



Mentoring Investigation Report

Collaborating to create a Year 8 Chinese program

Background information	
Mentor teacher(s) name: <i>Ruth Charles</i>	
Mentee teacher(s) name: <i>Doreen Yang</i>	
School: <i>Killara High School (Ruth), Turramurra High School (Doreen), NSW</i>	
Language: <i>Chinese</i>	
Year level: <i>Years 8, 9</i>	
School or class context	
<p>Doreen will be running a new Year 8 Chinese course at her school in 2013. We are looking at preparing teaching programs and resources for this purpose. In addition we are looking at using technology effectively in the junior language classroom and at strategies to maintain student engagement. Together we would like to explore specific teaching strategies, for example how to introduce and teach Chinese characters.</p> <p>My teaching load includes a Year 9 class requiring differentiated teaching strategies as it comprises 13 non-background and 6 background speakers of Chinese. Doreen is assisting me to find and create suitable teaching resources to cater for the non background cohort.</p>	
Goals of mentoring program	
<p>To collaboratively create Year 8 teaching programs for 2013.</p> <p>To collate our teaching resources suitable for background speaker students, that can be taught by a non-background speaker teacher.</p> <p>To discuss and share ideas around specific teaching strategies e.g. <i>hanzi</i>/teaching of extended text writing skills.</p> <p>To advocate for Chinese language studies in high schools.</p>	
Design	Process
Collaborative co-mentoring on student engagement strategies.	We initially planned to share skills in student engagement and resources such as programs. This developed into a decision to collaborate to refine and rewrite Stage 4 (Year 7 and 8) programs.

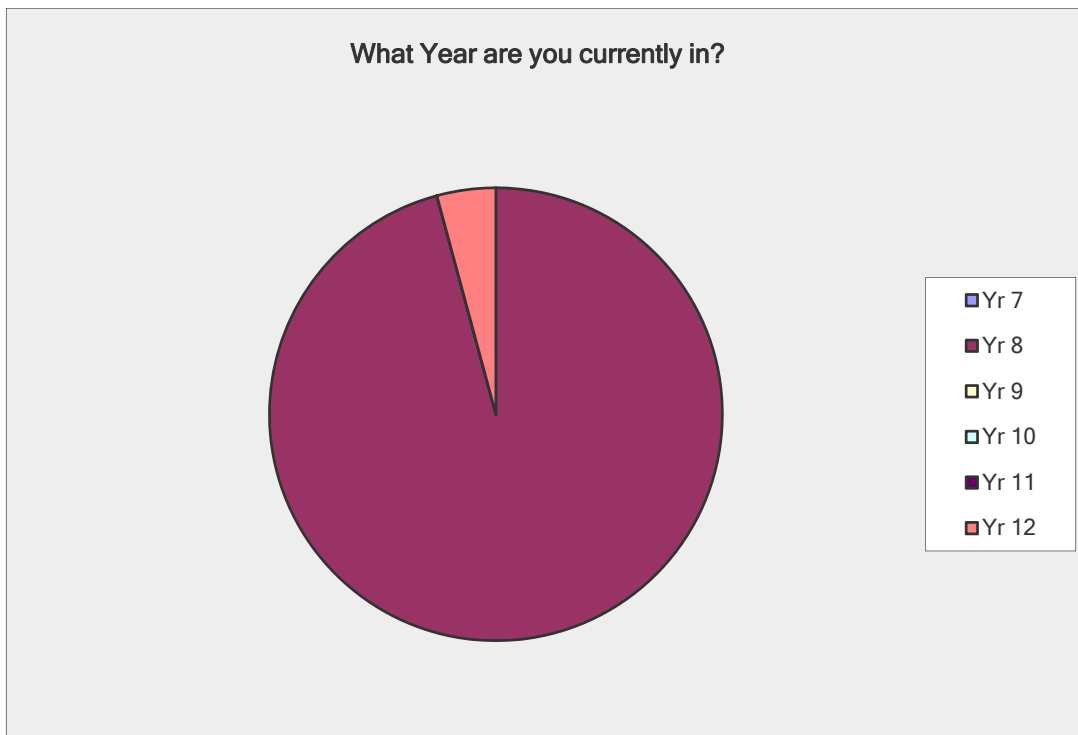
<p>Survey of Year 7 and 8 Chinese language learners- based on quality teaching with questions about learning Chinese in particular. Program evaluation.</p> <p>Co-mentoring on both Year 8 and Year 9 background speakers learning needs.</p> <p>Mentoring each other on using technology in the classroom.</p>	<p>In thinking about how to address student learning needs we decided to survey students.</p>
<p>Implementation</p>	
<p>21 June</p> <p>Visit to Turrumurra High School by my Year 9 class to run six 20 minute seminars for Year 8 students about why they chose to learn Chinese, what they enjoy about it etc. My students prepared and ran the sessions which I felt were successful in terms of sharing their enthusiasm for this elective.</p> <p>10 July</p> <p>Meeting with Doreen to discuss the development of Year 8 programs and to share ideas about including technologies in languages lessons.</p> <p>Late July</p> <p>Follow-up session to compare newly created programs (2 each) and my new non-background speaker program.</p> <p>Early August</p> <p>Additional follow-up session with a focus on how to introduce and teach <i>hanzi</i>.</p>	<p>Year 8 students responded positively to my Year 9 student session leaders who were able to present their own experiences as teenagers learning Chinese and sharing their own perspectives and reflections. They had a lot more impact than a 40 something teacher, no matter how enthusiastic!</p> <p>Ruth to work on programs for terms 1 and 2. Doreen to work on programs for terms 3 and 4.</p>
<p>Data gathered (see Appendix)</p>	
<p>We presented a series of seminars to Year 8 students about the value of learning Chinese at high school.</p> <p>We conducted a survey of Years 7 and 8 students to better understand their learning experiences in Chinese classes. The survey is based on quality teaching principles and included questions specifically about learning Chinese as a second language.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and evaluation</p>	
<p>The seminars revealed that students perceive Chinese to be a difficult subject- more difficult than the alternative languages on offer. As teachers of Chinese we need to navigate a path for these learners to succeed in the challenge of Chinese. We need to refine what we believe to be the content needs of learners and focus on outcomes and what students can actually achieve- such as developing skills that students can use readily.</p> <p>Students enjoy autonomy in their learning- they appreciate being given the responsibility to choose learning tasks and will follow these up more readily than those which are imposed on them.</p>	

Interpreting the data

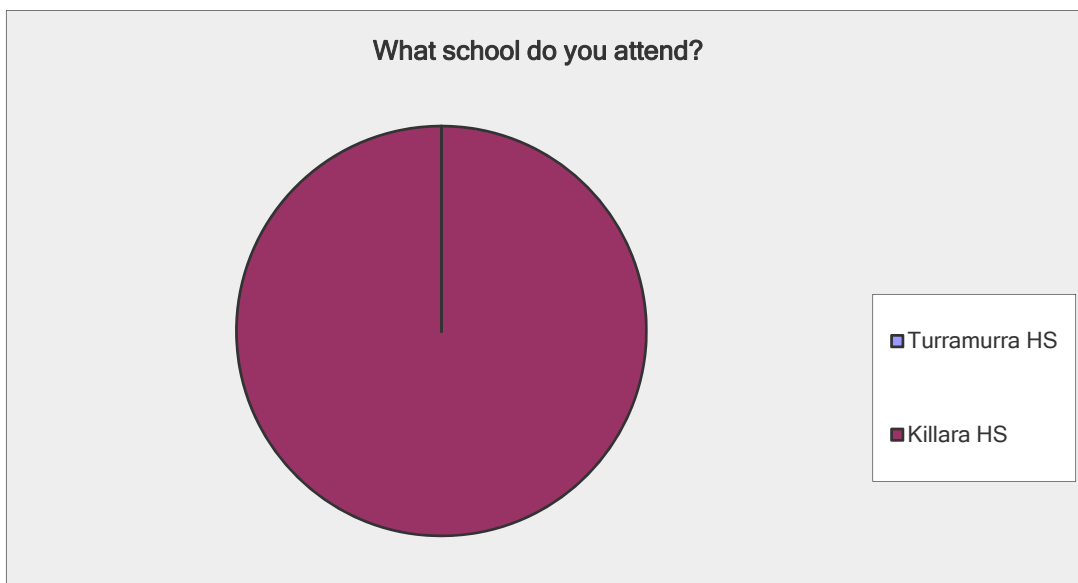
The survey suggests students enjoy autonomy in their learning and as such respond well to open-ended assignment questions which allow them to explore areas that interest them personally. Creative and IT based assessment and classroom tasks are favoured over traditional tasks.

APPENDIX: Student survey-selected results

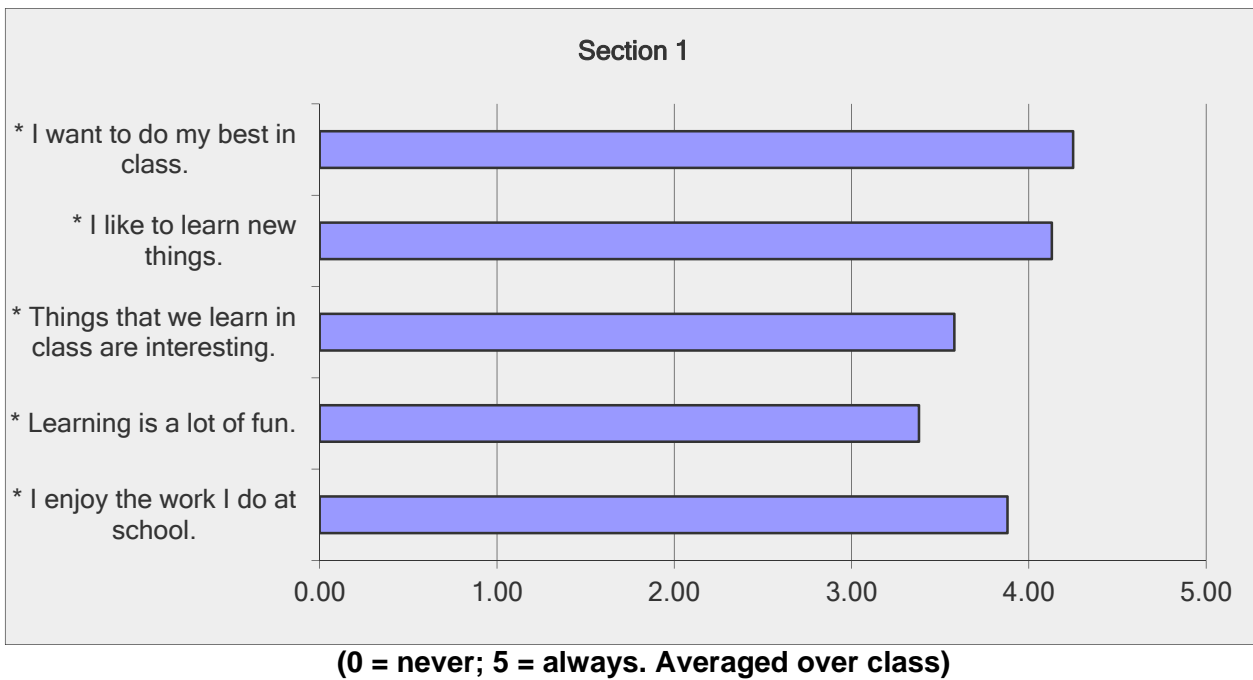
Question 1: What year level are you in?



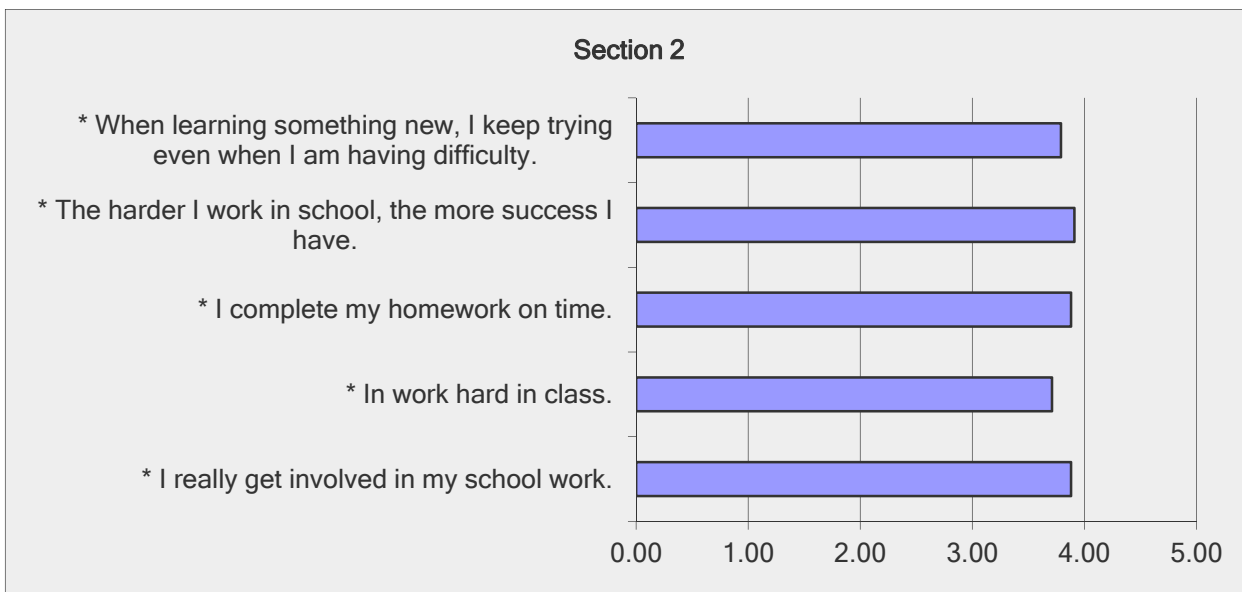
Question 2: What school do you attend?



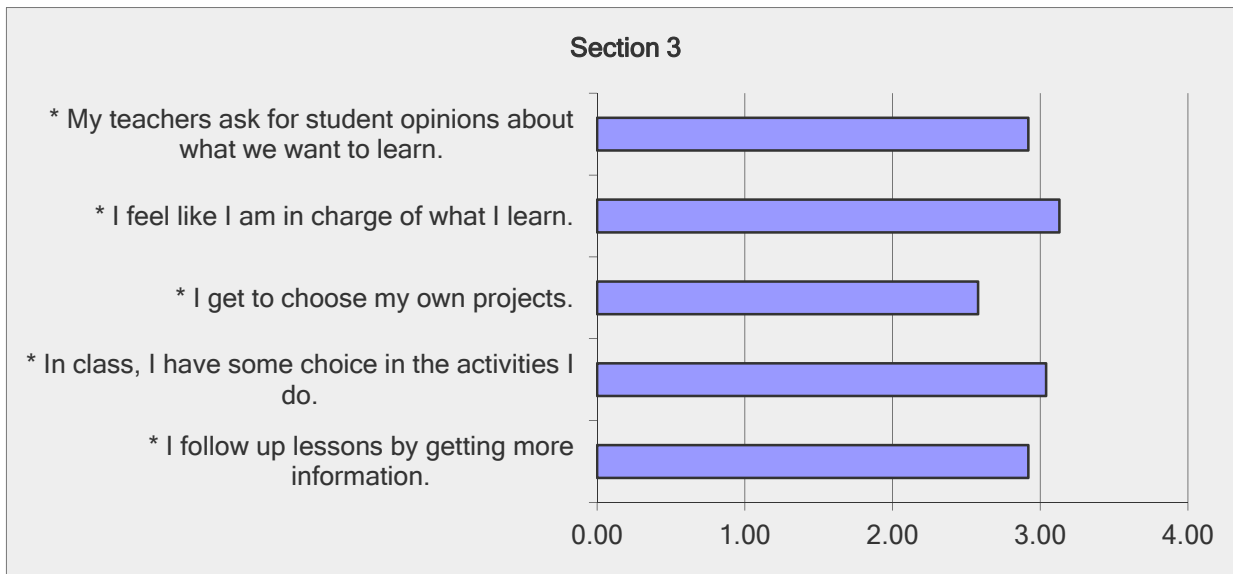
Question 3: Opinions about learning Chinese



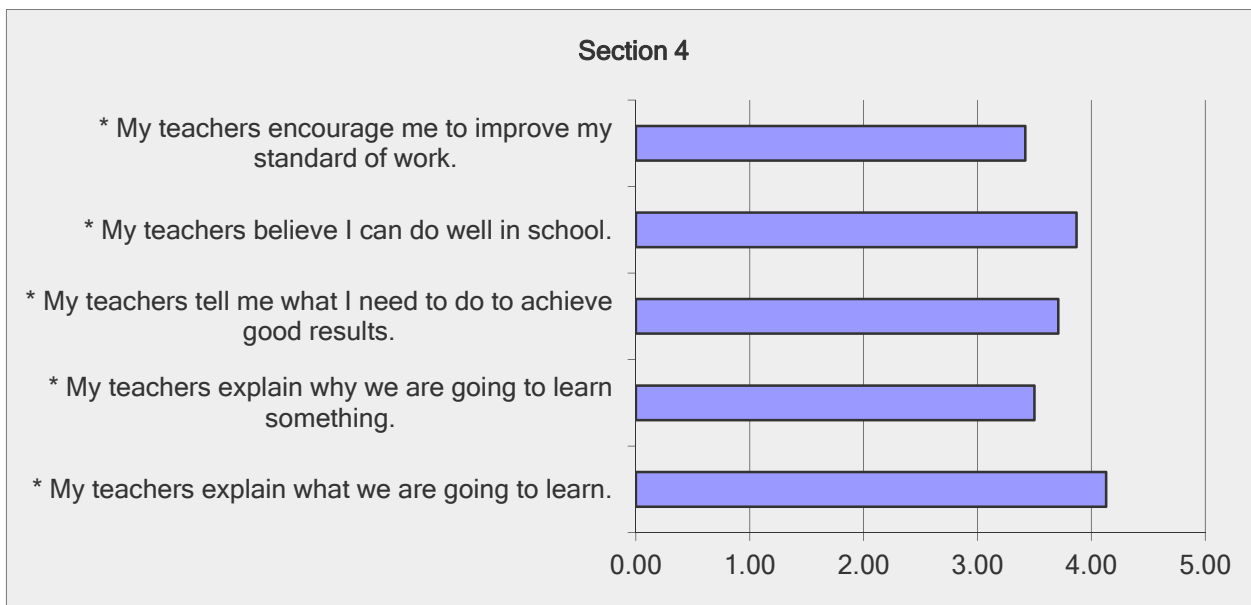
Question 4: Opinions about learning Chinese



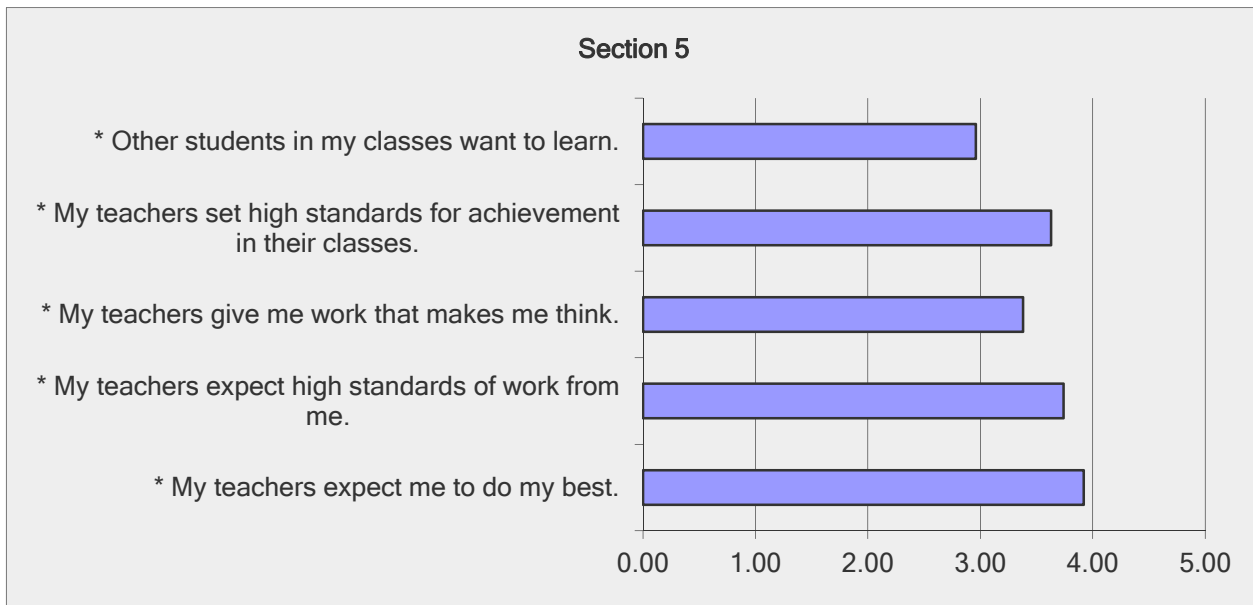
Question 5: Opinions about learning Chinese



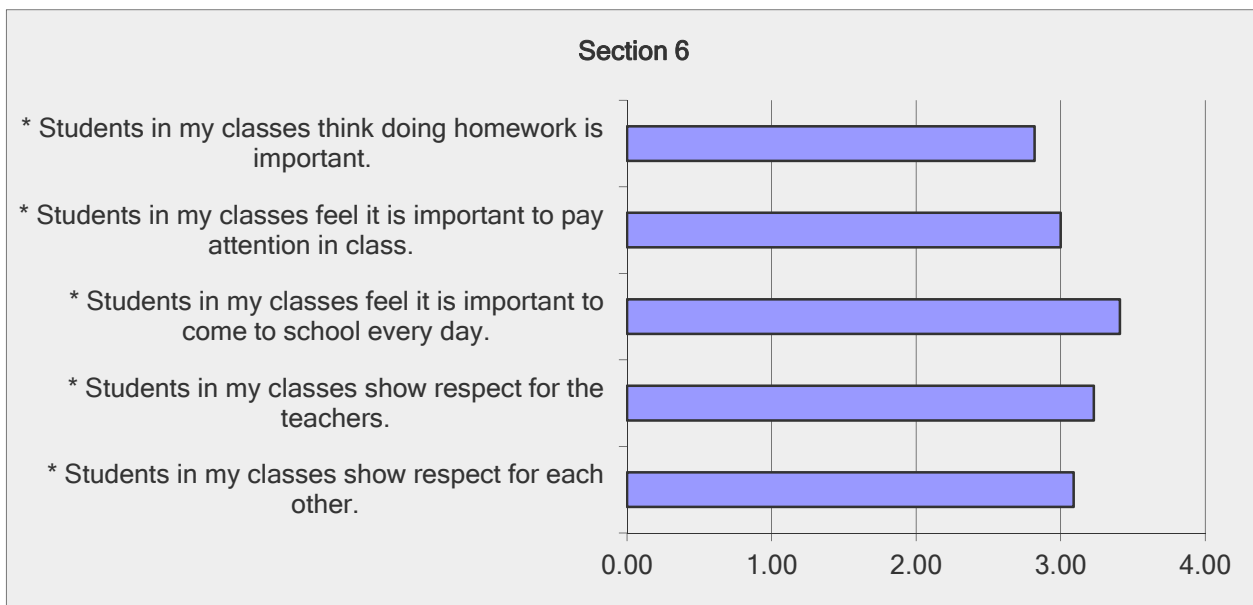
Question 6: Opinions about learning Chinese



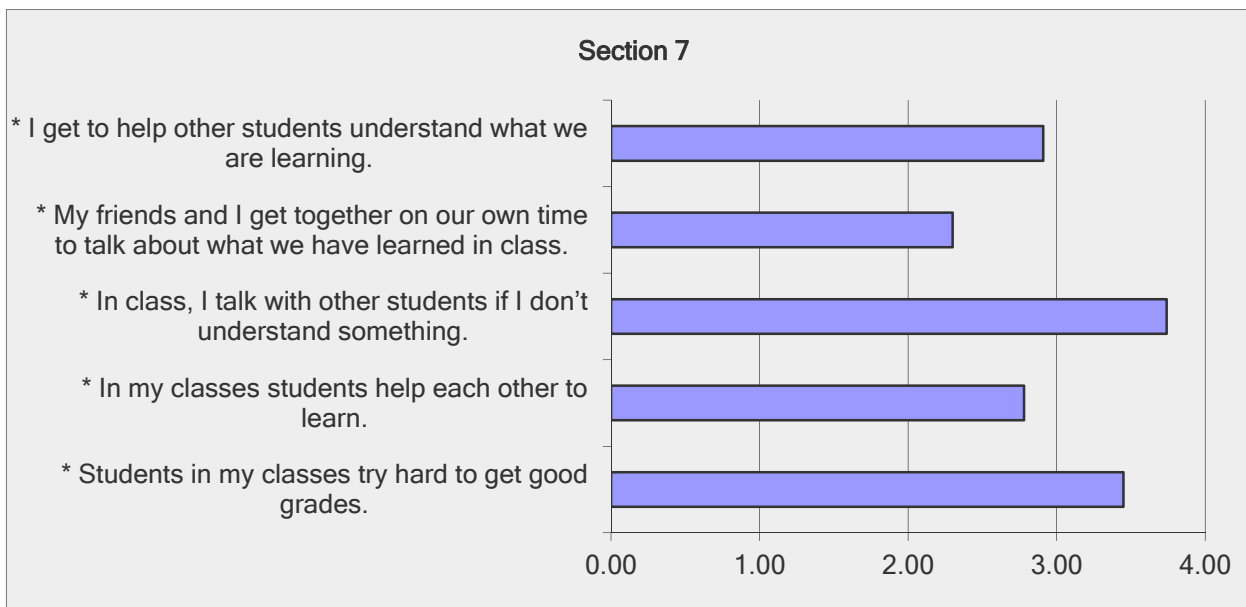
Question 7: Opinions about learning Chinese



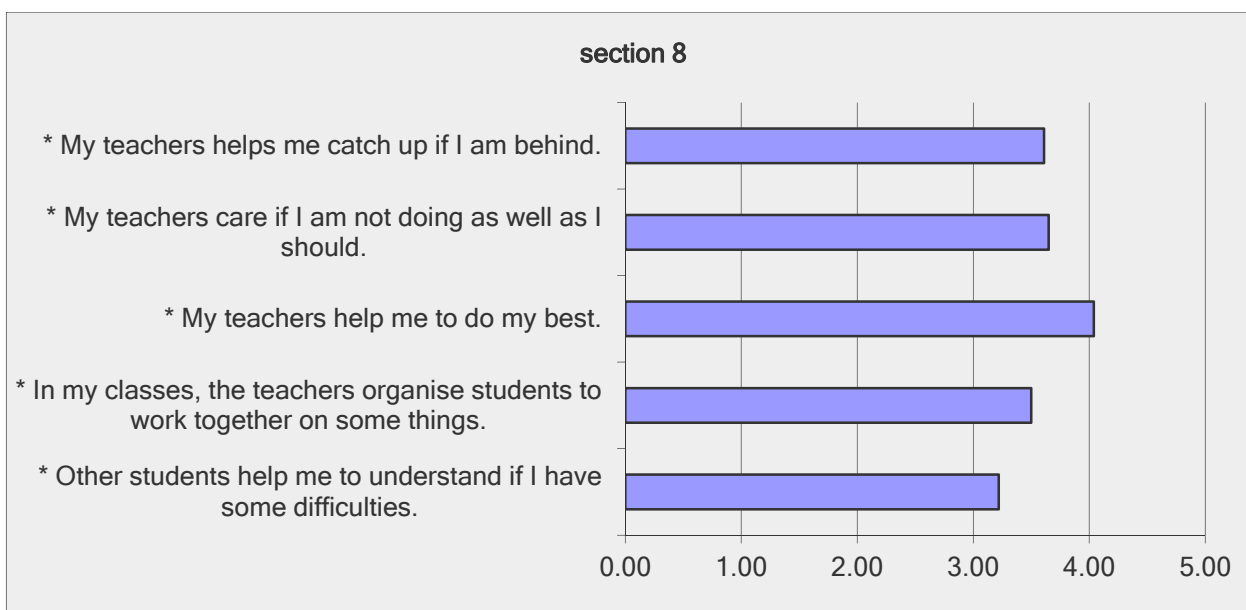
Question 8: Opinions about learning Chinese



Question 9: Opinions about learning Chinese



Question 10: Opinions about learning Chinese



APPENDIX 2: Log of mentoring meetings (excerpt)

Date	Activity	Discussion points	Follow- up
22 May Coffee shop Gordon 3.30-4.30pm	Meeting to discuss Language Morning events at Turrumurra HS on June 21	Proposed format for the morning's activities. Suggested activities and who will attend. Discussion of suitable audio visual resources for the event. Purpose is to present Chinese language option as engaging and relevant to Year 8 students. Suggested songs 'Ni hao ma?' and 'Duibuqi'- both available on YouTube. Discussed other internet-based activities for Years 7 and 8 language learning. Value of songs and rhymes to make new vocabulary learning easier.	Ruth to send Doreen Year 7 resources especially web-based for 'greeting' 'numbers' and 'general knowledge'. Ruth to confirm with Doreen the names of students attending and the finalised program for the 6 x 20 minutes sessions to be run by Year 9 students on June 21.
21 June Turrumurra HS Language Morning at THS. Attended by Ruth and 8 Year 9 students	KHS students run 6 x 20 minutes seminars for groups of Year 8 students.	What we enjoy about learning Chinese. Some songs that we have learned in Chinese which make learning new vocabulary easy and memorable. Playing 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' using facts about China and Chinese language questions.	Ruth to send Doreen a link to the 'Millionaire' create your own quiz site for further use in other classes.
10 July (school holidays) Doreen's place 10.30 am to 1pm	Discuss programming for THS Year 8 2013. Discuss programming for Ruth's Year 9 background speaker cohort. Discuss strategies for engagement of background speakers	Look at existing programs for Year 7 and Ruth's current Year 8 programs to develop an up-to-date and relevant program of work for Year 8 in 2013. We looked at a wide range of resources including core textbook (<u>Ni Hao1</u>) and supporting texts such as <u>Learn Chinese with Me</u> , <u>Chinese Made Easy</u> , <u>Hanyu for Beginning Students</u> . Also considered supporting resources such as audio visual resources/web based resources/using web 2 tools in class to stimulate the learning environment. Showed Doreen how to create a PowerPoint presentation. Discussion of programming 'assessment for learning' activities and assignments to support class learning. This led to discussion of other cultural events that Chinese teachers can incorporate into teaching and learning programs such as cooking lessons/Chinese Culture and Conversation Club in the Chinese classroom at lunchtimes/special events such as Chinese New Year or other festival/guest speakers to visit the	Ruth and Doreen to rewrite 2 programs each: Ruth terms 1 and 2 and Doreen: terms 3 and 4. These should incorporate the elements of language and engagement that we have discussed. Ruth to send Doreen copies of assignments for junior years/ideas for games in the classroom/ links to 'digital dialects' and 'Chinese hour' web sites. Details of using film segment in the classroom e.g. Shrek- choose a scene from this film to teach as a Chinese dialogue. Doreen to send Ruth the listening comprehension works sheets from various Chinese culture documentaries. This is

		<p>school/workshops for Gong Fu or similar.</p> <p>Doreen suggested some texts for use with the background speakers group <u>50 Topics on Chinese Culture</u> and <u>Reading into a New China Vol 1</u>. which will extend Chinese language awareness and also English expression. The aim is to maintain students' Chinese language ability so that they are able to undertake either Heritage or Background Speaker HSC courses in the future.</p>	<p>useful as a tool for incorporating literacy outcomes into Chinese programs.</p>
12 July	Email Ruth to Doreen	Seeking assistance with checking a sample answer for Year 11 continuers Chinese.	
15 July	Email Doreen to Ruth	Draft of term 1 program for Year 8	
21 July Ruth's place 5.30 pm - 6pm	Swap resources- Year 9 b/s texts multiple copies loaned to Ruth and videos and <u>Easy Peasy Chinese</u> to Doreen	<p>Doreen raised the possibility of working together on a Study Tour to China September 2013. Discussions to follow. Agreed in principle.</p> <p>Swapping resources.</p>	
1-10 August	Emails containing resources attachments and discussion of programs ideas and progress	'Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures'- suggested areas for focus view of decision to rework Year 8 programs	Agree on areas of importance for the present project
11 August	Email with survey monkey details	Suggest we both use the survey to better gain understanding of what we want to aim to achieve in reworking the programs.	
15 August	Conduct survey at KHS and at THS		Look at the results and how these can affect the programs

Reflective summary

This investigation has allowed me to develop a valuable professional relationship through which I have pursued collaboration with Chinese language teaching colleagues.

Promotion of language learning has occurred both in and between schools, and has been shown through this investigation to be really valuable. The more we interact as professionals and view each other's work, the more opportunity we have to critically analyse what we ourselves are doing in the classroom and in the wider professional sphere.

Professional collaboration is essential to developing skills and to reflecting on what we have done. We need to reassess pedagogies used in the classroom and refine these over time to meet the needs of our students.

Second language learners considering Chinese as an elective are often anxious about the unknown aspects of learning an Asian scripted language with 4 tones! We need to be sensitive to these feelings and pace ourselves in terms of language delivery. We need to decide if the focus is going to be vocabulary, tones, communication or even characters at any one time. Therefore pedagogy utilised in the junior high school classroom requires constant reflection and refinement.

The use of questionnaires or surveys can assist in identifying student perceptions and learning needs and preferences. As teachers we need to recognise the learning requirements of 'gen y' and even 'gen z' learners and if these differ from what we are presently engaged in, we need to refine our approach. Changes may be subtle- more student choice of learning activity or assignment topic, or greater use of IT tools to present work.

Working in a collaborative, reflective partnership has been a valuable opportunity to pursue the development of professional relationships and to reassess and improve my own professional agency.