



Mr Frank Merlino is currently working for the Department of Education and Training in the development of recommended policies and procedures in relation to the place of vocational certificates in applied languages in the curriculum offerings of Victorian government schools. As a result, I have had the privilege of being the Acting Principal of the VSL since the end of March this year. It has been a wonderful experience to get to know the complexities and programs which are integral to this dynamic school. As a complementary provider to our state school system, the work of the VSL is widely regarded and staff and students work together to attain outstanding results. In the past week we have been advised of a number of students who have been awarded Premier's Awards in their various languages as a result of their Year 12 studies in 2021. We look forward to being able to provide you details of their success in subsequent bulletins.



Students taking part in activities held throughout semester 1 - see page 10, Students taking part in a cultural art and craft activity – making traditional Japanese flags as part of the Blended Primary Japanese Program - see page 3

Quality language education provision is the result of sound structures and processes to support this work in some 42 centres across the state. It has been a pleasure to work alongside your dedicated Area Managers, who oversee the week to week running of these diverse centres, ensuring that we can provide families with high-quality teaching for their children. This includes also our Distance Education team who support students who cannot access their language of choice through their home school. This language provision amounts to over 18,000 students across the state being enrolled in the Victorian School of Languages in 2022. Later this month we will bring together all Area Managers for a professional learning day to support coherence across areas and develop our process for the complex layers of administration for a school of our size.

Last week we had the opportunity to welcome around 14 key staff from the Department of Education Languages Unit to our Thornbury Head Office, where we discussed how we can continue and grow our relationship to support language learning in our schools. This is key work as we respond to the changing needs of schools and our commitment to providing continuity of language across the state wherever possible.

Finally, I acknowledge and thank our Assistant Principals, Mr Stefo Stojanovski, Mr Joe Tasic and Ms Angela Natoli for their professionalism and support during my induction into your wonderful school. I wish students and families all the best for the remainder of the term.

Regards

**Acting Principal
Judi Benney**

Child Safety and Wellbeing at the Victorian School of Languages

Information for families and the school community



All children have the right to feel safe and be safe, but safety does not just happen. In recent years we have had the benefit of learning from many survivors and multiple inquiries, including the Victorian Parliament's Betrayal of Trust inquiry and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. These have shown the devastating extent of harm done to children when organisations do not have

the right culture, systems, processes and understanding to prevent abuse. A child safe organisation takes deliberate steps to safeguard children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect. It puts children's safety and wellbeing first and embeds a commitment to child safety in every aspect of the organisation.

The Child Safe Standards commenced in Victoria in January 2016. After five years, we have seen how the Standards improve safety for children and young people. The new Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. They provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia.

The things organisations already do to keep children and young people safe will help them be compliant with the new Standards. The VSL Leadership Team has reviewed and updated the current child safety policies, practices and organisational culture to ensure they meet the requirements of the new standards. These are available to view on our school website; www.vsl.vic.edu.au

In implementing the new Standards, the VSL has had the opportunity to reflect on our efforts to date and continue to build our capacity to keep children free from harm and abuse.

The eleven updated Standards and implementation applies from 1 July 2022.

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

VSL Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The Victorian School of Languages is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, LGBTIQ+ and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Angela Natoli
Assistant Principal: Curriculum & PD

Blended Primary Japanese Program

At the start of term two, we began delivery of a new Distance Education program, in partnership with the Languages Unit of the Department of Education.

Many schools in rural and regional areas of Victoria do not have access to specialist language teachers. The Blended Japanese Language Program aims to support such schools to deliver a quality language program. Unlike our traditional Distance Education programs, which involve one-to-one teaching, this involves teaching a whole class of students through video-conferencing based lessons.

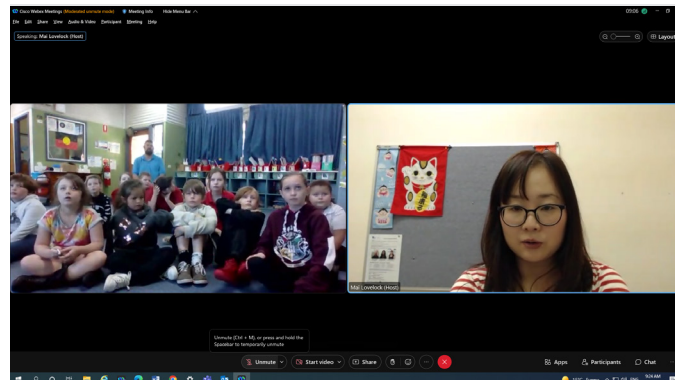


Blended Japanese Primary teacher, Mai Lovelock, in the classroom

For each class, participating schools receive a weekly 30-minute virtual lesson aligned to the Victorian Curriculum for Japanese, provided by a qualified VSL teacher. The Primary school classroom teachers, who do not speak Japanese, are provided with two structured practice lessons per week that they can teach. They are also provided with cultural materials and other support materials that allow them to facilitate these lessons and further Japanese language learning in their classroom.

We have employed Mai Lovelock as the Blended Japanese Primary teacher. She brings a wealth of experience to the position and spent the first two weeks developing course materials. The teaching program began with an introductory face-to-face visit to the Pyrenees Cluster of six schools (near Maryborough). We have four other schools involved as well. A lot of liaison has taken place with receiving schools (contact has been made with principals, teachers and technicians); online systems have been established and tested; and teaching has begun successfully, though a

couple of the schools have had technical challenges. Here is Mai's reflection on the start of the program:



Tanjil South Primary School conferencing lesson



Students taking part in a cultural art and craft activity – making traditional Japanese flags.

“It’s only been 7 weeks since I joined the VSL and started the Primary Japanese Blended Program. Despite facing some technical difficulties and challenges at the beginning, I am happy to say that we all have achieved a lot in this short time.

It was a pleasant surprise to see how confident and enthusiastic the students were when meeting them via Webex for the first time. They were happy, excited and were very eager to learn even though we were not in the same room. As

an introductory unit, we have been focusing on learning basics such as numbers, colours and greetings and it has been really lovely to see many students trying to use the language as much as they can in the classroom. It’s also nice to see Japanese posters and classroom displays popping up each week, creating a little Japanese corner in their classrooms.

I must thank the teachers and principals who are involved in the program as well. Each week, they join the lesson, supervise the class while learning with the students and later teach the content by themselves. Blended Program cannot happen without the hard work of those teachers on sites so I am humbled that I am able to work with such dedicated teachers.

Next term, we will be learning about animals. I cannot wait to see the continued growth of the students and the development of this program.”

Stefo Stojanovski
Assistant Principal

VCE Top Students from 2021

We congratulate all of our 2021 VCE students who completed their VCE language studies. The following students received the top mark in Victoria in their respective language. In the following pages they reminisce about their experiences during another school year interrupted by lockdowns and online learning.



Adriano Morandini - Italian (50)

I studied Italian at the VSL because it was not offered at my day school (University High School) where I studied French. I loved studying Italian by distance as it meant that I could work at my own pace whenever I had the time. I particularly enjoyed the weekly contact with my teacher via Teams. The oral sessions were always interesting, and, apart from completing the set oral activities, I was able to prepare very thoroughly for my oral exam for which I felt super confident. These oral sessions were also very useful as I was able to hear my teacher's feedback and ask questions. Studying languages, in my opinion, gives you a deeper understanding of your own language. You start seeing inter-linguistic patterns and how languages derive from each other. Moreover, it just helps you connect with people. I plan to study medicine. Apart from having a genuine interest in languages, being able to communicate with as many people as possible is a central part of being a doctor.



Ahmed Aletic – Bosnian

Studying Bosnian came with its challenges but I am glad I was a part of the 2021 VCE class. When I first joined the class, I was greeted with some familiar faces from past years, and new faces too, but that only made learning more enjoyable. My wonderful teacher, who always made learning practical yet as enjoyable as possible, helped me get through another challenging year. Bosnian is a big part of my life, and to me it was important to learn about the country, and I am happy I had the opportunity to do so through the VSL. The most important part was that we always had fun in the classroom and I would advise all those who have the chance to learn another language, to take it.



Chansreikeo San - Khmer

I decided to study Khmer to deepen my understanding of the culture in Australia and keep up-to-date on the social issues of Cambodia. I was able to meet new people and a teacher with similar background. It was wonderful to be able to communicate and share experiences of living in Australia with them. The main challenge I faced during the restrictions was remote learning. It was a struggle to study and communicate with my teachers and classmates online. However, with their encouragement and help, I was able to cope pretty well. Through practice with my teacher and classmates, I was able to approach both my oral and written exams with confidence and optimism. Being fluent in Khmer has enabled me to communicate and connect with the community and be more open to other cultures. I would advise younger students to set up their goals, prioritise their tasks and manage their time wisely. Practice tasks are essential to help you build your language skills. In the future, I want to become a nurse and I would use those language skills to help people that struggle with communicating in English, especially elders in the Khmer community.



Esther Lian - Chin Hakha

I studied Chin Hakha because I wanted to learn formally as it was unavailable for study at my day school. The most enjoyable moment was seeing my classmates onsite and engaging in role-play as part of class lessons. The main challenge during the restrictions was staying motivated to study and not letting the circumstances interrupt my goals. I would advise younger students to keep attending classes, ask many questions and set achievable goals. I'm planning to study a health-related course and assist my community with their needs by using my language skills to better communicate with them.



Seyoung Jung - Korean First Language

In 2021 Seyoung, an International Student, studied at the Blackburn Centre of the VSL as her base school did not teach Korean. According to her teacher, Ms Kyung-Ok Cho, Seyoung was a conscientious and hardworking student who exhibited a positive attitude in the classroom. She had incredible self-discipline and always tackled classroom assignments, tasks, and homework in an organised manner.

VCE Top Students from 2021



Fieke van der Kamp - Dutch

I discovered the VSL through Dutch-speaking friends, and thought “why not join the Dutch class!” I also thought it was good to do a VCE Year 12 subject in Year 11. I enjoyed learning about grammar, spelling, and pronunciation rules; things we do automatically as we speak a language but never really know why we say and write things the way we do. I found learning those little rules and connecting it to what we automatically do interesting. During lockdown I found that my day lacked structure, but I found that having a plan of what it was I wanted to achieve that day helped keep me on track. I felt my language really improved especially with spelling. I think it’s motivating to see yourself improve, and it’s also cool to be able to speak a different language and be with others who speak the same language. Learning a language also stimulates a different part of your brain and this, along with meeting people of other nationalities, can make you more open-minded - an especially important quality today. To future students, I would try to get as much exposure to the language as possible - do some writing or reading, or even just listen to a song or watch a little video in your language. I am so grateful to my teacher, Ineke, who made learning Dutch fun and made my time at VSL so much more than going to school.



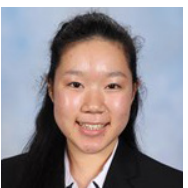
John Thompson - Indonesian Second Language (50)

Ever since I was young, I had always wanted to be multilingual. Having an Indonesian heritage naturally meant I would consider pursuing further study in Indonesian. I selected Indonesian SL as one of my VCE subjects, and undertook VCE Units 1&2 (2020) and Units 3&4 (2021) at VSL Glen Waverley with Ms Minarni Tirta. One of the challenges was adapting to a new and unfamiliar learning environment during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Not being able to engage in the face-to-face classroom setting with my teacher and peers made the process of developing my language skills quite challenging. Thankfully, everyone was supportive of one another, and the lessons very accessible and enjoyable for us all. I would say I approached both the oral and written exam components knowing that I had done my best to prepare for each of them. Keeping myself calm throughout the given time was perhaps the key to putting in my best work on the day. I hope to pursue law and commerce, but will always continue to find opportunities to practise my language abilities as I continue my love of the Indonesian language and culture.



Joshua Beltran - Filipino

I studied at the VSL because I wanted to learn to speak more confidently in Filipino. I enjoyed meeting new people and making new friends. I embraced the challenges that come with language learning. The main challenge I faced in 2021 was that I was extremely demotivated as I had to mostly do online classes, but to cope I reminded myself that I owed it to myself to improve in Filipino because of my passion for languages. I tackled the examinations head on. I was less confident in preparing for my oral exam, I felt I would be okay in my written exam as I found writing Filipino easier. The benefits of language learning are many. Language study broadens your worldview and it unlocks a part of yourself that is hidden. To young students, I would say that it will ‘click’ someday. It will take time, hard work and consistency. Being confused about grammar will not be forever, you are always a moment closer to being fluent. I am planning to become a Filipino-English interpreter; I want to use these skills to make Filipino media more accessible to a wider audience.



Yurika Konishi - Japanese First Language

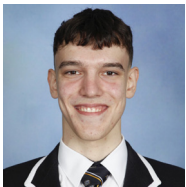
I chose to learn Japanese through the VSL to maintain my level of Japanese as well as to have an opportunity to interact with fellow Japanese students while studying here in Australia. 2021 brought many challenges to my learning as most classes were held remotely and it was especially hard during the exam preparation period. However, with the support from my teacher, I was able to approach both exams with confidence. I would recommend everyone to learn a language because it expands your perspectives towards different cultures, and speaking multiple languages would be a big advantage in the future when applying for a job. My advice to those learning a language would be to actively seek feedback from your teachers and not to be afraid to speak the language even if it’s not perfect.

VCE Top Students from 2021



Mathilda Mass – German (50)

I chose to study at the VSL because of the flexible structure and accessibility available via online/distance learning. I am from Germany and wanted to study German to feel more connected to my family overseas. I enjoyed talking to my teacher (Rukmani) fortnightly, and forming a supportive relationship with her. This really helped me throughout my VSL/VCE journey. The main challenge I faced throughout the lockdowns was feeling very alone and the lack of motivation without classmates to lean on. I got encouragement and support from my mother and teacher who pushed and challenged me to do better and constantly reminded me of my end goal. I was nervous about my oral exam but was confident going into my written exam. I get very anxious talking in front of people, especially people I do not know. For my written exam, I had familiarised myself with the structure so I knew what to expect. I also read various examiners reports, which prepared me on how to structure my responses. Knowing another language can open so many doors and connect you with people you would otherwise never know. To young students my advice would be, to be consistent! Practice writing and communication is the only way to really improve your language skills. Even if you are talking to yourself aloud, it still helps. Also, approach learning with a positive mind-set. In the near future, I plan to move to and study in Germany, so my language skills will be beneficial.



Vuk Todorovic - Serbian

I studied Serbian at the VSL because they offered VCE classes. I also wanted the opportunity to connect with classmates with a similar background and shared experiences to mine. The most enjoyable experience during all the classes was hearing different stories from other students and being able to meet new people. The main challenge was to stay on top of the work during the online classes due to the COVID restrictions. I found it hard to stay motivated and maintain communication with peers and teachers. I coped by constantly changing my surroundings and by chatting with classmates about all the work we needed to do. I was confident about the oral examination so I worked on my written exams to reach that same confidence level and to develop time management and writing skills, which were my weak points. Time management helped me to build my confidence to be able to express all my thoughts and ideas in a concise, timely manner. To younger students my advice would be to try and speak the language being studied as much as possible every day. In my immediate future, I hope to go back and live in the Balkans where I would be using Serbian every day.



Zosia Kardas - Polish

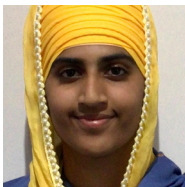
Language has always been a prominent part of my life. Although my high school did not offer Polish, I was grateful that VSL offered the subject and that encouraging teachers taught it. I enjoyed meeting other young people who had an interest in language and forming friendships. Class discussions provided a great opportunity to practise speaking in a light-hearted environment, even if they did occur over Zoom in the second half of the year due to COVID restrictions! I think that the main challenge that I faced during the restrictions was maintaining motivation and enthusiasm towards studying. Although this presented to be challenging, I coped by approaching it through moderation. After completing a homework task, I would listen to music or play an instrument, which for me was the equivalent of a reward for the work I completed. Encouragement from friends, family and my teacher was always helpful and restored confidence. I think I approached my oral and written exams with confidence because I knew that all the work I had completed throughout the year had prepared me well. I had a solid understanding of the foundations and rules associated with the language, which would allowed me to remain confident and calm during the exams. Pursuing language study challenges an individual to widen their perspective and understanding of other cultures. It challenges the mind to understand foreign sounds, but also to familiarise them. I think that it allows an individual to become more open to new ideas, even if they might seem strange at first. I would advise younger students to persevere whilst studying a language. There will always be moments when conjugating or writing an essay may seem daunting or challenging, but the satisfaction of successfully understanding the language is worth all the trouble. But ultimately also enjoy the journey. In the future, I plan to pursue a career as a medical professional while also travelling internationally. Having one foreign language up my sleeve, I am also keen to learn another :)

VCE Top Students from 2021



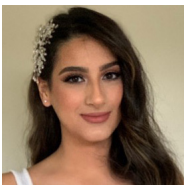
Hana Makas - Croatian

I chose the VSL to study VCE Croatian to combine and develop both my knowledge and cultural awareness. The highlight of having Zoom Croatian classes was socialising as we were in lockdown! Online learning sometimes masked the urgency of exam study, although when the exam period came I still felt equipped (even for the dreaded oral exam) due to thorough preparations with my teacher. Language study will not only enhance my linguistic skills but also my social and emotional development, as I step foot into another community and develop a deeper understanding of its lifestyle and culture. I would suggest that future students fully immerse themselves outside of class, by using their interests to develop their target language. For my career, my hope is to provide accessible and equitable eye care to all communities and not be confined by language barriers.



Paramjot Kaur - Punjabi

I loved being able to immerse myself in the Punjabi culture by studying at the VSL. My teacher was a strong role model for me, and I enjoyed gaining life lessons from him and having the most memorable time in class. I am eternally grateful for the passion he inspired in us. The main difficulty was not being able to attend class in person as I personally find it more difficult to keep focused and remain attentive online. However, I made sure to combat that by participating more than usual in class by asking questions and seeking feedback regularly. I've found that pursuing language study has helped me with my study goals. Having studied Punjabi last year, it gave me an extra boost of confidence going into year 12. It also allowed me to reconnect and gain a deeper understanding of my ancestral history and culture. When studying a language, it is helpful to immerse yourself in it through all aspects. Take time to listen to music, read literature and watch videos in the language. If you enjoy learning the language you will feel more inclined to work hard. Take advantage of your teachers - they're here to teach you and help you to excel. Ask them questions when you don't understand, do the homework, follow their tips and you'll find yourself on a path to success. I plan on pursuing physiotherapy, Sikh classical music and being part of the army reserve. Being bilingual allows me to understand and respect the differences in our wider community. It gives me the chance to connect and empathise with people on a deeper level.



Sarah Hannoun - Arabic (50)

Year 12 has its challenges in addition to the ones that were imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, studying Arabic through VSL provided an opportunity not only to enhance the connection with my culture and heritage, but also to have a break from studying my other VCE content-heavy subjects. I enjoyed learning Arabic, and ultimately, my hard work and dedication throughout the year were rewarded with a perfect score of 50. My score proves that nothing is impossible - seeking help when needed, putting in the work, submitting any queries or questions to your teacher, are important steps to reaching higher scores. I couldn't have achieved this without the help of my teacher, Mr Moussa.



Daniel Mirceski - Macedonian

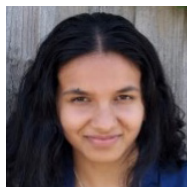
I have a Macedonian background so retaining that part of my identity and cultural connections is important to me. The VSL gave me a great opportunity to learn Macedonian on Saturdays and to connect with the Macedonian community. Over the course of my VCE studies there were some challenging moments in lockdown where I found it difficult to stay focused. I was able to overcome these challenges with the constant support of my teacher, Mrs Damcevska, who tirelessly worked in making our lessons interesting and keeping us all motivated. I enjoyed the dynamic nature of the classes, formed strong friendships, and built valuable connections. I was able to grow and communicate with a wider network of people. Pursuing another language is an extremely enriching and rewarding experience because now I can confidently communicate in Macedonian. I also have a stronger understanding of Macedonian history, culture, and traditions. I would strongly encourage younger students to become bilingual as it is valuable in life. Keep an open mind, be dedicated and work hard as it is worth it. The language skills and the cultural knowledge I acquired will open doors for new work and social opportunities. Who knows what the future will bring!

VCE Top Students from 2021



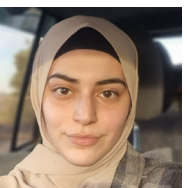
Amelie Portis - Italian (50)

I have always been fascinated by learning languages - French, Indonesian, Latin, Spanish, and even finding an Ancient Greek course! However, I always regretted that I didn't have the opportunity to study Italian, my father's language. When I found out about the VSL, I jumped at the chance to study Italian for Years 11 and 12. I loved being surrounded by like-minded students who value education and were committed to learning. I also enjoyed studying Italian literature like 'The Divine Comedy', thanks to my teacher. The most challenging aspect of study last year was maintaining a motivated attitude despite not having many face-to-face classes. It was easy to feel isolated and disheartened when trying to do practice exams or classes alone rather than with peers. I was surprised at how relaxed I felt when I walked into my oral exam. I found that the examiners were friendly and when completed, I felt like I'd just had a conversation with friends. I was more nervous before my written exam, but once I started writing time flew by and before I knew it, I was done! I believe language study allows you to feel connected to other cultures or to your own cultural heritage, as well as developing deeper thinking processes and progressing your study skills. My advice is to immerse yourself in your chosen language. Learning a language is often not a linear process - different skills develop at different speeds and you shouldn't be disheartened if you find some parts of your language study are harder than others. I am planning to spend some time travelling in Europe this year, and I would like to start university in the Netherlands in September.



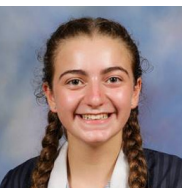
Riddhi Gawarikar - Hindi

I have been studying Hindi at VSL Blackburn ever since I was in Year 1 and over the years, have developed a strong bond with the language and the supportive learning environment. While 2021 was a tough second year through the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as my first year at the Glen Waverley centre, our teacher continually guided us as we focused on our learning and persevered through. I believe that, while having a severely impacted year 11 in 2020, it also gave us a chance to learn that sometimes circumstances can change and we must adapt according to them, regardless if this happens in the exam or in life in general. Studying any language in VCE will be advantageous and I highly recommend to future students to pursue this challenge to build your communication and expression skills, which will stay with you throughout life. Along with this, you also learn about culture and community within the language group, giving you a better understanding of the world. My Hindi skills will help me stay in touch with relatives and my culture and I will integrate it in my career in the health sector.



Fatemeh Latifi - Persian (50)

I knew studying Persian at the VSL with their experienced teachers was the right decision for me. The supportive and friendly atmosphere of the class made the challenges of remote learning much easier to overcome. By staying organised during online classes I was able to practice for both my oral and written exam and I approached them with confidence. My advice for younger students at the VSL is to never miss a chance to practice their skills in class and always ask for the feedback of their teacher and classmates.



Hanah Gomberg - Portuguese

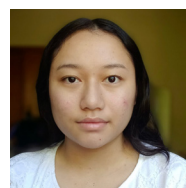
Studying Portuguese gave me the opportunity to meet similar aged students and to bond over shared experiences. I also wanted to be able to connect to my Brazilian heritage. Classes allowed me to delve into Brazilian literature, reading some well-known classics. Reading in Portuguese increased my vocabulary and introduced me to some outstanding authors. Books like 'Dom Casmurro' and 'Casa Grande e senzala' allowed for me to learn more about Brazil's past and its effect on contemporary culture. Overall, I believe I coped to the best of my ability with COVID restrictions and the subsequent effect it had on my learning. It was hard not being able to socialise and interact with others as I cherished the connection that had grown between the class members. Portuguese has Latin roots which paves the way for me to learn even more Latin-based languages. As I genuinely enjoy connecting with others, being able to open doors into different cultures and ways of life is something I value. Younger students: I know that it may seem daunting at first but the connections and experiences that knowing an additional language can bring you is well worth the effort.

VCE Top Students from 2021



Kaludeva Jayawardhena - Sinhala

The VSL was recommended to me by the local Sri Lankan community. Language is a part of culture. Meeting people who speak Sinhala and experience cultural events, was the most enjoyable aspect. Due to COVID, my studies went from face-to-face learning to online learning. This made it hard to develop my Sinhala language skills in interaction with peers and teachers. My parents and elder sister, an ex-student of the VSL, helped me to get through those difficult days. I was confident with my Sinhala exams as my understanding of the examination requirements was sound and my general level of language competency was high. I think that by pursuing a language it helps us to expand our ability to express ideas, gather knowledge, interact with people effectively, and understand different cultures. It is my dream to study civil engineering at university and pursue a career in the field. I believe that my language skills will help me to have a successful career.



Klay Po - Karen

I chose to study Karen as a way to stay connected to my heritage and to communicate with my parents and community. I enjoyed my time at the VSL because of the friendships I made, and my teacher who understood the struggles in learning a language. The main challenges I faced in 2021 was not being able to have in-class learning where I could ask my teacher for help at any time. However, to overcome this, I stayed behind in the online classes to ask questions and to clarify anything I was unsure of. Although I am more confident in my reading and writing of Karen, I believe I approached both the oral exam and written exam with the same degree of confidence. For my oral exam, I started by collecting information on my chosen topic through YouTube videos, websites and asking my teacher for suggested resources. I also practiced with my teacher at every opportunity. In preparation for the written exam, I completed past exams available from the VCAA website under exam conditions. Through this preparation, I was able to stay confident for my end of year examinations. In the future, I plan to study a double degree of Fine Arts and Business at Monash University.



Nora Bartol – Hungarian (50)

The most enjoyable aspect of VSL was that I was given the opportunity to be around students who had similar backgrounds to me. I was able to practice my Hungarian with them and be part of a community where I felt welcome and embraced. The main challenge I faced during 2021 was online learning. I completed the second semester of my VCE studies online, which made preparing for exams more difficult as we were not able to ask questions face-to-face or complete classwork in a school environment. I coped by staying connected with friends, keeping on top of all the classwork and communicating with my teacher, often staying back after class for simple chats. I approached my written exam with more confidence as I was nervous about the spontaneity of the oral examination and the freedom of question choice that the examiners had. However, keeping a good mindset and preparing well made me feel more at ease when the time came for my exams. I think there are endless benefits of pursuing language study, with the main ones being the opportunity to learn about the colourful culture and expansive history of a language as well as develop communication skills. The advice I would give to younger students is do not give up. I know language study can seem overwhelming; but it is definitely worth it. Do not be afraid to ask questions, your teachers are your best friends when it comes to exam preparation. Practice your language as much as you can by speaking it and complete the set homework. Stay dedicated and try your best. It is all that matters. I plan to study Biomedicine at Melbourne University and to pursue a career in medicine. I would love to complete an exchange year in Europe where I can travel, spend more time in Hungary and continue to use and improve upon my language skills.



Christina Glodea - Romanian

Cristina Glodea has been studying Romanian with the VSL since Year 9 as the language was not available at her home school, McKinnon Secondary College. Her commitment to her language studies was very clear through her two years of VCE Romanian, including travelling a considerable distance each week to the VSL Dandenong HS Centre. Cristina looks forward to being able to use her Romanian in the future as she progresses to university and in her career.

Semester 1 Area Activities

Telugu New Year (Country 1)

Classes of Telugu at the VSL Werribee Centre, celebrated the Telugu New Year in April. Students watched videos about the festival, Ugadi (Telugu New Year) and participated in the event by wearing traditional clothes, singing, dancing and reciting poems. Through all of this, they learned much about the language and culture.



Holi Festival (South East)

The Hindi Education Association Australia recently organised Holi celebrations with the VSL and in collaboration with the Indian Consulate General of Melbourne. Holi was celebrated with great pomp by the students studying Hindi at VSL Dandenong. The event was funded by the Victorian Multi-Cultural Commission.

Student MCs invited groups and guests of students onto the stage and conducted the entire cultural program. After this, the students gave presentations, sang songs, and recited poetry.



Dr. Subhash Sharma, President of Hindi Education Association also welcomed the dignitaries, volunteer teachers and students, and apprised the students about the importance of Holi festival and the link between language and culture.

The consul honorable Girish Singh also made an address encouraging the learning of Indian languages. Certificates were given to the students and teachers who participated in the program. In the end, light refreshments were enjoyed, and the students celebrated Holi by applying gulal color to each other and the Holi program was completed.

Turkish Immersion Class (South 2)

Technically speaking “Language immersion”, or simply “immersion”, is a method of teaching a second language in which the learners’ second language is the medium of classroom instruction. The Turkish immersion classes that were run on June 4th at the VSL South Oakleigh SC Centre involved 90 students of Turkish from years F-10. Sadly, we could not include parents as COVID had placed some limitations on school volunteers and helpers. However, our teachers Hatice Yesilagac, Ozlem Yesilagac and Omur Gungor managed to provide a smooth-running and effective program.



The Turkish immersion class at the VSL includes a simple cooking component and is carried out in the target language of Turkish with a little English when needed. The cooking aspect although integral is the starting point for the class. Students practice a new set of vocabulary, they are provided with a grammar

lesson, an opportunity to participate in listening comprehension as well as a cultural focus.

The goal of the program is to acquire a proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the target language. The cooking aspect of the program assists in acquiring the language skills; and provides the “fun element” and “wow factor”. It also incorporates an underlying science component as well as the opportunity to extend cultural awareness. The language proficiency expectations obviously are different from one year level to the other, but the fun remains the same for all levels.

Our students of Turkish were extremely busy cooking a 3-course meal which included Turkish Borek or burek (a filled pie made of a thin flaky dough filled with cheese) a Turkish salad and a chocolate dessert! The magic ingredients were the inclusion of a luscious vocabulary sprinkled with the joy of creativity.

The Dragon Boat Race (Central)

The Dragon Boat Festival (端午节 duan wu jie) is a traditional Chinese holiday which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. It is a day to remember a great ancient poet called Qu Yuan who sacrificed his life for his country (475-221BC). To commemorate this patriotic poet, the customs of holding dragon boat races and eating special food Zongzi (粽子 rice dumplings) were passed down from generation to generation.

Students listened attentively to the origins and significance of the festival. Many students were eager to share stories about the different Zongzi their parents/ grandparents made at home. Some Zongzi were savory with meat and egg, others were sweet with date or red bean. All students agreed that they all taste delicious!



After watching the dragon boat racing videos, the class was excited to participate in their own mini dragon boat race. The drummer was ready along with Fire Dragon (red team) and Water Dragon (green team).

Each team consisted of 5 students inside the joint hula hoops. A student stood at the front holding the Chinese flag and proceeded to count backwards in Chinese “10+9九...1—Go 开始!”

The flag quickly went down as the drum beat loudly, everyone was excited and cheering, the two dragons were racing faster and faster following the rhythm of the drum.

Experiencing this cultural adventure, certainly fostered increased student motivation to learn more about Chinese culture and tradition. Happy Dragon Boat Festival!

Distance Education

It has been a lively semester for the staff in Distance Education.

Teachers began the year with a start of year program focusing on our teaching practices. Staff have fully embraced Microsoft Teams as the platform for communication with our students including the oral lessons.

For the second year, we offered information sessions to parents of students studying by distance. Parents and carers were invited to participate in an online information evening to meet their child's teacher, learn about studying by distance and to understand how to support their child with their language studies. The parent information webinars were well received as they gave parents the opportunity to meet with the teachers and learn more about our processes.



Greek student excursion to Melbourne Museum - Open Horizons exhibition

students have travelled from Timboon, Ballarat, Bendigo, Colac and Swifts Creek among others. At a recent German seminar, one student flew in from Mildura and another from Darwin. Now that's commitment!



Student collaborative activities, Greek Seminar

Our learning specialists, Patricia Herr and Mike Atkinson, have been supporting the teachers with curriculum matters, new initiatives and with the teachers' work in Professional Learning Teams (PLTs). This year our PLTs focus on a range of areas including differentiation, online collaboration, peer observation and student engagement in seminars.

It has been pleasing to see many faculties returning to the Multicultural Hub in the city for our face-to-face seminars after a long absence due to COVID restrictions. The day-long seminars are usually held once per term for VCE students, and they give students the opportunity to meet up with their teacher and other students in the class. The students take part in a variety of activities from collaborative activities to Outcome preparation. Our students travel from all over Victoria to attend the seminars. To date,



Year 11 German seminar



Junior Indonesian students participating in a group oral lesson, which included a PowerPoint presentation and an interactive game. These extra conversation classes, run by Putri, Indonesian Language Assistant, are offered to Years 5-8 Indonesian students once a month.

Joanne Lepore
Distance Education Manager

School Updates

Key 2021 Term 3 Dates

July 11	Term 3 begins
July 20	2021 VCE Premier's Award Function
August 6	Area Professional Development Day (no classes)
August 30	Distance Education Parent Teacher interviews
September 7	VCE GAT (Unit 3&4 students)
September 10	Last day for F-10 students (Areas)
September 17	VCE only class Unit 4 VCE Progress Report distribution

Course Development – Distance Education Courses

Chinese FL Units 3 & 4 - Study Design Changes (FL)
Chinese Units SL 3 & 4 – Interactive online course
French 10 (Semester 2) - Re-writing for App development
German 10 (Semester 2) - Re-writing for App development
Indonesian FL Units 3 & 4 - Study Design Changes (FL)
Indonesian 10 (Semester 2) - Re-writing for App development
Japanese 10 (Semester 2) - Re-writing for App development
Japanese FL Units 3 & 4 - Study Design Changes (FL)
Latin - Study Design Changes (Classical)
Punjabi Units 3 & 4 – New
Spanish 10 (Semester 2) - Re-writing for App development
Vietnamese Units 3 & 4 – New

Course Development – Centres

Completed in semester 1:

Arabic 10 - Classroom Edition of DE course
Chin Hakha - Year 5 Textbook
Chinese - VCE Text Types
Malayalam - Year 6 Textbook
Sinhala - Years 10 Textbook
Tamil – VCE Units 1 & 2 Textbook
Turkish – Reading Comprehension

Centres Publications – Under Development

Arabic 9 - Classroom Edition of DE course
Chin Hakha - Year 3 Textbook
Chin Hakha - Year 4 Textbook
Chinese FL - Units 3 & 4 Classroom Edition
Greek - VCE Text Types
Hindi - Year 5 Textbook
Indonesian - Proverbs
Malayalam - Year 8 Textbook
Sinhala - Years 5 Textbook

New Curriculum Resources

- VCE Teacher Manuals
- VCE Student Exam Preparation Booklets
- VCE Transition Booklet 9-10

Semester 1 Area Activities

