

TAFE ACCREDITED PEER TUTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Issue 4, 2005

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Issue 1:

- Roles and responsibilities for TAFE coordinator, regional literacy contact and literacy linkages support officer
- Frequently asked questions
- Suggestions for conflict resolution.

Issue 2:

- PTT members share some insights and techniques
- Reflection and evaluation
- School structure idea using LASS
- Ingredients of a successful PTT program
- Tutor evaluation template
- Tutee evaluation template
- Findings from Sydney TAFE institutes.



Determining the main idea helps in deeper understanding

Issue 3:

- News from specific schools
- Article on PTT by Julie Wykeham
- Term 4 reminders.



For some students, all books are closed when reading is beyond them.

Some ideas for extra reading resources for PTT:

- Have you seen the 2005 *Follow-up to ELLA* resource in your school? Copies for the last four years should be in the staff library and with the Learning Support Team.
- Have you seen the *Literacy Links* linking to ELLA and SNAP handouts for each of the KLAs? Educational Measurement has produced them again this year.
- There is a *Programming and Strategies (PASH)* book produced for primary and has some valuable ideas.

- The folder: *A Guide for Learning Support Teams* (- see Session 3 for *students who require additional support in literacy*) should be in your staff professional learning library.
- Remember to visit TaLE and Curriculum Support web sites regularly to find updates and new information.



Boys often need extra motivation in the Middle Years

PTT tips:

- Why not open applications for tutors to all of Year 10? (This assists in promoting the valuable contributions that the tutors make and can become quite competitive.)
- Ask your STLA to pre-test and post-test Year 7 and 8 students so that you can accurately assess their progress.

Let's reflect on why we are doing this:

Students needing support in developing their literacy skills often need support in developing their comprehension skills of literary, factual, visual and even digital texts. A common area of need for middle years students is the development of literal interpretation of texts (such as, determining the main idea) as well as in inferential and critical skills.

Underperformance in reading and comprehension can deny students access to fundamental subject content let alone advancing through the curriculum.

We cannot perceive the Peer Tutor Training program as a 'catch-up' program only focused on basic skills. It is intended to be a program where the students engage with the authentic texts from the lessons. They should not be given commercially-marketed reading programs seen as a 'cure all' as they can widen the gap in understanding the classroom texts.

For students needing support, teachers also need to draw on their repertoire of pedagogical practices and skills to scaffold students' access to the more challenging texts in their subjects.

On following pages 3–10, you will find various materials to assist you in helping students with their reading comprehension.

A very valuable web site you might care to place on your Favourites list is: <http://www.myread.org> The following is a typical extract which underpins the wonderful work that you are doing as a school coordinator of Peer Tutor Training:

Students whose learning is 'fragile' will have prior cultural and linguistic experience which is not confirmed by what they encounter at school.

These students will not have encountered the numbers and types of texts with which their peers are familiar. They will not be sufficiently cognisant with the information, ideas and attitudes expressed in the texts they will encounter in the middle years of learning. These texts shape students' cumulative understanding and mastery of the increasingly complex language on which the accessibility of the educational curriculum depends.

At the same time, the middle years of school are characterised by differing and more complex literacy demands across the learning areas. The varied communication styles and expectations of teachers can make it difficult for many students to process the content and structure of information.

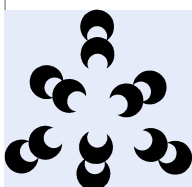
Different learning areas have different ways of organising information and use diverse language and linguistic structures to convey that information, e.g. science and history. How underperforming middle years students engage with each learning area and access the information and values expressed within them will depend on how explicit the teachers are about the literacy requirements of their particular learning area.

When literacy is taught routinely by all teachers as part of in-class practice, all students can engage with the curriculum and participate in learning.

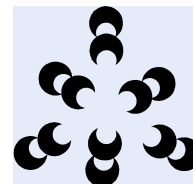


More PTT tips:

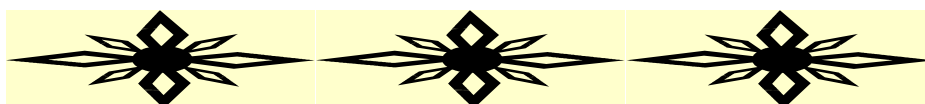
- Have a **set seating plan**: this way the roll marker can see at a glance who is absent; you can seat disruptive students away from one another.
- Often disruptive students are really crying out for attention. What about creating a **series of goals** with them or creating an **individual learning plan** between the three (teacher, tutor, tutee) of you? Decide on goal dates to discuss what progress has been made.
- Do you know which **Head Teacher** has been allocated to support you? If a student (a tutor or a tutee) is not cooperative and has gone beyond your management, refer the student to that Head Teacher for counselling.
- How are parents/caregivers informed as to the progress of the tutees in PTT? Have you considered creating a half-page **Interim Report** on the computer and posting it out to the parents? It's also a way to be in touch with the parent and maintain a line of communication. This can be very beneficial if a student is disruptive as well.
- Do you always stick rigidly to pairs? What about occasionally adding variety to the dynamics of the pairs by having them work in a group of four (that is, 2 pairs together)? Often students are aural and kinaesthetic learners and adding variety to the procedure might be beneficial.



What's new?



The first five sections of the Peer Tutor Training manual are being updated and will be emailed to each school as a pdf document on completion. This is to be inserted in the Peer Tutor Training manual.



On the following pages are some ideas from Lizzie Chase, the Literacy Consultant for Western Sydney, and Bernard Pryor to assist students who have high support needs in literacy. As Peer Tutor Training coordinators, you might like to share these with other teachers.

ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH HIGH SUPPORT NEEDS IN LITERACY

General tips:

Before the lesson:

- indicate what the subject of the lesson will be and what you expect the students to achieve by the end of it
- write any new vocabulary terms or concepts to be covered during the lesson and discuss them. Relate to students' prior knowledge.

When giving out handouts:

- Ensure that the writing is clear—typing is preferable and never in all capitals
- Ensure that photocopies are very clear— perhaps enlarged and on coloured paper (preferably pale blue or green) whenever possible
- Use recognisable graphics, illustrations and diagrams
- Read through the handouts with the students. Check their comprehension of difficult or subject-specific words
- Remind them to refer to their glossary for your subject.

Ways to assist student with organisational problems:

- establish a daily routine
- explain changes in routine
- keep work areas clear
- allow time to get organised
- list the actual materials needed for class the next day or for assignments
- write the homework on the board in the same place each time (e.g. in a column on the right-hand side)
- ask students to record homework in a diary
- display homework in the classroom in a consistent place
- provide work samples and models
- colour code
- provide a list of all the activities in each unit
- assist with notebook organisation (e.g. use the front for some things, such as class work; the middle for homework; the rear for a glossary and vocabulary or spelling activities)
- teach strategies for reading or writing or spelling
- review notes daily
- construct a time-line for long-term assignments (which must include dates when work is progressively to be shown to the teacher)
- provide a study guide.

Ways to assist student performance:

- provide in-class peer tutors for revision or study
- use self-checking and self-monitoring strategies
- provide specific marking criteria at the beginning of a topic or unit
- accept either printing or cursive handwriting in class
- allow class time to begin an assignment
- give frequent quizzes or give sample questions
- make the test format clearer
- read the test to the student
- tape record the answers to a test
- allow for short answers or give clues (e.g. the first letter of the answer) or use matching terms by drawing a line rather than fill in the empty box
- allow for explanation during the evaluation of work
- use multisensory approaches in evaluation.



Peers supporting one another in learning

Activities to find the main idea:

Helping students understand how to find the main idea



(Perhaps you could cut and paste this first section, expand it and use it as a wall poster.)

Main Ideas

Main ideas show the significance and impact of events, trends, theories or behaviours.

Skilled reading increases the life chances of every child

Main ideas are usually found in factual and informative texts in:

- **headings**
- **the first paragraphs [1 and 2]**
- **the last paragraph**
- the first sentence of each paragraph, called the **topic sentence** because it announces the topic of the paragraph
- you can track main ideas through a factual text by looking at headings, then the first paragraphs, then each topic sentence, then the last paragraph.

Other ideas:

- Step back to **summarise** the main direction in which the ideas have been heading.
- Ask questions which deal with main ideas: *Why? What if? So what?*

Seven Strips

Finding seven main ideas (paired work)

Students individually write the **seven main ideas** they have found from a text on seven strips of paper.

In pairs, they debate and justify their seven main ideas – they must emerge with only seven.

They glue these onto one sheet of paper. [The activity can extend to a whole class discussion to see if most pairs had similar main ideas, although this activity will always lead to some differences of opinion.] The intent is that students should be able to tell the difference between main ideas and examples and that they should justify their position from the text.



Reading can explode your comprehension of knowledge about the world

Reconstructed text



Summary sentence

Main Ideas Tracker

Students note down these items, then summarise the main ideas on a page

Look at these sections	Main ideas in your own words
Headings	
First two paragraphs	
Topic sentences	
Pictures or diagrams	
Last paragraph	
Your own summary of the page	

Reading, writing and studying lead to lifelong learning



Think/Pair/Share/Compare

– finding main ideas together

Procedure:

- **Preview** a text layout with students
– noting the headings, diagrams, pictures and captions and **predicting** what it will be about.
- **Explain** in broad terms what the text will be about, so students can connect with it.
- Teach up to **five key words** which will be unfamiliar to students BEFORE reading.
- **Read the text aloud** to students, do not pause unless absolutely necessary, so students hear a text read at **normal pace** – this helps them to hold the meaning across the text.
- Students **read along silently** while the teacher reads aloud.

Think - Ask students to note down any main ideas they have found plus any practical examples linked to these ideas – **private thinking and jotting time** for 2-3 minutes.

Pair - Ask students to share their ideas/examples with their partner and add in any extra information they have now discovered – 5 minutes.

Share - In a group of four, share main ideas and examples briskly and add in any extras.

Compare - As a class, compare and contrast your findings.

INFERENCE

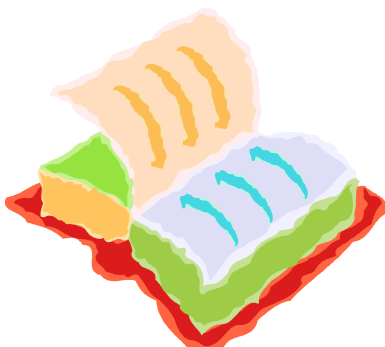
Inferential Questions Menu

Choose from these to generate questions:

- What is the **purpose** of this text?
- What is the **tone** of this text?
- What is the **audience** for this text?
- Make up a question requiring a reader to interpret a **table, diagram or graphic**.
- Create a question which requires a reader to **track a pronoun** back through the text to see from where an idea came.
- Make up a question about a **trend** revealed in this text, such as:
What is X feeling?
- Create a question about an implied [not stated] feeling.
- What **effect** did Y's behaviour cause? Make up a question about an implied effect.
- Choose an **alternative heading** for this text.
- Select the **three most important ideas** in this text.



Just as linking ideas leads to deep comprehension, so a gap in one's learning is like a broken link.



Unless comprehension occurs, books may not always lead to understanding.

CARS Question Menu – inferring

Many diagnostic reading passages in every KLA to test students' inferential reading skills can be found in *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies* by Deborah Adcock.

Strategies to Achieve Reading Success [STARS] are the companion student books to target the inferential/interpretive level reading skills which are diagnosed as needing a boost. *Books 7-8* are for Years 7 and 8, but students may need extra practice at levels 5 and 6 first.

Inferential and interpretive skills are:

Find the **main idea**

Recognise **cause and effect**

Make **predictions**

Find a **word meaning** in context

Draw a **conclusion**

Choose between **fact and opinion**

Identify the **author's purpose**

Interpret **figures of speech**

Choose the best **summary**.



Reaching in for understanding

3H Strategy: Here - Hidden - Head

Requiring students to write questions at three levels in pairs after reading, for another pair to answer.

The third level in 3H focuses on students' background knowledge and opinions.

Here: Is the answer directly stated **here** in the text? Make up questions at this level.

Hidden: Is the answer **implied in the text** but not directly stated? Make up questions at this level.

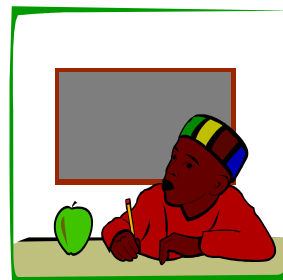
Head: Is the answer in my **background knowledge** or **my opinion**? Make up questions at this level.

Three Level Guides

Teach students how to make three level guides and **practice together** to check their understanding, before they make their own.

Students make up three level guide statements in pairs, then get another pair to mark each statement T or F by rereading the text to check.

**** The third level** in three level guides focuses on the **author's** implied values and opinions OR an **application** of the events, problems or beliefs of the text in the REAL world. Level 3 is the **applied** level of reading, moving into real world applications.



Recognition of the power of learning is the same worldwide.

Level 1 - The author said it

Statement One – T or F?

Statement Two – T or F?

Instructions for Level One [The literal level]: Write two statements which can be found **right there** in the text. You can change the wording a little as long as the information is still clear. To be extra tricky, find facts for one statement from the text, then alter them so the statement becomes FALSE.

Level 2 - The author meant it

Statement One – T or F?

Statement Two – T or F?

Level 2 [The inferential or interpretive level]: Create two statements which have **clues** in the text/pictures but **are not directly stated**. The author meant it, but **it is not right there** in the text – you need to think and search. *There will always be clues in the text.*

Level 3 - The author would agree with it

Statement One – T or F?

Statement Two – T or F?

Level Three [The applied level]: Make up two statements where there are **no direct clues** in the text. You are on your own. The author would agree with it, but **it's not there to be clearly seen**.

Developing literacy together

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TRAINING PROGRAM**

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