

TA TALK

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Leaders in
Professional
Learning
For
Teacher Aides



Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell, ATA Directors

Australian Teacher Aide Directors Message

ATA MEMBERSHIP IS GROWING

Is this year going as quickly for you as for us? It is almost half way through the year, and perhaps you are already looking forward to the next term break!

Since our exciting meeting with Professor Blatchford last month, we have been heads down providing professional learning services to our members and the general education community.

We had a great turn out to our free webinar on Sensing Autism, presented by Disability Educator, Michelle Knights, which has now been uploaded to our members' site where you can access it anytime.

We have uploaded the third Literacy Support Skills program on Supporting Students with Academic Vocabulary, and our first Learning Support Skills video on Supporting Student with Learning Difficulties will be available in June.

Our membership is growing, with schools and training organisations all over Australia, joining our national community. If you regularly read MyPLC, your private online professional learning community, you may have noticed the diversity of ATA members.

This led us to thinking how interesting it would be to feature a teacher aide, school or training organization in our newsletter. We would love to hear from you if you would like to submit a feature for our newsletter. After all we know that our members enjoy hearing from each other.

We will be inviting members to participate. Please use the Contact Us link in this newsletter, or on our website if you wish to participate.

Warm regards

Stella Liliendal & Mandy Bell

WEBINAR: SENSING AUTISM (ASD) STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH AUTISM TO PROCESS SENSORY INFORMATION



Sensory Seekers are constantly moving or doing something.

Processing sensory information

The focus of this webinar was on the different ways children with autism process sensory information, and the strategies that teacher aides can use to support them.

Proprioception

Michelle introduced the concept that we have at least seven senses, and how proprioception provides us with sensory information about our body position, and is necessary for simple actions such as walking up stairs, sitting down and moving between objects such as desks. Michelle went on to explain how children with poor proprioception may be considered clumsy as they continually bump into things, and knock things over.

Vestibular

Participants learned how the vestibular sense provides information related to movement, and plays a role in balance, coordination, eye control and movement.

Sensory seekers, avoiders and underresponders

Of particular interest to the participants, was the way some children avoid sensory input, some seek it and others are unresponsive to sensory input. Michelle talked about the indicators that highlighted the different ways children process sensory information, and provided many useful strategies to support students at school.

It was especially exciting to have schools join in with large teams of teacher aides from across Australia. The overall response was very enthusiastic, and participants were keen to have more webinars on this topic.

Michelle Knights is Principal of Training, Education and Consultancy Service (TEC). You can contact Michelle by emailing Michelleknights.TEC@gmail.com

ATA members can now view our May webinar with Disability Educator, Michelle Knights. Michelle engaged a large audience of educators sharing her insights into ways that children with ASD process sensory information.

Michelle's advocacy role started as a parent of a child with a disability, over 21 years ago. Since then Michelle has supported families, and worked with businesses and government departments. Michelle is also a trainer with TAFE East Coast, on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.

NEW RESOURCES

Literacy Support Skills for Teacher Aides

Supporting students with academic vocabulary

The third of our Literacy Support Skills videos is now available to assist members to support students with vocabulary development. This program provides information and practical strategies to support students to use academic content words to understand and talk about specific subject areas such as English and maths, as well as exploring the use of cognitive verbs, appropriate to the students' level.



COMING SOON

Learning Support Skills for Teacher Aides

Supporting students with learning difficulties.

The first of our Learning Support Skills videos will soon be available to assist members to support students who are experiencing difficulties with learning. This program explains the different types of learning difficulties and some of the reasons children experience these difficulties. It also provides an insight into some of the more common specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia. It includes a workbook and a certificate of completion

WHAT'S TRENDING ON FACEBOOK?



MAY 2016

PAGE LIKES: 2290

Top Post: Make sure you make a difference today - 6902 Views 97 shares

Mandy designed this post to highlight the difference teacher aides can make in the lives of children.

Our FB fans shared this message widely and we enjoyed some of the wonderful comments such as the one by Kathleen who wrote *"Goes both ways. Often their beautiful smiles are the first we get for the day too...."*

And Clare who observed that *"We don't get paid like a teacher, but we are the ones who help them...and that's why we do it."*

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

CURRENT EDUCATION TOPICS FOR YOU. CLICK ON THE LINKS TO LEARN MORE ACADEMIC VOCABULARY- PRACTICE RESOURCES

[The RMIT Learning Lab](#) provides excellent practice resources for students moving from secondary school to university. As we recently uploaded a program on Supporting Students with Academic Vocabulary, to our members' professional learning area, we thought you may find this site of particular value if you are working with secondary students. Students can work through a series of self-check activities to develop up to 550 academic words recommended for successful university studies.

MATHEMATICS – WHAT ARE INTEGERS?

A while back on MyPLC, we shared a link to Mr Woo Tube. Eddie Woo records his classroom lessons and shares these videos on his Woo Tube channel. He has now expanded the videos to cover other areas such as technology, however the following link is about mathematics. Mr Woo's explanation of [integers](#) is informative, and begins by exploring the meaning of the word. This is another illustration of the importance of students' understanding of academic content words. Have you checked out our Academic Vocabulary series in the members' professional learning area, yet?

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES

Many teacher aides support students who experience difficulties with learning. [Learning Difficulties Australia](#) is a useful site for information that includes links to research papers, resources and programs. Keep a look out for the first program in our Learning Support Skills series on Supporting Students with Learning Difficulties.

STEM PROGRAM INDEX 2016

The Australian Government has put together [SPI 2016](#) a booklet of over 250 STEM programs for schools and students across Australia. The booklet is organised into Science, Digital Technology and ICT, Engineering and Technology and Mathematics, and all are aligned with the Australian Curriculum. Each chapter of this very informative document sorts the information according to grade level, where it is available, and the program type, such as in-school, holidays and competitions.

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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