One of our key services that we provide our students is teaching them the skills required to interpret, write and edit their assignments independently. Our goal is for our students to learn how to interpret a task sheet and use it to effectively structure a concise and meaningful response.

This guide is available for staff because there is a fine line between providing constructive feedback and over-scaffolding a task. It is our responsibility to ensure that the feedback we are providing prompts further thought from the student about how they can address the criteria, not us telling them what could meet the criteria.

STARTING THE ASSIGNMENT

- Support the student to read through the task and criteria sheets. Ensure the student is using a highlighter. Use the **Interpreting Task Sheets** resource to guide this process.
- Students are to complete the essay planning sheet. This helps the student understand the expectations. Monitor the student for any misconceptions or misunderstandings of concepts or definitions (e.g., analyse vs explain).
- Photocopy the task and criteria sheets and save them to the student file to avoid future heartache if they lose them.
- Ask the student to go through any classwork or textbook information regarding this topic so they have a clear understanding of their topic.
- Students use the task and criteria sheets to create a scaffold of their response. This includes:
    o generating a topic sentences/hypothesis from the task questions
    o breaking up the word limit into each paragraph.
    o Copying which part of the criteria sheet will be adhered to in each section of the task sheet.

    Note: students should practice doing this with a mock task sheet before attempting on their school assessment. This way, the tutor can provide hands-on support and assist them to learn this skill without compromising the integrity of the student's school draft.

- Provide a copy of the QCAA exemplar (if available).
- Give the student independent research time.
- Use this time to get clear on the assignment expectations *for yourself as the tutor.*

WRITING PROCESS

- The student should be doing most of their writing in their own time outside of class, using the scaffold they create using their task and criteria sheets provided by their school. If the student is adamant to use class time to write, it is essential that the student does this **independently.** If the student requires assistance, support them to seek their own answers (e.g., if they ask 'what does xxxxx mean?' support them to use a thesaurus or dictionary to obtain the answer.)
- If it is an essay, they can use the CST Essay writing scaffold to structure their paragraphs. Again, this is only assisting them to order their ideas, not giving them ideas for what to put in each section.

- If a student is stuck, **go back to the task sheet.** Use this as a guide for your prompting questions. You can use this to support a student to get back on track if they are feeling overwhelmed. E.g., "the task sheet asks us to do xxxx. How could we do that?"

There is nothing worse for a student than to be accused of plagiarising an assignment they have worked so hard on because the syntax or word choices exceeds what they are producing in class. Of course, the first draft of any work is always going to be a lesser standard than the final edited product, but it is our responsibility to make sure that every single word on the assignment has come directly from the student. A key part of the editing process is the students reading their drafts out loud to identify any spelling or syntax errors. If a student writes a sentence that does not make sense, **do not suggest a better way to say it.** Instead, ask the student what we could change to make it fit more what they envisioned, or suggest they return to the task sheet to check if they are on track to meeting the criteria.

Some of our students are better at verbalizing their ideas than typing them. If a student is particularly stuck during the initial planning stage, we can support them to get back on track by asking them to verbalise their idea and typing it **verbatim.** This includes any grammatical errors or repetition. We only do this for a few dot points to support the student to regain some confidence, as it can be frustrating for a student if can articulate an idea but struggle with their writing skills. Another strategy they can use independently is the voice to text function on their laptops. Sometimes students who aren't confident can get so overwhelmed by a blank page, once they see their ideas on the page it can help them refocus and continue working. **This is only for the scaffolding and brainstorming stages, not for drafting.**

EDITING PROCESS

The first thing to do is support the student through the editing process. During this process, you should provide feedback that supports the child to **edit their own work** rather than provide suggestions to improve their work. While suggestions can seem helpful, we need to ask ourselves: what has the student learnt if we provide a better word or sentence structure? This can also decrease a child's confidence and sense of ownership of their work if we make changes to their ideas, so it is imperative that any changes need to come from them. If the student believes that what they have is 'enough,' this is where we draw on our rapport with the student and refer to the criteria sheet directly to highlight how editing can benefit their mark overall. Sometimes students who historically have not achieved highly use avoidance or apathy to mask their low confidence. By expressing to them that we believe they can produce something better can motivate them to engage in their learning to improve on their work. This can reap incredible improvements in their confidence, motivation and engagement in future tasks.

Examples of editing strategies or prompting questions include:

- Read the sentence out loud for grammatical errors – ensure you read it verbatim.
- Ask the student to read the sentence themselves out loud.
- "What are you trying to tell me in this sentence? How could we say it a bit clearer?"
- "Has this sentence added anything new?"

- "Let's have a look at this part of the criteria. Do you think we have done that?"
- "What part of the criteria do you think this part of the assignment meets?"
- "Thinking about our word limit and the criteria, are our words best spent here or could we focus more on another section?"
- "Which section of the criteria is worth the most marks? Have we spent enough time there?"
- "You've used this word a few times. Can we think of a better word to describe this?"

ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Something that is key when supporting students to learn is Zygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This is defined by Vygotsky (1978) as, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." Put simply, it's although we are Goldilocks and looking for the 'sweet spot' in the middle! If we under-scaffold a task and provide no support whatsoever, it can feel overwhelming and too difficult for students, therefore discouraging them from engaging meaningfully in the task. This impacts their confidence in future academic tasks. At the other end of the spectrum is if we over-scaffold a task and provide too much feedback or scaffolding (e.g., sentence starters, sources to use) it can demotivate them as the task is too simple, again resulting in disengaged students. This can also impact their confidence as if we provide too much 'help,' students can internalise this information and perceive that we believe they are not capable of doing the task without our assistance. It can also reduce their sense of pride in their work and intrinsic motivation to engage in the task, as if we provide too much help, they don't feel like it's their work.

The ZPD refers to somewhere in between these two spaces. We need to meet students exactly where they are right now and provide tasks that challenge them but are still achievable. This increases their intrinsic motivation, learner confidence and consequently engagement in the task. To do this successfully we need to provide scaffolding that encourages them to think, rather than provide the answers. To do this well, we use strategies such as modelling meta-cognitions (thinking aloud), prompting questions and sentence starters.

We also want to incorporate the Gradual Release of Responsibility to ensure the students have the appropriate tools to succeed. It refers to gradually releasing responsibility of learning to the student. This includes 3 stages; I do, we do, you do. Firstly, we want to show students what they are expected to achieve in the learning and the tools, resources or skills they need to succeed. Next, we repeat the task in a 'we do' context. Depending on the task and student's understanding, the time this stage takes is varying. Once the student is on their way to success, the student completes the task independently without teacher support and scaffolding. If the student struggles, we just go back to the 'we do' stage and try again.

VERSION CONTROL:

Version	Change description	Date	Author
1.0	Document created	12/1/2021	Phillippa Riggs

1.1	Document edited	23/2/2021	Phillippa Riggs
1.2	Document edited	01/02/2026	Brittany Campagnolo