

Immersion program for Indonesian language teachers

Maintaining fluency, extending vocabulary and grammatical skills, and keeping on top of social and cultural developments is crucial for primary and secondary school teachers of Indonesian.

This project provided teachers with an opportunity to refresh and practice their language skills in a supportive environment.

It is difficult to maintain fluency in a language when isolated from other speakers and learners. Language maintenance is crucial for all learners of other languages, but it is particularly important for schoolteachers of Indonesian in Victoria. The Victorian Department of Education and Training commissioned Monash Indonesian Studies to run five weekends of full Indonesian language immersion for primary and secondary school language teachers in Victoria.

The aim of this pilot project was to provide teachers with an opportunity to practice their language skills in a supportive environment. This was achieved with teachers engaged in full immersion, speaking and hearing nothing but Indonesian for two days. Over 5 residential weekends in 4 locations across metropolitan and regional Victoria, teachers practiced and extended their speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. Each weekend focussed on a particular topic relevant to contemporary Indonesian culture and society, providing individuals at different skill levels the tools to interact with each other and extend their knowledge individually, whilst using materials adaptable to classroom use. In addition, participants in the immersion program were encouraged to develop a network of colleagues, for future practice and material sharing.

Boosting Australia's Indonesian language capacity is crucial. Indonesian is recognised by the Australian Government as a key language for trade, diplomatic relations and engagement with the fastest growing democracy. Victorian teachers play a critical role in the development of the language skills of the next generation.

Potentially this project has the capacity to improve teaching quality and student learning outcomes, as demonstrated by participant immersion feedback:

'The variety of activities was awesome and revisiting vocabulary through different activities for reinforcement was particularly useful, instead of just jumping from topic to topic without consolidating. The different types of activities, whilst not presented as a teaching method, clearly were, and they have given me so many useful ideas on how to present ideas to my students.'

'A wonderful balance of activities that engaged all language learning skills. I got a lot of wonderful ideas for my classes, but this week-end also addressed a lot of gaps in my knowledge of Indonesian celebrations and ceremonies and has equipped me with manageable ways to teach these in the classroom'.

CHIEF INVESTIGATORS

[Associate Professor Beatrice Trefalt](#)

Dr Paul Thomas

Ms Yacinta Kurniasih

Funded by

Victorian Department of Education and Training

CONTACTS

Ms Vanja Radojevic

Partnerships and Business Development Manager
Faculty of Arts
+61 3 990 55445
vanja.radojevic@monash.edu

A/Prof Beatrice Trefalt

Japanese Studies
Faculty of Arts
beatrice.trefalt@monash.edu