

TAFE ACCREDITED PEER TUTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Issue 3, 2005



In the article *Our Secret Schools* published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 1 June 2005, education reporter Bruce McDougall cited the achievements of four outstanding students from Fairfield High School. It was a great delight to see that two of those students, Sally Hau and Darko Vranesevic, were not only high-achievers in their school, but were **TAFE Peer Tutors** in Year 10 last

year and had received TAFE accreditation. This is further endorsement of the fine contributions of Year 10 students dedicating themselves to assisting others in developing their reading and comprehension through this valuable program.

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Literacy means being empowered for lifelong

Ed.: Particular thanks go to those teachers who have responded to these newsletters. The following are some extracts of procedures that you may care to consider:

Jen Balancoire: *We are starting English authentic texts now and the students are working on two-part plays as preparation for a drama unit.*

We found last year when using exactly the same text or worksheet that students used in class, they refused to do the work as they felt they had already done it. I guess this is part of the struggling reader's perception that if you have finished work, you certainly don't want to revisit it.

We are treating the plays they are reading by changing the sex and age of the characters to make it more their own and also to encourage risk-taking and playing the 'fool' in a safe environment.



Gaylia Bigg (Armidale High: We advertise the PTT program to Year 9 students in Term 4 about becoming tutors. We also liaise with the Year Adviser who will encourage students to apply and use current tutors to talk to Year 9 students about the program.



We liaise with the next year's Year adviser, Year 6 teachers and the Learning Support Team to compile a group of tutees for the following year, but adjustments are made to this following a Literacy Screening Test conducted across Year 7 in Week 2 Term 1. Once the list of tutees is finalised, a letter is sent home to parents informing them that their child is in the program, encouraging them to contact the school if they would like further information.

We use the Library, have set tables, and in preparation for each session, individual folders are placed out ready. Students come in, sit at their table and then if tutors or tutees are absent, some alternate matching occurs.

Currently we have some tutees with challenging behaviours but our tutors are committed and persevere. At the end of each term we allow the tutors a choice as to whether to stay with their tutee or swap with another. We also monitor the progress of the tutees and remove or include students as necessary.

One teacher takes responsibility for marking a roll each day. This is time-consuming, but made easier with the set seating.

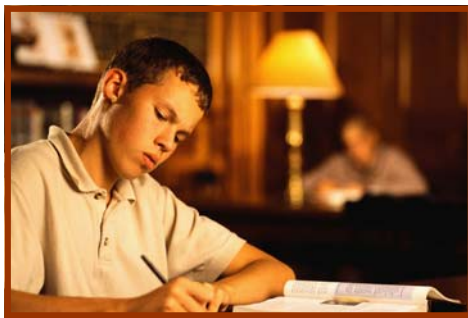
Over the years, we have prepared a huge amount of material for the tutors to use, based on the Before, During and After reading strategies that the students have learnt. We also have some memory games and a bundle of novels or worksheets to use when we are short, or need a break.



Every five weeks we check with teachers what topic they are doing so that the materials used coincide with what is happening in the classroom. This is probably the most difficult part of the organisation - marking the folders and trying to keep them up-to-date.

The program is so valuable for tutors because they learn about the reading process; they develop leadership skills, initiative and confidence; and their self-esteem and confidence grows. They do miss out on reading time, but the revision they do for their School Certificate exams is considerable.

I will use the Tutor evaluation form provided in *Issue 2, 2005*, to plan for next term, adding an additional question, "Would you like to change tutees for Term 3?"



IDEAS PLEASE:

Does anyone have ideas for tutees who refuse to maintain their logs? Please email them to Bernard Pryor (editor).

CROSS-AGE PEER TUTORING IS TERRIFIC

TAFE teacher Julie Wykeham wrote an inspiring article with the above title for *The Australian TAFE Teacher* journal issued in winter, 2005.

Here are some selections from Julie's article:

I love working with the tutors and value the professional collaboration with my colleagues in the high schools. I have learned a lot from them and respect the miracles they perform with adolescents under often difficult circumstances.

Flexibility is needed (by the school) in order to fit into the school calendar and there also needs to be a whole-of-school approach to literacy. The entire school community needs to value the work of the tutors and be flexible themselves around the tutors' work. Examples include the support for longer roll-call, for Drop Everything and Read time, allowing tutors to be a little late for class, allowing tutors to attend TAFE for the initial training, providing the tutors

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with folders, Tim Tams and the occasional lunch. Tutors sacrifice their lunchtimes once a fortnight for their TAFE theory training and this can be very hungry work!

Students who have previously struggled with learning to read themselves can make wonderful tutors as they bring great insights to the reading process. The tutors also grow considerably in the program. They develop leadership skills, communication skills and insights into the learning process and themselves as learners, which have a positive impact on their academic performance as well.



The tutors also appreciate the fact that they are TAFE students and over the years have consistently expressed satisfaction with the

“TAFE way of doing things” - of being treated like adults especially. Great relationships are forged between students in the senior and junior school which helps in building the whole-school morale and general behaviour.



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Your ideas and suggestions are greatly valued.

If you have anything you would care to share or suggest, please email or call me.

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Developing literacy together

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