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Impact Studies

Measuring the success of your English language programme





Impact study collaboration

Cambridge University Press is working with schools, colleges and universities around the world to help them understand how effective their English language programmes are.



Why should you get involved?

Schools and colleges need to show that they are evaluating their programmes. An impact study can help you understand how effective your programme is and how you might improve it.



What do Impact Studies look at?

These impact studies focus on three areas: language proficiency, motivation to learn and behaviours that support learning. An impact study is usually set up when a new language programme or course begins.

Language
proficiency

Motivation
to learn

Behaviours
that
support
learning

How much have
students
improved their
English?

How motivated
are the pupils to
learn English?
What factors
affect this?

Which teaching
and learning
methods are
most effective?





How does it work?

Every institution is different but there are usually four steps to completing an Impact Study:

Step 1 Decide which courses and students to include.

- Choose courses with Cambridge materials.
- Results are most useful when there are 300 or more students included.



Step 2 Give a short questionnaire/activity and test to pupils and a short questionnaire to teachers at the start of the programme.

- Pupils take Test 1 to determine their current proficiency. (Note: If an institution already uses a test at the start of a course, it might be possible to use these test results instead of doing an additional test only for the Impact Study. This can be discussed when the Impact Study is arranged with Cambridge.)
- There is a Questionnaire 1 for pupils and one for the tutors. They normally take about 10-15 minutes to complete.
- In the case of very young pupils, an alternative to a questionnaire will be used which is more age-appropriate (for example: a flashcard or drawing activity).
- These should both be completed as early in the programme as possible.



Step 3 Give a short questionnaire/activity and test to pupils and a short questionnaire to teachers at the end of the programme.

- Test 2 is similar to Test 1 but taken at the end of the research period. (Again, if an institution already uses a test at the end of their course, it might be possible to use these test results instead of doing an additional test only for the Impact Study. This can be discussed when the Impact Study is arranged with Cambridge.)
- There is a Questionnaire 2 for pupils (or a more age-appropriate activity for younger learners) and one for the tutors. They normally take about 15-20 minutes to complete.



Step 4 Receive Impact Study Report from Cambridge.

- Cambridge analyses the data from the tests and surveys/activities and produces a report.



FAQs

Who can participate in an Impact Study?

This service is for any educational institution that is using Cambridge University Press ELT course materials.

What will our institution get at the end of it?

You will get an Impact Study Report, which includes an analysis of the data collected, conclusions that can be drawn from the data and recommendations for future improvement.

What will we have to do?

- Arrange for your students to take a test at the beginning and end of the course.
- Send links to online questionnaires to the teachers and pupils involved (at the beginning and end of the course).
- For younger learners doing an activity instead of a questionnaire, it may be necessary to invite a trained Cambridge researcher to conduct the activity.

What will it cost?

It won't cost you anything other than the staff time to carry out the activities above.

How many students do we need to include?

We find that the analyses work best with over 300 students. However, useful qualitative reports can be produced smaller samples.

What will Cambridge do?

Cambridge can:

- Provide the tests and questionnaires/activities.
- Collate and analyse the data.
- Provide a report with conclusions and recommendations.

How long will it take?

This is most effective on a course of six months or more. However, it is possible to apply it to a course of 3 months.

The tests we use for Impact Studies normally take 30-60 minutes – once at the start of the programme and once at the end. The exact amount of time depends on the test and on the age of the students/pupils.

Questionnaires can be completed by the teachers and students out of class, and usually take 15-25 minutes to complete. Activities for younger pupils can be conducted out of class and in a familiar, safe environment (ideally, at the school).

Will the results be public?

The Impact Study Report will be for your institution to use as you wish. You can then choose to give permission for Cambridge to use the data in an anonymised form.

