



T U T O R S ' T I P S

Setting students on a path to lifelong learning

By helping to build self confidence and self esteem in our students we give them the tools they need to believe in their personal capabilities. With these skills they will be confident enough to access further literacies once they leave the protective bounds of our classrooms - the first steps along their lifelong learning path.

This tutor tip will look at ways to help students over the hurdles that have inhibited their learning process in the past and give them the confidence to perform to the best of their ability.

Breaking down barriers

Many adult learners come to the classroom with underpinning issues - lack of self confidence and self esteem; memories of bad learning experiences; fear of the classroom situation and most of all the fear of allowing others to see their weaknesses.

Ways to address these issues

Make the learning environment less threatening

- No schoolroom desk arrangements
- Background music
- Tea & coffee; water
- Invite visitors into the learning environment
- Allow students to take part in classroom decision making
- Allow time for social interaction. This will help students realise that they are not alone

Make lesson topics relevant & interesting

- Use the media as resource materials
- Use materials that interest the student body
- Use student ideas whenever possible
- Get out of the classroom and into the 'real' world as often as possible
- Make sure the lessons cover as many learning skills as possible
- Try and make tasks that cover both literacy and numeracy skills and can be completed at different levels



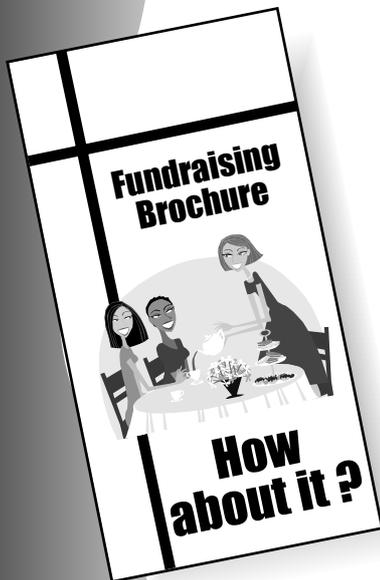
Suggestions are one thing but incorporating them into a busy multi-level classroom is a daunting task. To follow, are a few lessons plans and ideas that have worked for me.

A fundraising lesson

This lesson was born when I picked up a fundraising brochure. The brochure was a wonderful, real life resource. It offered comprehension, writing, discussion and numeracy opportunities. Adding the simple question at the end of the classroom task that read, "How about it?" I could never have imagined how successful this lesson would evolve into!

■ **This is how the lesson evolved...**

1. **Create a comprehension worksheet** - allow students to work in pairs to extract information from the brochure.
2. **Discussions** - "Benefits of National Fundraising."
"What do you think about this national fundraising venture."
"Do you think this is a successful way to raise money? Why?"
3. **"How about it ?"** The class were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about meeting the challenge.
4. **Class meeting to decide on fundraising ideas** - Hand out a prepared agenda. Get students to choose a chairperson to run the meeting and secretary to record the decisions made by the class
5. **Choose fundraising ventures** - we chose an Easter Raffle and an International Food Day. (joint decision)



■ **Raffle and International Food Day**

The skills covered :-

■ **oral communication**

e.g. class meetings; discussions; decision making and selling tickets

■ **writing**

e.g. letter to the office manager re. display; raffle sheet design, invitations and a review once the venture was over

■ **numeracy**

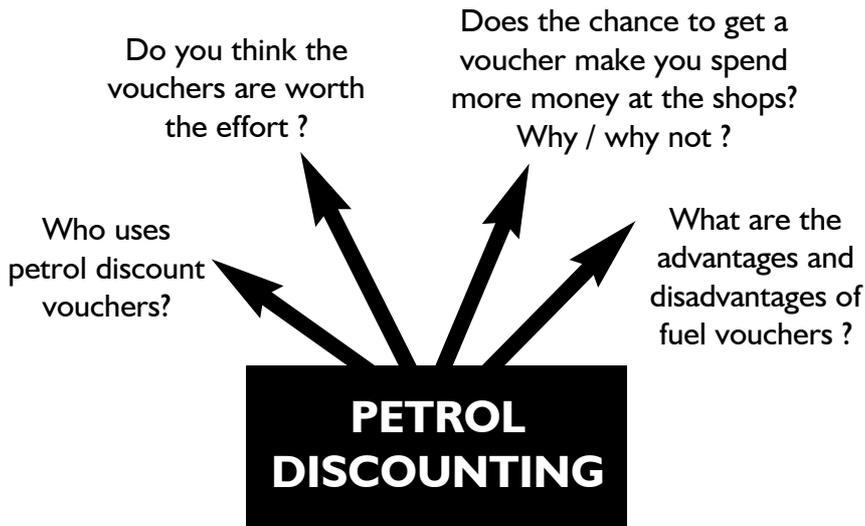
e.g. ticket pricing; recording of donations; reconciliation needed for the submission of money to the organisation

■ **strategies**

e.g. planning; budgeting

The success of this venture was due to the enthusiasm with which the students entered into the venture. It was a task that covered oral, written and numeracy skills but I think it was the fact that it was a real life situation that made it relevant and interesting. The students received affirmation in the form of congratulations from friends and staff who enjoyed the luncheon with them and positive feedback from the organization for whom they'd collected the sum of \$428.00 !

Petrol discounting brochure



2. Comprehension tasks

- Pair and group work - reading and understanding the text
- Comprehension questions
- Recording information that you hadn't realised before

3. Numeracy tasks

- Calculate discounts
- Calculate what you'd pay before and after the discount
- Calculate the length of a trip; km/litre; costs of fuel at both full and discounted prices
- Map reading

4. Written tasks

- Your opinion on discount fuel - advantages / disadvantages
- Sequencing - steps needed to obtain and use a petrol voucher
- Spellings - A list of spellings taken from a real life activity are relevant as the words are ones which the students will encounter in their daily life

Where do you think this photograph was taken ?

One of my students found a photograph in a pile of scrap paper on the desk. He mentioned to me where he thought it had been taken and his powers of deduction were amazing. I asked him if I could use his ideas in class then I swore him to secrecy while I printed off copies for each student. Below the photo I printed the question, "Where do you think this photo was taken and what made you decide this ?" The students worked with a partner to come up with their answers. I gave them five minutes. Not one person even came close to the correct answer.

At this time I handed the floor to the student to give the class a few clues before telling them the answers. His self esteem grew before my eyes! He asked questions, joked and teased. I had to eventually ask him to please let the class out of their misery.

What a transformation !

Muddled words

One morning a student shared his excitement about being able to read a sheet of text without stumbling. I try to use student ideas when possible and this was a perfect opportunity. I asked permission to use his sheet to plan a lesson for class that day. He was thrilled and agreed to the idea.

■ This is how the lesson evolved....

1. Created a discussion "Why we hate spelling"
2. Printed a copy of the text for each student.
3. Introduced the lesson idea as "David's"
4. Asked 'David' to read the text to the class. The other students were so impressed with his fluency.
5. 'David' then handed each student a copy of his text and asked them to read it to themselves.
6. Class discussion - why they thought it was so easy to read. (as long as the first and last letters are correct we are able to recognise the word !)
7. With a partner they corrected the spelling and punctuation and then typed it out as an answer sheet for me to use in future lessons
8. Class chose twenty spelling words and used each one in a sentence of their own. 'David' walked out of my classroom ten feet tall that day !

■ Why do lessons like this work ?

They are :

- relevant and cover interesting topics
- often based on student suggestions / materials
- based on real life resources
- often stretch beyond the bounds of the classroom
- interactive / allowing for student input
- include as many learning skills as possible
- incorporate a combination of learning styles
- fun
- not taken from a 'school book' etc.

It is so important that our learning environments are a positive experience. One that encourages our students to give learning "another go." If we can encourage our students to take their learning beyond our classrooms, we have set them on the path to life long learning, a gift they'll treasure forever.

