in primary schools where "traditionally" we don't have foreign language specialists on our staff"

"Children in my class found the language learning very motivational. They could work at their own pace and use our newly installed technology. They enjoyed keeping track of their own score and trying to beat it - and others".

For more details, visit: <http://www.eurotalk.com/jlc/>

What about picking up this idea for Australian primary schools 2008? Is anything like this already happening around the country??

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FOCUS ON: CHINESE LANGUAGES

ACT - Students Recognised for Mandarin Language & Culture Skills

Winston Tan, Canberra Times 3 November 2007

It is not just the Federal Opposition Leader who is adept at Mandarin. Achievement in Mandarin language and culture was celebrated in the 2007 ACT Mandarin Presentation Contest yesterday, with 36 high school and university students winning awards.

The ceremony awarded students for a range of activities, including writing and conversation skills and cultural performance Linda Hill who is in grade 5 at Mawson Primary school won an achievement award for her Mandarin oral presentation.

Although she has been learning for only three years, she is enjoying learning Mandarin. "I like speaking the language and getting to perform songs," Linda said. Her teacher, Wei-Wei Callinan said given Linda comes from a non-Mandarin speaking background, her skills were something she had to "learn and earn".

Australian National University student Tatiana Scott won an award for her vocabulary skills. "To be able to speak to 25% of the world is exciting. English opens so many doors - and Mandarin opens even more," Ms Scott said.

Julie Chiu from the Cultural Division of the Tapei Economic and Cultural Office, which organised the awards, said students were increasingly embracing Mandarin as a language to learn.

Minister for Education Andrew Barr said Mandarin was the fastest growing language in ACT schools

Chinese Bridge language competition winners head to China

Monash University Bulletin 13 June 2007

Monash University students have again been recognised for excellence in Chinese language.

This year, Monash Chinese Studies Program students have won the top two places at the prestigious Chinese Bridge competition, a worldwide language competition for foreign students not of Chinese background.

Students David O'Loughlin and Thomas Shugg have been awarded first and second place respectively at the Melbourne section of the competition. Both are studying 'Chinese 9', an advanced level of Chinese language and studies at Monash University

The annual competition was held in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth this year where students from across Australia vied for the right to compete in Changchun, capital city of Jilin in northeast China.

Dr Lijian Hong, Senior Lecturer from School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, said the two students were outstanding in their presentations for the competition.

"There were three components to the competition where the students had to each present a short speech followed by a question and answer segment with the panel of judges followed by a performance of their choice," Dr Hong said. "David presented a Chinese poem, while Thomas enthused the judges with his calligraphy talents."

Dr Hong said Monash has had consistent success at the competition. In 2005, Monash students took out first, second, third and fifth places. The Chinese Studies Program at Monash is one of the largest in Australia.

Dr Hong said the highly successful Chinese In-country Program is so far the largest of its kind in the world and believes the competition confirms the program and calibre of students is of an international standard.

"Our program attracts students from a diverse background and while the competition is only open to students from non-Chinese backgrounds, many students undertaking the language course are from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong and have selected Monash to further their language skills and study in the history and culture of their native country from a different perspective

Source: <http://www.monash.edu.au/news/monashmemo/stories/20070613/chinese-language.html>

For more information about the annual Chinese Bridge Competitions (from 2002) http://www.hanban.edu.cn/en_hanban/hyqds.php?cid=6

Australia-China Council National Chinese Speaking (Hanyuqiao) Competition

The inaugural competition was held in 2005. The 2007 competition was held in Melbourne on 6 July. The competition is open to Chinese language students in year 10 or 11 (or their equivalent), who are first selected through state competitions.

Students interested in entering the next national competition should talk to their Chinese Teacher about the State Competitions.

As part of its support for the competition, the Australia-China Council is providing a subsidy for travel and cash prizes for the winners:

- First prize: \$500
- Second prize: \$300
- Third prize: \$200

There are two categories in the competition: Chinese first language; and Chinese second language. Second language students must be born in a non-Chinese speaking country and their parents are not native speakers of any form of Chinese. They should not have more than four weeks' experience of Chinese exchange or overseas study.

First language students may have one or both parents who speak a Chinese dialect as their first language or the student settled in Australia before the age of five. Students who arrived after the age of five are not eligible to enter the competition.

Teachers may submit a request for an exception to these criteria where the circumstances warrant it.

(Information from Dept Foreign Affairs & Trade site

http://www.dfat.gov.au/acc/yep/speech_competition.html)

Full details of the competition and the selection process can be obtained through the presidents of the state Chinese language teachers' associations. (contact details at:

<http://www.clta.asn.au/frameset.htm>)

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IN LIGHT OF RECENT EVENTS ...

"Languages for Australia's Future"

Public Forum, Melbourne, 22 September 2007

The Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria (MLTAV), with the support of the Australian Federation of Modern Languages Teachers (AFMLTA), hosted this important Public Forum on 22 September 2007 in Melbourne.

The Forum was held as part of MLTAV's ongoing Advocacy campaign for Languages. More details of the Forum and a major report, including the policies as outlined below, will be included in the November edition of Languages Victoria. To receive this publication, you must be a MLTAV member. If you would like to support the MLTAV's work, and you are not already a member, please considering joining!

The speakers representing each of the major political parties contesting the [then] upcoming Federal election were:

Dr Richard Di Natale, Lead Senate Candidate, Australian Greens Victoria

Mr Laurie Ferguson MP, Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Urban Development and Consumer Affairs (representing the Office of **Mr Stephen Smith MP**, Shadow Minister for Education and Training)

Senator the Hon Kay Patterson (representing the Office of **Ms Julie Bishop**, Minister for Education Science and Training)

Each speaker answered a number of questions including:

* The MCEETYA National Statement and Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools has been endorsed for 2005 to 2008. Will your Party support such a Statement and Plan beyond this period? What changes, if any, do you envisage to the present Statement and Plan beyond 2008?

Check out the whole discussion online at:

<http://www.mltav.asn.au/content/view/156/175/>

RESOURCES

Cracking the code: online learning resources for Chinese and Japanese

Olivia Clarke - Curriculum Leadership, 2 November 2007

The [Le@rning](#) Federation (TLF) makes available to all schools in Australia and New Zealand high-quality, interactive, digital learning resources to support teachers and help students learn another language. The Cracking the code set of learning objects helps students to learn and use the Chinese and Japanese character-based writing systems through analysis and interaction rather than simply through memorisation. The article describes the use of these resources for teaching Chinese at one South Australian secondary school.

Currently TLF has released multimedia, interactive learning objects for seven languages: Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian and Japanese. The digital content, in the form of learning objects, for each language has either been produced by TLF or licensed from other sources and made available by TLF.

TLF produces two types of digital content for Chinese and Japanese. Based on separate principles of language learning, they are grouped in sets titled 'Cracking the code' and 'Close encounters'. The Close encounters learning objects, available for all seven languages, are based on the principles of Intercultural Language Learning (ILL). The ILL objects offer students a way to use the target language to communicate and interact in authentic activities that portray the socio-cultural characteristics of the target country.

The Cracking the code project was designed to support students to learn and use the Chinese and Japanese character-based writing systems.

Character-based systems are often hard to learn for students used to alphabet-based systems like English. Based on recent National Asian Languages and Studies for Australian Schools (NALSAS) research led by Dr Andrew Scrimgeour of the University of South Australia, the TLF online curriculum resources aim to enhance students' understanding of the Chinese and Japanese writing systems through analysis, interaction and consideration of the component parts, rather than simply memorisation.

Read the whole article at

<http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=21282&issueID=10967>

Read more about TLF Languages at <http://www.tlf.edu.au/languages>.

THE WORLD IN REVIEW

USA: Building a Nation of Polyglots, Starting With the Very Young

New York Times November 14, 2007

Since September 2006, all students in grades one through five in Loudon County, Va., have been given 30 to 60 minutes of Spanish instruction each week.

Last year, officials in Fairfax County, Va. - which, with 165,439 students, is the nation's 13th-largest school system - decided to expand the study of foreign languages to all 137 elementary schools over a seven-year period.

Twenty-five Fairfax schools provide 30-minute lessons twice a week in Spanish, Japanese, Arabic, Chinese or French starting in the first grade. Ten schools have ambitious "immersion" programs where math, science and health are taught in a foreign language.

Paula Patrick, the Fairfax system's foreign language coordinator, said Americans have for too long had a "mind-set that everyone else in the world could learn English."

But with an economy that recognizes few geographical borders, and with people from all over the planet becoming our next-door neighbors, more Americans are demanding language instruction earlier in school.

Martha Abbott, director of education at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, said that while there is no reliable data on the trend, her organization keeps learning of more school systems that think paying for elementary school language teachers is money well invested.

The growth in language instruction is also taking place in college. A survey by the Modern Language Association released yesterday found a 13 percent increase in language-course enrollments between 2002 and 2006, with a 127 percent increase in the number of students taking Arabic.

Read entire article:

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/14/education/14education.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

UK: Ten-year-old schoolboy musician can speak eleven languages

Arpan Sharma has astounded his teachers by learning to speak an incredible 10 languages on top of English. The primary school pupil has taught himself five of them by using interactive, multimedia CD-ROMs and has been fluent in another since he was practically able to talk. Aside from his mother tongue, Arpan speaks Hindi, after learning it from his parents, and has learnt French, Spanish, German and Italian in school.

In addition he also speaks Thai, Swahili, Polish, Chinese Mandarin and is currently studying the difficult Lugandan language of Uganda.

The youngster, a member of the National Children's Orchestra, uses his keen ear for music to listen to the correct pronunciation of words.

His dream is to become a top surgeon able to travel around the world to different hospitals speaking in their native tongue. Arpan, who lives in Oldbury, West Mids, said: "Learning these languages is my favourite part of school along with music.

"I have known how to speak and understand Hindi since I was very little because both my mum and dad speak it. French, Spanish, German and Italian, I learnt in school and I studied languages that were a bit more difficult by using CD-ROMs on the school computers. Learning Swahili was probably one of the biggest challenges I've faced and Mandarin Chinese was hard too.

"I want to carry on studying foreign languages at secondary school next year but I haven't decided which ones yet."

Arpan learnt Italian when he was seven, German when he was eight, Spanish a year later and French last term. This year he has studied a computer based programme called Junior Language Challenge, taking in Polish, Thai, Swahili, Chinese Mandarin and now Lugandan.

Languages teacher Nicky Lambert-Green, said: "Arpan has proven to be an incredible talent at learning so many languages at such a young age. It's basically a language for every year of his life. He is a pleasure to teach. At the school we offer an introduction to languages which then enables the children to make an informed choice of foreign languages when they move to their senior schools."

Deputy Headmaster Richard Lynn added: "Arpan is a language genius, a natural when it comes to listening to the exact pronunciation and repeating them perfectly.

"I think some of his talent is twinned with his ability as a musician. His good ear for music and tone is used for languages as well."

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=490547&in_page_id=1770

USA: Accentuating the 'American' in their Speech

The Los Angeles Times October 23, 2007

In classes and private tutoring sessions throughout the nation, immigrants and others are focused on sounding more American (think prime-time news anchor).

They are practicing their vowels and reciting problem words.

Such accent reduction classes have been around for years, but linguists and teachers say an increasingly multilingual workforce is prompting a surge in enrollments.

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association reports a 15 percent increase from 2005 to 2006 in the number of inquiries. What is more, private tutors said they answer calls almost daily from prospective students, when just a few years ago the phones rang only periodically.

"As our workforce becomes more and more global," said Judy Ravin, president of the Accent Reduction Institute, "these classes are becoming more and more popular."

Read entire article at http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-accent23oct23_0,1577402.story?coll=la-home-center

Vietnam: Foreign Language Key to Success

Lao Dong (Vietnam) November 14, 2007

A significant number of students at foreign language teaching centers in Vietnam already have stable jobs but also want to reap the rewards of being bilingual in a country that needs more and more foreign language speakers every day.

Recruitment ads in Vietnamese newspapers are increasingly demanding strong and comprehensive language abilities for positions in the nation's companies, asking applicants to have good writing, speaking and listening skills in at least one foreign language.

And for "hot" jobs like network security, securities trading, or Web site design, foreign language is also a key requirement.

"Senior employees will be cut out if they can't use a foreign language," said Minh Thien, a senior designer at a private company. "Foreign languages are currently popular and even experience can't compete with young people who are bilingual."

Read entire article at <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/social/2007/11/754840/>

USA: New Push for Language Skills

The Columbus Dispatch (OH) October 22, 2007

If Ohio wants to jump-start its sputtering economy, it should start teaching Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish to children as young as preschoolers and encourage more foreign trade, according to a new blueprint created by business, education and government leaders.

Federal officials have put \$333,333 behind the effort in the hope that Ohio will set a national example of the benefits of having residents interested in other languages and cultures. Oregon and Texas also were selected for the effort, backed by the U.S. departments of Commerce, Defense and Labor.

The plan, called the "Ohio Language Roadmap for the 21st Century," lists five things the state can do to better compete globally, more warmly welcome foreigners with limited English skills and strengthen state and national security.

"Just think of the possibilities if more people in Ohio spoke another language," said Deborah Scherer, director of international trade for the state Department of Development.

Read entire article:

http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2007/10/22/bilingual.ART_ART_10-22-07_B1_VT88EKT.html?sid=101

UK: Bilingual School to be Capital's 'Little France'

The Evening Standard (UK) October 24, 2007

England's first bilingual comprehensive school could be created in London.

Recently, the Hammersmith and Fulham council said it was in talks with the French Embassy to redevelop an unpopular state school into an institution that offers both English and French national curricula.

The school would be free to the children of British citizens while French expatriate pupils would pay fees.

It would be a partnership between Hurlingham and Chelsea comprehensive in Fulham and the nearby Lycée Français private school, owned by the French government.

Read whole article <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23417905-details/Bilingual+school+to+be+capital's+'Little+France'/article.do>

USA: Ohio Language Roadmap for the 21st Century: Key Strategies:

1) Establish an Ohio Language and Culture Service Center (LCSC)

The LCSC will be built through the collaborative efforts of business, government and education and will focus on creating strong language proficiency and cultural knowledge in Ohio. Once established, the LCSC will bring together the foreign language assets of the state, assess the most critical needs, and develop the expertise for creating solutions.

2) Organize Language Partnering for Life (LPL)

Fostered by the LCSC, this networking organization will bring Ohioans who have language needs and expertise together to regularly share their thoughts, needs and resource networks. This includes connections within the U.S. and abroad, as well as between sister cities, chambers of commerce, universities and colleges, and government agencies.

3) Create extended sequences of foreign language study

In order to produce Ohioans capable of using foreign languages in their respective professional careers, foreign language study should start as early as possible.

Foreign language instruction must include fluency in the technical areas that employers need. This coupling of language and specific content knowledge will create truly global professionals.

The Roadmap Design Teams recommend that foreign language education be available from as early as preschool. Professionally-useful levels of foreign language proficiency require long periods of quality instruction, dedicated students, and workplace experience.

Creative cooperation among schools, government, and business will create a pool of language-competent professionals who have the skills to develop and implement solutions for organizations challenged by language and culture issues.

4) Train, license and employ more teachers educated in the use of technology; develop networked programs around these qualified teachers

Once the preceding recommendations are implemented, there will be many more positions available for foreign language teachers. Expanding the number of qualified foreign language teachers can be accomplished through recruiting of heritage speakers, improving alternative licensure procedures and augmenting teacher training programs for teachers of preschool through graduate school. With more trained teachers, more schools can offer quality foreign language instruction.

In addition, networked instruction developed around these highly trained teachers will bring foreign language education to school districts whose financial means may not be commensurate with their need for foreign language education, or whose local foreign language resources differ from other regions. For example, Cleveland would be able to take advantage of Toledo's considerable Arabic language resources and Toledo would be able to access Cleveland's Slavic language resources.

5) Create performance-based tools for assessing foreign language learners' ability to communicate effectively

Foreign language learning must be assessed on a performance basis.

As in sports and music, students who can perform masterfully in the target language will progress to the next level; therefore, masterful performance at each level needs to be identified, standardized, and clearly articulated. Assessments that are focused on the use of language in the workplace will be enriched by involving the expertise of persons in business and government in the design and evaluation of these performance- based tools.

Achieving these goals requires a shared recognition of Ohio's place in the world and the world's place in Ohio. As Ohio's leaders strive to create new opportunities for the state's economy and to nourish a new attitude toward its future, having the ability to act as global citizens is crucial. Learning the languages and cultures of those with whom we interact will enhance our ability to build the trusting relationships on which Ohio's success in the world depends.

Download the complete "Language Roadmap for the 21st Century" at http://www.dispatch.com/dispatch/export-content/sites/dispatch/local_news/stories/extras/1007/Language_Roadmap.pdf

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