

How language works: Success in literacy and learning

All Lexis Education's professional development courses are intended for classroom teachers and are comprised of a Tutor Training and a Teacher Course. The Tutor Training is an intensive train-the-trainer program

that is delivered in Host schools around the world to small groups of up to 20 teachers. Licensed tutors then deliver the Teacher Course, providing their school with cost-effective, school-managed professional development.

Aims

How language works is a comprehensive and innovative professional development course for all educators seeking to extend their understandings about language and literacy. It helps primary through to senior secondary teachers to improve their students' learning. It does this by dealing with the English language in a highly systematic way and by methodically building participants' understandings of how language works to make meaning across a range of contexts. The model of language the course uses is Halliday's functional model of language.

The course:

- makes explicit the workings of the English language system in order for teachers to appreciate the role language plays, not only in constructing knowledge across all learning areas, but in all facets of teaching and learning
- builds understandings about the patterned ways meanings are made within and across genres and subject areas so that educators are able to develop explicitly students' language resources to understand and produce those genres
- promotes a teaching and learning cycle that provides opportunities for an explicit focus on language as part of a rich learning environment
- enables teachers to understand and use the differences between spoken and written language, both as a teaching and a learning tool
- develops the ability to assess language explicitly and efficiently to support the learning of all students
- gives students the tools to be more accurate and effective users of language in a range of contexts
- has the potential to make all students more effective and efficient learners.

How language works provides teachers with an opportunity to engage in rigorous and sustained professional development. Consequently, it is possible to seek credit towards further postgraduate studies from tertiary institutions around the world.

Structure

How language works has the following features:

- It is organised into 10 modules for a total of 30 hours face-to-face.
- Each module has activities and readings to complete before the next module.
- Total teacher commitment is equivalent to at least 60 hours of professional development.

The course provides a collaborative and engaging adult-learning environment, where there are opportunities for whole-group discussion, small-group activities, classroom implementation, classroom-based research, and reading of relevant articles.

Content

MODULE 1

Building understandings of genre and register

This module focuses on genres, their structure and why they are important in the school context. Participants are introduced to the functional model of language.

MODULE 2

Applying understandings of genre and register

Module 2 considers the relationship between curriculum documents and language outcomes, the steps in the teaching and learning cycle, and the role of genre and register in the cycle and in curriculum planning.

MODULE 3

Representing experience

Module 3 explores how language is arranged to achieve its meanings. It uses the functional model of language to identify processes, participants and circumstances in texts. Participants consider the function of active and passive voice and learn to use techniques for moving between active and passive voice.

MODULE 4

Focusing on language resources for representing experience

In this module, participants learn to recognise the patterns of participants and circumstances in a range of genres and registers and develop understandings of nominal groups and nominalisation and the role they play in student work.

MODULE 5

Making connections—Working with clauses

In Module 5, participants work with clauses to identify clause boundaries, dependent and independent clauses, non-finite clauses, and embedded clauses and phrases. Participants also analyse the difference between spoken and written language.

MODULE 6

Making connections across a text

The focus for this module is on participants learning about what makes texts cohesive and the role of conjunctions in linking and organising texts.

MODULE 7

Language for organising meanings—Orientation and flow

Module 7 develops an understanding of how language organises the different levels of the text: clause level, sentence level, paragraph level and whole text level. It looks at the patterns of orientation at these different levels but also in different registers (especially the role of nominalisation in more formal, academic registers) and different genres.

MODULE 8

The power and the passion—Interacting with others

Module 8 shifts focus to interpersonal meanings and so participants develop their understanding of the impact on language choices according to five aspects: what roles people take on, what their relationships are, what their difference in status and power might be, and what their attitude is not only to others but to the topic they are communicating on.

MODULE 9

Taking a stance—Expressing attitude and engaging with other views

This module continues the focus on interpersonal meanings by considering the language resources for

expressing feelings and judgments and how language is used both in engaging with others and acknowledging their opinions.

MODULE 10

Macro-scaffolding language and learning

In this final module, participants return to aspects introduced in the early modules and consider how language and learning can be scaffolded within the teaching and learning cycle, and how to use frameworks for language development.

Our other professional development courses

Teaching ESL students in mainstream classrooms: Language in learning across the curriculum

- For teachers working with students between 8 and 18 years of age
- Develops an understanding of the role of language (spoken and written) in learning and the support students need to be successful learners
- Supports the design of strategies for effective teaching and learning across the curriculum

Teaching young children in English in multilingual contexts

- For teachers working with young students between 5 and 8 years of age
- Develops an understanding of the notion of meaning-making to inform the scaffolding that will build this capacity in young students
- Develops an understanding of the need for explicit teaching practices to build young students' repertoires of meaning-making resources
- Provides a context for teachers to reflect on their teaching and develop shared understandings to improve the effectiveness of whole-school collaboration

Literacy for learning

- For teachers working with students between 8 and 18 years of age—there is an International version and an Australian version
- Addresses the fundamental relationship between literacy and successful learning
- Provides effective strategies for scaffolding students through explicit teaching of the language and visual resources that they need to be successful learners across all learning areas
- Promotes whole-school approaches to addressing the needs of students in developing high levels of literacy across the curriculum

For more information:

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