



LANGUAGE ENROLMENTS					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
CHINESE	1481	1728	1687	1891	2077
COOK IS. MAORI	217	192	171	117	342
FRENCH	26128	27614	27284	28245	27197
GERMAN	6593	6696	6623	6251	6085
JAPANESE	19689	18489	18440	18157	17304
KOREAN	69	141	70	45	76
LATIN	2093	2302	2196	2339	1895

**‘The most important thing they are learning is confidence . . . They all have an appreciation of learning about other cultures’**  
 KAY VINCENT, LANGUAGE TEACHER, MANUREWA

Mrs Scott says languages are now a key part of the curriculum so teachers need more money for training, in order to teach them. Because those funds or courses aren't available to all teachers, languages aren't being introduced in all schools.

Any international language can be taught, provided the teacher is motivated: "What principals need to do is have a look around their staffroom and see what other languages are

popular. That is essentially what is happening with Mandarin today."

Euroasia offers language classes to adults, mainly to businesspeople and those wanting to travel. Auckland's growing Chinese population makes Mandarin a good choice for language learners, its director says.

"I've spoken to the people taking classes here at the moment; 60 per cent of them have interests in China and want to learn more about the language and culture.

"At the moment, though, Spanish is very popular. Kiwis love to learn it."

He believes language learning should be compulsory in schools. "It sounds a bit draconian but, compared to the rest of the world, New Zealand is very unusual because it isn't compulsory. We argue that learning a second language makes kids more intelligent.

"There is a general perception that learning another language is good for business, but there are huge outcomes in terms of cultural understanding, especially in resolving cross-cultural issues."

Another perception: everyone in the world is learning English, and there's no need to bother learning another language. "In response to that, no Chinese person would expect you to be fluent, but it determines that you're interested in learning about their culture and values."

**ROD ELLIS**, a professor in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics at the University of Auckland, says offering languages provides a good balance in high school curricula, but believes the case for starting foreign languages in schools is weak.

"The studies that have been done have shown no advantage in starting the teaching of foreign



## GIDDAY

International Languages Week starts on Sunday, August 15. Schools and communities are encouraged to try new languages. Euroasia director Kenneth Leong says many schools are organising activities for students. Everyone can get involved by trying greetings in languages other than their own for each day of the week:

- MONDAY** Ni hao (*Chinese*)
- TUESDAY** Bonjour (*French*)
- WEDNESDAY** Guten Tag (*German*)
- THURSDAY** Konnichiwa (*Japanese*)
- FRIDAY** Buenos dias (*Spanish*)

"It would be much better to put resources into making a good job of teaching languages at secondary school."

But he emphasises the importance of teaching languages. "There are many reasons for learning another language — one is clearly instrumental. A knowledge of another language will increase your job opportunities.

"A second is that it opens up cultural boundaries. Learning another language enhances cultural awareness and prevents you from being narrowly locked into the values and conventions of your own culture."

He'd like to see second-language learning compulsory in high schools. "Learning Languages is one of the designated areas in the new curriculum but it is the only one that is not mandatory. All students at secondary school should take at least one foreign language for the length of their secondary school education."

**THE MINISTRY'S** manager for secondary outcomes, Tony Turnock, says it has no plans to make languages compulsory. "Learning Languages has been added to the curriculum to encourage students to participate actively in New Zealand's diverse multicultural society and in the global community," he says. "Since 2005, there has been an increase in the number of students