

TA TALK

Issue 6, April 2016

[Australian Teacher Aide Directors Message](#)

WE MET WITH A WORLD LEADER IN TEACHER AIDE RESEARCH

This month we had the privilege to meet with Professor Peter Blatchford from the UCL Institute of Education, when he flew from the UK to deliver the [2016 Dean's Lecture at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education](#). You can read more about our visit on page three.

One of the great ways to reach our members and educators around Australia, is by webinar. We have seen a strong increase in participation in our free webinars. There are also some exciting webinars for members planned for May. Read about each of these events on the next page.

We strive to bring you relevant and current professional development programs and base all of our content on what educators tell us they want, so make sure you have your say in MyPLC. Academic Vocabulary has a strong focus in the Australian Curriculum and the third program, to be uploaded very soon, will assist you when you are supporting students to use academic content language and cognitive verbs.

We wish you a great Term Two and look forward to meeting you in our members' webinars.

Warm regards

Stella Liliendal & Mandy Bell



Leaders in
Professional
Learning
For
Teacher Aides



Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell, ATA Directors



COMING UP IN TERM 2

Literacy Support Skills for Teacher Aides

Use academic vocabulary to support student learning.

The third of our Vocabulary Support Skills videos will soon be available to assist members to support students with academic language. This program explains the different types of academic language used by teachers and students in all curriculum areas, and outlines how teacher aides can use different strategies to support students to understand, and use, academic language. It includes workbooks and a certificate of completion.

There are some exciting webinars scheduled for May. Members will be sent invitations to all of these events but in the meantime here is a preview of what is coming up.

FREE WEBINAR: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

April was Autism Awareness month, and as many teacher aides support students with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), we are following up this important and relevant topic in Term 2 with a webinar on *Supporting Students with ASD*. This interactive webinar will help participants gain a deeper understanding of ASD by presenting three perspectives; that of the parent, the child and the teacher aide.

MEMBERS WEBINAR FOR TEACHER AIDES

Do you get time at the start and end of lessons to plan and review student support sessions with teachers? Yes or No?

For our first members' webinar, scheduled for when all States have returned from their term break, we decided to include this as our first discussion topic. All topic questions and ideas are posted in MyPLC so we encourage you to have your say!

MEMBERS WEBINAR FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT TEACHERS

How do your trainers and assessors demonstrate their current industry skills?

The standards for registered training organisations (RTOs) 2015, state that trainers and assessors must be able to demonstrate that they maintain and develop new skills that are relevant to current industry needs. Activities that can contribute to demonstration of current industry skills include

- Participation in relevant **professional development activities** such as consulting with industry associations to identify relevant development activities
- Participation in **networks**
- **Personal development** such as reading online journals

This webinar will provide you with an opportunity to share information about how your RTO meets currency standards and provide feedback to ATA about ways we can support your currency through professional development, networking and personal development.

WE MET WITH A WORLD LEADER IN TEACHER AIDE RESEARCH *continued*

Professor Blatchford presented the results of his five year research project on maximising the impact of teaching assistants in schools, and after the lecture we had the opportunity to meet with Professor Blatchford. We heard more about the effect of his research in the UK, and talked about the Australian context. He was interested in how Australian Teacher Aide is providing professional development to schools, to assist them include teacher aides as part of their whole school planning.

There was room for a bit of lightheartedness during a photo opportunity! If you are wondering what was going on, we were encouraged to take pictures that included the university logo. Like us, always on the lookout for a good story!



In our last blog [Three Reasons Your School may not be Getting Maximum Value from your Support Staff](#) we talked about how effective use of education support staff can contribute to improved student outcomes. We would encourage you to pass this blog on to your school leadership team, as it also includes a survey for schools.

In our next blog we will be writing about what we learned from our meeting with Professor Blatchford and how we can apply this research to benefit Australian schools.

WHAT'S TRENDING ON FACEBOOK?

APRIL 2016 PAGE LIKES: 2177+



Top Post: Sometimes all we need is a little motivation or inspiration - 7672 Views 50 shares

This quote received the most views this month. I wonder if our FB followers related this message to their personal lives or to their education support role at school. Mandy shared this with ATA staff in mind, as we were getting frustrated at not getting everything done fast enough! Do you know the feeling?

Do you get time at the start and end of lessons to plan and review student support sessions with teachers? Yes or No?

This post resulted in a lot of comments from teacher aides, most of them a resounding 'No!' so we decided to include this as our first discussion topic in our members' webinar.

Did you miss any of these posts? Find them on our [ATA FB page](#). *Please keep liking and sharing our page.*

Do you like to keep up to date with education news? We have done some of the searching for you and sourced some useful and relevant education topics. Click on the links to learn more.

ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

This article published by the Age suggests that [too much screen time may harm children's oral language](#). The author, Dr Charlotte Forwood, explains that in the early years, children learn new words very quickly and that a rich vocabulary is necessary for reading comprehension, and the development of high level thinking skills. I wonder if it is sometimes better to put that iPad away and just have a conversation.

MATHEMATICS

What is an acute angle, a quotient or a trapezium? [A Maths Dictionary for Kids](#) by Jenny Eather can help you to easily check the meaning of maths vocabulary. This is a very useful dictionary both for teacher aides and for parents.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Have you heard of [non-verbal learning disability](#)? This neurological learning disability only becomes evident with age and is characterized by symptoms such as lack of coordination and poor time management and problem solving skills. Children have difficulty in starting and finishing tasks, leading them to sometimes being wrongly labelled as lazy and uncooperative.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Since our latest professional learning series has been focusing on vocabulary development, we wanted to share with you this great blog on [digital tools to build literacy](#). We will also publish the link to these resources on our Professional Learning Resources page, along with the video: *Use academic vocabulary to support student learning*.

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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