



Within Tuition

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd.

Volume 5 Issue 2

June 2010

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd

ATA-Dymocks deal: An alliance with Dymocks (Sydney)

The ATA Board is pleased to announce yet another business alliance - this time with Dymocks (Sydney). The Alliance is **ONLY** with the Dymocks (Sydney) franchise and offers the following:

- Fast, convenient procurement of books
- 10% discount* (negotiable on bulk purchases)
- Corporate gift service
- Free delivery for consolidated orders of \$500 or more
- Convenient browsing on-line at www.dymocks.com.au
- VIP invitations to special shopping and author events

* The offer cannot be used in conjunction with the Booklover card, any sales items, DVDs, CDs or software. The discount applies to the Recommended Retail Price (RRP).

About Dymocks Sydney Corporate Book Service:

This operates from Dymocks Sydney and is located at 424 - 426 George Street in Sydney. There are over 300,000 titles in stock and there is an ability to order from both local and overseas distributors.

How to Order

Orders can be placed 7 days per week from 9am - 5.30pm (Sunday from 10am) via the following methods:

1. QUOTE: "ATA ASSOCIATION" when placing an order.
2. In-store purchases can be made from the Special Orders section at the back of the ground floor - Quote "ATA ASSOCIATION" when ordering
3. Phone orders can be placed Monday to Friday. Tel: (02) 9224 0432 or Fax: (02) 9223 2970
4. Email orders can be sent to: corporate@dymocks.com.au

Note: Whilst the Dymocks website is useful for browsing titles and assisting with book selection, ATA members cannot access the discount using the website. They must only order as per the requirements listed above.

The ATA Board is very pleased to offer this service to our members. The ATA will receive a commission of 4% of total sales made to ATA members via this alliance annually. This should assist with covering the costs of administration.

The ATA Board is currently evaluating another possible business alliance for the express purpose of adding value to membership. If this opportunity materialises into a formal alliance then members will have a wonderful range of benefits to access.

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An ATA Members Card

The ATA has made a number of key corporate alliances over the past 12 months and it is expected that this will continue over time. AAMI, Westpac, Hoyts and now Dymocks. In order to help members to keep track of these alliances the Board are considering issue a membership card for use by members. This will also be convenient when calling the ATA office in regards to any membership inquiries or other matters.



Mid-year deal from Hoyts

Hoyts are offering an extended mid-year deal. In early June, via the ATA website, Hoyts offered the following: "Buy a Book of 10 movie vouchers and go in the draw to win passes to either: Robin Hood (rated M), The A-Team (rated M) or The Karate Kid (rated M).

A new offer has been made by Hoyts which will place orders of a Book of 10 in the draw for a Bluray DVD of "Away We Go". Rolling Stone Magazine assessed this movie as "Absolutely extraordinary". It is rated MA15+ and would be good only for older students or tutors.

Apart from cheap and accessible movie tickets, the prizes offered by Hoyts could be good gifts or rewards for students. Clearly Hoyts is offering deals which act as incentives for ATA members and their staff. We still have books of 10 cheap movie passes and ATA members are encouraged to take advantage of the offer.

Gillard extends ETR - but still does NOT include face-to-face tuition...

On Tuesday July 13th the Prime Minister announced an extension to the Education Tax Rebate (ETR) Scheme. In her announcement she extended the rebate to cover \$779 worth of uniform expenses. The ETR allows claimants who are means tested to obtain a tax deduction on various education-related expenses. The announcement by the Prime Minister is welcome news for parents and will be financially beneficial to some parents.

For parents interested in the substance of education, rather than the form, this news will be greeted with raised eyebrows. Surely parents facing financial hardship would also benefit from having face-to-face tuition tax deductible up to an equal value. At present such tuition is expressly excluded whilst computer software, often priced at \$6,000 or more attract the \$779 rebate.

With NAPLAN results being used to compare schools it would benefit students, parents and teachers if the fear of embracing and acknowledging the work done by the private tuition market was overcome. For a start the sector could be validated through taxation relief to means-tested parents seeking face-to-face tuition for their children.

An ATA Scholarship program?

A criticism that can be levied at any fee-for-service tuition is that it is 'elitist'. Critics may say that private tuition caters for the rich and reproduces social inequities. It could be argued that only the people with means can have the personalised intervention and mentoring that private tuition programs can offer. In mainstream education a similar argument is mounted against private education, even though the existence of the private sector takes pressure off the public sector.

In the national education debate little attention is given to tuition. Tutors assist students to learn essential literacy, numeracy and thinking skills. They also promote examination readiness and problem-solving techniques. Tutors instill inner confidence and can guide students individually in a way that most mainstream classrooms cannot. When students get through examinations, successfully learn to problem-solve, gain entry into a particular school or course of learning where is the praise from the mainstream educational sector?

Corporate sponsorships

One way to demonstrate the value of tuition to a mainstream sector in denial is through the use of corporate sponsorships. This would be an accountable scheme of corporate sponsorships targeting students of low socio-economic background. Ideally, the scholarships would offer 32 weeks of 1 hour one-to-one tuition sessions per year. This would be based on 4 x 8-week terms. As such, the cost to a corporate to pay for, and thus name, a scholarship would be in the order of \$3,500.

The success of the scholarships program would be in the administration and accountability it would deliver. In this way it would distinguish itself from the tuition vouchers paid for under the debunked and poorly evaluated 'An Even Start' (AES) tuition scheme.

Many ATA members are already offering scholarships to students, though these are not aligned with the corporate sector. Consider the following from Mandarin Stars:

Mandarin Stars Scholarship Program

At Mandarin Stars up to 2 terms of free tuition is on offer to students from families that are experiencing financial hardship. The onus under this program is on the applicant to apply. The aim of the program is to give access to those who wish to learn Mandarin, including those that come from families that cannot afford it. In this way the business feels it is returning something to the community.

NTA National Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, USA - Mohan Dhall

From April 10th to 14th the National Tutoring Association of America held its Annual Conference. The venue was Louisville in Kentucky. The Conference drew delegates from across the USA, Canada, Hawaii and Australia. Also attending were numerous businesses particularly those focused on using technology in the management of students and in the delivery of on-line services.

The themes for the Conference were wide ranging, incorporating student management, business administration, tutor training and development as well as issues in relation to student learning and behaviour management.

The number of Conference attendees was lower than usual, on account of the recession being experienced throughout America and in Canada. This issue was a major factor affecting business enterprises both within and also outside of the educational services market.

There were two keynote speakers. One of these, Dr Samuel Bettances, spoke about his own life. He came from an impoverished background and was poorly educated when he came across a couple of people who opted to mentor him. They taught him the value of an education and stressed the relationship between effort and reward. The first of his mentors taught him the value of reading, particularly biographies. Once this enabled him to acquire enough of a grasp of literacy he went to university where he was mentored by a university professor.

Dr Bettances has worked throughout the world and assists international understanding and fostering cultural awareness as an intrinsic aspect of global interaction. He has worked for governments at all levels and is very highly regarded as a mediator and negotiator. He gave a very inspirational message of the value of education in shaping the outcomes and life chances of people.

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) in developing its partnership with the NTA was also invited to deliver a paper to the Conference. The paper given was a compilation of the research on the trends and importance of tuition throughout the world. The cost of this trip was partly borne by the ATA following Board approval.

This paper was very well received as it approached the issue of tuition from an unusual perspective in the context of the USA.

This is because the US market developed out of the system of university tutors and from there has entered the commercial sector. Thus, the issues of educational accountability, Codes of Practice and the relationship both to government as well as mainstream education raised considerable interest.

Whilst there an opportunity was taken to thoroughly investigate the alternatives and options in relation to tutor training and certification. The model used in the USA is predominantly on-line based and has various levels of exit. This model is module-based and tutors pay for entry into each module. Tutor trainers are appointed to assess the students and there are core units and options. Completion of the training gives entry into the NTA as a member. The training is conducted by a private organisation with an affiliation to a university. Given the pricing point this model seemed like an interesting one for Board consideration.

For more information about the Conference you may visit: http://www.ntatutor.com/conf_sched.htm



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A contractor or employee...? Further questions - Mohan Dhall

On March 4th 2010 Robert Gottliebsen wrote an article for the Business Spectator website titled "Chaos looms for SMEs". In his article Gottliebsen raises an issue of great relevance to tutors personally and tutoring firms generally. The issue is one that has been discussed in the ATA Newsletter previously: Contractors.

He asserts in his article that that the union wish to have all contractors classified as employees. This, he says, shifts the emphasis from the person doing the work to the actual work that is done. He puts it as follows: "What better way of doing that than tax the returns from a shovel differently from the person using it? Or to turn a contractor into an employee if that contractor gets a major contract which means that 80 per cent of the revenue for the business comes from one source? Or to require small businesses have two staff?"

Gottliebsen was referring to comments made by Nick Sherry at the time. The union movement appears to want contractors classified as employees as there are implications and benefits to the individual which give them greater protections. These protections would create a greater burden on employers. At the very minimum the following areas would be affected:

- Superannuation
- Taxation
- Workers compensation

Gottliebsen clarifies the law relating to contractors in the following way:

- He refers to the results test which poses the question: 'who is responsible for the rectification of errors in the work?' If the answer is the that the responsibility lies with the business not the individual then the person may more than likely to be an employee rather than a contractor.
- A second test applies for those who do not pass the results test. This test is based on where income is sourced. If 80% or more of a person's income comes from one source then they may be classified as an employee. If over 20% of total income comes from other sources then a person may be classified as a contractor.

However, a casual reading of the bullet points above can confuse. The results test must be passed first,

prior to looking at the 80:20 rule. The results test is applied first.

Implications for tutoring

In a tuition context, most tutors would be responsible for their clients, even if they work for an enterprise. This responsibility extends to lesson preparation, conducting the sessions and writing reports. In some tuition enterprises the lesson plans may be provided by the business or business managers. The tuition may simply be an application of the pre-prepared materials. In terms of reporting, managers will often sign off on any reports that are issued in the name of the firm. Thus, even if the tutor has a measure of autonomy, the responsibility lies with the firm.

If a business calls a person a contractor but undertakes to rectify any errors for tuition work not performed to standard then the lines between the two become blurred.

In terms of the results test, the issues here are how to ascertain how much is 80% of a person's income and when the value of total income is determined. A person can only know after the end of the financial year whether or not they have received over 80% of their income from only one source. This can also become confusing when a person spends more **time** on an activity but receives less income from it relative to other things they derive income from. Thus, a tutor running a one hour class may earn \$150 whereas if they run 3 hours of one-to-one tuition they might earn \$125 - substantially less money for doing longer hours of work. This discrepancy between income earning and time can lead to some confusion.

A tutor may prefer to be classified as an employee shifting the onus for taxation, superannuation and workers' compensation to the employer, whereas a tuition firm may prefer to lower costs by classifying the tutor as a contractor. Both parties need to be clear about the rules.

Thus tutors and tuition firms need to be very clear about how they characterise their relationship. In the first instance communication between the parties may be of use. An open dialogue and open communication between tutors and tuition firms would help define the parameters of the relationship and can assist in creating an environment of trust. Moreover, open dialogue can assist in reducing conflict later.



The ATA in the Press

- Mohan Dhall

Both the Daily Telegraph in and the Sydney Morning Herald have had articles related to the push by the Australia Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd for the mainstream recognition in the educational sector of tutors.

Background

This realisation came about through research conducted for the NTA Conference in USA (see page 3). In this research it became clear that the tutors are generally invisible with respect to mainstream education. Indeed it is classified as 'shadow education' by most academics and even by the United Nations. Tutors are not recognised in any jurisdiction as being equal to or valid in the context of the mainstream educational sector. This despite the tuition sector absorbing up to 30% of the discretionary spending of some households.

Moreover, in every nation where there are public examinations either for entry into particular schools (for example, academically selective schools, or 'elite' private sector schools which have high entry fees) or for entry into university there is a huge and growing tuition sector. Teachers publically shun the sector yet privately either work in it or place their own children in the hands of a tutor whilst they are in their schooling years. This ambivalence is reflected at government level as well where public governments generally do not regulate or formally acknowledge the sector yet will give vouchers for private tuition (Australia, South Africa, USA and numerous other jurisdictions) - especially when targeting children for low socio-economic backgrounds who do not meet literacy and numeracy standards.

It is in this context three things need to happen:

- Governments need to formally recognise the private tuition sector and give it a voice in educational debates that arise;
- Governments need to work with the sector to find acceptable forms of certification of tutor;
- Governments need to fund private tuition vouchers to assist students who do not meet benchmark standards of literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills

Daily Telegraph

Reported briefly that the ATA wants its tutors to be nationally recognised as they benchmark the highest industry standards and they seek to work in partnership with mainstream schools.

Sydney Morning Herald

Anna Patty wrote about the push by the ATA for national recognition of ATA accredited tutors. The aim is to elevate the status of private tuition out of the 'shadows' and for it to be acknowledged as an integral aspect of a healthy educational system.

SMH series into selective schools entry in NSW:

- "Coaching common at elite level" 03.07.10
- "Migrant pupils top entry tests for selective schools" 03.07.10
- "Selectives are causing academic apartheid" 05.07.10
- "Coaching colleges claim 60% success rate on selective schools test" 06.07.10

The Sydney Morning Herald recently ran a series of article by Anna Patty and Andrew Stevenson. The title of the first four articles are listed above and can be accessed from the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au

In the first of the articles Stevenson interview a number of parents who valued coaching as a part of a process to assist in entry into academically elite schools. This article was written alongside a jointly written article with Anna Patty. The co-authored article claimed that 42% of the non-English speaking background students who sat selective schools tests gained entry into selective schools. This contrasted with 23% 'success' (that is, entry) by those who spoke English at home. They claimed that there had been a rise from 29% (1995) to 62% (2008) of children of migrant families gaining entry into such schools. Their article also stated that up to 50% of students in Years 5 and 6 gifted classes (OC or 'Opportunity Classes') were from migrant background.

The notion of 'academic apartheid' was raised in their article of July 5th. Such 'apartheid' was 'academic and social' fostering inequities on the basis of ability and income. In the article various sources asserted that the use of selective high schools (there are 17 in NSW which are fully selective and 28 partially selective) was removing bright students from mainstream education thus denying other students academic models. Apparently an unnamed principal of an academically selective school stated that the selective system was a disaster for comprehensive schools.

In the fourth article the claims made by various coaching colleges in regards to the successful entry of students into selective schools was explored. One selective school principal conceded that whilst coaching was not recommended it did give students an edge.



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ATA Board Meetings

The ATA Board meets from time to time (at least four times per year face to face) and conducts regular teleconferences. The ATA Board aims to improve the range of services offered to ATA members.

Members are welcome to contribute items for the Board to discuss through contacting one of the Board members or emailing the ATA at the addresses listed below. Members are invited to contribute to the newsletter, which is published quarterly. The ATA Newsletter is distributed in hard copy form to all members and is also available on the ATA website for download.

Within Tuition Editor: Mohan Dhall
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Contacting Us

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ATA Updates:

The ATA Board is currently drafting a letter to every parent representative group to introduce the ATA to them directly. Moreover, the ATA Board will also seek to meet with both Simon Crean and the Shadow Education Minister prior to the next Federal election.

All members are reminded to have the Code of Conduct on display and to always abide by the requirements of the ATA Code. This distinguishes ATA members from other tuition providers. The Code is reviewed annually.

Sticker availability

The ATA has stickers available for car bumpers and for windows of premises. All new members received two such stickers upon acceptance of membership. Additional stickers can be purchased for \$1 each from the office. Postage is free.

Back Issues of the Newsletter

Previous issues of the ATA newsletter are available upon request. We now have nearly 4 years of quarterly newsletters which cover a huge range of issues relevant to the tutoring industry domestically. Moreover, they can be downloaded free from the ATA website: www.ata.edu.au.