

TA TALK

Issue 8, June 2016



Leaders in
Professional
Learning
For
Teacher Aides



Stella Liliendal and Mandy Bell, ATA Directors

Australian Teacher Aide Directors Message

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM FACEBOOK!

We always knew that teacher aides have a great sense of humour, and are dedicated to the work they do supporting children's learning, but we were overwhelmed by the reaction to the post *Keep Calm Let the Teacher Aide Handle It*.

So why was this post viewed over 140,000 times, and shared or commented on nearly 10,000 times? Read some of the things we learned on page four.

A big welcome to the new schools and training organisations that came onboard this month, from New South Wales and Queensland. We notice that non-government schools are leading the way!

Welcome, too, to teacher aides from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland who also joined the ATA community. Along with members from Tasmania and Western Australia we almost have representation across Australia. Come on ACT and Northern Territory!

When you read the overview of our latest training webinar on page two, make sure you take note of the special (free) resource offer we have for schools. Please share this with your school leaders and ask them to make contact with us to arrange delivery of the resource. The offer is available, in celebration of NAIDOC week, until the end of July.

As always this term has flown. Wishing you a wonderful winter holiday. Keep warm and stay safe!

Warm regards

Stella Liliendal & Mandy Bell

WEBINAR: CECELIA'S STORY: THE CULTURE AND TRADITIONS OF THE TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE



ATA members can now view our [June webinar](#) with ATA guest presenter and leading multicultural trainer, Cecelia Wright. ATA is especially pleased to present this webinar to you as part of our celebrations leading into NAIDOC week.

During the webinar, Cecelia shares the culture and traditions of her Torres Strait Island people and their homeland.

Cecelia started her career, following in the footsteps of her mother, as a teacher aide at the Catholic school on Thursday Island, where her mother still works. Cecelia has done some amazing things in a short space of time, including founding Cultural Inclusions, an organisation dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion at early childhood level.

Cecelia provided listeners with an understanding of the geographic scope of the the Torres Strait Islands and you might be surprised to learn exactly where the Island cluster starts and finishes. She shared some of the traditions and cultural protocols and engaged us in the tongue of one of four of the languages used in the Torres Strait.

Did you know there is a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday Island, as well as the well-known Thursday Island? That Thursday Island is one of the smallest islands in the Torres Strait but one of the most heavily populated? And that the colours of the national flag have special significance as does the clothing worn by villagers on Fridays.

Throughout the presentation, Cecelia kept us engaged with an activity sheet containing words specific to the Torres Strait. As Cecelia spoke about various clothing, animals, tradition, instruments and other items, we matched the Islander language with items on the activity sheet. Make sure you download the activity sheet when you view the recording in the Members' area.

Cecelia's Story is a magical, and colourful, snapshot of of the Torres Strait Islander people, their community and life in the islands. Please let your school leaders know that we are happy to share this resource with them in recognition of NAIDOC and to support culturally inclusive practices in the workplace.

Simply ask your school representative to contact us via email: info@australianteacheraide.com.au or via our Contact Us form on the website: <http://www.australianteacheraide.com.au/contact-us>



A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHER AIDES - MEMBERS WEBINAR

Did you catch our Members' Webinar in June, when we discussed what type of information teacher aides would like to see included and why?

Jodie, one of our founding ATA members, initiated this discussion. She explained her frustration at not having strategies at hand to manage situations and shared, with fellow participants, what she was looking for.

As we listened to your discussion, we became aware that some of your learning needs are already being met through many resources available in the membership area.

In this Issue, we have focused on behaviour, as it was the topic that kept cropping up. Read our suggestions that highlight current resources that may help meet your needs.

We will address some of your other topics in future newsletters, and continue to find ways to deliver content to you that targets your identified needs.

In the meantime have you considered using MyPLC as your 'go to' place, to ask your peers for suggestions about issues you are having in your support work? You can provide a scenario, but for confidentiality and privacy reasons, never name students, teachers or other persons involved.



Webinar Topic	Content	Suggested Professional Learning Resources
Behaviour Concerns	Use of encouragement, praise and reward	Behaviour Support Skills, Part 1: Make it Clear This short video helps you to know how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use positive language that tells students what to do instead of what not to do • Explores the use of clear language to set expectations and • How you can use the power of non-verbal communication
	Keeping students on track	Behaviour Support Skills, Part 2: Keep It Simple and Part 3: Stay on track These two short videos help you to know how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your focus the task, and not the student • Respond to behaviour, rather than reacting to a situation which usually leads to escalation of the behaviour • Recognise the triggers in yourself and in students, and • Strategies for getting students back on track in the least intrusive way.
	Motivating at risk students to learn	Snapshot: Pav Cosmatos, Behaviour Management Specialist, talks about the power of building positive relationships with students, and how to connect with those students who are at risk of disengaging from school

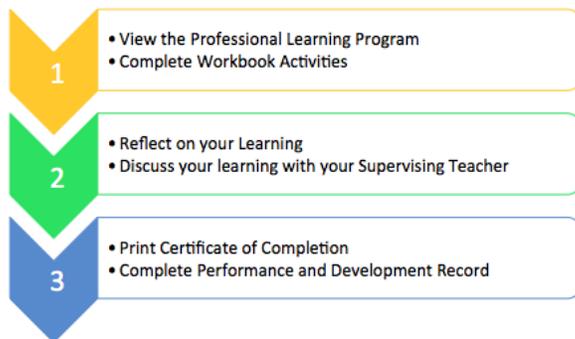
Date claimer: Our next Members Webinar is scheduled for 12th July 2016

Date claimer: Our next RTO Members Webinar is scheduled for 19 July 2016. Members, make sure you lock these dates in your diaries. We will send you a reminder email with registration details closer to the time.

NEW RESOURCE IN JULY

Understanding learning difficulties.

Understanding Learning Difficulties will be available in July, 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.



NEW WORKBOOK IN JULY

We have redesigned the workbook that accompanies the Support Skills for Teacher Aides professional learning series. Because our focus is on recognising teacher aides for their professional learning, we have made it easier for you to document your learning. The workbook is a record of the knowledge and understanding that you will have gained from completing the professional learning program.

Additionally, the workbook explains ways you can use your learning during a professional conversation with your teachers, or towards your Developing Performance process.

The new version will be available with the Learning Support Skills for Teacher Aides series. We will let you know when we have updated the current workbooks.

WHAT'S TRENDING ON FACEBOOK? JUNE 2016 FANS: 3027

Top Post: Keep calm and let the teacher aide handle it

142,408 Views 9681 reactions, comments and shares

We wondered if this post highlighted the level of recognition that teacher aides receive for their paraprofessional role in schools, or perhaps the lack of it.

When we started ATA, our vision was for a national community and professional learning space that put teacher aides at the front and center. Our research indicated that although professional development is available to teacher aides, it is too often a 'handed down' version of teacher training, or not made available to everyone.



These are some of our thoughts, based on our observations in schools, and feedback from teacher aides:

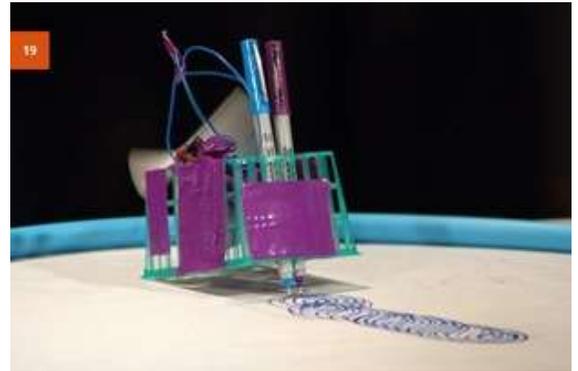
- When supporting student learning in the classroom, teacher aides want to meet with their teachers regularly, so they know what to do before and after a session, and have the strategies to do it.
- During pupil free days teacher aides want an opportunity to develop their skills through professional development (as opposed to stocktaking or tidying up)
- Teacher aides want to be seen as paraprofessionals, and be included in staff meetings relevant to their role.

Do you agree with the lessons we learned from this? Why do you think this post was so popular?

Please keep following us on our [ATA FB page](#) and don't forget to share the page with your colleagues.

CURRENT EDUCATION TOPICS FOR YOU

Each month we bring you links to ideas that you can use in the classroom or at home. Did you like the Australian government's STEM Index that we published last month? What a valuable reference, when your school is looking for ways to be involved in STEM. This month we continue the science and mathematics theme by sharing with you some hands on science toys that you can make with children at school or at home.



MAKING SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS FUN

Children love learning by doing, and that is the philosophy behind the Maker Movement. Have a look at their ideas and tools to make science and mathematics interesting and fun. Today we wanted to share with you a few of the [Science Toys](#) activities that fired up our imagination.

[Squishy Circuits](#) use play dough to build electronic sculptures that light up, make sounds and move!

[50 Things you can do with a cardboard box](#) as the name suggests, encourages children (parents, teachers) to use cardboard boxes that would otherwise end up as landfill, to create things such as musical instruments, dolls houses and puppets.

[Why Kids should learn to code](#) Coding is being referred to as the new literacy. I'm not sure that we agree but the article highlights that there are plenty of easy activities that children as young as five can do!

If scribbling or doodling is your thing, check out the [How to Build a Scribbling Machine](#). It can be made from simple materials and when motorized, moves in unusual ways leaving scribbles where it has been on the page.

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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