



The Showcase Award for Excellence in Global Engagement

School Name: Wellers Hill State School

Submission Title: Japanese Bilingual Education: an Alternative Model of Learning

Overview:

Wellers Hill State School is dedicated to maximising learning opportunities for all students. As a result of exploring alternative evidence-based models of learning, WHSS launched its Japanese Bilingual Programme in 2014. Research relating to the benefits of bilingual language learning indicates that children who learn in a bilingual environment have significant changes to the neuro plasticity of their brain. Brain changes in neuro plasticity increases a student's ability to switch between tasks and improves their ability to maintain attention. To maximise these benefits, children should be engaged in language learning from an early age, with the WHSS programme commencing in Year One. Students spend 50% of their school week studying the Australian Curriculum in English with the remaining 50% spent studying the Australian Curriculum in Japanese as well as a Japanese Literacy and Numeracy component. All Japanese teachers at Wellers Hill are Japanese nationals with Australian qualifications. WHSS uses an authentic CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach in the bilingual programme. Our Japanese Literacy and Numeracy programme is unique to Wellers Hill and is developed as a spiralling curriculum building on and reinforcing the previous year's content.

Global Citizenship: Improving Outcomes, Enhancing Knowledge, Celebrating Cultural Diversity through Japanese Bilingual Education

Personnel Involved

Principal: John Webster
Deputy Principal: Louise Hart
Master Teacher: Anna Gojkovic
ST:L&N: Sue Webster
Teachers: Taku Hashimoto
Tracey Hawkins
Hideko Tanaka
Educational Assistant: Akiko Hansen
Parent Representative: Sarah Prescott

Design – the rationale and quality of the methods and data used for the initiative

Wellers Hill State School is committed to offering an innovative and responsive education for its students. The primary purpose of the Wellers Hill Japanese Bilingual Programme is to enhance the students' learning ability through neurological brain development. A key benefit of the program is developing global citizens who have deep intercultural understandings and are connected with the world making them globally competitive in the international employment market. Research also indicates that bilingual adults have reduced incidents of dementia in later life. Our programme therefore, provides short and long term benefits for students.

In 2013, the Principal, Mr John Webster wanted to investigate alternative methods of improving student outcomes. One of the approaches to improving student outcomes that Mr Webster researched was curriculum delivery through bilingual education. Due to the research undertaken and the strong links already existing between WHSS and Japan, the principal, following considerable consultation with staff and community, made the decision to use bilingual education as the platform for improving student learning outcomes at WHSS.

Mr Webster's research led him to Huntingdale Primary school in Melbourne. Huntingdale is a long established Japanese Bilingual school that teaches Japanese from Prep to Year 6. Two visits to Huntingdale followed, where staff and an invited prospective parent were able to learn about bilingual education and establish a continuing relationship.

Huntingdale shared their programme philosophy of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). After much research it was decided that Wellers Hill would also adopt CLIL as the philosophy to base our programme on, The CLIL philosophy is to teach both the subject and the language, and is captured in the phrase "using language to learn, learning to use language." The CLIL philosophy and many other readings, about bilingual education were shared on a monthly basis with prospective parents in 2013 prior to the start of the Japanese Bilingual Programme.

The importance of our students learning in a global context is acknowledged in the priorities identified in the State Schools Strategy 2016-2020, "successful learners engaging in learning and achievement and successfully transitioning to further education, training and employment."

The objectives of the WHSS Japanese Bilingual Programme are:

- To improve student learning and outcomes through the development of additional neural pathways.*
- To provide a bilingual and global education. This broadens students' educational experiences and opens new perspectives.*
- To enable children from all cultural backgrounds to discover and integrate Japanese linguistic and cultural experiences into their life.*
- To support the learning of students by teaching Japanese vocabulary linked to Australian Curriculum as well as other subject areas in order to enhance students' use of spoken and written Japanese.*
- To use real texts, concepts and functional communication in order to promote the application of language in the real world.*
- To assess students' progress using a variety of assessment formats including oral, written and culturally appropriate assessment.*
- To ensure students are able to communicate effectively in all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, in both English and Japanese.*
- To aim for students to be conversationally fluent by the end of Semester Two Year 3 and technically fluent by the completion of Year Six in both spoken and written Japanese.*

*Students are eligible to enter the Japanese Bilingual Programme from Year One. There are no criteria for the children to meet in order to enter the programme, as research indicates all students can benefit from learning in a Bilingual environment. Research also indicates that learning in a bilingual environment results in significant changes to the neuro plasticity of a student's brain, resulting in increased cognitive ability and the ability to maintain focus in a learning environment. **(Please refer to Appendix 1 for a list of readings).***

Information sessions are held for parents the year prior to children entering the Bilingual Programme to discuss the programme; how the children are taught, division of languages, the curriculum, current bilingual parent experiences' and research on bilingual education. Wellers Hill has also developed a rigorous data plan to monitor the academic progress of all students, including those in the Japanese Bilingual Programme.

Our Bilingual Education Programme has global benefits for all students at Wellers Hill State School. All students from Prep to Year 6 at Wellers Hill State School have access to quality weekly Japanese language lessons, and are exposed to intercultural experiences throughout their schooling, embedding in each student an international global perspective to learning. Students participate each term in a variety of Japanese cultural festivals and celebrations ranging from Setsubun to Kodomonohi (Children's Day); (please refer to Appendix 2 for photos of cultural festivals and children's testimonials). Since 2003, all students in Year 5 and 6 have had the opportunity to participate in a biannual thirteen day (13) educational and cultural tour of Japan encompassing a three (3) day home stay opportunity in Yasugi, Shimane Prefecture. From 2017 the Japanese tour will evolve to an annual Year 5 experience. Students also have the opportunity to host Japanese students who visit Wellers Hill for English language immersion study tours. Since the inception of our Japanese Bilingual Programme, Wellers Hill proudly celebrates our Japanese connection by presenting a biannual Japanese festival for the school community to enjoy. Thus, the flow-on effects of the Japanese Bilingual Programme to the broader school community have been extremely supportive and positive.

Many factors indicate the Japanese Bilingual Programme is successful. In 2013, parents were asked to make a minimum two (2) year commitment to the programme. We are currently in the third year of our programme and have not had one (1) child withdrawn. The school also has had an overall increase in the number of families within the school's catchment area enrolling and wanting to have their children become part of the Japanese Bilingual Programme. An increase in parental demand for positions in the programme has led to an increase in the number of classes in the Japanese Bilingual Program from 2014 to 2016.

With the introduction of our innovative Japanese Bilingual Programme in Queensland in 2014, Wellers Hill is embracing the DET Every Student Succeeding, State Schools Strategy 2016-2020, advancing education by allowing our students to become lifelong learners, global citizens and successful people.

As a result of the introduction of the Japanese Bilingual Programme Wellers Hill has built strong alliances with DET International, Access Asia, the AEF, and the Queensland Japan Chamber of Commerce. The Deputy Consul General from The Japanese Consulate of Brisbane, Takahko Watabe currently holds a position on our School Council and discussions are also underway with the Language Faculty at the University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology to develop a research partnership (Please refer to Appendix 3 for a letter of support for the Japanese Bilingual Programme).

As stated in the Global Schools-Creating successful global citizens draft initiative, Independent Public Schools are leading the way in looking internationally to inform innovative practices in our schools to increase student engagement and intercultural understanding. WHSS, as an independent public school, is encompassing national and international research to influence the delivery of an innovative and responsive curriculum that will lead to improved learning outcomes and global citizenry for all students.

Impact – degree of measurable change

Globally, the introduction of the Japanese Bilingual Programme to WHSS guarantees our students are culturally literate, connected to the wider world and have the skills needed to engage in a global community. A direct result of the introduction of the Japanese Bilingual Programme at Wellers Hill is the schools ability to prepare our students for the future by fostering the global citizenship needed to ensure their success in our interconnected and interdependent world.

A key reason behind introducing the Japanese Bilingual Programme at WHSS is to improve student learning outcomes. Additional benefits include neurological and long term health benefits for students enrolled in the bilingual programme.

Each term literacy and numeracy data is collected and analysed to measure academic performance across the monolingual and bilingual streams of the WHSS curriculum. The data indicates that the students enrolled in the Japanese Bilingual Programme are achieving at or above year level expectations, in the Australian Curriculum in English, the Australian Curriculum in Japanese and the specific Japanese Literacy and Numeracy curriculum.

Wellers Hill has developed a rigorous data plan to monitor the academic progress of all students, including those in the Bilingual Education Programme (Please refer to Appendix 4 for comparative student data). These include:

- *Assessments in subject areas against benchmarks and performance measures, including year level subject moderation.*

- Continuous assessments of progress through a collection of strategies such as; Running Records, Progressive Assessment Test of comprehension (PAT-comprehension), Question Answer Relationship (QAR)
- Standardised testing (e.g. Reading and Spelling Age tests and NAPLAN pre-testing in Years Two and Four)

The pre-NAPLAN test data gathered in Term Four of Year 2, 2015 indicated that 44% of the students in the Bilingual Programme were already in the U2B for reading, 28% for Number and 20% for Reading. In addition to these measures, the Japanese reading, written, oral language acquisition and mathematical development of the students in the Japanese Bilingual Programme are also measured against school developed criteria. Qualitative data is also collected where parents of the students in the Japanese Bilingual Programme are asked on a yearly basis for their feedback on the programme (**Please refer to Appendix 5 for parent feedback**).

In 2015 WHSS also undertook an independent review of the Japanese Bilingual Program conducted by retired District Director Jim Horton. The purpose of the review was to look at the programme's success, how our community views the programme and to use the data gathered to help forward plan the future direction of the programme at WHSS. Mr Horton gathered data on the success of the Japanese Bilingual Programme from many sources including; staff, students, parents of students in the Japanese Bilingual stream, parents of students in the English stream and future Wellers Hill parents. The data gathered indicated that the Japanese Bilingual Programme is viewed as a successful addition to the already broad educational opportunities offered to the students at WHSS. General comments from parents are reflected in the following two quotes collected by Mr Horton: "Our seven year old is continuously singing in Japanese and our two year old now joins in"; "It's fantastic. Our daughter is in Year 2 of the programme and we couldn't be happier in her schooling." However the bravery of both parents and students in entering the programme is summed up where a parent indicated, "There are few things that I can think of where the child at 6 years of age most certainly knows a topic better than their parent."

Scalability – the implementation context

The Japanese Bilingual Programme was implemented at WHSS in 2014. The program began with seventy-five (75) Year One students in three (3) classes, two (2) English teachers and two (2) native speaking Japanese teachers. In 2016 the program has grown to include; one hundred (100) Year One students, seventy-five (75) Year Two students, seventy-six (76) Year Three students, five (5) English teachers and five (5) Japanese teachers. Our program has grown from three (3) classes with a total of seventy-five (75) students in 2014 to ten (10) classes with a total of two hundred and fifty-one (251) students in 2016. The continued growth in enrolments in the Japanese Bilingual Program indicates that parents highly value the program and have a desire to ensure it continues to grow and develop throughout the school.

The Japanese Bilingual Programme at WHSS operates on a 50/50 basis. The children spend 50% of their contact time with an Australian teacher and 50% with a Japanese teacher. Classes are timetabled with both teachers every day. Children start their day in either the Japanese or English classroom and then following a break swap to the other teacher and language. It is our belief, based on the CLIL philosophy, that in the early stages of the students' language acquisition, learning should occur in both languages every day. The Japanese teachers only speak Japanese to the children (this includes in class and in the playground); this practice starts day one of Year One. From Semester One, Year Two the children are encouraged to only speak Japanese whilst with their Japanese teachers. As of Semester Two, Year 2 students are not permitted to speak English, even between themselves, when with their Japanese teachers. By Semester Two, Year Two, students are spontaneously speaking amongst themselves in Japanese during eating and play breaks.

Our Japanese and Australian teachers all teach the Australian Curriculum. The Australian teachers teach: English, 50% of the Mathematics curriculum, History and Science. Our Japanese teachers teach: 50% of the Mathematics curriculum, Geography, Science and Japanese Literacy and Japanese Numeracy. This curriculum is unique to WHSS and developed as a spiralling curriculum building on the previous year's content. The Arts, Health and Technology are shared amongst both the Australian and Japanese teachers. The teachers, both Japanese and Australian, in each year level plan collaboratively to ensure consistency of content, ways of working (pedagogy), assessment and moderation (**Please refer to Appendix 6 for Staff feedback**).

The children's parents are also included in their child's educational journey. Communicating with the parents about the programme is vital; regular newsletters and emails are used to keep parents informed.

We also offer Japanese lessons for parents, allowing them the opportunity to learn the Japanese language and culture. In 2016 we have offered the parents the opportunity to observe a lesson in their child's Japanese class, this is an opportunity afforded to parents in Japan called Jugyo Sankan.

Teachers in the Japanese Bilingual Programme have a professional responsibility to their year level colleagues, their Japanese Bilingual Programme colleagues and their teaching partner. Parent feedback requires both Australian and Japanese teachers to report to fifty (50) parents each term. Teachers are also required to ensure every child in their two (2) classes is supported academically, socially and emotionally. To support the staff in delivering a high quality education to the children in the Japanese Bilingual Programme processes have been implemented for teachers to utilise. Teachers access our STL&N, Educational Assistants (Teacher Aides) and parent classroom helpers. Japanese teachers have access to two (2) Japanese Educational Assistants employed four (4) days per week, and twelve (12) Japanese classroom helpers.

Professional Development is paramount for all staff at Wellers Hill. All staff have access to a Personalised Individual Learning Account (PILA) where each year \$500.00 is allocated for each staff member to access to attend targeted professional development.

Professional visits are also an integral part of our program. Teachers are encouraged to visit their year level colleagues to learn from each other. Classroom observations and feedback are also part of the support offered by the administration team. Teachers are also released each term as a year level and as a Japanese/Australian team to work with the Head of Curriculum and a Deputy Principal to plan their units of work.

In May 2016 our Year One and Year Three bilingual students were invited to open the Language Teachers' Conference in Brisbane, and following this success three (3) Year Three students were invited to Cairns to open the Language Teachers' conference there.

It is hoped that other schools wishing to investigate Bilingual Education can use our model and learn from our journey, with this in mind Wellers Hill hosts approximately six (6) group visits per month from primary and high schools from within DET and the private sector wishing to learn from our bilingual journey so far.

Investment – the value for money

The establishment of the Japanese Bilingual Programme at Wellers Hill in 2014 required a huge leap of faith from our parent community in trusting the administration and staff to ensure that their children would truly benefit from this Educational Pathway. It also required inspiration, dedication; commitment and team work from the staff (**Please refer to Appendices 7 & 8 for Letters of Support from the P&C President and WHSS School Principal**).

For the continued success and growth of the programme the administration ensures quality teaching staff join the program each year, this includes teachers with native speaking Japanese ability and the continued employment of native speaking Japanese ability Educational Assistants to support both the academic and cultural aspects of the programme.

All funds and staffing (teachers and Education Assistants) for the Japanese Bilingual Programme have been sourced through school funds.

New resources are sourced from Japan each year to support the growth of the program. The programme is funded in the following way:

2014: Cash financial component School Funds: \$7 583.49, which equates to \$101.00 per student
Education Assistant employment: \$6 822.22, which equates to \$90.00 per student

2015: Cash financial component School Funds: \$19 980.94, which equates to \$132.00 per student
Education Assistant employment: \$16 074.85, which equates to \$106.00 per student

2016: Cash financial component School Funds: \$24 159.00, which equates to \$95.00 per student
Education Assistant employment: \$5059.81, as at end of Term One, 2016.

Voluntary Parent Levy introduced 2016: \$100 per family, with 89% of families contributing to date.

These funds support the purchasing of resources from Japan, locally made resources and cultural events for all children in Years 1 to 3.

It is important that the Japanese Bilingual Programme is expanded each year in the following ways: resourcing for current and additional year levels, culturally and inclusively. It is also important that with each passing year another dimension is added to our programme to ensure our students and their families are being truly enriched by this Alternative, Innovative Educational Pathway, leading to enhanced global citizenship.

At Wellers Hill, our students don't just learn Japanese, they live Japanese!