

# Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI) — What works?

## Implementation insights for 2022



The TLI team has designed this document to support school leaders and tutors. We hope to share our learnings about ‘what works’ when implementing the TLI, based on feedback from schools in 2021.

This document also provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your own practice and consider any TLI implementation improvements you wish to make at your school in 2022.

## TLI in 2021

### What was the impact of TLI in 2021?

The 2021 TLI evaluation found that the initiative is an appropriate intervention in response to extended periods of remote learning. This reinforces what we know from current research suggesting that small-group learning offered through focused, regular sessions with a trained teacher is an evidence-based approach for improving student learning outcomes in a timely manner (Grattan Institute, 2020).

We know that many students participating in TLI speak English as an Additional Language and have a language background other than English. A large proportion of TLI students also experience disadvantage or attend schools with high levels of disadvantage. In 2021, these students were at greater risk of falling even further behind their peers, due to continued disruptions to their learning throughout the year. However, emerging evidence, based on Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) data, shows that the learning gap between TLI and non-TLI students did not widen in 2021. This indicates a positive correlation between TLI intervention and improved student outcomes.

*The findings in this document are drawn from a range of evaluation sources including case studies, principal focus groups, termly principal check-in surveys and our external TLI evaluation, conducted by Deloitte Access Economics (DAE).*

- What impact did TLI have on your school in 2021?
- What are some elements of last year’s implementation that you wish to continue in 2022?

*“ We are targeting the TLI to VCAL for the students that are struggling to complete these units due to school lockdowns. Without the TLI support just about all of these students would not achieve their certificate. ”*

Principal, specialist school,  
South Western region

## Practice approaches and dosage in different school contexts

Small-group and one-to-one intervention can be a powerful tool for supporting students. The Education Endowment Foundation suggests that 'frequent sessions, three times a week (minimum), lasting up to an hour over about 10 weeks typically show the greatest impact' (2021).

**The TLI model is based on the assumption of three 45-minute tutoring sessions per week over 26 weeks of intervention.**

Schools implementing TLI in 2021 reported that:

- TLI sessions usually last between 40 to 60 minutes. Nearly half of school leaders reported that sessions are run three times a week.
- Primary schools tend to run shorter but more frequent TLI sessions.
- Secondary schools tend to run longer and less frequent TLI sessions. The most common session length for Years 11–12 was one 50-minute session per week.

**Schools said effective TLI interventions should include:**

- structured supporting resources and lesson plans with clear objectives.
- assessments that are used to identify students requiring additional support, guide curriculum areas of focus and track student progress.
- alignment between content taught in the classroom and learning occurring in TLI sessions.

Schools can choose to implement one or more of three small-group tutoring practice approaches to suit their context and student needs:

### Tutoring in-class

**42% of secondary school principals noted the benefits of in-class tutoring as it:**

- allows students to participate in whole class instruction
- increases tutor-teacher collaboration and alignment between tutoring and whole class sessions
- allows tutors to assist other students who may not be eligible to participate in the program
- prevents participating students from missing out on crucial in-class learning.

### Tutoring out-of-class

An out-of-class model is frequently used for Year 11 and 12 students receiving tutoring, while 46% of primary schools also use an out-of-class approach, making it the most common primary-level TLI model. Schools reported that:

Primary students enjoy being withdraw from class for TLI and being singled out for additional support, as there tends to be less stigma in younger year levels around participating in learning intervention

An out-of-class model allows for the explicit teaching of core skills that do not directly relate to content being taught in class (e.g. phonics knowledge in upper primary classrooms).

### Hybrid approach

**62% of secondary schools use a hybrid model (usually focused on literacy, numeracy or study skills), while it is the second most common primary school TLI intervention, used by 41% of schools.**

Many schools prefer out-of-class or hybrid tutoring as it minimises the impact of cognitive load, an issue which in-class tutoring may present for some students.

For more information on different practice approaches, please visit the [TLI Policy Advisory Library page](#).

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*TLI is great because it has changed the culture of intervention and removed the stigma. Tutoring sessions are not hidden in a cupboard down a corridor; students receive support in the library – the nicest space in our school – and sit around openly in groups having discussions. Each student is viewed as unique, and kids don't mind getting extra help. It's not just for the lower performing students – some of our TLI-identified students were top NAPLAN performers.*

Principal, Prep-12 regional school, North Western Victoria

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# What works?

## Critical factors for success

Several schools that demonstrated high levels of growth for TLI students, based on PAT data, identified the following factors as consistent contributors to the success of TLI implementation and emerging impact.

### School readiness to implement TLI

Schools appeared most 'ready' to implement the TLI when they had the following critical features in place:

- Recruited qualified and accessible tutors early. 72% of school leaders reported a preference for employing staff already working within their school. Tutor and teacher expertise was considered the most critical enabler to implementing the TLI
- A clearly defined and aligned school improvement model and practices, in addition to experience with a related pedagogical or intervention model, such as the Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support (MYLNS)
- Existing, embedded approaches to student assessment and monitoring

*Do you foresee any challenges with recruiting suitably qualified tutors? How might this be addressed?*

### Use of assessments and assessment schedules

High performing TLI schools worked closely with their middle leaders, teachers and tutors to implement a robust assessment schedule. This involved:

- timing and precision of assessments used to track the 5 or 6 week learning cycle
- use of multiple forms of assessments to both screen or identify students for participation in TLI and to monitor ongoing effectiveness of intervention.
- effective moderation practices between teachers, tutors and middle leadership. Some schools noted that this was able to be facilitated through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

- *What data sources does your school use to identify students in need of tutoring support?*
- *Are assessments scheduled to monitor short learning cycles?*

### Engagement and wellbeing practices

A range of initial evaluation findings show that:

- the TLI had a positive impact on wellbeing, as reported by tutors, parents and teachers
- the TLI supported students to become more ready to engage in school and their learning. Readiness for learning was identified as a core student need following remote learning
- schools that employed existing staff in tutoring roles found increased student engagement, due to long standing relationships with tutors and increased interaction with staff members
- improvements in student performance through the TLI were often linked to confidence gains and a strong relationship with the tutor (particularly in secondary schools).

*“In a short period of time, [my son] went from very apprehensive, timid and fearful to a few months later, blossoming. He went from being afraid to make mistakes to then having the courage and self-esteem to try. He has belief in himself and it's all due to the Tutor Learning Initiative.”*

Parent of a Grade 1 student, metropolitan school, South Western Victoria

*In what ways does the TLI support student engagement and wellbeing at your school?*

### Tutor skills and quality of support (including explicit instruction)

Tutor skills and expertise, or the quality of support provided in tutoring, were beneficial to successful implementation. Several schools noted that they had deliberately opted to release existing teachers with considerable expertise to run their tutoring program. Key tutor skills identified were:

- knowledge of effective pedagogy (instructional techniques and strategies)
- knowledge of curriculum, content and how to plan and sequence learning
- interpersonal skills.

16% of principals noted that explicit teaching had the greatest impact on student growth in tutoring, followed by 12% of principals who attributed success to the structure of tutor sessions and use of learning routines. School leaders emphasised that explicit instruction should be:

- implemented rigorously and effectively
- used within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework – high quality Tier 1 instruction (classroom) contributed to successful Tier 2 (tutoring) implementation.

*How does your school support your tutors to engage in professional learning that improves their skills and expertise in delivering tutoring sessions?*

### Team teaching and collaboration

69% in of primary principals and 75% of secondary principals reported an observable increase in collaboration among tutors, leaders and teachers as they were exposed to new teaching and learning strategies through the TLI). The TLI evaluation also reflected that the initiative had encouraged an 'open door' approach in schools, creating opportunities for incidental professional development and co-designing of learning programs that best suit the needs of students.

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*It's not every day you get an experience like this and it's great to develop your teaching practice, skills, and continue growing as an educator. The beauty of TLI is you can adapt it to the school and your nature. You're constantly collaborating with parents, the community, and other staff who are knowledgeable in other areas. You get to learn a lot.*

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Tutor, regional school, North Western Victoria

- What formal and informal structures are in place at your school to help teachers, tutors and school leaders collaborate?
- What successes or challenges has your school experienced when seeking to enable this collaboration? How can successes be built on and challenges be overcome in 2022?

#### REFERENCES

- Grattan Institute (June 2020) COVID catch-up: Helping disadvantaged students close the equity gap, p. 22
- TBA



**For more information** on the Tutor Learning Initiative please contact [tutor@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:tutor@education.vic.gov.au)