

# TA TALK

Issue 10, August 2016

## Australian Teacher Aide Directors Message

### SCHOOLS DISCOVER ATA!

Welcome to the August edition of TA Talk.

We recently had an insightful chat with Jo, a head teacher from a high school in NSW. This school is committed to the ongoing development of their TA team, and recently purchased ATA membership for their 10 teacher aides. Jo told us that she was thrilled to have found an organisation dedicated to teacher aides.

Prior to learning about ATA, Jo was designing all of her own workshops for the teacher aides. Jo now uses the ATA professional learning resources to facilitate training sessions, and also offers voluntary workshops for the “sponges” who just can’t get enough! Some support staff are also using our professional learning programs independently, completing the workbooks and reflections and meeting with Jo to talk about their learning. They told Jo that they really loved getting a certificate of completion to recognise their efforts.

Jo said that the discussions, and information shared, have been a really valuable part of the training sessions. The teacher aides said they feel more valued, knowing they have access to a website specifically for them; and have grown in confidence, as they feel better prepared for their day-to-day support role.

If your school finds it challenging to source relevant professional development for teacher aides, make sure you introduce them to ATA. Many schools still do not know we exist. Please help us change this.

Warm regards

*Stella Liliendal & Mandy Bell*



Leaders in  
Professional  
Learning  
For  
Teacher Aides



*Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell, ATA Directors*

## MEMBERS WEBINAR

### LANGUAGE OF EXPECTATION – GIVING CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

In our August members' webinar, Stella presented the topic: *Language of Expectation - Giving Clear Instructions*. It was the second in a series of members' webinars that focuses on developing positive relationships.

The Language of expectation is used to talk with students about their learning and behaviour and in this webinar we discussed the skills of:

- Giving Clear Instructions
- Waiting and Scanning
- Cueing with Parallel Acknowledgement

#### Giving Clear Instructions

Our participants told us about situations where teacher aides are required to give instructions. These included group reading and math activities, supporting individual students and during lunch duty, playground or bus duty. The key to giving clear instructions is to:

- gain the students' attention
- use a verb to give your instruction
- finish your sentence with thanks



#### Waiting and scanning

This skill is about waiting to give students time to process the information about what they are to do next, while you scan the students in the group to check if your instructions are being followed.

#### Cueing with parallel acknowledgement

When you observe students who have followed your instructions, and acknowledge this with prompts such as "I see this group has their math books ready" it acts as a prompt for nearby students to follow.

#### DATE CLAIMERS

**13 September:** The Language of Acknowledgement: The who, what, when, where and why of encouragement

**11 October:** The Language of Correction: Simple and positive strategies that work

**8 November:** The Balance Model – Summing up: What did you learn and where to next?

**Our members' webinars are on the second Tuesday of each month at 3.45pm. Members receive a reminder email each month, prior to the webinar, including registration details.**

## OUR NEXT WEBINAR: WORKING AS A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER AIDE: WHAT IS IT REALLY LIKE AND DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

*"I love my job!"*

*"It's so rewarding"*

*"It's exhausting, but worth it"*

There is no doubt that teacher aides who work with students with disability have a passion for what they do and a dedication to make a difference in the children's lives. "I love my job!", "It's so rewarding", "It's exhausting but worth it!" were some of the immediate responses, when we advertised this upcoming webinar on Facebook.

Tony Leigh-Sheriden has over thirty years' experience teaching students with disability and additional needs, ranging from learning disabilities to mental health issues, so he really knows what it takes to be an effective teacher aide in this specialist area.

This coming Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at 4pm, Tony will talk about the many sides to working with students with disability, the attributes that teacher aides need to provide effective support, and how to give yourself the best chance of landing a job in this specialist area. Tony will also share with us what his large education support team really think about their job, including the challenges and benefits of working with students with disability. If you haven't already registered for this webinar, you will find the link on the [Home page](#) of our website.

### WHAT'S TRENDING ON FACEBOOK? AUGUST 2016 FANS: 3207

**Top Post:** Be the teacher aide who helps kids look forward to each, and every, school day

23,296 Views 1,033 Reactions, Comments and Shares

This post went completely viral! In fact, I think it is our second best performing post yet.

We love to see the warm accolades posted by colleagues for colleagues. It really shows the depth of dedication and appreciation that is out there in schools.

We still have a very small proportion of our members on [MyPLC](#), our private online community for ATA members. If you haven't requested to join, please do so. The content is quite different to our open Facebook site and, here, you have the opportunity to network with teacher aides all over Australia. MyPLC is your communication forum (we merely facilitate it) so do take advantage of this wonderful member benefit.

Please keep following us on our [ATA FB page](#) and don't forget to share the page with your colleagues.



## CURRENT EDUCATION TOPICS FOR YOU

Each month we bring you ideas that you can use in the classroom or at home. As this month's free webinar is on working with students with disability, we have found some resources that we know you will find useful.

### PROMOTING THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

Kids Matter is an Australian mental health and wellbeing website for schools, early childhood, families and the community. It works with the education and health sectors to help create positive schools. Once more we found some excellent information on [disability and children's mental health](#).

### THE CHALLENGES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD

The Victorian State Government Education and Training website has some very useful teaching and learning resources on supporting students with disability in a school environment. These articles are in PDF format and can be downloaded or printed for future reference. I found [managing the challenges of secondary school learning environments for students with ASD and Communication and conversation - how to talk to a student with ASD](#) used real scenarios to provide very practical advice.

### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Do you use [assistive technology](#) to support students with learning disabilities? The Great Schools website explains that assistive technology tools help children to play on their strengths and work around challenges. There are links to a range of technology tools that can help students with listening, math, organisation and memory, and reading and writing.



## SHARE YOUR STORIES FROM AROUND THE STATES AND TERRITORIES. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS:

- **Make a difference:** Acknowledge someone who is making a difference in the lives of students
- **What's new?** Are you using a new App, literacy program, STEM activity?
- **What have you been learning?** Have you attended an awesome workshop? Share it with your paraprofessional colleagues here

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