



Asia Education Foundation

# Building Demand - What Works

## The Study of Asian languages

>> from students

### Building Demand: providing students with quality programs

#### Japanese in action: a language lab at Taranganba State School

Taranganba State School (and its partner Emu Park State School) are at Yeppoon in Queensland. With the assistance of a 'Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools' (BALGS) grant, the school was able to create a sophisticated language laboratory. This had a number of consequential benefits for students such as increasing their enthusiasm for learning the Japanese language.

#### Background

One of the challenges at Taranganba is that Japanese is taught to a wide range of students. Some are working at the expected level for their age group but there are also special needs students, advanced and gifted students, ESL learners and students who enrol mid-year without Japanese experience.

In this context, student motivation to study Japanese was quite variable and teachers struggled to deal with the situation. The language laboratory, then, was a specific solution to the needs of the diverse student population.

The school also aims to improve student motivation and learning by ensuring that the outcomes of learning extended beyond the boundaries of the school, both within the local community and to Japan. This is Japanese in action.

#### A virtual classroom

The project involved the establishment of a Japanese language laboratory: an iPad virtual classroom, with resources on iPads complementing the curriculum, a new LOTE



section in the libraries of both schools, and the purchase of a wide variety of cultural and language resources.

The use of iPads allows students to access the virtual classroom for learning and assessment tasks. They will be used to communicate easily with a Japanese partner school or previous Japanese visitors to Taranganba.

A total of about 330 Grades 6 and 7 students were able to use the facility in its first year.

#### Benefits for students

Students have been able to work at their own level and pace using high-quality resources, while the new LOTE library has allowed them to learn about a range of cultural topics. Some younger students have used the library to begin language and cultural learning at their own pace prior to commencing formal classes.

The quality and length of students' assessment tasks have improved, and many students have become more self-motivated. As well, students with literacy difficulties have been more inclined to persevere with their work through the use of apps on the iPad.

**A virtual classroom improves student motivation and achievement**

Taranganba's sophisticated language laboratory has provided students with a highly engaging environment in which to learn Japanese. It caters well for students at all levels and has improved student motivation and achievement. It also allows real-world communication with partners in Japan.

'These days it is often a simple matter of finding the correct app on the iPad and changing the app settings.'

Student, Taranganba State School, QLD

In the past, they would often limit their Japanese sentences to the bare minimum because they found the use of paper dictionaries difficult.

Many students have been able to trial Japanese apps or other resources before purchasing them themselves. The project leader said another important key learning from the project involved the benefit of being able to instantly produce suitable apps at a moment's notice for a wide variety of students.

*'These days it is often a simple matter of finding the correct app on the iPad and changing the app settings.'*

The project leader reports that a number of students have been inspired to continue Japanese learning outside school time:

*'We are proud of the quality of our Japanese program and the increase in student engagement. We know that the students have a much more rounded and real view of Japan.'*

## 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.

## Conclusion

The development of a high-quality language laboratory has improved student learning outcomes, their motivation and their engagement with Japanese language.

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## Related links

- >> Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools [www.asiaeducation.edu.au/balgs](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/balgs)
  - >> Taranganba State School website [www.taranganbass.eq.edu.au/wcms/](http://www.taranganbass.eq.edu.au/wcms/)
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