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WithinTuition Editorial

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Editorial

Welcome to the September Edition of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) newsletter.

Literacy Specialisation – Foundations of Reading

We are delighted to announce that the **Literacy Specialisation – Foundations of Reading** has been finalised. Created by Dr Allison Greenland, we highly recommend tutors consider completing this course as a part of their professional training. Doing this course, earns 18 credits points – enough to transition to **Silver Qualification** status. Tutors can enrol in this course at <https://ata.college>

Lockdowns and re-openings

The tutoring market has been deeply affected by Covid and lockdowns in our most populous states. Tutors and tutoring businesses in NSW and Victoria particularly have suffered because of extended lockdowns.

The lockdowns have created deep uncertainty amongst parents as well. With regular schooling being disrupted, work uncertainty, health and safety concerns about face-to-face and online learning, and with mixed experiences with respect to online learning, students and their families are more cautious about online tutoring.

Re-opening and new growth

Once 80% vaccine targets have been achieved then State and Territory governments will significantly relax restrictions. This should be accompanied by a period of economic recovery. Once this occurs, I expect that we will see a large increase in the uptake of tutoring – a fact predicted in the government's own Jobs Outlook data.

Mohan Dhall, ATA CEO



Literacy Specialisation – Foundations of Reading

The ATA College has launched the Literacy Specialisation – Foundations of Reading course. It is the first specialisation created for ATA College. This specialised study focuses on the foundations of reading as an essential and fundamental first step in literacy. Created by Dr Allison Greenland, this training will help tutors to understand the elements of literacy and to apply it in their own professional practice.

Dr Greenland is a literacy specialist. She has trained both teachers and tutors in specialised literacy training. She currently runs *Leap into Literacy* - a business dedicated to assisting students improve their literacy, and to addressing literacy issues in education.

Tutor training

Tutors can undertake this literacy specialisation to be designated as a literacy specialised tutor. To complete this specialisation all three modules must be completed. In addition, each of the module tests must be completed to a pass mark of 80%.

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Educators who have undertaken specialised training in literacy and can show evidence of this training through academic transcripts, can be granted RPL. Applicants will need to submit evidence of their prior studies and have those transcripts assessed to gain this exemption.

Literacy Specialists

Tutors who successfully complete the literacy specialisation will be recognised as literacy specialist tutors. If these tutors are ATA members, this will be denoted with a specialised literacy icon beside the tutor's profile on the ATA website.

Call for Numeracy Specialists

ATA College is calling for numeracy specialists to help create training for tutors around mathematical literacy. We believe the addition of a numeracy specialisation will be beneficial to tutors who can then undertake specialised and targeted training in numeracy. For more details about how to apply please see Page 6 of this ATA newsletter.

COVID Intensive Learning Support

The NSW Government has allocated \$337m to schools to assist students most affected by the Covid pandemic. Based on this notion of 'learning loss', the government identified early that there were significant educational ramifications arising for those students most educationally disaffected by the lockdowns.

Learning loss

In her article, "*My message to parents: Don't panic, remote learning is OK for most kids*" published in the SMH on August 25th, Professor Jenny Gore, an educational researcher, stated, "*The term "learning loss" is highly problematic.*" She went on to state that "*even the Year 3 students from disadvantaged schools who achieved less growth in maths compared with 2019 students didn't go backwards. They gained new knowledge and developed new skills in 2020.*"

Here we see the gap between academic studies, carefully couched and reported, and actual tutor, parent, and teacher experiences. Dr Gore also used the words, "most kids". Most can mean "80%", and we do know that about 20% of students, up to half a million, have been severely impacted by lockdowns. The further issue with this article by Professor Gore is that narrow studies fail to assess student confidence, their emotional resilience, and their capacity to take academic risks when problem solving. In my experience in schools and tutoring over the past year, students have been very impacted, and their learning has undoubtedly been hampered or compromised.

In my view, we cannot simply dismiss the notion of learning loss. Students and their families have suffered, and students need additional support. According to Sonneman and Goss (2020) from the Grattan Institute,

"Even if remote learning worked well, disadvantaged students are likely to have learnt at about 50% of their usual rate. This means they would have lost about one month of learning over two months of remote schooling."

The ATA as a provider under the COVID ILS program

In this context we are very happy that the ATA is one of the COVID ILS providers listed on the Department of Education website. We believe that the best approach to remediating the amplified disadvantage that has occurred for students at risk due to lockdown is framed around individualised learning plans (ILPs). To this end, the ATA will work with schools to create ILPs for each learner we are tasked to support.

Private tutoring ban in China

The growth in private tuition in markets such as Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China has been the subject of numerous academic studies. In the most recent decade, large firms in China have been set up to take advantage of middle-income parents seeking to maximise the educational opportunities for their child(ren). Many of the firms have grown very large and tens of millions of parents have invested billions of dollars into the private tutoring sector. This sector has grown in addition to the many billion-dollar English language market globally.

\$140bn tuition market

According to business reporters David Chau, Joyce Cheng and Jason Fang in *China tries to spark baby boom by destroying its \$140 billion tutoring sector* (20 Aug 2021) the Chinese private tutoring market was worth \$140bn – about 140 times the size of the Australian market. Yet the Chinese population at about 1.4 billion people is around 55 times larger than the Australian population of 25.5 million. On these figures this means that tutoring in China has about 2.5 times the market penetration. This implies two trends: proportionally more students do private tutoring in China and/or families undertake a greater volume of private tutoring.

According to Pete Sweeney in *China's education crackdown flunks economics* (Reuters, 21 June 21) *Chinese tiger parents serve investors well. Families in Shanghai's Jing'an district, for example, spent around \$80,000 per child on educational services before they even reached high school, a 2019 state think-tank survey found. Multiplying by 400 million middle-income people produces a massive market.*

The tutoring ban

According to Guo Ginhui in *Off-Campus Training Center of the Universe' Stands Empty in Beijing* published in YiCai Global on June 15, the Chinese *Ministry of Education set up a new department to regulate off-campus education and training institutions. According to industry rumors, its establishment meant that stricter supervision policies were imminent, including a blanket ban on extracurricular tutoring during the upcoming summer vacation.*

Sources

<https://www.yicaiglobal.com/news/off-campus-training-center-of-the-universe-stands-empty-in-beijing>

<https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/chinas-education-crackdown-flunks-economics-2021-06-21/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-20/china-crackdown-private-tutoring/100392352>

Re-opening: Staff vaccines Covid-safe plans

NSW and Victoria are set re-open after stringent lockdowns. We are all looking forward to the re-opening of our centres for physical, face-to-face tuition.

The path forward for each State and Territory will vary. The NSW Roadmap is provided below.

NSW Roadmap

The government advice is as follows: Educational facilities CANNOT re-open until we reach the 80% vaccine milestone. This is expected to be on or about, 25th October 2021. Once we do re-open for face-to-face tutoring the following rules apply:

- 1 person per 4sq metre rule will apply
- Staff must be double-vaccinated, or they will need to work from home
- A Covid-safe plan must be in place

Additionally, the ATA suggests

- Students and their families should be given a choice as to whether they want to have face-to-face learning or continue to learn online. They cannot be forced to come into a centre.

Unvaccinated parents

Unvaccinated parents will not be permitted on-site and those that do come on-site should expect to be asked to be shown proof of vaccination status.

Further, the normal Covid-safe plan applies:

- Physical distancing
- Hand hygiene
- Use of face masks by all staff indoors
- Sanitation of surfaces

NSW from 1st December

From 1st December the rules relax further, and the 1 person per 2sq metre rule applies. Mask wearing it appears, will not be mandatory. For further information with respect to NSW read the information at this link:

Source: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/FACT%20SHEET.pdf>



A call for Expression of Interest (Eol) in creating Modules

ATA College, a not-for-profit public company that is a wholly owned subsidiary of the ATA, is calling for interested and suitably qualified people to consider sending in an Expression of Interest to create original content in training Modules. These training Modules will be available to both ATA members and non-members, but at different prices.

The Eol document has been uploaded to the ATA media page and may be found here:

<https://ata.edu.au/2021/02/14/ata-college-call-for-expressions-of-interest/>

Interested parties are invited to return the completed form to the ATA office. Shortlisted applicants will then be able to view a complete Module to assess whether they are able to create content using suitable technologies.

Those who create Modules used by ATA College will earn a 20% royalty on net sales.

ATA listed as one of five providers to the DET for covid intensive learning support

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) has been listed by the Department of Education (DET) as one of the five providers for Covid Intensive Learning Support (ILS) under its \$337m tutoring program. The ATA sought to be involved in the online learning component of the program rather than the face-to-face component.

The only tutors allowed to operate under the requirements are those whom:

- are fully teacher trained and with a *current* NESA or DET number, or
- are undergoing the final stages of their teaching qualification at university and have a *current* NESA or DET approval

Any teacher selected under the program will be vetted by the NSW Department of Education.

Teachers wishing to register with the ATA under this program should provide their details here:

<https://ata.edu.au/membership/covid-learning-support-program/>

To date we have provided several quotes and we have a range of specialised teachers willing and ready to support vulnerable and disadvantaged learners across the NSW.



ATA AGM

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd is pleased to invite you to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2021. Details are:

Time: 5.30pm – 6.00pm

Date: Thursday 9th December 2021

Location: Wesley Centre – 220 Pitt Street Sydney

Cost: Nil

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Correspondence
 - 2.1. Correspondence Received
 - 2.2. Business Arising from Correspondence
3. Reports
 - 3.1. Secretary's Report
 - 3.2. Treasurer's Report
 - 3.3. Business Arising from the Reports
4. General Business

RSVP

Please confirm your attendance (and any others) by Friday 3rd December 2021, 6pm.

This can be done by emailing us: office@ata.edu.au or contacting the office on 0481 255 574.

Please advise us of any special dietary requirements.

ATA College – Official launch

We are very proud to announce the NEW Official ATA College launch date

Time: 6.00pm – 7.30pm

Date: Thursday 9th December 2021

Location: Wesley Centre – 220 Pitt Street Sydney

Cost: Nil

Official Launch: 6.00pm to 6.30pm

6.30pm Mingling, free dinner and free drinks

All members welcome



Tutor Tip #2 – How do we know they know?

A fundamental question arising for all tutors and educators is this, *“How do we know they know?”* Common forms of questioning used by educators when “assessing” student understanding are these:

- Everyone understand?
- Are you with me?
- Any questions?

Whilst well-meaning, each of these forms of inquiry is probably worse than useless. Indeed, these questions serve the tutor, and do not serve the student at all. This is because the typical response from students is either, “yep” or silence. In my experience, silence is generally construed by the educator to mean “yes”. In other words, these questions take passivity as an answer to mean active affirmation that the tutor taught well.

To know how our students know, and what they know, we need to do better. One way of doing better is to ask students to teach back what has just been taught.

This means saying to our student(s) something like this, *“I am not sure whether I have been clear. Can you teach me back what I just taught so I can assess what has been understood and whether I need to teach this in a better way?”*

In this modelled response from the tutor, it should be evident that the tutor, as a professional educator, is taking responsibility for the learning of the student.

In my experience once students can teach concepts back, they tend to demonstrate mastery. An even better approach may be to say to students, *“Without using any of the words I just used, can you teach me back what I just taught?”* This aims to help the student own their personal articulation of concepts and ideas. The effect of this is to improve student concept retention. It also helps guide the tutor as to whether there are any areas with the student’s understanding that need to be clarified, reinforced, or expanded.

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