

# TAFE ACCREDITED PEER TUTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

**Issue 2, 2005**

Pam Dunstan, Literacy Consultant, Northern Sydney, organised a regional meeting in early May for her Peer Tutor teachers.

At the meeting, Margaret Downey (STLA) and Pam Mail (ESL) from Asquith Boys High School shared their procedure for conducting the Peer Tutor program:

Term 4 is a busy time for Margaret and Pam. They book the TAFE Training Day for the following year with their TAFE teacher and the date is then put into the school calendar.

In Term 4 of each year, Margaret and Pam discuss which Year 9 students would be suitable tutors for the following year with the Year 9 Adviser and the English staff. Permission notes are sent to parents and a phone number is requested on the form so that they can keep in touch with parents if needed. The students finally selected have a range of skills and are not usually the highest academically in the year. This allows the tutees to relate to them more readily.

Also in Term 4, Margaret visits the primary schools with the Year 7 Adviser. She discusses with the primary teachers those students who might need additional assistance with reading. This is also discussed with each relevant Year 6 student who is gently advised that they might be asked to be a tutee next year.



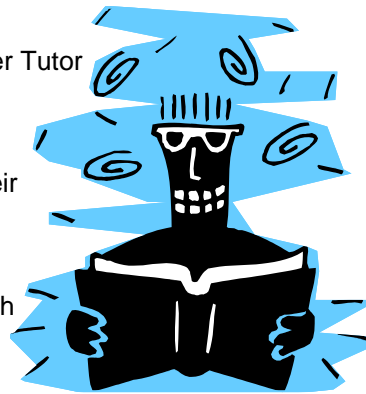
Term 4 is also when the support teachers determine whether any of the current Year 7 students would benefit from being in the program for a further year.

On the TAFE Training Day in Term 1, the support teachers supply the boys with pizzas at lunchtime as a welcoming gesture.

Information letters are sent to parents of tutees, informing them about the program, explaining the concept of authentic texts and asking for permission to attend the program.

Each tutor/tutee pair has a separate folder of materials located in portable plastic crates. Each pair collects their folder straight away in roll call and begins work as soon as they are ready.

As each pair sits in the same spot for each roll call, the teacher can identify them quickly and does not need to call out names and students can proceed without interruption. A special arrangement is made for the rolls so that the Year 10



Literacy means being empowered for lifelong



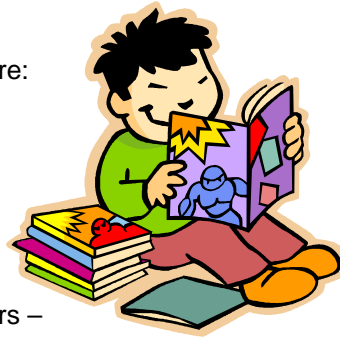
## Developing literacy together

tutors and the Years 7/8 tutees are all on the one roll. This prevents the teacher from having to transfer attendance information from a temporary roll to the official school one.

In early Term 2 after the ELLA results are in, there is sometimes a changeover of students when it is determined that some students are more advanced than first thought.

Other ideas that were mentioned at the meeting were:  
If Year 10 are on excursion or doing examinations, the tutees can be taken to the Library to use picture books for visual literacy practice – Lynn, Cherrybrook Technology HS.

Other texts used when authentic materials have temporarily run out are wide reading from the library and ELLA and SNAP booklets from past years – Cameron, Muirfield HS.



### Reflection and evaluation:

We are all clearly aware that reflection and evaluation are very valuable educationally. The Western NSW Region has shared its evaluation forms (see the following pages 3 and 4). It is very beneficial for student self-esteem and confidence to ask students to reflect on their development in both Terms 2 and 4.

### Another idea for a school structure:

Literacy and Study Skills (LASS) is another form of Drop Everything And Read. Instead of everyone just reading for 20 minutes, in LASS students can utilise their time studying and revising their notes or attend workshops run by staff in study techniques or revision. There are many variations on the theme that a creative staff can implement to meet the needs of the whole school.



In some schools, whilst Peer Tutoring is being conducted in one section, the various faculties withdraw individual students or small groups for intensive remediation (perhaps in numeracy, kinaesthetic skills, welfare matters, etc). Generally students are targeted for the extra assistance for two weeks at a time.

The Sydney TAFE Institute schools evaluated the Peer Tutoring program last year. Here are some findings (continued on page 5):

### The ingredients of a successful PTT program were:

- commitment
- flexibility
- time and energy
- generosity of spirit
- staff trained and knowledgeable with understanding of literacy learning
- good school organisation
- all teachers of Year 7 students are aware of the importance of current authentic text and their role in supporting the program.



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## TUTOR EVALUATION

Name: .....

On a scale from 1 to 10 (where 10 represents the highest score and 1 represents the lowest score), please rank your responses to the following statements. Circle the score:

Statement	Rating
My tutee has improved in reading since the beginning of the tutoring program	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
I have enjoyed reading with my tutee	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
As a result of the tutoring, my tutee is better at using clues and strategies to work out problem words	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
The tutoring sessions have helped my tutee's understanding of his/her texts	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
My tutee seems more confident with his/her reading	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
My tutee is now self-correcting his/her reading errors	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
The reading material was at the right level of difficulty for my tutee	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
I have developed a good rapport with my tutee	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
I have enjoyed the tutoring experience	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1
The TAFE qualification will be a valuable and useful aspect of my resume	10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1

What are the main things you have learnt from this program ?

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What has been the most positive aspect of the program for you?

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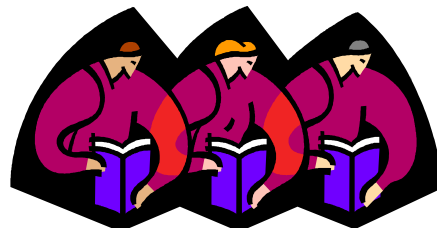
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How could the program be improved?

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## Tutee Evaluation

Name: .....

Please circle which word on the right fits your responses to the following statements:

Statement	Rating		
1. My reading has improved since I started the peer reading program	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
2. I have enjoyed reading with my tutor	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
3. I am better at using clues and ideas to work out problem words	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
4. I found it useful to revise problem words	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
5. I understand more of what I read	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
6. I am better at correcting my own mistakes now	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
7. I am more confident reading texts from different subject areas now	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
8. I feel comfortable with my tutor	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
9. I would recommend this program to other students	YES	SOMETIMES	NO

What has been the best thing about the program?

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How could the program be improved?

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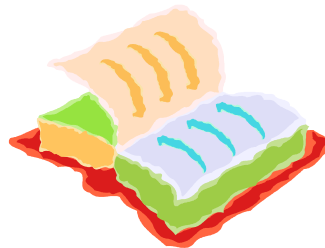
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Is there anything else you would like to comment about this program?

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### Further findings from Sydney TAFE Institutes:

#### Ideas for improvement in supporting schools:

- ensure current authentic texts are available
- schools staff have some release time to organise the program and materials
- longer reading time for tutors/tutees
- in roll call, notes are distributed at the end to avoid disruption
- more time for ongoing theory
- strong communication to alert the TAFE teachers about occasions when tutoring won't be on.



Notes from the 2004 Evaluations returned by supporting schools:

A total of 4108 students were supported as tutees in 2004 — of those 16% were ATSI; 21% NESB; 63% other.

Numbers of tutors were ATSI 14%; NESB 18%; other 68%.

The following shows the number of subjects supported in schools during 2004:

- English 148
- Mathematics 69
- Science 167
- TAS 21
- Languages 13
- PDHPE 52
- HSIE 292
- Creative Arts 35.



Although it is not appropriate in every school, those who responded about fewer suspensions or fractional truancy found a dramatic improvement.

Other results (rated into Bands 1 to 5):

Item (no. of responses)	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5
Academic benefits (/189)	81	90	9
Engagement benefits (/186)	65	107	10
Achievement outcomes (/182)	96	68	3
Skills, knowledge and understandings (/181)	71	99	8
Social benefits (/185)	30	120	33
Welfare benefits (/189)	39	101	36

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