

Student Feedback - 2016 Yearlong Languages Courses Report March 2017

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Course Coordination Team

"Learning a new language at any stage in one's life can be a challenge! As a language learner you have to be prepared to have-a-go and take risks....and for this you need to be in a learning environment which will support and encourage you, an environment where you feel safe. I have met some wonderful people through my Spanish classes- we support and encourage each other, and more importantly, we reflect on how far we have come on our Spanish learning journey. The combination of our tutor and the class members creates a motivating and inspiring teaching and learning environment"

Summary Findings

During 2016 written feedback was reintroduced for yearlong courses, of which the Language courses comprised 46% of the yearlong program. Students in 31 Foreign Language courses (French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish) were electronically surveyed in November, with 283 members providing feedback, representing 74% of all enrolled students. As in the earlier 2010 survey, student feedback was extremely positive about the tutors/leaders professionalism in running the course, their enjoyment and many benefits derived.

Multiple factors prompted students to enrol in their particular language course. Respondents indicated that they enrolled predominantly because they wanted to deepen their skills and knowledge of the particular language and culture (77%), had a general interest in the area (48%) or the course was relevant to a personal goal or plan, such as travel or better communication with family and friends (40%). In this respect, language students appeared more focused in their enrolment purposes than the Humanities students surveyed in July 2016.

Importantly, with few exceptions the course very well met or exceeded their expectations (88%). Students reported significant intellectual and social benefits from their participation in the course. The vast majority (96%) nominated the knowledge gained in the language and culture as an important outcome, with 68% also specifying the skills acquired and confidence gained in using these (45%). Half (50%) reported being motivated and inspired by the tutor/other students and

significantly over a half (55%) identified the companionship derived from course participation as a specific benefit be it within the class or friendships beyond.

These core benefits to students clearly stemmed from the quality of the program delivered by individual tutors and group leaders. In particular students most valued the tutors dedication, extensive knowledge, skills and flexibility in running the course; plus the supportive class atmosphere and camaraderie developed throughout the year that created a safe enjoyable learning environment.

In rating specific aspects of course delivery, students strongly endorsed the tutor/leader's knowledge and enthusiasm (95%), their providing a supportive and friendly atmosphere for learning (93%), and encouraging student participation (88%). Respondents strongly agreed that sessions were well-organised (82%), with relevant course content (84%), were presented in a clear and interesting way (81%) and included useful learning activities, texts and resources (81%). In this regard Language students gave higher ratings overall than the Humanities students, and especially in those aspects most related to the organisation, presentation and activities/resources used in the course.

Where students suggested changes to the course, these were largely related to increasing the diversity and currency of resources and activities included in sessions, and a greater emphasis on conversation and interactive exercises. Various suggestions were also made about new and additional Language courses, as well as new course topics in other categories, thereby providing guidance to tutors and the Course Coordination Team in further development of the program.

On this basis, we can conclude that the 2016 yearlong Foreign Languages program was well run along lines that support learning for mature age students and enabled many students to achieve their study goals. It would appear that the 2012 Foreign Languages Policy introduced in 2013 has gone a considerable way in enabling members greater access and progression in their language studies, although the great popularity of language courses and growth in membership continues to challenge this. Adjustments to enrolment procedures for 2017 aim to address these issues.

Indeed, students voiced their appreciation of the diversity and excellence of the course program and overall U3A Melbourne activities which achieved both the educational and social goals of the organisation. Many acknowledged the commitment and professionalism of tutors, leaders and behind-the-scenes volunteers who created and supported these opportunities.

"U3A is a brilliant idea and an enormously valuable educational and social resource for the whole of metro Melbourne, professionally delivered at almost no cost to the City. As metro Melbourne has grown into a world city, and with a growing population of alert, intelligent elders, the importance of U3A Melbourne City could hardly be exaggerated"

Introduction

Providing a high quality, diverse and stimulating education program for members is central to our U3A mission. In 2010 U3A Melbourne City introduced a policy of written student feedback, with the 2010 survey indicating high satisfaction with the yearlong courses surveyed, and useful suggestions for tutors and course coordinators/administrators regarding future courses.

Since 2011 the focus for student feedback has been our short course program. So in 2016 it was deemed timely to again seek the views of yearlong students. This report documents the perceptions and comments of students enrolled in Foreign Language courses which accounted for 46% of our overall yearlong course program.

Implementation

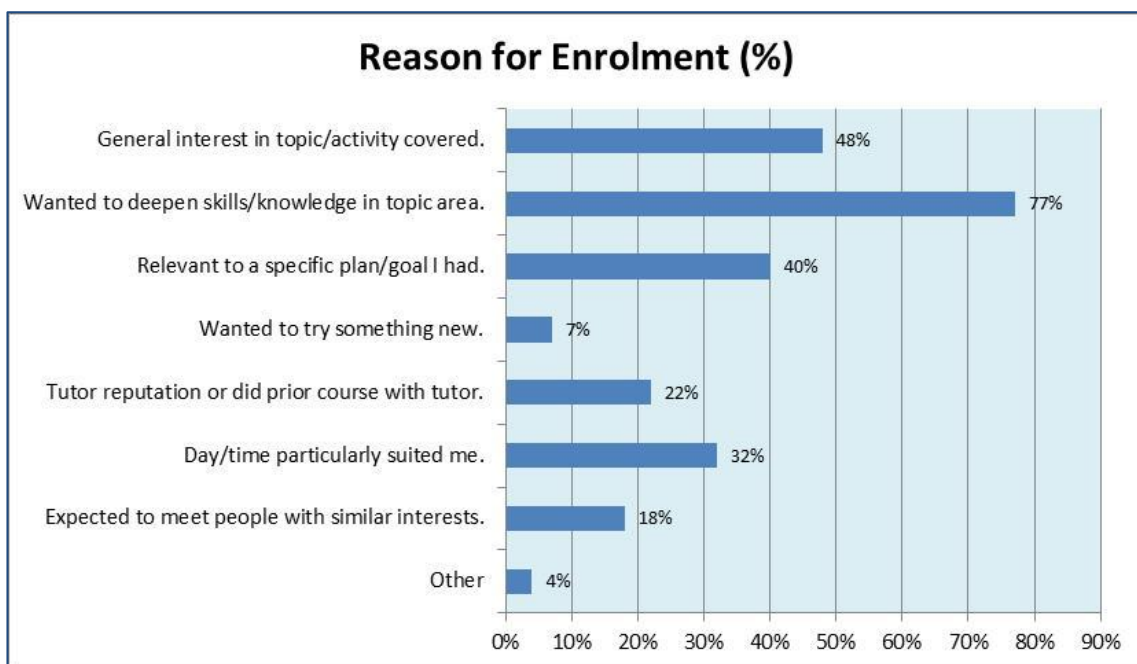
Following tutor input to the revised survey form, students in 31 Languages courses (French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish) were surveyed in November 2016 (see Appendix course list). An email including a direct link to the electronic feedback form on *Survey Monkey* was sent via *MyU3A* to all students who had an email address (95% enrolled students).

Feedback was received from 283 students, of whom only 30% chose to respond anonymously. As such comment was provided by 74% of the total enrolment in the Foreign Languages courses, and a higher 77% of the 366 enrolled students with email. This participation rate provides a very sound basis for analysis and interpretation.

Key Findings

Reasons for enrolling in their course

At the outset, students were asked why they enrolled in their particular course, with most nominating two or more reasons.



As can be seen from the graph above the majority of students enrolled in their course because they wanted to deepen their skills/knowledge in that language (77%) or had a general interest in the language and culture covered (48%).

Those seeking to deepen skills/knowledge in a particular language commented on a general wish to maintain, consolidate or progress prior studies; to focus upon a specific aspect such as grammar, conversation, history and culture; and to do so in a regular, affordable and supportive class room environment.

- *"I was in an Italian conversation class in 2015 but wanted to get to grips with the grammar"*
- *"U3A provides an opportunity to improve my language learning skills and provides a not-too-demanding class situation with friendly peer group"*

Students with a more general interest in the course indicated a longstanding wish to learn that or another language, and fascination with the specific language and culture.

- *"I always wanted to learn another language, especially French as my grandmother was French"*
- *"I love the sound of the Italian language... the food, the music - especially opera"*

A sizeable number of students (40%) enrolled in their course because it was relevant to a personal goal or plan. Many wanted to improve their language skills and knowledge of the culture before travelling; to better communicate with family and friends; or enhance family research and work activities. Others chose to study a foreign language for the brain stimulation and post-retirement transition provided.

- *"I travel very frequently to South America so I need to be able to converse in Spanish"*
- *"My son and his family live in Japan and I wished to develop some knowledge of the Japanese language, especially conversational Japanese"*
- *"Wanted to keep the brain active after retirement and to be part of a social group with common interest"*

For nearly a third (32%) the scheduled time was an important factor in choosing the course.

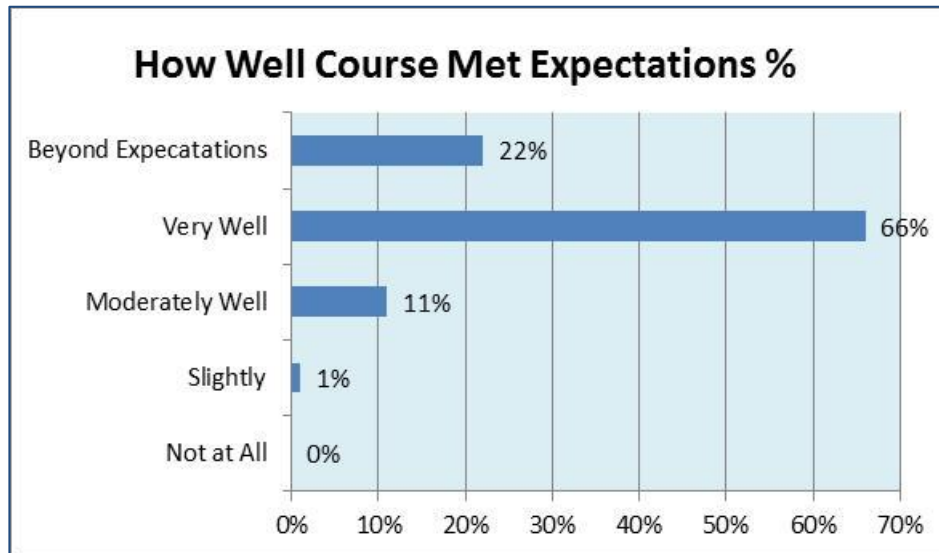
- *"This course was at a level, time and place to suit my need very well"*
- *"As I am retired and live in a country town, daytime travel rather than evening suited me best"*

The tutor's reputation or knowledge of the tutor from attending previous courses was an important motivator for 22% of students. Some were particularly attracted by the opportunity to learn with a native speaker.

- *"I chose this class because it is wonderful to have the opportunity to study with a native French speaker"*
- *"I participated in the tutors Beginners class last year and loved it. I found him to be an excellent teacher and was happy to continue in his class"*

How well their course met students' expectations

Given their various reasons for joining the course, students were asked (Q5) how well it met their expectations. Overall students gave high endorsement to the course attended.



A combined 88% of respondents stated that the course *met very well* or *went beyond* their expectations. A further 11% indicated it matched their expectations moderately well, with only 1% giving it a lesser rating.

What students most liked about their course

Students were asked an open question about what they most liked about the course (Q6). Of the 268 commenting, a handful said "everything" or "nothing", while most nominated multiple aspects of the course, providing a range of factors for grouping and analysis.

A very important aspect, nominated by nearly half the respondents (48%), was the particular tutor/leader, with students commenting on the tutor's inspiring passion for the language and culture; their knowledge and teaching skills; their flexibility to accommodate various student levels and interests; their sensitivity and encouragement of individuals; their dedication and time spent in preparation of and running sessions. Several noted the value of having a native speaker as their tutor.

- *"The tutor is a professional and skilled teacher who tailors the teaching to our various levels of knowledge"*
- *"It is easy to learn with the excellent teacher we have. He is passionate about the subject and it inspires his students to keep learning"*
- *"I am continually astonished at the amount of time and work the tutor must put in to develop the program and organise the varied activities that keep the members of the group interested and stimulated throughout every lesson "*

Clearly another important aspect of what students liked about their course was the supportive non-judgemental class atmosphere and camaraderie developed between students and tutors - some 33% students commenting in this vein. They said this friendly atmosphere fostered learning; grew confidence and participation; and friendships among people with similar interests. Some noted that being at the same skill level, attending together for several years, having small classes and "like-minded" people all enhanced camaraderie and interaction between students.

- *"I enjoyed the friendliness and camaraderie that promoted learning"*
- *"I love the relaxed, friendly and comfortable environment of the class. All the students are there to learn and we have similar interests in the language and travelling"*
- *"Mainly the people. They all bring different things to the class, which is all to our benefit"*
- *"The group worked very well: people participated enthusiastically in the sessions and before long we had a regular routine of having a coffee after our class"*

Over a quarter (28%) of students more specifically identified the teaching style and organisation of the course as an important factor. Students liked tutors well organised, structured yet flexible approach to teaching; the balance and stimulation of a varied session focus and ways of learning; delivery at an appropriate pace, with clear explanations and revision; the encouragement of participation but with skilled management of that process. Several noted the value of co-tutoring in enhancing their learning.

- *"I loved the flow of the course. It was logical, well structured with practical application to using the language"*
- *"As a late life learner I like the teaching style which is a combination of revising grammar as needed, speaking and listening on a variety of topics, and careful correction of pronunciation"*
- *"An excellent teacher who uses a variety of different materials to keep the class interesting and who is also very good at managing students who drift off the topic or talk too much"*
- *"Our tutor encouraged everyone to be involved and was not critical if members had not been able to complete all the work."*

Some (15%) specifically identified the various class activities and resources provided as aspects they liked most about the course, contributing to their overall learning and enjoyment. Students particularly liked the opportunity for conversation and interactive class exercises; the variety of CDs/ internet links used in lessons; homework, presentations, reading and dictation exercises; movies, websites or other references for later follow-up.

- *"This year we used the computer for listening exercises, grammar and quizzes and there is a great variety of material on line"*
- *"The course has a strong grounding in grammar which the tutor mixes well with dialogue, comprehension, poetry and music"*
- *"The warm up at the beginning of class, with an exchange of information regarding our various activities, cultural pursuits etc in the week preceding"*
- *"Tutor provides us with links to websites that would help our learning. We are encouraged to immerse ourselves in the language by watching French films which she gave us information about their screening"*

Over a fifth students (22%) indicated the course content was central to their enjoyment, some commenting on the range of topics/themes covered throughout the year, while others nominated a

specific aspect such as the particular literature read, facts given about the culture, or the grammar covered.

- *"I found reading the selected literature challenging and rewarding. The short stories were of great variety, and the level and style of Italian varies from story to story"*
- *"Mostly liked the varied topics discussed- from current affairs to German literature both modern and classical, with odd light subjects thrown in"*

The remaining comments related to various factors, such as appropriate class venue, and joy in actually making progress in the language through their attendance .

- *"I learned the language!"*
- *"I enjoy the challenge of learning and the language is one I have always wanted to study"*

Quality of course delivery

To obtain a more comprehensive overview of the course quality, students were asked how well their course rated on key aspects of class delivery indicative of good educational practice for mature learners. (Q8, Table below, N=268)

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable
Tutor/leader knowledgeable & enthusiastic	95%	5%		
Well organised sessions	82%	16%	1%	1%
Friendly, supportive atmosphere	93%	7%		
Relevant content	84%	15%		1%
Clear, interesting presentation	81%	16%		3%
Student participation & interaction encouraged	88%	11%		1%
Included useful learning activities, texts and resources	81%	15%	1%	3%
Right length of session	89%	9%	2%	
Suitable venue & equipment	78%	20%	1%	1%

Of the 268 students completing this question, 95% strongly agreed the tutor/leader was knowledgeable and enthusiastic, while 93% strongly agreed that their course had a *friendly, supportive atmosphere*, and *student participation and interaction was encouraged* (88%).

Sessions were judged to be the *right length* (89%), held in a *suitable venue* with *suitable equipment* (78%). The vast majority strongly agreed that their course included *relevant content* (84%), had *well organised sessions* (82%), with *clear and interesting presentation* (81%) and included *useful learning activities and resources* (81%).

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of responding students chose to elaborate on their ratings, with many reiterating themes expressed in the open Q6 above- about their tutor's skill and commitment; high

level yet flexible organisation of classes; the encouragement of student participation and other aspects of course delivery.

- *"Tutor is an experienced teacher and she has fantastic skills. Every class was full of fun and of learning, with great use of technology to assist us learn"*
- *"Tutor was well prepared with topic each week, but has the expertise to deviate and clarify in response to queries not necessarily on topic. The session is the right length for engagement without fatigue or a break"*
- *"As a former teacher, I appreciate the kind way in which the tutor encourages all members of the group to participate in conversation"*

Thirty-three students commented on the class venue and equipment, mostly to indicate the difficulties caused by noise of adjoining rooms or air conditioning equipment; the unreliability or lack of appropriate a/v equipment; the need for internet access and technical help; glare and room set up problems.

- *"Whilst the venue is very convenient, the glare from the whiteboard often makes reading difficult. Conversations in the kitchen and corridor can impact on the class, especially during dictation"*
- *"The class would welcome more technical help using the a/v equipment. It is new but we have had little success in viewing DVDs etc"*

Suggested changes to the content, delivery or organisation of the course

Students were asked (Q7) if they had any suggestions for changes in terms of content, delivery or organisation of the course they attended. A total of 67% of all respondents skipped the question or stated that they saw no reason make any changes to the course they attended, some adding that the tutor sought and incorporated suggested changes throughout the year.

- *"I would not change anything. The class activities are always varied, interesting and inclusive"*
- *"The tutor was very responsive to our suggestions during the year and accommodated these well"*

The largest number of students who provided suggestions commented on classroom delivery matters, such as greater diversity in learning activities and resources; revision and pace of class; encouraging student effort and use of the language; and more conversation activities.

- *"The course is quite text book based and could include other exercises including conversation sessions and maybe using colloquial phrases and songs"*
- *"Perhaps to participate in activities that give you the skills to pronounce the words/sentences. Thereby building confidence to speak"*
- *"It would be of more value if more difficult words were written on the board or explained prior to reading an essay to class"*

Many others suggested changes to the organisation of the course, including more involvement of native speaker tutors/guests; better class composition and size; class frequency, length and start time; better session planning and structure.

- *"Perhaps more outside engagement with the Spanish community"*
- *"Regular and prolonged absences make the class too small, and it is not replenished with new students"*

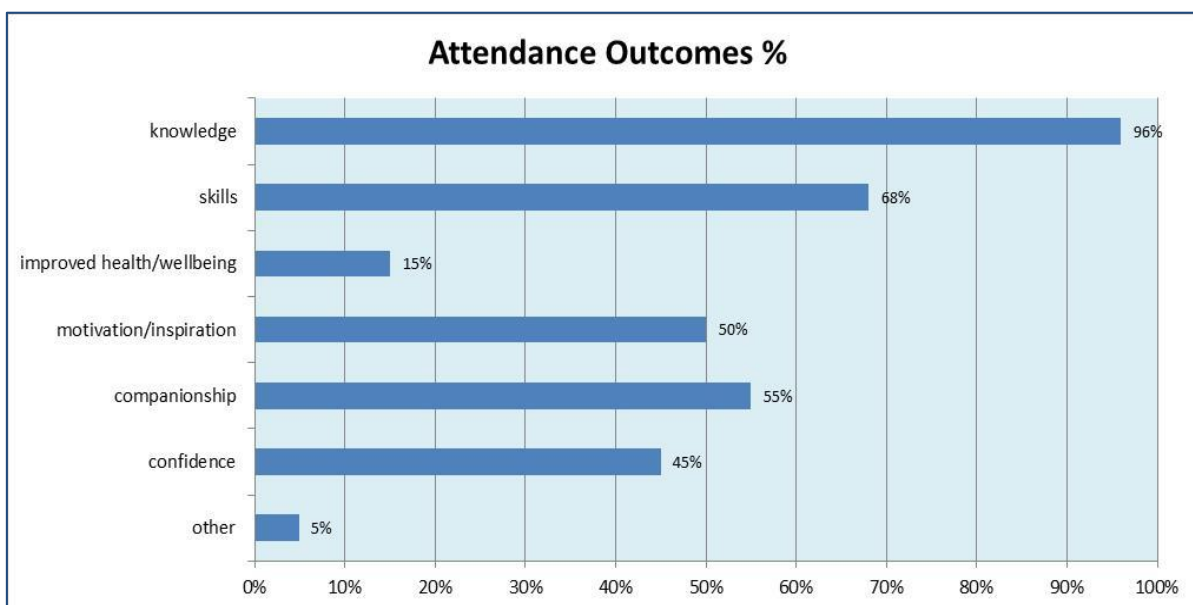
- *"More standardisation of level of student abilities"*

A smaller number of students commented on the course content, suggesting inclusion of more modern/current topics and everyday informal language rather than formal textbook learning,

- *"More conversation about ordinary topics such as a traveller may need - booking a room or train, family content, everyday happening"*
- *"Some of the literature we read and translate is very difficult because it is often in old Spanish. I would like to read and translate into English something more modern and topical"*

What students gained from attending their course

Students were asked to indicate what they gained from attending the course, with most respondents identifying multiple benefits (N = 268).



The majority stated that knowledge and skills, then companionship, inspiration and confidence were the key benefits for them. Nearly two-thirds elaborated on their choice of outcome.

Knowledge.

Improved knowledge of the topic area was the greatest outcome for participants (96%)- be it foundation or more advance knowledge of a language generally or a specific aspect such as grammar, vocabulary, cultural customs or history

- *"I started with very little knowledge and over the weeks began to understand the structure of the language and was able to read a little"*
- *"My German language has improved remarkably over the year due to the diligence of the tutor and the lessons presented"*
- *"My knowledge of Japanese language, culture and history is constantly increasing"*

Skills

In addition, 68% of respondents considered that they had either consolidated their language skills overall or improved in specific areas from attending their course, especially conversation, reading and listening.

- *"My vocabulary has improved and my communication skills were much better during my month in France this year than when I was there last"*
- *"It was very helpful in improving my reading and translation skills"*

Motivation/Inspiration

Half (50%) said that they were either "motivated" or "inspired" by their attendance, be it by the routine of weekly homework and classes; the inspiration and encouragement of the tutor and other like-minded classmates; or the nature of the class and progress made.

- *"Learning a new language at any stage of life can be a challenge! The combination of our tutor and the class members creates a motivating and inspiring teaching and learning environment"*
- *"The tutor presents the material in such a way that I am inspired to look at other sources to help me complete the task"*
- *"I am motivated to keep learning simply by the consistency of coming to weekly classes"*

Confidence

Forty-five percent of respondents considered they had gained confidence from attending their course, now being more comfortable in speaking the language in and outside class or using their skills in various situations.

- *"I found this course particularly helpful in building up my confidence, especially when it comes to speaking in front of many people"*
- *"My German has improved to such an extent that I now have the confidence to help others in the group"*
- *"Confidence in using the language and following (eg on TV, radio etc) is a measure of the success of the class"*

Companionship

For over half the students (55%) companionship was a significant benefit from their course participation, with many noting the supportive and friendly nature of the class; the commonality of shared interests; and the importance of the "social" aspect of the course where discussions and friendships developed beyond the classroom.

- *"Enjoyed meeting with other people with shared interests. The group has developed well and become an integral part of the learning experience"*
- *"The group meets outside the class (with the teacher) to view films and have coffee together. This really enhances my life"*

Improved Health/Wellbeing

An improvement in health or wellbeing as a result of their course participation was reported by a smaller group of students (15%), who noted the mental health benefits/stimulation of learning a

language; the wellbeing derived from regular class contact; and having a space/time just for themselves.

- *"Coming into the city once a week for lessons, I believe my general wellbeing is enlivened and improved"*
- *"It is nice to be doing/studying something just for yourself, as I find as a woman it is very easy for your life to be dominated by the needs of others"*

Suggestions for New Courses

As a means of informing course planning, students were specifically asked if they had any suggestions for new courses (Q10). The vast majority of respondents (80%) either skipped this question or said they had no suggestions at this time, with a few noting the comprehensiveness of the existing program or the need for additional courses to meet waitlist demand/reduced class size and enable progression to a higher level.

The 20% providing specific suggestions largely focused on new courses for the languages program (31 suggestions overall).

French (15): French Literature; French Singing; French News/culture with native speaker; French movies & discussion; French Conversation (beginners, 1:1 and small groups, intermediate level).

Italian (3): Italian through Song; Italian culture/mythology in Italian; Basic Italian.

German (3): Higher level German; German Grammar; German Conversation (native speaker)

Spanish (3): Spanish Conversation ; Advance Spanish discussion & study

Japanese (3): Japanese Conversation; Japanese Beginners

Language courses for Travellers (3)- all current language

ESL for Migrants- *"Learning English for migrant communities"*

Specific suggestions across all other course categories were as follows. Most reflected perceived gaps in the current program, and in several instances high demand for popular courses.

Humanities: History (7): Indigenous Australia ; Melbourne Buildings; Ancient Civilisations; Italian History

- *"Because of the importance of gaining an understanding of the history and culture of the Australian Aboriginal people, I feel a need for lectures in this area"*

Arts (8): learning musical instrument; Music Appreciation; Art; movies; making photo books; drama performance; sewing

- *"I would like to learn a musical instrument or be involved in a hands-on drama course"*

Sciences (7): Maths; Physics; Environmental Management; Complementary Medicine; Health

- *"I would like more scientific based courses, especially related to physics"*

Social Sciences (4): Current Affairs; Politics - World & Australian

- *"Movies, world current affairs , Australian politics..."*

Lifestyle (14): computers/devices; dance/exercise/Pilates; travel; brain-games; sailing; public speaking; wine appreciation (daytime not night class)

- *"I would like more courses on how to improve computer literacy- how to download podcasts, borrow e-books etc and using Google maps when travelling"*

Comments about our U3A Melbourne City course program overall (Q11)

The 56% of students who commented on this question mainly noted the excellent standard and the diversity of interesting courses offered by U3A Melbourne City. A number also noted the overall richness of activities and professionalism of the organisation, and expressed appreciation for the dedication of both Tutors and other volunteers involved.

- *"It's great! It's interesting and inspiring, and offers such a variety of terrific course, taught by committed professionals"*
- *"U3A Melbourne is a wonderful organisation which has opened up a whole new world for me. A huge variety of topics on offer which make me wish I had more days in the week. The lecturers are amazing with their generosity and passion to pass on their knowledge"*
- *"Overall an excellent organisation which makes a huge contribution to the Senior community and I am very grateful to be part of it"*
- *"When I show the program to friends, they immediately sign up for classes. I believe that we are very privileged to have such a great variety of classes that cater for all interests"*
- *"I am in awe of the amount of planning and production performed by the people who arrange the classes, the rooms, times, administration of the same, plus the tutors who offer the subjects. Thank you all for the wonderful job"*

A few expressed their frustration in not being able to join specific language or other courses due to high demand, the enrolment policy which gave volunteers priority and placed a cap on language course enrolments, and confusion re online enrolment introduced in 2016.

- *"I have found it disappointing to have to pay fees in advance and then find, as I have in some years, that I was not successful in enrolments or to find I have to stay in the present course rather than progressing as all the courses are full"*
- *"Some relaxation in respect of language Course policy. Perhaps a fairer system for re-enrolling students. If you are not on-line at 10am on enrolment day, you end up on waiting lists."*
- *"Numbers are rapidly expanding and I wonder how we will cater sufficiently for members. Many are often disappointed when they can't get a place in a course that was their main reason for joining. And then there is the room availability problem".*

Discussion

The above student feedback indicates the high quality of the 2016 yearlong Foreign Languages courses, which strongly met students expectations and provided significant intellectual and social

benefits across the year.

Students signed up to their language course with often a clear intent to improve their particular language knowledge and skills, or to achieve a specific goal such as communication with family and friends or travel, rather than mainly having a general interest in languages. This would suggest they were perhaps more focused and purposeful in enrolment compared with 2016 Humanities students, who were primarily motivated by a more general interest in the course topic, an expectation of meeting people with similar interests, as well as enhancing their knowledge and skills (Appendix B)

Given this more focused enrolment objective by Language students, it is interesting to note that 88% students in both course groupings reported that their course exceeded or very well met their expectations. Language students feedback indicates that this is driven by the knowledge, passion and skills of the tutor/leader who can deliver a structured but flexible course tailored to the various levels and interests of the students, and foster a supportive friendly class atmosphere wherein students feel encouraged and comfortable to take risks in applying their knowledge. Noting the challenges of learning a language later in life, students valued the shifts in focus to different aspects of the language acquisition within sessions, and also the range of activities and resources used to build knowledge and skills. This, and the group interaction, enabled them to remain stimulated, motivated and enjoy the course.

In giving feedback on the specific aspects of course delivery, Language students tended overall to rate their courses more highly than Humanities students, and notably so regarding its organisation, supportive atmosphere, presentation and use of learning activities, texts and resources. Given the progressive and specific demands of mastering and maintaining a foreign language, these aspects are vital and reflect the excellent quality of the courses that tutors deliver to members.

Where students did suggest changes to the delivery of their course, it was to increase this diversity of resources or activities included, especially conversation and interactive exercises which required them to put into practice their learning, and greater emphasis on revision and consolidation before tackling new areas. Suggested changes to content, such as more current or topical materials or themes and more colloquial language, perhaps reflect many students enrolment goals to improve their language and cultural knowledge for travel and family communication purposes. This interest might indicate the value of also offering shorter "for travellers" language courses which could meet this specific need, potentially also freeing up some places and reducing prolonged holiday absences in courses more dedicated to ongoing language study.

Overall students reported very positively on the outcomes from their course attendance, especially in terms of the knowledge gained of the language and culture, skills acquired and developed, and confidence built. Given the goals and nature of the Languages courses, it is not surprising that skills and confidence feature as more significant outcomes for those students than the Humanities students. For over half of both student groups, companionship and motivation were important benefits from course participation- outcomes that complement the core learning achieved.

Indeed in commenting on the program overall, students praised the excellence and diversity of courses and other activities offered by U3A Melbourne City, and acknowledged the dedication and work put in by tutors, leaders, coordinators and other volunteers to achieve this high standard.

In looking to the future, a number of students indicated areas for program extension that can be considered by individual tutors and course coordinators in planning and recruitment, especially regarding the language program and courses in lifestyle, history and arts subjects. Given the value ascribed to co-tutoring and native speaking tutors, these approaches could also be explored and encouraged within existing language programs and with new recruits.

Issues raised regarding venues, equipment/ technical assistance, and access to courses are ongoing concerns. There has been a concerted effort over the past two years to better locate language courses in rooms that experience less noise and have a/v equipment more suited to their class activity needs. It is thus gratifying to note that 78% students strongly thought their course venue and equipment were suitable. Clearly more remains to be improved, although recent renovations to the larger rooms in Ross House will resolve some glare and equipment problems reported above. As the yearlong languages program grows in response to demand (eg 33 courses in 2017), suitable equipment and venues will continue to be a challenge.

The excellence and affordability of our languages program attracts many members to the organisation, creating high demand for this precious resource. The *Foreign Languages Policy* was developed in 2012 with the multiple aims of improving choice of courses and equitable access for all members; creating, where possible, a coherent study pathway within each language; providing greater similarity in student skill levels within a class; and enabling student progression to higher levels;. Proactive recruitment and various procedures have been implemented since then to achieve these policy aims.

20 new tutors have joined the yearlong languages program since 2012, sustaining and enabling yearlong courses to grow from 16 to 31 (in 2016) and creating better study pathways, especially in French, Italian and German. Clarification of course prerequisites and the opportunity for tutors to decide whether applicants meet these has overall increased course skill homogeneity and tutor satisfaction. Implementing a cap on language applications has gone some way to addressing fairness in access to popular courses. However membership growth, the heavy demand for most language courses, the priority enrolment for volunteers, and the introduction of electronic application in 2016 has meant that not all students were able to progress, continue or enrol in the language course of their choice.

Following discussions with language tutors during 2016, the Foreign Languages Working Group recommended that "continuing students" should receive priority enrolment given the distinct progressive nature of language learning and our policy aim to create a study pathway that enabled students to advance to a higher level. This was approved by Committee of Management for trial in 2017 and new procedures put in place to implement this, together with a new initial limit of one yearlong course application for all members. The impact of these changes on equitable access and student progression will be reviewed prior to 2018 enrolments.

In conclusion, it is evident that that the yearlong Foreign Languages courses (which account for nearly half of our yearlong program) continue to deliver high quality educational opportunities to our members, who appreciate the program excellence and value the knowledge, friendships and stimulation it provides. Administrative concerns identified in student feedback have been acknowledged and strategies implemented to address these.

Individual course reports to tutors in December 2016 have enabled tutors to see what students like about their course and to consider specific suggestions for change and extension to their course in 2017. Overall practice themes reported here will serve to highlight areas for discussion with prospective tutors and for professional development with new and continuing tutors via the Foreign Languages Working Group and future workshops.

With a gap of 6 years since the Student Feedback Policy was introduced, it is pleasing that this yearlong feedback strongly endorses the value and continued excellence of the Foreign Languages courses and the evident achievements of the Foreign Languages Policy.

The yearlong courses yet to be approached for student feedback (ie Arts, Lifestyle; Social Science categories) will be surveyed midyear in 2017.

Recommendations

For stakeholders to benefit from this student feedback it is recommended that:

1. The Committee of Management ratify and make this report available to Language tutors and interested members via the website and the U3A Melbourne City office.
2. An Executive Summary of this report be distributed to all Language tutors and published on the U3A Melbourne City website for all members information.
3. This report be used as appropriate at Tutors' Workshops and Language Program Group Meetings to reinforce positive tutoring approaches with mature age students.
4. The individual Language Program findings be forwarded in summary form to each Language Program Convenor for information and consideration.
5. The Language Program Convenors and Course Coordination Team consider suggestions by members in respect of program development and organisation of the U3A Melbourne City education program.

Acknowledgements The Committee is greatly appreciative of the voluntary participation of students in this Feedback process, and the work of the Course Coordination Team volunteers who administered, analysed and reported on the Student Feedback.

French

French: Basic Introduction (G. Nyman)
French Level 1 (G. Harvey)
French Grammar Level 2 - Class 1, 10am (R. Matters)
French Grammar Level 2 - Class 2, 11.30am (R. Matters)
French Matters Level 2-3: Class 1, am (E. Batchelder)
French Matters Level 2-3: Class 2, pm (E. Batchelder)
French Conversation & Culture L3 (S. Holberton)
French Level 4 (R. Hooke)
French Reconnection Level 4-5 (M. Herron-Williams)
French Level 5 (C. Wright)
French Reading, Language level 6 (C. Wright)
French level 6 (R. Hooke)
French Advanced Study Level 6 (H. Adair)

German

German 1 : Beginners (P. O'Brien)
German 2: Post Beginners (P. O'Brien)
German 2: Post Beginners Plus (M. Wearne)
German 3: Intermediate (M. Wearne)
German Conversation 3-4 (E. Martens & J. Foks)

Italian

Italian Beginners (D. Hunt then K. Stevens)
Italian Level 4 (D. Bianciardi)
Italian Level 5 (P. Clemens)
Italian Study & Conversation L 5 (M. Dobson & J. Gravina)
Italian Advanced Study & Conv. L6 (C. Devlin)
Italian Conversation Intermediate (F. Forte)
Italian Conversation Advanced (F. Forte)
Italian Conversation Advanced (A. Pignatelli)

Japanese

Japanese Language & Culture (S. Sakai)

Spanish

Spanish Level 1: Beginners -Tues (C. Cohen)
Spanish Level 1: Beginners -Wed (C. Cohen)
Spanish Level 5 (J. Martinez & F. Anderson)
Spanish Level 6 : Advanced (J. Martinez)

Reasons for enrolling in the course

Reason	Humanities (N=220)	Foreign Languages (N= 283)
General interest in topic/activity	81%	48%
Wanted to deepen skills/knowledge	60%	77%
Relevant to specific goal/plan	8%	40%
Wanted to try something new	16%	7%
Tutor reputation/prior course	29%	23%
Day/time particularly suited	32%	32%
Expected to meet people with similar interests	30%	18%
Other	3%	3%

Quality of course delivery

Strongly Agreed	Humanities %	Foreign Languages %
Tutor knowledgeable/enthusiastic	89	95
Well organised sessions	74	82
Friendly supportive atmosphere	85	93
Relevant content	83	84
Clear and interesting presentation	74	81
Student participation & interaction encouraged	83	88
Included useful texts, activities, resources	51	81
Session right length	82	88
Suitable venue and equipment	70	78

Outcomes: What students gained from attending the course

Benefit	Humanities %	Foreign Languages %
Knowledge	90	96
Skills	26	68
Improved health/wellbeing	18	15
Motivation/inspiration	52	50
Companionship	58	55
Confidence	22	45
Other	7	5