



Building Demand - What Works

The Study of Asian languages

>> from students

Building Demand: providing students with pathways

Headstart to Indonesian on the Sunshine Coast

Headstart to Indonesian has created a completely new pathway to the tertiary study of Indonesian for secondary students and teachers.

In 2011, 60 scholarships were offered to Year 11 and 12 students (and ten to teachers) to allow them to study two Indonesian courses over two semesters at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) in 2012. The course starts at beginners' level and requires:

- >> three hours per week on campus;
- >> two hours per week online;
- >> homework.

On successful completion of the course, students will be guaranteed entry to most USC courses, receive two course credits towards their degree and have this study recorded on the Queensland Certificate of Education.

Context

Only two schools on the Sunshine Coast currently teach Indonesian, and they report difficulty maintaining class numbers at Years 11 and 12, although this situation applies equally to the study of other languages in the area.

Chinese is also offered at only a few schools, while Japanese is the most common Asian language studied.

Preparing the ground

Under these circumstances, USC staff knew that a range of promotional activities would be required to increase interest in the opportunity being offered. To that end, a range of promotional material was distributed to schools in the first half of 2011. Then, in the second half on 2011, *Headstart to Indonesian* was promoted by USC staff through:

- >> visits to 27 schools to participate in information sessions of various kinds with students;
- >> language taster workshops and informal talks at other USC events held for the community, teachers and/or students.

At these events the life and career benefits of learning Indonesian were outlined, as well as the obvious benefit of a head start to university studies and the fact that the courses were free to students and teachers.

In the end, 43 students applied for the 60 scholarships available, and 37 were accepted. The number of scholarships available to teachers could then be increased to 20.

Headstart to Indonesian: A new pathway to tertiary Indonesian

Headstart to Indonesian is funded by the University of the Sunshine Coast and NALSSP. The program provides Year 11 and 12 students with the opportunity to study beginners Indonesian; while at the same time gaining guaranteed access to university and course credits. A very flexible pattern of delivery means that chances of student success are maximised.



'After only six weeks, most students are palpably developing interactive skills, have a sizeable vocabulary, deeper understanding of the basic grammatical structure of Indonesian language and incidentally are learning much about Indonesian culture.'

Course Coordinator,
Headstart to Indonesian, QLD

About AEF

The Asia Education Foundation provides teachers, education leaders and school communities with innovative programs, curriculum resources and networks to support the achievement of Asia literacy for every young Australian.

AEF is a joint activity of Asialink at the University of Melbourne and Education Services Australia. It receives core funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

AEF leverages funding to support Asia literacy in Australian schools from a broad range of government, philanthropic and corporate partners in Australia and Asia.

Dealing with issues

Despite the best efforts of USC staff, some schools did not respond to contact being made, and it is likely that many students remained unaware of the opportunity being offered. Moreover, even where students expressed high levels of interest, a number of barriers became apparent, the most prominent being:

- >> the increased demand of studying an extra subject on top of an existing Year 11 or 12 workload;
- >> difficulties of being granted school approval for students and teachers to attend university during school hours;
- >> distance and means of travel to USC.

As the semester progressed 13 secondary students and one teacher withdrew from the program due to a work overload.

Steps have been taken to deal with some of these issues, but any result in terms of enrolments will not be seen until 2013. One of these steps involved working towards being able to offer a Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) approved alternative pathway to Senior Indonesian. However, the required work program for students to do this varies too much from the USC courses offered and would be too difficult to implement.

Flexible delivery

To capture and maintain interest in the program, *Headstart to Indonesian* is delivered as flexibly as possible.

Students come from as far north as Gympie and as far South as Bribie Island. To bridge that gap and accommodate varying timetables, the course is delivered as follows:

- >> 2 hours of face-to-face tutorials per week at venues in Gympie, Bribie Island and the USC Sippy Downs campus;
- >> 1 hour of online multimedia activities per week;
- >> 1 hour live online tutorial per week. Students can choose from six time options;
- >> 1 hour of face-to-face lectures delivered twice a week at USC. One is repeated live online in Bribie Island and online to students in Gympie.

These measures are showing results in terms of student retention with a total of 43 teachers and secondary students from 17 schools in the Sunshine Coast region studied Indonesian under the initiative in Semester 1, 2012.

A number of cultural days are planned for later in 2012 to promote Indonesian culture and language learning, including USC experience days and Indonesian language immersion days. It is hoped that these and other promotional activities will not only help retain existing students, but build the foundation for a strong cohort of students in 2013.

Student progress

Anecdotal evidence from the course coordinator indicates that at this stage students are progressing well:

'After only six weeks, most students are palpably developing interactive skills, have a sizeable vocabulary, deeper understanding of the basic grammatical structure of Indonesian language and incidentally are learning much about Indonesian culture.'

Conclusion

Determination to succeed and a willingness to provide flexible options have seen the implementation of a demand-building initiative that provides completely new Indonesian language learning pathways for students on the Sunshine Coast.

Related links

- >> [Headstart to Indonesia page in USC](#)
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Contact Asia Education Foundation P: +61 3 8344 4800 E: aef-support@asialink.unimelb.edu.au