

MEDIA RELEASE



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Malaysian teachers tap into Deakin's science and maths expertise

Teachers in Malaysia are learning the nuances of teaching Maths and Science in English thanks to a multi-million dollar change program being run by the Malaysia Government and Deakin University.

The four year initiative, now into its third year follows a decision by the Malaysian Government that all of its Science and Maths teaching will be carried out in English.

"The decision created quite a professional development challenge for the region's teachers whose main language is Bhasa," explained Associate Professor Ian Robottom, Associate Dean, International for the Faculty of Arts and Education.

"There are quite a lot of issues that are faced when you change your teaching language to English. For instance there are differences in terms of the content, Science and Maths teaching methods, you are also teaching English and translating the technical terms into English.

"Effectively the teachers and their students are learning Science and Maths in their second language."

Associate Professor Robottom said Deakin had a strong track record of teaching in the Asian region and a strong research reputation led by Professor Russell Tytler and Associate Professor Susie Groves in the teaching of science and maths.

"Deakin has been working in the Malaysian region for some 20 years through the Regional Centre for Science and Maths. (RECSAM)

"This Penang-based organisation is responsible for the professional development of teachers in South East Asia. We have been working with them on a range of levels, including a twinning program for our Master's Degree, providing keynote speakers at conferences and also providing staff for professional development programs.

Associate Professor Robottom said the University had developed a strong relationship with Universiti Sains Malaysia (University Science Malaysia) resulting in joint research activities, seminars, hosting of sabattical scholars and the offering of the BA Science Education and BA Maths Education for teachers in the region.

Deakin also had a strong reputation for teaching in Islamic countries.

"23 women have just graduated from our Masters of Education in the United Arab Emirates," he said. "This program was our first full off shore teaching partnership and Deakin's first in an Arabic speaking country."

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“At the time of putting the proposal together we were able to refer to our experience in Malaysia and it has stood us in good stead with the women in the UAE being highly satisfied with the course content, the mixed methods of delivery, Deakin staff doing teaching intensives coupled with the use of locally qualified tutors.”