



Within Tuition

Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Inc.

Volume 1, Issue 3

October, 2006

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) newsletter

Welcome to the third issue of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) newsletter. In this issue you will find some very interesting articles and an emergence of contributions from Queensland and Western Australia.

There has been much media interest in the industry in Queensland following the collapse of ABC and Tutor-master. Other media interest

has centred around the use of supposedly secure selective schools tests by some coaching colleges.

In this issue we look at these areas affecting tutoring:

- Some proposals for consideration by politicians
- Outcome Based Education in WA

- A media watch column
- An article outlining changes to the Code of Conduct

These articles are both informative and thought provoking and should stimulate much discussion amongst members and also within the industry generally.

For insight into the latest ATA initiatives please read the back page of the newsletter. Ed.

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President's Message



students beyond that offered by schools. Moreover, the ATA needs to be self-funded and professionally administered.

To this end we have made minor changes to the Constitution and the Code of Conduct. The new updated Code and Constitution are available from our website at www.ata.edu.au.

As a lobby group for tutors interested in benchmarking best practice we are also focused on consumer protection. Thus we are actively involved in raising an awareness of the unscrupulous practices of some operators. We openly share with parents and parenting groups advice on how to make the best decisions when deciding on a tutor.

Membership has topped three hundred organisa-

tions and individual tutors indicating that we are on course in the aim of representing the interests of ethical tutors nationally.

Our vision for the coming year is to focus on raising the ATA's profile through political lobbying and some very sound community initiatives which will give tutoring some very positive recognition.

We have had feedback from members that they want us to focus on these areas and it is important for members to know that we are listening. The Committee discusses many issues and is working collectively to find the best way to meet the needs of members. Our growth is giving us an increasing capacity to do so. We look forward to the next year with great anticipation.

Mary O'Brien, President

Our third edition of the newsletter, Within Tuition, brings to an end our first full year of formal operations and we approach our second AGM mindful of both our achievements and what needs to be done in the future.

The ATA Committee has focused this year on structural issues. We recognise the importance of representing the different sectors in the industry. Tutors and tutoring organisations provide tangible educational support for parents and

Protection for consumers from Non English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB): An Update

In the last issue we raised concerns for some minority groups that we felt were at risk from being misled by unscrupulous industry operators. The ATA has successfully had its Code of Conduct translated into three different languages:

- Korean
- Chinese
- Japanese

The Code can be downloaded from the website in these languages and should be available for clients for whom these languages are relevant. Eventually our whole website will be written in different languages and consumers will have the choice to opt for the language of their choice. This is an important initiative and help with translation from members will be very gratefully received.

Letters

Dear Editor,

I just wanted to give some feedback to say that I have embraced the Triangulation Method and am finding it very successful with the teachers I have engaged thus far. The teachers utilise the communication exercise book in which I paste a copy of a letter which I send them. This letter contains details concerning the use of the communications book, details of the student's assessment and an outline of the individual program that I intend to implement.

The use of the book has helped greatly to establish the three-way relationship (tutor-student-parents) in a mutually caring and nurturing way, for all three parties concerned. Furthermore, parents have expressed gratitude

because they want to maintain a health relationship with the teacher also of course, in respect of the additional tutoring.

Kind regards and thanks,
Jeanette Rachinger,
Aldon Tutoring Centre, Noosa

Dear Jeanette, I am very pleased that you are successfully applying the Triangulation Method (see Issue 1 Volume 1 of the Newsletter for details of the Triangulation method). Congratulations! It is good to see that tutoring and more formal schooling can successfully work in partnership for the benefit of all concerned stakeholders.

Some proposals for the ATA Committee and members to consider By Tony Williams, Director, Aldon Tutoring Centres - Bayside and Victoria Point

The following proposals were put to Andrew Laming, MP, the Federal Member for Bowman in Queensland, as a result of my realising that there are problems with many parents accessing accountable tutoring for their children. The proposals have been brought to the attention of the ATA Committee for consideration.

Proposal 1 Make Tutoring GST Free

Consider the provision of tutoring as an extension of the education system similar to other educational providers, such as private schools. I believe that this initiative would require a change in mindset, but would assist all families, no matter what their income. It would immediately decrease the cost of tutoring thus increasing available cash which could be put to other purposes. All students, regardless of ability, would benefit from this.

Proposal 2 Make tutoring fees tax deductible for parents

Consider tutoring as a means of improving a child's work prospects and future income. This proposal would make it easier for parents to make a commitment to tutoring, and for a longer period of time. The effect of this would be to allow more students to experience academic success and to reach a point where they can operate independently in the classroom. The extra assistance given to parents under this proposal would more than pay for itself as children's opportunities in life would improve through enhanced skills and greater opportunities for participation in the labour force.

Proposal 3 Allow the provision of benefits to be claimable under ancillary health funds for educational assessments and follow up programs of tuition

This would be inclusive of all students not only those with a medically diagnosed learning disorder or disability. Parents are already allowed to claim benefits from their private health funds for assessments and intervention programs for underdeveloped skill areas such as visual perception (ie behavioural optometry) and speech-language difficulties (ie speech pathology). Why not extend this to include assessments for children with learning difficulties or learning disabilities? Indeed, assessment carried out by tutors often initiate the detection of and treatment of students with underlying deficits in the areas of visual and auditory processing, thereby assisting in the diagnosis of underlying disabilities. Follow-up tutoring programs support and reinforce the work of specialists through timely and appropriate interventions which directly address student weaknesses whilst affirming strengths. Moreover, if more parents could afford tutoring then a higher number of children with deficit areas could be identified and assisted.

Proposal 4 Provide government funding to tutoring centres in order to subsidise the cost of tutoring to parents

This could follow the model currently in place for private providers of childcare,

thus reducing the costs to parents.

Proposal 5 Allow parents to access grants of \$800 (such as those given out with the Tutorial Voucher Initiative, TVI) to select their own preferred private service provider for tuition provided that the provider satisfies approved guidelines

For purposes of accountability, the provider should be a member of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Inc. By having this condition in place the Federal government would have confidence that the parents are engaging reputable, ethical and accountable tutors. This would be of benefit to families of students with learning difficulties.

In conclusion, increasing numbers of parents need tutoring for their children and they need the assistance of private providers of their choice. Parents need the government to acknowledge the increasingly important role that tutoring is playing in helping to ensure that children have a future which reflects their academic potential. Parents need changes to the current arrangements for the funding of tutoring as well as GST and tax deductibility concessions. If these initiatives were implemented then children and their families could enjoy the academic and emotional benefits that tutoring can bring. Moreover, the government will benefit from having a more highly skilled student population with flow on effects making a direct impact on the labour force.



Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in Western Australia

In response to Queensland Committee member Allan Matheson's request for a comment on OBE we have obtained the following from the Hon. Ljiljana Ravlich, the WA Minister for Education and Training

I welcome the opportunity to provide you with some information about the new system for the ATA newsletter... There is no doubt that the transition to a new outcomes and standards curriculum represents the biggest change in education in WA for 25 years.

The former system in WA was more than 20 years old and was not meeting the needs of students in the 21st Century. The move to an outcomes and standards approach to education brings WA into line with every other state in Australia, and is a condition of the Commonwealth funding agreement. It also has the support of the vice-chancellors of all of WA's universities.

In the past, the curriculum defined what should be taught to students, however it did not guarantee that students actually learned it. Under the new system, students will know what they are expected to learn and teachers will monitor students' progress to ensure that they achieve their potential. The new system focuses on the needs of every student and allows them to progress at their own rate. High standards are expected of all students, and teachers choose appropriate content, which ensures that students achieve their potential.

Fifty new courses are being implemented in WA schools between 2005 and 2008. The new courses have been designed to better prepare students for further education and training, as well as the demands of today's workforce.

The courses have been designed to be more flexible, creative and engaging for all students.

New courses have been developed with the support of industry. These courses include Aviation, Engineering Studies, Media Production and Analysis, Physical Education Studies, Building and Construction and Psychology.

How will an outcomes and standards approach benefit students? Outcomes identify what a student should know, understand, value and be able to deliver based on effective learning and good teaching. Standards make it clear what students are expected to achieve. The focus is not only on what is being taught but also on what a student actually learns.

It will provide:

- Consistent standards - across all courses
- A vast array of educational choices - catering to the needs of all students
- More control over learning - students learn to think for themselves
- Open pathways through Year 11 and 12 - there's no requirement to lock in subject choices in year 10
- Greater employability skills - the development of critical thinking skills as well as the opportunity to develop skills in specialist areas that provide a direct pathway to tertiary courses, training or the workforce
- Recognition for all student learning - in and out of school
- Course content - new courses will build on content of current subjects
- Parents and students will now get a fuller picture of what is expected of students and what needs to be done to improve. The explicit standards will help schools to monitor their students' achievement over time.

Recent changes to the ATA Code of Conduct

....by Mohan Dhall

The ATA Code of Conduct has been amended and updated. The specific changes are:

- The term "Plagiarism" has been defined on page 2. This was necessary to define as there seemed to be a blurring of understanding as to how cheating related to plagiarism
- The explanation of Plagiarism under Article 28 is in the new Code
- Clauses under the heading relating to Refunds have been simplified and now read as follows:

38. A client has the right to discontinue tutoring services for any reason whatsoever

39. All ATA Members must have a written Refund Policy which must be available for clients

40. The Member's Refund Policy must be consistent with all relevant Federal and State legislation

41. Members cannot ever display a sign saying "No Refunds" as this is misleading. Consumers do have the right to a refund if there is a breach of statutory conditions—Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth). Such conditions include working with appropriate care and skill, and providing the level of service promised or advertised.

Constitutional Amendments for growth of the ATA

The ATA Committee have reviewed the ATA Constitution in order to better grow the organisation and to facilitate a better voting process for the AGM in December.

The changes agreed to by Special Resolution of the Committee are as follows:

- An amendment to the voting procedures to allow for postal voting in Clause 26
- An expansion of the Committee from 7 members to 9 members to enable interstate expansion (with 3 members from each of categories A, B and C). This affects Clauses 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 11.2 and 11.5

Create additional income with virtually no extra work...



Tutoring Centres nationally are on-selling the highly regarded 'Table Tunes CD' and retaining over 40% commission.

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ATA campaigns

- Lobbying for making all past selective schools and OC (Opportunity Class) test papers to be made available to all students
- Raising consumer protection issues as they relate to students and families from NESB (Non English Speaking Background)
- Expanding membership into all States as enabled by the new Committee structure - see Stop Press

A call for help

We are seeking member help and calling for Member contributions. Specifically, could members consider contributing newsworthy articles and interesting discussions points relevant to the education of students. It would be great to have an Article in each newsletter focusing on the successes achieved by students as a result of the intervention of tutors. Please submit any Articles in this regard and they will be considered for publication.

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Contacting Us

For contributions and comments please email the ATA @ata.edu.au or mail us at:

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STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

ATA Committee Nominations

Nominees are being sought for positions on the ATA Committee. There are 4 open positions on the Committee. An insert in this newsletter details the nomination and voting process which will take place at the AGM in early December.

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 Public Officer of the ATA

Website

Please note that the Code of Conduct is now available in multiple languages: Korean, Mandarin and English. Vietnamese and Japanese language versions are currently being written.

Structure

By Special Resolution at the last Committee meeting of the ATA the ATA Committee structure has been expanded from 7 members to nine in order to better reflect the national character of the organisation. The practical effects on the running and structure of the organisation should not be different.

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.