Holistic learning support for your students

Shared below are suggestions to assist tutors in providing a wide range of support to students within an OSHLSP. Support offered should be carefully targeted to students' current needs. This involves addressing specific homework tasks or spending time practicing key learning areas. While academic support is a key component of an OSHLSP, the development of social skills, confidence, and wellbeing, among other areas, are also important to think about when working in an OSHLSP. When planning for your tutoring sessions it may be helpful to consider including, or developing, the areas set out below.
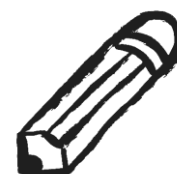
Confidence development

Building a student's confidence will assist with their capacity to learn. Consider how your OSHLSP can provide opportunities to succeed with small and targeted activities. Reinforce the view that making mistakes is an important part of the learning process. Using the concept of scaffolding can help to develop student's independence and confidence. Tutors are there to support and assist the students when they need help, like scaffolding does on a building, and once students develop the confidence and skills the scaffolding, or tutor support, can be removed and the students can work independently.

- Where possible, model the skill being worked on so the student can see what they are working towards.
- Ensure activities are diverse and engaging so that energy levels are high and encourage active student participation.
- Encourage a move towards independent learning in small steps.

Time management, planning and organisational skills

A focus on 'learning how to learn' is important for students' academic advancement. Look at developing study and organisational skills alongside the use of educational facilities and technologies.

Holistic learning support in OSHLSPs

- Assist your students to identify how they can best use their time when at homework club, and in other places of learning
- Work on establishing a study routine including creating a study timetable
- Encourage students to schedule time to complete tasks and allow sufficient time for revision during exam times
- Reinforce the purpose and value of homework and the benefit of working both cooperatively with others and independently
- Practice using graphic organisers to brainstorm, elicit, and organise ideas, and develop overviews and plans for task development. You may consider introducing online platforms that can assist with time and task management
- Assist students' understanding of how to use educational facilities such as libraries and databases, and how to access these electronically
- Develop exam skills such as understanding instructions, pacing and timings, prioritising questions, writing legibly, and utilising relaxation techniques.

Homework and broader educational support

Some students may bring specific homework tasks that they would like support with. Others may not know what they want or need to work on. Depending on the situation, the session can focus on preparing for specific school work, including assessment tasks and homework tasks, or exploring targeted aspects of learning that students need assistance with. It is important that tutors are adaptable to the changing needs of students, and feel confident in their ability to engage young people with both specific homework tasks, and with more general education support.

New content areas

It may be appropriate to introduce students to new areas of content if a knowledge gap has been identified. When doing so try to use real life and concrete examples connected to the student's life and interests and provide visual support where possible. Limit the number of new concepts introduced at one time and follow up with opportunities for exploratory talk and application of the ideas. Check for understanding by asking specific questions and giving immediate feedback. Consolidate learning by revising content in following sessions. To understand more about the content areas students are learning about you can connect with schools and key teachers, or you can look more generally at the Victorian curriculum.
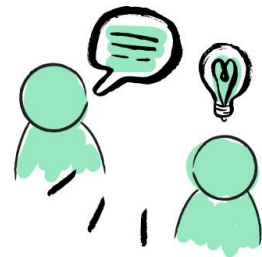
Holistic learning support in OSHLSPs

Targeted language and literacy development

School-based learning typically uses English and therefore the opportunity to practice all four macro skills of language; speaking, listening, reading, and writing; is really important. When doing so, provide opportunities for listening before speaking, and reading before writing. This enables students to feel comfortable with and develop their understanding and confidence before producing content themselves. Ensure that specific language features needing support are practised in a targeted manner. Specific attention to practising literacy skills is valuable with time allocated to reviewing reading and writing. Ensure sufficient time is allowed to complete all tasks.

Social skills

While OSHLSPs are primarily established to support students academically, the benefits stretch far beyond that. The development of social skills is a common positive outcome for students. Depending on the structure and model of your program opportunities will arise for students to foster strong interpersonal skills. Group activities, games, peer tutoring, and snack time are some ways in which you can encourage students to build positive relationships with their peers and to further develop their social skills.

Other skills

- Technology – explore with your students which information and communication technologies (ICT) can support them for different learning tasks
- Reference texts – assist your students to understand where to go to find certain information in a book or an online text
- Research skills – help your students to practice different ways of gaining more information on topics
- Reflective practices – an important skill that develops critical thinking and self-assessment skills and can lead to improvement of future performance

Conclusion

No two tutoring sessions will be the same. You may work consistently with one student every week, or provide help to multiple students throughout each session. By considering the areas discussed above, you will be equipped to provide a wide range of support to all students attending the program.

Do you have further questions? We're here to help at: learningbeyondthebell@cmy.net.au **or call (03) 9340 3700**