

In 2014, Overnewton began the Mandarin CLIL Program in the Junior School. The program commenced with the 2014 Prep students and will continue to evolve as this cohort of students progresses through the College. Through the CLIL Program, students learn Science-related topics via Mandarin as part of the Cross Curricular Learning process. The Mandarin lessons run daily in each class for 25 minutes and are taught by a specialist Mandarin speaking teacher. In 2015, students from both Prep and Year 1 were part of this program.

The exciting differences for students learning a language at Overnewton are that all the CLIL lessons are presented in Mandarin and home group teachers are learning alongside the students in their class. This creates a wonderful opportunity for teachers to incorporate and imbed learning of Mandarin within the curriculum and routines.

What is CLIL

CLIL is an abbreviation for Content and Language Integrated Learning. It is a way of teaching subject content (e.g. Science, Geography, History, etc.) through a second language. This educational approach to teaching and learning can be traced back to the Roman times when the Roman upper middle class chose to have their children educated in Greek. The acronym itself however was coined only in the mid-1990s and in brief, simply means that students will be learn a subject or parts of a subject through a foreign language.

CLIL is a strong form of bilingual education in which students can potentially achieve the goals of bilingualism and bi-literacy. It supports students from four specific dimensions, including meaningful content, higher-order thinking skills, practical language skills and intercultural understanding. In order to learn the meaningful content effectively, CLIL students need to link new information or ideas in the target language to previous knowledge in their first language. Therefore, they will transfer their thinking process to higher-order thinking through various activities. In terms of communication skills, students in CLIL can access a wide range of spoken and written language in both general and more specialised topics, which will develop their literacy skills. CLIL students also enhance intercultural awareness and form sensible attitudes towards different cultures as they explore different international perspectives on the subject they are learning.

Progress of CLIL from Prep to Year 1

Content taught

Prep students commence the year with pure immersion language lessons to learn greetings, colours, body parts, families, numbers and counting as preparation for more extended language used in Cross Curricular Learning units. As the year progresses they investigate how seasonal changes affect the environment and everyday life. In Semester 2, students categorise living things and non-living things, identify the basic needs of plants and the responsibility of humans to protect plants.

Year 1 students start the year by recognising different types of materials and discovering the properties and the uses they have. In Semester 2, they learn the words for different natural environments and engage in activities which enable them to interact with the natural environment. They identify the actions that may harm nature and discuss in Mandarin our responsibilities to protect the natural environment.

Incursions

To reinforce the understanding of Science concepts, students visit the Science laboratory and conduct a variety of experiments. Prep watch demonstrations of how rainbow, clouds, rainfalls and lightening are formed. Year 1 students test the properties of different materials and discover the ways that materials change.

In addition to learning Science concepts, students also participate in a variety of Chinese cultural activities and incursions. They sing the Chinese Happy New Year Song, watch clips of CCTV New Year's Gala and share the festive joy together to celebrate Chinese New Year. Preps learn about traditional calligraphy writing, dress up in different traditional costumes and paint a kite. Year 1 student are given a very meaningful Chinese name, which they used along with their own zodiac sign to decorate a Chinese fan.

Competitions

Our students' achievements at different Chinese competitions have been highlights of the CLIL program.

In the 2015 "Global Village" Children and Youths Bilingual Speech Competition, two Year 1 students, as the youngest contestants, entered the finals at RMIT University. Nithara Anooj from Keilor Campus won the first prize and Nihal Barthur from Taylors Lakes Campus won the second prize.