

English Greek Bilingual Program at Lalor North Primary School.

Lalor North Primary School has been offering a high quality bilingual education in **English** and **Greek** for the past 35 years. The program is open to children of both Greek and Non-Greek backgrounds. Lalor North Primary School is one of the 15 Victorian primary schools that offer a bilingual immersion program. Immersion programs are the most natural way for young children to learn a second language. This means, students are immersed or surrounded by the language through listening, comprehension, speaking, reading and writing.

Children who have a Greek background, discover the program helps them preserve, extend and cultivate their mother tongue. Meanwhile, children from a non-Greek background have the opportunity to develop language and problem-solving skills as well as cultural awareness. Many studies have shown the benefits that second language acquisition has on reading, writing and life skills.

BENEFITS OF A BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Evidence suggests that learning more than one language can enhance English literacy, help learners in other areas of curriculum, and help to develop skills in cross-cultural communication.

Learning a language:

- develops an understanding of how languages work which leads to improved literacy skills, including English literacy
- helps students develop critical thinking, analysis and problem solving skills
- teaches students about other peoples, their ideas and ways of thinking
- inspires interest in and respect for other cultures
- enhances employment and career prospects
- contributes to social cohesiveness through better communication and understanding
- contributes to economic, diplomatic and strategic development.

(Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – Languages other than English (LOTE) Domain – 2009)

WHY STUDY GREEK?

- 1) **Widely spoken** – Melbourne is one of the largest Greek speaking cities in the world. This provides students with a living context in which to use the language beyond the classroom.
- 2) **Easy to learn** – Greek follows very similar written conventions to English. Once the handful of new symbols of the Greek alphabet are mastered, reading and writing in Greek is very straightforward.
- 3) **Intrinsic linguistic value** – Many English words are derived from the Greek language, especially in the fields of science, technology, literature and religion. The majority of mathematical symbols and terminology are also of Greek origin. Knowledge of Greek will give students a deeper understanding of concepts in these fields.
- 4) **Cultural prestige** – Learning Greek will give students access to the rich history of Greek civilisation and the origins of Western civilisation in general.
- 5) **Career prospects** – As Greek is spoken by more than 150,000 Victorians, it becomes a highly useful second language for people working in welfare, professional domains and service industries. Knowing Greek also opens opportunities for employment overseas.
- 6) **Greek for travel** – Greece is one of the most frequently visited European countries because of its rich culture, historical importance and geographical beauty.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAM

The philosophy behind the Program stems from the belief that students acquire a second language (either Greek or English) better when they have a firm basis in their mother-tongue, and that maintenance and development of the first language and concurrent acquisition of a second language enhances cognitive development and self esteem. Using two languages to teach the key areas of the curriculum means that both languages are learned efficiently and that they are both equally valued.

Over the years a large number of books and other resources for teaching in Greek have been accumulated. Many of these have been funded through the school budget. A significant number of resources have been purchased through grants made available by the Victorian Education Department. Some materials and staffing support have been made available by the Greek Government through the Greek Consulate. (Since 1992, a teacher from Greece, funded by the Greek Government, has worked in the Program for a number of hours each week, providing an authentic Greek language model for the students.) A huge number of materials are produced by the teachers and teacher aides at the school.

THE CURRICULUM

In the Bilingual Program, the two languages are incorporated into the subject areas of the curriculum as follows:

Language: Taught at all levels in both English and Greek, which incorporates guided reading, writing and spelling sessions.

Mathematics: Taught in Greek from Preps to Grade 1 and in English from grades 2 to 6. Care is taken to familiarise the infant children with Maths language in English, so that there is a smooth transition into that language in Grade 2.

Integrated Studies: (includes Science, Health, History) Taught through both languages at all levels. For example, same theme or topic is shared between Greek and English or one theme or topic is treated in English and another in Greek.

PMP: (Perceptual Motor Program) Lessons are shared between teachers; therefore lessons are in Greek when taken by the Greek language teacher.

The Perceptual Motor Program is an activities-based program designed to develop fine and gross motor skills and increase confidence in movement. It is a diagnostic program aimed at giving the child experiences in seeing, hearing, touching, processing, making perceptual judgments and reacting through carefully sequenced movement activities.

Other:

Students also follow a weekly Greek Dance lesson taught by a volunteer parent with dance knowledge and experience.

Sometimes students from Preps through to Grade 6 are combined and grouped across age for special events such as Greek Easter Activities, the annual Independence Day Celebration which includes songs, plays, poems and dances, Christmas activities and Carols performances at St Basil's Home for the Aged.

Time Allocation:

Time distribution between Greek and English is as follows but may vary slightly from year to year.

GRADE	GREEK	ENGLISH	TOTAL
Preps-1	10 hours	15 hours	25 hours
Gr 2-6	7.5 hours	17.5 hours	25 hours

**YOU KNOW MORE
GREEK THAN
YOU THINK!!!**

Acoustics
Acronym
Acropolis
Aeroplane
Agora
Allergy
Alphabet
Amnesia
Amphibian
Anaemia
Anaesthetic
Analysis
Anthropology
Arachnophobia
Archaeology
Asthma
Astronaut
Astrology
Athlete
Atom
Batrachophobia
Biology
Chemistry
Chiropractor
Cosmonaut
Decathlon
Democracy
Discus

Economics
Electricity
Geography
Geology
Graphics
Helicopter
History
Isosceles
Marathon
Microphone
Microscope
Monochrome
Music
Octagon
Octopus
Olympics
Organism
Pathology
Paediatrician
Philosophy
Polyphonic
Pseudonym
Synthesis
Telescope
Theosophy
Trigonometry
Xerography
Xylophone
Zoology
Zodiac

