



# Building Demand - What Works

## The Studies of Asian languages

### >> Removing structural impediments

#### Building Demand: providing students with quality programs

#### A bilingual English/Korean classroom at Campsie

Campsie Public School in inner suburban Sydney has about 700 students from 42 language groups. About 85% of the school population is of Asian-Australian background, while 10% have a Pacific Island background and 5% are of European-Australian background.

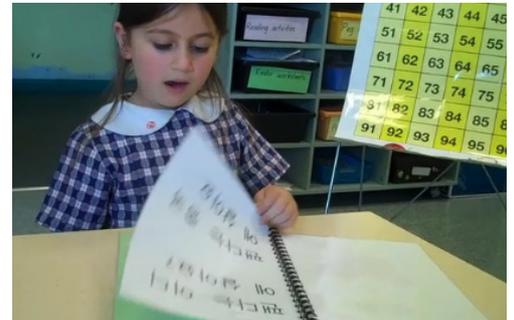
The school teaches ten languages, including a range of Asian languages and Pacific Island languages. Most recently, Indonesian has been added. The school's aim is for every student to study at least one language other than English. Each student has two hours of instruction per week; the first about the language itself and the second aligned with required outcomes in History and Geography (Human Society and its Environment).

#### Bilingual classrooms

Campsie Public School is one of four New South Wales government schools to have a bilingual program. Its current Korean bilingual program began in 2010, and the NSW Department of Education has indicated that it will be supported through to at least 2015, so students who began two years ago will be able to remain in the class through to graduation from Year 6.

The school is also involved in the *Connected Classrooms* project, through which it shares its Korean-teaching expertise with Merriwa Central School (in the Hunter/Central Coast Region) through innovative Information Communication Technologies (ICT) connections.

In 2012, Campsie independently established a Mandarin bilingual class.



The essence of the bilingual classroom is that both languages are used for instructional purposes, with Korean currently used for six hours per week. Principal, Phil Irvine says:

*"It seems to me that you can maintain a language in two hours per week, but for students who don't hear that language at home, it's not enough to make real progress. For that you need the bilingual approach, and six hours per week in the target language. It's very attractive for us that the bilingual program provides a genuine chance for students who don't have a Korean background to really develop a second language, and to begin that at a very young age."*

Successful bilingual approaches create their own demand

Campsie Public School in Sydney teaches 12 different community languages and is in the third year of an English/Korean bilingual program. Parents, community and students have responded enthusiastically and local demand for the program is strong.

Bilingual programs have a number of benefits for students. Apart from meeting existing community demand for Asian languages, they also create further demand as parents, and the community, witness their success.

Another feature of the approach at Campsie Public School is that the bilingual class is available to all students, regardless of academic ability. If parents choose it at orientation, their children will be in the bilingual class – students are not screened out due to ability.

### Parent and student demand

An indication of the level of community demand is that although the school does no marketing and there is not even a brochure about the bilingual program, there is never a problem filling the class.

Only about 7% of the local community is of Korean background, so clearly the demand for the Korean bilingual class is not just from that community. In fact, about one third of the 2012 class is from a Mandarin-speaking background, with just a small number coming from European-Australian backgrounds. Of the latter group, some choose to send their children across several suburbs to the school.

Many of the parent group come from backgrounds where speaking two or three languages is the norm rather than exceptional. Comments from them also indicate that they have an understanding about Australia's future in the Asian region, and they feel that being bilingual will be an advantage. Beyond that, according to Irvine:

*"The parents just want an all-round education for their children. They want them to learn to swim, to do public speaking, to be in a choir ... and part of that is learning a second language, like it's the most natural thing in the world. Which it probably is! As more parents see the success of the program, more want to be involved."*

He also notes that, in terms of valuing the program within the school, it all starts with the principal. With that commitment and belief, Irvine says:

*"I've been able to attract wonderful staff who are intent on making the program work. Some say you can't get the right staff, but I've found that's just not true."*

### Coordination

Irvine notes the necessity of supporting teachers in this work. Appropriate professional learning is important and issues of coordination must also be considered. It is essential, for instance, that teachers work cooperatively, so that content dealt with using Korean as the medium of instruction is identical to the content dealt with using English. This means that planning must be efficient and detailed.

### Conclusion

Bilingual programs have a number of benefits for students. Apart from meeting existing community demand for Asian languages, they also create further demand as parents, and the community, witness their success.

### About AEF

The Asia Education Foundation provides teachers, education leaders and school communities with innovative programs, curriculum resources and networks to support the achievement of Asia literacy for every young Australian.

AEF is a joint activity of Asialink at the University of Melbourne and Education Services Australia. It receives core funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

AEF leverages funding to support Asia literacy in Australian schools from a broad range of government, philanthropic and corporate partners in Australia and Asia.

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### Related links

- >> NSW Bilingual Schools Program
  - >> Phil Irvine at the AEF Summit, 2011 [www.asiaeducation.edu.au/campsie](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/campsie)
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