Tutor Learning Initiative

2023 Tutor Practice Guide

Contents

About this guide

The 2023 Tutor Practice Guide provides targeted advice for educators working in the Tutor Learning Initiative.

Background

The Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI) was introduced in 2021 to support students whose learning had been disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TLI provides government and low-fee non-government schools with funding to employ tutors to deliver targeted small group learning support to students who need it most (see Student selection on page 4).

Small group tutoring has been consistently found to be amongst the most effective learning interventions available (Grattan, 2023).

Based on its impact and positive reception by schools, parents/carers and students, the initiative was extended in 2022 and again in 2023, with the focus now on supporting those students who are below, or at risk of falling below, the National Minimum Standards (NMS) in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) or equivalent.

The role of tutoring

Tutoring plays an important role in a school's teaching and learning program.

Within the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework (Figure 1), TLI is categorised as a Tier 2 support, where a targeted intervention is provided for identified students.

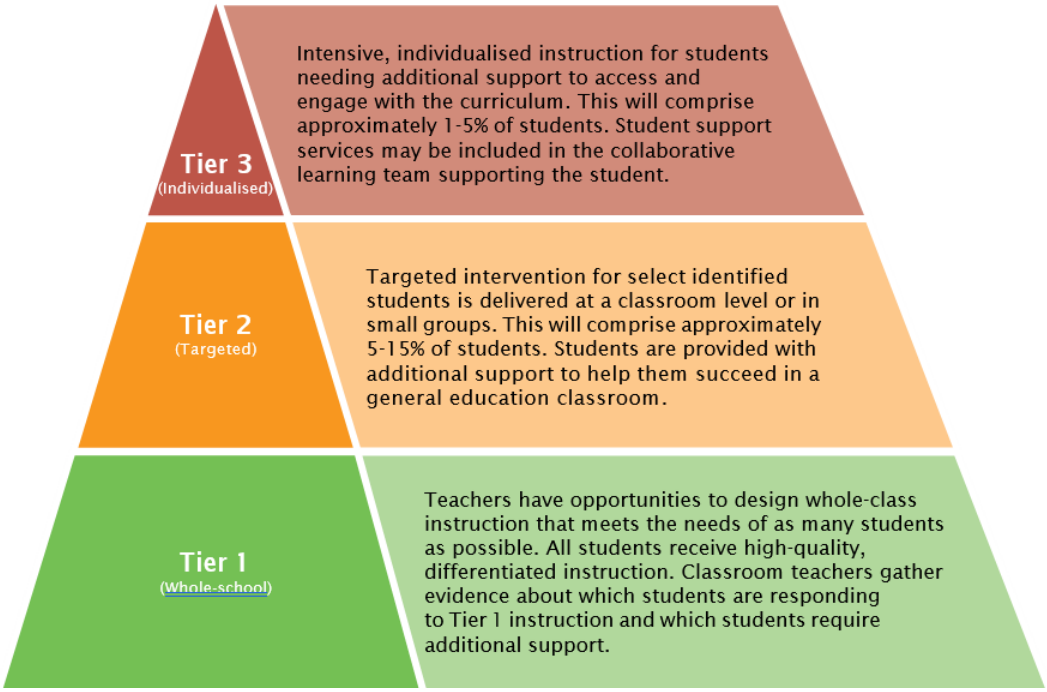
As an effective Tier 2 intervention, tutoring should:

- address identified gaps in students' learning
- use evidence-based approaches for teaching.

The focus of the TLI is on the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, which are critical for success in school and life.

Tutoring also supports the affective domain of learning (Bloom, 1956). Some students identified for TLI may have low self-esteem and may not self-identify as an effective learner, and this can often manifest as disengagement. Tutoring can contribute to reconnecting students to school.

Figure 1: Response to Intervention (RTI) tiers of academic support (adapted from Buffum Mattos, & Weber 2012).



Tutor qualifications

Tutors must be either:

- a teacher currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- a teacher with VIT Permission to Teach (teacher tutor)
- a pre-service teacher (PST) (employed as an education support (ES) class employee) working under the supervision of a registered teacher
- a speech therapist or occupational therapist (employed as an ES class employee) tutoring in specific identified student needs.
- a retired teacher who has re-registered with the VIT.

Your work as a tutor

Tutors are employed by schools to deliver small group learning support, with a focus on literacy and numeracy.

Tutors work closely with teachers and staff to:

- identify a student's point of need, through diagnostic assessments
- define SMART learning goals (recorded in an approved template) that can be achieved within a short, 5–8-week cycle of learning
- implement evidence-based, high-impact teaching strategies to progress learning
- regularly evaluate learning progress via formative assessments.

Student selection

Students should be selected for participation in tutoring using the following criteria in priority order:

1. Students below the National Minimum Standards (NMS) in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) or equivalent level in literacy or numeracy
2. Students at risk of falling below the NMS in NAPLAN or equivalent level in literacy or numeracy.
3. Other students who would benefit from small group instruction.

For students in F-2, schools should use the following resources to identify those students most in need of support:

- English Online Interview (EOI)
- Mathematics Online Interview (MOI)
- Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES)
- On-Demand Testing in English and Mathematics.

Schools should notify families of those students selected for participation in tutoring and the support their child will receive.

Schools must record students receiving support through TLI on CASES21 by the end of week 6 each term.

Students with complex and other needs

Students selected for support through TLI may have complex learning and other needs. Tutoring through TLI is intended to build upon and be integrated with existing supports as part of a whole-school approach to learning intervention.

For more information, visit:

- Learning Difficulties Information Guide (Numeracy)
- Learning Difficulties Information Guide (Literacy)
- Deciding if a student has a learning difficulty in numeracy
- Deciding if a student has a learning difficulty in literacy.

Program design

Key considerations in the design of a school's tutoring program should include:

- Tutoring frequency
- Instructional model
- Mode of delivery
- Assessment
- Links to reporting to parents/carers.

Tutoring frequency

For students to experience accelerated learning growth, evidence suggests that they should ideally participate in three 45-minute small group learning sessions per week, lasting anywhere from 6 to 20 weeks (E4L 2021).

Instructional model

Many schools will already have a clearly articulated instructional model that reflects the high impact teaching strategies (HITS), and schools are encouraged to apply this same model in tutoring sessions.

Of the HITS, explicit teaching and well-structured sessions are particularly important for effective tutoring.

Research into effective literacy intervention shows that instructions that directly address the information a student needs to learn have the greatest effect size for reading among students at every year level, supporting both low and high-level word comprehension (Hattie 2009).

Similarly, research conducted into effective numeracy intervention shows that logically sequenced instruction and instructions that directly address the information a student needs to learn are highly effective (Fuchs et al. 2008).

A tutor using explicit teaching:

- explains what students need to know and be able to do by the end of the session or unit
- uses worked examples to show students how to do something
- allows students sufficient time to practice what they have learned
- guides student practice by monitoring their work and providing help when it is needed
- reinforces the main points at the end of the lesson.

The way tutors structure sessions has a significant impact on student learning. A tutor structuring sessions effectively:

- explains to students the steps in the session, including presenting learning intentions, explicitly presenting new knowledge, identifying planned opportunities for practice, outlining questioning techniques the class will use and describing the assessment formats
- makes clear connections between the learning goals, activities and assessment tasks
- creates transparent, predictable and purposeful routines for students
- identifies clear transitions between each step in the lesson
- plans the sequence of steps to scaffold student learning
- monitors student understanding and provides feedback
- takes account of the social and emotional needs of the students.

Mathematics and Numeracy

Given the increasing attention being given to mathematics and numeracy, advice on teaching procedures to support development of these areas of learning is included in Appendix 1 of this guide.

Mode of delivery

Tutors should be working with small groups of students (generally up to 5 students) at a time. Tutoring can be delivered in-class, out-of-class, or in a hybrid model. The specific model is a school-based decision.

In-class support can include:

- providing intensive, ongoing small group or individual student learning
- teaching mini lessons to a small group of students (or individual students, where appropriate) to support skills required in the whole-class setting.

Out-of-class support can include:

- students being withdrawn from the classroom for small group or individual learning which has been differentiated to their point of need
- students attending an additional scheduled session for small group or individual learning differentiated to their point of need
- students attending a session immediately prior to a classroom lesson to preview vocabulary, skills or concepts, enabling students to be better prepared to access content
- students remaining in the classroom during introductory instruction, engaging in application activities in a separate space with

the tutor during the middle of the lesson, and returning to class at the conclusion of the lesson to share in whole-class reflection.

Hybrid support combines or adapts the above approaches.

Schools are encouraged to view the following resource for insights into mode of delivery trends in different school settings in order to inform their tutoring program: Tutor Learning Initiative – What works? Implementation insights for 2022.

Where sessions take place out-of-class, it is recommended that students do not regularly miss the same subject to ensure continuity of learning across the curriculum.

Assessment

Schools should measure student attainment using a standardised assessment tool at the commencement and the conclusion of tutor learning.

To support this, all Victorian government schools can access PAT assessment tools for free in in 2023. Schools are strongly encouraged to use the Adaptive PAT-R (Reading) and Adaptive PAT-M (Mathematics) to measure student achievement at the start and at the conclusion of their participation in the tutoring program. Schools have also been provided with access to the PAT Online Assessment and Reporting System (OARS).

Other high-quality standardised assessment tools recommended for use in the TLI include:

- the Digital Assessment Library (DAL) – schools are strongly encouraged to include the English and Mathematics assessments for Years 2-10, developed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
- the English Online Interview (EOI) and the Mathematics Online Interview (MOI) via the Insight Assessment Platform.
- Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) assessment tools
- Reading and Vocabulary Assessment Tool for students with English as an Additional Language (RVEAL)

The National Numeracy Learning Progressions and National Literacy Learning Progressions are also useful resources to map student's developmental progress.

Links to reporting to parents/carers

Schools may include information in the regular written reports to parents/carers about what additional learning support was delivered through TLI and what student outcomes were achieved.

Schools may request tutors to directly contribute to written reports by providing a short comment on:

1. a student's participation and engagement
2. information on the progress and achievement of learning goals set within the initiative.

For information on general reporting requirements, refer to Reporting Student Achievement and Progress Foundation to 10.

Tutoring Cycle

Evidence suggests that tutoring cycles of between 5-8 weeks are most effective (E4L 2021).

The cycle includes 4 elements, based on the FISO 2.0 Improvement cycle, specifically:

1. Evaluate and diagnose
2. Prioritise and set goals
3. Develop and plan
4. Implement and monitor.

Within the cycle, tutors should:

- sequence sessions to scaffold toward an identified learning goal
- identify sources of student data that will support monitoring of student learning growth against the curriculum, such as formative assessment rubrics and strategies
- consult with the classroom teacher to identify ways to connect sessions with classroom content
- plan flexibly to allow for adjustments to their approach and strategies based on formal and informal assessment indicators, to ensure continued learning progress for students.

Tutors are encouraged to refer to the practice examples included in Appendix 2 of this guide.

Tutoring Group Learning Plan

Some students in TLI will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which outlines key information including their literacy and numeracy learning goals.

If not all students in a TLI tutoring group have an IEP, then the tutor is required to develop a TLI Group Learning Plan or equivalent to capture the delivery approach and learning goals for each group of students receiving support (see Appendix 3 of this guide).

Tutors can of course develop a TLI Group Learning Plan even if all students have a pre-existing IEP.

1: Evaluate and diagnose

Understanding each student's individual learning needs is critical to determining appropriate interventions.

Tutors work alongside the student's classroom teacher to analyse data from a range of assessments to identify learning needs.

The school may already have created a literacy profile or numeracy profile for the student, which describes a student's existing knowledge and skills, their areas of need and identifies factors or obstacles affecting their learning. These profiles are invaluable for shaping the learning program, and it is recommended that a profile, even a fairly basic one, be developed for each student if not already available.

2: Prioritise and set goals

Setting a clear intention for the tutoring cycle guides the choice of appropriate interventions.

When prioritising areas for support and setting learning goals, tutors should consider what the assessments show to be the key learning gaps.

Where applicable, students' existing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) should be used to identify current and expected learning attainment levels.

Tutors should:

- collaborate with the classroom teacher to regularly monitor learning goals and progress, adapting them if progress is not being made
- document learning goals in the TLI Group Learning Plan template.

3: Develop and plan

Based on the learning goals for the tutoring cycle, the tutor develops learning tasks and session plans.

As noted in the Program design section, explicit teaching and effective structuring of sessions are particularly important to support students who are falling behind.

In their planning of the 5–8-week tutoring cycles, tutors should ensure these teaching strategies are prioritised.

Tutors should:

- develop tasks that motivate and challenge students
- plan for explicit instruction that models new knowledge, understanding and skills for students and gives them opportunities to practice these skills to competency and mastery
- plan to chunk concepts or texts into manageable pieces supporting scaffolding of learning and consideration of working memory

- give students thinking time and encourage them to talk through their thinking strategies (metacognition).

4: Implement and monitor

The tutor delivers tutoring sessions based on the TLI Group Learning Plan (or equivalent), incorporating regular monitoring.

In the implementation phase, tutors should:

- give students lots of opportunities to practice procedures and repeat new learnings to competency and mastery
- provide students with frequent task-based feedback linked to learning intentions
- maintain regular lines of communication with classroom teachers, school leadership, parents/carers to ensure adequate implementation support.

Student learning gains should be monitored during the tutoring cycles utilising a range of classroom-based assessment strategies, in conjunction with teacher moderation processes.

These assessment strategies can include:

- student self-reflection and goal setting, including recording their own progress against identified learning goals (dependent on student and context)
- recording and analysing observations of student verbal responses or student problem solving with the class using assessment rubrics
- formative assessment tasks undertaken during tutoring sessions.

In regard to monitoring, tutors should:

- monitor student learning with regular assessments to measure student outcomes and growth and share with students their learning progress
- make student progress visible to enhance motivation, either in small group settings, individually or with parents and carers
- update tracking documentation (such as student IEPs and/or TLI Group Learning Plans)
- identify the focus for the next learning cycle based on student learning progress.

Program Reflection

Schools and tutors can use the TLI Implementation Continua (the Continua) to reflect, self-evaluate, and track their progress regarding TLI implementation.

The Continua includes 6 dimensions unpacked across 4 levels of proficiency to support school self-assessment and the setting of developmental goals.

The Continua can be used to guide collective discussions between Student Achievement Managers (SAMs) and school leaders, classroom teachers and tutors to:

- self-evaluate their current TLI implementation and small group learning practice and understand what improved practice looks like
- engage in reflection, inquiry and conversations about improving TLI implementation
- sustain 2022 TLI implementation learnings into 2023 to support sustainable small group learning.

Schools are encouraged to review the following resource in order to inform refinements to their tutoring program: Tutor Learning Initiative – What works? Implementation insights for 2022.

Support for Tutors

Student Achievement Managers (SAMs)

Student Achievement Managers (SAMs) are located in the department's regional offices and are the first point of contact for schools.

SAMs work with schools to:

- support the implementation of TLI by working proactively with schools, networks, principals and their teams to build school improvement capacity through evidence-based best-practice literacy and numeracy intervention models.
- facilitate Communities of Practice (CoPs), which are an opportunity for tutors to connect with other schools in the region to share practice approaches and discuss challenges.

Tutors should talk to their principal team, who can connect them to their SAM for support in implementing TLI.

Professional learning

School leaders and tutors have access to professional learning to support the implementation of TLI.

Existing resources, including past professional learning, can be found on the TLI Arc channel and in the TLI Hub. A catalogue of all TLI webinars delivered to date is also available.

Other avenues for support include:

- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Communities of Practice (CoPs) within the school network
- professional learning offered by SAMs or other regional staff.

Contact

For further information on TLI, visit the TLI Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) page or contact tutor@education.vic.gov.au.

Key Resources

The following resources provide practice advice and strategies to support small group, literacy and numeracy intervention in schools:

- High impact teaching strategies (HITS)
- Tutor Webinar: HITS for small group learning
- Literacy Teaching Toolkit
- Numeracy Teaching Toolkit
- Literacy and Numeracy Learning Difficulties Information Guides
- Literacy and English for Koorie students
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Mental Health in Schools
- Student Engagement.
- Student Voice, Agency and Leadership: Resources
- SMART goal guidance
- Formative Assessment – Prof Practice Note 6

References

Bloom, BS (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*.

Buffum A, Mattos M and Weber C (2012) *Simplifying response to intervention: Four essential guiding principles*, Solution Tree Press.

E4L (Evidence for Learning) (2021) Small group tuition | E4L.

Fuchs LS, Fuchs D, Powel SR, Seethaler PM, Cirino PT and Fletcher JM (2008) 'Intensive intervention for students with mathematics disabilities: Seven principles of effective practice', *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 31(2):79-92.

Hattie J (2009) *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, Routledge, London and New York.

Sonnemann J and Hunter J (2023) Tackling under-achievement: Why Australia should embed high-quality small-group tuition in schools (grattan.edu.au)

Sullivan P (2011) Teaching Mathematics: Using research-informed strategies, *Australian Education Review,* 59

Appendix 1: Supporting Numeracy & Mathematics

Addressing big ideas and misconceptions

Tutors can help students grow in their mathematical understanding through the following process

1. identify mathematical content and/or focus areas that will be taught in the coming cycle/term by the classroom teacher/s of your students. *For example, additive thinking and decimals fractions in a Year 5 class.*
2. work out students' existing mathematics understanding of this content by using relevant parts of the:
    - Mathematics Online Interview. *For example, the MOI Section C for additive thinking.*
    - Fractions and Decimals Online Interview. *For example, Items 10-14 in the FDOI for decimal fractions.*
3. *use mapping tools* (i.e. Mathematics Online Interview – mapping tool, Fractions and Decimals Online Interview – mapping tool) to identify Victorian Curriculum level/s for each student, and gaps and misconceptions. For *example, students in Year 8 may be struggling with making connections between fractions and decimal notation (Level 4 achievement standard).*
4. use the Mathematics Curriculum Companion and/or the FDOI linked activities to select suitable activities for students, targeted to their point of need. Tutors can browse activities at the above links by Victorian Curriculum content code or focus area (mapping tools at 3, above, provide these codes/areas).
5. sequence activities into a tutoring lesson/s, structuring them to include:

    Previewing learning, where the tutor:

    i. familiarises students with the language and terminology to be used in the tutoring session
    ii. focusses students' attention on relevant concepts and skills, including surfacing and activating prior knowledge
    iii. introduces diagrams and other visual models that students will see later in the session.

    Investigating and consolidating learning, where the tutor:

    iv. makes explicit the intended learning
    v. "hooks" student interest in an engaging and meaningful way. *For example, link to a real-world problem; a short game or puzzle.*
    vi. proposes the activity/ies for the lesson, including:
        - modelling processes to be followed/practised by students
        - providing worked examples.
    vii. provides exploration and thinking time for students, as well as opportunities to share and collaborate with peers
    viii. engages in dialogue with students to draw attention to the mathematics in what they are doing, building mathematical connections within and between big ideas
    ix. uses observation and questioning to identify and address misconceptions
    x. uses similar activities ("a bit the same and a bit different") to check for and deepen understanding.

    Summarising and reviewing learning, where the tutor:

    xi. encourages students to articulate strategies and solutions, using work samples as evidence of learning
    xii. (re)makes explicit the intended learning, notes what has been achieved, and foreshadows future learning
    xiii. seeks feedback from students on their experiences of learning, including confidence about future learning.
6. provide classroom teacher/s of your students with feedback on learning, noting strengths and opportunities for strengthening.

Further Information

Mathematics Online Interview and Fractions and Decimals Online Interview – summary information

Scaffolding Numeracy in the Middle Years

Assessment for common misunderstandings

Appendix 2: Numeracy Practice examples

Primary Numeracy

The tutor is working in a primary setting with a group of 5 Year 6 students, focusing on the operations of multiplication (VCMNA183) and division (VCMNA184) for the broader cycle. The tutor is beginning with place value knowledge, prior to exploring the operations. For this sequence, the short term SMART goal is renaming of whole numbers from ones to hundreds of thousands (VCMNA186) (recognise, represent and order numbers).

The tutor draws on a range of High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) across the sequence.

Lesson 1: Tuesday | 40 minutes | Out-of-class support

The tutor establishes the lesson structure and responds to student questions before initiating the lesson.

1. Learning intentions and success criteria shared and explained
2. Explicit teaching of vocabulary
3. Open ended task to gather information about student knowledge of place value
4. Teacher models examples of identifying place value and renaming of numerals according to their place in the number
5. Students practise tasks related to renaming numerals when their place changes in a number
6. Teacher asks questions to evaluate whether students have understood the place value of numerals and provides them with an 'exit ticket' where they answer one question prior to leaving.

Lesson 2: Thursday | 40 minutes | Out-of-class-support

The tutor initiates the lesson by establishing learning intentions and success criteria. The lesson includes a recap of content from the previous lesson as well as a summary to close.

1. Fluency task relevant to place value and renaming
2. Questioning to access prior knowledge: e.g., *What do I know about multiplication? Where do we use multiplication in our everyday lives? What words do we associate with multiplication? How are multiplication and division connected?*
3. Explicit teaching of vocabulary
4. Questioning to access prior knowledge and explicit teaching
5. Skip counting to establish multiples of different single digits
6. Present fact families to demonstrate how factors and multiples are connected
7. Students practise creating 4 equations for a series of fact families to show the connection between multiplication and division and to identify multiples and factors.

Secondary Numeracy

The tutor is working in a secondary school context with a group of 4 Year 7/8 students. The tutor has planned a learning cycle (FISO 2.0 Improvement cycle) for:

1. Strand: Number and Algebra. Sub-strand: Patterns and algebra
2. Content descriptors: VCMNA251, VCMNA252, VCMNA253.

The short-term SMART goal for the lesson sequence is to build on basic algebraic skills and extend and apply the laws and properties of algebraic terms and expressions.

Learning Cycle/s: 5 Weeks | Dosage: 2 x 45-minute sessions per week | Out-of-class support

Step 1: Evaluating and diagnosing learner needs:

The tutor will work with students and the classroom teacher/TLI coordinator/Principal to diagnose and evaluate learning needs through engagement in a diagnostic task. The intention of this task is to identify where students are situated on the continuum of learning (At a glance – Literacy and Numeracy) and to enable the tutor to use this evidence to identify what students can demonstrate an understanding of and where they require consolidation.

Step 2: Prioritising and setting goals:

Learner data from the diagnostic task, along with triangulated data from NAPLAN/PAT/DAL, will inform the lesson sequence to prioritise 'coping with differences in [student] readiness' (Sullivan 2011).

Step 3: Developing a plan:

To address the differences in learner readiness, the tutor will develop a plan for the learning cycle which will prioritise differentiation (HITS, Differentiated Teaching). Structured sessions will contain core tasks to meet the content descriptors, with prompts. Enabling prompts will support students who experience difficulty with the core task and extending prompts will extend student thinking with higher order learning (Sullivan 2011). Core tasks will focus on proficiencies of Reasoning and Problem Solving and will start each lesson with Fluency and Understanding warm up activities. The learning intentions guiding each week of the 5-week cycle are:

- Week 1: By the end of this week, I will be able to apply key algebraic vocabulary to identify features of an expression, determine algebraic equivalency and identify and collect like terms.
- Week 2: By the end of this week, I will be able to 'show that' equivalent expressions are true and recall how to simplify algebraic expressions using multiplication and division.
- Week 3: By the end of this week, I will be able to find the perimeter and area of rectangles by writing and solving algebraic expressions.
- Week 4: By the end of this week, I will be able to solve algebraic fractions using addition and subtraction.
- Week 5: By the end of this week, I will be able to solve algebraic fractions using multiplication and division.

Step 4: Monitoring and implementing:

To evaluate the impact on student learning (At a glance – Literacy and Numeracy), an 'impact tracker' containing content descriptors will enable the tutor to monitor and collect evidence on student learning progress. The tutor will use assessments to reflect on the effectiveness of the teaching strategies used and consider changes needed for the plan, if required. A summative task will conclude the cycle and feed into student data to inform an upcoming cycle.

Appendix 3:

TLI Group Learning Plan Template

Student information

Student name (up to 5)	**Year level**	**Intervention focus**	**Rationale for selection** (Where applicable, please include the learning needs and/or diagnosis of student)
Sample Student 1	*7D*	*Numeracy*	*Student below National Minimum Standard in Year 5 Numeracy; PAT-M Adaptive results provided more granular information on numeracy focus when triangulated with school-designed assessments and Maths Online Interview data. Student has diagnosis of dysgraphia.*

Delivery model

Session length	**Frequency**	**Mode of delivery** (in-class/out-of-class/hybrid)	**Timeslots**	**Duration**
45 mins	*3 x per week*	*Out-of-class support*	*Monday 9.15am Wednesday 9.15am Thursday 11am*	*Term 1 and 2 2023*

Group Learning Goals

Group Learning Goals	**Connection to Classroom Learning**	**Assessment Tools and frequency**

(If required, add individual student learning goals below)

Student	**Learning Goal**	**Assessment Tools and frequency**

Communication

Classroom teachers will...	**The tutor will...**
Brief the tutor at the start of each term on the current units of work being undertaken by the student	*Send a weekly wrap-up email on a Friday to classroom teachers, identifying learning and flagging any issues*

Review Date: _____

Progress	**Evidence**	**Comments**