

# TA TALK

Issue 12, October 2016



Leaders in  
Professional  
Learning  
For  
Teacher Aides



*Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell, ATA Directors*

## Australian Teacher Aide Directors Message

### ANNIVERSARY EDITION

We can't believe that we have had the "doors" open at ATA for 12 months already. As they say, time flies when you are having fun (aka busy, busy, busy 😊)

Over the past 12 months, we have established many valuable partnerships and some strong alliances with industry professionals that add significant value to the professional development offered to our members.

We delivered our first webinar in December last year and since then we have continued to offer customised training sessions and professional learning programs to our members on a monthly basis along with regular webinars for the broader education sector.

This month we achieved preferred provider status with the Queensland Department of Education and Training. This will make it much easier for Queensland State Schools to access our professional development, and will give ATA more visibility within this sector. We plan to replicate preferred provider status, where available, in other states and territories in the near future.

Look out for some special announcements in November as we celebrate 12 months of working with our ever-growing community of enthusiastic, passionate and committed teacher aides. You are an inspiring team!

We look forward to another exciting year with you.

Warm regards

*Stella Liliendal & Mandy Bell*

## WHAT EXACTLY IS IN THE MEMBERS' AREA?

We know teacher aides are really busy so we thought that we would provide you with a list of professional learning resources, developed by ATA specifically for teacher aides over the last twelve months, to save you time searching for topics relevant to your support role and prompt you to log into your members' home page.

There are also other resources to browse, such as [Snapshots](#), which captures the worklife of teacher aides, educators and the wider community, and [TA Toolbox](#), which gives you links to high quality online resources such as literacy, STEM, communication and behaviour.

We will continue to expand our professional learning resources, based on what you, and your school, tell us you need. We aim to be your one-stop shop for all teacher aide professional development needs.

### Professional Learning Series

**Support Skills for Teacher Aides** are short programs that focus on the skills and knowledge that teacher aides need to support learning. Each program comes with a workbook that includes a learning record and a certificate of completion. Soon, we will add a facilitator's guide for schools who use our programs to deliver PD to teacher aide teams.

#### *Behaviour Support Skills for Teacher Aides*

*It's a Matter of Perspective* is a three-part series that assists teacher aides to better support behaviour through the use of clear language, choosing the right strategy and knowing how to respond to behaviour situations.



#### *Literacy Support Skills for Teacher Aides – produced in consultation with Debbie Hickey*

*Vocabulary Support Skills* is a three-part program that uses Marzano's six-step framework to support students with vocabulary development. The programs explain how to introduce reading vocabulary, how to reinforce vocabulary and how to use academic language to support learning.

#### *Learning Support Skills*

*Understanding Learning Difficulties* is the first program in this series that explains learning difficulties and disabilities, and some of the reasons children experience difficulty with their learning. We also discuss the characteristic three common learning disabilities: dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia.



## Webinar Library

Since December 2015 we have hosted at least two live webinars per month. Some are open to non-members, but only members get ongoing access to the recordings in our webinar library.

During the open webinars, our guest presenters share expertise in their field in a context relevant to teacher aides, and we wish to thank them and acknowledge their contribution. They are as follows:

### Three simple steps to improving behaviour in the classroom and at home

Presented by Stella Liliendal, Founding Director of ATA, December 2015

### Make every day a good day: Learn how to help children solve their own problems

Presented by Kathryn Tonges, from The Parent Within, February 2016

### How to bring more calm, clarity and effectiveness to your workday

Presented by Lindel Greggery, from Noticing the Now, March 2016

### Sensing Autism: Strategies to support children with autism process sensory information

Presented by Michelle Knights, from Training, Education and Consultancy Services, May 2016

### Cecelia's Story: The unique culture and traditions of the Torres Strait Island People

Presented by Cecelia Wright, from Cultural Inclusions, June 2016

### Working as a special education teacher aide: What is it really like and do you have what it takes

Presented by Tony Leigh-Sheriden, Head of Special Education Services, Noosa District SHS, August 2016

### From Bullied to Brilliant: Ending the pattern of bullying

Presented by Karen Clarke, Author, September, 2016

### Top Five Digital Skills for Teacher Aides

Presented by Cheryl White, Digital Skills Depot October 2016

## Members' Webinars

In May this year, we began hosting our members' webinars. These webinars connect the ATA member community, provides a forum for discussing ideas, and develops skills through short workshops.

**May:** Planning and reviewing a support session

**June:** TA Handbook

**July:** Tips for getting your support session off to a good start

**August:** The Language of Expectation

**September:** The Language of Acknowledgement

**October:** The Language of Correction

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



## OCTOBER OPEN WEBINAR: TOP FIVE DIGITAL SKILLS FOR TEACHER AIDES

With Cheryl White, Digital Skills Depot

Cheryl White is a digital strategist, and has many years' experience working with education departments and industry to enhance digital skills.



In this webinar, Cheryl introduced us to the five digital skill sets that we all need in the workplace.

First Cheryl took us on a journey, to illustrate how the tools we use for learning have changed. She also made the distinction between *digital literacy*, understanding which applications to use to support learning, and *digital skills*, the ability to use technology.

We came across two new terms that Cheryl used to describe learning: *plugged* and *unplugged*. Now maybe you are already familiar with these words and surprised at our confession! We do try to keep pace with both terminology and technology so we were interested to learn that *unplugged learning* is learning without the use of technology, and *plugged learning* is using technology to facilitate learning.

Cheryl used live polls to help participants rate their digital skill levels. Here's an overview of each skill set and some of the outcomes.

**Communication** is the first skill set and consists of being able to use email, social media and the Internet. Participants rated themselves the highest in this digital skill set.

The next skill set is **Collaboration**. This includes being able to use the intranet, cloud services and mobile applications. Participants showed some confidence in this area.

The **Creation** skill set is used widely by teacher aides in schools and includes creating documents using software such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Adobe. Although most participants use these skills, the rating was lower as participants felt they had a long way to go before being proficient.

As can happen in live webinars, we had a glitch and missed the next skill, which was **Content**. This skill set consists of being able to access and evaluate information for specific purposes. Teacher aides often source information for teachers, and assist students with researching information on the Internet. In our ATA members' site, TA Toolbox provides a great source of information that teacher aides can use to learn more about topics relevant to them such as disability, behaviour and literacy. The bonus is that each link has been reviewed, the content summarised, and new resources added regularly, saving you time and effort surfing the net.

Lastly, Cheryl introduced us to the skill set of **Coding**. We learned that problem solving and critical thinking are all part of coding. Polling results showed that coding rated the lowest of all of the digital skill sets.

Our total scores from the polls showed that most of us are digital citizens who can use technology to communicate and find information, however, to become digital workers, most of us will need to develop our digital skills. As a starting point Cheryl illustrated how participation in ATA covers aspects of all of these skill sets. From your feedback we also know that you want to gain more skills, and we are working to bring you this in the New Year.

## MEMBERS' WEBINAR

### THE LANGUAGE OF CORRECTION

In our October members' webinar, Stella presented the topic: *Language of Correction*. This was the fourth conversation in a series based on the 'Balance Model', designed to encourage and support positive relationships with students.

The Language of correction uses the skills of:

- Selective attending
- Redirection to learning
- Giving a choice
- Following through

These skills progress from the least to the most intrusive.



#### **Selective attending**

Selective attending is about giving minimal attention to everyday off-task behaviours that do not seriously disrupt or disrespect others. It uses eye contact to let students know that you have observed their behaviour, and gives them time to self-correct.

#### **Redirection to learning**

Teacher aides can redirect students back on task using verbal and non-verbal prompts. This program explores the skills of using questions, the when-then strategy and partial agreement.

#### **Giving a choice**

Teacher aides can give students a choice when they have already used other less intrusive strategies to redirect students back on task, without a change in behaviour. This is one of the most difficult strategies that needs planning with the teacher.

#### **Following through**

When students choose to not comply with a direction to get back to work, the teacher aide needs to be assertive and follow through with the choice given. Consequences need to be logical and enforceable, as it is the certainty of following through that is effective.

## DATE CLAIMER

### 8 November: Members Webinar

The Balance Model - Summing up: What did you learn and where to next?

#### **INVITATION TO MEMBERS**

You are invited to join us for our members' webinars, held on the second Tuesday of each month at 3.45pm. Members receive a reminder email each month, prior to the webinar, including registration details.

## WHAT'S TRENDING ON FACEBOOK? October 2016 fans: 3,744

### Top Post: *So much help, much unseen, but not forgotten by students*

42,804 Views 2,885 Reactions, Comments and Shares

It is not that teacher aides are less busy than other school staff; they are not, but they are the ones who find the time to help a young student tie their shoelace before they trip over it in the classroom, sit with a miserable teenager facing unspoken challenges or lend a listening ear to a student.

That is why this post resonated with so many of you and was shared over 300 times within 24 hours of appearing on our page.

Thank you for continuing to share the [ATA Facebook page](#) with your colleagues and for following us so enthusiastically.



## SPECIAL ATA ANNIVERSARY OFFER

November is 'party' month for us as we celebrate one year of ATA professional learning and fun.

Watch out for some special announcements and new developments that will make ATA membership even more special.

We will be sending you all the details via email, MyPLC and Facebook. So stay tuned!



## CURRENT EDUCATION TOPICS FOR YOU

Each month we bring you resources and ideas that you can use in the classroom or at home. As this month's open webinar was about digital skills, we have found some resources around this topic that we know you will find useful.

### DIGITAL SKILLS & CAREERS

[Digital Skills and Careers](#): *Building the skills for today for the jobs of tomorrow*, is published by the Australian Information Industry Association. The report identifies the digital skills essential for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and why digital skills in education are important.



### iPad APPS

A NSW community of schools has published a list of [iPad apps](#) for students and teachers. It is a comprehensive list that includes apps for English, Math, and Creativity, as well as many teacher apps. Each application has a short description and a price guide.

### STEM - TA TOOLBOX

We have already shared some excellent links to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in TA Toolbox, which is on our Australian Teacher Aide members' site. One of the highly recommended publications, worth mentioning again, is the [STEM Program Index 2016](#), which is a booklet of over 250 STEM programs available for schools and students, across Australia.

## 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

## SEND US YOUR NEWS STORIES: CONTACT US

[Contact Us](#)

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)