



Within Tuition

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd.

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The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Newsletter

Editorial Comment

In this Newsletter, our first of 2008, you will find a message from Stuart Trist, Program Manager of the An Even Start being run by **Curriculum Corporation**. The ATA has been proactive in seeking to co-ordinate between stakeholders in the best interests of the students eligible under the programme. It is hoped

that the formally recognised tutoring sector, as represented by the ATA, will be appropriately recognised and drawn upon to assist in delivery of tuition to students. In this regard the ATA is fully supportive of the An Even Start National Tuition Program. The tuition should commence from next Term and tutors are encouraged to register.

President's Message

Welcome to a new school and tuition year. As President I look forward to what 2008 holds educationally and for our collective businesses. The news that has the potential to affect our industry the greatest is the awarding of a tender to the Curriculum Corporation for the Federal Government's "An Even Start" National Tuition Program.

The ATA Board met with a project manager of the Curriculum Corporation, Stuart Trist at our last Board meeting. For those members who have not looked at the opportunities associated with this program you should go to:

<http://www.anevenstart.dest.gov.au/about.htm>

<http://www.aesprivate.edu.au>

All businesses in the private sector need to express their interest by registering.

Anecdotally, we are again seeing an increase in business across the sector as the year has got underway. This has been the case consistently for the last few years and certainly reflects the feeling among the ATA's Board and membership that the sector

goes from strength to strength. It also reinforces the need for strong and assertive representation for the purposes of lobbying and promotion.

The ATA's new insurance initiative has been extremely well received. More than 50% of members have taken up the offer. The insurance cover we have negotiated with RGB is considerably cheaper than any other commercial price available. This arrangement is one the major advantages we offer our membership and provides incentive for non-members to join. We are currently investigating other commercial alliances that may provide further benefits to membership.

Media coverage at this time of year has continued to focus on our sector. The ATA and I, as President, have been called numerous times for comments, quotes and opinions. Melbourne's *The Age* through its supplement *My Career*, Sydney's *Sunday Herald Sun*, Melbourne's *Sun Herald* and Channel Seven's *Today Tonight* have all recently been in contact with me with questions regarding our

sector. Interestingly coverage has been all positive which has not always been the case in the past. We believe this is a reflection of the ATA's Code of Conduct and our ability to present a unified, organised and professional front.

One reporter did pose the question to me "Do teachers make the best tutors?" It is an interesting question and one that refuses a definitive answer. The obvious answer of course is yes, but that would be dismissive of all the excellent work and results that are achieved by non teacher trained members of our sector.

As an organisation we aim to be as inclusive as possible to all our members and the different approaches to tutoring that exist within our industry, - with one important rider: that the tutoring be conducted in an ethical manner (i.e. under the umbrella of our "Code of Conduct").

It is a question that I'll leave you with but one I will also attempt to address further in future issues.

- Chris Druett, President.

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Update of ATA Code of Conduct

On May 26th 2008 the ATA Board will meet to look at updating the Code of Conduct. Issues for discussion include a possible expansion of categories of membership.

Renewal of Membership

A pleasing number of ATA members have renewed their subscriptions for the 2007 - 2008 year. We have now 180 members with all States and Territories being represented. The website has been updated and non-renewing members have been removed.



A loss of general knowledge and higher order literacy skills? - by Mohan Dhall

This year has been a very interesting one from the point of view of one-to-one tuition. At present my portfolio of students reads as follows:

- Year 6 girl student, NESB, aiming for Selective Schools entry
- A Year 3 and a Year 5 'gifted' student (sisters) aiming for private school scholarship
- Year 6 'gifted' boy aiming for Selective Schools entry
- Year 7 and Year 9 'gifted' siblings aiming for private school scholarship

The preparation for these students involves exposure to a range

of different types of questions and problems, some visual, some mathematical/logical and others literacy-based. To do well, a broad general knowledge is very useful. What I am finding is that there is a trend emerging from these students despite the different schools they attend, their different ages and genders, that suggest to me there is a general decline in general knowledge, use and command of language, understanding of maps and the placement of nations. Combined, these mean that our brightest students appear to have lost something. Sometimes, the best help I can give is to encourage a broad reading of both fiction and non-fictional literature and time to be spent poring over maps and imagining. Less time 'doing' and more time reflecting seems to integrate the mind and assist in the development of higher-order cognition.

One to One - By Pamela Davies

There can be no doubt that the tutoring industry has a major impact on the education sector. As we attend to our businesses, it is crucial to ensure that the central imperative of our work is always the quality of the learning transactions with our students. Focused tutoring makes a mighty difference and for those of us who work directly with young learners, their achievements are paramount. In this context, we might consider Will's story.

Two years ago, Will arrived in my office. Blundering about, he cast the laptop ahead of him onto one arm, disappeared slowly, awkwardly, head-first under the desk, scrapped about with wires and connections and came up smiling. "Right. Yeah. Now we can work." This was the tentative beginning for Will's experience of tutorial learning.

Will would lean back in the chair, tucking one crooked foot backwards under him. His left hand, fingers curled into the palm, turned away from his wrist at an acute angle. The right hand was quite rigid, but strong enough to type. He relied on his laptop. Sometimes, when the office's networks fail to connect I watched my student's profile: face closing and eyes down, he would mentally withdraw just a little. Frustration had been a daily and constant reality for Will. He had weathered from birth multiple surgeries, the major challenges of cerebral palsy, and the world's many responses to his specific autism. Now, at 17, this shy, genial giant aims to enroll in university "sometime soon".

My files held his chequered learning history. Hospitalisations for surgical repairs to fragile limbs had been regular and necessary. Psychological tests and learning assessment procedures had been a constant emotional mix: supportive and disruptive, sensitive and intrusive requirements. Schooling had been limited and at 15, Will experienced a lonely period of depression. When he recovered, he risked an enquiry, asking to be admitted to a "normal" school. With determined family support, a school was found. Will needed considerable consolidation learning to meet the mainstream curriculum requirements. From our first tutorial meeting, we began to define and implement the best options for his progress. Now we are two years further advanced in our progress.

Our tutorials have always been an adventure. Often surprising, our discussions have ranged across subject fields, challenging us both. Will would research and write relentlessly; together we applied conventions and checked criteria. Often fatigue dropped like a veil over Will's mind. "I have to think slowly," he often explained, referring to his learning difficulties. We talked out the propositions, discussed and revised the readings. He made his judgments about developing essays and responses, still painstakingly typing with one straight hand. As his confidence grew, his language, his expressive capacity, was shown to be exceptional. The depth of his general knowledge emerged as formidable.

At the end of the second year final class assessments loomed. Will had been granted a little extra reading time. His concentration came at the price of fatigue and could easily be stressed. His effective hand, despite extensive physiotherapy and finely targeted exercises, was still rigid, tight, slow, but he marshalled the words to deliver his knowledge amazingly well. Of necessity, he summarised, making his points, getting to the end. The reports, marks and comments came back, cheering him on: "Great, but more detail needed..." "Well-structured, but too general." "Good attempt but examples and stats needed..." This he accepted philosophically. He faced all his challenges that way.

We read the advice on the screen, filed the report, hit the Save key and celebrated a series of great grades, knowing that he had achieved his dream of qualifying for university.

We cannot underestimate the effort made by students like Will. He represents elements of students we all know. His achievements are the product of his own courage and resilience. His story reminds us that without doubt, tutoring is often a vital intrinsic element of the educating team, and can make a real and invaluable difference, ensuring opportunity and the chance to unlock personal potential.

For the purposes of this article, "Will" is fictitious: he is a fusion, drawn from the realities we encounter in our tutoring and teaching practice..



An Even Start 2008 - by Stuart Trist, Project Manager Curriculum

An Even Start – National Tuition Program is providing literacy or numeracy tuition to the value of \$700 (ex GST) for each student who did not meet the 2007 national reading, writing or numeracy benchmark in years 3, 5 and 7 (or who was formally exempt).

Parents and caregivers of eligible students will be able to choose whether their child receives school-based tuition or private tuition delivered by a private provider.

Tuition in reading, writing or numeracy will be personalised to meet the needs of individual students but will allow for flexible delivery. This could include one-to-one tuition, small group or online delivery and delivery through study clubs and homework centres. Tuition must be completed during the 2008 school year.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has contracted Curriculum Corporation as Private Tuition Coordinator (PTC) to manage the delivery of tuition by private tuition providers, where parents/caregivers choose this option.

There is a four-step registration process for private tuition providers who can be either individual tutors contracted directly to the PTC or tutors employed by tuition companies:

1. Read the information for private tuition providers, including the Tutor Code of Conduct, and the Private Tuition Registration Forms which are downloadable from the AES Private website at www.aesprivate.edu.au
2. Complete the appropriate Private Tuition Registration Form and send it to the PTC, Curriculum Corporation (address details are in the document).
3. Curriculum Corporation will send a Letter of Agreement to selected applicants.
4. When a signed Agreement is in place, private tuition providers will be registered on the AES National Tuition Management System database. Tuition companies and approved individual tutors will be registered by the PTC.

For further information about private tuition under *An Even Start* and to access the Private Tuition Registration Forms, visit www.aesprivate.edu.au. You can make a free call to our national private tuition help desk on 1800 076 331 between 9 am and 5 pm (EST) Monday to Friday, or email helpdesk@anevenstartprivate.edu.au.

The *An Even Start – National Tuition Program* is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Record Keeping and Student Assessment - Mohan Dhall

An intrinsic aspect of all educational interventions is accountability. In the context of tutoring this takes several forms:

- Accurate record keeping on student files
- Honest verbal and written feedback to parents

It is my belief that tutoring gains credibility when brief reports are written after each tutoring session. If these reports record the work covered, make observations regarding any difficulties and also record social factors like the student's attitude to learning then they can give great insight to the student and also the parent.

It is my belief that tutors should be honest about any difficulties being faced by students. If weaknesses are detected and disclosed then the parent is well placed to take remedial action and make informed decisions. Often tutors, in their role as mentors, are the first to detect areas where there are problems or concerns. This may lead to the need for a referral to other sources. If so this may mean that the tutor might have to forego income. This point is crucial as the interests of the student should never be compromised for the sake of commercial gain.

A summary report is appropriate at the end of a Term or program of study is appropriate as it provides insight into the tutoring and makes clear to parents what has been done.

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ATA Board Meetings 2008

ATA Board meets face-to-face 4 times per year. Members are welcome to email Board members to have items discussed at Board level. All issues raised, ideas and initiatives are taken seriously and assessed in the light of the best interests of the ATA. The meeting dates for 2008 are:

- Monday 26th May 2008
- Monday 18th August 2008
- Saturday 6th December 2008 - Annual General Meeting (AGM), at 6 College Street, Croydon, NSW

Additional Board meetings will take place via teleconferencing between each of the face-to-face Board meetings.

Note that views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the ATA Board. Private contributions are welcome and are a necessary aspect of raising issues for discussion amongst ATA members and in the wider community.

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Contacting Us

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ATA Updates:

Publicity

The ATA is always looking for opportunities to promote our aims of raising consumer protection issues and raising consumer awareness on the need for accountable, open and honest tutoring. If you have an issue you feel needs to be brought to the attention of the public please contact the ATA.

Collection of Articles

This is a general call to all tutors. There has been some discussion amongst members for the need to capture the trends and history of tutoring in Australia. The ATA would like to assist with or undertake such a project.. If members have articles about tutoring, or wish to provide insight into the history of the industry and/or their businesses then could they email the Editor at the following email address: mdhall@ata.edu.au

Sticker availability

ATA bumper and window stickers are now available. There are two different versions available (see insert in newsletter). If you wish to purchase additional stickers they may be bought for \$1 each. Please contact the ATA office at the number, address or email on this page.

Back Issues of the Newsletter

Previous issues of the ATA newsletter are available upon request. Moreover, they can be downloaded from the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au.