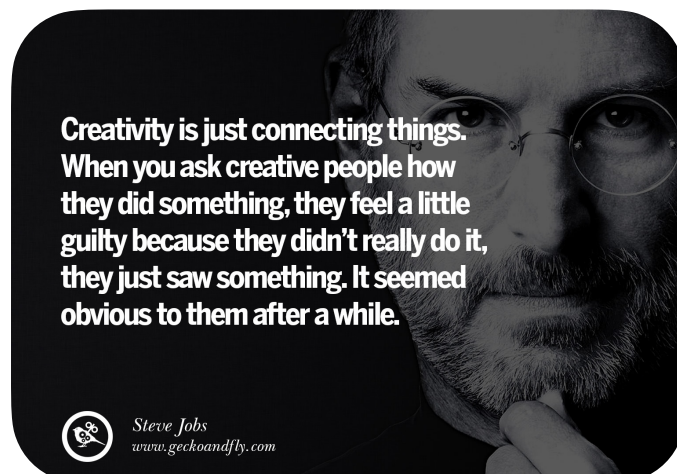


From activity to cREAtivity

could this be the way to 'feel good' in the Languages class?

1. Front Cover
2. Table of Contents
3. From the President
4. From the Publications Team
5. From the Professional Learning Team
9. Collaborative Sharing
18. Teachers' Perspectives
19. People Matters
20. What's News in Languages Education
21. Reviews: Webinars / Podcasts
24. Member Feedback Invited for this, and future, editions of LV
25. About the MLTAV, Committee, Life Members, Contacts



Creativity is just connecting things.
When you ask creative people how
they did something, they feel a little
guilty because they didn't really do it,
they just saw something. It seemed
obvious to them after a while.



Steve Jobs
www.geckoandfly.com

by **Andrew Morabito, President, MLTAV**

Dear MLTAV Members,

I am delighted to be able to present the second edition of MLTAV's new-look Languages Victoria Journal: November 2020 Edition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MLTAV Publications sub-committee for their work on this excellent edition.

Reflecting upon 2020, it would be remiss not to mention the professional and personal challenges we have faced over the past nine months. In March, our reality shifted in a way that neither could have been predicted nor prepared for. The forced shift to rapidly reimagine education as we have known it has not been without its frustrations. In retrospect, we have courageously faced the challenges before us by adopting a whole professional teaching community approach to enact necessary operational changes. As teachers, we needed to alter the way we have approached educating our students. Our students had to adapt to this new mode of learning and families were required to change the way they operated on a day-to-day basis. None of this was easy, however, we should take this opportunity to reflect upon, acknowledge and celebrate what as a professional community, we have achieved. This has not been done in isolation but rather as a result of our profession pulling together to share, support, encourage and collaborate on a global scale. Let us take a minute to reflect upon these important four words that have been the building blocks of our processes and the core of our achievements throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: **share**, **support**, **encourage** and **collaborate**.

In the July edition of LV I stated: *'The **lessons** we learnt about ourselves, as educators, our students, parents and our profession as a community, are unparalleled to anything we have experienced before. We were forced to look through an alternate lens and see ourselves and the world around us differently. We needed to look inwardly to draw on our own experience, expertise, knowledge, passion, strength and courage and marry that to looking outwardly to share, support, acknowledge and care for each other.'* I have repeated that statement here because now that 2020 is coming to a close, we need to reflect upon the lessons we have learnt since March and consider the new paradigm

for Languages education as a result of the impact of COVID-19. We have been forced to change in many ways. How can we take the reins back and use the learnings of the past nine months to consciously, thoughtfully and actively drive the change moving forward? The possibilities are exciting! We have the future in our hands! What do we wish to do with it? We need to ask ourselves, what we will do the same, what we would like to do differently and how do we embrace this opportunity for change? Amidst this thinking, it is critical to consider how we can creatively look after our own wellbeing, the wellbeing of our students, families and continue to support each other into the future.

With this at the forefront of our minds, the title for this journal was imagined: *From activity to **cREativity**: could this be the way to feel good in the languages classroom.*

Finally, sincere thanks to all languages teachers who have looked to MLTAV for support over this year and for their support of the Professional Learning opportunities we have been able to offer. In particular, I would like to mention our extremely successful Virtual Conference offered throughout August: *Reimagining Languages Education*. With over 360 delegates (Victorian, National, International languages teachers) with exceptional feedback, we were pleased to be able to support our professional community in this significant way.

Membership income is critical to MLTAV to enable us to continue to support teachers of languages in many ways, in particular through high-quality, relevant, best-practice professional learning. If you have not yet done so, please contact our Office Manager, Kerry O'Connor, to take steps to renew your membership with MLTAV for 2021.

I wish you all the best for the last weeks of Term 4. Please take care, stay safe and enjoy quality time for yourself as well as with your family and friends (within the COVID roadmap guidelines, of course!) over the summer holidays. I look forward to working with next year's Executive Team, Committee and Office Manager whilst continuing my Presidency term throughout 2021.

by Publications Sub-Committee, MLTAV:
Dolly Gerges, Elena Pirovano, Felix Siddell
and Kerry O'Connor

In this issue we bring together creativity and wellbeing in languages education. Throughout this year, in particular, we have been challenged to maintain a sense of wellbeing for our students, parents, colleagues, school community, families - not to mention, ourselves! For this edition, we thought it pertinent to reach out to languages teachers. We wanted to talk about needs and challenges, but also, and importantly, to hear stories of strength, wellbeing and creativity amidst a unique and unprecedented teaching / learning environment.

We identified that creativity is one powerful way to encourage and support wellbeing without the focus being on 'wellbeing' itself.

The Resources section of this edition showcases some creative ideas of languages teachers ... yoga classes in the target language, food, music, performing arts projects and taking the students virtually on the Tour de France.

In our Teacher Interview for this edition, we discuss the way that two languages teachers (Ellen & Isabel) have used creativity to encourage and support the wellbeing of students as well as themselves throughout this year.

We hope that this edition encourages us to think about a shift from activity to **cREativity**.



Reimagining Languages Education

by Virtual Conference Co-Convenors:
Kylie Farmer and Kerry O'Connor

In response to the challenges posed by COVID-19, the MLTAV was keen to ensure ongoing provision of quality Professional Learning opportunities for members. This resulted in a cREAtive re-imagining of the 2020 Conference!

The MLTAV Professional Learning team realised that taking a creative approach to a business-as-usual mindset was critical to benefit not only our professional practice, but perhaps even more importantly, to help our members to feel supported and connected. We recognised that teachers had been busy taking care of 'business', students, parents, families and school communities, and we wanted to make sure that we took care of them.

It is accurate to say that reimagining our annual major PL face-to-face Conference into an online event was not a light-hearted undertaking! It required a mammoth amount of energy behind the scenes in relation to strategic thinking, imagining, planning, developing, implementing, networking, training, marketing and above all, communication and collaboration.

The Virtual Conference was held throughout August offering delegates flexible options to participate in live sessions in morning and afternoon time slots. Recordings were also made available to cater for delegates unable to attend live.

The extensive range of quality Plenary sessions and Seminars offered throughout the Virtual Conference Program were thoughtfully tailored to meet the diverse needs of all languages teachers from early years to tertiary level.

We were also pleased to have been able to include informal networking sessions and an opportunity for teachers to connect with Commercial Sponsors.

Registration numbers were beyond expectations with the number of delegates participating in the Virtual Conference exceeding the number we see attending a face-to-face conference. This unique virtual delivery option enabled more teachers, particularly those from rural/regional Victoria to participate. It also provided the opportunity for languages professionals from interstate and overseas to be involved.



The extraordinary success of the Virtual Conference would not have been possible without the wonderful presenters who gave of their time and willingly shared their ideas,

practice, experience and expertise. Nor would it have been possible without the voluntary support of MLTAV Committee members who stepped up to contribute as presenters and/or session hosts. A big shout out also to the Conference Sponsors and of course to our delegates.

In the words of our delegates:

- *Thank you again for organising the virtual conference. It was really great and really well run. I really appreciated your excellent organisation and communication;*
- *The sessions have been epic! Really stoked you have been able to adapt and take on a new direction with remote events - some great learnings. It is certainly changing the way I am running my marketing!;*
- *I really appreciated the fact that there were opportunities for participants to watch the webinars at different times throughout (and after) the conference.*

Given this year it was conducted whilst school was still in progress, this facility enabled participants to get the maximum benefits from attending a wider range of presentations on broader topics. It was an excellent professional development opportunity which carried over into the school holiday period. Thanks so much!;

- I liked the ample information provided to us in terms of timetable, content and it was very well organised;

- I could watch the sessions and pause them and go back if I missed something important;

- I liked the amazing knowledge sharing by so many talented presenters and the usefulness of information delivered virtually and on point at this unprecedented time in education;

- I really liked the format and the efficiency. Some sessions I wanted to attend were clashing with others I wanted to attend, but it's great that we could access those we missed later. This is really appreciated. It also was very affordable;

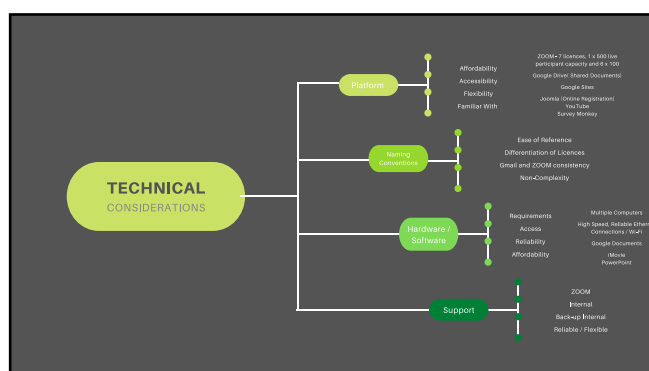
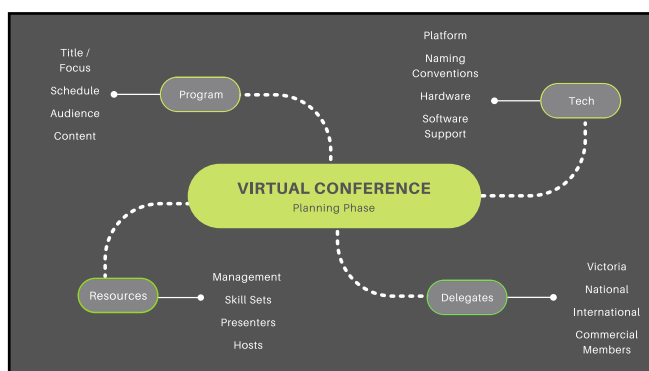
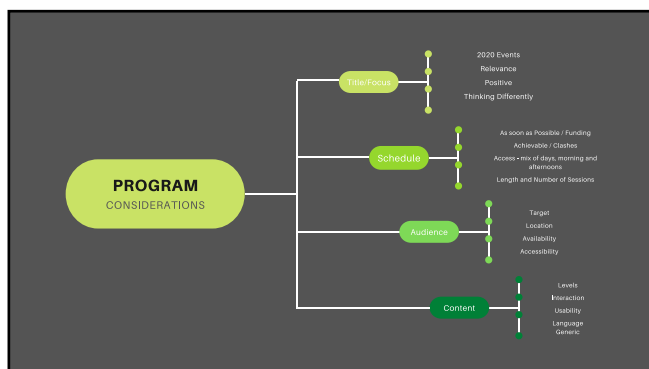
- I loved the flexibility it allowed me. As a teacher working online, I could listen to the sessions in between classes, before or after school. I also loved that if there were two sessions I was interested in running at the same time, I could watch both;

- I liked the fact that it happened! We were just talking about it in a staff meeting saying how our membership with MLTAV was the best value for money for any association all year!

Based on the overwhelming success of the Virtual Conference, MLTAV was approached by other state MLTAs to share some planning processes and information about the delivery model.

In response to this request, the Conference Co-convenors, Kylie Farmer and Kerry O'Connor presented an online session for state MLTA Presidents as well as Victorian Single Language Association Presidents. This was a great opportunity to reflect on our learnings and to support other language teacher associations

considering planning similar online Professional Learning events.



You can still register to access the many recordings available and receive a certificate of participation for this PL time. Goto: www.mltav.asn.au/conf

We are now reflecting on 2020 and based on our learnings are beginning to reimagine Professional Learning for 2021. Stay tuned!

by **Kylie Farmer and Kerry O'Connor**,
MLTAV

The MLTAV recognises, acknowledges and thanks the Victorian Government for their ongoing support of MLTAVs Annual Conference.

International Online 2020 CLIL Summit



A unique opportunity arose for teachers of CLIL when an international CLIL summit was held online from September 28 – October 2. This event was designed to enable CLIL teachers worldwide to connect and learn from each other.

The Summit program offered a range of opportunities to participate in live sessions including presentations, interviews, Q&A's as well as Networking Sessions. The MLTAV CLIL Network was able to support Victorian teachers to purchase the All Access Pass which provided access to recordings of sessions. As the Summit was hosted in Europe this was a great option given the time difference. Even with this, many Australian teachers still chose to participate live even though this meant some very late nights! Fortunately it was school holidays here!

The Summit presenters included CLIL authors, researchers and teachers from around the globe, including Australia, Brussels, Bulgaria, Italy, UK and Poland.

The presenters from Australia were Dr Russell Cross (Melbourne Graduate School of Education), Kylie Farmer (MLTAV CLIL Network Facilitator) and Linton Roe (Independent Languages/ Education Consultant).

It was inspiring to learn about CLIL from different perspectives and approaches. It was also extremely reaffirming to have had such inspirational and high-quality presentations both in terms of the presenters and content from Victoria! For contributing to this amazing program and online PL opportunity, we sincerely thank Russell, Kylie and Linton. Their sessions beautifully showcased some of the great ways in which CLIL is being implemented in Victorian schools!

The CLIL Network, through the Victorian Government, supported 39 Victorian languages teachers to participate in the Summit.

These teachers were part of an extensive cohort of approximately 1,900 Summit delegates from across the globe, including representation from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Buenos Aires, Chile, Columbia, Curacao, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, The Philippines, Japan, Kurdistan, Lithuania, Mexico, Myanmar, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam.

The European Day of Languages, which coincided with the timing of the Online Summit, promotes plurilingualism in the whole of Europe. Throughout Europe, 800 million Europeans are represented in the

Council of Europe's 47 member states and all are encouraged to discover more languages at any age, as part of or alongside their studies. Given a significant proportion of the CLIL Summit delegates were from Europe, it was very interesting for Victorian languages teachers to learn how languages education and CLIL operate in different countries, contexts and cultural settings. For example, in Italy CLIL has been mandatory in all upper secondary schools since 2010 as a result of an educational reform.

As a result of participating in the CLIL Summit, CLIL Network participants not only feel more confident in CLIL knowledge, they have also expanded their network in a way that would not have been possible from our own isolated context. The Online CLIL Summit opened up doors to further understand CLIL thinking, planning, implementation and assessment. Looking beyond what is and into what it could be, and how we can support each other globally, in our quest for further enhancing the quality of CLIL provision in Australian schools.

Post CLIL Summit ZOOM session - 3 October:

Following the Summit, all Victorian teachers who had been involved were invited to participate in a ZOOM session co-facilitated by Kylie Farmer and Linton Roe.

This was an opportunity to collectively reflect on the Online CLIL Summit presentations, connect these with the Australian CLIL context and share learnings.

Two of the participants summed up their experiences in their comments below:

Thank you Kylie. It was great to hear about the various CLIL resources that we were able to access through the Summit. It is very inspiring for me to hear what authentic CLIL teaching is and reassuring me that this is why we are using CLIL

methods in our teaching. Using real meaning and developing communication skills to teach kids makes sense!

Thank you for making this Summit available to me through the MLTAV. Having the All Access Pass, really helped. I did attend a number of the sessions in real time, which I enjoyed.

The opportunity to hear from teachers who have had a long history with CLIL was very valuable. I also really appreciated hearing from presenters such as Rosie Tanner, Phil Ball and Keith Kelly who have a very good understanding of CLIL pedagogy, as well as classroom experience. There were so many practical example activities that can be used in the classroom.

Patrick did an amazing job facilitating the conference and updating the website.

For my context, I will continue to advocate for CLIL practices to be used in language classes. As a teacher/languages assistant I can assist this by creating some of the student centred language activities in Japanese that I have seen during the summit.

I hope MLTAV can continue to offer CLIL workshops, I will be interested in attending.

If you would like to add your email to the MLTAV CLIL Network communications list, please email Kylie Farmer, CLIL Network Facilitator, PL@mltav.asn.au

Le Tour de France: Gastronomique Project

by Haileybury College:
French Department

Secondary Education

When thinking of France, it would be impossible and remiss to not visualise some unique gastronomical delight! The French are renowned for their *savoir-vivre* - living life to the full – and for the French, food is the foundation of living the best life. This guarantees all who visit the beloved *la belle France* leave with many fond memories which in some way, irrefutably link to French food / cuisine!

Eating in France never leaves one disappointed or bored with a monotonous cuisine as the food changes from one region to another. From crêpes in the west, to cassoulet in the south, choucroute in the east and delectable French pâtisseries and famous desserts throughout!

What better way to showcase the world-renowned French cuisine than by following the 21 stages of the Tour de France. This has been showcased in many ways, by many people, including the famous French-born Australian chef, Guillaume Brahimi, who has earned Three-Hats by the Good Food Guide. Guillaume has been known to take *SBS Food* viewers to the heart of France by exploring its wonderful culture and serving up his 'Plat du Tour' each night of the Tour de France (<https://www.sbs.com.au/food/article/2020/08/11/episode-guide-plat-du-tour>)

Thinking **cREAtively** to engage Year 9 pre-senior students of French in a fun and meaningful way during the COVID-19 enforced teaching and learning period, the French Department at Haileybury, developed a task that brought French Language, Culture and Gastronomy together in one fun and exciting project.

The creative activity titled, *Le Tour de France Gastronomique Project*, set a task

for students to develop a PowerPoint Presentation using the following instructions. For the purpose of this article, to fully showcase the task as well as an example of how students approached it, we have incorporated slides from the PowerPoint produced by a pair of the Year 9 pre-senior students (Angus and Finian).



Slide 1: Choose a town that the race passes through and name the region it belongs to plus the food/dish that the region is famous for. Add some delicious-looking photos of the specialty!



Lyon

Lyon is the city we chose, and is said to be the gastronomic capital of France and the world.

Lyon is famous for its *quenelle*, a type of creamed meat or fish mixed with breadcrumbs and egg.

Slide 2: Provide some information about the race in relation to your town. For example, when does the race pass



Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

The Tour de France passes through Lyon, where Mr Morabito used to live.

The Rhone Alps are famous for their mountains and ski resorts, and the section of the region that the Tour de France passes through is very hilly and difficult for the riders.

The riders will finish a race in Lyon on the 12th of September, and they will start the next race there on the 13th.


through it? What stage is it? How many kilometres does it involve? Will it be a flat or mountainous stage of the race? Is it near the coast or a famous lake? What does the landscape look like?


Slide 3: Translate the following vocabulary into English and find pictures that correspond to each term. Make sure you include accents.

la course, ville de départ, ville d'arrivée, une étape de plaine, le parcours, les coureurs, les vélos, un maillot jaune, un maillot vert, un maillot à pois, le roi des -montagnes, un grimper, une course contre la montre, une équipe.

Translating
the
following
words

La course = the race
Ville de départ = departure city
Ville d'arrivée = city they arrive in
Une étape de plain = plain stage
Le parcours = the course
Les coureurs = the runners
les vélos = the bikes
un maillot jaune = the yellow jersey
un maillot vert = the green jersey
un maillot à pois = the polka dot jersey
le roi des -montagnes = king of the mountain
un grimper = the climb
une course contre la montre = race against time
une équipe = a team





Slide 4: Include some information about your town. For example, population size, things for tourists to see and do there, what should people eat and drink?, what are the culinary “spécialités” of this region (there could be several!)?

- Population size : 1,705,000
- Go sight seeing in Lyon →
- There are many amazing dishes in Lyon, a stand out dish would have to be Saucisson de Lyon.



Slide 5: Cook a French recipe (from your region if possible) and ask a family member to write a review (taste, presentation, cleaning up). Include the recipe, review and photos of the meal in your PowerPoint. Each person in the pair

can cook the same dish or choose a different dish each.

Tartiflette

Tartiflette is a famous French dish from Savoy. It's made from thin potato slices, pancetta, double cream and Reblochon cheese.

I didn't have Reblochon so I used brie.



If you can't find a dish from your region, or struggle to buy the ingredients required, choose one of these: mousse au chocolat, tarte tatin, salade niçoise, bœuf bourguignon, crème brûlée, soupe à l'oignon or quiche Lorraine. **Bon appétit!**

Teacher's Reflection (Mr. Andrew Morabito)

I appreciated students' research of a regional dish from the south-east of France, fondly known as, tartiflette. Angus and Finian found that reblochon cheese is difficult to source in Australia (being an unpasteurised cheese which prohibits its import). The students used their own **cREAtivity** to replace reblochon with brie. This was a reasonable alternative, however, in terms of taste and texture, it was quite heavy to consume.

Angus and Finian cited this to be an excellent project, aligning itself to a famous, topical and current French event (Tour de France). It required some experiential learning which is deeply embedded within French language and culture. The students also thoroughly enjoyed the practical and creative aspect of the assignment which achieved the original goal of offering a meaningful French language task, requiring some deep level learning with a touch of fun and creativity.

Acknowledgement: The MLTAV thanks the French Department of Haileybury and in particular Angus and Finian for sharing this excellent example of **cREAtivity** with us!

Student and Teacher Wellbeing in a Global Pandemic

by *Monique Francis*: Japanese Teacher FCJ College & Joseph's Primary School, Benalla

Primary & Secondary Education

2020 has been a year like no other. So many unknowns. So many challenges. So many firsts. For teachers and students alike, this year has forced us to look at our learning and teaching with fresh eyes. For teachers, it has meant fast tracking our own digital learning and technological competence so we can provide meaningful and effective teaching in our virtual classrooms.

I am a Japanese teacher at two Catholic schools in North East Victoria. I teach Primary (Years 5 and 6) and Secondary (Years 7-11). Like many language teachers I grappled with how to deliver an effective online program to my students. Initially, I worried about the content and how I would 'cover' everything. I worried about losing precious 'input' time, I worried about making the Japanese content accessible to parents (especially at the primary level) who were facilitating learning at home. I especially worried about losing connection and diminishing relationships with my classes. In Remote Learning 2.0 this was of particular concern with my Year 7 students who had only just started Japanese classes 2 weeks prior to lock down. So many worries! I felt like a juggler (and not a very good one at that!) trying to keep a lot of different balls in the air.

After a good dose of worrying, I peeled back my thoughts and feelings about my classes and tried to pin-point what were the core principles, the most important beliefs that drove my teaching, no matter what level.

When pared back I knew I wanted three things:

- to give students choice;
- for students to experience success; and
- for my students to maintain healthy relationships with other students and me.

To this end, I fashioned my 'COVID curriculum'. I made changes and tweaks, I reduced my content, I gave students more time to complete tasks, and gave myself permission to relax my expectations. I focussed on setting tasks that would promote well-being and allow for **cREAtive** expression. It felt right. Student feedback was positive. They enjoyed the freedom to choose and express themselves and share snippets of their home life. They experienced a sense of completion and success as the tasks were open-ended, and the class bonded over shared remote learning insights. However, it was only after the end of Remote Learning 2.0 that I made the connection between my COVID curriculum choices and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which validated my decisions.

Self-Determination Theory

The Self-determination Theory suggests that individuals are motivated to grow and change by three innate and universal psychological needs. This theory suggests that people can become self-determined when their needs for competence, connection and autonomy are fulfilled.

A wealth of evidence suggests that understanding learners' motivation is key if we want to educate children to become self-directed and lifelong learners. This is true pre-COVID but even more now as our teaching norms have changed post-COVID.

I will highlight tasks which ticked these Self-Determination Theory boxes of *autonomy*, *competence* and *relatedness*.

Years 9 & 10 Bento Unit:

Relatedness: In Google Meet we looked at 'Kyaraben' which are homemade bento lunchboxes containing food decorated to look like cute characters. Lots of rich personal questions and answers ensued about the students' own school lunches. We compared lunches eaten at school and what they eat while remote learning, we discussed who makes the lunches, when, where and why. We talked about what character designs they would like to make and eat. We discussed the differences between Australian lunch boxes and Japanese bento boxes.

Autonomy: students researched Japanese lunch box designs, created their own lunch boxes, delivered an oral presentation showcasing their creations. They completed the unit by viewing (at a time of their choosing) an award-winning film 'Bento Harassment' made available through the Melbourne International Film Festival 2020 Schools Program collaboration with MLTAV.



Year 7 Japanese Program:

To provide screen-free time and a more individual, creative approach I set my classes with the challenge of creating both the Japanese Hiragana characters and the Japanese flag using household items. The students took photos of their creations and the class discussed the creations and what was used. Questions such as, what Hiragana character did he make?, what did he use?, do you have this item in your home?

Colour Tours:

An additional task assigned to the Year 7 student cohort was creating a 'Colour Tour' of their homes. The students captured different items of their choice and described them in Japanese. Some chose to walk through their gardens discussing the colours that they saw, some chose items in their workspace. Some introduced their pets. There was 'buy-in' as the students chose what items to

include and in doing so we could see their relative importance to the student.

Years 5 & 6 Choice Boards:

This was perhaps the most challenging year level for me personally during remote learning. We did not have Google Meet so the students were reliant on parents and carers for direction. Therefore my primary concern was addressing competence and setting students up for success. The choice boards provided student *autonomy* as they could choose the activity and the number of tasks to complete. The tasks on the Choice Board included;

- a pet challenge involving students teaching their pets basic commands (please, sit/stand etc) in Japanese and the students sending through videos;
- a karate challenge: this involved online karate workshop sessions;
- a cooking challenge: the students made and decorated Japanese savoury pancakes;
- a poetry challenge: writing and illustrating Haiku poetry;
- a gesture challenge: students record themselves saying and doing corresponding gestures;
- a chopstick challenge: finding the smallest/largest/most challenging item they can pick up using chopsticks.

These activities were effective for several reasons:

- the activities provided a little window and connection into the students' world (*Relatedness*);
- the activities provided independent choice (*Autonomy*);
- the students experienced success because they could choose their tasks according to their level (*Competence*).

In addition, these activities provided valuable screen-free time which was beneficial for both student and teacher wellbeing.



Year 9 & 10 Japanese

This term, one of our main focuses in Year 9 Japanese has been 'Kyaraben.' 'Kyaraben' is the shortened word for 'character bento' lunch boxes, a style of elaborately arranged food made to look like characters. We began the unit by researching, planning and making our own 'kyaraben.'

We finished the term off by watching a movie called 'Obento Harassment,' made available to us through the Melbourne International Film Festival. The movie is about a mother who tries to get her teen daughter's attention by making 'kyaraben' that includes messages for her school lunch. While watching the movie, we gained an understanding about the

meaning behind 'kyaraben,' that it is considered an act of love from the hard-working person who makes it. - By Abby Hammond

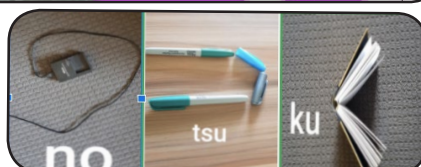
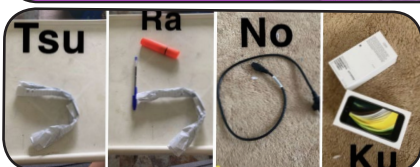


Year 7 Japanese

We have been learning about the Japanese alphabet called Hiragana. During remote learning we made the characters with things around our house and garden. We also created the Japanese flag using aka (red) and shiro (white) things.



The Red circle is Symbolizing the sun against a white background. It is known as the hinomaru in Japanese, meaning "circle of the sun."



Languages in the classroom: maximising learning and minimising stress

by **Matt Absalom**, Lecturer in Italian Studies, The University of Melbourne

Tertiary Education

Recently, I've come to the realisation that at the heart of my teaching philosophy there have existed a series of irreconcilable contradictions. For the longest time, I've entertained certain notions which are not dissimilar from views held by flat earthers – I actively denied the idea that second language anxiety was 'a thing'. This is even in the face of my own experiences as a language user (for instance, being paralysed by fear and horror at the idea of having to try out some Spanish in Spain) not to mention years of witnessing (and dismissing) this first-hand in class. I have also held two positions which go against over 50 years of research into second language acquisition:

- that teaching grammar explicitly leads to the development of implicit knowledge in learners (it doesn't!);
- that 'forcing' students to produce language (either spoken or written) contributes usefully to language acquisition (it doesn't! For a full exploration of these issues, I strongly recommend the recent volume by VanPatten et al.)

For someone like me who loves grammar (reading about it, thinking about it, buying books about it, talking about it, teaching it and writing about it), it is quite disorienting to realise that



explicit grammar teaching has very little impact on implicit language learning. In truth, there have always been signs that this might be so (think about those

stubborn mistakes that students keep making no matter how many times you've 'taught' them the correct forms). I am now of the view that teaching grammar (no matter how intriguing, well planned, ingenious, etc.) is not teaching language but rather *teaching about language*. On the issue of production, it seems almost sacrilege to suggest that this has no real place in languages teaching but consider for a moment first language acquisition: in our first language, we have years and years of input before we are expected to produce anything. Often, in additional language situations, students are immediately required to start rehearsing the language before even developing a minimal grasp of it. This is far from a low anxiety environment and really doesn't occur in any other learning areas.

At one level, I think I must have always recognised the debilitating effects on learning (but, more significantly, on the self) that these aspects of my (very typical) approach could have as I've always known that doing things differently is the way to engage learners. Indeed, the oft repeated need to 'make languages fun' tacitly acknowledges that for learning (not just of languages) to be effective it needs to reach learners at levels beyond just the intellectual. I'm not a fan of "making it fun" as I feel this trivialises what we do – learning a language is such a transformational act that reducing it to "fun" gravely overlooks its value. A useful way to understand the need for fun through a theoretical lens is Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. Essentially, Krashen suggests that there are certain affective variables (motivation, self-confidence, anxiety) which contribute to success in second language acquisition. He describes the "effective language teacher [as] someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation" (Krashen 1982, 32).

With this in mind, I will now describe a series of creative examples (which are often fun) of providing language rich activities to promote learning.

Words to actions

For a number of years, I have been able to organise a yoga session in Italian for my students. Yoga classes typically involve the vocabulary of the body which students tend to be familiar with. Yoga instructions are repetitive and yoga teachers often demonstrate the postures (or there is someone in the class – typically, me – who can demonstrate) so students quickly pick up what's going on. In this way, the language used becomes comprehensible and is supported by the accompanying physical realisation of action. Any slow deliberate physical activity lends itself to instruction in any language whether this be yoga, pilates, circuit training, dance, gymnastics, etc.

I often use led mindful breathing as an opening routine to my classes. Again, guided breathing exercises involve the use of repetitive language which students recognised quickly. These have the added benefit of providing a moment of calm and focus before embarking on the lesson. Doing this in language also primes the brain. It is very easy to find breathing routines in different languages by doing a simple search on the internet.

During the COVID lockdowns, my teaching has all been done via Zoom. This has provided some unexpected benefits in terms of the types of activities possible. I have a one-hour 'practical' class each week with groups of up to 15 students. Examples of the possibilities provided by this new distributed environment included:



- *Show and Tell* – I asked students on the spot to go and find their favourite piece of crockery or cutlery in the kitchen and then bring it back. We then discussed these as a group. This provided a varied and interesting context to rehearse differently everyday language;
- *Music week* – being at home provided an opportunity which we rarely have in face-to-face classes: students had their musical instruments at hand so that those who were musicians could not only talk about what they played but also give a small performance. This turned our practical class into a type of soiree and created an engaging environment for exchange of information in Italian;
 - *Teach us something* – I gave students a week's notice to think of something practical that they could teach the rest of the class. This ranged from origami, to lessons in other languages (conducted in Italian), to magic tricks, to how to make Christmas snowflakes from paper, to how to draw a Caribbean sunset. Again, the Zoom context offered something which is hard to replicate in face-to-face situations: we know from research into computer-mediated communication that interacting through screens can lower anxiety and inhibition which is crucial in second language acquisition. Thus, presenting via Zoom was less confronting than teaching us something would have been in a live classroom.

In these cases, students had a large degree of control of the content of their contribution which tends to lower the affective barrier and have positive effects on language learning.

Oral presentation

Instead of giving students a topic that they must prepare and present, I give students an excerpt from an Italian play which they

must learn by heart with one or two other students who play other characters. The feedback on this task has been very positive with students noting that, although the language may be more complex than what they would produce themselves, having it scripted takes away the pressure of having to compose it themselves and allows them to concentrate on meaning and delivery. One student this year commented that she was actually surprised by how much less pressure she felt doing an oral presentation this way.

Play

In an effort to maintain momentum, in second semester I offered students the opportunity to suggest topics for our practical classes. One useful suggestion was to play some games together. In the Zoom environment this presented some immediate challenges. In a face-to-face class we could play cards or board games

very easily. I began the class with a straightforward “who am I?” game. I modelled it by picking a famous identity and students had to interrogate me to learn my identity. We then rotated to two or three students who

became the “who am I?” I followed this up with a modified “celebrity heads” game which worked extremely well in the end. To begin with I split the class into smaller breakout rooms of around 4-5 people. One room would be the celebrity heads and with the other students we decided their identities. This is essentially the reverse of the first game – the celebrity heads now had to ask questions to determine their identities. After some searching online I found some multiplayer word games such as hangman, anagrams, guess the word from the definition, etc. and we played a few rounds of these. Notably, feedback from students on this lesson was more positive than I expected. The students loved the



relaxed atmosphere and felt that this was an excellent way to encourage development of vocabulary.

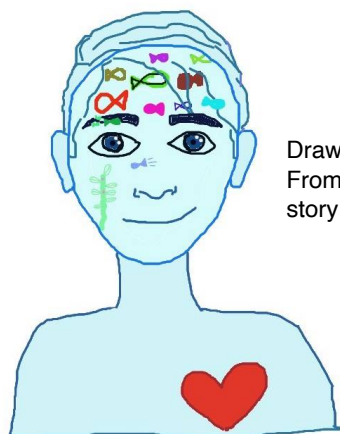
I am going to follow this class up with a second game focus during the XX Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo (20th Italian language week in the world) which in 2020 has a focus on words and image and attempt online Pictionary – where students are given a word that they have to draw and everyone has to guess what it is. The online version that I will use is <https://skribbl.io>

Maximising input

The final activities I want to discuss revolve around attempts to really ramp up the amount of comprehensible input students receive. It's important to understand that commonplace language activities like worksheets, grammar exercises, multiple choice comprehension checks, cloze tests, etc. are very marginally comprehensible input – this goes back to the notion of *teaching about language*. I've introduced two initiatives to promote more exposure to the language: story listening in class and a weekly reading log. The major proponents of story listening describe it thus:

In a Story-Listening lesson, a teacher tells a story, usually a fairy/folk tale which has stood the test of time. The teacher tells the story using language that she thinks the students already know. There will be, however, some words, or parts of the story that students don't fully understand. The teacher makes the story comprehensible with the help of many different kinds of support, such as drawings, written words on the board, occasional use of the students' first language, and taking advantage of the students' knowledge of the world. Use of this kind of support ensures that the students will understand the content of the story easily. Again, language acquisition is only possible when students understand what they hear or read. (Mason & Krashen).

Once students have heard the story, they are typically asked to write a global summary of the story or represent this through drawings. See example student drawing below:



Drawing:
From Gianni Rodari's
story *Giacomo di cristallo*

Crucially, the stories are used as language input not as grammar fodder. The comprehension checks after the story listening can be done in either a shared language (such as English) or in the language being taught. The benefits of this approach are that it is a low anxiety-causing activity, it is low cost (no need for costly textbooks) and provides a contextual immersion in the language. When this is paired with weekly reading, it creates a very fertile context for language development. To encourage reading, I have introduced an assessed reading log with clear criteria of how much to read and what types of texts. For a long time, I had recommended reading narrative fiction to my students as I realised that this had been an important source of learning for me both in my first and additional languages. This is supported by the work of Mason and Krashen. Many people object to the idea of imposing reading on languages students, particularly those who are still developing literacy in dominant schooling languages. What is important is to realise that cognitively students have the capacity to enjoy reading in additional languages of a similar complexity to texts in their first languages – it's simply a matter of encouraging this and providing students with appropriate reading matter.

My focus as an educator has always been on leading my students to the launching pad of their languages – that place where the language somehow takes flight as if on its own (I clearly remember when this happened for me with Italian – and it wasn't in a grammar classroom). After many years as a learner, scholar and teacher, I know that the only way to do this is to engage students in language rich activities which immerse and submerge them in the language in a way that is both fun and rigorous so that they almost don't know it's happening. It asks a lot of you as a teacher – you have to be critical of your own practice and of your own presuppositions and you have to explore these in different, sometimes new and startling ways – telling stories each week (and trying to illustrate these with drawings) has been an exciting and satisfying challenge for me. You owe it to yourself and to your students to ignite your creativity in order to fire up theirs.

References

[Krashen, S.D. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. 1982.](#)

[Mason, B. and Krashen, S.D. Story-listening and story-reading.](#)

VanPatten, B., Smith, M. and Benati, A.G. *Key Questions in Second Language Acquisition*. 2020. Cambridge.

Suggested further reading

<http://beniko-mason.net/publications/>

<http://www.sdkrashen.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/storylistening/>

<http://www.teawithbvp.com/resources>

Useful resources

[Readers in multiples languages](#)

[The Great Story Reading Project](#)



Double Interview with Ellen & Isabel

Interviewer: *Kerry O'Connor,*
MLTAV Publications Team

Interviewees: *Ellen Moffat & Isabel Fernandez*

A new, regular, refreshing and exciting contribution to MLTAV's Journal is our '*Languages Teacher Interview*' which gives our teachers a voice and an opportunity to share their perspectives, thoughts, ideas, experiences on a topic relating to the Journal theme.

For our theme of this Journal *From ACTivity to cREativity - could this be the way to 'feel good' in the languages class?*, we invited a languages teacher from both a Primary and a Secondary school setting to share their stories.

We are delighted to be able to introduce our readers to Ellen Moffat, Secondary teacher, Carey Baptist Grammar School, Kew and Isabel Fernandez, Primary teacher, Sacred Heart PS, Croydon.

Ellen and Isabel have amazing stories to share about how they thought creatively to promote, nurture and support student and self wellbeing throughout the unprecedented COVID-19 setting this year.

We hope their voices inspire you, as they did us!

Sincere thanks to Ellen and Isabel for taking time out of their busy schedules to chat to us.

About our Interviewees:

Isabel Fernandez is a Specialist Italian teacher at Sacred Heart Primary School in Croydon. She graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor in Behavioural Neuroscience/ Italian and a Graduate Diploma of Education.

As an ardent educator of languages, she has taught toddlers, pensioners and everything in between since beginning her career in 2007. Isabel loves creating resources and is most proud of an educational package she co-wrote for the Royal Botanic Gardens of Victoria. Isabel has always aimed to instil a love of languages and culture in all her students and teaches with engagement, excitement and empathy at the forefront of her mind.

Ellen Moffatt is the Leader of Learning for Languages at Carey Baptist Grammar School in Melbourne. Passionate about effective pedagogy, positive education and leadership, Ellen completed her Master of Education in 2016 and her Master of Business Administration in 2019.

She is particularly interested in the championing of student strengths and in empowering young people to acknowledge and capitalise on these strengths. In her role as a Leader of Learning, Ellen constantly seeks to understand, support and excite students as they engage in the language learning process. Ellen was listed on The Educator Australia's '2018 Educator Hot List'.

[Click here](#) to view the interview.

Video Music: <https://www.bensound.com>

Retired but not Retiring

Informal Interview with Emeritus Professor Joe Lo Bianco

Interviewer:

Gabriella Bertolissi, MLTAV, Immediate Past President

Interviewee:

Emeritus Professor Joseph Lo Bianco

In the July 2020 edition of Languages Victoria, we included the following brief message acknowledging the retirement of Professor Joe Lo Bianco.

Professor Joe Lo Bianco retired on June 30, 2020. As stated in his own words via his Twitter account, 'So weird to do this from iso. But much work I'm still keen to do: more like a life-stage transition.'

The MLTAV has congratulated Joe and given the close timing of his retirement and this [July] edition's distribution, MLTAV is planning a special retirement tribute for inclusion in the November edition of Languages Victoria.

We are delighted, in this November edition, to deliver on that commitment and offer our readers a unique opportunity to sit back with a coffee / tea (or wine) and listen to this *strictly organic* interview between Joe and Gabriella (MLTAV).

This purpose of this interview was for MLTAV to personally acknowledge Joe's retirement announcement. The intent behind the context of the interview was to showcase not only Joe's prolific work in the field of Languages Education, but to also introduce our members to some of the extensive professional and personal passions, foci and interests of an incredible man.

As a profession, we are extremely proud of, and grateful for Joe's commitment and dedication to Languages Education and we are so very fortunate and honoured that Joe, and his much loved family, chose, many years ago, to make their home base in Victoria.

Sincere thanks to Joe for taking time out of his busy (post-retirement!) schedule to chat to MLTAV for this interview.

[Click here](#) to watch the interview.

Video Music: <https://www.bensound.com>



Retired but not Retiring

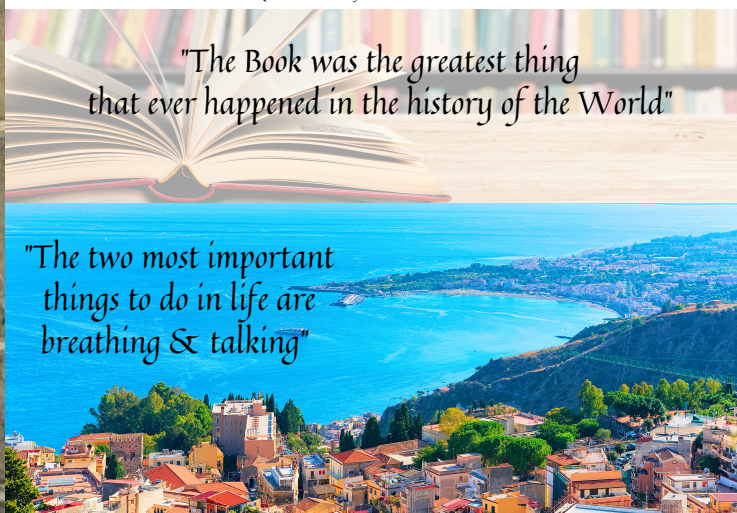
Interview with

Emeritus Professor Joe Lo Bianco AM, F.A.H.A.

Quotes below by Joe Lo Bianco

"The Book was the greatest thing that ever happened in the history of the World"

"The two most important things to do in life are breathing & talking"



National News



The AFMLTA provides vision, leadership, representation, advocacy, professional learning and support for quality teaching and learning of languages.

National Languages Plan & Strategy:

PARTICIPATE NOW IN TEACHER SURVEY 2



The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) is conducting a project for the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. The project involves developing recommendations that will inform future policy design for languages education in Australia. The survey data will be used to inform the development of a national picture of the current situation of languages education across Australia, including the teaching of Community Languages and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Teacher Survey 1 was released in September. Teacher Survey 2, relating to languages teachers' experiences and qualifications, is now available. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and all information provided will remain anonymous (the names of individual schools and participating teachers are not collected).

[Click here](#) to participate now in **Teacher Survey 2**.

(Survey 1 is also available for those teachers who have not yet participated.)

For more details, go to the project website: nlps.afmlta.asn.au

Contact the Project Director, Sherryl Saunders: e: vicepresident@afmlta.asn.au

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS TEACHER SURVEY 2](#)

Webinar Series



Melbourne Graduate
School of Education

Webinar series: Propelling education through a COVID-19 world

Laureate Professor John Hattie, Professor Yong Zhao and Professor Sandra Milligan

Webinar series: Propelling education through a COVID-19 world

Producer: Melbourne Graduate School of Education
Hosts: Jim Watterson and Janet Clinton (MGSE)

This Series was designed to contribute to the debate about the impact of COVID-19 on our schools, universities and our students. Its intent is to challenge how we think about, plan for and navigate education through the new post-pandemic world. How do we use COVID as an opportunity to evolve education?

Episode 1:

Professor Yong Zhao on: Education leaders must reconsider the way we teach and learn.

Episode 1 opens the conversation with a provocation: now is the right time to re-think education. Although the disruption of COVID-19 has brought many challenges, it has also created the conditions for re-thinking about what was already 'not working'. Yong Zhao highlights how, as educators, we succeeded in adapting to a revolutionary change in a mere few days. This has shown us that change is possible.

The focus of his presentation is on moving away from standardised education toward a more holistic approach that put the students, their knowledge, their needs and their interests at the core of education. I believe this is a challenge that we, as language teachers, must rise to through change to our everyday practice.

Reviewed by Elena

Reflection for language educators:

What innovative ideas could languages teachers introduce into everyday practice to enhance the linguistic competence of their students?

Episode 2:

Professor Sandra Milligan on: What skills and resources will students need to be agile and thrive, as they head into the world?

The moderator of this webinar, Janet Clinton, set the tone for the discussion by pointing out how the current pandemic situation is transforming our understanding of education now that working from home, with all the complex challenges of the internet, has become the norm. This context prompted Sandra Milligan to rephrase the title of her webinar as follows: "What needs to be done to fix the fact that many students don't get what

they need in order to thrive?” Sandra’s research with “First Movers”, that is educational stakeholders, from the students themselves to their potential employers, has revealed a widespread perception that the focus of education has become too narrow, not only in terms of the way subjects are studied but also in the sense of an increasing fixation on numbers and ratings, as demonstrated by an obsession with high ATAR scores. This has happened at the expense of **cREativity** and innovation. In the webinar Sandra explores the possibility of creating innovative ways of credentialing expertise, extending the experience of alternative certificates such as VET and VCAL. The Panel termed Sandra’s call to action revolution but their lively discussion also revealed a genuine commitment to change. This resulted in a thought-provoking webinar, providing participants with many ideas for educational reform.

Reviewed by Felix

Reflection for language educators:

How could a credential system be applied to language education? Is it a viable option in our context?

Episode 3:

Laureate Professor John Hattie on: Are the days of evidence over?

In Episode 3 Professor John Hattie challenges our thinking as educators and researches arguing that we do not need more evidence and that evidence of excellence is already all around us. He urges educators to consider the type of evidence used, emphasising that classroom evidence is as valuable as academic evidence. We are asked to “stop finding fault” but find excellence in education then scale it up. Hattie raises concerns about the ‘Grammar of Schooling’ arguing that it is negatively impacting on students’ excitement about school and retention rates in Year 12. Yet,

he is enthusiastic about what some teachers in Australia are already practising with their regular interpretation of the evidence. Excellence in teaching is not only transmitting the knowledge, but teaching self-regulation, the learner profile attributes and learning how to learn. The disruption caused by COVID is then considered an opportunity for teachers to implement a quick “release of responsibility from dependence”. An additional positive outcome of COVID teaching is the parents’ engagement in the learning, and appreciation of the process of learning and the teacher’s role. The Panel asked some more thought-provoking questions resulting in a rich debate. It was, however, agreed that education leadership needs to create more opportunities and time for teachers to examine the evidence and consider it.

Reviewed by Dolly

Reflection for language educators:

How could we, as languages teachers, create a paradigm shift which enhances student self-efficacy for their own learning? How could we involve parents in this process and encourage first language use (along with the target language) in our classrooms?

Episode 4:

A collective view on: What can we realistically achieve?

Episode 4 offers a macro view of all three preceding episodes. It brought together a fantastic Panel of different thinkers who complemented each other brilliantly. The content of this episode is informed by the questions and comments (over 500 in total!) that arose from participants of this Series. The phrase ‘.. new Grammar of Schools’ was referred to often and much discussion focused on how this could be reimagined to create the new world that has been talked about throughout this Series. What can be taken back to our

classrooms and how can the systems be changed? How can New Grammars expand the ideas of what success means for students and how can they become, and thrive, as confident learners?

The 'drilling down' by the Facilitator (Prof. Janet Clinton) inviting and challenging Panellists to provide specific, tangible and practical suggestions is what makes this episode interesting, engaging and thought-provoking.

Reviewed by Kerry

Reflection for language educators:

What is your understanding of the phrase, 'New Grammar of Schools'? Are we ready as language teachers to engage with a 'New Grammar of Schools'? What would you like 'a New Grammar of Schools' to look like/incorporate? How do you think 'New Grammars' explain ideas of what success means for students and how can they become, and thrive, as confident learners?

Review Panel Concluding Message:

The review of this topical and thought-provoking Webinar Series was undertaken as a collaborative approach by the members of the MLTAV Publications Sub-Committee Team. This series, combined with our own personal experiences of

education throughout the challenges of 2020, encourages us to reflect on the future of languages education and the role we can play in working out 'what the NEW NORMAL looks like'. What, as educators, can we do now and into the future?

We thoroughly enjoyed the experience of listening to one of the Episodes and bringing our thoughts together to provide our readers with this review. We hope the provocations raised throughout this Series will continue the important conversations about disrupting what we have been doing, and to encourage us to work together, as a Languages Education Community, to steer our profession in a modified direction.

If you, (our members), would be interested in participating in a review process with our Publications Sub-Committee Team, we would love to hear from you. We invite and welcome your perspective on a component of the Webinar Series we plan to showcase in the next Journal edition (July 2021). We are also very happy to accept suggestions on possible Webinar Series to consider reviewing.

Image Below: Episode 4 brought together all presenters from this webinar series.





Member Feedback Invited

Please provide
feedback to
help us plan for
the 2021
editions of
Languages
Victoria

Please [**Click here**](#) to complete our
FIVE brief question survey.

Telling us what you want / expect of
LV will help us to tailor to the needs /
wants of our Members!



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The MLTAV is a professional association for teachers of languages, and the umbrella organisation for approximately twenty Single Language Associations (SLAs) in Victoria.

In cooperation with its member associations, the MLTAV supports teachers and learners of languages throughout Victoria by providing quality services, including professional learning opportunities, advocacy and consultancy. The MLTAV aims to encourage and promote the learning of languages as an essential part of the school curriculum.

The MLTAV is an association of languages educators in early years, primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions, from all sectors – Catholic, Government and Independent.

MLTAV is also an active member of the Council of Professional Teaching Associations of Victoria (CPTAV).

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The Publications Sub-Committee always welcomes relevant contributions – please contact Kerry @ MLTAV - info@mltav.asn.au



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