



Building Demand - What Works

The Study of Asian languages

>> from students

Building Demand for: providing students with pathways

Connected classrooms in New South Wales

In recent years, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training has been responsible for a number of initiatives that use ICTs (information and communication technologies) to bring Asian languages to students who would otherwise find access difficult. Several different models and new pathways for students have been developed.

Mandarin in Northern Sydney

Through National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) funding, the Northern Sydney Region has been able to run a pilot program for 480 primary and junior high school students in 18 schools. Additional funding was provided from the NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre to support the development of the final model. The students are taught Mandarin for a total of five lessons each week, using connected classroom technologies: video conferencing and desktop sharing software. Two teachers of Mandarin are involved.

Initially, the two teachers were released from school for ten days to train in the use of connected classroom technologies and to develop the program and its associated learning materials. At that time, two NALSSP project officers from the NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre worked with the teachers, providing curriculum advice, technology training, advice on the requirements of the pilot and feedback on the program and its learning materials. The project officers also wrote a professional learning support document about how the pedagogy differs from face-to-face teaching.

Connected Learning in Languages

Supporting teachers of Languages in integrating new technologies.



All participating students first receive a face-to-face lesson from one of the Mandarin teachers, who then teach the remainder using connected classrooms technologies. At the receiving end, a teacher must be present in the classroom supervising the students, so there are no timetable savings in the model.

Success factors

The program has certainly been successful in terms of bringing Mandarin to more students. Factors in its success are reportedly:

- >> both teachers were prepared to invest significant amounts of outside school time in developing the materials for the pilot program;
- >> the two teachers have also developed a good on-camera presence and use the technology very effectively;
- >> students have an initial face-to-face class that builds rapport between teacher and students;
- >> the level of support provided by the regional School Education Director and NALSSP project officers;
- >> participating students are self-nominated or selected via an expression of interest.

ICTs allow more students to study Asian languages

In NSW, several NALSSP-funded projects have successfully created new pathways for students by providing opportunities to study Asian languages remotely, through information and communication technologies (ICTs). The success of these projects illustrates the potential of these approaches.

These projects illustrate the potential of innovative information technologies to deliver Asian language learning to students who would otherwise find access difficult or impossible.

Due to the pilot program's success, the Northern Sydney Region is now looking to expand the program, offering schools the opportunity to pay for program delivery. The future of this program will rely on this strategy and in 2012, 43 schools with over 800 students have taken up the offer.

Managing technological glitches

Since the model relies on technology, there are always times when it does not cooperate. To deal with this, the teachers send alternative lesson plans to the participating schools in advance. Most teachers at the receiving schools have an ICT staff member with them to set up the technology and to assist if something goes wrong.

Other working models

1. Camden Haven High School (North Coast Region) is delivering the Stage 4 mandatory languages course (in Japanese) to Peak Hill Central School (Western Region).

Under National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) regional grant funding, a one-off grant of \$5000 per connection will be made available to schools wishing to establish a Stage 4 connected class. This funding could be used for teacher relief to develop program and resources, for travel by the delivering teacher to the receiving school to build rapport, or for various other purposes.

2. Henry Kendall High School (Hunter/Central Coast Region) is delivering the Stage 6 Japanese Beginners course to a combined class of Henry Kendall and Elderslie High School (South Western Sydney Region) students, with Elderslie students joining the class via connected classroom technologies. At Elderslie an English teacher who is retraining in Japanese is available to the class. All students intend to continue with Japanese in Year 12.
3. Campsie Public School (South Western Sydney Region) offers a Korean bilingual program under the NSW Government's Bilingual Schools Program. Students in Kindergarten to Year 2 are now participating in the program, which will be extended to Year 6 by 2015.

Through NALSSP funding, Campsie has been able to expand its Korean program, and has become a high-profile hub for Korean language learning. It is currently delivering an innovative program of Korean language and culture through connected classroom technologies to students in Years 5 - 8 at Merriwa Central School (Hunter/Central Coast Region). Each year group at Merriwa participates in the Korean program for one term.

Conclusion

Although relatively small-scale, these projects illustrate the potential of the innovative use of information technologies to deliver Asian language learning to students who would otherwise find access difficult or impossible. This new pathway increases the numbers of students studying Asian languages.

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.

Related links

>> [NSW DET Connected classroom support website](#)

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