



What the 2011 participants said about the *Teach Me Grammar (TMG) Program*...

- *“Vastly improved my understanding of grammar. I came away with not just a better knowledge of grammar but as importantly, a lot less fear, and dare I say a bit of confidence. I look forward to using all I have learnt with my students in the future.” – Jenni Wieland, Challenger TAFE, Fremantle*
- *“I now firmly believe that grammar [teaching] must be embedded in the material that students are learning and I’m beginning to understand why some of my earlier ‘grammar’ lessons made no impact on students, because they had no context.” – Gillian Pow Chong, Curtin College and CentaCare, Perth*
- *“I have learnt to integrate grammar with reading which helps me see the relevance of teaching the grammar and, I believe, makes it more real for the students.” – Chesson Henshaw, Polytechnic West, Perth*
- *“My ability to teach grammar to my students has improved to the extent that it has become so much easier, in fact exciting, to teach grammar in class.” – Silvano Fasolo, Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison, Kalgoorlie*
- *“TMG opened my mind to a whole new ‘grammar world’.” – Charmaine Marshall, ATA Training, West Perth*
- *“One student missed out an article and preposition. He wrote “I felt hero.” I used the terms ‘article’ and ‘preposition’ when discussing his editing with him. He corrected his mistake very easily. It was really good to be able to use these terms with him and have him know what I was talking about.” – Sharyn Dauti, South Western Institute of Technology, Bunbury*
- *“Although I was a complete beginner, I have gained invaluable skills... [Grammar] is now one of my favourite hobbies!” – Susan Bates, Emmanuel Centre, East Perth*
- *“I have a better understanding of an approach to teaching grammar – the starting points and pathways from the points. I also have great ideas of how to make it fun!” – Nola Cigulev, South Western Institute of Technology, Bunbury*
- *“I found that my delivery, including changes as learnt from the course, has raised [my students’] motivation and awareness. There has been a marked improvement in both their writing and speaking.” – Seema Mazumdar, Polytechnic West, Balga*
- *“I can make ESL / literacy teaching more interesting, practical and effective by implementing new grammar concepts learned in the TMG Program.” – Maria Bunn, ATA Training, West Perth*
- *“An awesome course that was presented in a fun, enjoyable and informative way [and] modelled excellent learning techniques.” – Diane Vosganoff, WA Institute for Deaf Education, Belmont*

In their Program Exit Surveys, all participants said they would highly recommend the *Teach Me Grammar Action Learning Program* to other ESL / Literacy Teachers.



So, what is the *Teach Me Grammar* Action Learning Program?

Teach Me Grammar is an Action Learning Professional Development Program funded by the WA Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) open to all ESL / Literacy teachers working in Western Australia.

Based on the successful pilot project in 2011, it is a program through which language and literacy teachers of adults learn the fundamental concepts of grammar themselves and learn how to teach this knowledge in an engaging, positive, integrated way, tailored to the specific needs of their particular learner group. It explores, through learning activities, discussion and practice, the best ways to teach English grammar and sentence structure to adult learners of English.

In 2012, the program will have two incarnations:

- the full, 12-session program, and
- an intensive program consisting of six (6) sessions (for those already with a degree of grammar knowledge – see below for details).

Each program will involve a specifically selected group of 12 language and literacy teachers who, between them, teach a broad range of adult learners, including native English speakers, CaLD people, indigenous people, Deaf people¹, and others. It is hoped that each group will include teachers from both metropolitan Perth and regional Western Australia².

The groups will attend, free of charge, a series of professional development sessions to learn and discuss specific grammar concepts and learn about / practise a range of grammar-teaching strategies / methods. The participants will then practise what they have learned in the sessions with their own adult learner classes, and reflect on their experience in an online blog developed for the purpose.

It is intended that the sharing of ideas, perspectives, experiences and reflections amongst this eclectic mix of teachers will enable an understanding to emerge of what works for which learners and why, and whether what works for one learner group can also be used as a successful strategy for teaching another learner group.

Between sessions, the participants' reflections will be responded to individually by the project leader and then collectively summarised on a central project blog for everyone's benefit. Issues raised will be open for further online discussion and / or discussion / clarification during the subsequent PD session.

An alignment of the program to the following Units of Competency from **TAE70111 Vocational Graduate Certificate in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Practice** is currently being explored.

- TAELLN701A Analyse and apply adult literacy teaching practices
- TAELLN703A Develop English language skills of adult learners
- TAELLN704A Implement and evaluate delivery of adult language, literacy and numeracy skills

Participants will receive a *Certificate of Participation and Completion* to add to their professional development portfolio, if they complete all the requirements as indicated below. This *Certificate of Participation* will detail the program content so that participants may in future use this as evidence for RPL against these Units of Competency.

¹ Auslan interpreters will be provided at the PD sessions if required

² The training is free, but successful applicants may be eligible for a scholarship to cover other costs of attendance at the sessions in Perth. A separate application and approval process applies – call Cheryl Wiltshire on 9319 5155 (Mon-Wed) for more information.



1. The Full Program

The 12 sessions will run on **Fridays from 8.30am – 12.45 pm**. They will start on Friday 2 March 2012, occurring mostly at three-weekly intervals, and finish on Friday 16 November. (Each session will include a 15-minute break for morning tea, and be followed by a catered lunch, to allow for networking.) The session dates are:

March 2, 16 and 30
May 4 and 25
June 8 and 29
August 3 and 24
September 14
October 26
November 16

2. The Intensive Program

The six (6) sessions for the Intensive Program will be on **Wednesdays**, with the first and final sessions each being a full day and the other four sessions half a day, as follows:

March 21	(8.30am – 4.30pm)
April 18	(12.30-4.45pm)
May 16	(12.30-4.45pm)
June 13	(12.30-4.45pm)
July 25	(12.30-4.45pm)
August 15	(8.30am – 4.30pm)

The two full-day sessions will include a catered lunch and a 15-minute tea break, both morning and afternoon. The half-day sessions will include an afternoon tea-break of 15 minutes.

Session Content (Both Programs)

At each session, the 12 participants will:

- learn / extend their knowledge of fundamental grammar concepts;
- explore positive grammar teaching methods and strategies;
- discuss these methods and strategies with the other participants who collectively teach a range of adult learner types; and
- as required, practise teaching the learned concepts and teaching methods / strategies with the other participants.

The content of the sessions will include the following:

- What is grammar and why is explicit knowledge of it valuable for both teachers and learners?
- Fundamental concepts of grammar:

- key word functions (nouns, verbs, pronouns etc. and subject, object, subordinate clauses etc.)
 - sentence patterns (focusing primarily on the active sentence structure)
 - identifying the functions of words, phrases and clauses in context
 - links between vocabulary and grammatical structures
 - tenses (the 12 key past, present and future tenses in English)
 - practical applications (how does context dictate the language we should use?)
- The importance of focussing on positive, grammar-modelling teaching and feedback methods and the need to avoid deficit-centred, error-focussed teaching methods
 - Using *The Grammar Disc – Pah!*³ with different adult language and literacy learner groups
 - Adapting this (and other grammar teaching and learning resources) for use with adult learners from different linguistic backgrounds and with different learning needs
 - Using visual and kinaesthetic teaching methods, particularly, but not exclusively, with Deaf learners
 - Integrating grammar-teaching and learning into relevant, learner-centred, communicative tasks
 - Using PowerPoint, organic grammar charts and grammar function cards to support visual / kinaesthetic / auditory learning

On the Application Form, applicants are asked to indicate what else they would personally hope to learn from the program, both in terms of grammar and teaching it. Due to strict time limits, we cannot promise that all such suggestions will be catered for, but, where possible, requests will be built into the program.

What is Action Learning?

Action Learning is a process of learning by doing, and then reflecting on the experience and sharing these thoughts in order to reach a collective understanding of what works, what doesn't and what needs to change in order to improve outcomes next time. During the 2011 pilot program, this proved to be an invaluable way for participants to review and consolidate their own learning, as well as a good way to identify gaps in understanding and other important teaching issues.

Between the professional development sessions, therefore, the project participants will be expected to:

- preview / review the relevant sections of *The Grammar Disc – Pah!* (and other grammar-learning resources) and complete the associated exercises (approx 1.5 hours per session);
- complete various recommended readings on the teaching of grammar (approx 1 hour per session);
- use an action learning project blog to complete a reflection on personal gains, thoughts and questions relating to the content of the PD Session (approx 30 minutes)
- practise teaching the new grammar concepts and teaching strategies / methods to their own group of adult learners (3-4 hours); and then
- use the action learning project blog to complete a second personal reflection, sharing their experiences, questions, thoughts and suggestions for improvements / modifications to the teaching strategies used in light of their experience. (approx 30 minutes)

The project blog will be designed specifically for (and open only to) the 12 participants in the program plus the project leader. (Participants unfamiliar with blogging will be trained and supported in using the blog.)

³ *The Grammar Disc – Pah!* is an Australian interactive DVD-Rom initially designed to teach the basics of English grammar to Deaf adults. It also contains a voiceover for hearing learners. For further details, visit: www.thegrammardisc.net.au



What are the knowledge, skills and experience requirements?

Teaching / Experience

All successful applicants must have their own adult learner⁴ group running for the duration of their particular program, and be able to attend all the PD training sessions in their chosen program.

In addition, they should have **at least one** of the following:

- a teaching qualification which qualifies them to teach English language / literacy skills to adults
- a minimum of three years' continuous experience teaching English language / literacy to adults in a formal setting⁵.

Note: If you are interested in participating and believe you have the necessary skills to do so, but cannot meet the qualification or experience requirements, the selection panel will consider your application based on its own merits. You are therefore still encouraged to submit an application with a clear statement of why you feel you should be selected. This statement should be made on a separate sheet attached to the application form.

Knowledge of Grammar

For the Full Program (12 Sessions) , there is no requirement for participants to have any prior knowledge of English grammar. However, it is probable that some will have some basic knowledge of grammatical terms, such as verbs, nouns, and adjectives etc. Others may have more than this, particularly if they are ESL teachers / linguists.

The Application Form includes a brief assessment of your current level of grammatical knowledge. **This is not a test or a method of screening applicants in or out.** It is simply a way to ascertain the background knowledge of the group prior to the program. As such, it will have no bearing on the selection process for this program.

For the Intensive Program (6 Sessions), there is a requirement that participants have a **sound working knowledge** of the following basic grammatical concepts prior to joining the program:

- Nouns and pronouns
- Verbs and tenses
- Adjectives and determiners
- Prepositions, adverbs and conjunctions

If you consider you already have such a level of knowledge of English grammatical terminology, you should consider applying for this Intensive Program which will only briefly review these basic grammatical concepts before focussing on positive grammar-teaching strategies, as well as extending into further grammatical concepts .

Please note: To ensure that applicants to the Intensive Program have the prerequisite knowledge, they are required to complete the Intensive Program Pre-Assessment on the application form. If the pre-assessment result indicates inadequate prerequisite knowledge for the Intensive Program, the applicant will automatically be contacted and asked whether he/she wishes to be considered for the Full Program.

⁴ For the purposes of this project, the youngest "adult learners" permissible are Year 11 students.

⁵ Any educational institution following a formal learning program. If you are unsure, please contact Geoff Pearson on 9330 8989 to discuss.



So, is the *Teach Me Grammar* program for you?

For each program, the time commitment is as follows:

- **The Full Program:** roughly 11-12 hours every three weeks (i.e. 3-4 hours per week):
 - 4 hours at the PD session and
 - 7-8 hours on the various activities between sessions.

- **The Intensive Program:**
 - 8 hours each at the first and last sessions,
 - 4 hours at each of the four other PD sessions, and
 - 7-8 hours on the various activities between sessions.

The value of the training (i.e. cost to the funding body) is estimated at \$3600.00 per participant. As the selected participants will be offered a place in each program **free-of-charge**, and as it will not be possible for replacement people to join after the programs have started, it is essential that the selected participants agree to commit to:

- attending and actively participating in all sessions; and
- completing all the between-session viewing, reading, teaching and reflecting (action learning) activities, as described above.

These will need to be completed in a timely manner to ensure the participant is prepared for moving into the next session

If you cannot honestly make this commitment, you should not apply.

Please Note: Withdrawing from the program once it has started without a valid reason⁶, backed up by relevant medical certificates or other documentation, will leave the individual participant (or their employing organisation) liable for a cancellation fee of \$300 for each of the unattended sessions.

Substitute participants will not be accepted in any circumstances.

Submitting your application

Ultimately, the selection process will seek to establish a group of language / literacy teachers who, between them, teach a broad range of adult learner groups and who individually are enthusiastic, energetic and passionate about going on a learning journey with a group of like-minded others to discover how to teach grammar to their students in the most positive, effective ways.

If, after reading the above, you are interested in participating in this project and are able to make the commitment required, you are strongly encouraged to complete the attached application form.

⁶ Valid reasons are: serious illness or injury, death, or death of an immediate family member requiring the absence of the participant.

Please return your completed Application Form to Geoff Pearson **by 5.00 pm on Thursday 16 February 2012** in any of the following ways:

by email to: gpearson@agendacommunication.com.au

(Please use **Application for Teach Me Grammar Program** as the subject line of your message)

by post to: Agenda Communication Pty Ltd

A7, 550 Canning Highway

Attadale WA 6156

by fax to: 9330 9736

Successful applicants will be notified by **5.00pm on Tuesday 21 February 2012**.

Please direct all queries to:

Geoff Pearson (Project Leader) on 9330 8989 or via the above.

