

TA TALK

Issue 15, January 2017



Leaders in
Professional
Learning
For
Teacher Aides



Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell, ATA Directors

Australian Teacher Aide Directors Message

Welcome back everyone! Term 1 is well underway in Queensland and most other States are back at school this week.

We are really excited to be starting a new year, and have already been visiting member schools, attending workshops and developing this year's professional learning content.

We know that the teacher aides in many of our new member schools are planning to take advantage of pupil free days to become familiar with the ATA member portal.

This is why our first two member webinars, this year, are about getting the most out of the ATA professional learning resources and using the new Facilitator's Guide.

In January, we were invited to two mathematics workshops, led by Rob Proffitt-White who is a Principal Advisor, Mathematics, with the Department of Education and Training in Queensland.

This year we are developing professional learning resources for mathematics, as many of you told us last year that this was something you wanted. Attending workshops, like these, enable us to make sure that the resources we develop are up to date and demonstrate current teaching and learning strategies being taught in schools.

We look forward to getting to know as many of you as we can in 2017 and wish you a great year ahead.

Warm regards

Stella Liliendal & Mandy Bell

MATHEMATICS: LESS CONTENT - MORE CREATIVITY



We were recently invited to join 200 teachers and TAs at a mathematics workshop titled, *Mathematics: Less Content - More Creativity*, held at Cooroy State School, in Queensland.

The professional development was delivered by Rob Proffitt-White for the Noosa Hinterland Mathematics Alliance, during pupil free days.

Rob is a Principal Advisor, Mathematics, with the Department of Education and Training in Queensland. He is a dynamic and engaging presenter who has earned a reputation as a bit of a math 'guru'. He is working with teachers in the North Coast cluster schools, from Pine Rivers to Bundaberg, to simplify the Australian math curriculum, and make it more meaningful. Rob's work with schools has earned the alliance recognition for being one of the most innovative and creative in Australia.

The purpose of attending this workshop was to learn, firsthand, about effective math teaching and learning approaches, and to use this to develop a new professional development resource for our members that reflects current mathematics approaches.

One of the key messages from the day was that you don't need to be good at mathematics to make it engaging and meaningful for students.



MATH WORKSHOP FOR GYMPIE TEACHER AIDES



During a recent pupil free day, teacher aides from Gympie schools attended a morning workshop on mathematics. Rob Proffitt-White explained that the purpose of the workshop was to make sure that



teacher aides understand what teachers do, in order to enable them to effectively support students' math learning.

Rob believes that mathematics should be collaborative, and he modelled many different strategies to solve math problems using practical ideas that involve reasoning, justifying and sharing of ideas.

The teacher aides very much valued this opportunity, as well as the professional development on mathematics provided by their schools.

TA MEMBER PORTAL ORIENTATION

Many of our TAs in schools are taking advantage of pupil free days to log into ATA and become familiar with the members' portal.

Late last year we ran a live webinar orientation for James Nash State High school, one of our newest member schools with 19 TA members.

We were also invited to run an orientation at Mooloolaba State School, and being in our local area, we were able to attend in person and meet with the teacher aides.

First we did an overview of the log in process, and the content areas in the portal; but the really useful part of the session was some of the discussion around:

- How to find time in the school day to plan professional development
- How to record PD hours
- How to represent TAs as paraprofessionals.

In our first members' webinar on 14 February, we will be discussing some of these questions, and showing members how to make the best use of the ATA website. We would also like you to share ideas about ways your school includes teacher aide PD into their planning.



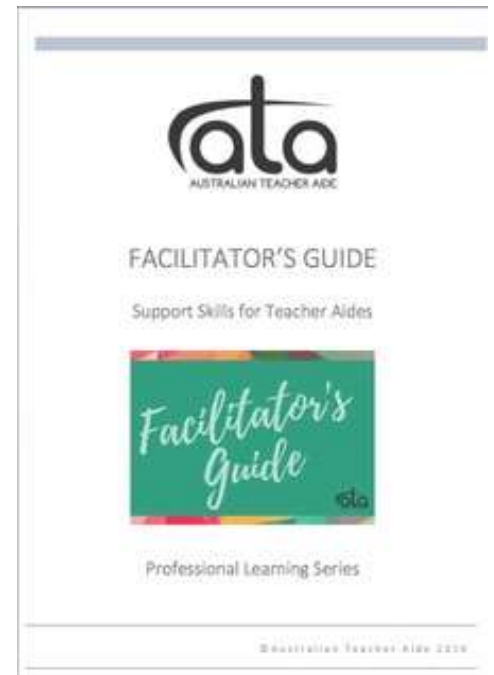
On 21 February, Stella will run a short session for our TA coordinators in schools, on facilitating PD using the ATA professional learning resources. Stella will outline how to make the best use of the support materials and introduce the Facilitator's Guide, our latest resource for schools. You can read more about the Facilitator's Guide on the next page.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE MEMBERS' PORTAL

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

In readiness for 2017, we have updated all of our Support Skills for Teacher Aides workbooks and included a learning record that will help you track your PD.

We know that there are some amazing TA Coordinators at member schools, who will be facilitating ATA PD sessions with their teacher aide teams this year. To make preparation for this a little easier, we have added a Facilitator's Guide to use with the Support Skills for Teacher Aides program series.



MEMBERS WEBINARS

At the start of the year, we asked our MyPLC network to let us know the best time for members' webinars.

Most of you told us that, last year, it was really difficult to be back from school in time to join in, so we have taken on your feedback and scheduled webinars at 4:15pm Queensland time, which is 5:15pm daylight saving time, in the eastern States. The webinars will also be 45 minutes, instead of half an hour, giving us a bit more time for questions and discussions.

We always publish upcoming webinars on the ATA website and in MyPLC, as well as sending members an invitation by email. When you click on the link, you will be able to see your time zone.

DATE CLAIMERS

14 FEBRUARY: A 'How To' Guide To Using ATA PD

21 FEBRUARY: Strategies to facilitate ATA professional development using the Facilitator's Guide

NEW SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP PRICING

Last year, schools told us, loud and clear, that ATA membership was of more value when whole school teams were able to access the TA professional development in our members' portal. In response to this feedback, our 2017 school corporate prices are as follows:

Up to 99 students - \$237 per year, unlimited staff
100 - 499 students - \$437 per year, unlimited staff
500+ students - \$547 per year, unlimited staff

ATA MONOGRAMMED POLO SHIRTS



Do you have your work wear sorted for this year? Don't forget about our fabulous ATA polo shirts. They are monogrammed with the ATA logo and they are available for purchase in two styles and in a variety of colours.

ATA has arranged for orders to be made directly with the supplier, Coast ImageWear, ensuring there are no "add-ons" and that you get the best possible price.

Members can find the link to order in our [Member's Portal](#).

WHAT'S TRENDING ON

FACEBOOK?

January 2017 Fans: 4,315

Top Post:

Welcome note to Year 4 students by a Bowen State School teacher

20,521 Views

862 Reactions, Comments and Shares

Wow, this got your attention! And why wouldn't it? What an awesome way to welcome your students back to school. 😊

Closely followed by:



Helping Children With Anxiety –
What to say to children when they are anxious

19,117 Views

552 Reactions, Comments and Shares

This post gave us some very good feedback on the type of information teacher aides are hungry for. Keep an eye on our webinar program; we are planning to bring this to you soon.

Thank you for continuing to share the [ATA Facebook page](#) with others. 😊

CURRENT EDUCATION TOPICS FOR YOU

The focus this month is on mathematics. Remember that all resource links are uploaded into the TA Toolbox, so you don't have to search through newsletters to find something you need from past issues. By the way there are some great [math resources](#) there already, under the heading STEM.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY RESOURCES

As part of [National Literacy and Numeracy](#) week, last year, the Australian Government published some excellent activities. Make sure you check out Adam Spencer's short video on math. He is a Sydney University Ambassador for Mathematics, as well as a comedian and author.



TEACHING WITH MINECRAFT?

This short video [The Craft Digital Citizens](#), shows how to use Minecraft to make mathematics relevant and engaging to 21st Century learners, who are growing up in a rapidly changing digital era. You will find many other videos on using Minecraft for mathematics on sites like YouTube.

PLAY BASED MATH LEARNING

In [5 Compelling Reasons for Teaching Spatial Reasoning to Young Children](#), the authors explain why we should include more of a focus on spatial reasoning in the classroom. According to research, the quality of block play at 4 years of age is a predictor of high school math achievement, and spatial reasoning can improve number sense in students who struggle in this area. After reading this story, will you be using more blocks and manipulative materials in your classroom?

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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