

# TA TALK

Issue 1, November 2015

## Directors Message

### AUSTRALIAN TEACHER AIDE IS READY FOR YOU!

**Welcome to *TA Talk***, the Australian Teacher Aide (ATA) monthly newsletter. If you are reading this edition in 2015, you are likely to be a founding ATA member. Congratulations!

We have had a busy few months leading up to the launch of our website and the presentation of our first Teacher Aide forum, on the Sunshine Coast. On reflection, the last 4 months have been a true mixture of excitement, exhaustion, jubilation, a little procrastination, anticipation, frustration and celebration! And I'm sure there are more of all of those things to come.

But, one thing that has been a constant is our vision for ATA which, from the outset, has been to give teacher aides a voice, to connect you with other teacher aides, from anywhere across Australia, and to make it easier for you to access professional learning, designed specifically for teacher aides.

To ensure that ATA is responsive to your professional learning needs, we have consulted with teacher aides, school leaders and other educators, before developing our content. We look forward to getting your feedback about our first professional learning series on Behaviour Support Skills for Teacher Aides.

During the consultation process, you told us that you wanted to network with other teacher aides and be able to collaborate with your colleagues to ask questions, swap ideas and provide support. We listened to you and now invite you to connect with other teacher aides on [MyPLC](#), your secure private Facebook community.

As we grow, so will the professional learning services that we bring to you. For now we look forward to hearing your feedback. After all it is ***what you think that matters.***

Until next time,

*Stella Liliendal & Mandy Bell*



Leaders in  
Professional  
Learning  
For  
Teacher Aides



Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell, ATA Directors

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*“Your jobs will get better with the more collaboration that you do. One of the first things that happened today when you came in is that you started talking about what collaboration is and who you collaborated with. A few of you said that you talk with your teachers a little bit, but that was the extent of it, so you’ve got so much more you can do. Anything you do now is more than that. This is a great start and I really encourage you to keep going, and ATA is a great platform for that.”*

*Brett Thomson – Independent Consultant, Education and Training*

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## COLLABORATION AND CONSULTATION WITH TEACHER AIDES IN SCHOOLS

**In October**, a group of teacher aides from the Sunshine Coast, were invited to attend a forum on *Thinking to the Future – Building the Capacity of Teacher Aides in Schools*, presented by Australian Teacher Aide (ATA).



The forum was the beginning of a series of roadshows around Australia, to consult with teacher aides about what they believe is needed, to develop their paraprofessional role in schools. The teacher aides represented both primary and secondary schools and were from the government and private school sectors.

The day kicked off with a bit of fun, where the teacher aide representatives were asked to line up in order of years of experience and hours worked. Lots of conversation followed and we learned that between

them, this small group of twelve teacher aides had a combined 166 years of experience and worked a total of almost 330 hours per week!

For ATA, it was an exciting opportunity to share many months of behind the scenes work, by launching our website to this select audience of teacher aides and colleagues, and through a series of activities the teacher aides then went on a discovery tour of the ATA website.

TAFE Queensland East Coast generously supported our event by providing the venue and key note speakers. Natasha Murray and Anna Nielsen, both Education Support teachers, talked about the value of collaboration and how to apply this in an online environment, through social media and with online learning.

Collaboration was the theme of the day, and the teacher aides worked in groups on a series of questions aimed at highlighting strategies, challenges and the vision needed, to build the capacity of teacher aides in schools. The groups were facilitated by Lisa Molloy and Debbie Hickey, both experienced educators.

Brett Thomson, a highly respected training consultant, who has worked all over Australia and in the Pacific region, summed up the value of collaboration.

*“Your jobs will get better with the more collaboration that you do. One of the first things that happened today when you came in is that you started talking about what collaboration is and who you collaborated with. A few of you said that you talk with your teachers a little bit, but that was the extent of it, so you’ve got so much more you can do. Anything you do now is more than that. This is a great start and I really encourage you to keep going, and ATA is a great platform for that”.*

Keep an eye out for the video clips from our forum as well as a blog about what we learned about what teacher aides would like to see happen, to improve their paraprofessional standing in schools.



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**Australian Teacher Aide**

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## NEW RESOURCES

*Literacy Support Skills for Teacher Aides*, our next professional learning series, is coming soon.

Also we think you will enjoy listening to a podcast by Hazel Gorman, as she reflects on the changes to her prep teacher aide role over the last 27 years.

You will receive email notifications from us when we upload new resources into the Members area.

## WHAT'S TRENDING ON FACEBOOK?

Our open [Facebook](#) site was launched on 1 September, and at the time of writing this newsletter, our fan base has grown to just over 1420 followers. We are both buoyed and overwhelmed by the support and enthusiasm from the education sector.

Through some of our most popular posts, such as World Teacher Day, that was seen by 15,000 people and shared almost 100 times, we have gained some insights into the caring nature of our followers, and their willingness to share and engage with others.

Quotes have been well liked and we have smiled at many comments, especially the ones from the post "What's your title?" Dianne replied that the title doesn't matter; it's what they do that matters, and Sally sent a message to Rachel and Karen saying that they were "educating ninjas". Wonderful stuff!

*Please keep liking and sharing our [FB page](#) with others.*



## TIPS AND IDEAS

### Danish Christmas Hearts



With *Christmas* just around the corner we thought you would enjoy making these Danish Christmas hearts. Traditionally hung on the Christmas tree and filled with goodies, they are also useful for many other occasions.

They enable children not celebrating Christmas, to make the hearts simply as a decoration, for giving to a family member, or to celebrate another event that is special to them.

The Christmas Hearts promote fine motor skills, as children (and adults) weave the two pieces of coloured pieces of paper together to make a heart. The activity should appeal to the visual learner, as it uses shapes, patterns and creative colour combinations.

*Follow this [link](#) for instructions on how to make these delightful hearts.*