VSL State-wide Conference
Enhancing our classroom teaching and learning - Challenges in a changing world

The 2013 VSL state-wide teachers’ conference for was held on Saturday 17th August at University High School. All centre staff including Supervisors, Assistant Supervisors, Language Teachers, Librarians and Administration Officers attended. Given the spread of our centres across Victoria it is always important for our staff to have the opportunity to meet as a whole and to network in language faculties to further improve the provision and quality of our language programs and develop strategies to implement curriculum initiatives.


The VSL is committed to support this vision and to promote the benefits it will provide to both our existing language students and future generations. What underpins this initiative is that Victorian schools provide quality language learning to all students through four interrelated principles: participation, quality, diversity and collaboration. For effective learning to occur teachers need to develop programs that contain: ‘sufficient exposure to high quality materials in the target language and culture; sufficient opportunities for practising the target language in real-life situations; high quality personalised feedback; and sustained motivation reinforced by progress toward language proficiency.’ This initiative also supports the introduction of AusVELS and the Australian Curriculum frameworks.

The August Conference program provided an overview of the curriculum initiatives being implemented in Victorian Schools and a range of key speakers were organised. These included Mr Chris Thompson (Director of Priority Projects Learning & Teaching Division, DEECD), Dr David Howes (Executive Director, VCAA) and VCAA language project officers Ms Maria Dikiaiou & Ms Gabriella Bertolissi. There was also a special guest speaker in Dr Barry Jones who was a student of Russian with our school starting in 1947.

Professional Development sessions were facilitated by our Leadership Team on our School Information Portal, Emergency Management Procedures, Handling Complaints, and Marketing strategies for smaller candidature languages. Our Librarians had a demonstration of software from ‘Functional Solutions’. The afternoon concluded with language specific network meetings facilitated by our centre language coordinators with the aim of implementing regular language network meetings across our school.

Our School has always prided itself on its innovative implementation of key curriculum initiatives and we will continue to provide quality language education that will allow our students to thrive in our multicultural and global world.

Dr David Howes (VCAA) addressing the VSL staff

Section of the audience
It is important for all our staff to keep abreast of the changes and to adapt current pedagogy and methodology to embrace changes.

It is also pleasing to report that the Department is also looking at ways in which the VSL can contribute to the implementation of the Vision for Languages. At the launch of the policy the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Nicholas Kotsiras said that to meet these targets “we must build demand for languages in the community, improve access to programs, particularly in regional areas and enhance the quality of teaching and learning’.

The VSL has made a significant contribution to teaching, curriculum development, the development of online interactive courses and the organisation of professional development sessions and conferences for language teachers. The school’s contribution to the teaching of languages in both face to face classes and in distance education is second to none. It is worth pointing out that at the 2013 Year 12 VCE Premier’s Awards – our students received a record number of 13 awards (see page 7) and also 181 top scoring VSL students received scores of between 40-50 in their respective language. Our school continues to deliver quality languages programs so as to provide the best opportunity for our students to perform at the optimum level for their language.

New Epping Centre

Part of our school’s role is sourcing how to best cater for the changing demographics of our language communities and students. After an internal review the decision was made to relocate our Mill Park centre (opened in February 2000) and establish a new centre to cater for growth in the northern suburbs at Epping Secondary College. It is an opportune time to thank the Mill Park teachers, Administration staff and Area Manager Vanda Matruglio for assisting in the smooth transition from Mill Park to the new centre.

The Epping Centre is part of Area North and is now managed by Area Manager Khalaf Greis who also manages Thomastown, Lalor and Roxburgh centres. Silvia Mitrevski is the appointed supervisor. Ms Mitrevski teaches at Epping Secondary College during the week and has worked at the VSL in an administrative capacity. Mr Ramazan Tirli is the Assistant Supervisor.

The VSL is delighted to enter this partnership with Principal Helen Alimides and Epping Secondary College which will lead to a wider language curriculum choice and pathway for students across all educational sectors in the area. The languages currently offered are Chinese, Greek, Hindi, and Sinhala. Additional languages and classes can be considered subject to community demand. Enrolments for 2014 are currently open.

Students can enrol at www.vsl.vic.edu.au.

For further information regarding the Epping Centre contact Khalaf Greis on 9464 0848.
Celebrating VSL 2012 Top Achievers

Earlier in the year the Victorian School of Languages hosted the 17th annual VCE Top Scorers evening celebrating our students 2012 VCE results at the Copland Theatre University of Melbourne.

The Masters of Ceremonies were Ms Kefalianos and Mr Stojanovski who did a wonderful job at hosting the evening.

In attendance were over 400 students and parents to acknowledge the 181 VSL students who were classed as ‘top achievers’ in the state by achieving study scores of between 40 and 50 for their language. There were 19 students who topped the State in their respective language and of these four students achieved a Perfect score of 50 for Macedonian, Romanian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Guest speakers presented and delivered some truly inspirational speeches. Key guest speakers included; The Principal of the Victorian School of Languages Mr Frank Merlino, the Minister of Education the Hon Martin Dixon and Dr Joseph Lo Bianco, Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne. Other dignitaries in attendance included members of the Consular Corps and a number of representatives from the Department of Education.

The Principal Mr Frank Merlino praised the hard work of staff and the dedication and enthusiasm of the students and parents in ensuring our graduates receive the best possible academic results. Mr Merlino discussed the role the VSL plays in working collaboratively with other schools to implement the Government’s Vision for Languages. He went on to list some of the support services the VSL provides which include Materials Development and Professional Development. The Principal ended his presentation by thanking all those individuals and organisations involved in supporting and promoting the teaching of languages.

The Minister of Education, the Hon Martin Dixon, acknowledged the importance of learning languages. Mr Dixon announced the implementation of a new policy that ensures every child in Victoria from Prep to Year 10 will learn a Language other than English. Mr Martin Dixon also acknowledged and congratulated the great work of the VSL and the integral part it plays in the network of professional institutions that teach languages. He ended his speech by thanking all the staff, students and families for their hard work and their achievements.

The next presenter to step up to the podium was Dr Joseph Lo Bianco. Dr Lo Bianco discussed the importance of appreciating languages in the current globalised, multilingual and multicultural society we live in. He encouraged the people in attendance to champion the cause of language rights through encouraging Governments to support the study and preservation of languages in Australia. He concluded by thanking all those in attendance and congratulating the achievements of our top scorers.

The final speakers were VSL students Laura Rabinovich and My Dan Pham who both received the Perfect Score in the State for Spanish and Vietnamese. They were happy to share some of their rewarding language experiences as students at the VSL.

Following the speeches, Mr Stefo Stojanovski introduced the top scorers for 2012. Students were presented with their certificates and vouchers by the Minister of Education, the Hon Martin Dixon as well as gifts from various Consuls and teacher associations.

The evening ended on a relaxed note with a performance by Sinhala students and then the students, parents, teachers and official guests mingled and enjoyed light refreshments and the opportunity to greet and congratulate those involved.
Top VCE Students in Victoria

The following students received the top marks in Victoria in their language at the VCE examinations.

Arnela Dug – Bosnian
I have been studying Bosnian for 9 years at the VSL. I believe that the gift of language is an investment that lasts a lifetime! Learning Bosnian was an enormously rewarding experience in many ways for me. Socially when the native language is not maintained, important links to family and other community members may be lost. My parents have always encouraged me to speak Bosnian at home which has helped me quite a lot with my language skills. There are many benefits of which learning languages such as opportunities for university and careers, a different perspective of the world, and greater confidence. I have certainly made many lifelong friendships and shared many memories that will stay with me forever.

Melissa Ilovaca - Croatian
I studied Croatian language at the VSL because I wanted to keep the language and tradition of my family heritage and to be able to share it with other friends and family. The classes and the learning were enjoyable because I had a great teacher! There are many benefits of pursuing language study and it also helps with the ATAR score. As advice to younger students, I would say keep it up, don’t back down and spread the word about how fun it is, and of course love the language because that is what makes us unique. In the future I plan to be a psychologist because I like to listen and help people. There might even be a possibility that I will become a Croatian teacher, because the Croatian language and tradition is my passion.

Keziah Panopio - Filipino
The main reason why I studied Filipino at the VSL is because I missed the ambience of the Philippines, and so I was able to speak Filipino in class and have friends who share the same culture and traditions. It helped me to further expand my skills in speaking and writing in Filipino and to gain a more in-depth understanding of my culture. I enjoyed all my Saturday classes but the most enjoyable memories were our language week activities. We were able to present our culture and tradition to an audience; this experience for me was unforgettable. One of the challenges I faced was improving my public speaking; but with practice over the years I developed my confidence. My advice to new students is to enjoy the experience! Knowing how to speak a language doesn’t make you a top scorer. Knowledge AND hard work is the key to success.

Ananya Kaswan – Hindi
From my first day of Saturday class at Dandenong to receiving an award at the VSL top-scorers ceremony, my journey of studying Hindi at the VSL has been very rewarding. Just like many other VCE students, I was unaware of the possibility of studying a language, other than the one offered by my day school. Going to classes at The Dandenong Centre on the weekend was a challenge in itself, especially with the mounting pressure of SACs, homework and study of my other year 12 subjects. My biggest motivation to study Hindi stemmed from the fact that it would help me achieve a better ATAR score. I am proud to say that Hindi was my highest score among all subjects I studied and it also played significant part in getting me an ATAR that would allow admission to the University and course of my choice. Hindi has also helped me with other subjects, particularly English.

Csilla Liptai – Hungarian
I studied a language at the Victorian School of Languages because I love the language that I speak at home and I feel that at the centre I could develop my knowledge and it was a place where I could make use of it. I really enjoyed the small classes that we learn in and we could really form a relationship with our teachers. The benefits of studying a language is that you can learn about cultures and appreciate them. I enjoyed finding links between the other languages I know and that I am learning, I suggest speaking the language as often as possible and discussing subject matter and different topics you are learning with family, friends and your teacher. In the future I plan to study at a Cultural Institute in Budapest, Hungary, as well as travelling/working in Europe.

Muhammad Wildan Al-Hazmi – Indonesian First Language - Premiers Award Recipient
I was quite surprised when I discovered that I could study Indonesian in Melbourne at the Victorian School of Languages. It then turned out to be an unforgettable journey as I explored more about the history, traditions and the exquisite cultural heritage of Indonesia. I would like to give a massive thank you to my teacher who assisted me with learning the language and made the class so fun and enjoyable. My advice for fellow language learners is to try and find plenty of engaging ways to make yourself familiar with the language such as watching movies and listening to songs in the language you want to learn, then try figuring out the dialogues/lyrics. When it comes to the exams, it’s really helpful to start preparing for both your oral and written exams well in advance, I wish to pursue a career in Computer Science and make a difference in the area of rapidly evolving technologies.
Top VCE Students in Victoria

Yuri Takei – Japanese First Language

I decided to study Japanese as one of my VCE subjects because I’m proud of the Japanese language and I wanted to maintain my language skills. I’d like to thank my teacher for supporting me. The most enjoyable unit was Japanese Culture and Society for my detailed study. I learnt many new aspects about my country and I fell in love with my homeland country again. The hardest thing was the pressure to do well because of the fact that Japanese is my first language. In my opinion, the most important thing is to enjoy learning the language. If you desire to achieve a high result, try to complete your work carefully and perfectly and to not give up. I believe language is the strongest tool of communication between people around the world and it broadens our outlook remarkably. In the future, the language skills I developed will be a big strength for whatever pathway I choose at university.

Nary Tuy – Khmer

The Victorian School of Languages was the only school where I could complete my units 3&4 Khmer and I know from previous VCE students that it was very achievable to score above 40 if I worked hard. Mr. Nath In is a very respected Khmer teacher in the Cambodian community. The greatest challenge for me last year was the distance I needed to travel each Saturday from Deer Park to Westall. Studying Khmer provided me the opportunity to maintain my language and it will be very useful when I visit Cambodia. I am currently a Paramedic student at Victoria University in Footscray.

Mende Stojcevski – Macedonian - Perfect score of 50 & Premiers Award Recipient

Hi there! I’m Mende. Initially, I wasn’t very keen on studying Macedonian at the Victorian School of Languages. No eight year old wants to get up early on a Saturday morning, and I admit that I tried vehemently to quit language study altogether. Despite this, I believe that language study is imperative in developing vital cognitive skills and genuinely helping one to understand their first language. I did continue my Macedonian study throughout my primary and secondary schooling. I am very thankful for this, as Macedonian became one of my VCE subjects and actually ended up as my highest scoring subject. I am now studying a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne. I intend to study the Juris Doctor degree at the Melbourne Law School after the completion of my Arts degree. As part of my Bachelor of Arts, I have elected to study a third language namely French.

Panah Sadat Fasihi – Persian

I believe bilingual people have more opportunities in their academic studies, life and future careers as they can understand and speak a couple of languages. The most difficult part for me was listening and translation, as I had some difficulty in translating some of the Persian words to English; but I believe joining the class was one the best decisions I ever made. The advice that I have for new students is that it’s a great experience in both meeting new people and learning new useful things. I’ll be studying Aerospace Engineering at Monash University and by knowing English I can now also study in overseas universities.

Monika Kania – Polish

I studied Polish because I have always wanted to go and live in Poland for a year or two. Therefore, studying Polish as a VCE subject seemed the best way to perfect my reading and writing skills. The challenge for me, other than writing, was pronouncing words properly. Most of my family and friends have been living in Australia for at least 10-20 years so they have started to speak in Polish “slang.” My frequent trips to Poland helped me with that! Studying a language broadens your horizons. Now I can travel to Poland knowing I have the basic communication skills to study or work and most importantly communicate with family and friends. My advice to younger students studying a language is to write or speak to people who know the language. They will be able to correct your most frequent errors and make sure you stop bad habits especially before SAC’s and exams.

Carolina Lopes – Portuguese

The best part of studying the Portuguese language for me was meeting other people who speak the same language, and making friends at the language school. There are plenty of benefits of studying the language, it allows people to better enjoy travelling and be able to communicate more effectively. It can also provide clear opportunities and offers a chance to discover aspects of culture, and to maintain one’s connection to it. My tip for other language students is to practice using the language as much as possible wherever you can.
Top VCE Students in Victoria.

Prebhjot Kaur – Punjabi
I chose to study a language at VSL as I wanted to learn more about my background language as well as reap the benefits of knowing a second language. One of the biggest challenges I faced whilst studying Punjabi was correcting my spelling and writing in the language. I overcame this challenge by regularly consulting with my teacher and reading many Punjabi books and articles. I believe learning another language equips individuals with a competitive edge in the workplace. Furthermore, I found that pursuing a language during VCE not only helped my ATAR score but also gave me a refreshing relief from the stress of Year 12. The only advice I would give younger students is to always do a little more than is required and you never know it might just help them get a top score.

Eunice Lois Ghita – Romanian - Perfect score of 50 & Premiers Award Recipient
I chose to study Romanian as so many people encouraged me to do so and I certainly don’t regret it now. The lessons were always enjoyable, especially when we learnt about great Romanians. The only disadvantage that I can think of was that I had to go to school on Saturdays. However, it was worth the sacrifice. Being able to speak more than one language is always useful. The advice I would give to future students who choose to learn a language is to read as many books as possible, to do their homework regularly, write short stories and speak it at home if possible. I believe this will truly enhance their language skills and it will also give them satisfaction when they see that they are making progress.

Dunya Tomic – Serbian - Premiers Award Recipient
Through learning the language I had the opportunity to not only investigate its correct grammar, and to develop both my written and spoken vocabulary, but also to learn extensively about its history and the lifestyle of Serbian people through time. The highlight of my Serbian experience was the detailed study our class chose for the spoken exam on a famous Serbian playwright. Learning a language gives you an insight into a world completely different to your own. I plan to enrol in a Biomedicine course after my completion of Year 12 in 2013; however, before I begin university my ambition is to travel around Europe, and in particularly to visit my extended family in Serbia. Using the skills I have acquired studying the language last year, I will be able to connect with people and places on their level far more than what I would have been able to in the past.

Asala Nanayakkara – Sinhala
I was excited that I undertook the opportunity to study Sinhala as a VCE subject not only because of the extra bonus points but also to be able to learn language skills and further improve my knowledge of Sinhala. Reflecting on my VSL experience, I was actually worried about the oral component but with the tremendous support and encouragement of my teacher I was able to converse with the examiners without even being nervous. Not only was the VSL a great learning environment but also a place where I met some great friends. In the future I hope to pursue a career in Law and International Relations. I know that my language skills and all of the other skills I developed will be very useful in being successful in the future.

Laura Rabinovich – Spanish - Perfect score of 50 & Premiers Award Recipient
I am so glad I made the decision to study Spanish with the VSL. I especially enjoyed how the course not only taught the language, but also gave us a greater understanding and appreciation for Spanish literature and Latin American history. Despite the challenges I faced studying through Distance Education, learning to manage my own workload and maintain up to date with my work helped me develop an independence and responsibility towards my studies that I felt greatly assisted with my other subjects. I would recommend learning a language to anyone who is interested as it just broadens your communication abilities and opens up the doors for future travel or job aspirations. This year will be my first year studying Law/Commerce at Monash University, and once I’m practising law, my Spanish may help me assist Spanish-speaking clients.

My Dan Pham – Vietnamese - Perfect score of 50 & Premiers Award Recipient
As an international student, I already had sufficient skills in Vietnamese. Surprisingly, studying VCE Vietnamese has given me a lot of insight in to language. It is not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about the whole dimension of the language, and culture and country. VCE Vietnamese has turned out to be an exciting and enticing subject for me, and kept the ‘Vietnamese’ part in me growing further. Even with some background in the language you cannot assume that it will be easy to study it at VCE level, you need to be highly motivated and need to be totally engaged in the study in order to earn high results, but the perseverance pays off. This year I’m starting my Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Melbourne, and in the future I would like to go to back to Vietnam to work.

Wilma Bernasco - Dutch (Profile not available at time of print.)
VSL receives the highest number of 2013 Premier’s Award recipients in the State

We are extremely proud to report that the Victorian School of Languages received 13 Premier’s Award for 2013 – the highest in the State. The award ceremony was held on Wednesday 5 June 2013 at the Melbourne Convention Centre and was attended by the students, parents and teachers.

The aim of the awards ceremony is not only to ‘acknowledge the outstanding results of individual students, but also pays tribute to principals, teachers and families who play an invaluable role in supporting and encouraging students during their VCE studies’.

By way of information, the number of study awards in each study is calculated using the enrolment base in that study and so there is more awards in larger studies. Individual Graded Assessment Scores are used to determine the order of merit and identify the best students. Students must have a study score of 46 or above to be eligible for an award. One of the students, Yomna Elsamman, who received the Award for Arabic, also received an award in 2012 for Japanese Second Language. Yomna is currently undertaking a medical course at Melbourne University.

Congratulations to all of our staff for the outstanding results. Credit also goes to teachers below VCE who have taught the students in previous years.

The 13 VSL Students who received the 2013 awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>VSL Centre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yomna Elsamman</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Carwatha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duoshao Wu</td>
<td>Chinese First Language</td>
<td>Distance Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muhammad Al Hazmi</td>
<td>Indonesian First Language</td>
<td>Glen Waverley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Li Wen Cheah</td>
<td>Indonesian Second Language</td>
<td>Glen Waverley</td>
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<td>Sabrina Lachman</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Distance Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mende Stojcevski</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>Keilor Downs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eunice Lois Ghita</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Dandenong</td>
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<td>Svetlana Nazaruk</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>McKinnon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunya Tomic</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>Dandenong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Rabinovich</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Distance Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kieu Nhi Nguyen</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Haileybury</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Dan Pham</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Footscray City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vy Nguyen</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Sunshine</td>
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Flora Osorio, Laura Rabinovich, Frank Merlino

Muhammad Al Hazmi, Frank Merlino, Yomna Elsamman

Frank Merlino, Venetia Kefalianos, Svetlana Nazaruk, Mrs Nazaruk
## Key Dates Term 4, 2013 & Term 1 2014 Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>21st September</td>
<td>Sinhala/Punjabi Network Meeting</td>
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<td>7th Oct - 3rd Nov</td>
<td>VCE Languages Oral Exam Period</td>
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<td>16th October</td>
<td>VCE CCAFL Written Exam</td>
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<td>18th October</td>
<td>Centre Enrolments Commence</td>
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<td>19th October</td>
<td>Laot SC 50th Anniversary - no classes</td>
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<td>19th October</td>
<td>Chinese/Greek Network Meeting</td>
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<td>26th October</td>
<td>Year 12 Polish Graduation Dinner</td>
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<td>30th Oct - 22nd Nov</td>
<td>VCE Languages Written Exam Period</td>
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<td>6th November</td>
<td>Distance Education enrolments start</td>
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<td>9th November</td>
<td>Final VCE Day - Centre Classes</td>
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<td>16th November</td>
<td>30th Anniversary Croatian as a VCE Subject &amp; Year 12 Graduation</td>
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<td>23rd November</td>
<td>Final Centre Classes - (Years 1 - 10)</td>
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<td>7th December</td>
<td>Distance Education Awards Day</td>
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<td>20th December</td>
<td>End of School Year</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>21st January</td>
<td>Head Office staff return</td>
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<td>24th January</td>
<td>AP’s &amp; Area Managers return</td>
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<td>28th January</td>
<td>Teachers resume</td>
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<td>28/29th January</td>
<td>PD for Distance Education Teachers</td>
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<td>1st February</td>
<td>PD for Centre Staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8th February</td>
<td>Centre Classes commence</td>
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## New VSL Publications/Materials

- Chinese Year 8 Online course (NALSSP project)
- Indonesian Year 11 Online course (NALSSP project)
- Spanish Primary Online resources – Languages Online [Stage 2]
- Turkish Primary (1-2) Coursebook
- Turkish 1-2 Flashcards and Kits

## Projects currently underway include:

- Chinese 9 course
- German 11 Online Course
- Hindi VELS Level 2 Workbook
- Indonesian 7 Online Course
- Japanese year 12 Course
- Macedonian VCE Text Types
- Turkish Year 9 Textbook