



SUNNYVALE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Principal's
Sabbatical Report
Term 2, 2014**

PURPOSE:

- 1. To investigate the impact of Mandarin teaching and learning throughout schools in West Auckland.*
- 2. To use the information gathered to explore the possibility of introducing an Asian Language class at Sunnyvale School.*

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge the support of:

- Sunnyvale Board of Trustees, Deputy Principals Jan Coffey and Jan McDonald, the staff and the School Community for supporting my application.
- professional, talented and collegial West Auckland Principals who shared their great teaching and learning with me.
- family and friends who rejoiced in my opportunity to have some time for them and myself.

I am privileged to have the opportunity and would like to thank the Ministry of Education and Teach NZ for accepting my application.

Executive Summary

Personally the luxury of a sabbatical has had its challenges and above all delights. It has given me the insight to look at my life and education with a renewed passion. Life has taught me that nothing ever stays the same and it is up to me as an individual to keep positive and excited about the world around me. This helps me to be a better leader.

This report endeavours to provide our school and the wider community with good reasons for our students to be Asian aware.

Purpose

Since being granted this sabbatical Sunnyvale School has been fortunate to have been offered a Mandarin Teacher for one day a week from the Confucius Centre. This has changed the dynamics of the second part of my purpose.

The purpose of this sabbatical is to:

1. Investigate the impact of Mandarin teaching and learning throughout schools in West Auckland.

WAS:

- 2a. to use the information gathered to explore the possibility of introducing an Asian Language class to Sunnyvale School.

NOW:

- 2b. to use the information gathered now that we are fortunate to have a Mandarin Teacher for one day a week to validate introducing an Asian Language at Sunnyvale School.

Sunnyvale School is a decile 4 school with an enrolment of 64% Maori and Pasifika pupils. We have 81 funded ESOL Learners and a considerable number of Special Need Students.

(109/420 students on our Special Needs Register) It is important that our pupils have the best opportunities to equip them for the future.

Now that we have a Mandarin Teacher for 1 day a week for 2014, I would like to continue to learn more about being Asian Aware, so that Sunnyvale School can continue to learn and grow in a globalised world.

Background and Rational

After attending the 2012 NZPF Conference in Melbourne I have become increasingly interested in Globalisation and Education. I listened to the research that Andy Hargreaves, Kishore Mahbubani, Pasi Sahlberg and Yong Zhao and became convinced that as a principal it was my duty to expose the Students of Sunnyvale School to the world beyond.

There are a number of schools in West Auckland that already have a partnership with Asia NZ and the Confucius Centre and so I decided to visit these schools and investigate the success and challenges of my fellow colleagues in the area.

I was particularly interested in how low decile Schools have:

- established the Mandarin Programme
- monitored Mandarin Learners to show progress in learning
- Developed a direct link across the curriculum with the teaching and learning of another language.

My "I wonder" Question was:

How many pupils from these Primary and Intermediate schools have continued to develop their language skills at Secondary level?

Methodology

Contact the schools in West Auckland that have a Mandarin teacher and arrange a time to visit. These schools include primary, intermediate and secondary

Visit the school Principals and collect relevant information.

Revisit research from key note speakers at the 2012 NZPF Conference in Melbourne and the 2013 conference in Hamilton.

Interview a Sunnyvale School teacher, and a student focus group, to get a teacher and student voice about their experience of being taught Mandarin at Sunnyvale School. (This focus group will consist of a range of ages and cultures.)

Collate all information and write report.

Share report with the Board, Community and WAPA Exec.

As a farmer's daughter growing up in the Rodney district during the 1950's through to the late 1960's the word "globalisation" to me existed only of friends and families emigrating to NZ from Britain by ship and the odd older cousin flying to Australia or England to study or travel.

I knew that the beef and pork produced on our farm and the apples and plums grown on my Uncle's orchard had a huge part to play in NZ greatest export to Australia and Britain.

I had never met a person from Asian decent as a Primary School pupil. At the age of 10 years the only Pasifika person I had met was my cousin's husband who was from Samoa and this was a very unusual happening at the time. I had a few close Maori friends from school which added to my limited cultural experience in a very rural environment.

This is such a different world from where I stand at the moment. I have a son in law from Paraguay and Spanish speaking grandchildren. I lead a school that is predominantly Maori/ Pasifika with increasing numbers of pupils of Asian descent.

Facts:

The 2013 Census shows that:

- 470,000 people have identified themselves with at least one Asian ethnicity as compared with 240,000 in 2001

- Maori will be outnumbered by Asians as the second biggest ethnic group in NZ within the next decade
- Within this group the Indian population is the fastest growing, having increased almost 50% since 2006
- Massey University Pro- vice Chancellor Professor Paul Spoonley says that Asian population of 471,711 had grown from 6.6% of the population in 2001 to 11.8%
- In 2013, 18.6% of New Zealanders could speak more than one language, up from 15.85% in 2001
- More than a million of those living in NZ were born overseas - that's a quarter of NZ population
- Half a million of Auckland population were born overseas. The most common countries of birth are:
 - England
 - China
 - India
 - Australia
 - South Africa
 - Fiji
 - Samoa
 - Philippines
 - Korea
 - Scotland

What does Globalisation mean today as stated from the World Business Directory?

“The world movement toward economic financial trade and communication integration”

“Globalisation implies the opening of a nationalistic perspective to a broader outlook of an interconnected and interdependent world with free transfer of capital, good and services across national frontiers. However it does not include unhindered movement of labour and as suggested by some economists may hurt smaller fragile economies if applied indiscriminately.”

These are a lot of big words but how does this affect the teaching and learning of students in West Auckland Primary schools?

Questions:

1. *What does the programme look like in your school?*
2. *Have you any evidence that this improves teaching and learning?*
3. *Do you know if any of your students have taken this to a new level at Intermediate or Secondary School?*
4. *What are the challenges?*
5. *What are the benefits?*
6. *Other:*

Findings

1. What does the programme look like in your school?

Of the 9 schools in West Auckland that I visited 5 were Primary Schools, 1 Intermediate, 1 Primary to Intermediate and 2 Secondary Schools

The Schools that I visited had a wide range of ethnic culture and some were very different to Sunnyvale with their biggest group of ethnicity being Asian.

School decile's ranged from 1 – 5 and numbers of pupils enrolled from 130 to 1326.

Most schools have a Mandarin Teacher for 1-3 days a week and these teachers are provided free of charge for the school from the Confucius Centre. All the Mandarin Teachers were completing their last year as a Student Teacher from a University in China and had signed a one year contract, in one case a 2 year contract to teach in NZ. These teachers are home stayed with NZ families. Living with a NZ family is an incredible opportunity for them to learn the NZ culture and travel to see some of our beautiful country. The Confucius Centre pays \$200.00 per week toward the Home Stay Family.

In all schools the Mandarin Teacher is timetabled for ½ hour - 1 ½ hour sessions per week. For our school we gave our teachers a chance to volunteer their class so that we had just the right amount of teaching spaces for ½ hour sessions one day per week. The teachers must stay in the class and learn along with their students. (this is not a hardship.) Our teachers are enthusiastic and enjoy being the learners to enhance their own Asian Awareness.

Some of the schools have a fluent Mandarin Teacher of their own as well as one from the Confucius Centre. One Primary to Intermediate and an Intermediate School have their own teacher that teaches the year 7 and 8 students who are more proficient.

In all the schools their students are exposed to the more cultural side of Asian Awareness other than just the Language. Four of the schools I visited belonged to the same Confucius Cluster that Sunnyvale does, some share the same teachers and many of the following experiences across the cluster.

- Cultural days / festivals
- Schools combine together and share activities based around food, clothing, The Arts, and cultural experiences such as tea ceremonies and hand painting.
- Mandarin Students in a school nearby to the shopping centre walk to buy sushi or other Asian delights. They learn to budget and speak Mandarin in an authentic setting. They then use the chop sticks to eat their tasty Asian food
- Classes share their new learning at assemblies
- Tai Chi is a favourite lesson at Sunnyvale

2. Have you any evidence that this improves teaching and learning?

The answers to this question varied from Primary to Secondary Schools. Most Primary schools saw the Mandarin experience as a real positive to exposing children to another language and culture.

They saw their students as:

- Excited learners
- Eager to share new learning in front of assemblies and at festivals
- Proud of their achievements and students are generally well behaved.

- Willing to take a risk and try something new in authentic settings
- Being able to follow this through to the contributing Intermediate and Secondary Schools with more confidence if not proficiency if they chose.

3. Do you know if any of your students have taken this to a new level at Intermediate or Secondary School?

This was a good question as not many Primary Schools or Intermediate Schools had thought of this and it led them to take an interest and investigate.

When I spoke to the Secondary Schools they did have a good idea of those children who had Asian Awareness and they had definitely noticed an increased preparedness to learn Mandarin at their schools.

4. What are the challenges?

For every school the challenges were the same but achievable. The Principals talked about previous years experience as they have been much longer in the programme than I have. For them it was all about relationships and the good fit between the Mandarin Teacher and the school. Having a teacher lead the Mandarin Teaching and Learning within their own school was imperative to the organisation and the building of positive relationships.

The following list provides some challenges:

- Overcoming cultural misunderstandings
- Mandarin Teachers lack of experience with challenging students within the NZ Pedagogy and Curriculum
- Communication and language misunderstandings
- For very young students learning needs to be set in a more authentic setting
- ½ hour sessions once a week is not enough for Primary aged children however finding more time in the already overloaded curriculum is also difficult
- Overcoming the Mandarin Teachers often high expectations of the learners and aligning the programme to the learners needs can often take time
- In larger schools timetabling could be difficult
- Sometimes it is hard to find a suitable home stay

5. What are the benefits?

- Mandarin Teachers through the Confucius Centre are FREE.
- A teacher from within the cluster is paid a Management Unit to manage the cluster activities
- Relief costs for teachers are paid for cultural days
- All photocopying and resource expenses are invoiced to the lead school and paid for by the Confucius Centre
- Buses for cultural days are also invoiced to the lead school
- Costumes are provided.
- In some cases the NZ teachers had the opportunity to visit China and the Confucius Centre, paid for 1 reliever per 20 students.

- There are tremendous opportunities for NZ teachers to enter into their own higher order teaching and learning
- Learning about another culture increases the opportunity for all students to share and help each other
- The students really enjoy the chance to broaden their knowledge of the world
- It provides an opportunity to learn another language and prepare students for the future as they travel to wherever their learning journey leads them

Student Voice

I interviewed a group of students from age 6 to 10 years olds from Sunnyvale school and this is what they had to say.

1. Why do you think you are learning Mandarin?

- So we can speak to Mandarin speaking people in shops
- If we get new children at our school we can make friends with them and help them
- We can learn lots about China
- We might get a job where our boss speaks Mandarin or other people at the job speak Mandarin

2. Do you think you are good at learning Mandarin and how do you know you?

All the children admitted that they were getting very good and this is how they knew

- I can say lots of words now and I couldn't before.
- I listen very hard to hear how the words sound
- My Mandarin teacher tells me I am doing well and she is happy
- I can go home and tell my mum what I have been learning.

3. What do you enjoy most and why?

- Counting
- Saying the new interesting words
- Learning Tai Chi is the best because we get to practice in the hall
- Singing songs
- Learning Chinese poems
- I can use chop sticks now and I have some at home
- Some worksheets
- I Love my teacher she looks like an angel (she does she is tiny, quietly spoken and the students adore her especially when she is in her traditional costume)
- I can't wait until Thursdays to learn new words and sing songs and dance

4. When do you think you will use your Mandarin language?

- I want to go to China one day
- When I go to a Chinese restaurant with my family I can help them use chop sticks and look at the menu
- I have a friend at Sunnyvale and she cannot speak English and I want to help her so she is not scared. She cries for her Mum (Sweet)
- One day I might get a job in China and it will help me to learn what to do
- There are lots of Chinese people in NZ and we will be able to talk to them

Teacher Voice

I sent the teachers at Sunnyvale the following questions and their answers aligned with the Principal comments from the schools I visited.

1. Are your students making progress with their Mandarin and how do you know?

- Students can respond in Mandarin
- The students can recall the previous weeks lesson
- Pronunciation has really improved
- Some students are picking up the language faster than others
- All instructions are in Mandarin and this is hard. Maybe use English and Mandarin to explain would be better
- A longer time frame would be beneficial
- A lot of prompting is needed for some of the students
- Maybe spending more time on one topic would help the students
- Students are following simple instructions
- Some teachers said that students are using Mandarin at roll call but not in other settings

2. What do they enjoy most and why?

- All teachers commented that their students love Tai Chi, making dragon boats and chopstick lessons the most – practical hands on activities are best
- Authentic activities are the best
- The students are really enjoying the cultural side more than learning of words
- It's awesome to watch the students eager and interested to learn new things

3. As this is to benefit students and teachers what benefits have you experienced by being in the class and learning alongside your students?

- Being able to help the students with follow up activities
- I don't have the same retention as the students!!
- Sometimes I'm distracted by keeping the students on task
- I struggle with reading and writing other languages myself and it's hard to help the students to learn to play the games. Because of this I am not participating as much as I should
- Seeing another language being taught is great
- When the lesson is around the culture this helps me to talk to the children about why it's important to learn Mandarin, know the Chinese culture and continue to learn when they go to Secondary School
- I have learnt new ways to introduce another language which I could transfer to other languages
- I have learnt some Mandarin words
- Its excellent to have an "expert teacher"
- I am being the learner alongside my students

4. Have you noticed how the ESOL children are coping compared to the English first language learners?

- All students seem to be on an equal playing field when learning a new language. They like all being beginners unless Mandarin is taught at home.
- One Japanese student thought some words were similar and seemed more confident and was picking it up faster.
- Students with parents from China were finding it easier and felt proud of their culture being taught. Mandarin speaking children are excelling
- Mandarin is completely different to the other languages known to the students and the children find this interesting and also a challenge
- ESOL students seem as engaged as every other student in the class
- Some ESOL students thought mandarin was easier than English
- In one class the teacher commented that there were many students who did not have L1 and L2 in their own language or English and introducing another language again was very difficult when following instructions.

5. What are your thoughts on continuing and expanding the programme in the future

Nearly all the teachers spoke about the same things

- Most teachers support the programme to continue
- All teachers would encourage the inclusion of more cultural experiences
- The lessons need to be a bit more basic. Some “one off” lessons could have been broken down over numerous lessons eg Chop stick lesson could have gone onto making some food and then practising how to use of them. This would have kept the students motivation higher
- Teachers are looking forward the opportunity for their students to share their learning with the rest of the school
- It is valuable to share the cultural aspects of the less prevalent cultures in our school
- Continuing to expand lessons that centre around Chinese music, dancing , games, food , sport, mythology, traditions would widen our students knowledge and increase engagement.

6. Why do you think teaching Mandarin is important to the students at Sunnyvale

- It's important for us all to learn about different cultures in this ever changing world and the change in the ethnic makeup of NZ especially Auckland
- Mandarin lessons from the Confucius Centre gives us options we would not be available to us otherwise
- It breaks up the day from the usual norms and gives the students something to look forward to.
- It creates a level playing field where we are all learning something new
- It gives us a perspective on how hard it is for ESOL students to learn a new language
- Mandarin sparks enthusiasm that transfers to other subjects
- It gives our students the opportunity to learn to speak a language of one of the biggest economic countries of the world which may help them in future endeavours
- It broadens their understanding of the world

- It provides a Gifted and Talented aspect for students who have the yearn to learn
- One teacher questioned if the students especially juniors saw the relevance.

7. Any other comments?

- Some teachers wanted more than 30 minutes per week to support their students ability to retain their learning
- All teachers wanted more practical sessions that aligned to the students prior knowledge
- Teachers were keen to incorporate Mandarin into other curriculum areas and through Concept and Inquiry
- They want more follow up activities to teach and learn with their students during the week
- Even though Mandarin teaching is overall supported by staff, some teachers were concerned about the already crowded curriculum and their students that were struggling to meet National Standards at present especially when they were ESOL students.
- Some of the teachers that have not had the opportunity to have a Mandarin Expert teacher are chomping at the bit to get one
- 2 teachers commented on their desire to have a similar programme for Te Reo

Conclusion

The teaching of Mandarin in the West Auckland Schools that I visited provides such an opportunity that we cannot ignore for the sake of children in the future.

Our Students are learning to broaden their horizons.

By the time 5 year olds of today are entering year 9 and 10 in our Secondary Schools they need to be prepared for learning and becoming proficient in a new language.

For our 5 year olds of today entering the workforce in 2030 their world will be completely different. Yes there are challenges but these are not insurmountable and the benefits far outweigh them.

“Expert Mandarin Teachers” are the key and they are FREE from the Confucius Institute.

John F Kennedy said:

“Change is the law of life and those that only look to the past or the present are certain to miss out on the future”

Interestingly, an article in the North Shore times recently caught my attention.

Mandarin helps to save Te Reo.

“The success of a Mandarin language programme taught in schools by the Confucius Institute has sparked the introduction of similar lessons in Maori at 22 North Shore Schools.”

Maybe the government might see this as an opportunity and fund something that would be helpful to lift National Standards for Maori and other ethnic groups throughout New Zealand, rather than investing millions of dollars in other less researched ideas.

Articles From:

- Asia New Zealand Foundation
- New Zealand Census
- Asia Awareness

Schools who provided information:

- Pomaria Primary School
- Henderson North School
- Henderson Intermediate
- St Dominics School
- Sunnyvale School
- Holy Cross School
- Waitakere College